



*“Some 42 percent of the population lives on less than 1 USD per day”*

# Afghanistan

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## Background

Conditions in Afghanistan have continued to deteriorate throughout 2009. An escalation in armed conflict has decreased civilian security, inhibited access to basic services and slowed the delivery of humanitarian aid. Civilian casualties in the first six months of 2009 were 24 percent higher than the first half of 2008 – a year in which losses of innocent lives had already climbed by 40 percent over the previous year. Continued insecurity and election-related violence claimed a further 624 lives in August and September 2009 alone.

Over 256 000 Afghans are internally displaced and nearly 2.5 million refugees remain abroad, primarily in Pakistan and Iran. The effects of conflict and insecurity have disproportionately impacted women and other vulnerable groups, frequently subject to human rights abuses and inequalities that widely go unpunished. An estimated 40 percent of the country cannot be reached by relief operations due to general security threats and increased targeting of humanitarian partners.

The country is highly prone to recurrent natural hazards and climatic extremes, including severe winter weather, plant and animal pests and diseases, earthquakes, drought and flooding. Extensive losses to livelihoods caused by natural disasters and conflict combined with the global hike in food costs have taken an enormous toll on the country's extreme poor. Some 42 percent of the population lives on less than USD 1 per day and more than half is either chronically (31 percent) or borderline (23 percent) food insecure.

## Challenges facing food security and livelihoods

Improving food security in Afghanistan will largely depend on the ability of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), refugees and families affected by disasters to resume their farming activities. Agriculture provides the main source of livelihood for over 80 percent of the population. However, year-on-year crop and livestock losses caused by human-made and natural disasters have increasingly diminished the capacity of farmers to meet the food needs of their families. Although food costs have stabilized, they remain 40-45 percent above pre-crisis levels and account for an average of 67 percent of household spending.

Despite projections for a good harvest in 2009, recurrent drought, flooding, earthquakes and intensified conflict throughout the year have caused food security to remain a priority need in 2010. Decades of conflict have forced millions to abandon their agricultural activities and land.



*FAO intends to distribute wheat seeds and fertilizers to enable vulnerable farming families to resume food production*

Recurrent drought and water shortages continue to threaten key food production areas and subsistence farmers. Plant disease and pests, such as locusts and melon fly, are also a major source of annual losses to staple and cash crops. Thousands of households lack quality seeds and fertilizers for the upcoming agricultural seasons and will be unable to plant if these essential inputs do not reach them on time.

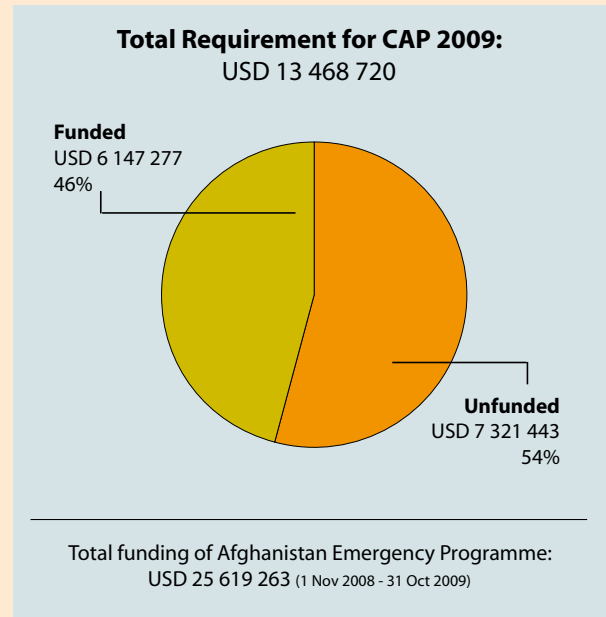
Livestock provide a vital source of food, income and draught power for Afghan farmers – and are often their sole lifeline in times of crisis. Endemic animal diseases and lack of veterinary services, grazing pastures and fodder are causing low productivity, livestock deaths and, consequently, devastating economic losses. Many farmers are forced to sell their surviving animals at low cost, plunging them into deeper food insecurity.

### FAO Response

Despite elevated needs in the sector, agriculture interventions remain severely underfunded. Increased investment in the recovery of rural livelihoods will be paramount to securing the positive agricultural gains achieved in 2009, lessening dependency on food aid and increasing the population’s resilience to future shocks.

