



منظمة الأغذية  
والزراعة  
للأمم المتحدة

联合国  
粮食及  
农业组织

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Organisation  
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pour  
l'alimentation  
et  
l'agriculture

Продовольственная и  
сельскохозяйственная  
организация  
Объединенных  
Наций

Organización  
de las  
Naciones  
Unidas  
para la  
Agricultura  
y la  
Alimentación

## JOINT MEETING

**Joint Meeting of the  
Hundred and First Session of the Programme Committee  
and the  
Hundred and Twenty-sixth Session of the Finance Committee**

**Rome, 13 May 2009**

**Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) Support to the Initiative on  
Soaring Food Prices (ISFP) and the Comprehensive Framework for  
Action (CFA) of the UN High-level Task Force on the Global Food  
Crisis - Progress Report**

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This document, prepared at the request of the Chairpersons of the Programme and Finance Committees, aims at presenting summary information on the support provided by the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) to the Initiative on Soaring Food Prices (ISFP) and to initiatives undertaken within the framework of the Comprehensive Framework for Action (CFA) of the United Nations High-level Task Force on the Global Food Crisis (HLTF). It analyses progress made to date in the implementation of the ISFP input supply TCP projects, identifies factors associated with the successful implementation of projects and provides lessons learned. It also provides a section on the ISFP in relation to the HLTF and concludes with information on the impact and the catalytic effect on resource mobilisation and an outlook for activities in the future.

#### I. TCP Support to the ISFP

2. FAO has launched, in December 2007, the Initiative on Soaring Food Prices (ISFP) to call for urgent measures to support the most affected countries and to protect the poor farmers against escalating food prices. Many requests for immediate assistance were received from affected countries both for input supply and for longer-term technical assistance. Donors and International Financing Institutions were urged to increase assistance or consider reprogramming part of their ongoing aid in countries negatively affected by high food prices. With the objective of stimulating a global response, the organization immediately reacted by allocating resources, including funds from the Technical Cooperation Programme and resources from donor countries to respond to

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these requests in a timely manner. The projects were designed to boost food production and improve availability and access to food for the most vulnerable and to cope with higher and more volatile food prices.

3. In line with the overall approach of the ISFP, the implementation model followed was a decentralized one with budget holder authority delegated to FAO Representatives (FAORs) wherever possible. An ISFP-TCP Support Group<sup>1</sup> was established at headquarters to assist the FAORs in the implementation, as required. The TCP Facility Modality was also used to complement technical assistance components as and when required. At the request of relevant Regional Economic Organizations or of the countries concerned to provide additional technical support to the implementation of the national TCP projects, six regional ISFP TCP projects were approved.

4. The table below provides summary information on the TCP support to the ISFP including number of projects, budget, region, type of assistance and number of beneficiaries for the input supply projects.

**Table 1: TCP support to the ISFP as of 31 March 2009 (budget figures in USD million, beneficiaries in number of targeted households)**

	Input supply			Technical assistance		Total input supply and technical assistance	
	No.	Budget	Beneficiary households	No.	Budget	No.	Budget
Africa	35	15.74	283 522	21	3.08	56	18.81
Asia and the Pacific	18	7.20	161 083	14	2.60	32	9.80
Europe and Central Asia	3	1.50	11 354	2	0.13	5	1.63
Latin America and the Caribbean	16	4.75	62 550	7	0.73	23	5.48
Near East and North Africa	2	0.81	10 500	1	0.06	3	0.87
<b>Total</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>29.99</b>	<b>529 009</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>6.59</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>36.59</b>

5. Since March 2008, FAO has received requests from 90 governments for TCP assistance in the context of the initiative, both for input supply and for technical assistance. As of 6 March 2009, 74 input supply TCP projects have been approved for a total of USD 29.99 million, while being strictly limited to low-income food-deficit countries, least developed countries, land-locked developing countries and small islands developing states (SIDS). Their budgets range from USD 250 000 for SIDS to USD 500 000 for larger countries.

6. In order to move quickly and provide the required inputs on time for the 2008 and early 2009 agricultural seasons, FAO emergency procedures for the approval of the ISFP/TCP projects were applied.

