

Programme Evaluation Series

Cluster evaluation of projects on protecting, improving, and sustaining food security in rural Somalia

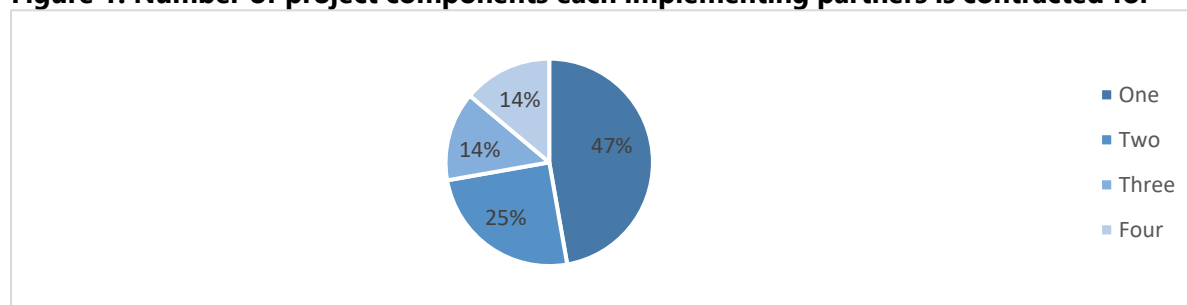
**Project codes: OSRO/SOM/908/USA
OSRO/SOM/007/USA**

Annex 2. Results of the implementing partners survey

Introduction

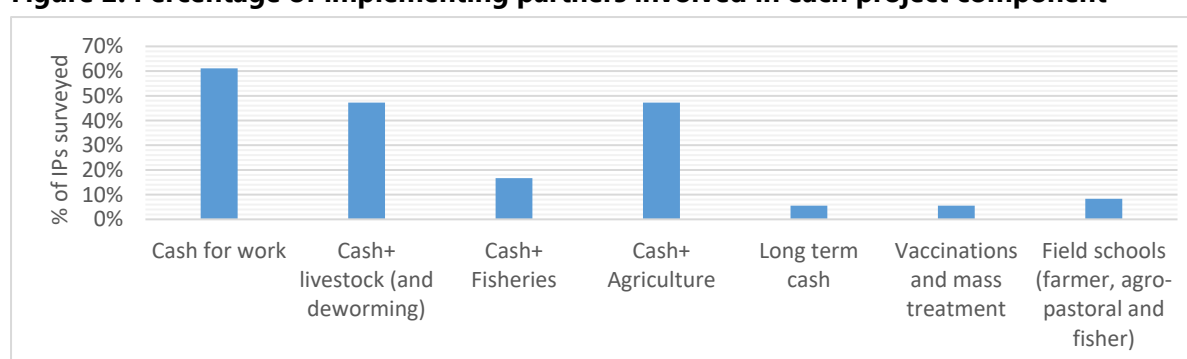
1. This survey was conducted as part of the cluster evaluation of projects on protecting, improving, and sustaining food security in rural Somalia. Given the access constraints, a large proportion of the project activities were implemented through local implementing partners (IPs) and formed an important group of key stakeholders for the two projects covered under the evaluation. The evaluation team held key informant interviews with a few selected IPs based on the areas visited in Somalia, however, the survey was conducted to include views of those that were not interviewed. The survey was designed and implemented after the first round of data collection. The questions of the survey were tailored to probe further into specific areas raised during these discussions.
2. In terms of the survey process, a list of 58 IPs was prepared based on the details received from the FAO Somalia country office. These IPs had been working with FAO in delivering the various components of the OSRO/SOM/908/USA and the OSRO/SOM/007/USA projects across Somalia. The request to complete the online survey were sent out in mid-May 2022 with a deadline of two weeks. A total of 36 complete responses were received, with a response rate of around 62 percent. The survey was administered online in English.
3. To ensure that IPs were involved in the two projects, an additional screening question was included confirming the number of years they have worked with FAO since 2016. All 36 IPs had worked for at least two years with FAO. Additionally, a few other questions were asked to understand the extent of their experience with FAO. Figure 1 shows the percentage of IPs that responded to the survey, against the number of project components they were involved in. 53 percent of the IPs were involved in more than two project components. Figure 2 provides the percentage of IPs surveyed working on each project component, which also largely correspond to the size of each component.

