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Food and Agriculture
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Продовольственная и
сельскохозяйственная организация
Объединенных Наций

Organización de las
Naciones Unidas para la
Alimentación y la Agricultura

منظمة
الغذية والزراعة
للأمم المتحدة

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Hundred and Seventy-fifth Session

Rome, 18 - 22 March 2019

**Report on the Special Fund for Emergency and Rehabilitation Activities
(SFERA)**

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FC 175

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Special Fund for Emergency and Rehabilitation Activities (SFERA) enables the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to take rapid and effective action in response to food and agricultural threats and emergencies. The Fund has three components: (i) a working capital component to advance funds once a resource partner's commitment is secured toward the immediate procurement of inputs to protect livelihoods, restart agricultural activities or contribute to an immediate response to a crisis; (ii) a revolving fund component to support FAO's involvement in needs assessment and programme development, early establishment and reinforcement of emergency country team capacities, Level 3 emergency¹ preparedness and response activities; and (iii) a programme component, which pools resources in support of a programme framework for large-scale emergencies or strategically complements ongoing programmes through the Agricultural Inputs Response Capacity (AIRC) window, as well as early actions triggered by corporate early warnings.
- From its inception through 31 December 2018, SFERA received USD 230.4 million, of which USD 102.5 million were allocated to large-scale programmes (e.g. sudden onset disasters, the Sahel, Horn of Africa, El Niño response, highly pathogenic avian influenza, locust outbreaks, Fall army worm and protracted crises); USD 51.2 million were disbursed under the AIRC window; USD 27.8 million were used to set up or reinforce country office emergency response capacities and support needs assessments and programme formulation; USD 9.2 million were allocated to the Level 3 emergencies preparedness and response window; and USD 5.2 million were contributed to the early action window.
- Since SFERA's inception, USD 390.9 million have been advanced to fund immediate emergency projects, of which USD 36.1 million were advanced over the reporting period. Outstanding advances as at 31 December 2018 amounted to USD 7.6 million, while SFERA's cash balance as at 31 December 2018 was USD 26.9 million.

GUIDANCE SOUGHT FROM THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

- This document is provided for information.

¹ Sudden onset, large-scale disasters and crises that require a corporate response.

I. Background

1. During its Hundred and Second Session in May 2003, the Finance Committee supported the creation of the Special Fund for Emergency and Rehabilitation Activities (SFERA), with the purpose to “...enable the Organization to rapidly initiate emergency operations by participating in interagency needs assessment and coordination activities, establishing an emergency coordination unit, preparing a programme framework and projects, and providing advance funding for procurement of inputs when a donor’s commitment has been obtained”².

2. This annual report provides a brief description of the major operations initiated with SFERA funds for the 12-month period ending 31 December 2018. The report contains financial data for this period, as well as for the 15 years since the Fund became operational.

II. SFERA set-up

3. SFERA has three components: (i) a working capital component to advance funds, once a resource partner’s commitment is secured, toward the immediate procurement of inputs to protect livelihoods, restart agricultural activities or contribute to an immediate response to a crisis; (ii) a revolving fund component to support the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations’ (FAO) involvement in needs assessment, programme development, early establishment and reinforcement of emergency country team capacities, Level 3 emergency³ preparedness and response activities; and (iii) a programme component to support work on specific large-scale emergency programmes, or strategically complement ongoing programmes through the Agricultural Inputs Response Capacity (AIRC) window, as well as early actions triggered by corporate early warnings.

Table 1. SFERA components and windows

Working capital component	Revolving fund component	Programme component
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency coordination and response capacity window • Needs assessment and programme development window • Level 3 emergency preparedness and response window 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large-scale programme window (e.g. sudden onset disasters, highly pathogenic avian influenza, the Sahel, El Niño and protracted crises) • Agricultural Inputs Response Capacity (AIRC) window • Early action window

4. The **working capital component** reduces the reaction time to emergencies by enabling FAO to initiate activities and purchase the most critical assets before funding from resource partners is received. By enabling a rapid response, this component helps to mitigate the impact of threats and emergencies, and hasten the recovery of those affected.

5. The **revolving fund component** supports the efforts of FAO’s emergency country teams to identify the most critical needs of affected populations, strengthen response capacity, and develop and coordinate technically sound response programmes. Through the Level 3 emergency preparedness and response window, FAO can prepare for and respond to the extraordinary challenges facing the agriculture sector during a Level 3 emergency.

² FC 102/14.

³ Sudden onset, large-scale disasters and crises that require a corporate response.