7. Information on targeted planting season, procurement and distribution status for ISFP input supply TCP projects in all 74 countries is summarized in Annex 1. As of 31 March 2009:

- 21 projects had targeted the 2008 planting season only;

<sup>1</sup> Coordinated by the Emergency and Rehabilitation Division (TCE) and with members from the Technical Cooperation Programme Service (TCOT), the Office for Coordination of Normative, Operational and Decentralized Activities (OCD), the Procurement Service (AFSP), the Communication Division (KCI), the Trade and Markets Division (EST), the Seed and Plant Genetic Resources Service (AGPS) and the Land and Water Division (NRL).

- 30 projects were targeting 2008 and 2009 planting seasons;
- 23 projects were targeting the 2009 planting season only;
- procurement of inputs was completed in 36 countries, ongoing in another 33, and at the planning stage in 5 projects;
- distribution of inputs was underway or completed in 50 countries and pending in the remaining 24.

8. With reference to the last report to the Joint Meeting<sup>2</sup>, indicating that 38 projects are targeting the 2008 planting season, several countries were either unable or, in consultation with local authorities, chose not to meet the initial target. Of the 21 countries that kept the target for 2008 only, 18 countries have completed distribution of inputs and three have completed the distribution of all except for a few specific items. Examples of two countries which have successfully completed distribution of inputs are given below.

- In Côte d'Ivoire, where food riots made the headlines in early 2008, project TCP/IVC/3104 was integrated into a broad response programme also supported by the United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), Belgium and Sweden. TCP resources were used to support 3 600 vulnerable households, out of a total of 14 600. Selected beneficiaries are internally displaced persons (IDPs), returnees, households affected by HIV/AIDS and smallholders hard-hit by the acute food crisis of 2008. The supplies (rice seeds, fertilizers and tools) were distributed in the early fall of 2008 and allowed TCP beneficiaries to sow 900 ha with low-land rice during the off-season. Beneficiaries were trained and supported throughout the growing season by the "*Agence nationale d'appui au développement rural*" (ANADER). The harvest is currently ongoing and preliminary estimates indicate an excellent yield, between 3.4 and 3.8 tonnes/ha, which is enough to meet beneficiaries' requirements for a period of more than six months and/or provide the opportunity to market surplus production.
- In Lesotho, FAO has pioneered the organization of "Input Trade Fairs" (ITFs). Through this system, vouchers with a cash value are distributed to selected beneficiaries who, on a given day, gather at the fair (with other farmers) to purchase agricultural supplies as per their requirements. In Lesotho, ITFs are a particularly useful means of attracting vendors in remote locations where rural markets are underdeveloped. With resources from TCP/LES/3202, FAO organized 15 ITFs in the month of August 2008, just in time to support the main growing season of the year in the three mountain districts of Lesotho (Mokhotlong, Thaba Tseka and Qacha's Nek). The 3 984 beneficiaries - 40 percent of whom were women - received vouchers worth USD 106, sufficient to cover production costs on a plot of 0.5 ha. They acquired a broad variety of inputs, reflecting personal production choices: seeds (maize, wheat, legumes, potatoes and vegetables); organic fertilizer and small hand tools. FAO is currently conducting a survey to assess areas planted, condition of crops and expected production.

9. In addition to 74 input supply TCP projects, 11 TCP projects (for a total of USD 4.69 million) and 34 TCP Facility components (for a total of USD 1.90 million) have been approved for technical assistance. These account for USD 6.59 million, or 18 percent of the total TCP support to the ISFP. Technical assistance includes market studies to identify the causes and effects of the soaring food prices, assessment and formulation missions to prepare larger operations and support for the implementation of the input supply TCP projects and monitoring their impact. These technical assistance projects include the six subregional projects.

