Ukraine

Rapid Response Plan
March–May 2022

Supporting crisis-affected vulnerable smallholder men and women farmers
FAO requires **USD 50 million** over the next three months to urgently assist up to **240 000 of the most vulnerable rural men and women** (over 100 000 households), including internally displaced people (IDPs) affected by the crisis. The response plan sets out key emergency agricultural interventions and immediate cash transfers to help sustain lives and agricultural livelihoods amid the escalating nationwide crisis. Depending on the local conditions, vulnerable households may receive cash, agricultural inputs or cash plus agricultural inputs.

Overview

The recent escalation in conflict in Ukraine is affecting the food security of the most vulnerable rural households. According to the United Nations (UN) Flash Appeal, given the scale and direction of the ongoing hostilities, 18 million people are projected to be affected, including up to 6.7 million projected to be newly internally displaced. For rural and isolated communities, the conflict is resulting in large-scale displacement, compounding existing vulnerabilities and disrupting the agricultural livelihoods of smallholder farmers.

In addition to Donetska and Luhanska oblasts (regions), which have long been affected by conflict, the crisis is predicted to impact the rural population in all regions of Ukraine. FAO will adapt its targeting of assistance based on the evolving situation, analysis of pre-existing vulnerability and the results of a rapid needs assessments. Large portions of the affected population will likely remain in their communities, facing extreme challenges and requiring multi-sectoral humanitarian assistance.

With immediate assistance, FAO can support smallholder farmers throughout the country who choose to stay, including IDPs and host families, to plant their fields, save their livestock and produce food. Through the Rapid Response Plan, FAO will immediately inject multi-purpose cash assistance to address urgent needs, and, where needed and possible, combined with agriculture-based livelihood in-kind support to produce nutritious food.

**This Rapid Response Plan will focus exclusively on agricultural livelihood-saving interventions for the most vulnerable smallholder farming households.**
The conflict is having a severely negative impact on agriculture-based livelihoods, which are a key source of income in rural areas of Ukraine. Prior to 24 February 2022, the Food Security and Livelihoods Assessment\(^1\) in government-controlled areas (GCA) and non-government controlled areas (NGCA) of eastern Ukraine (November 2021) indicated that 58 percent of the population faced material challenges related to limited livelihoods opportunities, including lack of income-generating opportunities and access to markets. Furthermore, 28.3 percent experienced food insecurity at “moderate or severe” levels; among the food insecure, female-headed households were significantly more food insecure (37.5 percent) than male-headed households (20.5 percent). While the evolving situation remains unpredictable, expectations are high of a further deterioration of food security in the east and across the country. FAO plans to scale up assistance to all affected oblasts.

Agricultural assistance combined with cash assistance (cash+) is critical to improving food security, especially for the most vulnerable rural households, including those headed by women, the elderly and people with disabilities. Providing short-cycle vegetable and potato seeds that can be harvested in as little as two to three months and animal feed/fodder to vulnerable households will enable them to increase their own food production, and prevent the loss of their valuable livestock assets. Ukraine’s agricultural season is starting now, and the next begins in May, making funding urgently needed.

FAO will focus exclusively on livelihood-saving interventions for the most vulnerable smallholder farming households in all affected regions. Beneficiary selection criteria will be in line with the UN response and may include:

- highly vulnerable small-scale farmers, including those who have low or no income;
- households suffering the highest levels of food insecurity;
- female-headed households;
- households with pregnant and/or nursing mothers and children up to one year in age;
- elderly people;
- IDPs and host community households;
- victims of sexual and gender-based violence; and
- people with disabilities.

\(^1\) The assessment used the FiES survey module: https://www.fao.org/in-action/voices-of-the-hungry/fies/en/
FAO’s immediate response

To assist up to 240,000 people in all affected regions, including but not limited to Donetsk, Luhanska, Kyivska, Kharkivska, Khersonska, Mykolaivska, Odeska, Sumska and Zhytomyrska oblasts, FAO requires USD 50 million.

Objective

This plan aims to respond to the food insecurity and livelihood needs of the most vulnerable households affected by the crisis in Ukraine. The plan will meet the immediate food security and other basic needs of vulnerable, conflict-affected households and protect their productive assets.