Figure 1. Number of project components each implementing partners is contracted for



Source: Elaborated by the evaluation team.

Figure 2. Percentage of implementing partners involved in each project component

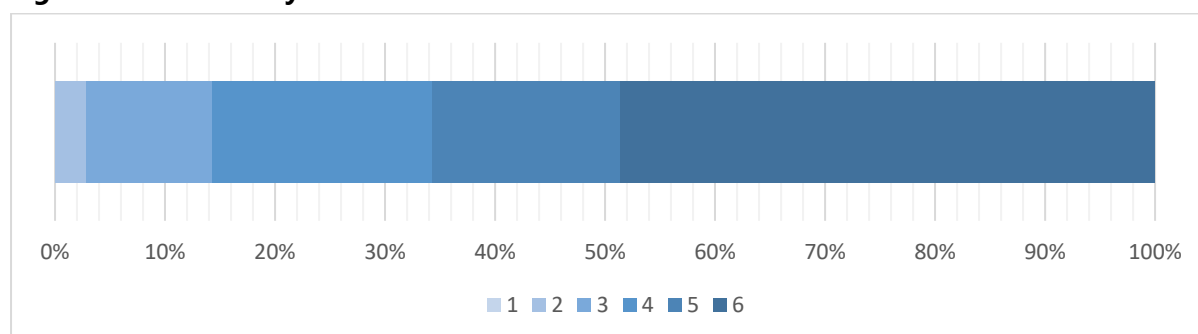


Source: Elaborated by the evaluation team.

Past experience of the implementing partners

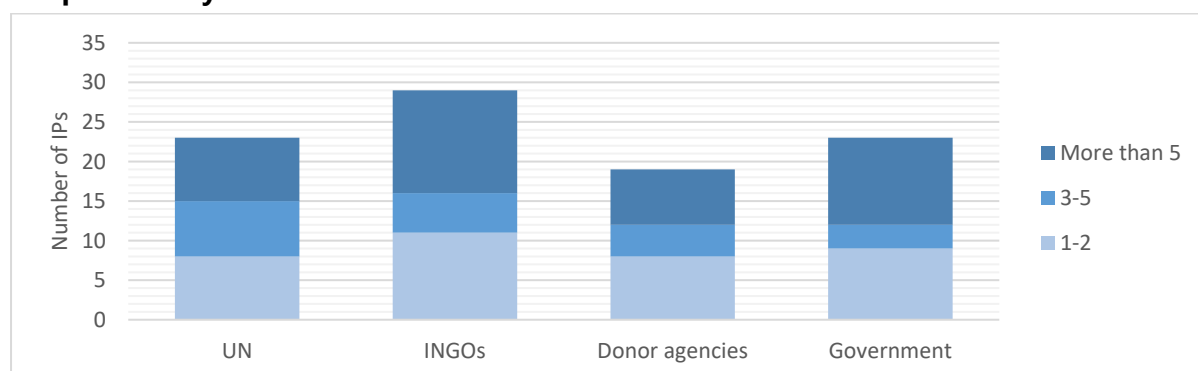
4. Most IPs had a wide range of experience on multiple thematic/technical areas across a range of organizations. The initial few questions focused on understanding the background of the IPs. Eighty six percent of the IPs had worked with FAO for more than three years. Most IPs have worked with other United Nations (UN) organizations, international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), donor agencies and the government, and they have a wide range of technical/thematic expertise with generally substantial years of experience (Figures 3 and 4). Two IPs had not worked with any other organization besides FAO. Geographically all IPs worked with FAO in their usual area of operation.

