



Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Priority countries

Belgium's contribution through the Special Fund for Emergency and Rehabilitation Activities (SFERA)

The Government of the Kingdom of Belgium contributes flexible funding to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to address the most urgent needs of vulnerable populations in 2023 and 2024

Thanks to Belgium's contribution of USD 10.9 million, FAO aims to support priority countries to quickly improve the food security of crisis-affected households.

The funds will be channeled through FAO's SFERA funding mechanism, with streamlined procedures to receive flexible contributions from resource partners and allocate them where and when they are most needed.

During a humanitarian crisis, productive assets such as seeds and livestock are often lost, affecting the food security and livelihoods of rural populations. FAO's priority is to help affected families to resume their own food production, restore their livelihoods and strengthen their resilience as quickly and as effectively as possible.

Against a backdrop of increasing levels of acute food insecurity, with 258 million people in 58 countries/territories facing high acute food insecurity in 2022, Belgium's unearmarked contribution to SFERA provides FAO with the means to respond rapidly to the urgent needs of food-insecure populations through livelihoods assistance.

Time-sensitive emergency agricultural interventions, especially when combined with cash or food assistance, have high impacts and are the most cost-effective actions to reduce food insecurity, protect livelihoods and reduce humanitarian needs. Together with anticipatory actions, when possible, they aim at preventing rural people from plunging into hunger and reduce the need for costly and prolonged external assistance. Restoring agricultural production serves as an exit strategy for food aid, enabling people to regain self-sufficiency.



Agricultural livelihoods assistance activities such as the distribution of poultry production packages combined with multi-purpose cash assistance improve the food security and livelihoods conditions of vulnerable households affected by the war in Ukraine.



Belgium is one of the largest contributors to FAO's SFERA funding mechanism since its inception in 2004, providing more than USD 32 million over the past six years. This has enabled FAO to provide agricultural inputs and take anticipatory actions at the early signs of impending crises, respond quickly when disasters strike and prepare for future crises in many countries all over the world.

For example, in 2022 Belgium was among the first countries to assist vulnerable households affected by the war in Ukraine through the provision of agricultural livelihoods assistance combined with multi-purpose cash to improve their food security and livelihoods conditions.

In the Syrian Arab Republic, to respond to the impact of the earthquake that hit the country in February 2023, FAO's activities funded by Belgium are supporting food production and providing feed to 1 200 livestock-keeping households, as well as restoring access to irrigation for 13 000 farming households in Aleppo and Hama governorates.

In Pakistan, FAO vaccinated 14 000 large ruminants and 70 000 small ruminants owned by 7 000 households against foot-and-mouth disease, lumpy skin disease and peste des petits ruminants. Moreover, 2 000 smallholder households received three 50-kg bags of animal feed to increase their access to sustainable supply of fodder, as well as molasses and mineral/urea blocks.

Finally, in Rwanda, 3 500 households from Gisagara and Nyanza districts benefited from anticipatory actions through support for small irrigation mechanisms along with early maturing and drought-resistant seeds to mitigate the impact of expected drought combined with high food and input prices.

Thanks to Belgium funding through SFERA, in 2022, FAO also provided agricultural assistance to Bangladesh, Cabo Verde, Cuba, Ethiopia, Iraq, Kenya, Mauritania, Myanmar, Philippines and Tonga.

To respond to the earthquake that hit the Syrian Arab Republic in February 2023, FAO has been working with partners to rehabilitate infrastructure and restore access to irrigation for thousands of farming households.

Through FAO's SFERA, Belgium is continuously among the first and most active resource partners to respond to humanitarian crises around the world.

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