

FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

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Organization (FAO) of the United Nations (UN)

**Enhancing technical coordination and backstopping of the Food
Security and Livelihood sector in the restoration and sustaining of
household food security of vulnerable conflict affected populations
in the Greater Darfur Region of Sudan**

FAO Projects: OSRO/SUD/816/EC (July 2008 to September 2009)
and
OSRO/SUD/917/EC (December 2009 to June 2010)
funded by
the European Commission Humanitarian Aid Department (ECHO)

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Acronyms

APA	Agricultural Planning Administration
BQ	Black Quarter
CAHW	Community Animal Health Worker
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CDA	Community Development Association
CONCERN	Concern Wide INGO
COOPI	An Italian NGO
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
CVA	Charity Veterinarian Association, a National NGO
DFS LA	Darfur Food Security and Livelihoods Assessment
DFS NA	Darfur Food Security and Nutrition Assessment
DPA	Darfur Peace Agreement
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations
FAR	Fellowship African Relief
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FMD	Foot and Mouth Disease
FSI	Food Security Information
FSL	Food Security and Livelihoods
ECHO	European Community Humanitarian Office
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GAA	German Agro Action
HAC	Humanitarian Aid Commission
HH	Household
HS	Hemorrhagic Septicemia
IDPs	Internal Displaced Persons
INGO	International Non Governmental Organisation
IP	Implementing Partner
KAEDS	Kutum Agricultural Extension Development Association
KSCS	Kabkabyia Smallholders Charitable Society
LoA	Letter of Agreement
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MoAR	Ministry of Animal Resources
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NNGO	National Non-government Organization
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OVI	Objectively Verifiable Indicators
PHCA	Post Harvest Crop Assessment
PPR	Peste des Petits Ruminants (Sheep and goats plague)
RI	Relief International
SC Sweden	Save the Children Sweden
SRCS	Sudanese Red Crescent Society
TOT	Trainer of Trainees
TRMA	Threat and Risk Analysis Assessment
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WCC	War Child Canada
WFP	World Food Programme
WR	World Relief
ZOA	Dutch for Zuid (South) Oost (East) Azië (Asia)

Executive Summary

1. The evaluation focused on two consecutive projects OSRO/SUD/816 (July 2008 to September 2009) and OSRO/SUD/917 (December 2009 to June 2010) which were managed by FAO and funded by ECHO. Both projects were accorded the title: **Enhancing technical coordination and backstopping of the Food Security & Livelihood (FSL) sector in restoration and sustaining of household food security of vulnerable conflict affected populations (IDPs, refugees, returnees and host communities) in the Greater Darfur Region**. FAO has partnered with government institutions and both local and international NGOs for the implementation of a wide range of activities supporting the production of vegetables and certified seed; the protection of animal health; and the rehabilitation of natural resources.

2. The purpose of the evaluation is to examine the effects of FAO support on improving living conditions of target beneficiaries being internally displaced persons (IDPs), host communities and returnees with particular attention to women headed households. The scope of the evaluation included an assessment of all project interventions in the three States of the Darfur region (North Darfur, West Darfur and South Darfur). The evaluation conducted household level interviews, undertook focal group discussions (FGD) and conducted interviews with key stakeholders (Government Ministries of Agriculture, Animal Resources and the Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC), UNOCHA, WFP and NGOs) both at state level, and at federal level in Khartoum, to generate primary sources of data. Secondary sources of data included needs assessment reports, project documents, interim and final reports and project outputs (including agriculture and animal health data generated during the lifespan of the two projects).

Assessment of project relevance

3. The strategy of both projects was to expand the role of FAO to strengthen existing coordination and monitoring mechanisms (at both state and federal levels) to make interventions in the food security and livelihood sectors undertaken by both governmental and non-governmental organisations more effective in assisting the most vulnerable households. Furthermore, the projects aimed to reduce the dependency of such households on humanitarian assistance and move towards self-sufficiency. The project's objectives and outcomes were considered very appropriate to the Darfur region which continues to face multiple problems ranging from adverse climate conditions to volatile social, economic and political challenges. Certain elements of the design including the OVIs, risks and assumptions were considered inappropriate and not sufficiently reflective of the context. However, the interventions identified in the areas of FSL coordination, vegetable and seed production, animal health and rehabilitation of the natural resource base targeting the segments of the population in greatest need were considered very appropriate to the situation in Darfur. These interventions were based upon the findings and recommendations of two comprehensive assessments (2007-2008) undertaken jointly with government and key stakeholders in the FSL sector of Darfur region.

Project Implementation

4. The combined investment by ECHO in both projects amounted to €2 million from July 2008 until June 2010, although approximately 25% of the funding was not utilised, despite two no-cost extension agreements being arranged. This was in part because certain international staff positions originally identified were never mobilised and in part because of the challenges (particularly insecurity) facing project implementation in the Darfur region. Generally, the relationship between government and the projects (under FAO management) was good and conducive although some tensions have arisen over the issue of the Government's cost-recovery policy for animal vaccines and treatment.