6. The **programme component** facilitates faster and more programmatic assistance that can be tailored to evolving needs on the ground. SFERA's pooled funding approach provides the flexibility to adjust activities and support according to the geographical and thematic areas of greatest need. Likewise, the programme approach enables operations to adapt as the situation changes, streamlining activities to ensure the most appropriate assistance reaches affected populations sooner. The programme component also includes the AIRC window that channels pooled funds towards the immediate procurement and delivery of time-critical inputs. With the early action window, FAO is enabled to act early once an impending threat has been identified, before disaster losses are sustained in the agriculture sector or livelihoods compromised.

III. SFERA resources

7. **Receipts** – Since SFERA's inception in April 2004, the Fund has received a total of USD 230.4 million. Of this amount, USD 164.9 million were provided by the member countries listed in Table 2, including USD 7.8 million provided by resource partners that transferred the balances of closed emergency projects to SFERA. During the 12 months that ended on 31 December 2018, deposits to SFERA amounted to USD 9.6 million.

Table 2. SFERA funding receipts

Contributors	Jan-Dec 2018 (000)	Since inception USD (000)
Belgium	4 374	50 256
Norway	0	34 472
Sweden	2 407	28 276
United Kingdom	0	9 339
Canada	38	9 288
France	75	8 872
Switzerland	43	4 937
Netherlands	0	4 462
Finland	0	3 745
Ireland	2 000	3 453
Italy*	0	1 490
Saudi Arabia	0	1 377
Germany	0	1 305
Austria	0	1 125
Spain	0	520
China	0	500
South Africa	0	452
Japan	430	430
Greece	0	227
Australia	0	107
Jordan	0	60
Monaco	0	59
Kuwait	0	50
Others (less than 5 000)	2	37
Czechia	0	36
Lao People's Democratic Republic	0	14
New Zealand	0	13
Luxembourg	0	8
Chile	0	5
Total members	9 369	164 915
Others	263	65 497
Total received	9 632	230 412

As of 31 December 2018 – Source: compiled from subsidiary records and agreed to the general ledger

** Accounting reclassifications*

IV. Use of SFERA funds

8. Under the working capital component, USD 390.9 million was advanced to projects after resource partners' commitment, but before receiving the cash contributions. Of this amount, USD 7.6 million remains outstanding, pending receipt of resource partner funds.

9. Of the USD 230.4 million contributed, USD 37 million were approved under the revolving fund component (USD 4.8 million during the reporting period). A total of USD 158.9 million was allocated under the programme component, of which USD 7.3 million were provided during the reporting period. The use of the funds is detailed in **Table 3**.

Table 3. Funding components

	Jan-Dec 2018 (USD 000)	Since inception (USD 000)
ADVANCES		
Working capital component		
Total advances made during the period	36 123	390 890
Refunds on advances paid during the period	30 952	383 278
Outstanding advances		7 612
APPLICATIONS		
Emergency coordination unit setup and reinforcement	2 557	15 307
Needs assessment and programme development missions	1 202	12 456
Level 3 emergency preparedness and response	1 000	9 247
Total revolving component	4 759	37 010
PROGRAMME COMPONENT		
AIRC	5 731	51 167
Horn of Africa (regional programme)	-	13 521
The Sahel (regional programme)	-	2 642
Avian influenza campaign	-	45 928
Tsunami campaign	-	10 002
Initiative on soaring food crisis	-	1 168
Locust campaign	-	4 982
Protracted crises	-	3 648
Typhoon and hurricane	-	15 598
El Niño	-	4 552
Fall Army worm	500	500
Early action	1 063	5 200
Subtotal programme component	7 294	158 910
Grand total applications	12 054	195 919
SFERA balance		26 881

A. Working capital component

10. **Advances** – During the reporting period, 96 percent of SFERA advances were in support of projects funded from five resource partners, as shown in **Table 4**. Once a resource partner's commitment is secured, funds are allocated towards the immediate procurement of inputs to protect livelihoods, restart agricultural activities or contribute to an immediate response to a crisis.

Table 4. SFERA advances from resource partners

Resource partner	Advances (USD 000)	Refunds (USD 000)
United States of America	22 029	22 229
Norway	5 000	3 000
OCHA	3 000	1 000
Germany	2 544	0
IOM	2 100	2 100
Austria	0	300
World Food Programme	427	300
Crown Agents	340	0
France	200	0
Belgium	160	160
New Zealand	135	0
Japan	128	627
MUL	60	60
UDF	0	700
United Kingdom	0	476
Total	36 123	30 952

11. Advances mainly supported major programmes in Nigeria, Somalia and South Sudan, representing more than 80 percent of all advances between 1 January 2018 and 31 December 2018, as shown in **Table 5**.