Planned interventions

FAO’s response will employ cash+, a cash assistance modality that combines unconditional, multi-purpose cash transfers with agricultural input support packages. This approach ensures that crisis-affected households are able to cover their immediate basic needs while producing their own food and sustaining their productive assets. Depending on the local conditions, beneficiaries may receive only cash, only agricultural inputs or cash plus agricultural inputs.

FAO will ensure that distribution points are as close and accessible to beneficiaries as possible, protecting women and girls from gender-based violence, and that distribution arrangements (time, place, size and weight of inputs, etc.) are accessible and do not discriminate against vulnerable groups, including the elderly and people with disabilities.
Outcomes

Outcome 1. Households’ basic needs are met through improved access to cash

- The most vulnerable farming households will receive unconditional, multi-purpose cash transfers of UAH 2,220 (USD 74) per person per month for three months to cover immediate food and other basic needs and to prevent the use of negative coping mechanisms such as taking on debt or selling livelihood assets.
- The value of the transfer is consistent with the UN Flash Appeal and the recommendations of the cash working group.
- The implementation will build on FAO’s recent experience with cash transfers in Ukraine and on best practices learned from other contexts. The intervention will comply with FAO’s rules and regulations on cash transfers.

Outcome 2. Households’ livelihoods and ability to maintain food production are sustained through the provision of agricultural inputs

- Provision of fodder and feed to safeguard livestock assets during the next three months and to prevent the use of negative coping strategies.
- Provision of short-cycle vegetable seeds, including potatoes, a key staple of the Ukrainian diet, to improve food security and nutrition, and enhance income-generating opportunities through the sale of surplus production.

Outcome 3. Strengthened coordination for effective humanitarian response

- Support evidence-based information generation through assessments to inform the Food Security and Livelihoods Cluster and humanitarian response programming.
- Lead or contribute to a rapid needs assessment, a multi-sectoral post-disaster needs assessment and detailed sector analysis on damage and losses.
- Lead discussions on food security and livelihood issues at cluster and inter-cluster levels.
- Support planning and implementation of joint projects/programmes for effective coverage of food security and nutrition needs.
Implementation arrangements

Institutional framework

FAO in Ukraine provides operational and technical support and leadership in food systems transformation and livelihood support and enjoys strong, collaborative and effective relationships with other UN agencies, humanitarian and development partners, international and national non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and government partners.

Since 2015, FAO has been operating in the conflict-affected areas of eastern Ukraine. The programme has focused on providing assistance to improve food security and nutrition, livelihoods and economic recovery of the most vulnerable households, including smallholders, IDPs and their host families. FAO has supported these households to meet their immediate needs and prevent them from adopting irreversible negative coping strategies, strengthening their resilience to pave the way for their sustainable engagement in productive, income-generating activities. As part of its emergency and early recovery programme, FAO has already supported around 55,000 vulnerable rural households located along the contact line with assistance including cash+ (the provision of cash transfers complemented by agricultural inputs), capacity building and training.

In addition to field offices in eastern Ukraine, FAO has offices in recently impacted areas of the country where newly displaced and vulnerable populations are in need of assistance. FAO offices in Lviv, Kyiv, Kramatorsk, Mariupol and Zaporizhzhia include staff working on recovery and resilience-building activities. The focus will now transition to meeting the population’s immediate needs in order to save agriculture-based livelihoods and improve food security and nutrition. FAO has the capacity to operate in areas in eastern Ukraine (along the previous contact line) and in the newly impacted areas, which will be a major asset for the food security and nutrition sector response in Ukraine as a whole.

With its existing human resources on the ground of 81 staff backed by dedicated support from regional (based in Budapest) and headquarters-based teams, technical and operational capacities are in place to scale up humanitarian interventions across Ukraine.

