



Locust Crisis in Madagascar

31 January 2014

HIGHLIGHTS

- Since April 2012, Madagascar has been facing a **plague** of the Malagasy Migratory Locust, that threatens the livelihoods of **13 million people** in the country, 9 million of whom earn a living from agriculture.
- Findings from a damage assessment conducted in May 2013 indicated that **rice crop losses due to locusts in 2012/13 vary from 10 to as much as 40 percent** in 17 of Madagascar's 22 regions.
- The Ministry of Agriculture of Madagascar declared a **national disaster on 27 November 2012** and requested assistance from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to address the current locust plague.
- It is estimated that at least **three successive locust control campaigns costing USD 43.9 million* are required** to return to a recession period by treating over 2 million hectares between September 2013 and September 2016. **One or two campaigns alone, will not be enough to reach this objective.**
- The [three-year programme](#) jointly prepared by FAO and the Ministry of Agriculture in response to the plague **focuses on:**
 - **Improving the monitoring and analysis of the locust situation**
 - **Large-scale aerial control operations**
 - **Monitoring and mitigating the impact of locust control operations on human health and the environment**
 - **Assessing the effectiveness of each locust campaign and the impact of locusts on crops and pastures**
- The **current funding gap is USD 17.7 million** required for the 2014/15 and 2015/16 campaigns. Should all the funds not be available on time to undertake the campaigns, the plague could severely affect a family's ability to provide for itself.

LATEST UPDATE

Fledging (emergence of young winged locusts of the first rainy season generation after completion of the hopper development) started during the last ten days of November 2013 and continued throughout December in both invasion and outbreak areas. In the medium part of the invasion area, which became too wet for the Migratory Locust, the locust populations that escaped control operations formed light and dense flights, which moved towards the coastal areas or the outbreak area from early December. In the outbreak area, hopper and adult locust populations were present over huge surfaces but at relatively lower density than in the invasion area; they were also much less homogeneous than in the invasion area but will soon group due to changes in weather and ecological conditions. From the 10th January onwards, mating followed by egg-laying was in progress mainly in the coastal plains of the invasion area and in the low lands of the outbreak area. The most infested areas were located in a stretch of approximately 900 km length and 80-100 km width, from Maintirano to the south of Toliara. First hatching was observed between Morondava and Toliara during the second ten-day period of January.

RECENT ACTIONS TAKEN

Locust Watch Unit, mandated with the collection, storage and analysis of locust, weather and socio-economic data as well as anti-locust information since the beginning of the control operations produces ten-day and monthly bulletins illustrated by pertinent and updated maps, which are distributed to the technical and financial partners in Madagascar and published on the FAO website dedicated to the locust emergency in Madagascar. Additional improvements on the database and maps are in progress with the support of an International Expert in Geographical Information Systems (GIS).

The first locust campaign (September 2013 – August 2014): Following extensive aerial surveys and the deployment of two aerial bases in the west and in the southwest of Madagascar, locust control operations started on 4 November 2013 and were stopped for security reasons related to the presidential elections (20 December 2013). Extensive aerial survey operations restarted on 11 January 2014 to assess the locust situation, localize the actual hotspots of the locust populations and redeploy the two aerial bases, each equipped with one helicopter. Since the beginning of the aerial operations in late September 2013 and up to 30 January, it is estimated that a maximum area of 20 million hectares was surveyed and more than 68 000 hectares were treated or protected with conventional pesticides and insect growth regulators respectively. The aerial bases are now both set up in the western coastal plains, one in Morondava and one in Toliara. A third helicopter and one aircraft will strengthen locust survey and control capacity by mid February. Critical inputs such as conventional pesticides, insect growth regulators and biopesticides, as well as vehicles, camping, survey and personal protective equipment, etc. were (and continue to be) delivered. The Campaign Coordinator is on site since 18 January to organize and supervise the field activities and manage the operations. In addition, two Junior Locust Experts, one Junior Logistician and one Logistics and Security Expert, are on site since the end of January to support the implementation of the activities. In close collaboration with the National Anti-Locust Centre, the Plant Protection Directorate of the Ministry of Agriculture and the National Coordination Unit, national specialized expertise has been mobilized and the [Human Health and Environmental Management Plan](#) is being implemented.

Pesticide triangulation (donation of pesticides from a country with available stocks to a recipient country): Almost half of the conventional pesticide required for the first locust control campaign was donated by the Governments of Algeria (30 000 litres), Mauritania (30 000 litres) and Morocco (200 000 litres) from their pesticide stocks, thus limiting the environmental risks associated with the storage and disposal of surplus stocks in the Sahel. More than 30 percent of the pesticide donated by Morocco was delivered so far and the delivery of the remaining quantities donated by those countries is expected by early February 2014.

Funding required (USD)	Funding received by FAO (USD)	Funding gap (USD)
43.9 million* FAO Appeal, 18 December 2012	26.2 million (Government of Madagascar through a World Bank loan, Austria, Belgium, CERF-OCHA, European Union, France, Italy, Norway, and USA)	17.7 million
* The budget for the three-year programme required adjustment from the previous estimate of USD 41.5 million to USD 43.9 million based on current (actual) market prices of inputs and services required for the first campaign.		

FURTHER INFORMATION

- All up-to-date information is available on our Website: www.fao.org/emergencies/crisis/madagascar-locust/en/
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