



EC/FAO Food Security Programme - Phase II
'Food Security Information for Action'

Programme Workplan for West Bank and Gaza Strip

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Implementing Agency:	FAO
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Activities for the West Bank and Gaza Strip will be developed in conjunction with the ongoing EC-supported project "Management of a Food Insecurity and Vulnerability Information and Mapping System: FIVIMS Phase 2" to ensure consistency and complementarity among the various EC/FAO programmes that support food security.

Many problems in the WBGS are related to the political situation. Food security has been dramatically affected by the current change in the institutional and economic spheres. In terms of specific gaps in food security analysis, the main issues to be addressed are related to the lack of impact monitoring of various food security interventions, the lack of systematization of food security monitoring indicators, poor links between analysis and programming and limited coordination capacity.

Proposed activities include:

1. Carrying out a baseline study on food systems.
2. Strengthening Food Security and Agricultural Statistics through the introduction of information tools and data sharing (CountrySTAT, GIEWS).
3. Capacity building in the analysis of expenditures and food consumption data.
4. Assisting in the development of the methodology of the Household Survey in the preparation and implementation of the comprehensive joint FAO/WFP food security assessment.
5. Adapting tools for monitoring household food access and dietary diversity.

May 2006

1. Background

The Occupied Territories of Palestine consist of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip (WBGS). Its total land area is 6220 sq km. It has a population of 3,762,005 with an annual growth rate of 4%. 45% of population is between 0-14 years of age. The number of people living below the poverty line is 65% for the Gaza Strip and 27% for the West Bank. (2004 est.). The Palestinian population also includes a large number of registered refugees. According to the UN Refugees and Works Agency (UNRWA), there were 687,542 registered refugees in the West Bank and another 961, 645 in the Gaza Strip as of March 2005.

Palestinian institutions are considered quite well-developed and the Palestinian economy is market-oriented. The current humanitarian crisis mainly stems from the volatile political and economic environment. Following the change in Palestinian leadership in early 2005, efforts were made towards adopting a recovery and development approach to assistance and the Palestinian Authority initiated its first three year Medium Term Development Plan for 2005-2007. However, the prognosis of the situation has dramatically changed since the beginning of 2006 with the Hamas' landslide victory in the general elections and the subsequent suspension of international aid and of the transfer of customs levies on Palestinian imports/exports by the Israeli Government.

At present, the humanitarian situation is critical. In 2005, real GDP grew by an estimated 6.3 %, while in 2006, according to World Bank, it seems to have drastically declined by 27%. Poverty has climbed to 64% and unemployment, at 27%, is almost three times what it was in 2000. Israel's permit and closure system which regulates the movement of Palestinian people and goods is considered to be one of the main reasons for this economic decline¹. Other structural constraints related to Israel's occupation include control over water resources.

The entire Gaza Strip, with the exception of Gaza city, has been identified as experiencing high levels of food insecurity (over 37%). Key food security determinants – such as labour wage, food trade and social security schemes are under severe threat. The agricultural sector, often comprised of family or small scale activities, still plays a central role in achieving food security for the Palestinian population. Furthermore, the increase in closures is bringing the traditional complementarities of Palestinian agricultural production to an end.

In addition, the outbreak of avian flu has emerged as a further key challenge for food insecurity and nutrition vulnerability.

2. Problems to Be Addressed

Two types of problems identified in the WBGS need to be addressed in order to implement the Programme and link information to food security relevant action.

- The first group of problems is strictly related to gaps in food security analysis. They include:
 - The lack of impact monitoring of various food security interventions.
 - The lack of systematization of food security monitoring indicators.
 - Poor links between analysis and programming.
 - Limited coordination capacity.
 - Insufficient attention to selected food security issues (e.g. closure policies, impacts of market changes, food safety information and enforcement of regulations, natural resources management etc.).
- The second set of issues is related to the fragile political situation. For linking information to food security relevant action in West Bank and Gaza, interaction between Israeli and Palestinian decision makers is required since some of the response mechanisms to food security issues are outside Palestinian control. Examples include:

¹ World Bank – “West Bank and Gaza Economic Update and potential Outlook”, Quarterly Publication, April 2006.

