

ISFP Summary Project Proposal to the European Commission

ISFP PROJECT PROPOSAL

Country:	Mauritania
Agency:	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
Project Title:	Emergency assistance to vulnerable farmers and breeders affected by climatic events and soaring food prices in Mauritania
Sector:	Agriculture and Livelihoods
Objective:	Improve sustainable food security and agricultural production of vulnerable farmers affected by soaring food prices
Beneficiaries:	377 000 smallholders
Implementing Partner(s):	Ministry of Agriculture & Livestock, National Centre for Agricultural Research (CNARADA), and non-governmental organizations (NGOs)
Project Duration:	January 2009 to March 2010 (15 months)
Funds Requested:	USD 18 172 702

Needs Assessment

Food security in Mauritania is heavily dependent on imports. National agricultural production only partially satisfies the internal demand for food, particularly for cereals (estimated to be about 430 000 tonnes). In the best-case scenario, national production satisfies about 30 percent of the population's needs, while the remaining 70 percent is assured by commercial imports and food aid.

In Mauritania the food price crisis and outbreak of animal diseases (Peste des Petits Ruminants, Sheep/goat pox, brucellosis and Rift Valley Fever) severely affected the food security of poor farmers and breeders, who resorted to consuming their seed stocks. There is an urgent need to provide seeds and veterinary medicines to enable vulnerable farmers and breeders to resume their farming activities and rebuild their seed stocks. Support to breeders is also essential to diversify the beneficiaries' diet and reduce their dependence on imported cereals. Training is also essential to promote the use of appropriate agricultural practices and increased productivity.

The Government of Mauritania has developed a Special Plan of Action (PSI) to assist vulnerable farmers in overcoming the current situation. In particular, the PSI aims at reducing the effects of soaring food prices and reinforcing food security. For the medium term, the Government of Mauritania aims at achieving cereal self-sufficiency (rice and traditional cereals) by 2012.

The initiative of FAO on Soaring Food Prices (ISFP) is designed to assist countries in increasing food supplies, and is complementary to the PSI of Mauritania. Within this framework, this project is designed to provide emergency assistance to vulnerable farmers and breeders affected by climatic events and soaring food prices. These climatic events had the incidence of major livestock diseases.

As a result of soaring food prices on the international and domestic markets, there is a new additional demand for local production. FAO's Initiative on Soaring Food Prices is designed to assist countries in increasing food supplies. In Mauritania one of the limiting factors to increasing productivity is the lack of access to seeds and outbreak of animal diseases.

The imports of wheat heavily affect the national budget and national cereal self-sufficiency. Soaring food prices and recurrent animal diseases have aggravated this situation and increased the food deficit of the country. Tests conducted between 1977 and 2007 with seeds of a total of 60 selected varieties of wheat from Syria¹ and Morocco have given promising results and indicated a good potential for growing wheat in Mauritania.

This project would aim at increasing the production and productivity of crops and livestock.

Expected impact, outcome and outputs

The project would address the following areas:

a. Emergency assistance to vulnerable farmers and breeders affected by drought and soaring food prices in Mauritania

This component will enhance food security of about 60 000 households. The increase in the national production of cereals will allow to reduce dependence on food aid (currently Mauritania imports over two thirds of its needs of cereals).

As outcomes, this component would assist in the production of cereals, vegetable crops and livestock. In particular:

- Enhancement of food security
- Increase of household incomes
- Selected beneficiaries will have received the inputs needed in a timely manner
- Animal health will be improved
- Selected beneficiaries will have received the training needed to improve their productivity
- Agricultural production will be increased
- More food will be available in communities and local markets

The outputs will be the delivery of seeds and veterinary drugs to about 60 000 smallholder households.

b. Production of traditional seeds for food security

This component will benefit to 300 farmer associations for seed production and 300 000 smallholders belonging to 36 Departments (*Moughataa's*).

