



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the United
Nations

Office of Evaluation

Impact Evaluation of FAO's programme under the Common Humanitarian Fund

Final Report

November 2012

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Office of Evaluation (OED)

This report is available in electronic format at: <http://www.fao.org/evaluation>

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Acknowledgements

The Evaluation team members would like to thank the staff of the FAO Emergency and Rehabilitation Coordination Unit (ERCU) in Sudan and FAO colleagues supporting the Sudan operations from the Technical Cooperation Department in FAO Headquarters, for their availability despite particularly challenging working conditions and time pressure. The evaluation team is grateful of them for sharing their opinions and knowledge in a transparent and constructive manner. Evaluators are also grateful to the FAO team in Sudan for the logistical and administrative support provided, which greatly facilitated their movements and the organization of meetings in the complex and volatile humanitarian environment of Sudan. The specific support provided by TCEO/ERCU through the hiring of temporary assistance to support the evaluation in country was greatly appreciated.

We also wish to thank all of the stakeholders interviewed throughout the country for their time and their openness in sharing their viewpoints, instrumental for the team's acquisition of an understanding of the situations and issues that CHF-funded interventions supported by FAO were faced with. The present evaluation report presents the team major findings, conclusions and lessons learned, related to the impact of FAO's work carried under CHF funding.

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Acronyms

ACORD	Agency for Co-operation and Research in Development
Afag	Organization for Peace and Development
ADO	Attamas Development Organization
ARS	Agricultural Research Station
AWP	Annual Work Plan
BQ	Black Quarter
CAHWs	Community Animal Health Workers
CAP	Consolidated Appeals Process
CBOs	Community Based Organizations
CDA	Community Development Action
CFSAM	Crop and Food Supply Assessment Mission
CHF	Common Humanitarian Fund
COOPI	Cooperazione Internazionale
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
CPWG	Crop Production Working Group
CRS	Catholic Relief Services ()
CRLRS	Community Revolving Livestock Recovery Society
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
DCPSF	Darfur Community Peace and Stability Fund
DDA	Dar Al Salam Development Association
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
ECHO (EC)	European Commission's Humanitarian Aid Office (European Commission)
ERCU	Emergency and Rehabilitation Coordination Unit - Sudan
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nation
FAR	Fellowship for African Relief
FNC	Forestry National Corporation
FSL	Food Security and Livelihoods
GAA	German Agro Action
GOE	General Operational Expenses
Ha	Hectare
HAC	Humanitarian Aid Commission
HH/HHs	Household/ Households
HIV/AIDs	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
HPAI	Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza
HS	Hemorrhagic Septicaemia
HWP	Humanitarian Work Plan
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDP/IDPs	Internally Displaced Person(s)
IGA/IGAs	Income- generating activity/activities
INGO(s)	International Non-Governmental Organization(s)
IP/ IPs	Implementing partner(s)
ISRA	Islamic Relief Agency
JAM	Joint Assessment Mission
KAEDS	Kutum Agricultural Extension and Development Society
Kg	Kilogram

LEGs	Livestock Emergency Guidelines and Standards
LoA/ LoAs	Letter(s) of Agreement
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoAR/MoARF	Ministry of Animal Resources and Fisheries
MC	Mercy corps
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MT	Metric Ton
NGO(s)	Non Governmental Organization(s)
NCO	Noon Charity Organization
No.	Number
OCHA	Office of the Coordination for Humanitarian Affairs
OFDA (USA)	Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (United States of America)
PA	Practical Action
PHA	Post- Harvest Assessment
PODR	People Organization for Development
PPD	Plant Protection Department
PPR	Pests des Petites Ruminants
REMCO	Riaheen Alsalam for Maternity & Childhood Organization
SAARF	Secretariat of Agriculture, Animal Resources and Forestry
SCRS	Sudanese Red Crescent Society
SC-S	Save the Children Sweden
SMoA	State Ministry of Agriculture
SMoAR	State Ministry of Animal Resources
SMoAR&F	State Ministry of Animal Resources and Fisheries
SMoH	State Ministry of Health
SPHO	Sudan Peace and Humanitarian Organization
SPLA	Sudan People Liberation Arm
SSRRC	South Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation and Commission
SSSA	Seed System Security Assessment
TADs	Transboundary Animal Diseases
TCEO	Technical Cooperation for Emergency Operations
TOT	Training of Trainers
UN	United Nations
UNAMID	United Nations African Mission in Darfur
UNCT	UN Country Team
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
US\$/USD	United States Dollar
WFP	World Food Programme
WR	World Relief
WVI	World Vision International

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Executive Summary

ES1. This report presents the consolidated findings of an impact evaluation, aimed to provide an evidence-based analysis of the extent to which FAO has effectively made a difference on the short term food security and livelihoods of the people it supported with funds received from the CHF, covering the period 2006 to 2011. The evidence on which it draws combine primary and secondary data, the former being collected through substantial data collection carried out from April to June 2012 in the three main regions of Sudan where FAO operates and which were accessible: Darfur, Eastern Sudan and Blue Nile.

ES2. The CHF has been the main source of funding for FAO emergency activities in Sudan and FAO has tapped about 70% of all CHF funds allocated to the Food Security and Livelihoods (FSL) in the period. Out of all areas of work of FAO in the emergency sector, the evaluation has examined more particularly three of the main components aiming to support grassroots level productive capacities : FAO's core areas of expertise and which represented the biggest volumes of funding received. These interventions included : i) the provision of inputs and services to vulnerable farmers or pastoralists to safeguard or help rebuild their livelihoods ; ii) support to income generation and iii) sector coordination.

ES3. The assessment evidenced the following in terms of impact : support provided to farmers in the form of vegetable and groundnuts seeds generally had a remarkable impact on households' food security. Households widely reported increasing their vegetable consumption, a positive diet improvement particularly helpful during the lean season, as well as their income. Support to cereals cultivation was also positive in helping households eat for longer from their own production, but the magnitude was limited, mainly due to limited quantities eventually sowed, partly due to targeting deficiencies. The evaluation judged that some of the positive changes could be to some extent attributed to the interventions supported by CHF funds, principally due to the positive effect on vulnerable households of free and improved seeds. Other factors at play included the cutbacks in food aid, reported as a disincentive for farmers to cultivate, while external factors such as climate-related hazards, pest infestation or land access were seen to constitute strong hurdles which assistance provided could not help overcome. The evaluation noted that more integrated interventions whereby a package of inputs or services are delivered may have the potential to foster more significant impact, and recommended for FAO to diversify its inputs package when possible to adjust the offer to specific local needs as far as possible.

ES4. Support to animal health was largely successful and demonstrated to be of higher impact than the former component. In the three regions covered by the evaluation, beneficiaries reported improved consumption of meat or animal products, increased revenue from animals' sales and an enhanced sense of resilience due to a solid asset base. The improvements in terms of awareness regarding the value of animal health and utility of veterinary services is also seen as a very promising impact, opening up on options to streamline veterinary service provision on a cost-recovery basis. The free-based service has been instrumental in allowing overcoming animal owners' initial reluctance to pay and was also an important factor in widening the access to veterinary services to more people, including the poor. The fact that services provided through CAHWs were recognized as being of higher quality also contributed to building the confidence of livestock owners in veterinary services. Aside from the few corrective measures regarding the implementation of CAHWs support that could enhance its impact, such as providing refresher trainings, the evaluation also noted that support to animal health should be implemented along interventions aiming to

address needs for extension service and training on animal nutrition and husbandry; for improvement of pastures and water sources for animals, as well as for supporting monitoring of veterinary services. The evaluation also noted that there is no evident rationale to maintain a free service delivery approach in certain regions of Sudan where pastoralists should be capable and now disposed to pay against services that they know serve their interest. Introducing cost recovery for veterinary services is deemed necessary in certain areas, and is strongly supported by the MoARF and several NGOs as a more sustainable approach.

ES5. Supporting income generation through trainings was generally ineffective in that most activities did not ultimately generate any income. The distribution of donkeys was the most successful intervention with significant impact in income generation and building of livelihoods, usually when combined with a cart. The impact of food processing training on income generation was insignificant, but could have positive impacts on consumption or reducing consumption expenses. Other activities such as goats restocking or bee keeping demonstrated poor and inconsistent results and cheese making failed completely. The impact was very different according to the activity and region and the inconsistent anecdotal results reported reflect on the fact that the interventions' success or failure was entirely conditioned to the quality of implementation (and design). Most projects visited by the evaluation evidenced a width of issues with the design and implementation of IGAs by FAO's implementing partners (no marketability analysis, no analysis of trainees' interest, no training in business management or accounting,...) and received no support from FAO's part.

ES6. The performance of FAO as FSL sector/Cluster co-lead has been examined along five categories identified by the evaluation as pillars of what coordination encompasses:

- i) In terms of *promoting good information sharing and dialogue among sector members* FAO appears to have been quite successful through regular sector meetings. The increased collaboration and dialogue between the aid community and relevant Government partners, mainly at State level, is acknowledged as an important achievement largely owed to FAO.
- ii) With respect to *fostering strategic sector planning*, results are rather limited: though overlaps between agencies were generally avoided, sector planning still failed to be genuinely strategic with partners' interventions remaining rather individually managed. The lack of a common framework for comprehensive needs assessments could be a root cause.
- iii) *The harmonization of good practices through technical exchanges and capacity building* has neither been the strongest achievement area. Aside from organizing training workshops and using sector meetings to exchanges on technical matters, the general sense of partners and counterparts was that FAO could be more active in sharing technical knowledge and promoting mutual learning on innovative approaches.
- iv) FAO has generally been effective in *facilitating sector members access to funding* and related processes. It is perceived as a good partner, particularly by smaller NGOs whose main entry point into the wider humanitarian community has been FAO and whose capacities are unilaterally considered as essential to maintain in Sudan. FAO is less fundamental for larger humanitarian agencies. Managing funds may have however taken disproportionate time off the sector lead's compared to its other central tasks.
- v) Related to its responsibilities to *manage accountability and oversight over sector activities*, FAO appears to have achieved poor results, as a result of a lack prioritization of this function, not only for sector members with whom FAO had no formal partnerships, but even for those of whom it was supposed to monitor progress against LoA commitments. The absence of a formal monitoring system also attests of this.

ES7. Looking at the factors that have influenced impact, first of all the evaluation has confirmed the relevance and appropriateness of FAO's intervention package in Sudan.

Safeguarding or increasing productive capacities bear a potential for increasing both food availability and access, both of which are relevant in view of the high numbers of households who still cannot sustain their household needs for food throughout the year. The geographical focus as well as the target groups retained were also found appropriate considering the high levels of food insecurity prevailing in targeted regions but the choice of covering regions such as East Sudan, where food security has chronic and structural causes, with CHF funds was questioned. Considering the risks related to maintaining relief-type of assistance in some regions in need for rural development support and judging of the relevance of FAO's expertise to address needs in transitional contexts, the evaluation judged that FAO had to adjust its positioning to better match regional needs, and seek to balance its emergency assistance with longer-term support to food security and productive capacities. FAO is deemed unjustifiably absent on strategic issues related for instance to land tenure, natural resource management or even simply agricultural development and has thereby failed to make the most of its areas of strength. Related to the above, despite the general satisfaction expressed by Government partners regarding their collaboration with FAO, counterparts also unilaterally regretted the excessive focus of FAO on short-term objectives.

ES8. In terms of the implementation, the evaluation points to several aspects that have also weighed on the impact of interventions supported by FAO. The evaluation considered that an inadequate system to map priority needs related to the FSL sector was a cause for the sector being insufficiently strategic in its programming. This deficiency explains why the evaluation could not find evidence to conclude that needs in the sector have been addressed according to identified priorities. The sophistication of the decision making process related to funding sector members proposals (through direct and pass-through mechanisms) also did not promote planning based on needs identified at the field level, ultimately favouring centralized decision-making. The intricacies of the decision making processes related to CHF fund allocation probably also exacerbated tensions between sector members which did not promote the best conditions for smooth strategic planning.

ES9. As for implementation arrangements, targeting also appears as an element that has significantly undermined the impact of agriculture interventions due to the redistribution of already small agricultural inputs packages that reduced the seeds quantities to an insignificant additional input. This is an aspect on which FSL sector meetings could have played a stronger role in steering members' interventions towards efforts put on community mobilization, evidenced as a key to successful targeting. The way FAO has build its partnerships is also here at stake, and the evaluation concluded that FAO failed to develop a long-term vision for collaboration with selected partners that could have been strengthened over time and mentored in a way to implement ever better programmes. More efforts on building a true sector co-leadership with WFP are also needed to promote the FSL Cluster role.

ES10. While the quality of inputs was generally praised by most beneficiaries, issues were also noted related to FAO's capacity to deliver timely inputs for agriculture, owing both to glitches in the FAO procurement processes some of which could be easily addressed, but also to the CHF system that cannot guarantee the delivery of funds for agencies to timely engage funds.

ES11. The little priority put on monitoring is also considered by evaluation as a strong shortcoming which undermined FAO's capacity to be a leader for the sector, and should be addressed. These deficiencies also revealed another of FAO's deeper-rooted weakness, related to its ability to manage its staffing resources in a way to retain people over time.

ES12. Based on the above findings, the evaluation recommends that:

- 1) FAO prioritizes its action on sectors where it has a comparative advantage over others, based on its technical expertise or its strategic positioning, possibly giving up some areas of work.
- 2) FAO keeps supporting the livelihoods and food security of rural households whose vulnerabilities are still extreme, building on identified areas of strengths and weaknesses. When relevant, FAO should seek to define gradual strategies to transition out of emergency support and explore ways to devise multi-level programmes with short and longer-term objectives, possibly mixing funding sources, thus promoting continuity from emergency into development.
- 3) FAO, by way of its Representation, should be more active on strategic issues related to rural development as advisor to the Government and by way of policy support, and better balance its sources of funding in order to avoid leaning excessively on emergency-stamped sources.
- 4) FAO seeks to implement integrated interventions whereby inputs or services that can cross-fertilize one another and are distributed simultaneously and result in higher impact.
- 5) Consider its responsibility to promote a strategic sector approach as a priority and support for that matter sector needs assessment, knowledge sharing and monitoring.
- 6) Keep attentive to the importance of managing its staff resources, to avoid that staff be diverted of real priorities focus and encourage them to remain within the programme by offering reasonable contractual conditions.
- 7) FAO uses in-house technical expertise to transfer knowledge to Governmental and NGO staff through training and dissemination of normative work it produces or has access to.
- 8) FAO ERCU establishes more strategic partnerships with NGOs, seeking to build a long-term collaboration which would infer more efficient use of capacity building investments.
- 9) FAO should keep very attentive to promoting peaceful livelihood considering the latent conflict over land between farmers seeking to expand their agricultural production and pastoralists seeking pasture.

I. Introduction

1. CHF in the Sudan humanitarian setting: General trends

1. Decades of conflict and unfavourable climatic conditions or natural disasters have contributed to anchoring a chronic state of poverty in Sudan¹, doubled the acute crisis situations in various parts of the Country, both bearing serious threats to livelihoods and lives of a large part of the population in Sudan. The sole Darfur war caused the displacement of nearly two million people and an estimated 200,000 to 400,000 deaths, as reported by the Darfur Consortium².
2. The assistance channelled through the United Nations and International and national NGOs to address humanitarian and rehabilitation needs in Sudan is collectively planned and implemented through the UN and Partners Work Plan (*the Work Plan*), aiming to enhance consistency and co-ordination. The Work Plan outlines country, region and sector objectives and strategies with associated indicators and targets, and the individual projects through which it is envisaged the goals will be attained.
3. Bi-lateral donor funding covers the most significant part of humanitarian interventions in Sudan, which are for the rest funded through multilateral mechanisms, of which the Common Humanitarian Fund (CHF) channels the largest volumes. As an example, in 2008, bi-lateral funding represented about 89 % of total funds channelled to Sudan, while CHF represented about 10 % and CERF funds 1%. ..
4. As part of the overall humanitarian reform initiative, the CHF has been created with the aim of “improving humanitarian outcomes through the provision of committed funds more rapidly than under previous arrangements; strengthening joint planning and coordination; directing funds towards most urgent needs; and ensuring funds are available for rapid response to unforeseen circumstances”³.

2. Evaluation Background, scope and, Objectives

Rationale

5. In 2012, the work of the humanitarian community in Sudan has been faced with new uncertainties, both related to both national and international contextual changes. Taking stock of past achievements and strategically analyzing the positioning of FAO based on objective evidence was considered appropriate in this context, to identify what can be learnt from the past experience for the benefit of future interventions. This independent impact evaluation thus aimed to provide an evidence-based analysis of the extent to which FAO has effectively made a difference in supporting the short term food security and livelihoods of the people it has supported with funds received from the CHF, to the extent possible considering data-related limitations.

¹ Reference to the Sudan is herein understood in its post-2011 definition, i.e. the northern part of what used to be Sudan prior to the cessation of South Sudan from Sudan in July 2011.

² <http://www.darfurconsortium.org>

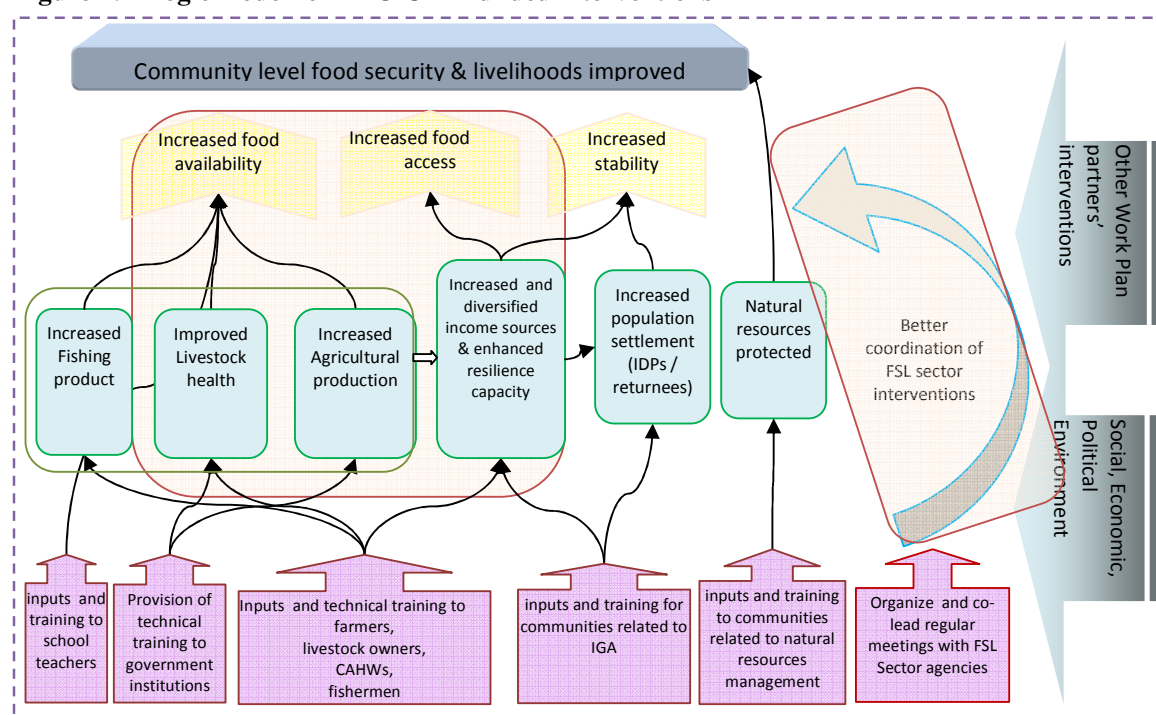
³ CHF 2008 Annual Report

Scope

6. As an impact evaluation, the main focus has been on demonstrating whether there have been perceptible changes on households' lives, on their communities, or at the level of sectors targeted by project (agriculture, livestock...) which can be attributed to the CHF funded FAO interventions. Complementary to the assessment of impact, the evaluation has been attentive to understanding the factors that may have favoured or hindered the success of these interventions in generating positive change; thereby also appraising features of the interventions' relevance and execution.
7. Considering the challenges related to attributing impact on such multi-variants concepts such as food security and livelihoods in a complex operational context such as that of Sudan, it was decided to focus the evaluation attention on selected *components*⁴ considered as the most significant on the basis of their weight (number of projects including these components and volume of funding they channel) or their critical importance in the context of the CHF. Therefore, amid all activities supported by FAO since 2006, the evaluation focused on interventions supporting: i) agriculture; ii) animal health, ii) income generation and iv) coordination. Considering also the short-term remit of CHF funded interventions, the evaluation intentions have been focused on changes that could realistically be measured, i.e. focusing on changes in:
 - productive capacities (related to farming and livestock keeping support) with a view of inferring potential contribution to increased availability of and access to food;
 - income diversification and levels (component 3 above), with a view of inferring potential contribution to increased access to food; and
 - coordination of humanitarian activities in the FSL sector (component 4 above), informing the extent to which this component may have contributed to streamlining responses in this sector.
8. In view to formulate hypothesis on what impacts could be expected and then identify indicators to be measured through our inquiry, a theory of change was reconstructed on basis of the analysis of the 45 projects covered by this evaluation. A simplified version of the one used by the team, and included in the evaluation TORs is presented in **figure 1** below. The red frames in the figure signal the main areas of focus of this evaluation.
9. The evaluation looked at evidence concerning the entire times when FAO received support from CHF, i.e. from 2006 up to 2011. However the bulk of evidence refers to most recent years, for practical reasons related to the difficulty for people to recall changes that occurred long ago, considering that CHF-funded interventions mainly intend to address set urgent needs, rather than produce longer term effects.
10. This narrowing of the evaluation scope implies that the evaluation has not examined some of FAO's areas of work in Sudan over the period, such as disaster preparedness or environment preservation. The evaluation team has nonetheless endeavoured to keep in mind that though not assessed; these other areas of work have also received support. As will appear in the findings, when these areas were confirmed to be high priority for Sudanese populations, the evaluation captured the need for concentrated efforts, but the extent to which FAO has up to now been adequately addressing the issue could not be appraised.

⁴ Hereinafter the terms *component* or *interventions types* are understood as a coherent set of objective and related activities in support to a given sector.

Figure 1: A logic model for FAO CHF funded interventions



3. Structure of the Report

11. This report presents the consolidated findings drawn from the evaluation team, following a period of substantial investigation through the collection and review of primary and secondary data, carried out in the first half of 2012. The report first presents the main features of the evaluation approach and subject; and then puts forward main findings with respect to impact, and design or management related factors, seeking to address all questions identified in the TORs. Conclusions, Lessons and Recommendations are then offered derived from the findings.

II. Evaluation approach

1. Composition of the Evaluation Team

12. The evaluation was carried by a team composed of :
 - A team leader (Ms. Aurélie Larmoyer, FAO evaluation expert) in charge of steering the process, designing the evaluation methodology and tools, and supervising the team division of labor. On the evaluation, she focused on coordination outcomes, and on assessing programme management performance and its effects on impact. The team leader bears the responsibility for the present evaluation report, for which she received inputs from two team members.
 - Four national team members: M. Abdul Hamid Rhametalla, M. Abdelmajid Kojali Mohamed, Ms. Awadia Mohamed and M. Yousif Mohamed Abbaker, combining expertise on agriculture, rural development, livelihood support, microfinance and social research. Each team member contributed to the evaluation in different ways and collectively carried the following tasks:
 - ✓ Data collection at community / local levels: three team members supervised the collection of primary data related to assessing impact at grassroots level (in

- three different regions); two team members carried out interviews with key informants to complement the beneficiary assessments;
- ✓ Data analysis: all team members produced analytical reports to present their findings from the field;
- ✓ Two team members assisted the team leader in extracting insightful analytical pieces from field reports and other secondary data and provided written contributions to this report.
- Nine national field monitors contributed to the data collection in field location under the supervision of a team member (3 per area).

2. Evaluation Approach and Methodology

Phases and Organization of the Evaluation

13. The evaluation was initiated in early 2012 with a preparatory phase aiming to obtain more thorough information on the evaluation subject, based on thoroughly reviewing the FAO CHF portfolio and various CHF policy documents. This desk review and an inception mission by the team leader and one team member provided a further opportunity to refine the evaluation scope and methodology based on better understanding of the stakes and operational constraints. A Methodology note was prepared as a result of this first phase, which aimed to complement the initial evaluation TORs, by elaborating on the approach and organizational aspects of the evaluation (sampling, itineraries, roles...), and included draft tools for data collection.
14. A 5-day mission was organized mid-April 2012 in Kassala State to test the draft data collection tools in the presence of all 3 field teams supervisors whose suggestions on necessary adjustments provided a basis for the team leader to finalize the tools, then translated into Arabic to facilitate their use by the field enumerators.
15. The primary data collection phase in the field ran from 20 April until 15 June with three teams simultaneously deployed in sampled project locations in Darfur (South/East, West/Central and North), Eastern Sudan (Red Sea and Kassala) and Blue Nile⁵ as the only accessible region of the three "Protocol areas". The teams work was guided by a detailed investigation protocol presented in the methodology note and remotely supported by the senior agricultural team expert and team leader. Concomitantly, key informants based in State capitals⁶ and in Khartoum were interviewed to complement the grassroots level information gathered at community level. Details regarding the team's itineraries and people interviewed are provided in annex 3. Written reports were produced by each team members to account for their main findings and serve as repositories of the evidence gathered to support the teams' analyses of impact.
16. Field and secondary data reviews findings were discussed in a final team meeting organized early July 2012 with the aim to pull findings together, work on data quality and develop a common understanding of the underpinning analytical framework. Preliminary findings that emerged from the team discussions were presented to FAO's Emergency and Rehabilitation Coordination Unit and the CHF management Unit hosted in OCHA during a debriefing meeting on 05 July 2012.