Table 5. SFERA advances for country programmes

Country	Advances (USD 000)	Refunds (USD 000)
South Sudan	11 250	11 750
Somalia	12 018	10 950
Nigeria	5 582	2 106
Bangladesh	2 100	2 100
Syria	2 000	0
Afghanistan	1 300	1 100
Uganda	0	300
Zimbabwe	427	427
Myanmar	340	0
Sudan	329	1 028
Burundi	0	476
Philippines	262	0
Regional Africa	260	260
Global	0	200
Iraq	160	160
Regional Near East	60	60
Côte d'Ivoire	35	35
Total	36 123	30 952

12. In 2018, SFERA advances allowed FAO to respond to the highest levels of food insecurity ever recorded in South Sudan by improving the ability of households and communities to withstand, recover from, and prevent shocks that negatively impact livelihoods – whether they be naturally occurring or related to violent conflict. This included restoring and diversifying livelihoods, restoring and strengthening agricultural production practices, strengthening community and intercommunal resource sharing and management practices, and increasing access to emergency livelihood inputs to maintain or resume food production. FAO's support through crop and vegetable production during the main and lean seasons as well as support to fishing activities helped increase the availability of locally produced food and protect livestock assets to ensure continued production-related income generation.

13. In Somalia, opportunities were seized and needs met at the right time and scale to effectively respond to and reduce the massive humanitarian needs in rural areas. SFERA advances allowed for an integrated cash and livelihood assistance (known as Cash+) in pastoral areas by combining cash transfers with veterinary care, feed blocks and storage containers that improve milk availability, quality and purity. Also through SFERA funds, community resilience was strengthened through the use of timely information and analysis on the food security, nutrition and livelihood situation as well as early warning information to improve flood and drought risk reduction, preparedness and mitigation.

14. The three Nigerian states of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe have faced escalating conflict for many years resulting in massive displacement of people. The production levels of food crops, livestock, fisheries and forestry in the three states are insufficient to feed the bulk of the population – host communities, returnees and internally displaced people (IDPs). A significant proportion of land for agriculture has degraded and has led to a progressive and severe loss of the original vegetation cover. With SFERA advances, FAO enhanced the agricultural productivity of conflict-affected households during the 2018/19 dry season through vouchers. Training, agricultural inputs for backyard micro-gardening, small ruminants and poultry kits were also provided to diversify livelihoods and improve access to markets and credits, particularly for women.

15. SFERA advances enabled FAO to improve the food security and nutrition of newly-arrived refugees in the Kutupalong extension sites and host community populations in Bangladesh to enable them to restore food safety, improve nutrition and diversify diets. Farmer groups were able to enhance their technical and production skills through trainings and high quality inputs. This, in turn, enabled farmers, including women farmers, to increase vegetable production. FAO's support in the resumption and improvement of farming activities and recovery of agriculture-based livelihoods, as well as environmental restoration and reforestation for land stabilization ensured the overall improvement in the food security and nutrition of both host community and refugee populations.

B. Revolving fund component

16. The **emergency coordination** window of SFERA's revolving fund component facilitates the rapid deployment of emergency experts, as well as the reinforcement of existing teams to support additional activities or fill short-term funding gaps. **Table 6** shows the allocation of resources by country.

Table 6. Emergency coordination

Country	Approved allocation (USD 000)
Bangladesh	199
Cameroon	65
Central African Republic	30
Egypt	20
Ethiopia	192
Indonesia	20
Iraq	75
Kenya	55
Regional Africa (FAW)	100
Eastern Africa	158
Lebanon	62
Lesotho	60
Myanmar	265
Niger	40
Regional Near East	95
Senegal	112
Sudan	4
Turkey	149
Uganda	55
Ukraine	50
Zambia	72
Total allotment	1 878

17. The **needs assessment and programme development** window of the revolving fund finances needs assessment activities at the onset of a crisis to support FAO and its partners in obtaining the information needed to formulate rapid response programmes as well as longer-term resilience strategies. During the reporting period, needs assessment and programme formulation exercises were implemented in the countries shown in **Table 7**.

Table 7. Needs assessment mission allocations

Country	Approved allocation (USD 000)
Bangladesh	4
Burkina Faso	20
Cameroon	46
Central African Republic	60
China	26
Colombia	60
Ethiopia	10
India	40
Iran	20
Iraq	30
Jordan	35
Kenya	40
Lao People's Democratic Republic	32
Lebanon	22
Madagascar	60
Mali	4
Mauritania	22
Myanmar	120
Niger	7
Philippines	135
Subregional Western Africa	193
Sahel	15
Somalia	15
South Sudan	108
Sudan	109
Syria	5
Togo	15
Turkey	37
Venezuela	15
West Bank and Gaza Strip	15
Yemen	129
Total allotment	1 449

18. The **Level 3 emergency preparedness and response** window was established under the revolving fund component following the Finance Committee's endorsement at its Hundred and Forty-Seventh Session⁴. This window focuses on the following six areas: (i) development and maintenance of appropriate Level 3 emergency procedures; (ii) capacity building for Level 3 emergency preparedness; (iii) organizational preparedness; (iv) participation in Level 3 interagency processes; (v) Level 3 simulations; and (vi) Level 3 emergency response and corporate surge.