Figure 3. Number of years worked with FAO since 2016



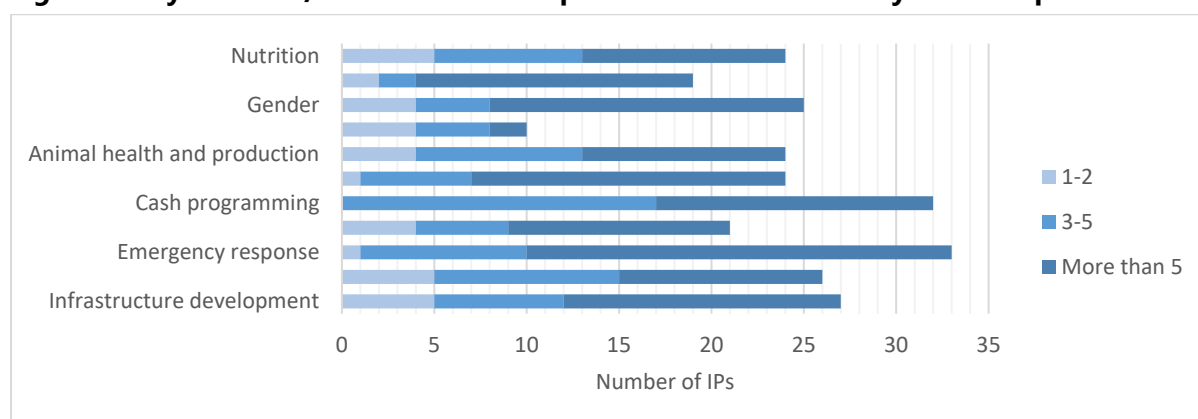
Source: Elaborated by the evaluation team.

Figure 4. Type and number of organizations the implementing partners have worked for in the past three years



Source: Elaborated by the evaluation team.

Figure 5. Key thematic/technical area of operation with number of years of experience

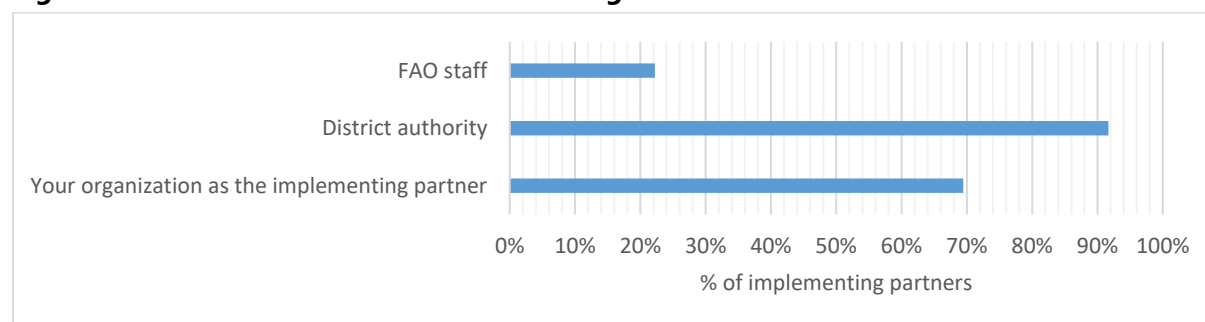


Source: Elaborated by the evaluation team.