⁵ It should be noted that the data collection team in Blue Nile was able to access only locations within a distance of 10 kilometres outside Damazin town, so data could only be collected from relatively "better-off" areas while regions where the bulk of the CHF supported activities were implemented such as Gaisan, Bau and Kurmuk localities could not be visited.

⁶ Kassala, Damazine, Nyala and Geneina

Approach rationale and validity assurance

17. Measuring impact in a complex operational context such as that of Sudan is faced with a number of challenges. First of all, due to the difficulty to find adequate counterfactual data. Baseline data was indeed not available to allow a comparison before /after. And comparing recipients / non recipients situations could not be systematically expected, for it would require, for each CHF beneficiaries, meeting with neighbouring populations faced with comparable issues and who did not receive any support: a difficult task not easily well-matched with the already numerous “logistical” factors dictating sampling options⁷.
18. This pragmatic starting point influenced the choice of evaluation approach built around a more qualitative line, to get around the expected limitations to a systematic quantitative based approach, likely suffering from the inconsistent counterfactuals. Also, considering the width of intervention types and modalities assessed as well as the need for the evaluation to factor-in the multitude of situations of target populations (encompassing a number of nuanced situations of displacements, return, and chronic vulnerability), the evaluation deemed more appropriate to acquire an overall in-depth understanding of the driving forces behind populations' food security and livelihoods. Some quantitative data was nonetheless collected to gain some sense of magnitude of change when possible.
19. To safeguard the credibility of the evaluation findings, the team ensured that the assessment relied on: i) assembling a critical mass of data from triangulated sources to be able to acquire some reasonably reliable information on the reported impact; ii) recognizing biases (own and respondents'); iii) valid data warranted by a well designed and tested set of data collection tools, a rigorous sampling strategy and a systematic approach to data collection and analysis.

Data collection methodology

20. The evidence was collected through the following combined tools:
 - Semi-structured interviews (SSI) with households supported by interventions evaluated (and when possible with non recipient households);
 - SSI with key informants at the community, locality, State or capital levels, focused on their perceptions of changes in people' s lives and their driving factors;
 - Focus Group Discussions (FGD) with sample households disaggregated between the various type of support received to confirm and complement information from interviews;
 - A Survey of Food Security and livelihoods (FSL) sector partners to capture general perceptions regarding the functioning and results of the FSL sector coordination.
 - Review of secondary data, to complement primary data with evidence on achieved outputs over the period. A complete list of documents reviewed is provided in Annex 4.
 - All tools are annexed to the methodology note.

Sampling

21. To sample areas and type of respondents a non-probability sampling approach has been used, so as to ensure that communities visited and individuals met illustrated the work and target populations at stake in their complexity and that informants were met in large enough numbers so as to allow making inferences regarding the dynamics underpinning

⁷ The methodology note that served as the evaluation roadmap based on the TORs, provides more details on the rationale for selecting the approach taking into account the realities of the working environment.

livelihood strategies or vulnerabilities of the wider target population. Only the choice of communities met within the selected locality / IP and households to interview were selected on a random basis. The need for interviewed people to recall a situation that was anterior to the intervention entailed that only communities who had benefited from recent (2010-2011) projects were selected.

22. A first sampling stratum aimed to identify geographical areas to be covered, that were to present an illustrative diversity of agro-ecological and political features. All three (now five) regions of Darfur, the accessible areas in the Protocol areas, and Eastern Sudan were seen as illustrative of different situations and therefore considered as warranting distinct coverage by the evaluation.
23. Within each area, guided by operational information, evaluators selected localities presenting the widest illustration of FAO/CHF focus and implementation modalities, considering in particular: i) the intervention types, choosing groups of communities where more than one of the assessed components had been implemented; and ii) the typology of implementing partners (IP), seeking to strike a good balance between more or less experienced and capable IPs through which FAO implements its projects. In addition, practical elements were factored in the sampling, with regions where access would likely be restrained being counted out and seeking to minimise travel time (and cost) in order to maximise time spent with informants.
24. Within each community, the selection of households for Semi-Structured Interviewing or Focus Group Discussions was based on a stratified random sampling strategy, whereby a set of criteria describing the types of informants required (seeking to keep a balance e.g. populations with a different status such as IDPs, returnees and residents, when relevant) were communicated to the community key informants enabling a random selection of households. They were selected as described above, i.e. seeking to identify randomly household members who could illustrate a given situation. Key informants who, by their function or role were considered as holding key knowledge and perceptions that the evaluation should capture, were selected at Khartoum, State capital, locality or community levels. They included: national, local or traditional authorities, CBOs, National and International NGOs (IPs of FAO or not), Community workers, and other International (UN) aid workers.
25. The on-line survey was sent to all relevant stakeholders of the FSL sector for whom a valid address was provided by the FAO ERCU.
26. Altogether, the team gathered evidence from over 730 people located in 6 different states⁸. The evaluation met with 156 key informants⁹ from over 60 different institutions¹⁰; carried 95 one-to-one interviews with household representatives and met with over 370 additional community members through about 50 Focus Group Discussions, all across 44 different communities where projects supported by FAO with CHF-funds have been implemented. Out of the 470 people met at the community level about 30% of them were women. The methodology note developed in April 2012 to serve as a roadmap for the evaluation is enclosed in annex 2 for more details. This methodology was generally followed by the

⁸ Kassala, Blue Nile, 3 Darfurs and Khartoum States.

⁹ Including 14 from national administrations, 14 from FAO, 11 from other UN agencies, over 50 from NGOs and 4 from the donor community.

¹⁰ Over 50 NGOs, the two relevant Ministries and HAC, FAO, WFP, OCHA, UNDP, DFID and USAID.

team, though minor adaptations had to be done to adjust to constraints described in the following section.

Constraints

27. Despite efforts made from the outset to plan according to known difficulties inherent to the Sudanese context, this evaluation was significantly constrained by a number of factors. First, in some regions of Sudan, particularly the three Protocol Areas, conflicts have emerged again since 2010, causing serious security issues, which restrained access to some areas. As a result the evaluation team was discouraged to cover the States of Abyei and South Kordofan and was only given restricted access in Blue Nile. The security in some areas of Darfur (particularly West/central) also determined some of the sampling choices.

ACCESS CONSTRAINTS (as of 7 September 2011)

Access constraints due to insecurity or government-imposed restrictions



Source: UN and partners Work Plan 2012

28. In addition, though known from the outset, the demanding processes and administrative formalities related to organizing travel also did represent a constraint to the smooth organization of fieldwork and delayed the field work by several weeks. This was possibly compounded by some limitations in the capacities available within the FAO office to follow-up on these, due to the particularly tight human resources available in the ERCU, primary stakeholder to the evaluation, and more distant interest from the FAO Representation.
29. The evaluation was also affected by last minute changes in the team's organization, first with the early drop-out of a team member due to an incident and later, with a last minute absence of another team member due to an unforeseen personal problem, which compromised his participation in the team's mission, aimed at testing the data collection tools and ensuring other team members' understanding of the evaluation general approach.
30. The evaluation was ultimately affected by some difficulties related to accessing the information, in particular for the period anterior to 2009, first of all due to the high staff turnover inherent to humanitarian aid contexts in difficult working conditions. Secondly, the ERCU recent important reduction of staff to lower-than-minimal levels implied further institutional memory loss than usual. In practice this implied that a large part of people encountered lacked institutional memory and could neither speak of nor provide documentation related to the initial years of the CHF, and that the evaluation has drawn more heavily from recent projects, in particular for primary data. In addition, evaluators having visited FAO offices at a time when staffing levels were lower than usual, this may have biased their understanding of implementation capacities.

III. FAO CHF funded interventions in Sudan since 2006

1. Operational Context

Sudan operational & development priorities

31. Sudan has a great opportunity for peace and stability following decades of fighting and conflicts. The peaceful secession of South Sudan, stability and gradual shift to recovery and development activities in eastern Sudan and political progress and a relative improvement in security in parts of Darfur provide encouraging signs, though it is yet too early to count with sustainable stability in this regions and in the Eastern States. At the same time, the outbreak of fighting in South Kordofan and Blue Nile and large-scale displacement associated with the fighting represent reminders of unresolved issues in the CPA and call for more serious political settlement for conflicts within the country and the neighbouring new country.

Figure 2: Overview map as at 31.12.2011 (from UN and partners Work Plan 2012)



32. The economic situation of Sudan has been affected by the secession of South Sudan. Sudan lost 75% of its oil reserves after the southern part of the country became an independent nation in July 2011. Prior to the country's break-up, Sudan produced close to 500,000 barrels per day. In its World Economic Outlook published recently, the IMF projected a negative real GDP growth for Sudan: -0.2% in 2011 and -0.4% in 2012. This is down from the 6.5% growth achieved in 2010 and an average of 6.7% in the years 2003-2009.
33. Because of the sanctions as well as Sudan's heavy debt, borrowing options from international and regional financial institutions are severely limited. An economic emergency programme has been put in place for the next three years that is focused mainly on austerity measures that aims to cut spending. Earlier this year, the Sudanese government approved an austerity package that partially removed subsidies on sugar and petroleum products. Early 2012, the impact of the economic situation was starting to be felt by the ordinary citizens in Sudan in the form of rising food prices and persistent shortage in foreign currency available. Sudan is hoping that transit fees charged to the South for using its oil pipelines will help cushion the impact of secession. However, at the time of the evaluation, the two countries had yet to agree on how much should be assessed for using the Sudan's infrastructure.

Food Security and Livelihoods Situation in Darfur

34. In Greater Darfur comprising (since early 2012) North, South, East, West, Central Darfur States as per **figure 3**, rural livelihoods for the majority of the population remain at risk due to the protracted and multifaceted crisis still ongoing in the region. The principal cause has been the conflict in the region since 2003 which have led to mass displacements, devastation of key infrastructure and services and curtailed productive activities by the population.

Figure 3: Darfur State structure as at March 2012



35. According to the estimates by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), about 4.2 million in the Darfur region have been affected by the conflict and 1.7 million people are internally displaced (IDPs). Over 90% of the population in Darfur pursue livelihoods based on agriculture and livestock production. The majority of households have either lost their assets by looting and destruction or sold assets such as livestock and household items to cope with the situation. Humanitarian assistance remains the main source of food for internally displaced persons (IDP) and a considerable part of the resident population, as the protracted conflict has significantly increased the

vulnerability of the population through an overall reduction of food availability, accessibility and quality. The following factors contributed to this situation:

- a reduction in agricultural and livestock production;
- loss of livestock as a result of looting and harsh climatic conditions;
- loss of economic activities and limited off-farm income earning opportunities;
- inaccessibility of markets;

- difficult access to land in certain areas where land occupation and use have changed due to the conflict;
 - disrupted solidarity systems, social networks and coping mechanisms; and
 - increased pressure, competition and even conflict over limited and still shrinking natural resources (water resources, arable land, pasture and natural vegetation).
36. Sudan has considerable animal wealth totalling approximately 40 million head of cattle, 49 million of sheep, 42 million of goats and 3.5 million of camels (MOAR, 2002) and over 20% of Sudan's livestock population is in the Darfur region according to the study of El-Amin (2007) and the Sudanese Federal Ministry of Animal Resource (2002) as illustrated in the table below.

Table 1: Estimated Numbers of Livestock in Darfur (Million)

Region/Species	Cattle	Sheep	Goats	Camels
N. Darfur	0.65	3.53	2.80	0.44
S. Darfur	3.99	3.61	3.24	0.08
W. Darfur	3.84	3.67	3.84	0.32
Total	8.48	10.79	13.90	0.88
% National Herd Population	21	22	22	24

Source: Mohamed El-Amin (2007), Gezira University (Unpublished).

37. The livestock per capita production value is estimated at US\$330 for the population in North Darfur where pastoralists predominate in the dry land environment. Livestock production contributes over 50% of household income in agro-pastoralist and about 90% in nomadic and pastoralist societies. The restricted movements of animals within most areas of the Darfur region due to the conflict have had a negative impact on animal production especially for large animals such as camel and cattle.
38. The most common contagious diseases of livestock in the three States are Hemorrhagic Septicaemia (HS), Black Quarter (BQ), Sheep Pox, Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD), PPR and Anthrax. Failure to vaccinate against these diseases can lead to catastrophic outcomes and may result in loss of all animal stocks. The protection of livestock, a key livelihood assets for the poorer sector of the Darfur population (including IDPs and nomadic societies) is therefore of paramount importance.

Food Security and Livelihoods Situation in East Sudan:

39. Eastern Sudan comprises Kassala, Red Sea and Gedaref states and borders Eritrea and Ethiopia to the east. Kassala and Red Sea States are highly food insecure and susceptible to natural disasters. Today, the rural majority in the two states mainly survives on subsistence farming and livestock trade. Historically, communities mainly depended on pastoralism in these regions, a livelihood undermined by the creation of large semi mechanized farms and irrigation schemes that took 2.5 million feddan of pasture land off local populations who subsequently lost almost all their animals due to starvation in the drought periods and during the wars. The shift to subsistence farming has therefore been a compelled decision despite its inadequacy to those dry regions. Ecological, political and economic factors have combined to create both a recurrent food security crisis and situation of chronic structural poverty for many of the rural households. The creation of the Ghirba dam with the New Halfa irrigation scheme is another important factor that affects both pastorlism, and generally the water situation in Kassala. In addition to the

above-described factors that led to the radical change in land use, other key underlying factors contributing to the chronic vulnerability situation in eastern regions of Sudan are:

- perpetuating natural disasters particularly poor rainfall situation;
- deteriorating agricultural production;
- limited economic opportunities and
- reduced livestock production and productivity.

40. Crop production has dropped to below household subsistence levels as a result of the negative impacts of climate change, reduced access to land and inadequate agriculture support services. Favourable cultivation land and water points are mainly localized around deltas and consequently, household land holding size has diminished to below the required level for subsistence food production. The population lacks adequate and appropriate agricultural inputs and tools to produce their own food, but even when they manage to acquire inputs, floods, prolonged dry spells or drought frequently strike and lead to households' loss of their crops. This recurrent phenomenon has eroded the population's resilience capacities.
41. The population used to keep camels and small ruminants (goats and sheep) but lack of feed, poor husbandry practices and the need to cope with chronic food insecurity has led to a net reduction in animals stocks. The loss of animals has in turn gradually eroded coping capacity of the communities, making them more vulnerable to food insecurity. Nevertheless, significant number of livestock (mainly camels, goats and sheep) still exists among most rural communities. Key challenges facing livestock rearing in the region are scarcity of pasture and water points; inadequate veterinary services and lack of extension services. There is significant stress on existing pasture resources resulting from high concentration of animals in specific locations. Inadequate rainfall has led to localized pasture and water points for livestock consumption. This has led to concentration of livestock in localized areas and spread of diseases. Seasonal migration in search of pasture has become limited due to inadequate rainfall for pasture development and water.

Food Security and Livelihoods Situation in the Three Transitional Areas

42. The three transitional areas were given special status under the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) protocols agreed between the Government of Sudan and the Government of South Sudan, recognizing the need to resolve these areas' specific conflicts in order to build lasting peace. The areas are resource rich and form an economic and social bridge between the Sudan and South Sudan. The three areas still suffer from the negative impacts of the civil war that resulted in wide spread chronic poverty and underdevelopment related to instability, recurrent natural disasters or tribal conflicts. The three areas are endowed with vast arable land suitable for production of a wide range of field crops, vegetable and fruits and the annual rainfall is quite sufficient for all types of agricultural and horticultural crops besides livestock rearing. Range land is also abundant for livestock production. However, the conflict hampering rural livelihoods in all three regions, some dry spells, the high number of returnees and displaced people, landmines issues and other reconstruction needs to improve market infrastructures and accessibility, call for sustained humanitarian and rehabilitation assistance. In 2011, following the independence of South Sudan, fighting erupted in all three areas: in Abyei in May, in South Kordofan in June and in Blue Nile in September. These new developments have further compounded an already fragile food security and livelihood situation, generating new movements of populations. The situation in the three areas remains fragile and subject to the political will to settle the dispute between the two neighbouring countries. In Abyei in particular, unresolved issues regarding the status of this State raises

uncertainties about people's return, while the lack of access to this region has also limited humanitarian actors operating in the area.

Donor cooperation

43. While over the past decade, assistance budgets for Sudan had generally grown, in recent years, largely due to the sanctions in place, assistance to Sudan has been considerably declining, with some embassies closing and most of this funding has been directed to emergency interventions. The more recent economic crisis, particularly felt amongst European nations, has also surely played against more funding being allocated for development assistance in Sudan. The separation of the former Sudan in two distinct countries has also somehow drawn funding away from the north, with the new nation of South Sudan being seen as in dire need of assistance. Such situation has constrained FAO in mobilizing funds for its non-relief interventions and the fact that the FAO Country Office did not have a Representative in 2008 may have compounded this challenge, with supposedly less intense communication and networking capacities. On the other hand, other countries such as China and some Arab Gulf States such as Saudi Arabia or Qatar have started investing in Sudan and may now constitute an important new source of funding for development of Sudan, possibly including support to poverty alleviation.

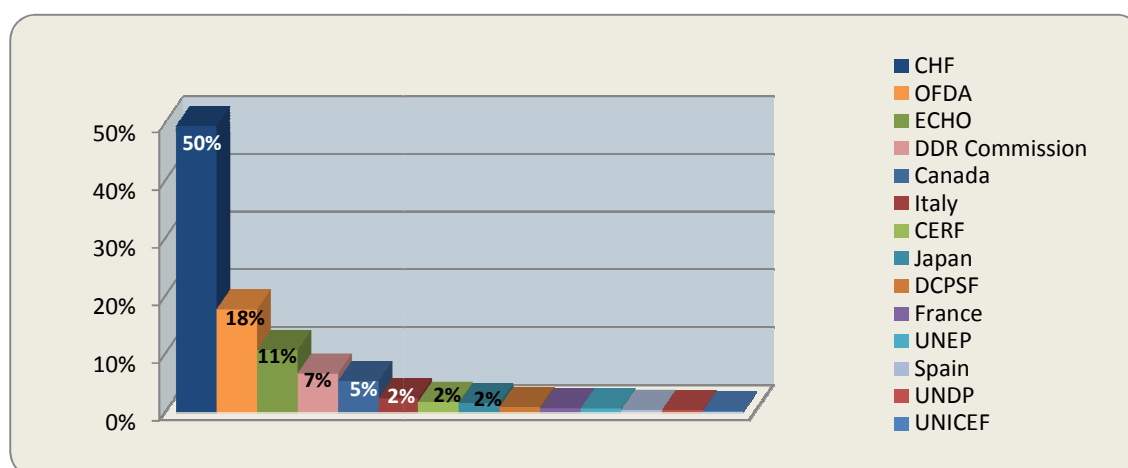
2. FAO strategic and structural orientations

44. Since 2006, FAO has supported food security and livelihoods in Sudan with funding from a number of donors including the CHF, the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), the European Union through its European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO) up to 2012 and DG Dev., the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) Commission of Government of Sudan, and Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) as the main five.
45. A review of FAO records related to project implementation in Sudan shows that in the period examined by the evaluation, about 8% only of all activities have a development focus. And as per the 2010 Sudan Country Evaluation about 56% of all activities over the 2004-2009 period were dedicated to relief. The remaining ones are considered to be in support of rehabilitation / recovery. Two large capacity building projects (SIFSIA and SPCR) represent about 25% of the total portfolio over the evaluation period (2006-2011).
46. In 2002 FAO established its Emergency and Rehabilitation Coordination Unit (ERCU) for Sudan aiming to respond to the humanitarian and recovery needs of communities affected by conflicts and natural disasters in the three Darfur States, the Three Transitional Areas (Abyei, South Kordofan and Blue Nile) and Eastern Sudan through interventions at regional and national level. The ERCU has managed a portfolio of emergency and recovery interventions ranging from support to small scale farming; animal health; income generation and diversification of livelihoods sources; fisheries and natural resource preservation/management. The ERCU has in addition taken the co-leadership, with the World Food Programme (WFP), of the food security and livelihoods (FSL) sector, thus taking charge of coordinating the preparation of the annual FSL Action Plan within the framework of The UN and Partners Work Plan.

3. Features of FAO CHF funded interventions in Sudan since 2006

47. As shown in **figure 4**, the CHF has been the main source of funds for FAO emergency activities in Sudan followed by OFDA and ECHO, catering for an average of 50% of the total funds managed by FAO under the Work Plan between 2006 and 2011. Since 2010, this share has been declining to around 40%.

Figure 4: FAO ERCU consolidated funding over the period 2006-2011



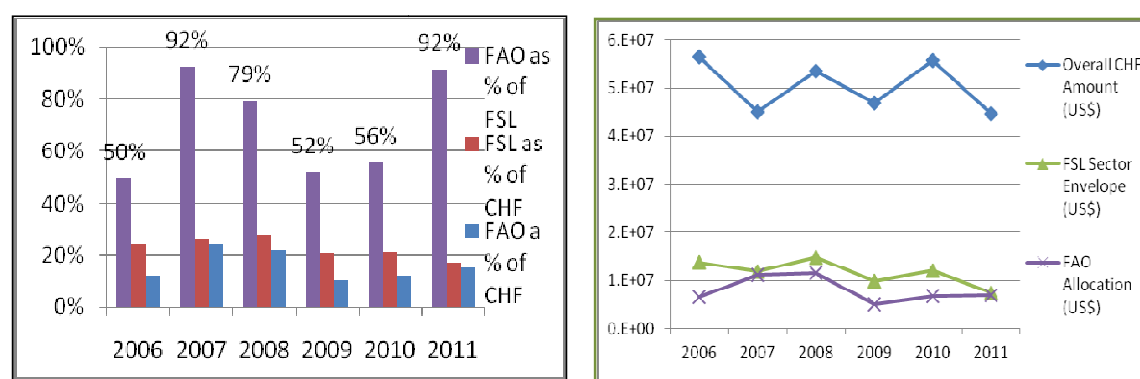
48. FAO has received an overall US\$ 48 million from CHF to support its intervention in Sudan i.e. amounting to an average of US\$ 7.5 million annually, as represented in **table 2**.

Table 2: Trends of funding by CHF, 2006-2011

Year	Overall CHF Amount (US\$)	FSL Sector Envelope (US\$)	FAO Allocation (US\$)
2006	56,510,586	13,682,497	6,797,803
2007	45,056,036	11,829,925	10,923,154
2008	53,441,569	14,745,125	11,718,343
2009	46,825,139	9,840,000	5,095,998
2010	55,800,902	11,999,999	6,682,794
2011	44,619,451	7,500,000	6,870,257
Total	302,253,684	69,597,546	48,088,349

Source: ERCU databases

49. Interventions implemented through FAO represented on average 16% of the total transfers made by CHF to sectors and about 70% of funds allocated to the Food Security and Livelihoods (FSL) sector, which represents a considerable share. Funding received from CHF by FAO to support its programme in Sudan has for that matter generally followed the same trend as that of the FSL sector, but both have been relatively detached from overall CHF funding availability trends, as illustrated on **figure 5**. The share of CHF funding dedicated to FAO activities within the FSL sector's has nonetheless varied quite extensively, ranging from 50% to over 90%.

Figure 5: compared trends and relative weight in funding available for the CHF, the FSL sector and FAO, 2006-2011

Sources: ERCU and FAO's Field Programme Management Information System (FPMIS) as at 10.01.2012¹¹

50. The amount of funds provided by donors to the CHF has been somewhat fluctuating throughout the period which may have been a reason for the irregular support given to some activities, such as coordination.

Modalities of Intervention and priority trends over time

51. Since its inception in 2006 the CHF has funded interventions implemented by FAO in Sudan aiming to support food security and livelihoods through a range of interventions, by and large supporting: i) human and productive capacity of herdsman, fishermen and small-scale farmers, through material and technical support; ii) vulnerable groups' capacities to generate, increase or diversify their income; iii) national preparedness capacities to improve responses to sudden threats to food security; iv) environment restoration and protection and v) coordination through the Food Security and Livelihood (FSL) sector / cluster. These interventions have been implemented through 45 individual projects. **Table 3** below synthesizes the variety of project activities across the 45 projects examined over the period, highlighting their key specific objectives and the activities corresponding to each of them.