5. Both projects relied considerably on FAO's partnership with implementing agencies formalised through Letters of Agreements (LOAs). LOAs cover the administrative conditions of the partnership rather than a more strategic and intellectual relationship. Nevertheless, some implementing partners complained at FAO's slow delivery on funding and procurement of critical inputs which impacted adversely on the effectiveness of the projects relative to the agricultural season. The evaluation noted that FAO's capacity to monitor projects at the field level was very limited due to insecurity. There was limited international technical backstopping to the projects. Instead national experts were contracted and this support was generally well received by implementing partners and beneficiaries. Unfortunately, for reasons unknown, a number of technical studies indicated under the two projects were not undertaken.

Project contribution to development objectives

FSL's sector coordination capacity increased

6. Through strengthened coordination, the projects supported 64 partners (both government and non-governmental) in the FSL sector. FAO also selected 13 of these partners for direct project implementation across the three states of Darfur. This provided a strong platform for planning, intervening, learning, advocacy and helped strengthen relationships between stakeholders. However, the planned assessment of FSL partners' capacity was never conducted by FAO – which represents a missed opportunity to develop a systematic capacity building approach. Only one training workshop (data management) was ever arranged at Khartoum level (for 15 staff of state governments) with another on needs assessments (for 49 staff of government and non-governmental stakeholders) conducted in the Darfur region. Rapid FSL assessments continued to be undertaken, driven by government, FAO and WFP. A monitoring system of food security using sentinel sites was established. Only one of a series of technical studies was undertaken and this related to local seed supply and seed market systems. A technical consultation workshop on livestock rehabilitation was also conducted as a distinct activity.

7. Stakeholders stated that enhanced FSL coordination had been particularly effective at: (i) conducting joint assessments; (ii) targeting of humanitarian response; (iii) avoiding overlap in the food security and livelihood interventions; and (iv) understanding activities of other partners. It was considered a very appropriate investment of time and human resources managed by FAO and the relationship between FSL partners had strengthened. The main limitations were weak inter-cluster linkages, inconsistent and irregular feedback from Khartoum level coordination, demands on smaller FSL partners with limited capacity to meet frequently, and FSL reports and updates only in English. Work is in progress to finalise an FSL sector strategy and contingency plan for the Darfur region.

Vegetable production increased

8. The generation of baseline data, the provision of vegetable seed and training to local farmers on horticultural practices and treadle pumps and the construction of shallow wells appear to have been undertaken in line with the project design. Generally, the vegetable production interventions were perceived as positive and effective. The targeting of beneficiaries has been in accordance with the criteria set (including IDPs, returnees, host populations). Women in particular were the primary beneficiaries of vegetable production activities. Unfortunately in some cases the mission was not able to find verified lists of beneficiaries. In addition, focus group discussions revealed that seeds and tools were sometimes provided with insufficient knowledge of the indigenous farming systems (e.g. tomato was not suitable for winter cultivation, okra is not commonly consumed) and in some

cases seed was of poor quality. Particularly critical however was the late timing of the distribution of the seed by up to three months¹. The household survey indicates that the project impacted positively on vegetable production and household income but it is not clear that this translated into improved food consumption at household level.

Capacity to produce quality, certified seed

9. In total 513 farmers in both North and South Darfur were trained and assisted to become certified seed growers for both cereal seed (sorghum and millet) as well as for potato seed multiplication. The intervention was undertaken in full collaboration with the Agricultural Research Stations in Nyala and El Fashir. However, the crop was attacked by birds which resulted in the final quantities of cereal seed produced being below target. This highlighted some weaknesses within the crop protection department of the Ministry of Agriculture. The target production for certified potato seed however was met in North Darfur where a local NGO (KAEDS) organised training for 75 farmers who in turn produced sufficient quantities of seed for re-distribution to 330 households early in 2009. Unfortunately climatic conditions for potato production that year were not favourable and germination levels that season were quite low.

Animal health protected

10. The treatment (223,420 head) and vaccination (875,147 head) of animals, the training and equipping of 156 community animal health workers (CAHWs), the training of ten veterinarians on disease surveillance, serum sampling and analysis, the training of 100 livestock producers in food processing (cheese making) have fulfilled and surpassed the targets within the livestock domain in line with the project design. Generally, the interventions have been very well received and have impacted positively on the health status of livestock in the region which is critical to the majority of households in Darfur, in particular nomadic and pastoral societies where livestock production contributes about 90% of household income. The vaccines provided are the most relevant to the common diseases known in the region. Issues which undermine the sustainability of these interventions are the lack of progress in establishing the legal registration of CAHWs and lack of capacity of the Nyala Regional Veterinary Laboratory to produce vaccines for livestock in the three Darfur States to secure vaccine supplies for the future.

Natural resources base rehabilitated

11. In total 380 hectares of land was rehabilitated by planting improved pasture seed in two localities of South Darfur during the 2009 rainy season (exceeding the 200ha originally planned). A tree nursery was established just outside Geneina in West Darfur which produced around 25,000 seedlings (50% below the targeted output). These seedlings were in turn distributed and planted on 100ha of rehabilitated land during the 2009 rainy season for the benefit of an estimated 5,000 households.