Targeting of beneficiaries

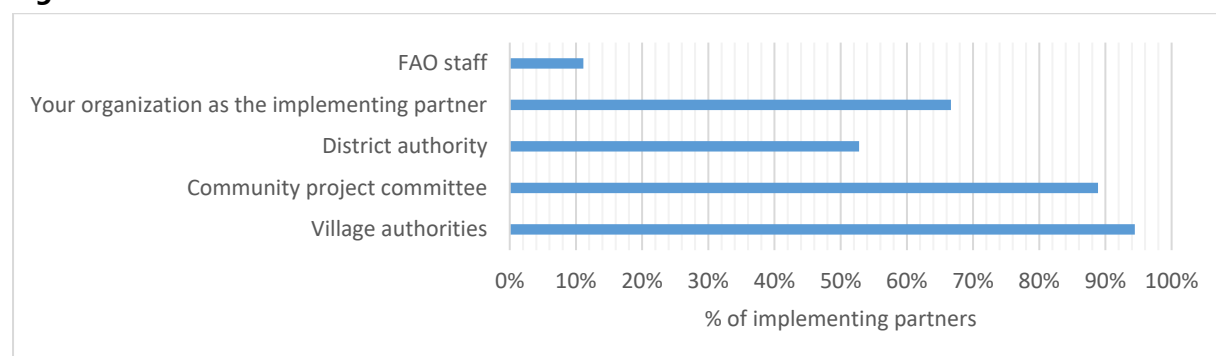
5. The next set of survey questions focused on beneficiary targeting. Overall, the IPs were involved closely in both the selection of villages and the selection of beneficiary households.
6. On the involvement in the selection of villages, most IPs indicated the involvement of the district authority (Figure 6). Additionally, around 20 percent (7 of the 36 IPs) said that the village elders or community members were involved in the selection of villages. Two mentioned that the government ministry was involved in the selection and one mentioned that the selection was based only on FSNAU data.
7. Selection of beneficiary households, according to the IPs, was based mainly on village authorities, community project committees and themselves. In addition to Figure 7, two IPs specifically mentioned the involvement of village distribution committees (VDCs) and another mentioned the role of community animal health workers (CAHWs).

Figure 6. Involvement in the selection of villages



Source: Elaborated by the evaluation team.

Figure 7. Involvement in the selection of beneficiaries' households



Source: Elaborated by the evaluation team.

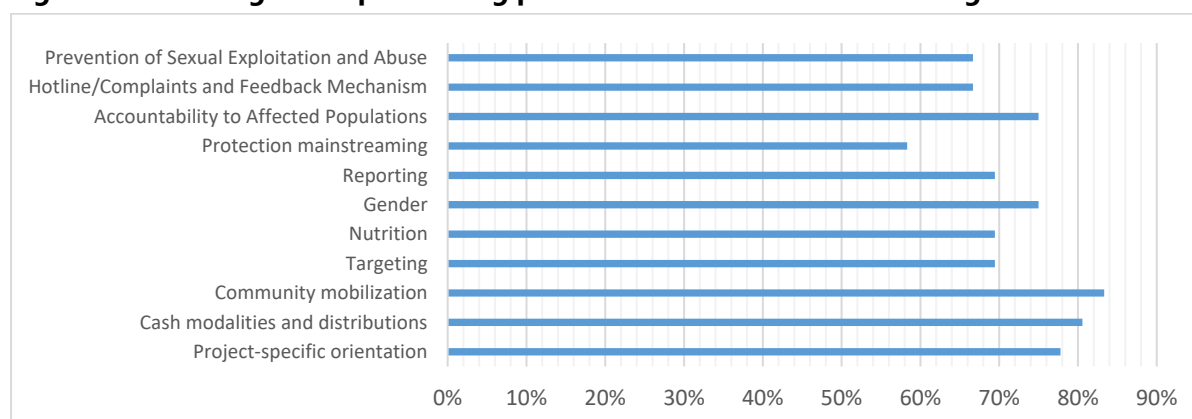
Involvement in design

8. Fifty three percent (19 of 36 IPs) of the IPs surveyed indicated that they were able to collaborate with FAO on the design of the activities they were implementing. However, of the 53 percent, only 3 were able to provide examples of meaningful collaboration. They referred to discussions with the technical teams as collaboration (these were IPs implementing the Cash+ livestock component). Eight of the 19 referred to compliance with FAO procedures and responding to the contractual agreement as collaboration. The rest did not provide any examples.

FAO support to implementing partners

9. Another section on the survey, enquired about FAO support provided to the IPs. Figure 8 list the trainings that the IPs for most activities should have received prior to implementing the project. Most IPs confirmed the participation on all trainings; protection mainstreaming was least reported. Other FAO trainings mentioned by the IPs were on software application usage, crop and livestock production and beneficiary registration.