Table 3: Main intervention types implemented by FAO in Sudan under the CHF

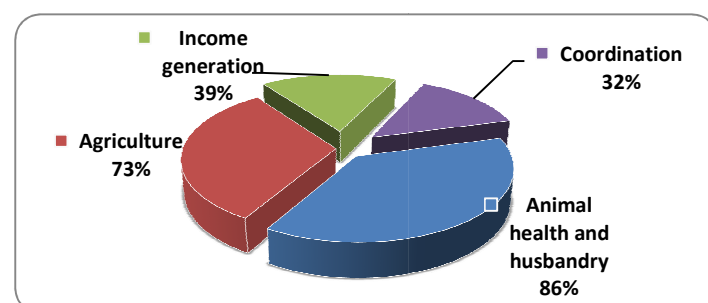
Objective	Activities
Increased agricultural (crop and vegetable) production	Distribute improved agricultural inputs : crop and vegetable seeds and quality, locally-made agricultural tools to farmers (including treadle pumps)
	Train farmers in improved farming practices (crop and vegetables) including water management and seed-bank establishing
	Train school staff in vegetable production
	Train farmers in water management (irrigation, water harvesting technique and conservation) for crops and vegetable garden
	Strengthen government capacities related to extension service
Livestock health and production improved / safeguarded during crisis	Provide inputs and services to safeguard the livestock and maintain productivity such as veterinary treatment, pasture seeds or fodder establishment support
	Train pastoralists on resilient livestock management practices and animal feed preservation and utilization techniques
	Train and equip Community Animal Health Workers (CAHWs) to increase communities capacities in trans-boundary animal diseases

¹¹ All data referred to as sourced in FPMIS is hereinafter understood as at 10.01.2012

	preparedness & response including improved livestock disease surveillance
	Emergency input for animal protection feed and shelter provision to conflict affected households (Darfur and Eastern Sudan)
	Strengthen Government capacities in trans-boundary animal diseases preparedness & response including improved livestock disease surveillance
Increased and diversified income sources & enhanced resilience capacity	Small business oriented training (blacksmithing, cheese-making, agro-processing, bee keeping or fishing) and related start-up input provision;
	Inputs distribution for small animal keeping – goats, poultry and donkeys
	Inputs and training for establishing community networks or services
Improved Coordination of FSL sector interventions	Organize and co-lead regular FSL sector meetings , provide guidance and training to FSL partners and establish and maintain databases and references for sector partners
Environment restoration and protection	Train in the production and use of fuel-efficient stoves
	Support tree seedling production and planting
	Rehabilitation /construction of water points such as <i>Hafirs</i> and water yards.
Fish production increased	Train and equip fishermen with fishing gears

52. Interventions aiming to address food security-related issues by supporting animal conditions and agriculture received most steady and highest levels of financial support from CHF throughout the period, with over 70% of all FAO projects including agricultural support and over 85% including a livestock support component. These are indeed FAO's core areas of expertise and are relevant sectors to sustain to safeguard food security at grassroots level, given their significance in Sudanese rural livelihoods. Such interventions typically entailed providing inputs and knowledge to farming or herdsman affected by a disruptive environment, to safeguard or start rebuilding their livelihoods and strengthen their resilience capacities. About 40% of all projects also incorporated a component aimed at bolstering income generating activities by supplying training and basic business start-up packages to vulnerable households. About one third of all projects incorporated support for sector coordination.

Figure 6: Relative importance of each component assessed over the period (out of 45 projects)

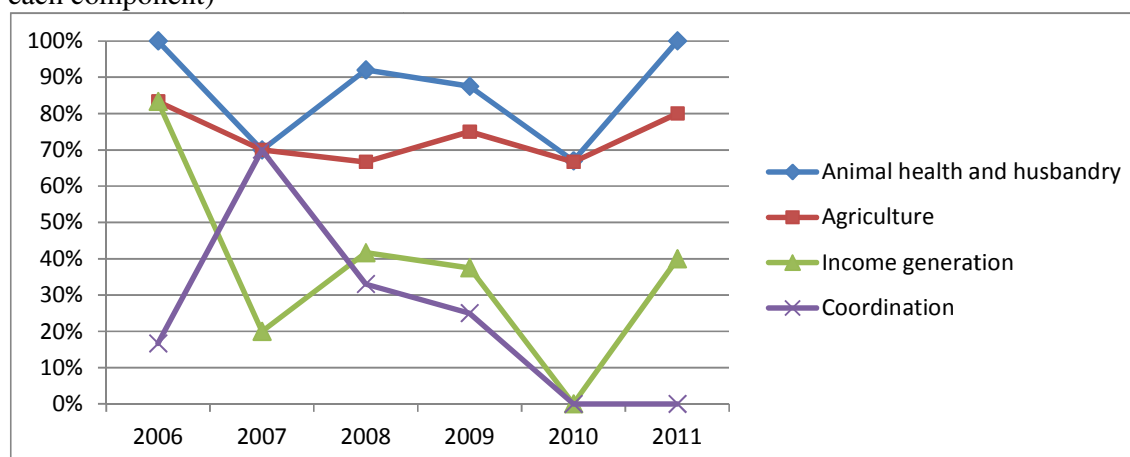


Source: ERCU and FPMIS

53. When looking at the general trends in funding priorities as far as areas of work are concerned (from a count of projects including each component), 2009 appears to mark a tendency to have a more consolidated funding approach, with fewer but larger FAO

projects funded, clearly prioritizing support on farmers or pastoralists' productive capacities over other components. In particular, FAO received no direct support from CHF for its coordination efforts since then.

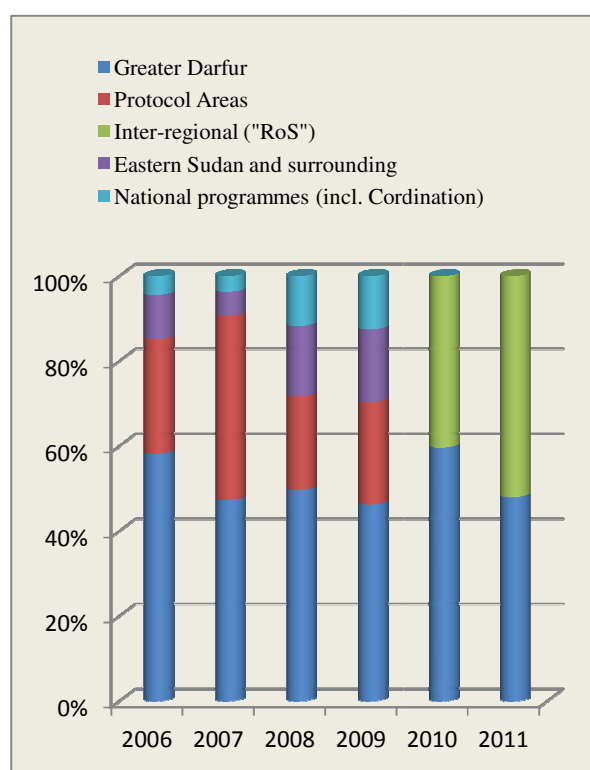
Figure 7: Evolution of funding by component, 2006-2011 (based on project count including each component)



Source: FPMIS and ERCU

Geographical distribution of work

Figure 8: Trends in regional distribution of CHF allocations per year, 2006-2011 (Source: ERCU)



54. The main region to receive CHF funding has been Darfur, that received about 52 % of all CHF funds allocated to FAO over the period. This regional priority for Darfur is not surprising considering the remit of CHF to help address most urgent needs and the highly vulnerable profile of Darfuri populations, where numbers of displaced and returnee households are the highest in the country. Over the period, the Darfur region is the only one that remained targeted as such, as Eastern Sudan, the TTAs, and other regions were, from 2010 lumped together within projects of wider scope labelled as "Rest of Sudan"¹² ("Inter-regional (RoS)" in figure 8). The sudden appearance of projects labeled as "inter-regional" and vanishing of other regions on the graph is a reflection of this shift.

55. The three protocol (or transitional) areas have been the second priority region to receive CHF funding over the period, receiving just above 20% of the

¹² No data was available disaggregated by sub-region for the period 2010-2011.

total volume of funding and the highest number of projects (38% of total). And indeed, as represented in **table 4**, the TTAs reportedly received more but much smaller grants than Darfur. The TTAs have suffered from insecurity due to regular tribal-conflict over resources (water and pasture) compounded by the conflict with South Sudan over borders and oil resources. The consequences of conflicts on the food security of populations in the three States explains the relatively steady levels of funding received by the region (though less visible as of 2010, as part of projects larger in scope).

Table 4: Relative volume of funding received by FAO from CHF for each region, 2006-2011.

Geographical area	Volume of Projects		Total Budget (DWH) ¹		Average project size (Vol. of funding / No. projects) in US\$
	No.	Share	Amount (US\$)	Share of volume	
Greater Darfur	11	24%	24,611,466	51.2%	2,237,406
Protocol Areas	17	38%	10,386,090	21.6%	610,946
Inter-regional (as of 2010)	8	18%	6,263,295	13.0%	782,912
Eastern Sudan and surrounding	6	13%	4,115,908	8.6%	685,985
National programmes (incl. Coordination) ²	7	16%	2,711,590	5.6%	
TOTAL	45	100%	48,088,349	100.0%	1,068,630

(1): As at 10.01.2012, from FAO's Field Programme Management Information System (FPMIS)

(2): National programmes included Southern Sudan, up to 2011 part of the greater Sudan in operational terms.

CHF processes and implementation arrangements

56. The Common Humanitarian Fund (CHF) is part of the overall humanitarian reform initiative and supports sector coordination and stronger humanitarian leadership, created in four countries including Sudan¹³ with the aim of “improving humanitarian outcomes through the provision of committed funds more rapidly than under previous arrangements; strengthening joint planning and coordination; directing funds towards most urgent needs; and ensuring funds are available for rapid response to unforeseen circumstances”¹⁴. The main technical secretariat role is partially filled by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), assisted for some of the technical secretariat function by the sector leads and an advisory board. UNDP acts as Administrative Agent for the CHF and as Management Agent for funds channelled through non-UN agencies. The CHF allocations are of three types:

- The *standard allocations* are made by the HC who essentially confirms allocation decisions made by the sectors through an extensive participative prioritization of needs and ranking process with the sector. Such allocations accounted for about three quarters of the allocations in 2010.
- The *special allocations* also made by the HC but with the extensive participatory process replaced by a simple advisory function from the CHF board.
- The *emergency allocations* follow the same type of process as described above. They are meant to allow addressing unforeseen emergency needs.

¹³ Other countries where a CHF is operational are DRC, CAR and Somalia.

¹⁴ CHF 2008 Annual Report

57. FAO with the support received by CHF has a responsibility to ensure that most urgent needs related to food security and livelihoods were covered to the extent possible in view of the level of funding. A large part of funds for the sector were allocated to FAO that in turn redistributed them to Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) through smaller projects. This induced a number of related functions as sector lead including a coordination role at planning stage and an oversight function.

IV. Impact assessment findings

58. This evaluation was focused on measuring the extent to which interventions supported by FAO, with funding from the CHF have produced their expected results and impact. This section presents the main findings in that respect. Some consideration is also given to aspects such as the appropriateness of inputs, that may shed light on the reported results and impact of a given intervention type.

1. Changes at household and community levels related to agriculture support

59. FAO's assistance related to crops is designed to enhance grassroots capacities to produce food by availing agricultural productive inputs and providing related training to vulnerable and needy households. Agricultural extension services are therefore provided alongside the inputs supply.

Farming Inputs' Appropriateness

60. FAO provides a combination of certified seeds of registered improved varieties (most vegetable seeds) and local landraces of locally adapted varieties (millet, sorghum, okra and cowpeas). The local landraces are the most preferred in emergency contexts for adaptability to local conditions of low input agricultural systems as well as suitability for local food habits. Most of the inputs were distributed across regions in Sudan apart from the maize that excluded Darfur and the donkey ploughs, confined to Darfur. **Table 5** shows details on input allocations at household level. Traditional hand tools were also provided for in Darfur, East Sudan and Blue Nile, treadle and motorized pumps were distributed in Darfur and East Sudan and donkey ploughs only in Darfur.

Table 5: Agricultural inputs package (quantities distributed varies between and within regions)

Crops	Allocation (Kg/HH)	Sufficient plant (feddans)	to Standard seed rate (Kg/feddan)
Sorghum	3	1	3
Millet	6	1	6
Maize	2	0.2	10
Sesame	1	0.5	2
Cowpea	2	0.2	10
Groundnuts	10	0.25	40
Vegetables	Gram/H	Sufficient plant (feddans)	to Standard seed rate (g/feddan)
Tomato	20	0.01	2 000
Watermelon	50	0.01	5 000
Okra	100	0.02	5 000
Onion	50	0.025	2 000
Cucumber	50	0.025	2 000
Pumpkin	50	0.01	5 000

Tools	No. / HH
Weeding hoe	1
Digging hoe	1
Sickle	1
Rake	1
Donkey ploughs	1/group of 2-5
Motorized pumps	1/group of 10
Treadle pumps	1/group of 2-5

Inputs appropriateness

61. The types of inputs were found to provide an appropriate mix for the different agro-ecological zones, farming systems and crops activities in Sudan. And indeed, targeted households and communities in all regions covered by the evaluation generally reported satisfaction about them. This did not preclude some requests for adjustments to be formulated, such as vegetable growers in North Darfur (Kutum) asking for leafy vegetable varieties e.g. marrow and radish and sesame seeds, to supplement diets; or beneficiaries in East Sudan and Blue Nile asking for tractors for land preparation and harvest, to help plough the heavy clay soil (black cotton type) that prevails in parts of East Sudan and Blue Nile.
62. Regarding the distribution of hand tools, farmers and implementing partners across the country mentioned that often FAO's provisions exceeded the needs. In Blue Nile farmers even reported that hand tools being available in the market at reasonable prices, were not their highest priority. The need seems to be highly variable according to the population, i.e. typically needed for returnees and less so for chronically vulnerable communities. Nonetheless, the evaluation could not evidence that such needs analysis was necessarily done.

Inputs quality

63. Overall interviewed beneficiaries generally judged the seeds to be of good quality considering in particular: germination, resistance to pests, high yielding and early maturity. The latter two were specifically mentioned for groundnuts, okra and sorghum seeds. In East Sudan 71% of households interviewed by the evaluation reported a good germination of sorghum seeds and 28% reported early maturing of crops' harvest, while 54% of vegetable growers reported high germination and good productivity of the seeds received, particularly cucumber, okra and melon. In Darfur, issues of suitability for local consumption habits were raised to a limited extent. In Blue Nile, 85% of households interviewed reported that groundnuts and okra had quick and better germination and 77% were satisfied with their early maturing and high yielding varieties.
64. The quality of tools was unevenly perceived according to the region: in North Darfur the weeding hoes were reportedly of poor quality while in East Sudan and Blue Nile all interviewed households indicated that the tools provided were of good quality. As for donkey ploughs, interviewed households in Central Darfur reported that donkey ploughs are manufactured from weak metal and did not last long.

Inputs quantity

65. The quantity of seeds distributed per household varied from region to region and within the same region. The evaluation could not establish that any standard allocation per household had been followed systematically for the different varieties. **Table 6** below shows the quantity of inputs distributed per household per region as reported to evaluators. According to FAO field offices and ERCU, this variation in quantities distributed was attributed to differences in farming practices, farmers preference of type of input and availability of funding in that specific year. By and large, implementing partners and beneficiaries accounts highlighted that quantities of sorghum seeds distributed by FAO were insufficient, and did not account for replanting needs and redistribution. In East Sudan for instance, the quantity of sorghum seeds distributed per

household was just enough to plant 2 feddans, and farmers did not consider it as a significant additional input. Nevertheless, the evaluation findings also suggest that issues related to targeting were a major compounding factor for this perception of an insignificant inputs provision by households. A section dedicated to targeting in this report will provide further details.

Table 6: Agricultural inputs allocation per household per region

Crops/Legumes	Darfur	Blue Nile	East Sudan
Sorghum	3	4	4
Millet	4	-	
Maize	0	4	
Sesame		1	
Cowpea	2	2	
Groundnuts	4-8	4	

Vegetables			
Tomato		20	
Watermelon	50-100	50-100	200
Okra	100-200	100	100
Onion	50	50	
Cucumber	50-100	50-100	200
Pumpkin		50-100	

Tools	Darfur	Blue Nile	East Sudan
Weeding hoe	1	1	1
Digging hoe	1	1	1
Sickle	1	1	1
Rake	1	1	1
Donkey ploughs	1/group of 3-4		
Motorized pumps	1/group of 10-15		
Treadle pumps	1/group of 5		

66. Farmers' seeds sources ranged from own production, to kinship, barter, market and assistance by the government and other humanitarian organization. In Blue Nile, communities visited reported that FAO seeds contributed for 100% of their vegetable seeds (okra, melon, cucumber and tomatoes), while for sorghum and groundnut, FAO provided 7% and 5% respectively. See **table 7** for details. In North Darfur, figures available for the whole state suggest that, seeds distributed by FAO represented 18% in 2010, the government's 43%, NGOs' (*Tearfund* and *ARC*) 16%, and ICRC's 23%.

Table 7: Farmers seeds sources in Blue Nile

Seed type	Quantities of seeds by source cultivated in the year 2010					Quantities of seeds by source cultivated in the year 2011				
	Own	FAO	Market	Total	% of FAO seeds	Own	FAO	Market	Total	% of FAO seeds
Sorghum (kg)	361	29	6	396	7%	399	17	0	416	4%
Groundnuts (kg)	460	28	66	554	5%	684	26	66	776	3%
Cowpeas (g)	1.5	2	2.5	6	33%	1.5	3	3	7.5	40%
Okra (g)	20	300	0	320	94%	200	40	0	240	17%

Cucumber (g)	0	450	0	450	100%	250	20	0	270	7%
Melons (g)	0	100	0	100	100%	0	20	0	20	100%
Tomatoes (g)	0	120	0	120	100%	0	0	0	0	0%

Source: semi structured interviews

Timeliness of Inputs Delivery

67. Timely delivery of inputs is determinant factor in the success of the farming season, as it allows farmers to make critical decisions on access to land and its size, its preparation, mobilization of family labour for cultivation and, savings on inputs costs which can be used to support other household's necessities. Thus, availing seeds to Sudanese households in May or latest in the first half of June is considered the most appropriate time. In Blue Nile and East Sudan inputs were reportedly received late May or early June which was appropriate. In Darfur however, inputs distribution mainly took place in July, after some household already started planting, which is considered late: In some areas of South and West Darfur where the rainy season is rather long, beneficiaries reported still managing to plant the seeds received between mid June early July, though with likely lower yields. For others, such as in North Darfur where the window for planting is short, late delivery implied losing the opportunity to plant and having to keep seeds, which comes with non-negligible logistical hurdle. **Table 8** indicates the farmers' views on the delivery of seeds in Darfur.

Table 8: Inputs Distribution time in Darfur

Area	Inputs distribution time	Beneficiaries views
Geraida (IDPs camp) South Darfur)	Mid July	Late; appropriate distribution time is in May/June
Gussa (Central Darfur)	Beginning of June	In time; the appropriate time is end of May beginning of June
Dankoj (Central Darfur)	In 2010 in July; In 2011 on 18 th July	Late; the appropriate time is end of May beginning of June
Treig (Central Darfur)	Late June	Late; the appropriate time is May
Kutum –Fata Barno (North Darfur)	August	Always distributed late; sometimes in August and sometimes in January (vegetables). June is the appropriate time for distribution of seeds for rain-fed farming and October is appropriate time to distribute seeds for winter cropping
Kutum- Kasab (North Darfur)		Always distributed late; appropriate time is the first week of June

Performance in Extension Services Delivery

68. Alongside the distributions of input, FAO supported agricultural extension services, either through MoA staff or implementing partners, often themselves seconded from the MoA. As reported by the interviewed households across regions, extension messages delivered included:

- sowing dates for different seeds
- seed rates and planting spaces
- weeding and thinning of crops
- pest control and reporting of infestation to plant protection department

- seeds selection and storage
 - harvest practices and techniques
 - irrigation methods and opening of irrigation channels (reported by interviewees in East Sudan)
69. The extension approaches adopted by FAO implementing partners were either through (i) training of trainers (ToTs) or (ii) delivery of short extension messages in meetings organized on the day of distribution of inputs. The ToT approach involved selecting members of the community to train them on delivering certain extension messages, so that they rollout the messages to intended target beneficiaries. This approach, widely employed in East Sudan and Darfur, was reported to be inadequately implemented in that community leaders were in most cases targeted as trainers, which proved to be an inappropriate choice considering their political and social role, and the limited time they had to devote to extension messages delivery. The second approach, was also reported to be inadequate as distribution days are too hectic for beneficiaries to pay attention to messages delivered. Also, as some households send representatives to collect seeds, who can be children or elders, the messages are not necessarily delivered to farmers. In Darfur, it was reported that only 50% of the farmers were present on the day of receiving the seeds, while only 40% were available in Blue Nile. The others reported that they were unaware about delivery of extension messages on the distribution days. The contents of extension messages, differences were also reportedly of uneven quality between locations and illustrated the variations in the abilities of “messengers”. Furthermore, it was reported that no follow-up visits were conducted to assess the outcome of extension work on farming practices. Budget limitation was cited as the main reason for not conducting follow up visits, as IPs mentioned that funds passed through by FAO are barely enough to cover the cost of distribution of inputs.
70. Related to this, the evaluation notes that parallel to CHF-funded projects, FAO has been supporting the Sudan Productive Capacity Recovery Programme (SPCRP) that has involved revitalizing the extension capacity of the state MoA provision of technical expertise to Ministry staff and material support to the extension department infrastructure. Surprisingly, the link between the SPCRP and FAO emergency programme was found to be weak or non-existent, which is considered as a cruel missed opportunity to synergize complementary aid programmes. The request, repeatedly heard from many stakeholders in communities and the Ministry offices, for more extension services provides further evidence that the quality and quantity of extension services delivered by the Ministry is not good enough to enable farmers acquire useful additional knowledge on farming. Certainly, improving extension services delivery is an area where FAO can make a significant qualitative contribution.

Results of CHF-type interventions on agricultural production

71. The evaluation aimed to identify what have been the direct results of the support provided to farmers through the CHF funded interventions supported by FAO and its partners, and the outcome on agricultural practices in communities supported. The changes that could be attributed to these interventions mainly related to increases in surfaces cultivated, in productivity and thus in overall production. The changes reported being quite different for vegetables growers compared to farmers who received millet and sorghum seeds, the two are presented separately.

Results related to vegetable production

72. Farmers met in the three regions who received vegetable seeds reported to be very pleased with the results they achieved with vegetable seeds. In terms of change in surfaces cultivated with vegetables, although the evaluation was not able to systematically measure the magnitude, ad hoc evidence confirmed farmers' general reports that production largely increased. In East Sudan, farmers reported having increased their water melon gardens by one feddan on average. In Blue Nile, farmers reported increasing surfaces from 1.5 feddan to 4.7 feddan for vegetables and from 21 feddan to 66 feddans for groundnuts, both representing a 68% increase in area. Some reported growing groundnuts only since they received support with FAO seeds, as such variety was unaffordable to them before. The areas of groundnut cultivation reported by farmers in Darfur before and after they received assistance also evidenced that surfaces increased by 171%. In South Darfur, areas cultivated before farmers received seeds was 0.16 feddan, while household reported to grow 1.3 feddan in 2010, and 1.6 feddan in 2011, i.e. 812% and 1000% increases respectively.
73. Changes in productivity are difficult for farmers to report on, in particular as many factors contribute to changes in production, including increased surfaces and weather conditions. However, the fact that farmers have sought to grow as much vegetables as their capacity allowed suggests that they had noted that such type of agriculture was profitable to them, and therefore that vegetables grown had good productivity. The possibility of accessing good vegetable varieties was allegedly considered as an incentive for farmers to cultivate more land, as reported for cowpeas in Blue Nile, cucumber and melon in East Sudan and groundnuts in Darfur. In addition, some of the varieties provided represented multiple benefits as in addition to the food and income gains, the residues of some plants could be used as fodder for feeding small ruminants for leafy vegetables; or in construction for groundnuts crusts.
74. In East Sudan, 54% of farmers reported increased vegetables production, with exceptionally good results for watermelon and cucumber. Groundnuts growers interviewed in Darfur and Blue Nile also declared having noted an increase in their production, the latter summing up to 70% of interviewed households. Nonetheless farmers in Darfur deplored a production decrease in 2011 as a result of deficit in annual rainfall and pests' infestation, as illustrated below. Such inconsistent results *in fine* illustrate the extent to which production remains highly vulnerable to a variety of factors, including climatic conditions and conflict.

Table 9: Groundnut harvest in Darfur as per interviewed households' reports

	South Darfur (Geraida IDP camp)		Central Darfur (Gussa return village)		North Darfur (Kutum)	
	2010	2011	2010	2011	2010	2011
Volume of harvest (sack/45kg)	16.8	15.6	7	11	NA	NA

Results related to crop production

75. Interviews across regions indicated that the inputs distributed had generally contributed to a slight increase in total areas cultivated, though rather inconsistently, possibly reflecting

the uneven effectiveness of targeting across communities. In Blue Nile, the total increase in areas cultivated by sorghum was reportedly limited, and could be considered between 5-10 %. In East Sudan the total areas cultivated reportedly increased by 27% in 2010 and 31% in 2011. The FAO package was designed to cultivate an area of 3 feddans only, 2 feddans with sorghum¹⁵. According to met community leaders and most IPs, the amounts of seeds distributed were too limited to foster significant change in cereal production. The contribution of FAO seeds was acknowledged in the savings made from purchasing seeds from the market but this benefit is considered to be insignificant. In Darfur the increase in areas under cultivation varied depending on state and targeted beneficiaries¹⁶. In South Darfur, farmers living in IDP camps reported increasing their area cultivated with millet and sorghum from 0.8 feddans in 2009 to 1.3 feddans in 2010 and 2 feddans in 2011. The increase represents 162% and 250% for 2010 and 2011 respectively. In Central Darfur, the area under millet and sorghum cultivation increased from 2.6 feddans per household to 4.8 feddans in both 2010 and 2011. This represents an increase of 185%. In North Darfur the areas under cereals cultivation increased from 1.3 feddan to 1.6 feddan representing an increase of 81% in 2010 and 2011. Brought to an overall figure for Darfur, the cereal cultivated land increased by 63%.