Preparedness

19. Under the “**Development and maintenance of appropriate Level 3 emergency procedures**” area, the emergency preparedness status of 134 country offices was analysed based on a self-assessment of emergency response capacity in country as indicated in the FAO country annual reports. A more detailed analysis and preparedness planning was completed for 23 country offices through the

⁴ FC147/8

application of the FAO Emergency Response Preparedness Plan (FERPP) tool. Analysis of the country office emergency response preparedness status guided the delivery of strengthened preparedness support through tailored training and initiatives. Consequently, the Emergency Preparedness and Response section in the FAO Corporate Handbook was developed to ensure that such information can be accessed in a quick and user friendly manner. Webinars and training to increase awareness and knowledge on the handbook were also organized. Furthermore, the Level 3 window supported the piloting of tools for strategic contingency/scenario-based planning at Country Programming Framework level and the application of crisis modifiers for more flexible programming.

20. The “**Capacity building for Level 3 emergency preparedness**” area supported the design of simulation-based training sessions in Asia, the Pacific and eastern Africa to build core capacities of FAO country offices for emergency response. The training sessions were tailored according to the information gathered through the emergency preparedness section of the FAO country annual reports for a more detailed analysis carried out through the application of the FERPP tool. It also supported the initial planning of further regional/subregional training for 2019. Furthermore, this window supported a capacity building mission on cash- and voucher-based transfers in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and initial work on the update of the animal health preparedness guide “Good Emergency Management Practice: the Essentials”.

21. Under the “**Organizational preparedness window**” area, the Early Warning Early Action (EWEA) capacity was further advanced in 2018 through the roll out of the EWEA system in Pakistan and technical support provided to the early action implementation in Colombia, Kenya and the Niger. In particular, the organizational preparedness window funded the analytical capacity underpinning the quarterly Global EWEA report on food security and agriculture, which continued to be produced and improved throughout 2018, with four editions issued during the year. The report was revamped in early 2018 on the basis of a user survey, focusing both on the quality and coverage of the analysis as well as user friendliness of the report, and is increasingly becoming a key global reference for forward-looking analysis of food security-related risks. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs-FAO led El Niño and La Niña standard operating procedures (SOPs) for early action were approved in March 2018 by Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Principals, marking a significant milestone in interagency work on early action, and were applied in September 2018 with the activation of the Global El Niño Southern Oscillation Analysis Cell. As per the SOPs, the Cell provided the international community with an analysis of El Niño risks and high-risk countries, prompting the countries and regions to monitor and plan ahead of time. Return on investment studies were carried out in Madagascar and Mongolia to generate further critical results that demonstrate the cost effectiveness of acting early. Under the Emergency Response Roster workstream, suitable candidates have been selected and endorsed for key emergency response profiles and capacity development support was provided.

22. Under the “**Participation in Level 3 interagency processes**” area, funding enabled FAO to participate in all relevant interagency processes related to emergency response preparedness such as the global Food Security Cluster Preparedness and Resilience Working Group, IASC Emergency Response Preparedness workstream and in global preparedness initiatives, such as the Global Preparedness Partnership (GPP). In November 2018, FAO supported the GPP Viet Nam scoping mission following a request from Viet Nam to GPP for the support in strengthening national preparedness capacity.

23. Under the “**Level 3 Simulations**” area, travel and logistical support was provided for the simulation-based training workshops carried out in Asia and the Pacific in June 2018 and eastern Africa in November 2018. The training for the Asia and the Pacific region was intended to ensure that a minimum basic knowledge and capacity for emergency preparedness and response be in place among core national country-level staff and key work groups from the Regional Office. The objective of the training in eastern Africa was to improve the capacity of the FAO country offices in the region to provide a coordinated and needs-based response to deteriorating slow-onset humanitarian situations through improved preparedness, early actions linked to early warning triggers and response actions.

C. Programme component

24. Under the SFERA programme component, USD 5.7 million were allocated under the AIRC window, USD 1.5 million under the early action window and USD 500 000 under the fall army worm (FAW) programme window during the reporting period.

AIRC window

25. Under the AIRC window, USD 5.7 million were received from Belgium, Sweden, Ireland and Japan. The funds were allocated to 13 countries to support time-critical, emergency agricultural assistance while developing a more programmatic response to crises.