10. Furthermore, within the framework of the HLTF, FAO, partner agencies and targeted countries have jointly carried out a total of 58 inter-agency assessments to prepare action plans for implementation in the medium- to long-term to contribute to achieving sustainable agricultural

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<sup>2</sup> JM 08.2/2

development and food security. Of these, 17 are major interagency and multidisciplinary country assessments, 31 are rapid assessments carried out in the context of the EC Food Facility, and 10 are Crop and Food Supply Assessment Missions that have been specifically focused on the food crisis. A Synthesis Report has been prepared covering all 58 reports to provide easier access to country responses to the food crisis and analytical comparison of issues and responses.

### *Challenges and Lessons Learned*

11. As reported to the last meeting, major challenges have been faced with respect to timely procurement of inputs and in several cases it has been necessary to request waivers with respect to delegation of authority, direct procurement, procurement from government suppliers, etc. The ISFP-TCP Support Group has been closely monitoring project implementation and assisting field offices whenever challenges arose, mainly related to the correct application of FAO procedures.

12. From a preliminary review, the following factors could be associated with a more effective and timely input distribution: (i) a well-established FAO representation with significant project portfolio; (ii) the presence of an Emergency and Rehabilitation Coordination Unit to assist the FAOR in project implementation; (iii) coordinated support from headquarters; (iv) local availability of inputs; (v) supplementary use of TCP Facility funding.

13. FAORs with sufficient administrative capacity were able to request authorization to procure locally, under the supervision of AFSP, in amounts in excess of the current delegated authority for procurement. Requests for such *ad hoc* increases in delegation of authority were most frequently applicable to seed inputs, and in some cases fertilizers and hand-tools. As seed inputs were an important component of the ISFP TCPs and are often only available from local or regional sources, AFSP, in consultation with OCD and TCOT, decided in February 2009 to raise the delegation of authority for local procurement, strictly for the ISFP TCP projects, to USD 100 000. The intention was to accelerate delivery of locally available inputs under the projects for which procurement was not yet completed.

14. The regional ISFP projects, originally intended to supplement the ISFP input supply TCP projects by providing a vehicle for the provision of technical assistance in support of national input supply, were hindered by the time required for obtaining the necessary agreement and signatures from the countries in the region or regional partners. As a result, the six regional projects were approved only in September or October 2008 and, so far have had varied and somewhat limited results. There is, however, a plan to use these resources to draw on the experiences learned under the national TCPs and investigate further the impacts of the TCP initiatives together with the underlying causes of the crisis and the means to address them.

## **II. The ISFP and the Comprehensive Framework for Action of HLTF**

15. In April 2008, the United Nations Secretary-General established a High-level Task Force (HLTF) on the Global Food Security Crisis under his chairmanship, with FAO Director-General Jacques Diouf as Vice-Chairman, and bringing together the Heads of the United Nations specialized Agencies, Funds and Programmes, Bretton Woods institutions and relevant parts of the UN Secretariat, in order to develop a Comprehensive Framework for Action (CFA) and coordinate its implementation. The CFA identifies both immediate and longer-term actions that need to begin now and operate in parallel to address the food crisis, to urgently meet immediate needs of vulnerable populations and to urgently build longer-term resilience and contribute to global food and nutrition security. FAO worked closely with partners in the elaboration of the CFA which is fully consistent with the ISFP and FAO's approach to food security and has a leading role in both the short- and longer-term CFA goals related to increasing smallholder farmers' food production in a sustainable way. FAO also plays a key role in the CFA objective of strengthening global information and monitoring systems.

16. The HLTF has continued to operate as the primary forum for planning a coordinated response to the crisis, and has been meeting on a monthly basis. Its main function is to support the

realization of outcomes of the CFA in countries in need, responding both to country requirements, and to requests from national authorities. The HLTF aims to advocate for funds needed for urgent action and long-term investment, inspire a broader engagement of stakeholders in a concerted movement for food security, and ensure accountability by assessing achievements, reviewing progress, demonstrating results, and adjusting activities that are suboptimal. The lessons learned through the implementation of the TCP projects in response to the food crisis have helped FAO better contribute to the deliberations of the HLTF and advocate for the interests of the countries most affected.