76. The main reasons for the increase in crop land in the three regions can be attributed to a combination of factors, many evidencing the undisputable role of FAO inputs distributions:
 - The increased accessibility of inputs, distributed for free, for vulnerable households, such as farmers in Gereida IDP camp who reported growing groundnuts, an expensive seed, for the first time since the start of the conflict;
 - For some, the availability of tools among which donkey ploughs in Darfur, which favored the increase in area under cultivation;
 - The distribution of improved varieties, as a motivating factor for farmers to cultivate more land, compounded by the fact that they were free.
 - The reduction of General Food Distribution (GFD) by WFP and other humanitarian actors, that encouraged farmers mainly IDPs and returnees to cultivate more land;
77. As far as production and productivity are concerned, information gathered from the field inquiry and desk review evidence inconsistent results. In Blue Nile, interviewed households' production data or reported surfaces cultivated did not evidence that productivity had increased as a result of FAO seeds and extension interventions. On the contrary, the calculated production figures reflect decrease in productivity for sorghum (as with groundnuts, ref. above section). The reported insufficient rainfall, pests infestation, destruction of crops by animals or inability to harvest because of the fighting between the government troops and the SPLA are so many factors that were at play and could explain the lack of production gains.
78. In Darfur, though it was difficult to quantify the increase in production from before CHF interventions, interviewed households reports generally inferred that harvests had increased since they received inputs and mentioned their satisfaction regarding the superior productivity of improved seeds distributed. In regions where farmers could extend their cultivated surfaces, farmers generally mentioned benefiting from an increase in cereal production in 2010, but again lamented that in 2011 the annual rainfall and pests infestation negatively impacted the average harvest of cereals, as per figure reported

¹⁵ The optimum seed rate for sorghum is 5.5 pound per feddan. Therefore 4 kg is equal to 9 pounds, which is less by 2 pounds than what is required for 2 feddans.

¹⁶ See section on targeting issues under heading 5, page 49 of this report.

below. In North Darfur, where access to land is a constraint, beneficiaries interviewed could not expand their surfaces cultivated but still reported increased production, thereby inferring that the crops they received had a better yield.

79. In East Sudan farmers in the villages covered by the evaluation faced crop failure for the second successive year. In 2010 the respondents reported that many areas were subjected to floods leading to crop damage while the shortage of rainfall in 2011 was the main cause of crop failure. **Table 10** shows the declining trend of sorghum production. The average production was 2.5 sacks per feddans prior to FAO assistance, 2.2 sacks per feddan in 2010 and 1.6 sack in 2011. More than 54% of the households surveyed faced complete crop failure in 2011, with only 23% of the respondents reporting a slight increase in their production; 77% reporting decreased production and 9% maintained same level of production.

Table 10: Cereal harvest results in Darfur and East Sudan, as reported by interviewed households (sack of 90 Kg/feddan)

Year	South Darfur (Geraida IDP camp)	Central Darfur (Gussa return village)	North Darfur (Kutum)	Crops harvest in East Sudan
Before CHF	NA	NA	NA	2.5
Year 2010	2.1	8	2.4	2.1
Year 2011	1.75	9	1.8	1.6

80. These results are important reminders that productivity and production remain highly dependent on a combination of factors including fertile land, good rain, good quality inputs, pests control and appropriate agricultural practices. The package of support provided by FAO included quality inputs, which have contributed positively for increasing production and productivity.
81. Households who received treadle and motorized pumps in Darfur reported that their use boosted the agricultural production. The Community Development Association in Darfur (CDA) reported that the water pumps in Debnege village in West Darfur helped women groups double their vegetable grown areas, and Oxfam-Geneina reported that the distribution of water pumps for vegetable gardens watering as a major success story amongst their programme. No strong views were expressed about the benefits fostered by hand tools received, anyhow difficult to measure, aside from the mention of savings on the households budget. On the other hand, in South and Central Darfur, interviewed NGO staff and community leaders reported that donkey ploughs were considered priority over seeds that could be purchased at local markets as quantities required are small. In such regions where land preparation has a short time window, ploughs can make a difference for farmers. Renting a plough in 2011 was SDG 120 and expected to increase to SDG 170 in 2012. The price of a plough this year is SDG 220, which is unaffordable to IDPs and other vulnerable households. Such situation typically would justify for FAO to diversify and expand the inputs package.

Increase in knowledge and farming practices

82. The improvement of farmers' knowledge and practices is assumed by the evaluation to have been limited, considering the inadequacy of approaches applied (see paragraph 69). This did not preclude some perceived benefits as in Blue Nile where about 40% of interviewed households judged the extension messages received helpful. Farmers who

reported acquiring knowledge mentioned the topics of spacing, weeding, timing for cultivation, seed rate, identification of pests' infestation and opening of irrigation channels. The insufficient results of extension services was indeed confirmed by quasi unanimous views from Government staff, IPs or community leaders that more support to extension work is indeed necessary. The large requests for more heard in all regions from most stakeholders, from farmers themselves to IPs. Evaluators however noted an interesting case, in Kutum, where farmers were less interested in the extension services being supported by aid agencies due to the fact that extension services were well established and extension agents were available from another on-going project in the area.

Impact of agricultural support on food security and livelihoods

83. From the information gathered in the three regions, the support provided to farmers in the form of vegetable and groundnuts seeds seems to have had a remarkable impact on households' food security, increasing both their consumption and their access to income. By and large, vegetables consumption was reported to have increased in all households who benefitted from vegetable seeds, inferring richer diets during the period of the vegetable harvest season (October –December). This is seen as particularly positive in relation to the micronutrients intake it entails for presumably vulnerable households during the lean season. Farmers appreciated being able to access varieties such as cucumber, melons and cowpeas which had until then been too expensive or unknown to them. Households interviewed also mentioned higher income levels since they received support. IDPs in Gereida camp in South Darfur reported selling 6 sacks out of a production of 15-16 sacks. The 6 sacks were sold at SDG 110 per sack, meaning an income of SDG 660. The IDPs considered the additional income significant. In Kutum, North Darfur, the interviewees' responses varied, the IDPs in the camps used the vegetables production for household consumption mainly whereas returnees in Fata Barno village reported an average income of SDG 2,700 from sales of onion, cucumber and/or melon in 2011. Several IPs also mentioned increased school enrolment as a direct result of the increased income and wealth. In Darfur, other cases were seen of households getting additional income from groundnuts residues' sales for brick making, highlighting the value of those varieties that can produce multiple benefits.
84. Support to cereals cultivation has had a more limited impact on households' food security and livelihoods. Mainly, the benefit reported by recipient households related to the extended time during which cereals were available for consumption. The average production from seeds received from FAO is 3 sacks/90kg of sorghum. This represents about 37% of the household food harvest, which can be interpreted as 37% of households food stock of cereals is obtained from FAO seeds. This amount of food is sufficient to meet the household needs for cereals for over 3 months. In Blue Nile, 46% of households interviewed reported an increase in their food stocks for one additional month of consumption, while in Darfur the reported increase was sufficient for two to five additional months. In Darfur, disaggregated information provided by IDPs in the camps suggests their average production for a household is 2 sacks of 90kg which is enough to feed the household for 2 months. Increased cereals consumption can logically be inferred as a result of the reported bigger food stocks, as cereals are grown mainly for household consumption.
85. In West Darfur, the MoA and NGOs such as CIS and CDA both reported that cereals, groundnuts and oil were available in local markets for longer period in 2011 than it used to be. Though it is difficult to attribute this to FAO intervention alone, it can be inferred that FAO interventions contributed to this.

86. It is important to note that the reported increased food access, availability or consumption was more significant for people in Darfur compared to East Sudan or Blue Nile. This notable difference reflects the uneven “baseline” situations of targeted beneficiaries between more stable and established communities compared to the more vulnerable population in Darfur. The targeted beneficiaries in Darfur are mostly IDPs, returnees and other conflict affected host communities. Access to services and inputs is very limited to these categories of beneficiaries and increase in the land holding or input quantity represents a substantial support to households' food security.
87. In sum, evaluators judged that some of the positive changes could be to some extent attributed to the interventions supported by CHF funds, principally due to the positive effect on vulnerable households of free and improved seeds. The cutbacks in food aid also seem to have represented another conducive factor, mentioned in Darfur as a disincentive to cultivate.

Intervention gaps

88. Nonetheless, the positive results should not overshadow some missed opportunities to have achieved yet better results through better-designed or more comprehensive interventions in support to farmers. On the design side, more adequate modalities to transfer knowledge to farmers, a more significant inputs package and efforts to promote effective household targeting and improving the timeliness of distributions have already been mentioned above for better impact for beneficiary households.
89. Furthermore, some of the external factors that negatively affected production related to land access issues, or climate related hazards could have been better tackled if interventions in the FSL sector favoured more integrated packages of inputs and services. Local communities and implementing partners in the three regions covered by the evaluation confirmed that FAO agricultural interventions are necessary but not sufficient to contribute to increasing households' food availability. In those conflict and drought affected areas an integrated package of agricultural inputs supported by extension services and pest control is required. Also, just as ploughs or pumps have been described as being powerful boosters of the benefits farmers could draw from the good seeds they received, more support with water harvesting would have been required to attain more significant results. The example of Kassala, where most farmers reported a production failure is symptomatic of the insufficiency of the intervention package that has been supported so far: supporting farmers on water harvesting or other irrigation methods could have enabled them to safeguard their production. In East Sudan implementing partners mentioned that seeds and tools without adequate extension services including water harvesting techniques is inadequate to support household food security as they put it “*a sauce without bread*”. Water is very scarce in East Sudan and whatever rainfall water available is not trapped properly it is likely that it will run off and benefit the plants less. Land tillage and construction of small terraces could make a difference for small farmers in East Sudan. See **box (1)** on the NGO ACCORD's experience in integrated agricultural services for drought affected population in East Sudan.

Box (1) ACCORD's experience in East Sudan

ACCORD realized that seeds and tools allocated by FAO were adequate to cultivate 3 feddans, an insufficient surface to produce enough staple food for the household in rain fed conditions. Therefore ACCORD mobilized additional resources to help farmers reach the minimum required area of 5 feddans cultivated. Additionally, the NGO facilitated organizing

the farmers into small association aiming to identify needs, find resources, share experiences and advocate for farmers' rights. A demonstration farm was established in villages selected to introduce new varieties of seeds as well as new agricultural techniques. Communities were also mobilized to construct terraces based on standards/specifications provided by the Ministry of Agriculture in Kassala. ACCORD provided machineries while farmers provided free labor. The construction of one terrace based on 2011 estimates costs SDG 220,000 (USD 50,000) and it lasts for 2-3 years.

Success of subsistence farming in these vulnerable environments requires an integrated approach to reach significant results. Farmers supported by ACCORD were able to produce enough food covering on average 7 -9 months of household annual needs.

2. Household and community level changes related to animal health support

90. FAO interventions in support to animal health aimed at enhancing livestock owners' capacities to safeguard livestock assets through the use of veterinary services. They encompassed vaccination, curative services and training of Community Animal Health Workers (CAHWs). The package of interventions has been developed in close collaboration and consultation with the Ministry of Animal Resources at both federal and states level, which in Sudan keep a monopoly over vaccination services and hence defines the standard vaccines and drugs package based on epidemiological surveillance results. Vaccines are procured from the Central Laboratory for Veterinary Research which is the only authorized supplier of vaccines in the country. Drugs are procured with approval of the National Corporation for Drugs, Toxins and Medical Supplies. Accordingly, quality control is maintained through the regulations made by the MoAR on drugs supplies and prescriptions. **Table 11** below shows the standard types of vaccines and drugs provided through FAO interventions. Therefore, interventions are described as relevant and effective to Sudan context.

Table 11: Vaccines and drugs types and sources

No	Vaccine/drug	Sources/Quality control
1	Hemorrhagic septicemia vaccine	Central Laboratory for Veterinary Research
2	Sheep Box vaccine	Central Laboratory for Veterinary Research
3	Anthrax vaccine	Central Laboratory for Veterinary Research
4	BQ vaccine	Central Laboratory for Veterinary Research
5	PPR vaccine	Central Laboratory for Veterinary Research
6	CBPP vaccine	Central Laboratory for Veterinary Research
7	Ox tetracycline injection L.A. 100 ml	National Corporation for Drugs, Toxins and Medical Supplies
8	Ivermectine injection 50 ml	National Corporation for Drugs, Toxins and Medical Supplies
9	Albendazole drench 10%	National Corporation for Drugs, Toxins and Medical Supplies
10	Tylosine injection	National Corporation for Drugs, Toxins and Medical Supplies
11	Quinapyramine inj	National Corporation for Drugs, Toxins and Medical Supplies
12	Diamenazine Diminazene aceturate	National Corporation for Drugs, Toxins and Medical Supplies

13	Cypermil pour on	National Corporation for Drugs, Toxins and Medical Supplies
14	Ox tetracycline powder	National Corporation for Drugs, Toxins and Medical Supplies
15	Albendazole sulfoxide inj 2.5%	National Corporation for Drugs, Toxins and Medical Supplies

91. This evaluation is mainly concerned with the impact of livestock interventions in support to food security and livelihoods of intended target beneficiaries and less so with the technical aspects of the livestock sector. Impact has been assessed based on improvement in animal health and husbandry and the outcome of that on household's availability, access and utilization of food.

Appropriateness of implementation features of livestock support interventions

Livestock Vaccination services

92. Vaccination is mostly undertaken and/or supervised by MoAR staff. In areas where government staff's access is difficult, implementing partners (IPs) conduct vaccination with support from ministry staff and CAHWs at community levels. Animals are vaccinated against anthrax, sheep pox, BQ, PPR and CBPP.

93. In Darfur the vaccination coverage varied according to the State: in South Darfur (Kass) both livestock keepers and authorities consistently reported a coverage of 75 -90% of stocks while in both Central Darfur and North Darfur the coverage was below 70%. **Table 12** below shows the vaccination coverage by state.

Table 12: percentage of vaccination coverage by state in Darfur

South Darfur	
Hashab (SSI)	75%
Dar Al Salam (FGD)	88%
MoAR	75-90%
West /Central Darfur	
DRC (progress report)	65%
Sulu (FGDs)	50%
North Darfur	
COOPI (30% of the figure that provide by MoAR)	30%
Kutum – Bor Saeid (SSI)	50%

94. The lower coverage in Central and North Darfur was due to a number of factors:

- *Poor mobilization of livestock owners:* information on vaccination campaigns not properly communicated resulted in some livestock owners missing the vaccination;
- *Distances to or location of vaccination Centres:* in some areas veterinary services were hard to reach for households, such as in Sulu, Central Darfur requiring 3-4 hours drive, or in Kutum, North Darfur, 50 Kms away from the nearest vaccination centre. Reportedly, some community leaders or CAHW use their influence to decide on the center's location.
- *Insecurity:* in some areas of Darfur livestock keepers were reluctant to drive their animals through certain areas or avoided interacting with some people from other ethnic groups in the vaccination centre;

- *Limited vaccination period:* In Kass and Sulu in Central Darfur, vaccination days were reported to be limited to 3, which was not enough for some livestock keepers living away from the centre to catch the vaccination campaign.
 - *Discouraging rumors:* in some areas the community leaders charged nominal fees (SDG 20 per 100 heads) to cater for tea or food for voluntary community members which led communities to believe that the vaccination was granted against payment and discouraged them to show up.
95. In East Sudan, vaccination coverage varied from one locality to another. It was reported to be low in villages covered by the evaluation: 10% of animals were reportedly vaccinated in Tahmyam (Haya locality) due to limited resources and reports from veterinary units in New Halfa and Aroma Localities confirmed the same situation whereby the campaign could not stretch to cover all livestock areas. Livestock owners in search of water and fodder missed the campaigns, which was in some instances addressed by the veterinary department sending another team to cover missed herds. In Blue Nile there are no figures available for vaccination coverage but households interviewed stated that the vaccination services provided had covered all the animals owned by community members.
96. In the three regions covered by the evaluation respondents expressed their satisfaction with respect to the timeliness of delivery of vaccinations campaigns, organized at the time when livestock are congregated around grazing areas or water points. In East Sudan, timeliness of vaccination is governed by movement of livestock owners, ideally in April – June when most of livestock is in the vicinity of larger towns. However, few cases of late vaccination were reported in North Darfur and livestock keepers emphasized the importance of conducting second vaccination round.

Livestock treatment services and training of CAHWs

97. Through the MoAR and IPs FAO provided drugs, kits and training for Community Animal Health Workers (CAHWs) to administer animal health diagnosis and treatment at the community level. The CAHWs are paraprofessionals selected by the community based on certain criteria, trained by MoAR or IPs and supplied with kits and drugs to perform basic animal treatment at the community level in remote areas. The drugs supplied are based on a standard package developed in consultation with MoAR. Drugs are prescribed by CAHWs according to MoAR treatment protocols. Curative services provided by CAHWs include: diagnosis of illness, prescription of drugs and physical treatment of the animals. Complicated cases are referred by CAHWs for further treatment to localities or states capitals. CAHWs allegedly report on mortality and morbidity to MoAR at the locality or state level. Animals treated by the CAHWs in villages or IDP camps and rural areas included horses, donkeys, goats, sheep and poultry. Cattle were also treated in rural areas and camels in Darfur.
98. The training package provided by FAO for the CAHWs included a 2 weeks of training based on a 2 sessions per day with practical training. CAHWs were trained on main animal diseases, animal husbandry, main internal and external parasites and control methods, wounds treatment, reporting, meat inspection techniques, practical training on animal vaccination and drugs administration methods.
99. Most of the CAHWs interviewed by the evaluation teams in the three regions received the initial training and reported being satisfied over their quality and having acquired basic knowledge about animal treatments. Kits provided were helpful in addressing needs at

community levels (only in East Sudan did CAHWs lament that standard kits missed some essential instruments) and drugs were of good quality and quantity in relation to the number of cases they could cover per day. However, as drugs quantities reduced in 2010 and 2011, and presumably as their activity became more established and popular in particular where treatments were provided for free, drugs supplied were reportedly only sufficient to handle half of the cases that were presented to them.

100. On the other hand, CAHWs reported that there is limited or no follow up provided to them as part of the project implementation teams or FAO. They regretted the absence of refresher training sessions considered important to keep their skills up to standards. It worth mentioning that some CAHWs supported by NGOs outside the scope of FAO's support did receive follow up and refresher training, as reported by World Vision in South Darfur. The evaluation judged the training curriculum provided for CAHWs as adequate however noted the lack of follow up and refresher trainings as important shortcomings.
101. In the three states covered by the evaluations, trained CAHWs have increasingly been available in villages and camps. In some areas of Darfur, two CAHWs were even trained per village. CAHWs in Blue Nile reported seeing on average 100 cases per month, and in the IDP camps of Essalam in South Darfur, up to 200 per month.

Connectedness of support to veterinary services

102. CAHWs are recognized paraprofessional by the Ministry of Animal Resources at both federal and states level, to provide basic services where veterinary services are not available or target beneficiaries are inaccessible by the government services, as in Darfur. In that respect, the need to link CAHWs to veterinary units at locality levels is evident. In Kassala State trained CAHWs indeed report to veterinary officers at the locality level and some of the good performing CAHWs are employed by MoAR and considered as regular staff of the ministry.
103. In Darfur most CAHWs have been supported by NGOs especially in areas inaccessible to government staff, including some IDP camps. NGOs provided regular support including incentives for MoAR staff to strengthen CAHWs capacities, as reported by WV in South Darfur and many others. According to most NGOs' approach, drugs were provided on a cost recovery basis, to promote the continuity and sustainability of services. On the other hand, FAO did not consistently promote the same approach with CAHWs it supported: while in some regions where the situation was relatively stable, CAHWs established their services on a cost-recovery basis, in Darfur CAHWs supplemented drugs for free. In addition to the sustainability problem encountered by the latter, who had to close shop as soon as they ran out of medicine or material, the evaluation also deplored the fact that FAO did not apply a consistent approach, in line with other agencies', which at least in most recent years is considered appropriate even in Darfur. The dual approach has undermined the legibility of the FAO Strategy.
104. Additionally, it was reported by CAHWs in Blue Nile and East Sudan that the link between the CAHWs and private pharmacies was weak. In East Sudan, CAHWs contacted the pharmacies on their initiatives like any other livestock owner in the state and sold drugs with a marginal profit at the community level. For sustainability purposes, it is crucial that such casual links between the CAHWs and local pharmacies is facilitated and institutionalized to ensure that CAHWs have access to regular supply of drugs that can support sustaining and maintaining the veterinary services at community level. The

evaluation team in Darfur came across good examples whereby CAHWs worked closely with the private pharmacies and acquired drugs that they sold within communities at affordable prices, such as in Kutum where the CAHW was able to generate an income of SDG 50 – 75 per week, which he described as good income.

105. Overall, the evaluation found that the role of CAHWs is recognized and that a lot has been achieved in establishing this function at the community level. CAHWs in East Sudan are well linked to the MoAR but more work is needed in that respect in other regions. The link of CAHWs to private sector is weak and it requires more efforts to strengthen and institutionalize it with the veterinary services. Ultimately, introducing cost recovery for veterinary services is deemed necessary in certain areas and is strongly supported by the MoAR as well as many NGOs in Sudan. By letting the service be delivered for free, FAO and its partners have promoted an unsustainable approach and undermined efforts made by others to “normalize” the system. Regarding vaccination campaigns too, MoAR representatives in East Sudan and Darfur raised concerns about the FSL cluster approach of free service delivery and if it is still justified to provide free veterinary services in some parts of Darfur, there is no evident rationale to maintain free services in East Sudan and Blue when the situation is conducive to cost-recovery and many other actors are moving away from free service provision.

Results of support to animal health on the livestock sector

Safeguarding and increase of livestock assets and by-products

106. In Darfur all interviewed households reported that the vaccination was very effective in preventing diseases outbreaks and generally reducing diseases prevalence, as reports in an inter-agency assessment mission reports in Sulu in January 2011. Additionally, interviews and Focus Group discussions carried out by the evaluation team revealed cuts in mortality rates among goats, sheep and cattle. **Figure 9** below show the reduction in mortality and increase in animals in the three Darfur States between 2010 -2011 as reported by people met by the team. These findings confirm that animals have been safeguarded through both vaccination and treatment, including for IDPs in the three Darfur States who also reported increased herds: some small from 3 to 5 goats per household while others reported substantial increases from 4 to 19 goats. On average the increase in number of goats mentioned across interviewed households was around 50%. A CAHW in Dreij camp in South Darfur reported vaccinating 300 animals, representing just 30% of the total number of animals in the camp.

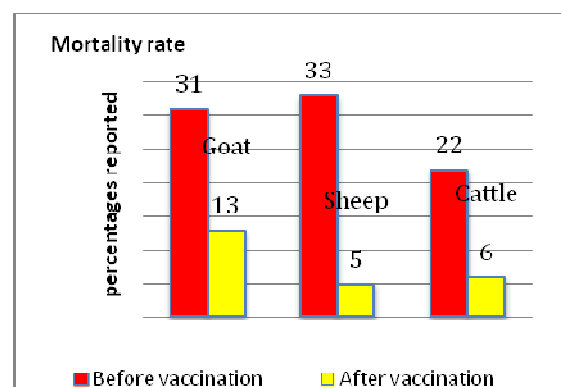
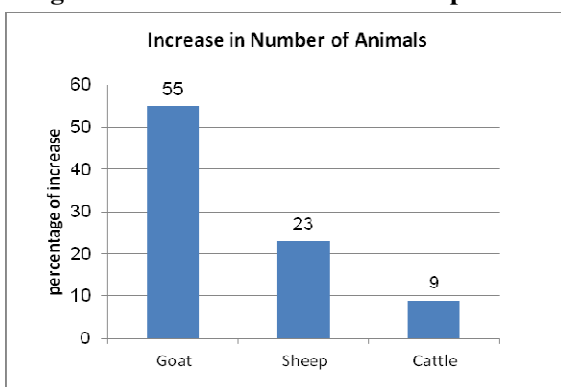


Figure 9: Interviewed households reports on animal health evolution in Darfur

107. Though no figures could be found for the increase in number of animals in East Sudan and Blue Nile, in general, interviewed households in the three states reported reduction in mortality and morbidity and increasing delivery rates since treatment and vaccinations has been available interventions. The vaccination campaigns contributed to reduction of mortality rates and diseases outbreak, improved immunity status of herds and

ultimately increased production. In Blue Nile, professionals even reported disappearance of several epidemics that used to . The curative services contributed to eliminating parasitic infestation among treated animals through de-worming. In East Sudan, more than 90% of the respondents reported good veterinary services and remarkably reduced mortality and animal diseases incidence. In Blue Nile, several key informants, such as community sheiks and the director of the animal resources administration concurred in estimating a reduction in mortalities rates by around 80% since the FAO support. According to the Director, around 90% of the vaccination campaigns and the cases treated were covered through the FAO assistance.

“I would have lost all my cattle if I did not have access to vaccination. This service reduces spread of diseases in our area and consequently reduces death of animals”. Animal owner in Aroma Locality, Kassala State.

108. The undisputed accounts of animal conditions having improved also implied that the production of meat and milk in turn improved in quantity and quality. The sales benefits are good proxy indicators of the level of productivity gains that occurred for supported pastoralists. Although the impact of livestock support on household access to income is covered in the following section, the following exemple can provide a sense of the magnitude of the benefits reported in terms of productivity. In Blue Nile the average monthly sale of animals per household increased from a benefit of SDG 1,020 to SDG 1,990 and income from milk increased from SDG 480 to SDG 600, representing increases of 95% and 25% respectively. Around 40% started selling milk only after receiving health services from the FAO projects.

Improved quality and accessibility of service

109. With respect to the service delivered, a consensus emerged from pastoralist households, community chiefs and CAHW in the three regions that the quality of treatment improved tremendously since the intervention of the FAO programme in 2008. Most noted that the need to provide more and better veterinary services accessible to communities was high. Pastoralists distinguished the following improvements:

- The presence of the CAHW / health unit implied that medicines and diagnosis capacity was available and at reasonable prices (sometimes even for free);
- The increased physical accessibility of the service was noted as an important gain, eliminating a disincentive to refer to a veterinarian, as well as facilitating a timely – and thereby often more effective- response to disease cases;

- The level of technical knowledge of CAHWs was also evident to their clients who noted a better quality diagnosis and results of the treatment. In comparison, households in Blue Nile reported that in the past only one medicine was administered treat any diseases.