Table 10. Funding provided under the AIRC window

Country	Type of intervention	Amount USD (000)
Afghanistan	Emergency livelihood assistance to vulnerable smallholder farmers affected by drought in Badghis	300
Angola	Emergency assistance in restoring food security and agricultural production for refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo in northern Angola	100
Bangladesh	Livelihoods recovery for agricultural and fishing communities affected by the refugee crisis in Cox's Bazar	500
Bangladesh	Piloting of alternative cooking fuel for highly-vulnerable, newly-arrived Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar	500
Cabo Verde	Emergency assistance to resume the production activities of drought-affected households	220
Central African Republic	Strengthening food security, nutrition and livelihoods of vulnerable populations affected by the crises in the Central African Republic	500
Democratic Republic of Congo	Emergency support to improve the livelihoods of vulnerable households affected by armed conflict	500
Democratic Republic of Congo	Response to the food insecurity and malnutrition of 6 000 households (Lomela territory)	436
Indonesia	Emergency assistance for the post-earthquake and tsunami recovery in Central Sulawesi	200
Kenya	Emergency livestock feeding during the drought to improve nutrition for women and children under the age of five	300
Mali	Emergency protection of the livelihoods of vulnerable households affected by the pastoral crisis in the northern and central regions of Mali	444
Myanmar	Improvement of agricultural livelihoods and resilience for conflict-affected communities in ethnic minority areas	430
Nigeria	Emergency agricultural and livestock assistance to returnees, IDPs and vulnerable host families affected by the food security and livelihoods crises in northeast Nigeria	500
Senegal	Emergency assistance to safeguard the livelihoods of vulnerable pastoralists affected by the pastoral crisis in the Sahel	400
Syrian Arab Republic	Emergency seed distribution in response to the drought in Syria Arab Republic	400
Total		5 731

26. Low precipitations during the winter 2017–18 primary planting season caused a significant drought throughout Afghanistan in 2018. The drought resulted in dried pasture and poor quality fodder, spread of livestock diseases, livestock mortality and a shortage of water for rainfed and irrigated agriculture. This led to a particularly damaging situation as agriculture and livestock play a major role in Afghanistan's economy. In response, SFERA AIRC funds supported vulnerable people through the distribution of concentrated animal feed, fodder crop seeds and deworming medicine for large and small ruminants. Training on improved livestock husbandry techniques was also provided to enhance and protect livestock-based livelihoods.

27. The situation in the Kasai region in the Democratic Republic of the Congo remained volatile throughout 2017, causing significant displacements in the region and in neighbouring countries. By December 2017, 33 000 refugees fled to the Lunda Norte Province in Angola. In support of the open-door policy by the Government of Angola, humanitarian agencies have responded to the influx of refugees by providing emergency and relief services and supporting the recovery of their livelihoods. Through SFERA AIRC funds, FAO worked alongside host communities to increase the food production in Lóuva settlement through the provision of vegetable and poultry kits and primary animal health care to refugees and host community members.

28. The massive influx of displaced people to Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh has placed a significant strain on host communities, infrastructure, services and local forest reserves. Refugee and host populations were unable to meet their daily fuelwood needs and are therefore adopting negative coping strategies. In response, SFERA AIRC funds supported vulnerable households through the provision of LPG cooking sets and training on fire safety and efficient cooking. These funds ensured the reduction of households' fuelwood expenditure and extraction and establishment of mechanisms for LPG distribution.

29. In the district of Cox's Bazar, approximately 80-90 percent of the host population depend on agriculture and fisheries for their livelihoods and food security. Before the crisis, the district was among the poorest in Bangladesh. The refugee influx has posed an additional strain on local agricultural livelihoods. Agricultural production is poor in the district, largely due to poorer soils, salt-water intrusion challenges, limited access to technology and issues of land ownership. To support vulnerable crisis-affected households, SFERA AIRC funds enabled FAO to provide agricultural inputs and equipment, training on innovative climate-sensitive cropping technologies and Water Management Committee support. Rehabilitation of fish ponds and information campaigns were also carried out to improve the overall food security and nutrition through income generation.

30. Cabo Verde faced its worst crop year in 2018 due to the drought in 2017. Animal health conditions had significantly deteriorated because of lack of feed and access to water. This threatened the livelihoods of 60 percent of livestock-dependent households. SFERA AIRC funds enabled FAO to provide emergency and rehabilitation support to the most vulnerable households through feed distribution and veterinary equipment to facilitate pest control and anticipate future risks.