Figure 8. Percentage of implementing partners that received FAO trainings



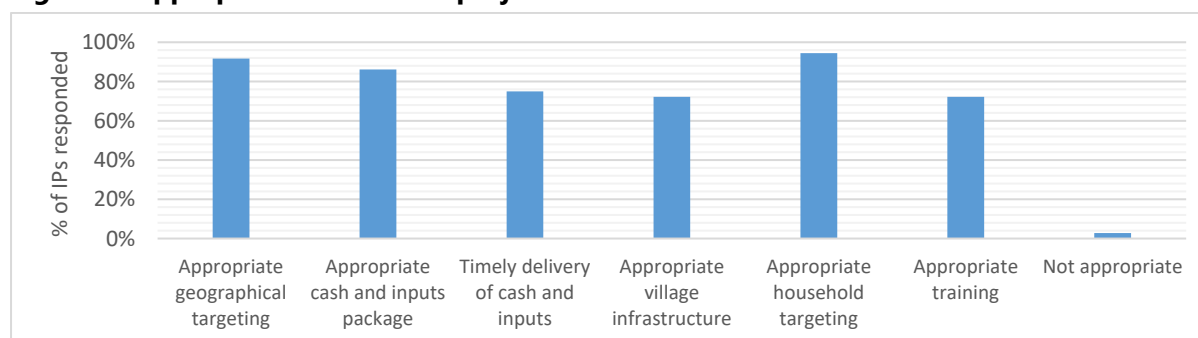
Source: Elaborated by the evaluation team.

10. Further, around 61 percent (22 of the 36) of the implementing partners surveyed suggested that to effectively support FAO programming they would like to receive other trainings. Most of them suggested trainings directly related to the project cycle (including on monitoring and reporting [M&E], report writing project and financial management). However, a large proportion of the IPs also identified a few technical areas and cross-cutting issues for trainings. These include more trainings on AAP, gender mainstreaming, prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, and protection mainstreaming. Technical trainings on environmental sustainability/climate resilient agriculture, crop and livestock production were also mentioned. An increased frequency of the current trainings was also stated as an important factor, to mainstream key issues.

Project activities and key challenges

11. Nearly all IPs indicated that FAO activities were appropriate, specifying factors detailed in Figure 9. One IP that listed FAO activities as inappropriate, stated timeliness as a key factor and the issue of interventions not being based on existing needs on the ground.

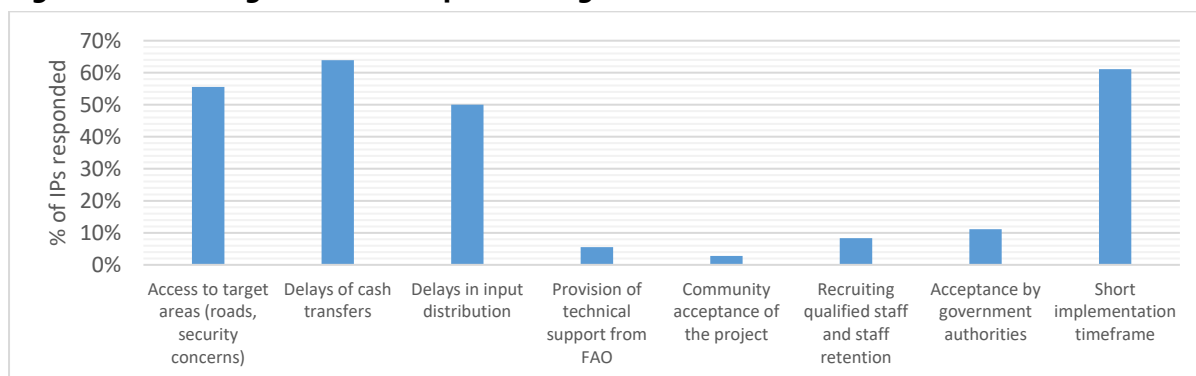
Figure 9. Appropriateness of FAO project activities



Source: Elaborated by the evaluation team.