Increase in Knowledge of livestock owners

110. Generally, FAO interventions had limited involvement in livestock extension services. However, extension messages were delivered during vaccination campaigns and through CAHWs. In Darfur and East Sudan however interviewed households reported a change in perception about the importance of vaccination and treatment. This can also largely be attributed to the presence of CAHWs in or closer to the communities, which has implied a closer relationship and exchange with livestock owners. In the past some livestock owners believed that vaccination caused diseases and contributed to abortion of animals. This has changed dramatically as the same households with those perceptions reported to have vaccinated their animals last year in Kassala state.

Impact of support to livestock on households and community's food security and livelihoods

111. In the three regions covered by the evaluation interviewed households concurred in judging FAO interventions in support to livestock health highly effective in supporting their food security. Higher impact was even achieved compared to agriculture, and was measured in terms of improved consumption; increased revenue from animals sale; enhanced asset base and subsequent enhanced sense of resilience by livestock owners and finally enhanced knowledge on animal husbandry and awareness regarding animal health.
112. Households who benefited from veterinary services as a result of the assistance of FAO projects reported being able to consume more meat and milk since their animals had been cared for. In Blue Nile there was a consensus among the pastoralists interviewed at all levels (households, community leaders and CAHW) that their dependence on their own animals for food and cash has increased after FAO animal health interventions. Around 37% of households met reported slaughtering on average 3 animals per month compared to maximum one per month, while in Darfur, 87% reported increases in milk production. In Darfur too, 78% of interviewed households reported improvement in milk production and consumption. In eastern regions, 87% of interviewed beneficiaries reported increasing their consumption of milk and 75% reported increase consumption of meat, usually for special social occasions.
113. All the same, households reported increased revenue from the sale of animals: the example presented above of increased benefits from the sale of meat and milk in Blue Nile, is one amongst other accounts of the monetary benefits that animal health improvement have represented. In Darfur 83% reported increasing their income from livestock product sale, with an average reported increase in income around 30. In East Sudan, 43% of interviewed households reported increased income from the sale of milk and by-products and 75% reported increase from sale of animals, although the latter is also explained by raising prices of animals. With the additional revenue, households acquire additional food and non-food items, thereby improving their livelihoods base and food security. In addition to these tangible impact indicators, livestock owners interviewed also explained that their strengthened capital gave them a sense of being more resilient in the face of future difficulties.

114. Another important change noted by the evaluation related to mentalities and the general awareness that has been raised among livestock owners about the value of veterinary services. Where some years ago owners would have refused categorically to pay for treatment or even more vaccination, today some seem to have understood the incredible benefit they can draw from such services, and would be ready to invest in it. The opportunity given to them, through free-based support, to witness the results of veterinary services, has been instrumental in this mentality change. Another positive behavioural change noted is that some pastoralists seem to pay more attention to the quality of herds and the potential by-products they can gain from it to support their families. In the past livestock would be kept as an asset and livestock owners were more concerned with numbers of heads than with quality of animals.
115. By and large, the evaluation judged positively the impact of livestock support interventions implemented by FAO and its partners. The changes in households' consumption and income is quite clearly related to the interventions supported by FAO, though surely not only FAO/CHF has been able to deliver this type of assistance in the past years. However, it should be acknowledged that FAO does have some comparative advantages over other agencies in making these interventions happen. Indeed, combining a capacity to act at a national scale; a certain recognition by the Government; and convening power FAO is positioned ideally to take the responsibility of coordination.

Gaps in Interventions

116. Notwithstanding the good results, better results even could be achieved with some corrective measures with respect to the support given to CAHWs, through the provision of refresher training – provided on too limited scale- and technical support and efforts towards a better integration of their function in the institutional setup, and for the gradual exit from free-based services where it is already possible.
117. Furthermore, the evaluation has identified the following gaps in the FAO livestock support interventions¹⁷:
- *Knowledge in animal husbandry*: the FAO interventions focus mainly on protective and curative aspect of livestock safeguarding. Little consideration has been made to improving animal nutrition and husbandry. CAHWs training barely touched on these issues though they were identified by local community as key in improving animal health as well. The need for extension service and training on animal nutrition and husbandry was reported by both CAHWs in Darfur and East Sudan.
 - *Improvement of pastures*: this is also linked to the first point but the focus here is more on supporting availability of fodder for livestock, particularly in East Sudan. It was reported that FAO was supporting the Range and Pasture department of MoAR in Kassala in the past but this support ceased to exist.
 - *Improvement of water sources for animals drinking*: in regions such as East Sudan where water resources are scarce, livestock compete with humans on water. Clashes between farmers and pastoralists were reported in Darfur as well. Some efforts were made by FAO to rehabilitate some water sources in East Sudan and Darfur but those efforts are considered small as reported by MoAR in West Darfur. Supporting water provision for livestock has the potential for contributing to peaceful coexistence between farmers and pastoralists are reported in West Darfur.

¹⁷ It should be noted that the evaluation did not cover any of the FAO interventions related to natural resource management and protection, so the following elements are noted only as reminders of their importance and reflect what evaluators have heard local stakeholders raise as areas where there is need for action.

- *Monitoring of outputs and impacts of veterinary services:* although monitoring of FAO intervention is generally reported to be inadequate, MoAR and IPs made special mention for monitoring and support by FAO for impact. It was emphasized that monitoring of impact should include technical support from FAO to IPs and MoAR at state level.
118. In addition, FAO, by its mandate and functioning modes, is judged to be positioned ideally to support the sector through more strategic or policy level assistance, and even more appropriate there than on following up on relatively small inputs distribution-based interventions. Supporting the establishment of surveillance and drug supply networks could be some possible leads.

3. Changes at HH and community levels related to supporting income generating activities

119. To increase and diversify income sources of the targeted beneficiaries and increase their resilience capacities, FAO and its partners supported various income generation activities, most of which can be classified as quick impact interventions generating benefits in the short to medium terms. The activities supported included animal restocking, bee keeping and various food processing activities. In the three regions covered by the evaluation, the activities assessed were: bee keeping, food processing and cheese making in Blue Nile; goats restocking, food processing, and cheese making in the Eastern States and goats restocking, distribution of donkeys, food processing and cheese making in Darfur.

Features and results by IGA type

Food Processing and Cheese making

120. The food processing training comprised theoretical and practical training related to the drying of fruits and vegetables or the making of jam and soft drinks, cookies, pastries, vermicelli, and cheese and in the eastern regions, ice cream and yogurt. The training aimed at developing techniques to avoid wasting vegetables and fruits when in surplus and allow utilizing them in the off seasons for consumption and selling to generate additional income. In Darfur, both men and women were supported while in the eastern and Blue Nile States the training covered women only due to the cultural norms in these communities where mixing of men and women is not approved of.
121. In all three regions interviewees confirmed gaining new knowledge on recipes, selection of good quality fruits and vegetables and proper cleaning and handling of vegetables and fruits. Women in Darfur reported that it was the first time for them to dry sweet potatoes, mangoes and mulokhia.
122. On the other hand, very few women reported using their newly acquired skills for income generation, and when they did income was gained exclusively from selling preserved vegetables and fruits and cookies. The best results were achieved in Kassala, where 57% of the women interviewed reported generating income. It should be noted that all of them were producing and selling before the training. The average income generated per month ranges from SDG 50 – 300. None of the 43% who were not practicing before the training utilized the skills gained in income generation. In Darfur only 5% of interviewed women reported selling cookies which they only did in the seasons of

religious and social celebrations. The average income generated per month then was SDG 30-40. In Blue Nile around 30% of the beneficiaries interviewed mentioned having produced milk candies for some time and stopped because of too limited market demand in the village and because of technical difficulty of packaging the product. Mainly these activities benefited the households in terms of diversifying the household food intake, especially children.

123. None of the households trained in cheese making had established a business, due to the fruitlessness of this activity. The few who tried to produce and sell produced once and stopped. The reasons given by all interviewed trainees were the high price of milk: very few women tried to produce and sell but all of them failed to continue because the market prices were lower than the cost of production i.e. they were not able to compete with the relatively large producers who have the advantages of the economies of the scale and establish temporary industrial unit near the seasonal settlements of the pastoralists where milk is found at reasonable prices.
124. *Deficiencies in market and needs assessment:* The success of food processing training for income generation in rural area depends on several factors: availability of adequate market demand and the proximity of the markets to the targeted communities; availability of inputs and appropriate technology; the cost of production in relation to what customers can pay; and access to funds to establish the business after selecting the appropriate product. In the three regions, some of the IGA effectiveness were often not able to establish successful and permanent businesses because no marketability study had been made to identify most adequate IGAs to support. The implementing partners in the three regions did not conduct market assessment studies and even women were not consulted on the most appropriate activities based on their knowledge of the area. FAO and ACCORD in Kassala reported that they assumed milk would be abundant in the market for profitable cheese making, which proved to be a wrong assumption.
125. *The management aspects were neglected:* The implementing partners focused on the technical side of the businesses and neglected the market, managerial and financial aspects of small and micro enterprises. Women were not trained on how to establish and manage small businesses in a successful and a sustainable manner. For example the women targeted with food processing and cheese making training in the Blue Nile selected cheese making, the most difficult product to start with in terms of cost of raw materials, processing, marketing and competition. They did not start with vegetables and fruits drying/preservation, which are most appropriate in terms of simplicity of the technology, availability of raw materials for longer periods during the year, market demand and cost of production.
126. *Lack of Business financing:* In the focus group discussion women reported lack of finance as one of the reasons mentioned for not using the skills for income generation. After the training, the women groups in each course were given the utensils used in the training to encourage them to start group businesses. With exception of the NGO Alshimal in Kassala, none of the other implementing partners met provided start-up capital or assisted the trained women to obtain loans from microfinance institutions when feasible.

Goats restocking

127. Goats restocking interventions design and implementation were different in Darfur and the eastern region, where they were assessed. In Darfur each beneficiary in the surveyed communities was given 3 goats for free, some of which were males. The goats were received in May 2011 during the hunger season where pasture is poor and the prices of feeds is at its highest level. Moreover, 70% of goats were immature, which burdened the beneficiaries with a high cost of feeding and veterinary care for longer periods before they could reproduce and start giving milk. The targeted communities were not given the chance to participate in the purchase of goats. Some of the men beneficiaries claimed that their goats have died as a result of vaccination or inappropriate feed; evaluators believe on the other hand that they were sold. Still around 80% of those who received goats, women in particular, still had them. One year after receiving goats, beneficiaries reported mortality rates ranging from 0-1 and deliveries ranging from 1-4. The average herd size for those interviewed and still keeping their goats was around 5 heads.
128. In Kassala, goats were distributed to women, each receiving from the IP (ACCORD) SDG 400 to buy 3-4 she goats or ewes giving them the opportunity to select the animals. ACCORD had benefited from a previous experience in other communities where beneficiaries had complained about the quality and ages of animals received. Because the number of the needy families registered was high exceeding the budget allocated for the project, ACCORD agreed with the beneficiaries that goats would be given on cost recovery bases where each of the beneficiaries would return a number of goats equal to that purchased from the off-springs. The project was implemented in October 2011 at the beginning of the harvest period where the pasture is good and the cost of feeds and fodder is reasonable. As reflected in the table below, the delivery rate of animals since they were distributed was around 90%, i.e. much higher than that measured in Darfur. This indicated a positive outcome of beneficiaries' participation in the selection of animals. The mortality rate was around 15%. The beneficiaries confirmed returning 2-3 goats to beneficiaries registered in the waiting list and indeed around 50% of the interviewees were secondary beneficiaries i.e. received goats from first-round beneficiaries. The average ownership per household surveyed was 4 heads, of which 80% were females.

Table 13: Number of animal received in October 2011 – Awadat village and changes in the herds size until June 2012

Type of beneficiary	# animal received	New born	sold	died	Used to pay debts	Current #	
						M	F
Secondary	2	3				1	4
Secondary	2			1		1	1
Primary	4	4	2	1	2	1	3
Primary	3	3		1			5
Total	11	10	2	3	2	3	13

Source: Semi-structured interviews

129. The goats restocking in Darfur and Kassala resulted in the increase of the number of household who own small ruminants. The cost recovery approach of goats restocking adopted in Kassala increased the project coverage. Households interviewed owned on 5 goats in Darfur and 4 in Kassala. In both regions the increase in number was limited, because the animals given in Darfur were immature and in Kassala the beneficiaries had to recover the loan from the first generation.

130. All beneficiaries explained keeping goats to meet family milk consumption. Restocking of small ruminants has moderately increased the production and consumption of milk as reported by the households targeted in the two regions. For income generation in terms of selling of milk/milk products and sale of animals the impact was insignificant. In Kassala very few women reported selling milk/milk products or animals. In Darfur, as stated above, none of the women interviewed reported selling of goats. Those who sold their goats were mostly men who were either better off not in need to keep goats or were poor and unable to keep the goats as the goats were given in the hunger season.

Distribution of donkeys

131. Distribution of donkeys was implemented in Darfur. Beneficiaries interviewed complained from the small size and age of donkeys distributed, explaining that donkeys needed 6-12 months until they could be used to do heavy work like transportation or pulling a plough or a cart. This meant that some beneficiaries had to bear the costs of taking care of the animals before benefiting from them. The targeted communities were not consulted about specifications of animals or participated in their purchase.
132. Despite complains, participants of the FGD and semi-structured interviews reported that donkeys assisted them in several ways:
- In transporting their harvests from the farm to the village in time which has reduced the incidents of loosing crops due to theft or damage by animals;
 - Transportation of water and firewood reduced women hardships and increased daily household consumption of water. Without donkeys a woman usually brings around 6-7 jerry-cans of water daily. After the donkey the amount increased to around 10. An increase of 50% per day;
 - For income generation the impact of donkeys was also significant. It assisted some IDP families in establishing new income generation activities and others to increase their monthly incomes by nearly 100%. In Khamsa-Dagaig camp, an interviewee reported raising his weekly income from grass selling from around SDG 12 (head carried) to around SDG 30 after receiving the donkey, i.e. an increase of 150%. Another IDP in the same camp could collect and sell firewood for SDG 50 monthly, in addition to what he could rent the donkey for one day for ploughing and earn SDG 30. Another IDP rented a cart without a donkey for SDG 40 a month and established a transportation business in Zalenji. His average monthly gross income was around SDG 600-800. From the savings accumulated after paying the business and family expenses, he purchased a cart for SDG 900.

Bee keeping

133. In Blue Nile State the bee keeping intervention targeted people whom were practicing traditional honey collection from forests. The trainees received theoretical and practical training in addition to input support of beehives, wax foundation, and honey extractors. Because of the security situation in Geissan and Kurmuk localities beekeeping communities were not visited by the survey team. However, in June 2011 Islamic relief, the implementing partner, was able to collect information on production and sales of those who could be reached through phone calls. Table below reflects the quantities produced and sales returns. Although the report did not mention their production and incomes from one production cycle before the training to measure the magnitude of impact, at least it reflects that the persons trained have utilized the training and material support received in improving their incomes.

Table 14: Quantities produced after the training and sold and income realized

#	Name	Locality	Village	Quantity	Income
1	Gibrail Mohammed Salih	Kurmuk	Khorelbodi	35	600
2	Ahmed Mohammed Abd.	Kurmuk	Khorelbodi	10	200
3	Algamri Agoda	Kurmuk	Yabos	50	800
4	Algamri Athnian	Kurmuk	Yabos	40	700
5	Garabo Awara Morsal	Kurmuk	Yabos	25	500
6	Alnour Mohammed	Giessan	Kashenkaro	10	200
7	Hassan Abona Karama	Giessan	Kashenkaro	15	300

Source: ISRW presentation

134. In Kassala town, the evaluation visited a bee keeping project targeting people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA). The program was implemented by the Sudanese Living with HIV/AIDS association (SLWHA): 46 persons affected by AID were selected for training on and distribution of bees and equipment 9 months after the training. The boxes and hives were erected in a fruits garden allocated by the State Ministry of Agriculture to host the hives. Erecting of the hives was done under the supervision of the bee keeping professional who delivered the training. Bees were distributed at the appropriate time. However, serious constraints and difficulties were encountered which led to failure of the IGAs:

- Because of health problems related to HIV/AIDS and other employment commitments, the supervisors appointed by the group to manage the hives were not able to perform their tasks daily as should be.
- In addition, the absence of a professional expert to supervise the first season of bee keeping led to many fatal mistakes: the flowering reduced in March due to development of fruits. The natural food available for bees thus had to be supplemented with other sources and people assigned to supervise the activity mistakenly gave the bees an insecticide in lieu of sugar, resulting in the death of many bees. After discovering their mistake, the supervisors started giving sugar and as a result worms bred in the hives and wild bees were attracted to the hives and killed the bees in hives.

135. The above constraints and failures could be attributed to factors related design, planning and implementation gaps, in addition to miss-targeting:

- The hives and bees were distributed after a long period of training (9 months between the training and distribution of hives). The learning from training was not applied immediately and beneficiaries were unable to figure how to resolve the problem faced.
- No technical expertise to supervise and provide guidance and technical support to the beneficiaries during the first production cycle, which is very essential. The duration of training consultant was limited to training and erecting hives. This reflects a gap in needs assessment and lack of expertise from both FAO office in Kassala and the implementing partner in the kind of technical support needed in such interventions, considering the fact that the beneficiaries do not have any experience or knowledge about bee keeping.
- The training consultant is based in Khartoum while professional people are available in Kassala to do the training and mentoring in a timely manner and may be at a lower cost.
- PLWHA were not interested in bee keeping. In the focused group discussion participants preferred other projects such shop keeping, poultry raising, etc. This

reflects that the beneficiaries were not consulted on what was suitable for them as an income generation activity. Moreover, beekeeping needs daily supervision and management, which cannot be fulfilled by PLWHA because of their health situation, which indicates miss-targeting.

- The same group was previously targeted with the same intervention and the project failed. This indicates that the lessons learned from previous intervention were not utilized in designing and approving future ones.
- The PLWHA were living in an urban area and as such they are not typical FAO targets.

Impact of support to IGA on households and community's food security and livelihoods

136. The impact of the income generation trainings and goats restocking was generally insignificant in terms of income generation and wealth accumulation. Some interventions like cheese making had no impact at all. Others generated different impacts in the three regions.

137. **Distribution of donkeys:** The distribution of donkeys was the most successful intervention with significant impact in income generation and building of livelihoods. Apart from being used in household affairs, donkeys assisted some IDP families to establish new income generation activities and enabled others to increase their incomes by more than 100%. The success stories mentioned above in the outputs results section explains the achievements clearly. The income generated from donkeys was mainly used to purchase family basic needs, paying education expenses, and spending on health care. Few IDPs could save part of the income to buy some productive assets e.g. carts.

138. **Food processing:** The impact of food processing training in income generation was insignificant. In Darfur around 5% of the women who received training were able to practice their skills in the seasons of social and religious occasions to generate income. The income generated per woman per month was very limited not exceeding SDG 30-50. The intervention was not successful in generating the intended impact due to several design and implementation shortcomings, including the lack of market assessment to identify skill/products with potential market demand or the fact that the training focused on the technical issues and neglected the business and market dimensions of income generation. Women in all three regions however reported benefiting from skills in household consumption which has resulted in reduction of consumption expenses. In Zalingei, women who started to dry sweet potatoes, onions, and molokhia in the glut season and consume in the scarcity season, reported huge savings. In the production season one *mid* of onion is sold for SDG 3-4 in the off-season it is sold for SDG 20-25. The price of one *mid* of sweet potato during the production season is usually around SDG 1; in the off season it is sold from SDG 5.

139. **Goats Restocking:** The impact of goats restocking was insignificant in terms of selling of milk or milk products and sale of animals. In Kassala very few women reported selling milk/milk products or animals. Most of those interviewed confirmed using the milk for household consumption. The goats in Darfur and Kassala being distributed in 2011; it might be too early to assess its impact on income generation. The impact would increase by time as the number of goats gradually increases in terms of number and milk production. To achieve quick and significant impact the goats should be mature and larger in number.

140. **Bee keeping:** The bee keeping training generated different results in Blue Nile and Kassala. In Blue Nile the traditional honey collectors were trained in modern means of bee keeping to increase their productivities and incomes. All of those trained utilized the skills gained and started to produce. The average quantity produced per person in the first production cycle ranged from 10-50 kilograms and the income generated ranged from SDG 200 – 800. In Kassala the whole project collapsed before the end of the first cycle of production for technical, design, and implementation factors as discussed above.

4. Performance of sector coordination and impact on coverage of FSL needs

141. Since the 2007 merger of the Food Aid and the Food Security and Livelihoods sectors, FAO and WFP have co-led the Food Security and Livelihoods (FSL) sector under the UN and Partners' Work Plan. The magnitude and importance of FSL-related needs within the HWP and the complex ground realities including (i) the scope of the sector and diversity of activities; (ii) the specific needs of different regions; (iii) the large number of stakeholders¹⁸ and (iv) changing context in terms of weather patterns and security constraints call for effective coordination mechanisms of the FSL sector –formally “cluster” since 2009. In addition, the introduction of the CHF as a funding mechanism aligned with the HWP that appears to have increased the number of agencies participating in the HWP present substantial additional coordination efforts to be borne by Cluster Leads.
142. FSL sector¹⁹ coordination efforts have been supported by various donors including the CHF; although the latter has not been steady over time. CHF funding dedicated to FSL coordination activities took either the form of coordination-*focused* projects or of dedicated funding *for* coordination within projects supporting assistance to beneficiaries. These represented respectively 3 and 6 projects since 2006. By and large the funds served to ensure adequate levels of human and material resource to convene meetings; to organize assessment and monitoring missions and avail information to the FSL members; to strengthen analytical/managerial capacities; and to generally support the sector by carrying a function of strategic planning and operational oversight. Notwithstanding, FAO points to the lack of continual and dedicated staffing at Khartoum and regional levels as a continuous constraint to effective Cluster coordination activities, an observation that finds an echo in the latest CHF Evaluation report that comment on the lack of sufficient human/financial resources being dedicated to coordination activities. This will be analyzed in more detail in a following section.
143. The need for coordinating FSL activities in Sudan is mentioned in every HWP²⁰. This is usually expressed, as the need to “ensure effective coordination of activities and planning as well as to ensure stronger partnership with the Government at the state level.”²¹ The CHF TORs as well as the generic TORs for Sector/Cluster leads at the country level both also point to the responsibility that sector leads have with respect to coordinating actions in their sector. References to coordination in the HWP are usually generic and concrete pathways to improved coordination, whether CHF-funded or

¹⁸ According to FAO's Plan of Action (Aug.2010-Aug.2012), the Cluster has recently involved more than 60 organizations or institutions.

¹⁹ The terms sector and cluster are herein used inter-changeably.

²⁰ HWPs (and MYRs) for the period 2006-2012

²¹ Mid Year Review of the HWP, 2006

otherwise, are rarely explained. For example, the HWP for 2007 states “*The CHF was established in early 2006 to promote a more coordinated funding response to humanitarian challenges in terms of the prompt provision of committed funds, the reinforcement of the planning and coordination process and the flexibility required to respond to emergency situations.*”²² Still, from documents such as the CHF TORs (2011), Cluster leads generic TORs (2011) or FAO's Plan of Action (2010-2012) the evaluation could identify common elements from which the evaluation has drawn five areas of work seemingly understood to be pillars of *coordination*.

144. The following 5 elements will be referred to as commonly accepted outcomes expected of coordination activities:

- Good information sharing and dialogue among sector members, including streamlined collaboration with national institutions;
- Strategic planning of FSL sector activities, including reducing gaps and overlaps;
- Good practices harmonization through technical exchanges including capacity building;
- Facilitation of sector members access to funding;
- Management of accountability and oversight over sector activities

145. The performance of FAO as co-sector lead has been assessed along these broad categories, with the understanding that CHF has contributed for some part to these outcomes though not exclusively. The findings presented below are the products of combined primary data inquiry exercises, including a short on-line survey submitted to FSL partners in Sudan and interviews carried with key informants, both covering stakeholders based either in Khartoum or in State capitals; and of an extensive review of FSL coordination meeting minutes at every level, and of relevant project reports and CHF policy papers.

Information sharing and dialogue amongst FSL sector partners, including with national institutions

146. FSL cluster meetings have been regularly organized, at least since 2009²³, which according to feedback gathered from all stakeholders, is largely the result of FAO's efforts, as WFP has allegedly been more irregularly involved as FSL sector co-lead. And de factor, FSL minutes reveal that up to one third of meetings were chaired only by FAO, while the others were co-chaired between the two co-leads. In Darfur, where the FS situations and operational context are likely to change more rapidly, the frequency of meetings is twice as high as in Eastern Sudan regions where the situation is rather stable, and FSL meetings are even complemented with sub/working group meetings focused on agriculture, livestock and environment support activities.

147. Meetings are usually well attended by sector partners, as attest minutes from meetings and confirmed by FSL sector members who responded to the survey²⁴, 80% of who reported attending most or every meeting. NGO staff interviewed indeed frequently presented the FSL sector as being the most active of all. Attendance in Khartoum

²² Sudan HWP, 2007, Vol 1

²³ As per FSL meeting minutes provided to the evaluation team, covering the period 2009-201 and within recall capacities of interviewed stakeholders.

²⁴ Amongst the 49 FSL stakeholders who responded to the survey, about 55% were from International NGOs, 18% from national NGOs, 14% by a relevant Ministry, 10% from a UN agency and 2% from the donor community.

increased consistently since end 2009 to end 2011, rising to 30-40 participants per meeting, while at the States level turnout varied substantially depending on the region, being sustained in some (between 15 to 25 organizations represented per meeting in Nyala or Fasher) and variable in others (with 5-10 organizations participating in Kassala).