17. The HLTF has established its main hub (Secretariat) in Rome, hosted by IFAD, and operated by staff seconded from the Rome-based Agencies and the World Bank, with other hubs being based in Geneva and New York. FAO is supporting the HLTF Secretariat through a seconded staff member and close partnership with the ISFP Secretariat.

18. The work plan for the ISFP in 2009 will contribute to the work plan of the High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Crisis. During the coming year one major objective of the ISFP will be to integrate the functions of the ISFP Secretariat within the framework of the Impact Focus Area (IFA) on “Action towards global food security in the context of the current food crisis and climate change”, taking a four-year view that will build on and go beyond the initial focus on short-term interventions. Formulation of the IFA has started by mapping relevant Organizational Results in FAO’s new Strategic Framework against the CFA outcomes, thereby ensuring alignment of FAO’s advocacy and resource mobilization not only with its Strategic Objectives, but also with the shared food security objectives of relevant UN agencies and the Bretton Woods institutions.

### **III. Impact and the Way Forward**

19. The implementation of a large number of projects focused on an immediate response to the food crisis helped to raise FAO’s credibility as a partner for addressing the crisis and undoubtedly contributed to the allocation of a part of the EUR 1 billion EC Food Facility to FAO. Under the first batch of proposals which were approved on 30 March 2009, FAO will implement activities in 11 countries for a total value of EUR 128.8 million (USD 169.3 million). Under the second batch of proposals, which are still under review, there is a possibility that FAO will be entrusted with another EUR 77.4 million (USD 102.5 million) for activities in 14 countries.

20. During 2009, the impact of activities responding to the food crisis will be systematically assessed with the support of the regional TCPs and drawing on the resources of FAO’s Global Information and Early Warning System. Some initial impact assessments of individual projects have been undertaken (for example Bangladesh). The Asia Regional Workshop, at which this progress was reported, proved to be a useful forum for exchange of experiences. In order to obtain similar feedback, equivalent workshops will be held in other regions in the near future under the auspices of the regional ISFP TCPs.

21. The Synthesis Report mentioned in paragraph 10 assembles information on country responses to the food security crisis, captures the diversity and innovativeness of the policies pursued and provides an initial assessment of their relevance. This, together with the above-mentioned impact assessments, is expected to guide the development of an agenda over the medium- to long-term in line with the proposed IFA on food security. The emphasis under this IFA will be on tackling the root causes of the food crisis and addressing food security in a holistic manner, including policy support, rather than focusing on short-term measures.

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**ANNEX 1**


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**Number of national TCP projects for input supply under the ISFP<sup>1</sup> - Summary statistics on status of implementation (as of 31 March 2009)**

Region	Planting season				Procurement status			Distribution status		
	2008	2008/2009	2009	Total	Planning stage	Ongoing	Done	To be Done	Ongoing	Done
RAF	7 (20%)	20 (57%)	8 (23%)	35	0	15 (43%)	20(54%)	9 (26%)	18 (51%)	8 (23%)
RAP	5 (28%)	3 (17%)	10 (56%)	18	4 (22%)	8 (44%)	6 (33%)	11 (61%)	2 (11%)	5 (28%)
REU	2 (67%)	0 (0%)	1 (33%)	3	1 (33%)	0	2 (67%)	1 (33%)	0	2 (66%)
RLC	5 (31%)	7 (44%)	4 (25%)	16	0	10 (63%)	6 (37%)	3 (19%)	10 (62%)	3 (19%)
RNE	2 (100%)	0	0	2	0	0	2 (100%)	0	0	2 (100%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>21 (28%)</b>	<b>30 (41%)</b>	<b>23 (31%)</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>5 (6%)</b>	<b>33 (45%)</b>	<b>36 (49%)</b>	<b>24 (32%)</b>	<b>30 (41%)</b>	<b>20 (27%)</b>

Planning stage for Procurement = gathering of information on suppliers, specifications, etc.

Ongoing stage for Procurement = tendering phase onwards

Done stage for Procurement = orders placed and goods delivered (at supplier delivery point)

<sup>1</sup> This table includes one regional TCP project for seven countries in the Pacific (the Cook Islands, the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of Nauru, Niue Island, the Republic of Palau and Tuvalu).