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Context

Since the end of 2020, the humanitarian situation in the Central African Republic has seriously deteriorated. This is largely due to attacks from armed groups, who have extended their presence in parts of the country and are responsible for regular violent actions, particularly in the run-up to and following the general elections of December 2020. This resurgence of violence has had considerable impact on civilians and caused the displacement of an additional 321 000 people, bringing the total caseload to 738 280. The post-election violence and displacement are taking place in an already disastrous humanitarian context where more than half of the country's population is in need of emergency humanitarian assistance.

This last wave of displacements since December 2020 mainly concerned the localities of Boali, Bossangoa, Bossembélé, Bouar and Yaloké, where violent clashes took place between the Central African Armed Forces (FACA) and rebel groups. FACA has now secured these localities, and displaced households are expected to return to their homes having lost their livelihoods almost entirely. Of the 321 000 people displaced since December 2020, 147 000 have been able to return home while the rest remain in the bush, in informal gathering areas, in community buildings (churches, schools and hospitals) or living with host families. In the coming months, 174 000 people are expected to return to their villages of origin. When they do, they will not have inputs to cultivate their land or the means to access food, adding pressure on the communities they will return to.

Regarding agricultural production, households' harvests have been below average. This is mainly due to reduced cultivated land, lack of seeds and agricultural tools, low productivity, as well as the ongoing insecurity in certain sub-prefectures. Family food stocks are therefore likely to run out quickly. This means the lean period will start early for these families and make them more dependent on markets. Prices remain above average due to import restrictions related to the coronavirus disease 2019, making it more difficult for vulnerable households to access food. As a result, levels of food insecurity remain high, with nearly half of the population in high acute food insecurity.

The Central African Republic

Anticipatory action –
Supporting returnees
to resume agricultural
production activities

Urgent call for assistance



to assist
474 000 people
(of whom 241 740 women)



FAO requires
USD 14.22 million



period
May–December 2021

Objective

Rapidly rehabilitate the agricultural livelihoods of returnees and strengthen host communities' production capacities.

Proposed anticipatory actions

- Analyse the situation, identify needs and coordinate with other key actors (Government, United Nations agencies, non-governmental and community organizations).
- Pre-position agricultural inputs in strategic areas where a high number of returnees is expected.
- Carry out cash-based transfers, including cash for work to rehabilitate agricultural infrastructure.
- Distribute timely agricultural inputs (crop and vegetable seeds and tools), taking into account land and water availability.
- Organize training sessions on good agricultural production practices.
- Engage beneficiary communities and promote social cohesion.

These anticipatory actions will rely on early warning information provided by government officials, local authorities and community organizations to identify villages that are expected to receive at least 1 000 returnees in need of immediate livelihoods assistance. In particular, municipalities or sub-prefectures in IPC Phase 3 or above will be targeted.



2.29 million people
in high acute food insecurity
(Integrated Food Security Phase
Classification, April–August 2021)



738 280
internally displaced people



75% of Central Africans rely on
agriculture for their food and income

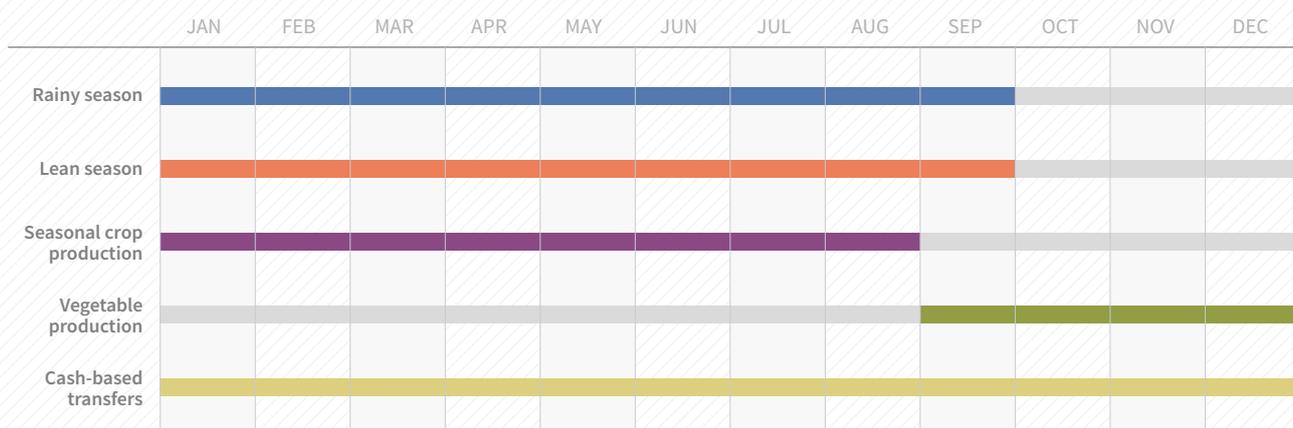


Pre-positioning short-cycle seeds benefiting both returnees and host families is critical to promote social cohesion, ensuring that sufficient food is produced for both communities as host families are the first to provide assistance to displaced households. Enabling beneficiaries to produce their own food and generate income by selling part of the production obtained will reduce their dependency on humanitarian aid and strengthen their resilience.

Anticipatory actions are needed to support the livelihoods of both returnees and host communities to mitigate the humanitarian impact of the crisis.

The activities will be developed against the proposed schedule and will focus only on the months when returnees are expected to arrive (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Seasons and types of activities



Since the Central African Republic’s agricultural calendar includes a number of planting seasons, there are multiple opportunities to boost production and availability of local foods, but the window to provide timely support to these vulnerable communities is extremely limited, so quick action is essential. Cash transfers can complement both seasonal crop and vegetable production input support activities.