148. Most FSL sector partners met in State capitals reported increased information sharing and networking between agencies as the main positive outcomes of the FSL meetings. And opinions gathered through the survey confirmed that for those who judged the meetings useful (over 90% of respondents), the main benefit they saw in the meetings was exchanging information. Most (over 90% for surveyed members) appreciated the frequency of meetings and the open dialogue that has come about from those, and accredited FAO as playing a positive role in creating a conducive environment. By and large, the information exchange consists in updating the group on relevant evolutions of the political or food security situation (including prices or climatic conditions) as a basis for discussing required actions in the sector, and presenting member organizations' on-going activities. For regions holding technical working group meetings, these often presented a summary of discussions to the wider FSL sector meeting, which promoted focused and efficient dialogue.
149. The sharing of information is a significant achievement, appreciated by all, in such dynamic context where the multiple and fast changing causes of vulnerabilities, call for on-going adaptation of the humanitarian response. Reliable dialogue and information exchange mechanisms are in such cases a cornerstone to timely and appropriate collective responses. As a slight nuance to the generally positive opinions regarding information exchange, some FSL members in Khartoum lamented the lack of information processing done by the sector to facilitate use of collated information by agencies that often lack time to bring information pieces together, on "who does what where", or regarding food security updates.
150. The FSL sector forum has also allegedly generated increased collaboration between the aid community and relevant Governmental partners, though mainly at State level, which is recognized by all parts as another important achievement. According to FSL meeting minutes, relevant State Ministries' representatives participated to nearly all State level FSL (and Working group) meetings. The sustained collaboration amongst participants of the FSL sector resulted in increased levels of confidence and exchanges between Governmental and humanitarian institutions. State Ministries representatives appreciated being informed about what agencies were doing, which they reported would not occur without the FSL meetings. In Southern Darfur, particularly close collaboration and remarkable levels of trust between the State Ministry of Agriculture (SMoA)'s and FSL sector agencies were reported as an appreciated outcome of the institutionalized regular exchange. Most NGOs and Ministries' representatives met by the team underlined the important role played by FAO as an agency respected by all for its technical expertise as well as for the perceived neutrality conferred by its multilateral status. However, in some regions, the collaboration still seems fragile and conditioned to the presence of FAO as a facilitator, and preconceived reservations from both sides still remain to be overcome. In Khartoum on the other hand, line Ministries' participation appears to have been sporadic and minimal. This significant difference between Central and State levels could be explained by the difference in nature of both levels, the State's being more operations-oriented, while Khartoum level focuses more on discussions related to humanitarian funding, maybe less directly relevant to Ministries' agendas. FSL

stakeholders frequently mentioned wanting to see them more involved (including 54% of survey respondents).

Strategic planning and implementation of sector interventions

151. Information sharing is a necessary stepping stone for collaborative strategic planning, and the fact that the process for it has been in place, through regular meetings was a good start. Nonetheless, interviews and meeting minutes revealed that despite having action-oriented discussions, meetings failed to lead to genuinely strategic planning for the sector: rather, sector actions have remained a collation of a myriad of individual interventions. The lack of awareness by FAO on “who does what where” or absence of operational maps are clear indications that the sector lead does not have a minimum general perception of what assistance is being delivered in each region and how agencies complement each other. If sector planning were done in strategic manner co-leads would be expected to have this overview. Instead FAO only gathers operational information for the sector at the stage of reporting. Most FSL members interviewed at State levels recognized this shortcoming from sector meetings and declared expecting from sector leads to promote more discussions on “operational contents” such as targeting, partners’ synergetic planning etc. The fact that many NGOs send note-takers to attend sector meetings rather than senior staff reflects on their perception that no strategic decision are taken in these fora. As a result of the limited discussions on implementation strategies, partners’ projects are executed without concern for harmonization: targeting strategies are applied differently according to the implementing agency; and modalities can vary to a great extent for a given intervention type: as an example, Community Animal Health Workers (CAHWs) are established by some NGOs as a service provided on cost-recovery basis while others set them up as a free service. And in the field, little evidence was gathered of WFP and FAO interventions each other, which seems to suggest that sector leads do not make particular efforts to plan to complement each other’s inputs.
152. It should yet be noted that most NGOs met in the field and FAO concurred in reporting that overlaps between agencies were generally avoided as a result of the regular sector meetings, which the field assessment seemed to corroborate. And when NGOs were expelled from Darfur in 2009, the FSL cluster reportedly played a fundamental part in reallocating work areas to remaining agencies. On the other hand, the question of whether the FSL sector forum was effective in ensuring an adequate coverage of needs, i.e. without leaving important gaps, cannot be answered with certainty, for the simple reason that annual planning has not been done on the basis of comprehensive assessment of needs related to food security and livelihoods. Being strategic requires at the minimum a planning that is based on a somewhat reliable understanding over priority areas and groups in need and over the main causes for their vulnerabilities, from which will depend the type of interventions to prioritize. Such information was not available in a comprehensive enough manner for sector leads to claim to be strategic in sector planning.
153. The Sudanese policy setup that compels NGOs to have predetermined areas of operations certainly does not facilitate a strategic approach and makes covering gap in underserved areas difficult to achieve. However, there does not seem to have been enough thrust towards a true sector planning strategy.
154. A review of all needs assessments conducted in recent years, reveal that inter-agency food security assessments have been conducted in ad-hoc manner rather than systematically to support strategic planning. Others such as the Crop and Food Supply

Assessment Missions (CFSAMs) or the Pre/Post-Harvest Assessments (P/PHAs) are conducted more regularly but are too focused to provide a basis to plan general FSL interventions. As reported by FAO and most FSL sector members, assessments on which project planning are mostly based are those conducted by individual NGOs who cover their respective areas of operations. FAO in turn mainly bases its planning strategies and geographic prioritization on pre and post harvest assessments' results (with subsequent problem it may cause when such basis serves for planning activities that have little to do with crops, as explained in relevant section). Agencies therefore each follow an ad-hoc method and their quality are uneven but generally very low, judging from the few reports made available to the team. Therefore, any effort to collate the individual assessments would likely be unsuccessful, and would anyhow fail to cover all regions systematically. Aside from the potential exclusion of needy vulnerable households, the lack of an adequate assessments system have also translated into planning errors, such as in "seasonal returnees" villages in Darfur, where programmes are established for "ghost" populations who do not live in the village but have remained in the camp; or in communities where income generation schemes were set-up in spite of people's interests, and failed due to lack of buy-in. Also, the lack of assessment generally implied that input packages have been largely standardized rather than adapted to the needs and preferences of given populations, leading to creating either dissatisfaction or lack of enthusiasm from both implementing agencies and beneficiaries.

155. Most agencies operating in the FSL sector strongly supported the suggestion that sector leads focus their efforts on establishing a common approach for FSL inter-agency assessment. FAO recognized this need and the responsibilities of sector leads in that respect and indeed have made efforts to impulse such common exercises, but found itself challenged either by protocol limitations (e.g. when an joint livestock sector assessment initiative was stopped by national authorities in 2010) or due to limited financial or staff resources compounded by low capacities in countries.

Good practices harmonization through technical exchange and capacity building

156. Closely related to the above, clusters also have role to play in harmonizing practices across members, through the promotion technical exchanges including via capacity building efforts. FAO has actually been fairly active in providing opportunities for FSL partners to build their capacities. The following training workshops were brought to the evaluators' attention, concerning the period 2010-2011²⁵:

Table 15: training workshops organized by FAO for FSL partners 2010-2011

Year	Training topic & duration	Participants
2010	Project cycle management, 4 days	34 participants from FSL cluster partners in West Darfur
2010	PCM monitoring and reporting workshop	25 participants from the (FSL) cluster in North Darfur
2010	Planning for Community Based Adaptation to Climate Change	50 people from Khartoum, South, West and North Darfur
2011	Livestock Emergency Guidelines and Standards	70 participants from FAO, the State Ministry of Animal Resources, national and international NGOs, based in Kassala, Blue Nile, Darfur
2011	Needs assessment, 4 days	55 participants from the Food Security and

²⁵ No information available regarding training workshops organized prior to this period.

		Livelihoods Cluster members in North, South and West Darfur
2011	Trans-boundary Animal Diseases Early Detection, Epidemiology and Surveillance Training workshop, 4 days	25 participants from FAO, implementing FSL partners and the Ministry of Animal Resources in Sennar, White Nile and the TTAs
2011	Managing Projects in Emergencies	20 participants from FAO Nyala and Khartoum and FSL partners in south Darfur
2011	SPSS Techniques in Assessment	30 participants from FAO Nyala and FSL partners in south Darfur

Source: ERCU

157. Aside the training workshops, some exchanges on technical matters were also organized during FSL sector meetings, on an ad-hoc basis. From available meeting minutes, evaluators could not confirm that such exchange was frequent. On the other hand, despite these efforts, FSL partners including Government counterparts consistently lamented insufficiently benefiting from FAO's renowned technical expertise, be it through formal or informal technical discussions or through the dissemination of technical documentation of interest. When questioned on FAO's comparative advantages, some partners did not even mention its technical expertise, a sign that they do not perceive it through the exchanges they have. FAO's backstopping role is most often mentioned in relation to its potential support to small and very low skilled NNGOs, but is not seen, in Sudan as in a position to technically support more skilled NGOs. FSL partners also expressed that they would like to see more efforts directed at promoting mutual learning on innovative approaches between partners, logically a responsibility for sector leads'. And indeed, as the evaluation noted, capacity building activities have often been facilitated by FAO through the financial support of training costs but FAO as a technical organization actually rarely puts to profit its technical expertise to share it with the FSL community. For instance, FAO could contribute technically to enhance the quality or update the contents of training provided to CAHWs by MoARF staff.
158. In general, partners seemed to have perceived FAO's technical inputs related to livestock husbandry more strongly than for farming-related matters. This may be the result of the staffing structure of NGOs that includes more agriculture experts than veterinarians. Also, the special role conveyed to FAO as only actor allowed to deal with the national monopolistic laboratory producing vaccines also reinforced the role of FAO in this sector. Ultimately, the collective perception that technical exchanges are thinner than could be expected, along with the lack of strategic orientation discussed above compound the harmonization flaw across FSL interventions.
159. Initiatives to strengthen capacities of Government counterparts participating in the FSL sector were also reportedly taken by FAO, as reported in Emergency and Rehabilitation Coordination Unit annual reports. A Training of Trainers (ToT)' approach was retained to promote the role of the Government with regard to extension work with farmers or pastoralists. However, aside from the ineffectiveness of such approach due to execution issues (as mentioned under the section on impact of training), line ministry staff met by the evaluation and NGO staff widely expressed their opinion of a greater need compared to efforts made and view the strengthening of government staff capacities as a more sustainable and thus efficient investment of resources. The building of government capacities would also clearly benefit communities in that this may allow for better and more sustained extension services delivery.

Facilitation of cluster members' access to funding and of related processes

160. The facilitation of cluster members' access to funding and of related processes is another pillar of coordination in which FAO is seen to be an active and effective sector lead. FAO is described as a good partner by most NGOs met by the evaluation, though this is particularly emphasized by smaller NGOs that have been dependent on FAO to get access to funding and for some to the wider humanitarian community. These national or local NGOs indeed have limited capacities and no or very limited direct access to donors and all interviewed insisted on the role played by FAO in bridging them with other agencies, providing the technical counselling and operational (procurement) support they lacked to enable them to be a part of the FSL sector response. They reported having benefited from networking opportunities created by the FSL forum to initiate partnerships, and some were even able to get direct access to CHF funding with help of FAO. NGOs such as NIDAA or CDA reported a great satisfaction with respect to the exchange platform created by the FSL cluster which they saw as an instrument of their growth. Notwithstanding their lack of capacities, these smaller structures are widely recognized as having an important part to play in the humanitarian landscape, for the knowledge of and access to communities they have, which in Sudan represents a great asset over INGOs. Their potential lasting presence in a given region confers them a special role. It is therefore important to keep giving a voice and supporting the capacities of these organizations that complement the larger ones. FAO has therefore supported many smaller NGOs in acquiring funding from the CHF.
161. On the other hand, as reviewer of the CHF funding allocation process and in a context where reviewers are all direct stakeholders competing along with other agencies to seize CHF funds, FAO has also been criticized for grabbing too much of the funding that could have been allocated to NGOs. This type of criticism is bound to emerge in a participatory allocation process whereby decision-makers are judge and party. However, there is scope for putting into question the appropriateness of such system as applied to agencies that have little or nothing to gain in having funds channelled through another agency with equivalent capacities.
162. The facilitating role related to allocating and channeling funding has de facto represented a time-consuming task for FAO as sector co-lead and has indeed been taken up so well that FAO staff, in Khartoum or in the field, may have spent too large a share of their time in facilitating the Work plan and CHF processes, at the detriment of other programme and coordination tasks. The large room reserved to matters related to these processes in ERCU annual reports and in FSL meeting minutes attest of it, as well as the fact that an ERCU staff is entirely dedicated to these tasks.

Facilitation of accountability and oversight over sector achievements

163. A results-based cluster approach calls for in-built oversight mechanisms, to assure accountability against spent resources, feed information systems to allow adequate reporting on results and give chances for cluster members to learn from the each other's experiences. Policy documents from the CHF, the FS Cluster and from FAO all clearly point to sector leads as bearing the primary responsibility in ensuring that systems are in place in that respect. In the CHF TORs sector leads duties include: "Support monitoring and evaluation of sectoral activities and reporting on these twice a year only compiling the overall achievements of the sector activities from all partners"; and the FAO Plan of action also mentions monitoring as part of its responsibilities as co-lead of the FSL sector.

Such allocation of responsibilities only seems logical. And in situations where FAO channelled CHF funds to other agencies, conferring it the monitoring function appears to be even more appropriate to its intermediary position.

164. Notwithstanding, FAO appears to have achieved poor results in terms of monitoring. Many FAO implementing partners met attested being rarely visited and when they were deployed receiving no feedback on the results of the monitoring visit. Also judging from the number of reports availed to the team, the frequency of monitoring visits did appear to be too limited and their organization to be rather ad-hoc than the result of systematic planning. This may have been the result of the absence of a formal monitoring system. The evaluation team's did not find standard templates or approach papers intended to provide a common framework for monitoring to FAO staff in the field, aside from a three page blank matrix calling for complex information analysis and demanding in terms of data gathering. It is no surprise that such format may have never been used; as it does not appear to realistically take into account the limited time and analysis capacities of dedicated staff on the ground. In 2010 however, when FAO was well staffed (with 2-4 field monitors per State), some monitoring visits work plans were established, which, judging from the reports dates, were only partially respected. Still then, the quality of reports is so low that the evaluators could not even then give a positive judgment regarding the monitoring. Reports reviewed were usually 2-3 pages long including the list of people met and relatively long sections on logistical constraints; the methodology followed to gather the data was seldom explained; and the thin substantial elements were mostly food security surveillance (climatic conditions, crop prices..) related rather than reporting on operational results. And for the little that did, reports focused on inputs distributed. This weakness shed light on the importance of having high quality and trained staff, regardless of their number.
165. Overall, and in line with the CHF Evaluation finding that "the lack of monitoring remains the critical weakness of the CHF"²⁶, FAO appears to have had little control over its IPs work and close to none on that of other FSL partners, despite its monitoring responsibilities as sector co-lead. No evidence was found that FAO did monitor the work of FSL partners nor was informed of their activities as, in contrast to IPs, FSL partners have no obligation to share information with respect to their activities with sector leads. This may be an element to review of the Cluster organization, as sector leads are in various ways challenged in their functions by their lack of compelling power. From what the evaluation could see, the very low quality of the monitoring system throughout the years appears to be the combined results of a lack of prioritization of this function by FAO and of the consequences of the work conditions that prevailed, which led FAO staff to keep changing over time and may also have prevented retaining some skilled staff. Limited financial resources cannot be invoked as a valid reason for these deficiencies as indeed, FAO has been provided with staff and dedicated budgets to support the coordination including monitoring, in particular with the assignment of 4 coordinators (SSCA) to the Darfur clusters, as well as through the three coordination-focused projects.
166. Unfortunately, the negative consequences of such weakness was that, aside reflecting badly on FAO's capacity in front of its partners, this had meant that FAO has not been able to exert any control over what was being done by agencies in the FSL sector, but also this hampered any learning to take place from experiences and thereby implied missed opportunities for the sector to improve its performance.

²⁶ Evaluation of the CHF Sudan (report, 2011)

167. FAO also reportedly showed a weakness in providing timely reports to the CHF Administrative Agent, although as recipient of CHF funding it has a responsibility to do so.

5. Performance of the project in supporting equitable access to Goods, Services and Decision-Making

Targeting the most vulnerable

168. The eligibility criteria for receiving food security support in the three regions were set by FAO and the FSL sector. According to the criteria the support targets communities affected by war and natural disasters. Within the affected communities the support targets: IDPs, returnees, host families in war affected zones, the poor, and women headed households, children and elderly people.

Selection of eligible communities (geographic targeting)

169. In the three regions the localities and communities to target with FSL support were selected based on the annual harvest assessment implemented by FAO and on assessments conducted by implementing partners each in his geographic area of operation, supposed to help prioritize regions over others and most vulnerable groups within the areas. Geographical targeting was discussed within FSL clusters in the States and in Khartoum. Despite the fact that FSL stakeholders raised little concerns about the geographical targeting, the evaluation team has found no evidence that FSL interventions, including that of FAO, have been focused on most needy regions, or with those that priority needs have been covered. This doubt stemmed from sector leads incapacity to prove that they had, at any point in time, a good handle on the situation of needs or on-going operations. As indeed, assessment conducted by FAO generated only general findings at the State level, and failed to contain in depth information that could be used to prioritize communities over others. Accordingly, the methodologies and approaches of conducting the needs assessment and selection of affected communities could not guarantee prevention of overlaps and gaps. In the eastern region Sudanese Red Crescent reported selecting the eligible communities in consultation with commissioners of the localities. The caseload number determined by the FSL cluster in selected regions did not match any precise data regarding the extent of needs. The identification of (and consensus on) geographic targeting as well as beneficiary-selection criteria in collaboration with FSL partners during state-level meetings appeared to be a key focus of the CHF-funded FAO projects dedicated to supporting coordination, as widely accounted in the projects' final reports.

Targeting at the community level

170. The socio-economic targeting, centred on selecting most vulnerable households raised more complex issues, involving stakeholders at different levels. FSL cluster agencies discussed targeting criteria which were supposed to be applied thereon by all partner agencies. In Darfur, usual criteria reportedly used, aside from belonging to the relevant livelihood group, included for the household to have / be:
- A female head
 - A disable head
 - Orphans

- Extremely vulnerable individuals
- Poor
- War affected

171. The criteria may have proved too vague to provide clear enough guidance to IPs, in charge of applying those criteria through the projects they implemented, as the evaluation found that the use of criteria varied from one IP to the other. Following are the different implementation modalities of the beneficiary selection across implementing partners in the three regions:

Blanket/semi blanket coverage through community leaders' involvement

172. A common approach to beneficiary identification at the community level was that implementing partners at best conveyed the selection criteria to the community leaders and left the selection of beneficiaries to the community leaders and community members without even conducting any checks to ensure that distribution had covered the intended beneficiaries. This non-targeting approach prevailed in communities visited in South and Central Darfur and in Blue Nile: in most communities visited, it was clear that IPs has made little effort to ensure targeting criteria had been applied and typically worked through community leaders. If some had mentioned the criteria to the community, the fact of leaving the tasks of preparing distribution lists and then to distribute to the leaders meant that these would anyhow not be applied, being overruled by other interests. In such cases, community leaders were found to either have used their influence to allocate inputs to relatives and other influential people rather than the poorest of the community, or to have distributed the inputs meant for the poorest to all members in the community, thereby reducing the overall availed quantities to an insignificant package. In Tereij, a village in Central Darfur, the evaluators came across a case where seeds were distributed to all people in the village some of whom were not in need of seed and others were non-farming household. For those IPs, most distribution were unattended and they failed to visits households to verify whether criteria had been respected. In East Sudan, according to the perspectives gathered in communities visited, targeting is often influenced by socio-political factors at the village level and sharing of limited seeds quantities is very common. In Blue Nile, from the interviews and focus group discussions carried, around 33% reported inequity in distribution, and 43% reported exclusion of some needy households.

Community dialog and mobilization to select the neediest

173. In other cases, as reported in North and West Darfur and Eastern Sudan States, IPs on the other hand made efforts to work through distribution or farmers' committees formed with representatives of the various groups of the communities. This approach reportedly demanded an important investment in time from the IP, who had to organize several meetings prior to the distribution, to mobilize the community around the identification of most vulnerable members, and assign verification functions to some of the community members, to avoid redistribution or political pressures once the inputs were distributed. This approach relied on establishing a dialog with the formed committees in the targeted village and towns and convincing them that only the poor and neediest households should receive the assistance, and allegedly performed well and ensured targeting criteria were respected. The positive experiences reported to the evaluators proved that targeting is achievable through commitments and appropriate approaches. Some IPs combined this approach with a sort of rotational targeting strategy,

from one year to the other. In these cases, from the variety of responses obtained, the evaluators could not be sure which criteria was applied, though they usually revolved around the usual ones used to determine vulnerability (as mentioned above). **Box (2)** below shows the targeting processes followed by PA, COOPI, and DDA in North Darfur, reflecting on those most successful approaches.

Box (2): Targeting experiences in North Darfur

Targeting process followed by Practical Action (PA):

- PA works with 3 Networks, representing 150 associations. The Networks have profile of each village including list of the households in the villages covered by the associations. The village/household profiles are updated annually.
Steps PA undertakes
- AP conducts numbers of meeting with representatives of the 3 Networks to discuss and agree on targeting criteria and agree likely number of the people in need.
- The Networks through discussions with association prepare the list of people in need
- The Networks present the prepared list to the community in each village for endorsement.
- The endorsed lists will be submitted to PA. Accordingly, the inputs will be delivered to villages.
- PA staff attends the inputs distribution sometimes.

Targeting process followed by COOPI:

- COOPI develops the targeting criteria according to the needs assessment findings.
- COOPI discusses criteria with FAO then COOPI and FAO agree on the criteria.
- COOPI meets the community leaders in the villages identified with needs for agricultural inputs and presents the criteria to community leaders to identify and submit list of intended beneficiaries according to the agreed criteria.
- Lists of households' targeted beneficiaries submitted by community leaders are crosschecked by COOPI through samples - visiting.
- COOPI staff distributes the inputs to the beneficiaries according to the prepared list.
- COOPI showed lists of beneficiaries to the evaluation team and reported that because of the targeting effort only 25% of the households in different villages were eligible for receiving inputs.

Targeting process followed by DDA:

- DDA works with 42 Community Based Organizations (CBOs)
- The CBOs have Distribution Committees (DC)
- DDA presents the targeting criteria to the DCs
- The DCs prepare lists of needy households
- DDA use the prepared lists for crosschecking and confirmation of selection of the intended beneficiaries
- Inputs distribution take place according to crosschecked lists.
- DDA staffs sometimes attend the distribution.
- DDA also stated that DCs require close follow up as sometimes they do not strictly follow the criteria.

174. The households interviewed and participants of the FGD attributed the inclusion errors / redistribution that occurred widely, to the limited amounts of inputs compared to the number of needy households. The difficulty to exclude some needy households therefore reportedly resulted in redistribution of inputs and thereby to dispersing an already small package available. In Yarwa, Blue Nile out of 200 poor households, only 60 could be selected based on the available inputs allocated and inputs ended up distributed to over 100 households, in addition to what all the households interviewed in the village confirmed sharing the inputs received with other families.

175. These issues shed light of the negative consequences of the iterative planning system retained by the CHF, that compels field agencies who have made plans based on a first round of consultation at community level, to come back to the communities once informed of the amounts they have been allocated, which is always reduced. By and large, most IPs and community leaders met confirmed that the mismatch between widespread needs and small (and unpredictable) quantities of inputs represent the main challenge to targeting.

Self selection

176. This approach was mainly followed in the food processing and cheese making trainings in all three regions. The beneficiaries were usually informed by a friend or by some staff members of the implementing partners. In Zalengi announcements for the trainings conducted by Zakia center were done through loud speakers. Usually after the announcements were done by different means there will be registration of interested people. Who registered first would be selected. In Zalenji and Blue Nile some of those whom attended the training were teachers and government officials. In Kassala some of them were members in the families of relatively better off farmers who owns irrigated fruit orchards along the Gash River.
177. From the above analysis it has been clear that the implementation approach/methodology applied by each partner determines to what extent the poor and needy (the real targets of the assistance) have received the support. Though the FSL and FAO have set the targeting criteria, this in itself is a not a guarantee that the support will reach the intended target group. To guarantee coverage of the targeted groups, FAO and the FSL clusters in all regions should develop detailed implementation approaches on how to identify the targeted persons and checks to ensure that they have received the support.

Considering “Do no Harm”

178. Another consideration at times came in the way of targeting based exclusively on socio-economic grounds. Indeed, the need in some areas to avoid creating tension between various groups in a given region encouraged the IPs in including households from the “competing” group although they may not have been eligible from a socio-economic perspective. This awareness of the need to balance assistance to avert conflicts is a positive sign that some NGOs (more so the national ones, aware of local dynamics?) are conscious of the harm they could possibly do through their action. Nonetheless, evaluators regretted to have mainly seen pastoralists receiving seeds so as to avoid that they retaliate any exclusion against the IDPs to whom they lent land to farm, while planning for more appropriate inputs for them may have been an even more appropriate response. One IP interviewed in Darfur indeed reported offering to train CAHWs as an input to pastoralists, to “balance” their contribution with that offered to farmers.

