

## Concept note

# ***Support to country-level learning from actions for food security in Southern Africa***

## **I. Background**

Despite efforts made at national and international levels to combat hunger and reduce food insecurity, the number of undernourished people in the world remains unacceptably high at close to one billion in 2010. Asia and the Pacific is the region with the highest number of undernourished people (3,5 million), but the proportion remains very high in Sub-Saharan Africa, where 28% of the population still suffers from undernourishment (SOFI 2010).

In order to reverse this trend, it is important to understand how we can make existing global, national and local policies and programmes more effective in terms of their hunger reduction impact. To that end, much greater attention needs to be paid to put in place a more enabling environment for food security, more efficient and effective systems and processes for policy and programme mapping, monitoring and evaluation and the adoption of more effective result-based management approaches in the food security area. It is expected that this will help to improve effectiveness, ensure greater accountability and above all provide a basis for more systematic learning from successes and failures in the combat against hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition.

## **II. Rationale**

The report of the independent external evaluation of FAO (IEE) issued in 2007 called for a renewed effort to formulate a strategic framework for the Organization which would be integrated with the traditional planning document of the organization ie. Medium Term Plan and Programme of Work and Budget. Both these documents are firmly based on Results-based Management (RBM) principles.

In November 2009, the FAO conference approved a renewed Strategic Framework covering the years 2010-2019 which addresses the 3 Global Goals of FAO Members within the framework of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The Conference also approved a set of 11 Strategic Objectives (SOs), Functional Objectives (FOs) and Core Functions (CFs) of FAO as well as the enabling environment and means of FAO action.

In this context, the Flanders International Cooperation Agency (FICA) on behalf of the Government of Flanders, in line with its activities in support of food security in the Southern Africa area, particularly Malawi, Mozambique and South Africa, has expressed its intention to also provide support to the normative work of the Organization in the area of food security and the fight against hunger on a cross-sectional basis with a focus on Southern Africa.

The activities to be supported by FICA as proposed in this note will build on the resources, tools and techniques developed by FAO and will contribute to achieving results as spelled out in FAO's Strategic Framework and more in particular within the Strategic Objective (H) on Improving food security and Nutrition and the Organizational Result 1 (H01OR1) on: ***"Countries and other stakeholders have strengthened capacity to formulate, implement and monitor coherent policies, strategies and programmes that address the root causes of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition."***

### III. What FAO is doing

While efforts are being made to develop country capacities to better assess impact and learn from past and ongoing actions, technical support and capacity development are mainly provided on an ad-hoc basis and there is much scope for increasing outreach. A more systematic approach is required to effectively build capacities at country level and allow policy makers to learn from, and build on successful experiences.

In 2011, FAO organized three needs assessment consultations in Asia, Southern Africa and West Africa, in order to analyze the skills and knowledge required by food security professionals in each region. Impact assessment of food security programmes was identified as one of the main areas of interest, and for which training is particularly needed.

In light of the above, FAO is rapidly expanding its efforts to develop appropriate learning tools and processes that provide access to knowledge and guidance for improving food security impact assessment and strategy development at large scale. These efforts are meant to support capacity development and on-the-job training at national and local level in countries where capacities need strengthening. FAO has a long-standing experience in support to food security policies and programmes at local, regional and global level. The organization has the ability to provide technical expertise and develop capacities in various domains related to food security and nutrition, including on monitoring and evaluation as well as impact assessment.

### IV. Specific objectives and results expected from the FICA support

The expected **impact** of the FICA support is improved food security impact assessments and strategy development at large scale, through capacity development and on-the-job training at national and local level in countries where capacities need strengthening.

#### **Objective 1:**

#### **To ensure an enabling environment for food security planning at national and regional levels**

The activities proposed under this specific objective will target government agencies and development partners responsible for planning and implementation of food security interventions.

#### **Result 1.1 - Better knowledge and sharing of information among targeted organizations about the food security actions that are being implemented at national and sub-national levels**

FAO has developed **a web-platform** ("Mapping Actions for Food Security, MAfFS") that maps food security investments and actions at various level of governance, including the local level: <http://www.mafsan.org>. This platform is a decision support tool and is meant to encourage sharing of information among development actors about food security actions that are being implemented at country and regional levels. It maps how resource flows for food security are being used and enables decision-makers to identify gaps and redundancies, and take corrective measures if needed. MAfFS is already being tested and used in Nigeria, Sierra Leone, and Afghanistan, with expressed interest from Tanzania and Angola, amongst others. The users of this tool are mainly located in the capital or in the main cities of the countries, and therefore connectivity issues are not a concern.