The outcomes will be:

- The quality and productivity of the crops concerned will increase
- The availability of seed to farming communities will increase

¹ The Arab Center for the Studies of Arid Zones and Dry Lands (ACSAD) and International Centre for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA)

- Cereal production will increase and more food will be available to the communities and local markets
- Dependence on food imports will be reduced

The outputs will be:

- The delivery of basic seed to 300 farmer associations and about 300 000 smallholders
- Farmers will be trained in seed multiplication

c. Improving households' food availability through the evaluation and promotion of improved and adapted wheat varieties

This component will benefit to about 7 000 households. This project will validate the promising results obtained in the past, in view of the expansion of the cultivation of wheat at national level. In the long term this would reduce the dependence of the country on the importation of cereals.

Its outcomes will be:

- Validation of potential for growing wheat in Mauritania.
- Selected beneficiaries will receive the inputs needed in a timely manner.
- Increased and diversified wheat production under the project will allow the expansion of the cultivated areas in the regions considered, and will reduce the country's dependency on imports. This will also alleviate the effects of soaring food prices.

Outputs:

- Basic seed of selected varieties was distributed to about 7 000 farmers
- Seed was multiplied
- Farmers were trained on participatory variety testing
- Public health improvement

Proposed Activities

a. This component would assist in improving food security and agricultural production through the following activities:

- Provision of high-quality seeds of rice, maize, sorghum, millet and vegetables; and
- Provision of veterinary medicines (surveillance for major animals diseases, vaccination/treatment against animals diseases). Two round of vaccination will be carried out during the time frame of the project and one round of sero-monitoring/surveillance to assess the prevalence for major diseases and sero-conversion after vaccination. It understood that 60-75% of the sheep (8 300 000) and goat (12 000 000) population will be vaccinated during the time frame of the project.
- Restocking/conservation of meat
- Create of awareness for animal health issues.

Inputs will be chosen among those recommended by the Government and adapted to local farming systems and agro-ecological zones.

2. Provision of training to farmers on good practices for agricultural production, conservation, processing and marketing and animal diseases recognition/treatment/vaccination,

These activities would be complementary to the ongoing projects TCP/MAU/3105 and GCP/GLO/216/SPA.

- b. This component would assist in the development of seed production through the following activities:

- procurement of basic seeds;
- training of farmers in seed multiplication using quality assurance schemes;
- multiplication of traditional seeds by farmer associations;
- promotion and training on seed stock management systems by farmer associations;
- support to farmers in seed conditioning and marketing.

- c. This component would assist in assessing the potential for producing wheat through the following activities:

- procurement of basic seed of selected varieties from agricultural research centres;
- multiplication of seeds using quality assurance schemes;
- training of selected farmers on participatory variety testing;
- cultivation of a total of 250 hectares of wheat under rain-fed, dam and irrigated conditions by selected farmers;
- creating awareness on the results and best wheat agricultural practices;
- creating awareness on the use of by-products; and
- implementation of a seed multiplication scheme for selected wheat varieties.

Linkages with existing and proposed programming

Within the framework of ISFP, FAO is currently supporting to the Government of Mauritania to assist poor farmers through the provision of agricultural inputs (seeds) to help them to resume and increase production during the 2008 growing season. Two projects are currently in progress - the TCP/MAU/3105 and the GCP/GLO/216/SPA - in six agricultural regions (Wilaya) suffering from climatic events and soaring food prices. These projects are reducing the vulnerability of these populations and are fighting hunger. Seeds of local traditional crops have been distributed and the crops are being cultivated.

The projects proposed will build on and expand the assistance currently provided.

Implementation strategy

This project would be executed by the Emergency Coordination Unit of FAO, in collaboration with the Direction of Agriculture (DA) of the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAE), and with the regional Delegations (offices) of MAE at regional level and Departmental Services of MAE at departmental level, as technical partners.

The identification of beneficiary farmers will be conducted in a participative way by the Regional Development Committee (also including NGOs, SPOs, etc.), FAO and DA/MAE on the basis of criteria of vulnerability and agricultural potential.

A possible implementation constraint could be the volatile political situation, that led to the recent coup d'état, new government and possible social unrest. Also, possible reshuffling of the staff of Ministries could slow down the activities of the project.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY	
Budget Items	USD
Staff costs	1 486 834
Input costs	13 700 000
Contracts	350 000
Administration costs	1 447 000
Indirect programme support costs, including TSS (7%)	1 188 868
Total	18 172 702