12. Further, as detailed in Figure 10 key challenges faced by the IPs were listed as delays in cash/input transfers, short implementation timeframes and access to target areas. Other challenges listed by IPs were very low operational costs which could lead to diversion of funds since the procurement of IPs is based on the lowest bidder policy and does not take into account a minimum budget required to implement specific activities. Another challenge listed was absence of direct linkages between the number of targeted beneficiary households to the actual vulnerability in the village, making it tougher to select villages and households.

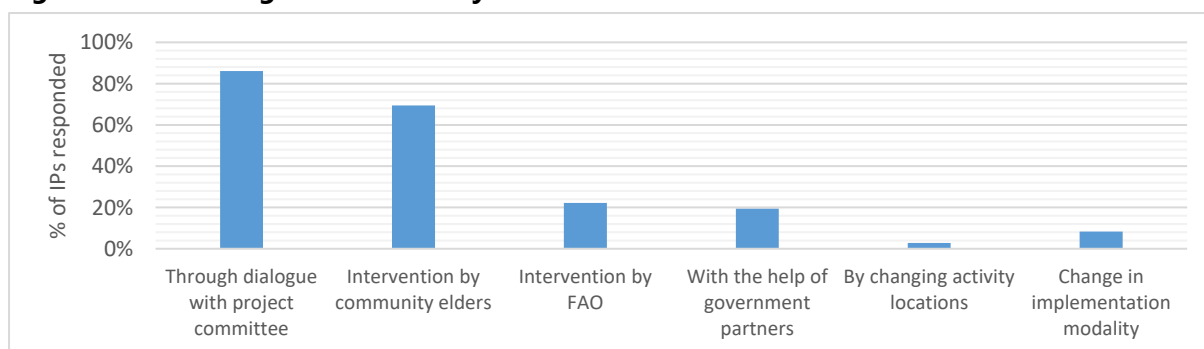
Figure 10. Challenges faced in implementing FAO activities



Source: Elaborated by the evaluation team.

13. The survey also asked IPs about ways in which they were able to raise issues raised by the beneficiaries. Key ways listed were through dialogue with the village project committee and another through intervention by community elders. As seen in Figure 11, other options provided were only selected by few IPs.

Figure 11. Resolving issues raised by beneficiaries



Source: Elaborated by the evaluation team.

Other implementing partners feedback

14. Lastly the survey also gave an option to IPs to provide any additional feedback that was not covered in the earlier questions. Thirteen of the 36 IPs had additional feedback. Key points summarizing the feedback are listed below:
1. IP procurement policy – the selection criteria of FAO call proposals based on the lowest bidder which can negatively affect project outcome and safety of conducting activities. It also discourages qualified organizations and their personnel.

2. Delays in payments/input distribution – delays in payments and inputs creates a lot of complaints from the beneficiaries and district authorities, these can be detrimental to the achievement of outcomes. Compliance activities could be leading to the delays.
3. Government involvement – government authorities in some cases bring a list of beneficiaries that may not seem the natural target communities facing hazards, and if the list is not accepted they would report to FAO, suspending activities of the organization.
4. Feedback loop for IPs – FAO needs to provide formative feedback that can help in improving the performance of the project. It should further meet with the IPs to discuss issues raised by the beneficiaries, since IPs have substantial information of the project and target areas.
5. Monitoring of activities – FAO mostly uses calling beneficiaries to monitor activities, which might not be the most reliable. FAO should monitor Partner activities through multiple ways in order to compare and validate based on different sources of information.
6. Long-term strategy – FAO should consider a long-term project for a particular district and same beneficiary households. This would allow FAO to see sustainable gains. It should also link the number of beneficiary households more closely to the level of vulnerability in a given district/village.

Appendix 1. Survey instrument

The FAO Office of Evaluation (OED) is conducting a cluster evaluation of projects in Somalia that are aimed at improving and sustaining food security in rural Somalia through coordination of the food security cluster while addressing production, availability, access, and quality of food. The two projects used emergency cash interventions, including cash for work, unconditional cash transfers, and Cash+ activities.