12. Recommendations

Recommendation to ECHO: Funding should be maintained to ensure that the human and material resources are available for FAO to continue supporting the FSL coordination in Darfur including coordination at national level.

Recommendations to FAO:

¹ Nearly all the interviewed farmers mentioned that to have agricultural inputs in February for the winter season, is the wrong month, since the winter season starts earlier in November and extends up till May or June, the start of the rainy season. They also added that seeds of transplanted plants such as onion and tomato need to be brought earlier for their seedlings to reach the sowing dates.

The FSL sector meetings (including working groups) should be better rationalised and focused to ensure convenience and inclusiveness of all stakeholders.

All relevant publications (particularly assessment reports, monthly updates, bulletin, assessment questionnaires and training materials) should be translated from English to Arabic to ensure wider benefits and application.

Advocate with OCHA and other UN cluster leads for strengthened Inter-sectoral coordination through the designation of full time cluster leads for all sectors and organisation of regular inter-sectoral meetings.

FAO Cluster Coordinators (with the support of the Darfur Region Coordinator) should accelerate the work on finalizing the FSL sector strategy and contingency plan (support, if required, should be sought from the national or global sector leads/focal points).

The FAO Khartoum office, in its role in coordinating the nation FSL cluster, must actively disseminate all relevant reports to the offices of all FSL stakeholders at both national and state level and provide timely feedback on FSL reports submitted from the field.

Foster long term strategic partnerships with relevant institutions and organisations in Darfur with special attention to local NGOs and CBOs. The terms and conditions of this partnership should be reflected in an arrangement other than the existing LoAs (e.g. MOU) which would better facilitate the transfer of technical skills, knowledge and lessons learned. Alternatively the existing LoAs should be reviewed to better accommodate the spirit of a strategic partnership.

FAO should introduce in Darfur more effective methods of training farmers through the application of demonstration farms and farmer field schools to help upgrade knowledge and attitudes.

FAO should continue to support the implementing partners (NNGOs, CBOs) within the FSL cluster in training and technical backstopping to build capacities for effective partnerships.

Factor in closer consultation with farming communities in the design of future interventions, engaging technical departments of the Ministry of Agriculture more effectively in the implementation of projects, and introducing procurement systems that are efficient and effective in supporting target communities reliant upon agricultural seasonal cycles.

Recommendations to FAO and MoAR: CAHWs must be supported to form an Association and become legally registered under the supervision of the State Ministry of Agriculture; CAHWs should be capacitated to buy vaccines and drugs for dispensing through cost-recovery to communities ensuring vital service provision in the remote areas.

Technical and financial support should be provided to Nyala Regional Veterinary Laboratory to produce quality vaccines (HS and BQ) for 40 million livestock in the region.

1. Introduction

1.1 Evaluation background

13. Two consecutive projects in support of food security and livelihood interventions in the Darfur region under the management and coordination of the Food & Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations (UN) and funded by the European Commission Humanitarian Aid Department (ECHO) are the subject of this evaluation. Both projects were accorded the title: **Enhancing technical coordination and backstopping of the Food Security and Livelihood sector in restoration and sustaining of household food security of vulnerable conflict affected populations (IDPs, refugees, returnees and host communities) in the Greater Darfur Region**. Two separate agreements were signed between FAO and ECHO for OSRO/SUD/816 from 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009 and OSRO/SUD/917 from 1 December 2009 to 31 May 2010. Both projects were awarded no-cost extensions agreed between both parties: OSRO/SUD/816 until 30 September 2009 and OSRO/SUD/917 until 30 June 2010. FAO has partnered with both local and international NGOs as well as government institutions for the implementation of a wide range of activities supporting the production of vegetables and certified seed; the protection of animal health; and the rehabilitation of natural resources. The overall objective is to enhance technical coordination and backstopping of the food security and livelihoods sector to restore and sustain the household food security of vulnerable conflict affected populations, most notably internally displaced persons (IDPs), refugees, returnees and host populations, with particular attention to women headed households.

14. Under both projects FAO committed to an external evaluation during the course of the action, but this was only carried out at the end of OSRO/SUD/917 in June 2010 by an evaluation that included both projects within its scope.

15. The **purpose** of the evaluation is to examine the effects of FAO support on improving living conditions of intended program beneficiaries in Darfur. In other words, the assessment endeavours to ascertain the changes in the lives of IDPs, host communities and returnees to which FAO support contributed, as well as likely sustainability of such changes. The support refers to all elements of the package in crop production and livestock domain (e.g. field crop and vegetable seeds, tools, animal vaccination and treatment services, reforestation and food processing/income generating activities). The evaluation is both summative (taking stock of results achieved over the past two seasons) and formative (identifying good practice and lessons learned to inform future programming) and the main clients for the evaluation report are FAO management and the project donor (ECHO).