31. Vulnerable households in the Central African Republic, including displaced, returnee and host community populations, are facing an acute food crisis. Persistent insecurity has disrupted agricultural and pastoral activities, the main sources of employment, particularly in rural areas. SFERA AIRC funds were used to contribute to social reintegration and strengthen the resilience of vulnerable households through the generation of income from the sale of production surplus and the establishment of an early warning system for food security.

32. The province of Sankuru in the Democratic Republic of the Congo was affected by a large-scale food insecurity emergency, affecting at least 240 000 people. This situation has mainly been the result of a lack of diversification in food consumption contributing to malnutrition and micronutrient deficiencies, especially for children under the age of two. With SFERA AIRC funds, FAO was able to reinforce the food production capacity of vulnerable households, particularly those with children under

five and pregnant and lactating women. Technical support was also provided to diversify the production and income of households to enhance their overall resilience.

33. The pressure of displacements on host community's resources is reducing the availability and access to food in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. SFERA AIRC funds were mobilized with the aim of improving the livelihood and dietary diversity of IDPs, returnees and host communities through the access of agricultural inputs for increased food production in Ituri province. This was possible through the promotion of short-cycle vegetable production, crop production and goat breeding.

34. The deadliest earthquake in more than a decade struck Central Sulawesi, Indonesia, on 28 September 2018, followed by a tsunami. The combination of natural hazards has killed around 2 100 people and caused extensive landslides, displacements and destruction. In the district of Palu, the agriculture sector, including horticulture, employs 52 percent of the total population. Due to the disaster, damage to transportation and infrastructure has limited the cash flow of farmers, horticulture crop production, processing and trading. To ensure a rapid restart of production and sustain the livelihoods of the rural population, SFERA AIRC funds supported vulnerable farming families in the Tawaeli subdistrict of Palu.

35. Livelihoods in Kenya's arid and semi-arid areas are predominantly pastoral, meaning they are heavily dependent on livestock. The higher frequency of drought coupled with the constraints imposed on pastoral mobility because of the expansion in agriculture and a growing population have limited forage for livestock, a decline in which is directly correlated to a decline in child nutrition levels. In response, SFERA AIRC funds provided nutrient-dense animal feed ranch cubes and procured veterinary drugs and equipment for livestock-owning households in Marsabit County.

36. In Mali, the impact of natural disasters (droughts and floods) on farmers' livelihoods was exacerbated by insecurity. Irregular rainfall and local deficits in agricultural production and pasture, border crossing restrictions and adverse regulations constraining pastoralists' movements, high staple food and animal feed prices, and disrupted markets have necessitated urgent agricultural and livestock support. SFERA AIRC supported vulnerable populations, including IDPs, host families and returnees, in northern and central regions to increase their food access through the provision of livestock kits.

37. In Myanmar, the combined impacts of poverty, floods and conflicts in Chin and Rakhine states devastated the livelihoods of thousands of rural communities and had a flow-on effect on their food security and nutrition. Through SFERA AIRC funds, FAO supported small-scale farmers and landless people in two townships with agricultural inputs (including additional power tillers and water pumps) and cash grants. The project contributed to the improvement of household food security and increased resilience to floods and cyclones in conflict and natural disaster prone areas.

38. For several consecutive years, farmers who did not benefit from livelihood support in northeastern Nigeria were unable to cultivate due to insecurity, the threat of attacks and lack of agricultural inputs. The production levels of food crops, livestock, fisheries and forestry products are insufficient to feed the bulk of the population in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe States. SFERA AIRC funds helped restore the agricultural livelihoods of households in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe States, including returnees and IDPs who have access to land and host communities, through the provision of quality agricultural inputs for the next rainy season as well as livestock restocking and animal health services.

39. In the north of Senegal, the 2017–2018 dry season resulted in a significant deficit of rains that led to the destruction of 60 percent of biomass. This was particularly harmful for herders whose animals traditionally rely on biomass for feed. In addition, an increase in transhumance rate and weakened animal bodily conditions were observed. SFERA AIRC funds, protected the livelihoods of livestock-dependent households and distributed animal feed to pastoral communities to limit the mortality of their herds and massive destocking of animals.

40. Despite the overall improved security situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, wheat farmers are facing serious challenges to sustain their livelihoods as below-average rainfall in the first three months of the 2017–2018 cropping season led to a reduction in the production of wheat and barley by about half. Additionally, access to good quality, certified seeds remains one of the biggest challenges for smallholders, together with the availability of water and fertilizer. To improve the food security and nutrition of drought-affected farmers in Al-Hassakeh and Deir-ez-Zor, SFERA AIRC funds were used to distribute quality seeds and inputs for resumption of increased wheat production to vulnerable households, who also received training on good agricultural practices.