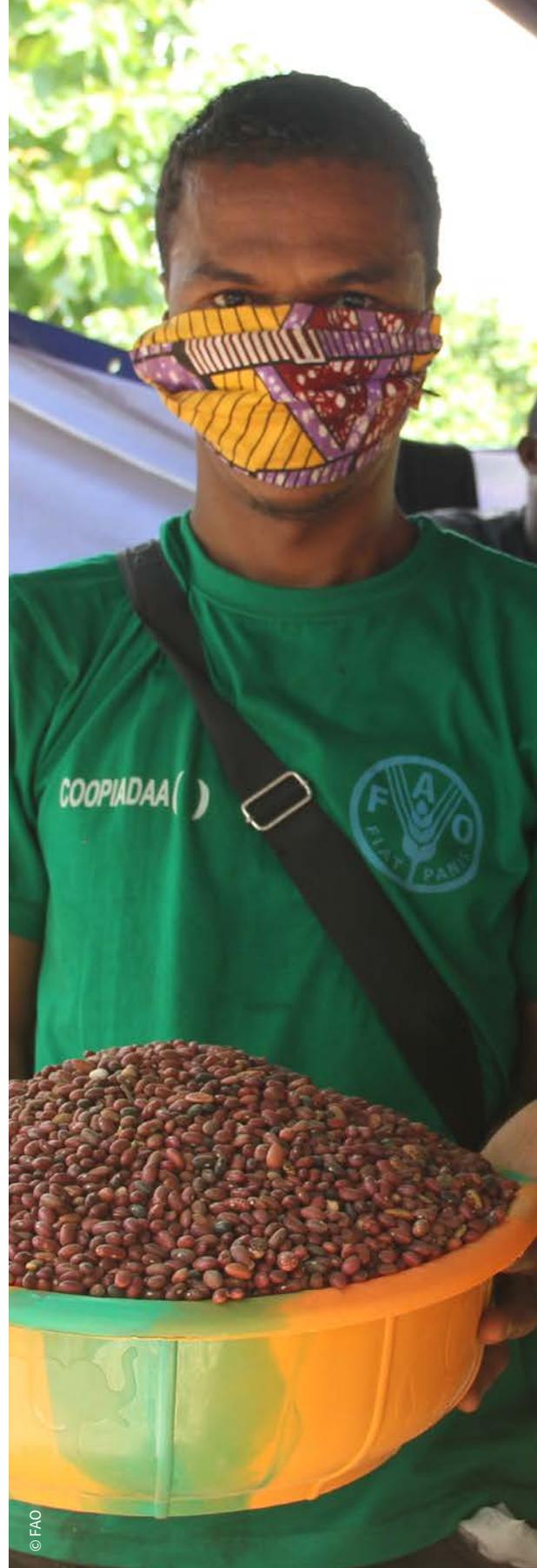
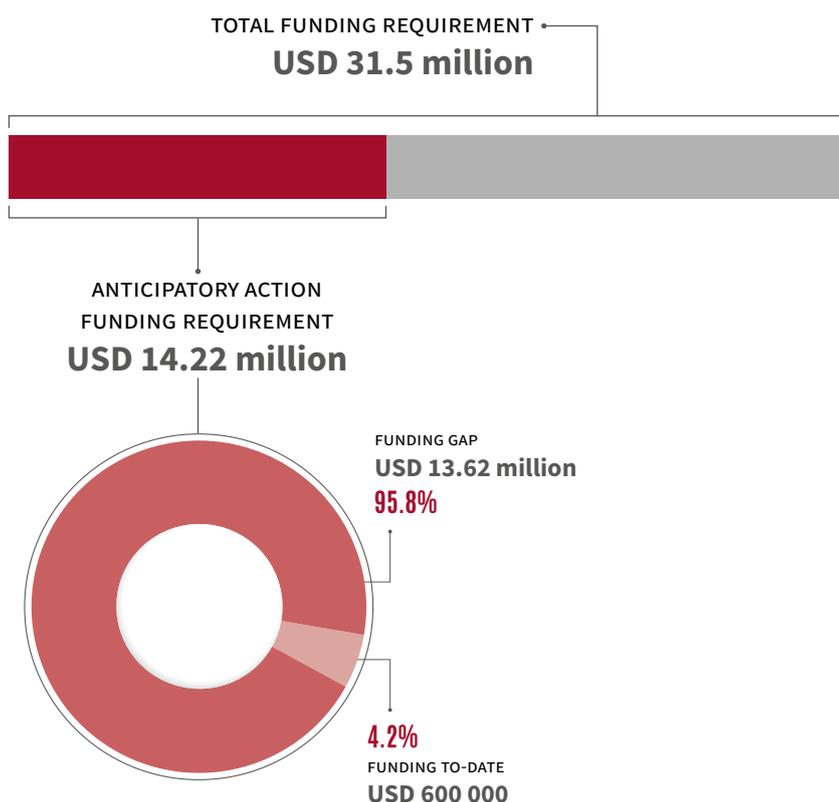


Ongoing response

Thanks to a generous contribution from the Government of Sweden, through the Swedish International Development Agency, of USD 600 000, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has launched an anticipatory action project to provide livelihoods support to 4 000 returnee families (20 000 people). More resources should therefore be mobilized to prepare for the return of 30 800 additional households (154 000 people) as well as support up to 60 000 host families (300 000 people) in the communities they are returning to, mainly by establishing strategic stocks of agricultural inputs.

Funding

Of the USD 31.5 million required by FAO under the 2021 Humanitarian Response Plan, USD 14.22 million are urgently needed to support 174 000 returnees and 300 000 host community members across the country through anticipatory action to grow food and avoid hunger in the coming months.



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Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations (FAO)



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