16. The **specific objectives** of the evaluation are to:

- examine the extent the project objectives were achieved at project completion or are expected to be achieved (effectiveness);
- examine the extent to which project objectives were consistent with the beneficiaries' perception of their needs or priorities (relevance);
- examine the effect of various inputs on agricultural and livestock production and productivity (impact);
- ascertain the utilisation of agricultural inputs and services by the beneficiary farmers (effectiveness);
- assess the awareness of farmers on adoption of modern agricultural methods such as the use of, crop rotation system, intermediate technology and small scale irrigation systems (effectiveness);
- assess the effectiveness of the partnership between FAO and other partners in the Food Security and Livelihoods (FSL) sector in assessing needs and planning, and monitoring responses; and

- determine if project inputs were delivered according to plan and to what extent resources committed were appropriate for the desired outputs (efficiency).

17. The **scope** of the evaluation was to cover the last two years (including both the 2009 and 2010 agricultural production seasons) and all of the areas of intervention and target groups supported through the two projects. The selection of the localities in the states to be visited was made based on practical considerations such as accessibility, diversity of interventions implemented, total number of beneficiaries reached and diversity of partners.

18. Whilst the evaluation covered all aspects of project effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability and relevance, specific primary data gathering was undertaken to assess the impact of the interventions on household food production (yield, area under cultivation, uptake of food processing techniques) and food consumption (dietary diversity) – and amongst livestock owners on satisfaction with animal health services and impact on animal health (incidence of vaccine preventable disease and vaccination coverage).

19. In addition, the projects were also assessed in terms of their performance on cross-cutting issues such as gender equality and social inclusion, and impact on the environment. Based on the above analysis, the evaluation has drawn specific conclusions and made proposals for further action by FAO. The full Terms of Reference for the evaluation are presented in **Annex 1** to this report.

1.2 Methodology of the evaluation

20. The evaluation adopted a participatory approach and used triangulation as a key method for validation of information and evidence. Consultations included both internal and external stakeholders throughout the process. The logical frameworks for the projects were used as an analytical basis for the evaluation (as presented in **Annex 3 and 4**) and a SWOT analysis was applied as an analytical tool for assessment of the project results.

21. The assessment considered both primary and secondary sources of data. Primary sources included direct observations, survey interviews of households which had been supported to increase their capacity in vegetable production (result 2 of both projects) and whose livestock had been vaccinated or treated (result 4 of the first project and result 3 of the second project) as well as focus group discussions (FGD) principally to look at the impact of the projects. **Individual interviews** were also held with NGO implementing partners, community leaders, Government staff, OCHA officers and FAO staff inter alia.

22. For the **household survey**, interviews were conducted with a random sample of vegetable production beneficiaries and compared with interviews with non-beneficiaries (matched on community parameters). Two sample areas were selected from Kutum and Kebkabia localities both in North Darfur where the project benefited 1,500 and 3,000 poor vegetable farmers in the two areas, respectively. A total of 5% of beneficiaries was interviewed from these two localities. An equivalent number of non-beneficiaries were also interviewed using the same questionnaire. The questionnaire included enquiry about the socio-economic status of the respondents, their income sources, access to inputs, crops grown and the dietary diversification of the interviewed households. The garden production impact study questionnaire is presented in **Annex 5** to this report. The field survey was conducted from 24 May to 17 June 2010 and engaged eight enumerators from the State Ministry of Agriculture.

Table 1: Sampling of Households in Survey - Kebkabia

Admin. Unit	Group / village site	No. of beneficiary households	Sample size (No. Interviewed)	No. Of Non-Beneficiaries Interviewed
Kebkabia town	Domi group	103	10 (11)	11
	Farashalakh	72	7	7
	Bargo A group	105	11	11
	Bargo B group	33	3	3
	Nara group	84	8 (9)	9
	Wilwil A group	523	52	52
	Wilwil B group	100	10	10
	House group	116	12	12
Kebkabia rural	Birka Jimaize	115	12	12
	Autriya	53	5	5
	Aramba	28	3	3
	Margouba	49	5	5
Total		1381	138 ² (140)	140

Table 2: Sampling of Households in Survey - Katum

Admin. Unit	Group / village site	No. of beneficiary households	Sample size (No. Interviewed)	No. Of Non-Beneficiaries Interviewed
Fata Barno Kutum town	Fata barno camp	1020	51	51
	Dalol	237	12	12
Kutum rural Kutum town Kutum town	Karama	55	3	3
	Zariba west	107	5	5
	Zariba East	81	4	4
Total		1500	75	75

Regarding the sampling in Kebkabiya, the sample size was taken as 10% due to many reasons among which were the critical time of the field work, the remoteness of the other non-represented areas and the insecurity and inability to reach those areas by cars or air flights.

23. **Focus group discussions** were held with groups of farmers (including both men and women) from among the project beneficiaries. Tools were implemented according to predetermined checklists prepared for this purpose before the start of data gathering.

24. A **case study** approach was used to assess the impact of project support for community animal health – discussing cases of animal disease and outbreaks and examining the role FAO supported CAHWs had played. The community animal health support includes Community Animal Health Workers (CAHWs) training, supply of vaccine and drugs for livestock vaccination and treatment and disease surveillance.