- Extension of the fishing zone in the Gaza Strip. In order to offset protein shortages deriving from the scarcity of poultry products caused by Avian flu, access to fish could increase if Israel would comply with the Oslo Agreement to extend the fishing zone from 6 to 20 nautical miles.

-In both rural and urban areas, food security depends on trade mechanisms. However, important aspects of trade are under Israeli control. Only a limited range of policy options are in the hands of Palestinian Authorities.

-Transit points for food commodities and agricultural products are under the control of Israeli Authorities who follow a strict closure policy.

3. Previous and Ongoing Assistance

Several food security policy and programmes have been launched in recent years with the expectation that political stability would increase and the economy would continue to grow. These include:

- The ongoing Palestinian Authority (PA) reform which has had an impact on the structure and mandate of different institutions.
- Continued UN humanitarian assistance (i.e. the CAP 2006) with an increasing focus on needs based programming; i.e. Needs Assessment Framework (NAF) pilot in 2005 and the Common Humanitarian Action Plan.
- Longer term International assistance will include a) the Palestinian Authority's Medium Term development Plan 2006-2008 with its food security programme and b) the UN Common Assessment in preparation for a UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF).
- The soon to be finalized National Food Security Strategy (NFSS), supported by the EC-funded Technical Assistance Programme, includes the establishment of a National Commission for Food Security aimed at implementing a food security action plan based on priorities developed by a broad range of stakeholders, including the public sector, private sector and civil society.

A drastic turn over occurred since February 2006 in international assistance, bringing to a halt all the above initiatives and shifting the focus on mere humanitarian aid.

With regards to food security information, current agency initiatives include :

- UNDP/UNICEF PallInfo, based on DevInfo technology, implemented by Min. of Planning and the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS).
- WFP's food aid related survey plan that includes a) a food aid beneficiary dietary diversity survey being piloted in the Gaza Strip since April 2006, b) a comprehensive food security assessment to be held in September 2006, c) rolling market studies, every second month since January 2006.
- OCHA's information centre for occupied Palestinian territories, includes a data management system for monitoring the change and impact of the occupation, livelihood analysis capacity and an advanced GIS laboratory.
- The Health Information System, gathering clinic based data sets from UNRWA and the Ministry of Health.
- The Nutrition Steering Committee, working as an inter-agency forum with a number of thematic working groups.
- The Nutritional Surveillance System, proposed by WHO as an inter-agency platform to be lead by the Ministry of Health.
- The Mapping Authority for Palestine, proposed by the Ministry of Planning.
- UNRWA's Research Unit which should broaden the scope of assistance beyond relief and expand relief programming for Palestinian refugees who currently make up approximately 50% of the total population.

Food assistance to the non-refugee Palestinian population is provided mainly by WFP and its implementing partners: the Ministry of Social Affairs, PARC (Palestinian Agriculture Relief Committee and CRS (Catholic Relief Services), the Corporate Housing Foundation and Ard el Insan. WFP responds to the needs of beneficiaries through two different distribution schemes: free food distribution and Food for Work and Food for Training schemes.

FAO has been assisting the Palestinian Authority in the formulation of an Agricultural Policy document which provides the overall policy framework for agricultural development in the WBGS and plays an increasingly important role in strengthening the coordination process for agriculture recovery and food security.

The following FAO projects and related activities have been or are currently being implemented:

- The Agricultural Revitalization Programme (ARP) developed in the framework of the Medium Term Agricultural Development Plan. Pilot projects are being implemented with funding from the Italian Government. The objective of this programme is to strengthen food security, alleviate poverty and create rural employment through: livestock development, horticulture, small-scale irrigation, marketing and capacity building. These pilot projects address some key activities of the ARP including rehabilitation of small-scale irrigation schemes, undertaking technical trials and advisory work on improved techniques (for small ruminants, horticulture), addressing key marketing issues and strengthening extension services and the implementation capacity of local authorities.
- Another FAO activity is the rehabilitation of destroyed or damaged greenhouses. The rationale of the project is to create links between emergency and longer term development and address humanitarian needs through the emergency provision of inputs and the rehabilitation of assets and infrastructure. Its longer term objectives in favour of sustainable development include supporting the more efficient use of natural resources, the introduction of improved management practices and building local capacity.
- Part of the National Food Security Strategy includes implementing a Food Insecurity and Vulnerability Mapping System in this context a project document was formulated by FAO and funded by EC. This EC funded project began in January 2006. The project's main objective is to establish a multi-sectoral integrated FIVIMS database that is being set up in the PCBS, and to facilitate stakeholders' access to a comprehensive, up-to-date and user-friendly information system on food security. The project workplan has been adjusted to respond to the dramatic change in the situation including : (i) a reduction in fiscal resources for Palestinian institutions; (ii) international aid budget cuts for food security programmes and a shift to solely humanitarian modes of operation; and, (iii) the adoption of a strict closure policy by the Israeli Government and its resulting impact on food systems and livelihoods.