Analysis on AIRC window

41. FAO carried out a review to determine the progress made and key lessons emerging from the use of SFERA, particularly funds from the AIRC window. Data were taken from a portfolio analysis of 33 SFERA AIRC projects funded by Belgium in 28 countries⁵ during the period of 2016–2018 and a survey completed by FAO country offices that have implemented Belgium-funded projects, including SFERA projects funded under AIRC and early action windows. Simultaneously, a gender analysis was also carried out for all SFERA-AIRC projects funded by Sweden.

42. Out of a total of 33 projects funded by Belgium, 19 projects were implemented in Africa, seven in Asia, five in Central America and two in the Near East. Countries that received most of the funding over the three-year period were the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Haiti, Kenya, Nigeria and the Philippines. From 2016 to 2018, FAO, through SFERA-AIRC funds, managed to reach almost 1 million people.

43. Some 61 percent of Belgium-funded projects were in response to natural disasters, mainly drought, but also floods, landslides, hurricanes and tsunami. The remaining 39 percent were in response to protracted crises caused by a combination of recurring causes (i.e. lengthy food crises, insufficient governance and institutional capacity to deal with the resulting crisis, natural hazards and human-induced factors, including civil unrest and conflict).

44. Key elements of agriculture and food security in SFERA AIRC projects were crop production, livestock, nutrition and food security, fisheries and aquaculture and water management. While most of the projects focus on distribution of inputs and tools for livestock and agriculture, others have complementary activities in other subsectors such as nutrition and food security, fisheries and aquaculture and water management.

45. SFERA AIRC interventions identify and integrate the different needs and strengths of women and men, boys and girls. Direct measures include supporting a good proportion of female-headed households in emergency response; disseminating technologies and practices that prevent and mitigate disaster impact, while reducing women's work burden; promoting women's access to information and training; as well as increasing women's access to productive resources and assets. According to the Gender and Age Marker, 100 percent of all SFERA-AIRC projects funded by Sweden address gender equality at least in some dimensions. More specifically, more than 83 percent of the projects address gender equality in a systematic way.

Early action window

46. The early action window enables the Organization to work with national governments and civil society to initiate anticipatory early action, specifically for the agriculture-, food- and nutrition-

⁵ Based on data downloaded from FAO's Field Programme Management Information System in November 2018. The 28 countries covered in this portfolio analysis are: Afghanistan, Angola, Bangladesh, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Chad, Cuba, Congo, Dominica, Ethiopia, Fiji, Haiti, Indonesia, Jordan, Kenya, Madagascar, Myanmar, Nigeria, Philippines, Senegal, South Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic and Uganda for country projects, and El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua for a subregional project on Central America's Dry Corridor.

related sectors. The objective is to protect at-risk communities, by increasing the resilience of the livelihoods of small-scale farmers, herders, fishers and forest dependent communities as well as of food systems. The expected outcomes include reduced emergency caseloads and costs of response and averting disaster losses. The early action window anticipates natural disasters, including climatic anomalies (e.g. droughts, floods, and temperature extremes), pest and disease outbreaks (e.g. livestock and crop disease, locusts) and complex emergencies.

47. The window supports early actions defined as activities taken once an impending threat has been identified, but before disaster losses are sustained in the agriculture sector or livelihoods compromised. The window finances early actions that (i) prevent an unfolding disaster from happening; (ii) mitigate the impacts of an anticipated event; or (iii) strengthen emergency response capabilities for a specific, imminent threat through targeted preparedness investments.

48. Support is provided for necessary preparatory activities to enable a rapid response should conditions deteriorate (including setting human resource systems in place, proposal development and liaison with resource partners, developing agreements with suppliers and starting tender processes, strengthening the capacity of local partners, surveillance, assessments and analysis, and coordination support). Funding is provided to initiate appropriate interventions on the basis of forecasts.

Table 11. Early action window funding

Country	Allotment USD (000)
Kenya	320
Colombia	402
Niger	341
Total allotment	1 063

49. In February 2018, evidence was sufficient to indicate that an early pastoral lean season was developing across the Sahel, promoting early action planning to mitigate the effects of the dryness on vulnerable pastoral livelihoods. Funds were allocated from the Early action fund to reach around 5 300 households in Tahoua and Zinder regions of the Niger, which were indicated to be those already worse affected and set to deteriorate. Targeted livestock feed interventions were complemented by vaccination and deworming to protect the animals from diseases.

50. In June 2018, funds were allocated to Colombia in response to a projected increase of migration from Venezuela. FAO's intervention focused on assisting 600 households in the La Guajira department to boost local food production and therefore help stabilize food prices, labour demand as well as food security outcomes. This was a significant early action allocation as it was the first time funding was triggered by a human-induced hazard, representing an important learning opportunity for the EWEA process in FAO.