25. Secondary sources of data included: needs assessment reports, budget to actual expenditure reports, project documents, interim and final reports, beneficiary assessments and project outputs (bulletins, training materials, minutes, monitoring reports of implementing partners and FSL work plans) and agriculture and livestock health data produced throughout the project lifespan specific to the three regions of Darfur.

² The sample size was increased to compensate for the fact that not all project locations in Kabkabia could be surveyed due to security constraints.

2. Context of the intervention

2.1 National/regional context

26. Rural livelihoods for the majority of the population remain at risk in Greater Darfur (comprising North Darfur, South Darfur and West Darfur States) due to the protracted and multifaceted crisis still ongoing in the region. The principal cause has been the military conflict in the region since 2003 which have led to mass displacements, devastation of key infrastructure and services and curtailed productive activities by the population. The situation has been further exacerbated by the fact that drought has affected the North Darfur State in 2001, 2002 and 2004. The State is itself chronically food insecure and historically relies on the surplus produced in the other two States of Darfur and other parts of the Sudan.

27. In 2009 the Government of Sudan expelled from the country 13 international NGOs and revoked the registration of three national NGOs all of whom who were operational in Darfur and this has also affected the implementation capacity of the humanitarian aid community.

28. According to the estimates by the United Nations for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), about 4.2 million in the Darfur region have been affected by the conflict and 2.4 million people are IDPs. Basically, more than 90% of the populations in Darfur are pursuing their livelihoods based on agriculture and livestock production. The majority of households have either lost their assets (from looting and destruction) or sold assets such as livestock and household items to cope with the situation and prevent them falling victim to further banditry. Despite the signing of the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) which has led to an improvement in the security situation, humanitarian assistance still remains the major source of food for internally displaced persons (IDP) and most of the resident population. Furthermore, the situation has influenced and triggered partial settlement of some nomadic groups such as the Meidob, Zayyadia and Berti tribes. This settlement, which has resulted from lack of security and limited access to natural resources such as water and pasture, has led to similar hardships as IDPs in the camps. The conflict has significantly increased the vulnerability of the population through the following factors:

- an overall reduction of food availability, quality and accessibility;
- a reduction in agricultural and horticultural production;
- loss of livestock as a result of looting and raiding;
- reduced livestock production;
- loss of economic activities;
- limitation of off-farm income earning opportunities;
- inaccessibility of markets;
- disrupted solidarity systems, social networks and coping mechanisms; and
- increased pressure, competition and even conflict over very limited natural resources (water resources, arable land, pasture and natural vegetation).

29. Sudan has considerable animal wealth totalling approximately 40 million head of cattle, 49 million of sheep, 42 million of goats and 3.5 million of camels (MOAR, 2002). A significant proportion of Sudan's livestock population (over 20%) is in the Darfur region according to the study of El-Amin (2007) and the Sudanese Federal Ministry of Animal Resource (2002) as illustrated in the table below. The value of the livestock figures for Darfur are estimated at US\$2 billion and the annual production is at US\$500 million (Ibrahim, 2004). This means a per capita production value of US\$330 for the population in North Darfur where pastoralists predominate in the dry land environment.

Table 2. The Estimated Numbers of Livestock in Darfur (Million)

Region/Species	Cattle	Sheep	Goats	Camels
N. Darfur	0.65	3.53	2.80	0.44
S. Darfur	3.99	3.61	3.24	0.08
W. Darfur	3.84	3.67	3.84	0.32
Total	8.48	10.79	13.90	0.88
% National Herd Population	21	22	22	24

Source: Mohamed El-Amin (2007), Gezira University (Unpublished).

30. Livestock production contributes over 50% of household income in agro-pastoralist and about 90% in nomadic and pastoralist societies. The restricted movements of animals within most areas of the Darfur region have had a negative impact on animal production especially for large animal such as camel and cattle, whilst most small ruminants (goats and sheep) can better adapt to the environmental changes.

31. The most common contagious diseases of livestock in the three States are Hemorrhagic Septicemia (HS), Black Quarter (BQ), Sheep Pox, Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD), PPR and Anthrax. Failure to vaccinate against these diseases can lead to catastrophic outcomes and may result in loss of all animal stocks. The protection of livestock which represent key livelihood assets for the poorer sector of the population in Darfur (including IDPs and nomadic societies) is of paramount importance.

2.2 Origins of the Project

32. For the past five years, the UN in the Sudan has initiated a joint and coordinated planning system through the UN Work Plan. The system follows a need based and bottom up approach in identifying interventions to be implemented in each of the planning regions identified under the Work Plan. FAO is co-leading/chairing the Food Security & Livelihoods sector both at national and state levels. The FSL sector brings together all stakeholders in a coordination forum that meets fortnightly at state level and monthly at federal (Khartoum) level. FAO is able to use this platform to take a lead in advocating to donors, NGOs and particularly the government of the need for relevant interventions to be designed and implemented to address all issues of food insecurity affecting the most vulnerable communities, and that lessons learned contribute to more effective programming.

33. In this capacity, FAO has been providing material and technical support to enhance both human and productive capacity of small-scale farmers in the traditional rain-fed agricultural sector of Sudan in both the humanitarian and early recovery contexts. FAO has supported a number of assessments since 2007 in the Darfur region to ascertain the population's vulnerability to food insecurity within a context of ongoing conflict and irregular rains. The earlier assessments were influential in determining the design of the two ECHO funded projects which are the subject of this evaluation.