FAO with other stakeholders are currently assessing the feasibility of existing facilities and will adapt presence and resources accordingly.
Coordination

Coordination within the Food Security and Livelihoods Cluster and inter-cluster levels (cash working group) will be crucial for the successful implementation of this response plan. With the massive multi-sectoral needs and planned responses from all stakeholders, only a coordinated effort among humanitarian actors can alleviate the hardships faced by the affected and most vulnerable population. FAO, through its co-leadership of the Food Security and Livelihoods Cluster in Ukraine, will ensure coordination among the partners, avoiding duplication of efforts and identifying synergies and complementarities as the work of the cluster expands. FAO’s strong presence in the conflict-affected areas and solid working relationship with the Government of Ukraine, including the local authorities, enables the effective implementation of this plan.

Accountability to affected populations

FAO is accountable to the women, men, boys and girls whose lives it aims to improve, and places this responsibility at the core of its humanitarian work. In line with this, at the beginning of its interventions, FAO will organize meetings and set up adequate and effective communication channels with stakeholders within the targeted communities. The purpose will be to share information about the projects, intervention designs, modality and beneficiary targeting mechanism and to receive information on the needs, views and perspectives of the communities themselves. In order to provide communities with the opportunity to give feedback or submit complaints, grievance redress hotline numbers will be made available and broadly disseminated. In addition, opinion boxes will be placed at FAO field offices and other relevant operational spaces. Community members, beneficiaries, partners and other stakeholders will be made aware of FAO’s zero tolerance of sexual exploitation and abuse and of the multiple ways in which they can provide their feedback and/or submit complaints with FAO in a confidential, protected and dignified manner.

Monitoring and reporting

For cash transfers and in-kind distributions, pre- and post-distribution assessments and monitoring will be jointly implemented by FAO and a contracted implementing partner. FAO and its implementing partners will determine the reporting tools, type of information and documents to be shared to verify transactions. Post-distribution monitoring will be conducted within one month of cash distribution cycles to a representative sample of beneficiaries. The survey will cover use of money, satisfaction with distribution, amount received as well as protection risks, among others.

For in-kind assistance, post-distribution monitoring will assess beneficiary satisfaction with kit composition, quality, quantity and timeliness through
field visits and representative surveys. In coordination with cluster partners and the cash working group, FAO will monitor market functionality to ensure that local markets are functional and able to support the intervention, and that the value and the continued use of cash as a response modality remains appropriate to evolving circumstances.

FAO is conscious of the limitations posed by access and security concerns that might constrain implementation of a full monitoring framework.

Communication and outreach

The response plan aims to strengthen and support efforts in advocacy, awareness raising, knowledge management and communication, as well as other initiatives to increase visibility of emergency interventions targeting agricultural livelihoods. In particular, the strategy will focus on the following areas:

- Increase awareness, knowledge, understanding and visibility of the importance of emergency interventions targeting agricultural livelihoods.
- Advocate for greater commitment and financial investment in emergency agricultural livelihood activities from resource partners, humanitarian partners and authorities.
- Promote good practices that can be scaled up and institutionalized.

To maximize reach, various groups will be targeted, including local institutions, government agencies, project partners (i.e. NGOs and community-based organizations), the humanitarian community, local and international media, resource partners and beneficiaries.
## Logical framework

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| **Outcome 1. Households’ basic needs are met through improved access to cash** | • Percentage of targeted households with acceptable food consumption scores and household dietary diversity scores  
• Number of households reached with cash transfers (disaggregated by age and gender) | 35.6 | • Improvement in access to the conflict-affected oblasts to allow partners to deliver required support  
• Willingness of national and international NGOs to work with FAO in hard-to-reach areas  
• The political, economic and health situation in the country will allow timely procurement and delivery of project inputs  
• Presence of staff is not impeded by hostilities and lack of basic services |
| **Outcome 2. Households’ livelihoods and ability to maintain minimum food production are sustained through the provision of agricultural inputs** | • Number of households who received feed or fodder for livestock  
• Number of households who received vegetable seed input packages  
• Average food production per household | 10.5 | |
| **Outcome 3. Strengthened coordination for effective humanitarian response** | • Number of assessments conducted  
• Number of joint programmes/activities implemented  
• Number of partners (national / international NGOs and institutions) actively involved in the food security and livelihoods humanitarian response | 0.7 | |

Indirect support costs (7%)  
3.2

**Total (USD million)**  
50