4. Objectives of the Programme in the Country

Taking into consideration the underlying strategy of using information from different sectors and sources for more effective food security policies and programmes, foreseen inputs aim at reinforcing the analytical capacity of the system already in place, strengthening the dialogue on food security among different stakeholders and improving response options through the more accurate investigation and analysis of the state of food systems during the current transitional phase.

In this difficult political context, where the presence of international agencies is particularly high, it is essential to identify the value added by the activities proposed under the Programme.

The Programme will give first priority to the analysis of changes in current food systems. In light of structural and geographical fragmentation, the consequent disruption of trade and food flows and the higher level of vulnerability due to unemployment and closure policies, the food security baseline also needs to be reassessed. The analysis of the present transitional phase and its outcomes would also help identify appropriate indicators for the future monitoring process of the food security and humanitarian situation in West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Furthermore, the EC-FAO Programme will also aim at reinforcing analytical capacity in the West Bank and Gaza Strip by (i) providing assistance in the development of the methodology used in the preparation and implementation of the comprehensive joint FAO/WFP food security assessment, (ii) monitoring crucial nutritional trends, and (iii) providing technical assistance to the analysis of specific socio-economic surveys.

The potential added value of the introduction of Country STAT and the GIEWS Workstation into the existent information framework needs to be investigated in close consultation with Palestinian counterparts.

5. Expected Outcomes at the End of the Programme

The following outcomes are expected to be achieved by the end of Phase II:

1. Enhanced capacity to formulate response options and create conditions for in depth long-term monitoring of the food security situation

The Programme will aim at investigating the changing structure of food systems in depth and the outcomes of the ongoing transitional phase, including coping strategies, in order to identify indicators that could be further utilised for monitoring purposes. The study would contribute to better response options in interventions in the WBGS.

2. Enhanced analytical capacity to monitor food security and nutrition issues

The Programme will support the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) in developing more appropriate and context-relevant methods of analysis of household expenditure and consumption patterns. Resulting data will feed into food security and nutrition analysis and monitoring.

3. Increased capacity to manage food security information

The Programme will help build the capacity of concerned national counterparts in maintaining and disseminating food security related databases. Digital information will be better organized and standardized. Appropriate training in the use of tools will be provided.

6. Results, Activities and Inputs

The activities in the present work plan are consistent with the overall logical framework defined in the EC-FAO Food Security Overall Programme Document.

Five activities are proposed with lead responsibility to be taken by the respective technical divisions using programme funds. Implementation will be closely coordinated with the FIVIMS Phase 2 project to optimise the use of resources and synchronise activities with other partners' schedule. The activities are as follows:

1. Carrying out a baseline study on food systems.

As mentioned above, the situation in the WBGS has dramatically changed since the beginning of 2006: The West Bank is increasingly fragmented, while the Gaza Strip is totally closed. Fragmentation has had a strong impact on food systems and they are rapidly and drastically changing. This new situation makes it crucial to understand emerging food systems and food security related vulnerability. A study will be conducted to analyse the situation in terms of small geographical enclaves and micro food security systems. This information will be crucial for preparing a comprehensive response to the new patterns of the crisis. It will also examine complementarities between different aid modalities – i.e. food and cash assistance, employment generation schemes, livelihood protection, income generation activities, adaptation of food production systems and social safety nets. Furthermore, the study will provide critical input into the analysis and interpretation of the data from the Comprehensive Joint Food Security and Vulnerability Assessment – a joint WFP/FAO exercise.