34. The Darfur Food Security and Nutrition Assessment (DFSNA) was undertaken by the Government of Sudan between August and September 2007 with logistical and financial support from FAO, the World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and several NGOs. The assessment included the three states of Darfur. A further assessment, the Post Harvest Crop Assessment (PHCA), was led by States Ministry of Agriculture from November 2007 to January 2008. This assessment was also supported by FAO and carried out by Food Security and Livelihood Sector (FSL) partners at the state level.

35. These two assessments identified particular constraints and challenges affecting poorer households in each locality of the three states of Darfur region. The recommendations included a continuation of humanitarian assistance to the most vulnerable population with

additional livelihood support to: (i) resume crop production; (ii) protect and restore livestock assets; and (iii) protect and rehabilitate the natural resources base.

36. Coordination, information sharing and reporting within the Food Security and Livelihoods Sector (FSL) were also identified as a priority by these assessments as well as other meetings and reviews conducted in the three Darfur states by government, FAO and other food security and livelihoods stakeholders. Fundamental to this is the need to generate quality data for planning to which all stakeholders can contribute according to common, agreed standards.

37. Subsequent assessments conducted during the course of the two projects have included a broad assessment of the Darfur situation (encompassing food security, livelihoods, education and protection) undertaken by the Government of Sudan and the UN in July 2009; further joint Post Harvest Crop Assessments for 2009 and 2010 undertaken through the FSL sector; and two ECHO Food Security & Nutrition missions conducted successively in May and August/September 2009.

3. Assessment of project concept and relevance

3.1 Project theory

38. The FAO project strategy was to enlarge the scope of its overall coordination role, to include other areas where a more effective and centralised coordination mechanism would benefit the food security and livelihoods sector approach. FAO also strives to ensure principled and coordinated programming, through strengthening of the existing coordination and monitoring mechanisms, thereby ensuring vulnerable households have access to not only the essential, but also the most appropriate, agricultural interventions. FAO also continues taking the lead in advocacy by engaging donors, NGOs, and particularly the government to ensure that needs are systematically being covered, gaps are filled, relevant interventions designed and implemented and key lessons shared for continued programme improvement.

39. Through the two ECHO-funded projects in the Darfur region, FAO aimed to further improve food security and livelihoods by adopting a strategy to reduce the dependency of the vulnerable groups on humanitarian assistance and move towards self-sufficiency. This it sought to achieve through increasing areas under cultivation, improving yields per unit area, better protection of livestock, restoration of the natural resource base and generating additional household income within the most vulnerable communities. Moreover, the design also focus on capacitating the farmers in the use of the provided inputs which may create positive changes in their attitudes and increase their knowledge base and add to their traditional experiences.

3.2 Project objectives and logical framework

40. **Project objectives and outcomes:** The principal objective of both projects was to “improve technical coordination and backstopping to response activities aimed at improving food security and livelihood situation of the population affected by the war and adverse climatic conditions”. The specific objective of both projects was to “enhance technical coordination and backstopping of the food security and livelihood sector in restoration and sustaining of household food security of vulnerable conflict affected populations”.

41. The project OSRO/SUD/816 had five expected results:

- i. The FSL sector's coordination capacity increased (benefiting directly 49 implementing partners);
- ii. 3,000 households have their vegetable production capacity increased;
- iii. 1,000 households built capacity to produce good quality certified seed;
- iv. About 390,000 heads of animals belonging to some 7,800 livestock owners protected against the most common diseases; and
- v. Over 200 hectares of natural resources base rehabilitated and/or protected through tree planting and awareness raising, involving about 5,000 households.

42. The project OSRO/SUD/917 had three expected results:

- i. The FSL sector's coordination and vulnerability assessment and mapping improved;
- ii. 3,000 households have their vegetable production capacity increased; and
- iii. About 227,000 heads of animals belonging to some 9,000 livestock owners protected against the most common diseases and animal disease surveillance strengthened through veterinary laboratory support.

43. The projects' objectives and outcomes are considered very appropriate to the situation in the three Darfur states which continue to face multiple problems ranging from adverse climatic conditions to social, economic and political dynamic challenges. This situation necessitates effective and coherent coordination among implementing partners in the FSL sector and between different sectors. UN agencies, government and other stakeholders alike entrusted FAO as lead agency in food security in Darfur to strengthen food security and livelihood coordination.

44. **Causal relationship between activities, results and objectives:** in general the logical frameworks have been well structured and proven effective by FAO and implementing partners as a planning and management tool. The principal criticism of the logical frameworks are that the evaluation mission was unclear of the differentiation between the specific and principal objective which stated the same intentions; and that these objectives inferred that enhanced "technical coordination and backstopping" alone would restore and sustain household food security and livelihoods without reference to the considerable investment to be made in agricultural and livestock inputs during the course of both projects.