With donor support, the distribution of certified wheat seeds and fertilizers will enable IDPs, refugees and drought-affected farming families to immediately resume food production. Focus will also lie in strengthening the development of alternative agricultural livelihoods, offering farmers the opportunity to move from subsistence to market agriculture. The start up of gardens and provision of nutrition education will benefit vulnerable households, feeding centres and hospitals and maximize their use of locally available foods.

From the 2009/10 to 2010/11 winter seasons, the provision of concentrate feed will protect the animals of thousands of families that depend solely or primarily on livestock for their livelihood. Animal and plant pests and diseases will also be addressed by implementing control measures and building capacity in surveillance and response at community and institutional levels. Importantly, support to coordination activities of the Food Security and Agriculture Cluster will strengthen the effectiveness of humanitarian response and ensure that timely assistance reaches communities most in need.



**PROPOSALS: FAO EMERGENCY AND REHABILITATION ASSISTANCE**

**Total funding requested: USD 20 314 060**

<b>Emergency support to vulnerable, food insecure farming families in Afghanistan through the provision of quality wheat seed and fertilizer, and through diversification of agricultural livelihoods and income-generating activities</b>	
Objectives:	To boost the food security of returnees, IDPs and vulnerable farming communities for the spring/autumn 2010 and spring 2011 planting seasons through the provision of improved wheat seed and fertilizer; the diversification of agricultural livelihoods and income-generating activities that will increase the income of vulnerable households; and strengthening the capacity of local communities and beneficiaries to ensure sustainable production and livelihoods.
Activities:	Assist 60 000 farming families that lack wheat seed for the 2010 spring/autumn and 2011 spring planting seasons, in irrigated and rainfed zones in provinces worst affected by natural disaster and drought, through the provision of kits comprising 50 kg of quality-declared wheat seed (irrigated or rainfed variety), 50 kg of DAP and 50 kg of urea fertilizers; strengthen the development of alternative agricultural livelihoods at national and provincial levels, diversify farming systems, generate off-farm employment and focus on community development and programme management; provide input packages that, in addition to seed and fertilizer, include diversified agricultural inputs for post-harvest storage, kitchen gardening, poultry and livestock production, beekeeping, fish production, nursery establishment and intensive vegetable gardening, among others, offering an opportunity for farmers to move from subsistence to market agriculture; ensure that project assistance reaches the most vulnerable farming families, including women-headed households, returnees and IDPs; and empower beneficiaries to continue developing income-generating activities through the provision of technical training, with an emphasis on marketing.
Beneficiaries:	420 000 returnees, IDPs and vulnerable farmers.
Implementing partners:	Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock, and NGOs.
Duration:	January – December 2010.
Funds requested:	USD 13 777 500.

### Strengthening the agriculture-based livelihoods and food security of vulnerable, food insecure farming families through the emergency provision of animal feed

Objectives:	To improve the food security of vulnerable livestock holders in areas of Afghanistan affected by natural disaster and drought through the provision of concentrate animal feed.
Activities:	Assist approximately 13 000 vulnerable rural livestock-dependent households in drought-affected areas through the provision of 2 600 tonnes of quality animal feed from the winter 2009/10 until the winter 2010/11 feeding seasons; and provide each family with 200 kg of animal feed for four sheep/goats (rations for 100 days per animal) or one cow (rations for 100 days), thus supporting a total of 52 000 sheep/goats or 13 000 cows.
Beneficiaries:	91 000 drought-affected livestock herders.
Implementing partners:	Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock, and NGOs.
Duration:	January – December 2010.
Funds requested:	USD 2 511 300.

### Emergency control measures against outbreaks of plant pests and diseases in Afghanistan

Objectives:	To improve food security in Afghanistan by implementing control measures against infestations of Moroccan locust, Colorado potato beetle (CPB), Baluchistan melon fly or other pest infestations to minimize crop losses.
Activities:	Implement control measures against infestations of Moroccan locust, CPB and Baluchistan melon fly (or other pests) to reduce crop losses; carry out maintenance, refurbishment and repair of control equipment; conduct planning and coordination through an integrated pest management (IPM) approach with a range of local and provincial authorities to ensure that an appropriate level of community support and involvement can be mobilized; and build the capacity and train staff of the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock, and the Plant Pest and Quarantine Department in ecology and control of Moroccan locust, CPB and Baluchistan melon fly.
Beneficiaries:	10 000 farming households affected by outbreaks of plant pests and diseases.
Implementing Partners:	Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock.
Project Duration:	January – December 2010.
Funds Requested:	USD 1 454 200.