The evaluation aims to provide accountability for results achieved to the national government, resource partners and the FAO management, as well as to draw lessons from project design and implementation that could inform future projects. The evaluation is organized around the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria, including relevance to the needs of the country, coherence with FAO's other activities and that of other development partners, effectiveness in achieving results, efficiency in delivery of the projects, and the sustainability of results achieved. More details on the evaluation can be found [here](#).

In this context, we request you to complete a short survey. The purpose of the survey is to get your views on FAO's work on cash transfers and related activities implemented in Somalia between 2019 and 2021. Results of the survey will contribute to the overall findings of the evaluation.

The survey should not take more than 10 minutes to complete.

All responses provided are anonymized and will be treated confidentially.

1. Which activities are you contracted by FAO to implement? (select all that apply)
 - a. Cash for work
 - b. Cash+ livestock (and deworming)
 - c. Cash+ fisheries
 - d. Cash+ agriculture
 - e. Long-term cash
 - f. Vaccinations and mass treatment
 - g. Field schools (farmer, agro-pastoral, fisher)
 - h. Other – please specify
2. What are your key thematic/technical area(s) of operation? Please select the number of years of experience your organization has for each. (select all that apply)
 - a. Infrastructure development
 - b. Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)
 - c. Emergency response
 - d. Development programming
 - e. Cash programming
 - f. Agriculture (crops)
 - g. Animal health and production
 - h. Fisheries
 - i. Gender
 - j. Protection
 - k. Nutrition
 - l. Other – please specify
3. Since 2016, how many years have you worked with FAO? (number between 1 and 6)
4. Did you work with FAO in your usual geographic area of operation? (Yes/No)
5. Apart from FAO, what type of organizations have you partnered with in the last three years? Please select the number of organizations for each type. (select all that apply)
 - a. UN

- b. International NGOs
 - c. Donor agencies
 - d. Government
 - e. Other – please specify
6. Who was involved in the selection of villages for the FAO emergency projects between 2019-2021? (select all that apply)
- a. Your organization as the implementing partner
 - b. District authority
 - c. FAO staff
 - d. Other – please specify
7. Who was involved in the selection of the beneficiary households for the FAO emergency projects between 2019-2021? (select all that apply)
- a. Village authorities
 - b. Community project committee
 - c. District authority
 - d. Your organization as the implementing partner
 - e. FAO staff
 - f. Other – please specify
8. Were you able to collaborate with FAO on the design of activities that you were contracted to implement?
(yes/no) If yes, how?
9. What trainings and technical support did you receive from FAO? (select all that apply)
- a. Project-specific orientation
 - b. Cash modalities and distributions
 - c. Community mobilization
 - d. Targeting
 - e. Nutrition
 - f. Gender
 - g. Reporting
 - h. Protection mainstreaming
 - i. Accountability to Affected Populations
 - j. Hotline/Complaints and Feedback Mechanism
 - k. Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
 - l. Other (please specify)
10. To effectively support FAO programming, are there any other trainings that you would have liked to receive? If yes, please list
11. Did the projects implemented meet the needs of the vulnerable populations on the ground? (please select all that apply)
- a. Appropriate geographical targeting
 - b. Appropriate cash and inputs package
 - c. Timely delivery of cash and inputs
 - d. Appropriate village infrastructure
 - e. Appropriate household targeting
 - f. Not appropriate, please specify
 - g. Any other comments
12. What were the key challenges faced during the implementation of FAO activities between 2019 and 2021?
- a. Access to target areas (roads, security concerns)
 - b. Delays of cash transfers

- c. Delays in input distribution
 - d. Provision of technical support from FAO
 - e. Community acceptance of the project
 - f. Recruiting qualified staff and staff retention
 - g. Acceptance by government authorities
 - h. Short implementation timeframe
 - i. Any other challenges
13. How were you able to resolve issues raised by beneficiaries?
- a. Through dialogue with project committee
 - b. Intervention by community elders
 - c. Intervention by FAO
 - d. With the help of government partners
 - e. By changing activity locations
 - f. Change in implementation modality
 - g. Others, please specify
14. Do you have any other feedback you wish to share with the evaluation team?

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