45. **Indicators:** indicators for measuring the projects achievements (against the results) have been developed in both logical frameworks. While the indicators are in general well articulated and measurable, at the higher levels the definition of the expected results sometimes overlaps between indicators at different levels (e.g. strategic plan for FSL sector under implementation is verifiable indicator both at the principal objective level and under R1 (coordination) indicators. Indicators at this level are also less specific i.e. "increase in agriculture and livestock production, household food security and household income levels" is the objective – what precisely will be measured? More specific indicators could have included average area under cultivation, average yield for specific targeted crops, etc.

46. **Risks and assumptions:** These should include those factors that potentially impact on the success of the project, but which cannot be directly controlled by the program managers. The list includes: availability of assessment reports, availability and timely release of funds, partners' implementation capacity, community involvement, the participatory approach in place, logistic capacity in place and others. A number of these risks and assumptions can be controlled by programme management. Only two risks, the favourability of climate conditions and improved access to beneficiaries, were completely outside the control of the projects. A good project design should be able to validate its assumptions, especially those with a high potential to have a negative impact on the project outputs. Also developing a risk mitigation

strategy even if it is not required by the donor format is essential and will improve the project/response implementation substantially especially in Darfur context.

3.3 Project design

47. **Institutional and management arrangements:** The project document proposed that coordination of the food security and livelihoods sector will take place at two levels: i) the cluster coordination at the three Darfur States levels including the overall cluster coordination for the Darfur Region and national coordination at Khartoum level; and ii) coordination at project implementation level which is managed and supervised by the FAO Senior Emergency Coordinator supported by the programme unit in Khartoum and the four Darfur field offices. The four offices are located in El Fashir (North Darfur), Nyala (South Darfur), Geneina (West Darfur) and Zalengi (West Darfur). These offices are responsible for monitoring and technical backstopping for the projects with virtually no management responsibilities.

48. FAO chose to operate through a number of implementing partners in the three Darfur States³. All partners selected were from national and international NGOs, CBOs, or in some cases local governmental technical bodies active within the FSL sector. They were selected on the basis of reputation, past experience and geographical coverage. FAO signed Letters of Agreement with each implementing partner which outlined their respective commitments to work plans and budgets. The evaluation considers this a very practical way of working given the enormous challenges of the context in Darfur. However, interviews suggested that additional efforts are necessary to make these truly strategic partnerships.

49. **Beneficiaries:** under the coordination and technical backstopping activities of OSRO/SUD/816 the project aimed to support 49 implementing partners which in turn were targeting 480,000 vulnerable households in Greater Darfur (under result 1). The project also was designed to provide direct assistance to 16,800 households under results 2 to 5). It was anticipated that 70% would be IDPs/returnees and 30% vulnerable host communities (overall at least 35% of the beneficiaries would be women). Particular attention would be paid to nomadic groups under the livestock protection intervention.

50. Under the coordination and technical backstopping activities of OSRO/SUD/917 the project aimed to support 64 implementing partners which in turn were targeting over 600,000 vulnerable households in Greater Darfur (under result 1). The project also was designed to provide direct assistance to 12,000 households under results 2 and 3. It was anticipated that 50% would be IDPs/returnees and 50% vulnerable host communities (overall at least 35% of the beneficiaries would be women). Particular attention would be paid to the nomadic groups under the livestock protection intervention.

51. Vulnerable communities were consulted through household questionnaires during the 2007-2008 assessments undertaken in the Darfur region and their views were taken into account in the design of both projects. Criteria were developed for the selection of beneficiaries by the implementing partners and community-level dialogue and Rural Rapid Appraisals were employed to determine beneficiary households.

³ The implementing partners of OSRO/SUD/816 in North Darfur were Oxfam GB (until their expulsion) and Relief International (RI); ZOA in South Darfur; and World Relief International and CONCERN in West Darfur. The implementing partners for OSRO/SUD/917 were Kutum Agricultural Extension & Development Society (KAEDS), COOPI, Charity Voluntary Veterinary Association (CVA), El-Fashir Veterinary Laboratory in North Darfur; and CRS and Fellowship for African Relief (FAR) in West Darfur.

3.4 Project relevance

52. The initial project document was developed as part of the UN and Partners Work Plan for 2008 in which FAO is the co-lead agency on food security and livelihood. Funding for the Work Plan comes from various donors including ECHO. The project design emphasises coordination which is in line with the UN reform agenda that is promoting coordination through the cluster approach. The projects responded well to the ECHO policy with respect to achieving consolidation of peace in the target area. The project design was also very much in line with government policy and priorities, especially the capacity-building component, but may have been better conceived if the commitment of the government was broadened especially with respect to technical issues affecting the State line ministries.

53. Furthermore, the project design, although built on previous surveys, appears to pay insufficient attention to the need for data collection, monitoring and evaluation. The existing periodic reports dwell on narrative reporting with few figures and much use of qualitative data. The design also failed to sustainability and/or FAO exit strategies.

54. It is the view of the evaluation that the projects do appear to have prioritised the areas that are most affected by the on-going conflict in Darfur. In these areas, humanitarian needs have been highest compared to other areas not covered by the project. As the project design was based on the needs assessment, there is a direct link between needs and responses and targeting. Furthermore, the projects targeted those segments of the population in greatest need and the interventions were very relevant to restoring their livelihoods in the medium to long term.