<b>Promotion of local food products to fight malnutrition</b>	
Objectives:	To maximize the use of locally available foods to minimize the consequences of the crisis.
Activities:	Train nutrition focal points, Government staff, implementing partners and community health workers on food-based approaches to alleviate, moderate or prevent a further deterioration of malnutrition (e.g. nutrition counselling, improved recipes particularly for high-risk groups, recipes promoting the use of local food products during the phase-out from feeding programmes, cooking demonstrations and backyard gardening); provide nutrition education, including demonstrations on improved recipes, to beneficiaries at feeding centres, hospitals and at village level, and distribute nutrition education material and utensils; provide technical support and inputs for the start up of gardens attached to hospitals and feeding centres (e.g. extension services, seeds and simple sets of tools) and extend such support to the families of children discharged from the feeding centres; and monitor the implementation of nutrition education and counselling, and evaluate changes in child feeding practices. Activities will be carried out in close collaboration with Supplementary Feeding Programmes and Therapeutic Feeding Programmes implemented by cluster members.
Beneficiaries:	1 200 000 individuals (150 000 children and 100 000 women).
Implementing Partners:	To be determined.
Project Duration:	January – December 2010.
Funds Requested:	USD 162 720.

**Strengthening cluster coordination, strategic planning and information management in Afghanistan**

Objectives:	To create an inclusive national coordination mechanism that ensures a well coordinated, coherent, strategic and effective food security and agriculture assistance programme to address the short-, medium- and long-term challenges of achieving sustainable food security in Afghanistan.
Activities:	Ensure the establishment/maintenance of appropriate Food Security and Agriculture Cluster (FSAC) coordination mechanisms, including working groups at national, provincial and district levels; actively promote NGO inclusion in the FSAC by creating an enabling environment for their participation; ensure full integration of priority cross-cutting issues (i.e. human rights, HIV/AIDS, age, gender and the environment), utilizing participatory and community-based approaches; promote gender equality by ensuring that the needs, contributions and capacities of women, girls, men and boys will be addressed; secure commitments from cluster participants in responding to needs and filling gaps, ensuring an appropriate distribution of responsibilities within the cluster, with clearly defined focal points for specific issues; ensure that participants within the FSAC work collectively to ensure the complementarity of stakeholders' actions; promote emergency response actions, while considering the need for early recovery planning, as well as contingency planning, disaster prevention and risk reduction/management; act as focal point for inquiries on the FSAC's response plans and operations; and ensure timely, effective and coordinated food security and agricultural responses based on participatory and community-based approaches.
Beneficiaries:	39 FSAC partners, the Government, the humanitarian community and poor, food insecure and vulnerable crisis-affected households.
Implementing Partners:	N/A.
Project Duration:	January – December 2010.
Funds Requested:	USD 715 000.

### Emergency control measures against outbreaks of animal diseases in Afghanistan

Objectives:	To improve food security in Afghanistan by implementing control and containment activities for transboundary animal diseases, such as Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza, other emerging and re-emerging animal and zoonotic diseases, such as brucellosis, <i>peste des petits ruminants</i> and foot-and-mouth disease, to minimize the impact of diseases and improve the livelihoods of farming communities.
Activities:	Provide technical support to the current animal disease control programme of the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock in the defined zones; evaluate the current status of animal diseases and identify high-risk areas for control interventions; establish an emergency vaccine bank, provide emergency vaccines for the prevention and control of the major animal diseases and procure refrigerator vehicles; provide other key elements and tools for the control and prevention of the diseases (e.g. cold chain equipment, syringes, disinfectant, sample collection and submission, etc.); build capacity and provide training on epidemiology, surveillance, clinical diagnosis and control measures from central Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock/Animal Health Department to field level.
Beneficiaries:	Farming communities and livestock owners in Afghanistan.
Implementing Partners:	Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock.
Project Duration:	January – December 2010.
Funds Requested:	USD 1 693 340.