With FICA support, **FAO will support 6 additional countries** in Southern Africa implementing MAfFS by facilitating national workshops, training, data collection and data entry processes, as well as institutional arrangements for the governance and maintenance of the platform. Assessment of country interest will be made in priority with Malawi, Mozambique and South Africa. A **MAfFS international workshop** will be organized in 2013 in Africa in order to share experiences among the countries that are using the tool and discuss opportunities for further development in the region.

### Result 1.2 - Improved policy and legal framework for food security at national level

A number of guidelines and policy briefs have been elaborated by FAO to assist countries in developing appropriate policies and regulations for mainstreaming food security at national and local levels. These include, among others, the Right to Food guidelines: <http://www.fao.org/righttofood>.

Building on these tools and on existing national policies and frameworks, FAO with FICA support will provide technical support in selected countries to undertake a review of the policy and legal food security framework, and to identify ways of improvement, in particular through the integration of the Right to Food concepts. The support will focus on 1) how the right to food can serve as guiding framework and overall objective; 2) how human rights principles can improve decision-making processes; and 3) how the notions of rights, obligations and responsibilities can be strengthened in the context of food security work.

This will be done through the organization of **a stakeholder consultation and a national workshop in 3 countries** (tentatively Malawi, Mozambique and South Africa), in collaboration with the FAO Right to Food Unit. The stakeholder consultations will be organized prior to the workshops in order to carry out a review of the legal framework and identify the gaps and limitations. The objective of the workshops will be to show, in practical terms, how the right to food can be integrated in the development and implementation of programmes and projects related to food security and nutrition. The workshops will be addressed to key national policy makers dealing with food security planning.

#### **Objective 2:**

**To support organizations for more efficient collaboration, exchange of experiences and coordination towards better food security planning**

Activities proposed under this specific objective will target government institutions, NGOs, civil society organizations and cooperation agencies in charge of formulating and implementing interventions aiming at improving food security and nutrition.

### Result 2.1 – Increased opportunities to learn about successes and failures of interventions in food security

FAO will use its expertise and, when needed, collaborate with external experts, to **provide technical assistance** to targeted organizations in **at least 6 countries in Southern Africa** to support their monitoring and evaluation systems and to better assess the impact of their interventions on food security.

As part of this assistance, **specific training programmes** will be developed and delivered for organizations that express particular interest in the targeted countries.

### Result 2.2 - Increased sharing of knowledge among organizations on food security actions

Various **communication tools** will be used to encourage sharing of knowledge among the various organizations (including international organizations and development partners) in the targeted countries. FAO will ensure systematic dissemination, through its website, of technical notes, policy briefs and lessons learned from the identification of successes and failures in interventions for food security and nutrition.

Furthermore, the **MAfFS platform** will be used to share documents in a user friendly manner, and the MAfFS forum will be developed in order to encourage discussion and sharing of information among officers from various organizations and countries.

**Objective 3:****To strengthen human resource capacities for better assessment and analysis of impact of food security interventions**

The following people will be targeted for individual capacity development: officers from institutions working on food security projects and programmes, including government agencies, NGOs, UN and other development partners, etc.

*Result 3.1 - Increased technical expertise at country level on food security key concepts and impact assessment methods*

FAO has developed an **e-learning course** (<http://www.fao.org/spfs/monitoring-evaluation/e-learning/en/>) which provides a comprehensive yet readily accessible source of guidance for assessing impact of food security programmes. This course is targeted to users and generators of information about programmes addressing food insecurity and malnutrition. Another distance learning course on qualitative methods is currently under development. With the view of increasing the outreach of these courses and giving the opportunity to learners to delve more deeply into specific aspects of, FAO has developed its capacities to organize online tutored course in which participants can interact within a guided group dialogue led by a facilitator with expertise in the subject matter. Learners from different countries are able to share their problems, questions, insights and solutions with each other, and to access knowledge and experience for better formulation of food security programmes.

FAO with support from FICA will **conduct 4 online tutored courses** in three different languages (English, French, Portuguese), and each course will be offered to 30-40 participants from various countries in Africa, with a particular focus on Southern Africa for the English and Portuguese versions. Participants will include both government officers and civil society members. Prior to the courses, needs assessment surveys will be conducted to identify the subjects that are most requested.

The material provided in the e-learning courses will also be used to organize **face-to-face regional training workshops in 4 countries** in Southern Africa (including Malawi, Mozambique and South Africa). These workshops will target 20-30 government officers and civil society members from various countries and will give participants the opportunity to delve deeper into the subjects presented in the e-learning courses. In order to ensure national ownership and sustainability of the learning outcomes, these workshops will be organized in conjunction with national Universities and regional organizations.

FAO will provide FICA with 6-monthly technical progress reports on the progress made in each of the above expected results.