Gender Equity

179. The support provided by CHF covered both men and women especially poor women headed households. Seeds and tools mainly targeted men and women especially in Darfur where women engage much in farming. In the Eastern region and Northern parts of Blue Nile State, women were less involved in farming and animal rearing, accordingly the seeds and tools distribution mainly targeted men. Women who received seeds and tools in these areas were mainly heads of households.

180. The training of CAHW has mainly targeted men, but few women in Kassala State in Halfa and Aroma localities were trained as CAHWs and they were active in performing their tasks. On the other hand, food processing, cheese making, and goats restocking generally targeted women, with an exception in Darfur where cheese making training was attended by men. Around 25% of those trained in beekeeping in Blue Nile were women. The majority of those benefited from the goats restocking were women.
181. The increased participation of women in the CHF activities have empowered them in many ways including by increasing their contribution to household and community development. From the income generated from selling of food products women started to contribute to the family consumption expenses, children education expenses and house maintenance. Currently the women trained as community animal health workers in Halfa and Aroma localities were active in serving their communities in animal health care. Women trained in food processing in Blue Nile and the Eastern Region became trainers and trained other women from their communities to benefit from the skills in household consumption and income generation. Moreover, training in food processing enabled women to realize the power of the group and the benefits of group work and networking. The women who were able to establish successful businesses after receiving the food processing training have established a group business and started to sell their products depending on their network. The 15 women in Abu Rammad in Damazine locality whom were trained in food processing have formed a group and build a woman center in the school from sales returns of the cookies and pastries they produced as a group after the training.

6. Environmental impact

182. The FAO environment interventions are designed and implemented through the Forestry National Corporation (NFC), Range and Pasture Department of MoAR and NGO partners. The NFC chairs the environment sub-group of the FSL cluster. The projects included pasture restoration, production and distribution of multi-purpose tree seedlings, rehabilitation of nurseries, establishment of school gardens and distribution of energy saving fuel efficient stove.
183. This evaluation did not look specifically on the environmental impact of these projects. However, the Range and Pasture department of MoAR in Kassala reported that in total 380 hectares of land was rehabilitated by planting improved pasture seed. A total of 2.2 metric tons of pasture seed was broadcasted (by 155 trained broadcasters) on degraded fallow land donated by local leaders and the fodder was protected to grow to maturity. In West Darfur SPHO reported that about 56,000 seedlings were produced and distributed to targeted households and schools for school gardens. The survival rate for seedling was reported to be 65%.
184. To mitigate pressure on tree logging for firewood, 400 stoves were distributed to women-headed households in IDP camps, in South Darfur. In Darfur the IDPs employ firewood and grass collection as livelihoods options to meet basic needs. This places significant demands on the environment near camps. From an environmental perspective, natural resources are being depleted around camps at rates that the IDPs themselves report to be of concern. The provision of IDPs with locally produced, fuel-efficient stoves will contribute to reducing the need to collect fuel. However, the impact on IDP natural

resource collection may be limited, as the need for livelihoods support is likely the most important issue driving IDPs to collect natural resources, rather than just a need for firewood.

185. On the other hand, the increase in number of livestock reported specifically in Darfur (goats 52%, sheep 23% and cattle 9%) will call for special consideration of environmental aspects. During pasture shortage goats are known to graze on almost all types of grass including shrubs. This can potentially lead to environmental damage and would require an assessment of the impact of increase in number livestock on environment especially around the IDP camps in Darfur.

V. Design and implementation factors affecting impact

1. Relevance to needs

186. The conflicts and impoverishment spread widely across Sudan territory, has led FAO to design wide-focus programmes, geographically and sectorally. This spread and diversity of programme is viewed as relevant to the needs of Sudanese in support of the food security and livelihoods. Safeguarding or increasing productive capacities bear a potential for increasing both food availability (through increased production) and access (through increased sale of produce), both of which are relevant in view of the high numbers of households whose livelihoods rest of these activities and still cannot sustain their household needs for food throughout the year. FAO's crops assistance portfolio, designed to enhance local capacity to produce food, has been addressing a basic and important need for most destitute people. This was confirmed by the numerous cases of met beneficiaries who reported not having the means to grow certain crops before the free distributions, or whose capacity to feed the households from their production was increased by a few months. Supporting livestock owners through interventions directed at animal health also responds to clear needs in Sudan, where pastoralism is often a cornerstone of rural livelihoods. Supporting access capacities by more directly focusing assistance income generating activities was also relevant for certain households who may not have the same productive assets due to many possible factors of vulnerability. The geographical areas of focus as well as the target groups retained were also found relevant considering the high levels of food insecurity and even malnutrition encountered amongst most destitute people in all the targeted regions, that are related to households' limited options for producing or buying food.

187. Nonetheless, a nuance to the above assessment should be made, which relates to the relative adequacy of FAO's focus (package of interventions, target areas and target groups) in relation to the CHF remit. Indeed, the CHF was created to ensure most urgent needs are covered by the humanitarian community. In this perspective, some target groups and areas that in absolute present significant need for support however are less of a priority for an emergency-type of support. In that sense, needs in Darfur or now in some of the TTAs appear as being more directly relevant to the CHF focus than Eastern Sudan States where food security is of more chronic nature being the results of structural deficiencies to address issues related to the harsh climate and environmental conditions that rural poors have to cope with. This discrepancy in the acuteness of needs between regions had led to dissonances amongst humanitarian and development stakeholders: the provision by FAO and aid partners of free services has been criticized by the MoAR and NGO partners. Such approach, such as the free vaccination campaigns or free services of

CAHWs undermines efforts of those who have shifted to cost-recovery based approaches, to foster change in mentalities and more sustainable results. In some regions such as East Sudan, maintaining relief-type of assistance is very much questionable and could have important perverse effects. The following section further develops on this matter.

2. Appropriateness of strategic positioning

Strategic positioning of FAO in Sudan

188. As presented in the initial sections of the report, the evolution of the situation of Sudan in the last decade has created a range of different contexts of poverty and food insecurity. Supporting the livelihoods and food security of the poorest segments of the Sudanese population calls for both emergency and development assistance to be provided. Although somewhat stabilized, the Darfur region still encompasses pockets and groups characterized with acute food insecurity that can only be addressed in the short term given the great number of uncertainties at play. The situation is similar in most parts of the TTAs and even more so since late 2010. On the other hand, most other regions of Sudan respond to very different dynamics, and their food insecurity and poverty rather relate to structural issues that should be addressed through long-term strategies of development. By its mandate focused on supporting food security through the development of agriculture-related productive capacities and considering the range of its technical areas of work, FAO is today one of the most relevant Organization to assist Sudan in responding to the challenges it is faced with. This entails that the Organization does position itself to address on the one hand the needs for short-term relief but also the longer-term chronic food insecurity issues. Yet, despite the fact that the latter can be expected to concern an increasing number of people, FAO seems to have been very weak at taking action to develop strategies aimed at addressing developmental issues.
189. The extent to which FAO's activities over the last years have been leaning on emergency-stamped funding sources and projects, including the CHF, is a clear indication that the Organization has not been balancing its priorities between relief and development support in Sudan. And activities that are not directed at addressing emergency or recovery needs supported by FAO are indeed, as stated earlier, much smaller, confirming that FAO has fallen short of taking the position it has been (and is) expected to on the development front. By leaning quite heavily on emergency funding for its technical cooperation programme, FAO has been limited in its options to build on all of its areas of comparative advantage, to address current structural issues related for instance to land tenure, natural resource management or even simply agricultural development.
190. By leaning so much on one source of funding which is mostly emergency relief-oriented, FAO has denied itself the opportunity to expand operations in its areas of comparative advantage. By diversifying funding sources FAO could have more strategic positioning to support both emergency needs and to promote agricultural and rural development in Sudan and gradually move away from emergency interventions. Diversified funding sources could have placed FAO in a good position to support government policies and development priorities to increase crops, livestock, and fish productions, and natural resources development and improved management. The rural communities covered by the evaluation in the eastern and Blue Nile regions and who were through the relief situation, were requesting support in technology transfer and technical interventions to increase productivity, i.e. improved land tillage and water conservation

practices, improved seeds in adequate quantities at cost, animal drawn implements for land preparation and cultivation etc.

191. As highlighted by most of FAO's partners in the FSL sector, an approach designed to suit short term needs in a context of crisis is not appropriate to suit needs of a different nature, as demonstrated by the damage caused by the free inputs distribution approach largely predominant in FAO projects, to the strategies of some agencies working in the sector and the Ministries', supporting sustainable change in the sector, in particular through the introduction of principles of cost recovery. Farmers tend to approach the free services providers when denied access to the same services by NGOs. Protracted free distributions also undermine any development strategy by exacerbating the risk of aid dependency.
192. In States such as Kassala or Red Sea, but even also in some areas of Darfur, FAO's renowned expertise in providing guidance and technical support has not been utilized to the full extent of its potential. As reflected in the minutes of some FSL sector meetings, requests were formulated to build local NGOs capacity: this type of activity oriented towards long-term civil society building being generally not supported by CHF, this type of activities tended to remain at the stage of good intentions.
193. FAO programmes have evidently been suffering by a quasi inexistent cross-fertilization or any sort of linkage between its emergency and development programmes. All of FAO programmes are compartmentalized and at times working against one another. For example, FAO emergency programme is not benefiting from the investment made by SPCRP in rebuilding of agricultural extension services and the interaction between the two programmes is nonexistent. There is a clear need to build more coherence in the approach and structure.
194. Also, the majority of FAO partners (in the government and the FSL sector) mentioned expecting FAO to take on a more prominent role on strategic issues, where it has a clear comparative advantage even over large NGOs due to its "special" status as inter-governmental Organization. FAO having also demonstrated its general weakness in operational implementation, more policy-level and institutional support may indeed be more appropriate eventually. The development of good policies related to the agricultural and breeding sectors, or to NRM and climate change, in addition to building government capacities (already supported by the SPCRP or SIFSIA projects) ; advocacy efforts towards the Government in support to good practices or the promotion of seed multiplication, are examples of the type of more strategic level support where FAO is seen as having a clear advantage, up to now under-utilized.

FAO-supported actions in emergency support: coherence of with Government priorities

195. FAO works through the Government and as such has an important role to play, as previously highlighted, in establishing a link between the national authorities and administrations and aid agencies. Considering the usual lack of cooperation between the two sides, this is considered as an important achievement and is a sign that FAO works in line with Ministries strategies. And indeed, interviewed staff from the different line Ministries expressed a general satisfaction regarding the collaboration they have had with FAO and the role played by the latter. The financial support channelled through FAO, significant for vaccination campaigns for instance, was also appreciated.

196. Nonetheless, the dissatisfaction of Government actors related to FAO's strong positioning on emergency rather than in support to longer-term programmes with consistent approaches is notable. According to the Evaluation of FAO Sudan Cooperation Report (2004-2009) published in the year 2010, several official letters from the Government of Sudan have expressed dissatisfaction with FAO operations and in particular the continuing focus on emergency activities, rather than developmental and technical support, post CPA. The contradiction of cost free approaches vs.; the Government's was often pointed out as an area where FAO should adjust its positions.

Position of FAO within FSL sector

197. Analyzing FAO's positioning and coherence with respect to the wider humanitarian community cannot be isolated from an examination of its role as FSL sector co-lead as this function undoubtedly influences how FAO relates to the operational environment. It is important to note that FAO, both influenced by its institutional setup as agency governed by member countries and by its role in Sudan as cluster lead, plays a very important *connecting* role in Sudan for the FSL sector, which also means it is a well connected organization, be it to the Government or to aid agencies. Its mandate and expertise support FAO's technical legitimacy to be a lead for the sector, while its inter-governmental nature allows it to be perceived as neutral by Governmental agents, granting it with an intermediary role between the latter and non-governmental bodies. In Sudan, where relationships between authorities and NGOs can be challenged by respective distrust, such a role is essential and has bestowed FAO with a unique "convening role" that probably no other organization could take on. Such go-between role has been emphasized by several State Government staff and NGOs as being vital to maintaining the dialogue between them.
198. Besides, as explained previously, FAO's *modus operandi*, which strongly relies on other organizations, has made FAO an entry point into the humanitarian community for smaller and much needed NGOs, who have a role to play and would not have emerged or would not survive without this intercession. Moreover, need it be mentioned, by its mandate FAO is also particularly appropriately positioned to respond to root causes of food insecurity and threats to livelihoods, in large part related to issues of availability of food. Many FSL sector stakeholders met by the evaluation team indeed pointed to the specific relevance of FAO in the current Sudanese context, in a transitional phase calling for emergency food security support at the same time as deeper-rooted and longer term rural development. Indeed FAO is, by its mandate and technical expertise, ideally positioned to oversee food security strategies bridging emergency and development to respond to issues ranging from agriculture to natural resource management. Last, FAO also can rely on good logistical and technical capacities that allow it to intervene at national scale, which few agencies have, due to its financial resources and granted access in entire territory (again deriving from its special status for governmental bodies). All the above indicate that FAO has clear qualities which legitimize its position as co-lead the FSL sector / cluster in Sudan with WFP. However, as discussed in the following chapter, in practice FAO has revealed important weaknesses in its capacity to implement this role despite its in-principle assets.
199. The role of FAO as a "pass through" agency, channelling CHF funding through to other NGO implementing partners, has been criticized by some, on the basis that such intermediary role goes against a cost efficient use of funding. Analyzing the comparative advantages of FAO in this light, a distinction should be made between two cases in point. On the one hand, agencies (such as international NGOs) that have the capacity to i) select

and procure inputs in large quantities and ii) capture funding directly from the donors, such as CHF, have indeed no interest in receiving funding through FAO, as a direct relationship with donors allow them to have more resources and more sovereignty in the way they chose to use them. On the other hand, as already mentioned, smaller NGOs who are capable of delivering good services in appropriate manner but have no procurement capacities (whether technically or logistically), or not high enough a profile to mobilize funding directly, have greatly benefited of their partnerships with FAO in that it allowed them to access funding and in kind inputs, and as they also had a lot to gain from FAO's technical counselling and training opportunities. The pass-through system also entails other notable benefits: i) in terms of efficiency gains for the CHF management team, as FAO works through some 70-100 agencies each year; and ii) in inducing more connecting power from FAO to FSL partners, who as implementing partners are more accountable to FAO than those who are not IPs, which thus somehow facilitates information management.

200. Then again, it should be made clear that the amount of funds retained by FAO for supporting the additional operational costs implied by the additional follow-up, technical counselling, etc, if justified should however be commensurate with the level of implication of the FAO ERCU structure and that these additional costs could by no means justify for FAO to utilize CHF to bear more operating expenses than it can justify. A review of financial reports of the ERCU revealed that the CHF supported by and large 50% of international staff and 100% of field national staff in 2011. The staff budget line being the most costly; it is an important pointer. The same reading could not be done for previous years due to a different reporting, nor could the evaluators manage to get a clear picture of the distribution across funding sources of expenses related to overheads. Considering the weight of CHF-funded projects in all of the ERCU portfolio, this may be acceptable though clearly on the high side, but it should be reviewed as other non-CHF projects develop and ERCU management should always seek to maintain a level of structural funding that reflects the amount of work captured for CHF.

3. FAO's capacity to be a leader for the FSL sector

201. The legitimacy for FAO to take the lead in the FSL sector is conditioned to its capacity to demonstrate that it indeed can effectively putting its assets to the profit of FSL actors and live up to expectations with respect to providing effective operational support to FSL sector members.

Factors explaining some accounted limitations in FSL coordination performance

202. FAO's capacity to lead the FSL cluster has so far not been evident, and this can partly be attributed to the lack of priority given to this function by both sector leads and the particularly minimal interest shown by WFP to engage. Several interviewed staff within WFP at State of Khartoum level, were not aware of the existence of cluster leads TORs nor had been briefed about their responsibilities as co lead, which the evaluation interpreted as a sign of disinterest. At the State level, the collaboration between co-leads was uneven: in some such as South Darfur, WFP co-chaired and supported the organization of meetings for years (though no high profile staff was in charge) and in others such as West Darfur, FAO seemed to be more active. And regardless of the existence of a formal co- leadership at state level, little evidence was found from analyzing the portfolio of activities supported by FAO throughout the period of the evaluation, of a synergetic and complementary programming between both sector leads,

despite some opportunities. In Kassala, the relationship between WFP and FAO has even been competitive over funding, and even implemented programmes with farmers without informing FAO.

203. FAO also reported on the difficulty to get partners to respond, engage or share information with the sector, considering that sector leads have no pseudo-coercive power. Partners having no obligation to comply with any requests that is put to them, some NGOs were reported not to share information with the sector, in particular regarding their funding levels. This represents a clear obstacle to coordination and to the monitoring function of sector leads who for instance could not verify whether partners may have received funding for a proposal put forth to CHF. The minutes of FSL meetings pointed out that fact that despite soliciting information on seed distribution, the information gathered was not complete and gaps remained.

204. In addition, as explained previously, a large share of sector leads' work has been dedicated to facilitating funding arrangements (mainly allocating CHF) , which has not been systematically balanced with funding provision for coordination. The CHF in particular involved a complex decision making system that, as it is participatory, has raised many complaints despite time-consuming provisions for transparency. The long process by which the HWP priorities and then CHF allocations for FSL have been discussed and decided has de factor leaned heavily on the FAO ERCU staff, that has allocated a full-time person to it, to supervise the planning but also oversee the implementation of projects for which FAO had signed Letters of Agreements (LoAs), ranging between 78 and 206 in recent years as shown in **table 16**. Besides, this process brought competition for funding between sector partners, which has created tensions where is was meant to promote coordination.

Table 16: number of LoAs signed by FAO with IPs 2009-2011

Year	# LoAs in Darfur	# LoAs in other regions	Total number of LoAs
2009	150	at least 56 ²⁷	206
2010	38	53	91
2011	29	49	78

205. FAO as sector lead agency appears to have been drawn away from its core coordinating function by the time-consuming tasks related to sector planning and resources allocation, and in this way the CHF may have created a counter-productive effect whereby procedure management takes priority over other necessary coordination actions. Coordination does not necessarily come with a cost but staff time does. And it is in that sense surprising that the CHF did not systematically allocate some funding for these, in particular considering the above comments. However, some coordination related tasks may indeed come with a cost: as this evaluation suggests, sector leads have a key responsibility in developing and promoting systems or frameworks and guidelines related to key operational sequences such as needs assessment or monitoring, for the benefit of sector partners. However, these functions seldom get donors attention and funding these tasks is often a challenge for organizations. FAO has up to now received funding irregularly for coordination, thus giving it the possibility of working on establishing such systems.

²⁷ No information re the number of LoAs for Abyei in 2009

206. In line with this evaluation findings, it should also be noted that the recent evaluation of the CHF for Sudan has also highlighted the need for more funds and efforts to be focused on improving coordination of stakeholders and activities in the sectors. The report states that “The CHF has had a [...] mixed impact on the cluster system: more agencies have become involved with clusters, but the competition for CHF funding often poses major challenges for cluster leads and co-leads, and the transfer of CHF allocation responsibilities to clusters has not yet been matched by a commensurate transfer of human and financial resources to enable them to discharge these responsibilities”²⁸

Insufficiently strategic programming of CHF funds for FSL

207. As raised in various parts of the evaluation report, evaluators found indications of insufficient achievements in terms of coordination for the sector of FSL, thus reflecting on the capacity of the cluster co-leadership to carry-out its responsibility. In particular, FAO as co-lead, revealed weaknesses in the two following areas, in which it could yet play an important part.

Establishing a system for sector-wide needs assessment

208. As explained previously, assessing needs is indispensable to warrant strategic and complementary interventions in a complex sector such as FSL, and so far the FSL sector has no access to consistent information available on needs related to food security and livelihood levels in Sudan. Sector leads have a responsibility to set-up systems to promote needs assessment and assure a good basis for planning with the minimum necessary information at national, State, locality and local levels.
209. Such a system could build on what exists to date (CFSAM, Pre/post harvest assessment, WFP FSMS, local NGOs assessments, etc.) although efforts should be geared at improving the quality of what is produced and reaching minimum standards. Reports reviewed by the evaluation revealed for the most part little method and expertise from staff who carried the assessments, the information collected for a large part was not valid to inform programming, and findings presented did not seek to make the link between the situation observed and programmatic options. Then, a sector approach to assessments should seek to complement what exists, which fails to provide an overall vision over the territory, bearing the risk of missing priority needs. A rapid and simple annual assessment mechanism²⁹ should seek to provide a model to rapidly acquire a comprehensive view of key needy areas and people, through a rapid approach and simple steps on which FSL agencies could be trained. WFP's solid assessment methodologies and capacities could be utilized to jumpstart the process.
210. FSL sector partners interviewed generally concurred with the necessity to strengthen the sector approach to assessment and all welcomed the idea to produce common tools. Building capacities was also called for, and indeed should be the final step of an assessment capacity set-up for the sector. If deemed appropriate and realistic, the development of such system could be reliant on an *Assessment Working Group* formed on a voluntary basis by interested agencies who would avail a staff to support the set-up of an approach and related tools and capacities and could then act as mission leads during the assessments implementation.

²⁸ Evaluation of the Sudan CHF (report, 2011)

²⁹ A model could be taken from WFP's Initial EFSA approach.

Issues with fragmented programmatic decision making process for pass-through funded projects

211. The processes whereby planning priorities are identified for the sector to feed into the HWP and then CHF funds were allocated reportedly created some tensions within the sector and FAO. Despite the consultation of agencies operating in the field at State level organized by sector leads, the iterative participatory process that leads to planning and eventually funding interventions is undermined by a centralized and rather complex decision making process. Indeed, despite efforts to be transparent and to communicate on criteria used to select proposals for funding, some agencies whose proposals were not selected for direct CHF funding expressed resentment over the decision and criticized sector leads for a biased decision making process. As reported in some sector meeting minutes (2011), these agencies protested against the fact that the CHF funds are allocated to a handful of organizations only, with almost no local NGOs being awarded funds (it seems that only 1 local NGO received direct CHF funding in 2011).
212. Two elements may have prompted this situation, first of which the sophistication of the decision making process related to the allocation of CHF funding, involving many stakeholders from donors, to the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC), CHF management (OCHA), State/area coordinators, sector leads and with consultations of sector members. The various layers of decision somehow dissolves the sense of responsibility over decisions taken, one being constrained by the directions given by the preceding stratum. The following extract from the 2008 allocation policy paper illustrates this point: "State based management teams will outline priorities at field level for the three Darfur states. Informed by state-based priorities, sectoral allocations will be agreed at Khartoum level between the OCHA regional coordinator, sector leads and key NGO/UN partners. Allocations should be decided in close consultation with field based focal points." A review of the annual CHF allocation policy papers points to other elements of the processes that may have compounded the ambiguity for partners: the decision-making chain was not the same across regions (e.g. in Darfur allocations are "agreed at Khartoum level between the OCHA regional coordinator and sector leads" while in others are "agreed at field level in close consultation with overall sector leaders" – CHF policy paper 2007); and on top of this procedures have evolved over the year, which did not allow sector partners to get acquainted with the process over the years. In addition criteria mentioned as guidelines for sector lead to support the selection of projects were many and not necessarily straightforward.
213. In addition to the intricacies inherent to the procedures, deficiencies in vertical communication, i.e. from Khartoum decision makers to field-based actors, further added to the confusion over the allocation rationale. It should be noted that FAO ERCU appears to have systematically made efforts to communicate with sector partners on the allocation process and criteria used to select proposals. The horizontal communication was thus not an issue. On the other hand the vertical (Khartoum-field) communication flows were less straightforward, possibly owing to an overly centralized decision-making set-up within FAO. FAO State office staff regretted not being involved more closely in decisions taken regarding allocations rationale, or at least kept informed so as to be able to pass clear messages to field partners as to what decided allocations implied for them. In practice, field level FAO staff in charge of coordinating FSL interventions were not given the keys to link the State level planning figures communicated by members to Khartoum with financial allocations received from Khartoum as a results of the CHF allocation process, and this created unnecessary tensions. In addition a significant proportion of

implementing partners contacted complained of the disconnect between their planning figures and the eventual caseloads or programmes FAO was proposing to support them for with CHF funding.

214. The cost of such process glitches for IPs was noteworthy as it often implied redrafting a new proposal, but above all as it created tensions with communities as the NGOs had to adjust established targeting criteria to focus on the utmost needy, which was usually not easily accepted. Some IPs even chose to give up the allocation rather than have to go through this. For FAO, playing a key part in the fund allocation process as sector lead also had a cost in creating competition with who should be partners, and generating an important additional set of managerial tasks that dragged it away from other of its coordination functions.

4. Operational capacity: establishing adequate implementation arrangement

215. Aside from the leadership capacities, FAO as pass through agency also has to demonstrate its capacities to deliver the appropriate service to its partners in practice. This section analyzes the extent to which FAO has been strategic in the selection of partners and its capacities to provide adequate operational support to them.