51. In July 2018, widespread flooding caused by the long rains in Kenya triggered a risk of a major Rift Valley fever (RVF) outbreak. RVF is a zoonotic disease posing a serious threat to both lives and livelihoods, particularly pastoralist communities. FAO allocated funds to protect around 150 000 people and 73 000 heads of livestock from the outbreak, focusing on hot spots identified together with expert counterparts and local authorities. Activities included the deployment of One Health (human-animal disease experts) investigation teams, provision of adequate laboratory equipment, support to national and county level coordination, provision of inputs to national and county teams.

52. To demonstrate the case for acting early, FAO invested in generating empirical evidence on the cost-effectiveness of EWEA. By the end of 2018, early actions were valued across four countries: Kenya and the Sudan, to protect livestock ahead of localized dry spells, Madagascar to safeguard small-scale farms ahead of drought, and Mongolia to support vulnerable herders through a severe

winter season. Across these countries, for every USD 1 FAO invested, households had a return ranging from USD 2.5 to 7.1 in avoided losses and added benefits. These empirical studies, the first of their kind, provide a critical insight into the value for money of acting before an anticipated crisis has become a humanitarian disaster.

FAW programme window

53. Under the FAW programme window, USD 500 000 was received from Ireland.

Table 12. Funding provided under the FAW programme window

Region	Type of intervention	Amount USD (000)
Eastern Africa	Sustainable management of fall armyworm in Africa	500

54. In response to the spread of FAW across all of sub-Saharan Africa and to ensure farmers were supported in sustainably managing the pest, FAO, through farmer field schools (FFS), piloted a new model of incentive-based community outreach mechanisms and supported the monitoring and coordination for FAW preparedness and response. The FAW FFS curriculum was launched through a regional Master Trainer course in Kenya in 2018, followed by training of 62 FFS facilitators and the start-up of 66 FFS groups across Ethiopia and Kenya for the application of sustainable management and control of FAW through testing of different technological practices at farm level. Furthermore, 140 community groups, reaching 300 households, were established in Ethiopia for FAW monitoring and early warning through the use of community forecasters and application of the FAW monitoring and early warning system app. Mechanical FAW control through handpicking and destruction of worms and egg masses were carried out in the 140 groups in Ethiopia, while in Embu county in Kenya, 150 FAW scouts (mostly unemployed youth) were trained in identification and management of the pest. The scouts were able to reach around 900 farmers through bi-weekly scouting visits to each beneficiary farm during the six-week-peak season scout intervention. A follow up impact assessment among 1 201 households showed that 80 percent of farmers continued with mechanical control on their own for the following season. Mass awareness on FAW was achieved through a range of leaflets, booklets and public awareness campaigns. FAW dashboard, showing seasonal prevalence rates, land affected, estimated losses and progress by countries in the subregion toward the partnership framework indicators were introduced through interventions to support FAW monitoring and coordination at country and regional levels.

V. CONCLUSIONS

55. SFERA provides FAO with a tool increasing predictability and continuity in its response at country level. Contributing to SFERA renders FAO with the means to provide rapid, high-impact emergency assistance to the most vulnerable populations affected by disaster. It enables FAO to be quicker and more flexible in its response and puts the Organization in a position to quickly upscale its operational capacities at times when needs increase rapidly and exponentially after a disaster.

56. SFERA plays a critical role in strengthening country offices' operational capacities, as well as country offices' preparedness. The Fund enables the Organization to respond to Level 3 emergencies as well as rapidly scale-up response efforts in case of smaller-scale emergencies. SFERA also plays a critical role in coordinating a collaborative, longer-term response focusing on livelihoods and resilience strategies, as well as improving the capacity of their local institutions to prevent, protect and restore.

57. SFERA interventions identify and integrate the different needs and strengths of women and men, boys and girls. Under the AIRC window, interventions include supporting female-headed households in emergency response, disseminating technologies and practices that prevent and mitigate

disaster impact, while reducing women's work burden, promoting women's access to information and training as well as increasing women's access to productive resources and assets. According to the Gender and Age Marker, all SFERA-AIRC projects recently approved address gender equality at least in some dimensions.

58. SFERA fosters the benefits of acting early. Empirical evidence demonstrate the cost-effectiveness of EWEA in Kenya and the Sudan to protect livestock ahead of localized dry spells, Madagascar to safeguard small-scale farms ahead of drought, and Mongolia to support vulnerable herders through a severe winter season. Across these countries, for every USD 1 FAO invested, households had a return ranging from USD 2.5 to 7.1 in avoided losses and added benefits. These empirical studies, the first of their kind, provide a critical insight into the value for money of acting before an anticipated crisis has become a humanitarian disaster.