2. Capacity building in the analysis of food consumption data collected in household income and expenditures surveys.

Ongoing PCBS (Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics) household income and expenditure surveys collect data relevant to food insecurity and poverty. This data is often not fully exploited due to limited analytical capacity and interaction with food security users. A more comprehensive exploitation of this data would allow for in-depth food insecurity and vulnerability analyses which would help identify coping capacity/strategies targeting food insecure and vulnerable population groups.

Technical assistance will be offered by FAO, under the EC Programme, to analyse the household income and expenditure survey of WBGS. In this regard, FAO has developed

statistical procedures and software for deriving relevant food security and poverty indicators from national and sub-national population groups defined according to demographic, geographic or socio-economic criteria. This will include the MDG indicator number 5, i.e. the proportion and number of people falling below the minimum level of dietary energy consumption.

The objectives of the assistance are twofold:

- Improve the analytical capacity of the institutions responsible for assessing and monitoring food insecurity and poverty. In the WBGS this will involve the PCBS, in particular.
- Produce reliable statistics on food insecurity and poverty at sub-national levels including under-nourishment estimates (Millennium Development Indicator Number 5) for measuring progress towards the achievement of the MDGs and WFS targets on hunger reduction established under the country policy reference frameworks and international initiatives.

Staff in the PCBS and in other key institutions for food security will be trained in processing and analysing food consumption data for producing and updating food security statistics, including food deprivation and poverty. These will be made available to a large range of users. Moreover, the activity will contribute to the FIVIMS Phase 2 project's efforts to improve coordination between the PCBS and line ministries and provide quality food security information for policy formulation and monitoring.

The preliminary stage of the training will be conducted remotely and will involve the preparation of basic files. The second stage will consist of a tutorial to be held in Rome. The third stage will be conducted remotely as a follow up to the training and continue until the technical and comparative reports are complete. A national dissemination seminar will follow and involve national stakeholders and the international community in validating the food security statistics obtained and the technical report produced during this process.

3. *Assisting in the development of the methodology of the Household Survey to be used in preparing and implementing the comprehensive joint FAO/WFP food security assessment.*

The survey will be carried out in the framework of the comprehensive joint FAO/WFP food security assessment. The purpose of the survey is to contribute to providing key information about food security, wealth and economic activity of the population by matching the characteristics of households (for example, their income level, their food expenditures and geographic location) with community level information. It thus seeks to understand people's daily life and problems and how local services and infrastructure are targeted to the poor and influence their wealth. The Programme will provide expertise in statistics to enhance (i) sampling and analysis methods, and (ii) links between analysis and food security programming.

4. *Adapting tools for monitoring household food access and dietary diversity*

This nutrition related activity consists of capacity building in the use of simple monitoring tools for measuring household food access insecurity and the dietary diversity of households and individuals. The tools being introduced can be used as monitoring indicators for food security and nutrition information systems. The tools are sensitive to rapid change in the food security situation, and inform specifically on deterioration in access to food and diet quality. Moreover they allow for the assessment of the severity of food insecurity.

The Nutrition and Consumer Protection Division of FAO will provide support and technical assistance for adaptation of the tools to the national context and for testing them in real field situations. A national consultant will be responsible for the field adaptation with supervision from the Nutrition Division. It is foreseen that the tools will possibly be integrated into a food security assessment survey. In this case, the Nutrition Division will assist with the analysis of data pertaining to the tools.

In early 2007, the EC/FAO Programme will support attendance in an international workshop in Nairobi by one or two national officials/consultants. At the workshop, food and nutrition security experts from several countries that have collaborated with FAO on

adapting the monitoring tools will share their experiences and discuss uses of the tools in their respective countries.

5. Strengthening Food Security and Agricultural Statistics through the introduction of information tools and data sharing

The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) uses up-to-date technology for archiving and processing statistical data on food security and agriculture. However, for some of the data domains, obtaining up-to-date statistical information is difficult and requires exchange between Israeli and Palestinian Authorities.