Building Strategic partnerships

216. The effectiveness of FAO's interventions has been to some extent conditioned by the quality of its partnerships. Some of the issues discussed above and related to FAO's role as sector lead already affected the relationship of FAO with its partners. The capacities of agencies selected by FAO to deliver assistance constituted another important factor influencing the quality of its programme. The process followed by FAO to select its implementing partners did not appear clearly to the evaluators, and though capacities were mentioned by FAO as a criteria to select partners, not all IPs seemed to have the minimum required capacities. The quality of partners interviewed varied indeed greatly, with distinctions to be made generally between: i) international NGOs that generally presented an appropriate level of knowledge and use of good practices (e.g. for targeting, connectedness, etc.); ii) national NGOs or CBOs that also demonstrated having suitable capacities; and iii) national NGOs or CBO that did not have the minimum required level of capacities available within the structure, with subsequent limited understanding of stakes, good practices or possible harm done through poorly designed or executed projects. Finding the appropriate cut-off point beyond which agencies are considered too weak is delicate, and by no means should FAO seek to work only with highly skilled NGOs as its mission includes strengthening capacities of the civil society and transmitting knowledge. However, working through organizations that do not have the *minimum* required capacities to manage a project and provide some expertise imply for FAO to spend more time than it can spare on mentoring, supporting and monitoring them. In actual terms, this has led ineffective projects, which in other words meant misusing limited funding. At least 3 cases were encountered during the field assessment of NGOs that never delivered the inputs or services they were expected to, or that mismanaged them (selling a part in local markets, as per testimonies of local stakeholders). Such lack of control over limited resources is unacceptable and to be avoided demands that FAO be more strategic in selecting the organizations it intends to partner with.
217. FAO does not appear to have sought to build strategic partnerships and this does not only depend on its ability to select the appropriate partners. Building strategic partnerships

calls for a medium-term collaboration outlook. Such vision of partnership promotes constructed capacity building investments by FAO in favour of long-term mutual benefits, facilitating the work of FAO over time with ever more qualified IPs. More efforts on building a true sector co-leadership with WFP would also be beneficial to the sector for instance in fostering more strategic and “substance-related” exchanges; proactive efforts to set-up assessment or monitoring systems or promote harmonized practices.

Delivery of appropriate inputs in timely manner (procurement): institutional issue

218. One of the cornerstone of good operational capacity lies on the ability to deliver good inputs in a timely manner to partners. As reported in the section related to impact, the evaluation noted some deficiencies in that respect, owing to FAO but not exclusively. The issue noted related first of all to the timeliness of inputs delivered, related to the agriculture component. While in most regions, IPs of FAO reported a general timely delivery of inputs, in Darfur, some delays were reported, with important consequences on production. Inputs reported to have arrived late were generally distributed in July to NGOs while the ideal timing would have been May, to allow for farmers to plan according to what they knew they would receive (or June with information ahead of time). As a consequence farmers either kept them (with logistical constraints induced) or for others planted them, with reduced yield. In one community visited, farmers ate the seeds that got in too late. The negative impact of such delays on the NGO credibility vis-a-vis communities expecting seeds on time should also be mentioned.
219. These delays have had two main reasons. The first is related to the FAO procurement and delivery chain: an analysis of the chain of events going from the initial request formulated by programme managers until the delivery of inputs to IPs has revealed that the main reason for delays seems to lie on the number of stakeholders that have a role in the process (each new clearance adding a number short (or at times long) delay has sometimes led to longer processes overall than it could) combined to logistical constraints inherent to delivering in Darfur. In theory, a procurement process that entails tendering (i.e. when Repeat Orders, cannot be placed) could be as short as 25 days, after which the delivery time depends on how the difficulties entailed with transport logistics. In the period under study, the entire process of tendering took from a minimum time period of 1.5 months (seeds in 2006) to 10 months (vaccines in 2007). The latter was the result of incomplete information provided by the ERCU regarding the state monopoly on vaccines, leading to time losses on tendering to several local ‘suppliers’ and subsequent reluctance from the Technical Division to clear the state supplier. Such glitches in communication, alike another similar delay reported in early 2012, have explained some of the delays experienced in the procurement system but remained marginal. As mentioned earlier, the process is dependent on several actors, a series of procedures, and specific information required for each step of the process. While speed in responding is of the essence and most actors do respond immediately, the quality of the responses are not always satisfactory and may require a significant amount of back and forth in terms of clarifications and changes to documents (specifications, Memos, commercial evaluations, PRs, POs etc.), which ultimately lengthens the process. This could partly be related to the fact that no one person has the overall ‘control’ over the entire process. Overall, the procurement process seems to have improved over the period and benefited from having a dedicated officer to oversee the local procurement processes. The decisions to require procurement plans from programme managers and to start procurement processes as early in the year as possible seem to have had positive effects. Some delays can be avoided in ensuring that all involved parties (in Sudan and in HQ) play their part in the shortest delays.

220. Another reason for some delayed delivery was related to the late arrival of donors funds into the CHF account: despite CHF's commitment to FAO, the latter was at times compelled to wait until funds were delivered by donors before initiating the procurement procedure. Indeed, as the 2007 CHF policy papers clearly states "Allocations [are] on condition of commitment of funds from donors and disbursements [...] based on release of funds from donors", FAO could not take the risk of buying inputs without having a certainty that it would receive the funds. Donors delays in delivering committed funds therefore have had an important impact on the delivery chain and up to the farmers.
221. One surprising finding was that the procurement process for Emergency Reserve projects, supposed to be mobilized for quick execution to respond to acute crisis situation, does not seem to respond to any specific procedure. And indeed, looking at the procurement chain related to a selected ER project (ER-008) revealed that the process took up to 3.5 months from the request formulation to delivery, a time lapse that is obviously not in line with the nature of funding received.
222. Another element is worth noting which has had consequences on the speed of delivery of seeds to farmers, which relates to the seed testing process: it came to the attention of evaluators while doing the assessment that seeds were being tested after they had arrived at the State level FAO warehouse. Testing at the end of the delivery chain seemed little appropriate, as a negative result would lead to an embarrassing situation for FAO and dramatic for farmers counting on the seeds³⁰. In addition, despite there being capacities in the State to test seeds (in Nyala, these capacities were even the result of support by FAO), FAO could not avert the Government decision to have the testing done in Khartoum, which added a greater delay to the distribution to farmers. Such situations to be avoided would require firm advocacy from FAO against such decisions on the basis that they may undermine the results of efforts to support poor farmers. This would demand a closer collaboration between the ERCU and the FAO Representation than it prevails today, with an FAOR supporting the smooth operational execution of the emergency programme using its position vis-a-vis the Government.
223. Inputs delivered under the livestock support component were generally reported to be delivered on time, despite a challenging process for FAO due to the sometimes late provision of vaccines from the exclusive provider in the country.
224. The quality of agricultural inputs is guaranteed by FAO with the National Seeds Administration (NSA), which tests of the varietal purity and germination at federal and states levels, to ensure they meet standards set by the Ministry of Agriculture. Seed testing was performed at both State and federal levels up until 2012, where the National Seeds Administration revoked the agreement signed with FAO on local seeds testing. This had led to reported delays in seeds delivery as per the section on delivery of inputs that follows. The tools quality is assured through specification developed by FAO in consultation with Ministry of Agriculture, target populations and implementing partners.
225. With respect to the inputs' quality, most farmers met in the field reported being very satisfied with the quality of seeds they received, appreciating the higher yield and resistance of crops and vegetable. The tools were also usually appreciate with rare

³⁰ According to the FAO procurement officer, seeds are however always tested at the supplier's warehouse before buying, and the second testing is the result of a requirement from the national seeds administration, to double check warrant that the good quality seeds are indeed those that have been sent to the field.

exceptions, and actually considering their reported good quality, evaluators questioned the appropriateness of delivering tools each year, as did some NGOs that reported receiving tools whereas having not requested them, and even FAO state offices that explained having had in the past to distribute tools that they thought were not needed. This leads to a more general matter related to inputs quality, that FAO may wish to consider in the future, regarding the over-standardization of the inputs package. Besides the above, there are other indications that FAO package seems to partly be predetermined: varieties distributed remain the same while some IPs has expressed wanting to receive new ones, including some that may provide a more complete benefit, e.g. with leaves that can be used for animals, or types that call for less water while providing good micro-nutrients. But more importantly, the package has been standardized in quantity, which most agree is no longer appropriate in view of the soil degradation and other combined factors that has negatively impacted crop yields. As reported by an FAO staff at field level, who advocated for an increase in the quantity of seeds distributed by FAO without which he argued no impact can be expected, other FSL partners such as ICRC already distribute a bigger package. The standardization may be a way around the lack of visibility over actual needs?

226. Regarding the livestock components, inputs were generally highly appreciated, which has been instrumental in building up the confidence of livestock owners on the benefits of treatment. One issue was however mentioned by Community Animal Health Workers related to the short expiry date they had to manage with the drugs they received, which has caused the difficulties when delivered in too large quantity to be able to distribute / sell all by the expiry date. The logistical hassle related to sending the drugs back and getting new stocks could be avoided by ensuring longer expiry periods when drugs are distributed.

Managing programme oversight and accountability

227. As mentioned previously, as sector lead FAO had a responsibility to ensure FSL assistance comes to most needy and to exercise an oversight function, and has received some support- though not regular- from the CHF in that respect.
228. The need to set-up a systematic mechanism to follow-up on agencies' programmes is clear, for reasons already mentioned related to accountability, information sharing and learning. Analyzing the impact of the IGA component supported by FAO has showed that without good monitoring, NGOs that proved incapable to deliver an appropriate programme were not identified as flawed by FAO, while on the other hand FAO did not have a system whereby it could have identified those that did demonstrate to have good capacities with respect to IGA planning. As mentioned earlier, FAO has up to now not appeared to prioritize monitoring and thereby has first of all not been in a position to exert its oversight function, for which it is accountable to donors funding the sector as well as beneficiaries who should be ensured of the aid community's efforts to ensure the highest quality of programme delivery. And FAO has also lost opportunities to learn from errors and successes, a potential benefit of working in a cluster. FAO staff in the field and in Khartoum entirely recognized the absence of an institutionalized M & E system, and actually were working on strengthening and prioritizing this function when the evaluation was underway.
229. As mentioned previously, this gap could not be attributed to a lack of funds and over the period 2006-2007, the "RC/HC fielded six Sector Strategy and Coordination Advisors (SSCAs), equally divided between Northern and Southern Sudan, to support four sectors

with coordination, planning and monitoring of progress”³¹ and four of them were attributed to the FSL sector. FAO could therefore count not only on these 4 SSCAs to coordinate the entire sector in each Darfur State, but also then had team of (2 to 4) enumerators whose main tasks were the monitoring. The weak results thus rather reflected on the crucial importance of being able to rely on good enough experts to implement the M&E system.

Ability to rely on good staff : institutional issue

230. The weaknesses in monitoring have revealed a more institutionally-embedded problem that has been underpinning several of the capacity issues that challenged FAO in delivering its programme: the inability for the Organization to retain its good staff which evidently derives from the feeble contractual conditions that the Organization was able to offer, in turn the result of the fragile financial situation of FAO. Indeed, examples of staff resignations have been reported as causes for many of the pointed deficiencies, and concern the entire period the evaluation has covered. Positions such as the Sector Strategy and Coordination Advisor (2007), Information and Reporting Officer (2007), or the M&E officer (2009) were almost never staffed for more than one year and each time took between 4 month to over one year to fill again, leaving gaps and inducing a loss of continuity. These observations resonate with the findings of the CHF Evaluation that comment on the lack of sufficient human/financial resources being dedicated to coordination activities.

The conditions offered by FAO to its staff, with non-staff contracts and periods seldom going beyond on year, may not adequately balance the level of effort required both personal and professional, to attract the high-level experts required.

³¹ Sudan HWP, 2007, Volume 1

VI. Conclusions

231. The evaluation was set out to demonstrate the extent to which CHF funded FAO interventions had produced an impact on households' lives and productive capacities, and what the main factors at play had been. In that respect, the evaluation evidenced several areas where an improvement of households' production, consumption or income levels can reasonably be correlated to the assistance they received. The sector in which impact seems to have been the most evident and extensive is that of animal health, a highly relevant area of activity to support in all parts of Sudan. Supporting vaccination campaigns and the development of quality veterinary services in rural areas has had immediate positive effects on people's production and thereby on consumption of animal products and income, in turn building households' resilience capacities. In addition, the experience of these benefits has facilitated a change in people's knowledge and awareness regarding the utility of veterinary services to safeguard and develop herds. Today, in some regions supported, pastoralists are willing to pay CAHW against their veterinary services and would probably also be in many other areas where it has not yet been piloted after years of free services, having now tested the value of such investments.
232. And indeed, the main shadow in this generally positive picture is that by providing services free of charge, FAO and FSL sector partners may have undermined efforts towards "normalizing" the veterinary service supply chain through cost-recovery based vaccination campaigns or treatment. Herds represent a rather high value, giving pastoralists a resource to invest in their herds, if only they are persuaded that it is in their interest to do so, even though the service has a cost. This behavioral change has occurred for some of the animal keepers supported for years, but not for all. Also, though the role of CAHWs is recognized and sometimes well established at community level, the establishment of this new function as a free service has denied it the possibility to become a reliable service and a viable livelihood option for the CAHW, as drugs provided for free run-out fast, leading to the closing of the veterinary unit until new supply comes in and sometimes forever. The question is now whether the establishment of a service provided on a cost-recovery basis can still be considered for support by humanitarian actors and if so how. Some households with lower resources will also remain in need of free services as selling their animals may overly increase their vulnerability and free veterinary service is still likely needed to stimulate mentality changes for those who have not yet been won over.
233. Interventions aimed at supporting agricultural production has also demonstrated to generate positive changes for beneficiary farmers though with more inconsistent results. Vegetable growing has proved to be a high impact activity for vulnerable households who without assistance were put off by high prices of seeds and lack of knowledge of some varieties. When coupled with irrigation support, such activity became an outstanding success and, save land ownership issues, has demonstrated its potential for pulling out households out of vulnerable conditions when established as a sustainable income generation business. The impact of support to staple production as implemented is not conclusive, despite the satisfaction generally expressed by farmers over the quality of seeds received. And evidence suggests that by addressing design issues related to the seed package size and by putting more efforts into effective targeting, to avoid redistribution and sprinkling of the inputs, such type of intervention may prove effective. There is still a definite need to support most vulnerable sections of the Sudan population, in particular those who lost their livelihoods due to conflicts, such as returnees and IDPs. Approaches retained to support extension services also proved inadequately designed and suffered

from a deficit of coordination with the FAO-supported Sudan Productive Capacity Recovery Programme (SPCRP). These shortcomings affected the results obtained on agricultural production, as corroborated by farmers lamenting insufficient knowledge related to some varieties' cultivation, in particular vegetables.

234. Experience generally suggested that much higher impact may have been achieved on production, had FAO and its partners provided complementary support to farmers with respect to irrigation equipment, support to water harvesting, pest control or land tillage in particular, as indeed, the mixed results obtained by farmers were mainly due to the effects of pest or climate related, as well as limited human capacities. In eastern regions despite promising starts farmers all lost their production to drought, while had low or failed production levels due to pests or limited human capital, or missed an opportunity to apply good cultivation practices owing to limited good technical extension services. Experiences of integrated support provided by some NGOs (Oxfam, CDA) were reportedly very successful, to the extent that NGOs were able to confidently cease support, households having the asset base and skills to sustain themselves and cope with possible future shocks without falling into unsustainable strategies.
235. Results obtained from the support to IGAs are generally much less positive as for the two intervention types mentioned above, mainly due to implementation and related design issues. Aside from restocking of animals which demonstrated as having benefitted recipient households quite immediately whether to generate income or otherwise, other activities supported were not or only marginally effective IGAs. The design weaknesses found to have limited if not hindered the impact of IGAs supported in recent years were of many kinds, whether related to targeting, to the choice of the activity or inputs, to the training quality or the supervision modalities (or lack thereof) but all could be seen as deriving from a fundamental initial shortcoming in analyzing the needs and context. FAO has not been attentive enough about warranting the relevance and appropriateness of activities supported by its implementing partners in support to income diversification. This oversight may be related to the little technical expertise that FAO can provide in this field and possibly to a lack of prioritization of IGAs compared to other activities related more directly to in-house expertise. This reading is corroborated by the institutional set-up of FAO offices at Khartoum as at State level, where the evaluation team found no dedicated officer for IGAs, supervised either by the agriculture sector or the livestock sector experts depending on the nature of the activity. The selection of partners who do have the expertise to design and implement IGAs is also at stake, and FAO has demonstrated a weakness in this area.
236. The evaluation confirmed the initial hypothesis that, in line with CHF's mandate to support most urgent humanitarian needs, CHF-funded interventions mostly safeguarded short term food security by enabling households in situations of survival, to sustain their needs without recourse to negative coping mechanisms, as an alternative to continued relief and to prevent aid dependency. Nonetheless, the evaluation found that some of the support provided to animal health also contributed to create more sustainable results, as evidenced by the reported sense of resilience by some whose animal resources had become as a solid capital on which to rely in emergency.
237. Whichever the intervention type, the evaluation notes that the extent to which they impacted on households' productive capacities or livelihoods and food security was rather disparate depending on their "baseline" situation. More vulnerable households, such as IDPs living in camps in Darfur, generally benefitted more from the provided support, as

the little they received still could represent an important addendum to their “normal” asset base, compared to households who though registering as vulnerable, have more options to cope with stress.

238. The evaluation findings regarding impact raise a fundamental issue related to the strategic positioning of FAO in Sudan. In 2012, food insecurity in Sudan cannot be related to the same causes everywhere. In many regions, such as in the east, production and grazing capacities depend on climate related factors combined with structural deficiencies. Such chronic vulnerabilities call for long rural development strategies lying with the national authorities and aiming to rebuild sustainable livelihoods. Different types of response are called for, to address food insecurity in Darfur or in the TTAs, where conflict still disrupts livelihoods in immediate manner and creates emergency situations. FAO nonetheless, has been mainly present in recent years through emergency-oriented short-term interventions, a largely inappropriate strategic positioning. With a mandate covering a range of sectors from agriculture to natural resource management to address from emergency to development needs, FAO has all the instruments at hand to be in the forefront of any initiative to support the food security of vulnerable populations in Sudan and in particular bridge emergency and more development-oriented assistance. Still, despite this notional advantage, FAO appears to have had limited actions related to the many development challenges facing Sudan in sectors such as natural resource management (including water and forests), agricultural and livestock management, land tenure, etc. FAO as an inter-governmental organization is also uniquely positioned to take action at strategic level and has renowned expertise to support governments at policy and institutional levels, or play an advisory role to line Ministries, making the most of its awareness of grassroots needs to suggest policy orientations. FAO could for instance promote the development of seed multiplication centres at State level (as has been done in the past) in order to ensure the availability of good seeds in local markets from where farmers could simply supply themselves rather than keep receiving them from aid agencies. Yet again FAO is not audible in such discussions nor does it communicate as an external stakeholder on some key issues calling for resolution in Sudan and related to its mandate.
239. Mobilizing donor support in Sudan appears to have been a challenge in recent year especially for development programmes, however it is not clear the extent to which the Representation of FAO has been active on this side, to complement emergency-oriented funding, which has dominated in recent years. On the other hand, the evaluation found the imbalance between relief and development funding of concern, as in this originates the inadequacy of FAO's assistance to “transitioning” regions, mainly of short term emergency nature, as funded by the CHF. Yet, if resources were the main stumbling block, supporting Line Ministries with their policy development and strategic orientations may entail relatively contained expenses and would nonetheless fill a need unanimously expressed by counterparts. Such upfront work at policy level could also have direct positive effects on grassroots food security, as FAO could use its field presence to flag needed policy or institutional changes. With FAO keeping an on-going dialogue with national authorities, problem such as the delayed inputs distribution generated by inadequate seed testing processes, may find a way for resolution.
240. FAO is a needed actor in Sudan, as recognized by most stakeholders working there and by the Government. It has a unique role in supporting national or local NGOs that may not otherwise find direct support from the international donor community. FAO, because it works through partners, largely relies on these civil society organizations and

supports national capacities in doing so. In a complex operational setting such as Sudan, promoting local organizations in delivering assistance is helpful in ensuring continuity (internationals rotate and can be expelled) and an in-depth understanding of dynamics at play, which can in turn favor a more efficient implementation. Its perceived neutrality also confers it a unique and crucial role in bridging the international humanitarian community with the Government, both of whom can have difficulties keeping a smooth dialogue. It also has the capacity to act at scale, which many agencies do not have (e.g. to deliver seeds, or vaccines). FAO has a role to play in leading small to medium organizations that do not have the technical, logistical or networking capacities to act independently. There is on the other hand little justification for FAO to be operationally supervising (or passing funds through to) international NGOs or other larger national NGOs who can access donors and deliver assistance on their own. This seems to have been the tendency in recent years anyhow.

241. The evaluation notes that FAO is expected on various grounds where it is not present (enough), according to its counterparts and partners. The technical nature of FAO's work and the reputation of its experts are some of the recognized strengths of the organization which are considered under-utilized, considering for instance the limited provision of technical backstopping or knowledge sharing opportunities, regretted by many partners and counterparts, or the fact that capacity building is usually sub-contracted by FAO but not systematically carried by FAO technical experts. The unique positioning of FAO in particular versus the Government, and the power to influence and convene influential or high level stakeholders are assets that FAO makes little use of to be active at strategic level in Sudan, as reported above. The operational capacity of FAO not being its strong points, as underlined in the report, a repositioning on more strategic undertakings may be all the more appropriate.
242. FAO also has a demonstrated comparative advantage in leading the Food Security and Livelihoods sector in collaboration with WFP as it has done up to now. Its technical expertise; complementary positioning at field and policy levels; the respect it has throughout a range of stakeholders conferring it a natural convener role are some of the reasons supporting its legitimacy as leader. Notwithstanding, some areas of work do not appear to have been prioritized by FAO, which yet constitute important functions of a sector lead. First FAO has failed to promote a common approach to assessment –despite efforts in this direction-, which is at the root of the absence of common and strategic programming among sector partners. Second, the monitoring function has not been given any priority, neither for FAO to exert its oversight on its partners' achievements nor in the form of guidance provided to sector partners. The evaluation is however confident that this situation may be addressed in the short term as the ERCU management had given priority to the setup of a monitoring system for projects funded through FAO at the time of the evaluation mission.

VII. Recommendations

243. **Recommendation 1:** FAO should build on its areas of strength to prioritize its action on sectors where it has a comparative advantage over others, based on its technical expertise or its strategic positioning, as “neutral” stakeholder. This may imply giving up on support to partners in areas of work, such as IGAs, on which it cannot offer specialized technical expertise or operational value added.
244. **Recommendation 2:** There is a need to keep supporting the livelihoods and food security of rural households in emergency contexts, in areas of Sudan where the situation has not yet stabilized and vulnerabilities are still extreme, to complement relief aid with immediate productive capacities. In doing so, FAO should build on identified areas of strengths and seek to take corrective measures to improve interventions identified as less effective. Forthcoming emergency programmes would need to define gradual strategies to transition out of emergency support, possibly including stratified targeting approaches that would allow continuing free distributions for some and adopt cost-recovery (or revolving funds) for others. FAO could make the most of its ability to tackle both emergency and developmental challenges to devise multi-level programmes with short and longer-term objectives, possibly mixing funding sources, thus promoting continuity from emergency into development.
245. **Recommendation 3:** As a part of its strategic positioning, FAO, through its Representative, could take a more prominent role on strategic issues related to rural development as advisor to the Government and by way of policy support. This would also entail for FAO to better balance its sources of funding and mobilize funding to support development assistance where it is more appropriate than emergency support.
246. **Recommendation 4:** Taking advantage of its multi-sector expertise and capacities, FAO should whenever possible seek to implement integrated interventions whereby inputs or services that can cross-fertilize one another and are distributed simultaneously and result in higher impact.
247. **Recommendation 5:** FAO should give priority to its role as FSL sector lead and seek to promote a strategic sector approach with interventions that are focusing on verified and consistent priority needs and continuously learn from past experiences. Particular emphasis should be put on:
- i. Sharing its technical knowledge through the Cluster to support more substantial exchanges regarding sector planning and offer guidance on implementation modalities. Knowledge and experience sharing among Cluster members should generally be promoted as a way of strengthening on-going programmes.
 - ii. Establishing and supporting a sector-wide system in support to needs assessment which could take the form of a working group within the cluster to whom the task of developing guidance and leading assessment initiatives could be delegated. The solid assessment expertise of sector leads and in particular WFP could be built upon.
 - iii. Monitoring the activities and outputs of its partners, and strengthen partners' capacities in this field. Monitoring visits will allow increasing the accountability to the humanitarian community; learning from experience for FAO in order to improve programming and build partners capacities.
248. **Recommendation 6:** In order to cultivate a high level of programme management quality, FAO ERCU should not undermine the importance and implications of managing

staff resources. In particular, it should keep alert not to divert its staff from identified priorities, which may for instance mean limiting the extent to which it is involved in time-consuming fund management, which is not its core business. Secondly, FAO should make all efforts to avoid excessive turnover by offering reasonable contractual conditions, aligned to other agencies'.

249. **Recommendation 7:** FAO should seek to make use of the technical expertise held within the Organization to transfer knowledge to Governmental and NGO staff, rather than appealing to third-party firms to deliver training. It should also be more active in disseminating any normative work that is relevant to Sudan stakeholders.
250. **Recommendation 8:** FAO ERCU should establish more strategic partnerships with NGOs that are carefully selected for being competent and in line with or complementary to FAO's orientation, with which it would then seek to build a long-term collaboration and mutual investment, inferring in particular a more efficient use of resources put in capacity building.
251. **Recommendation 9:** Looking ahead and considering the positive impact achieved by recent interventions for both farmers and pastoralists, allowed to expand their area of activity, FAO should keep very attentive to the risks related to the latent conflict over land between farmers seeking to expand their agricultural production and pastoralists seeking pasture. FAO has a responsibility to keep promoting peaceful livelihood strategies and thinking ahead of how to prevent future causes for conflict.

Annexes

Annex 1: Evaluation Terms of Reference

Annex 2: Methodology note

Annex 3: Evaluation itineraries and people interviewed

Annex 4: List of documents reviewed