The introduction of tools such as CountrySTAT and the GIEWS Workstation will enhance information management capacity in the concerned areas and would help the dissemination and sharing of available data. The GIEWS Workstation is an Internet GIS mapping tool for food security and early warning data management. It allows remote sensing data to be integrated with tabular data for early warning and food security analysis. CountrySTAT is a system for organizing and disseminating statistical data and metadata on food and agriculture. CountrySTAT, as it is now, gathers and harmonizes existing but scattered institution-wide statistical information so that information tables become compatible with each other at the country-level and with data at the international level.

Subject to close consultation with relevant counterparts, the plan for the implementation of this activity has two phases:

- Remote phase. At this stage there will be a preliminary operationalization of the tools which will be delivered by FTP (File Transfer Protocol); the recipient institution will install and examine the tools and its application in meeting the ad hoc needs of the concerned territorial areas. On the basis of the country's evaluation, research and development will be carried out during this phase.
- Consolidation phase. This phase will require further efforts, including the organization of a workshop/training event for Palestinians, the purchase of servers and other inputs to be provided through missions according to the requests received from interested local recipients. Further development of the tools may be required.

The table below shows how the above areas of intervention relate to the Programme logical framework:

Specific Objectives	Results	Outputs	Areas of Intervention
1 - Improve availability and quality of relevant food security information	A - Collection of food insecurity and vulnerability data and information is improved or strengthened	1.A.1 – Food insecurity and vulnerability data and information are improved	2,4,5
		1.A.2 – Food insecurity and vulnerability data and information management are strengthened	2
	B - Analysis of food insecurity and vulnerability data and information is strengthened	1.B.1 - National and regional capacity to analyze food insecurity and vulnerability data is strengthened	3,4,5
		1.B.2 - Capacity of using environmental monitoring tools and data for food security assessment are strengthened	
		1.B.3 - GIEWS Workstation is established at global and national levels and capacity in its use is strengthened	2
	1.B.4 - National and regional capacity for food security assessment is reinforced	1,3,4	
2 - Reinforcing capacity in formulating food security policies, strategies and programming based on food insecurity and vulnerability information	A - National and local capacity to produce and use information for policy making are reviewed and updated	2.A.1 – Gaps in national and local capacity to produce and use information for policy making are identified	3,4
	B - National and local capacity to produce multi-sector food security information is strengthened	2.B.1 - Response mechanisms to crises and food security policy formation are improved	1
		2.B.2 - National institutional structures and systems are reviewed	2,3
	C - Dissemination of food insecurity and vulnerability data and information is strengthened	2.C.1 - Integrated food insecurity and vulnerability data and information dissemination systems are strengthened	2
D - Capacity to formulate appropriate food security policies in different contexts using adequate information	2.D.1 - Methodological approaches for integrated use for household, food insecurity and vulnerability data are strengthened	4	
	2.D.2 - Guidelines to switch from rehabilitation to		

	is increased	development using appropriate data and information are prepared	
		2.D.3 - Awareness to embody gender aspects in policies using gender disaggregated information is increased	
		2.D.4 - Capacity to formulate food security and rural development policies in countries with natural resources under pressure is increased	
		2.D.5 - Support to selected countries in preparing strategies and operational plans for food security agricultural and rural development is provided	
3 - Raise awareness of governments, local actors and international community, on impact of food insecurity & poverty	A - Causes of food insecurity and vulnerability are better understood	3.A.1 - National context analysis of food insecurity and vulnerability are better understood	1
	B - Good practices in food security, poverty and rural development, institution building and networking are identified, analysed and disseminated	3.B.1 - Good practices in food security, vulnerability, institution building and networking are identified, analyzed and disseminated at national level	
		3.B.2 - Good practices in food security, poverty and rural development are disseminated	
	C - Dialogue and exchange of experience within the international community are improved	3.C.1 - Dialogue and exchange of experience among international community are facilitated	
3.C.2 - Improved information in qualitative and quantitative terms is provided to the GDPRD			

To ensure the successful completion of programme activities, it is essential that national focal point institutions allocate staff, office space and furniture for the duration of the programme. Given the current and expected difficulties of the Palestinian counterparts and security restrictions for UN staff, the FAO Office in Jerusalem will assist the Programme with logistics and general services.