55. There were issues about the relevance of some of the agricultural inputs provided which are discussed under project implementation. With respect to livestock, range and pasture rehabilitation, as a base for livestock production, was not given adequate consideration in the design. In both the 2009 and 2010 cropping seasons, food shortages and fodder deficits were reported in North Darfur. It is the view of the evaluation mission that FAO should have considered more holistically the needs and threats to livestock assets.

4. Project implementation

4.1 Project budget and expenditure

56. The project budget for OSRO/SUD/816 totalled €1,500,000 over 12 months (later increased to 15 months through a no-cost extension agreement). In the original budget, nearly 53% (€793,800) was accorded to the first result relating to increasing the capacity of FSL sector coordination, emphasising the significance of this outcome. Other results relating to increasing vegetable production capacity and livestock protection were accorded 10.5% (€156,266) and 11% (€166,333) respectively. Since there were difficulties in fielding the international posts providing Support to Area Coordination, FAO in June 2009 proposed (in addition to the NCE) that savings of nearly 70% made under the budget for professional salaries be re-allocated principally to contracts with implementing partners and expendable equipment in support of results two through to five. According to the FPMIS, the balance of funds remaining from this project is approximately €398,000 representing 26.5% of budget.

57. The project budget for OSRO/SUD/917 totalled €500,000 over six months (extended to seven months through a no-cost extension agreement proposed by FAO in May 2010). In the original project budget, the costs associated with the first result relating to increasing the capacity of FSL sector coordination were reduced to 35% (€173,797), and more emphasis was placed on livestock protection at 27% of budget (€133,129) than vegetable production

at 15% of budget (€76,263). According to the FPMIS, the balance of funds remaining from this project is approximately €60,275 representing 12% of budget.

58. The project budgets are managed by FAO/TCES in the headquarters at Rome, Italy where the budget holder assumes overall responsibility. Disbursement of funds are arranged through the Office of the FAO Representative to Sudan in Khartoum. The FAO Emergency Coordination Unit (ECU) within the FAOR is responsible for administering and accounting for these funds (including the management of LOAs with implementing partners) as well as the coordination and reporting of project implementation and expenditure back to headquarters.

59. Delays in dispatching funds on a regular basis have created difficulties in implementation timing and schedules for some partners. Due to the sensitivity of timing of vaccinations, the treatment of livestock and cropping, the implementing partners have been compelled to borrow funds from “other” projects they are implementing to meet the timing of the ECHO/FAO projects and later reimburse the loan. While it is recognized that delays in payment are sometimes the fault of the implementing partner (i.e. they have not reported on time) and even the donor (i.e. signing retroactive agreements and slow funds transfers to FAO), late implementation of project have a negative and direct impact on project results and should be avoided at all costs.

4.2 Government support

60. The project is enjoying support from the government and there is strong sense of ownership from the government line ministries e.g. state level Ministries of Agriculture, Animal Resources and Forestry National Corporation. The establishment of working groups for crop production, livestock and environment has further contributed to strengthening relationship with the government. Arranging for government counterparts to chair working groups meetings has proved to be the most significant measure of effective government collaboration and leadership. This has contributed to timely, joint decision-making and reduced work load on cluster lead and human resources dedicated to cluster support.

61. Additionally, the project has contributed to alleviate government resource constraints. For example, the vaccination programme and livestock emergency drug supply provided a substantial contribution and addressed funding gaps in Government programmes which were scheduled on paper, but hardly existed for lack of funds. The agreement signed with the Agricultural Research Stations in the Nyala and El Fasher also helped in working with and strengthening local agricultural institutions.

62. All the government departments and line Ministries interviewed during the evaluation are supportive and showed satisfaction of ECHO/FAO interventions. The relationships between FAO and the government departments have been excellent with the exception of with the Ministry of Animal Resources and Fisheries of South Darfur. The Director General of the Ministry complained of neglect, poor consultation and participation. These negative comments may be the result of poor inter-personal relationships and/or due to tensions arising from the free veterinary services/cost recovery debate.

63. The Agricultural Planning Administration (APA) in each state is directly benefiting from FAO in terms of funds for pre- and post-harvest assessments to determine the areas of gaps and shortage of food in the states. The technical agreements between FAO and the government line Ministries are further adding to the collaboration mechanisms.

64. In a consultative meeting with members of state Ministry of Agriculture (Director General and Heads of Department), strong support was expressed for the project. Interviewees felt that the project is serving their farmers in remote areas and they mentioned that some of their field staff, especially at the locality level, had participated strongly in the implementation

of some project activities, such as training, capacity building and data collection. They asserted that MoA must have more involvement in the project implementation, since they are actually the direct technical stakeholder that could support FAO in the field of agriculture. They also requested to have more information on implementation of the field activities i.e. through reports and regular feedback.

65. However, they have been very keen to suggest the following points as recommendations in support of future sustainability: (i) introduce solutions to irrigation problems in the field of water harvesting techniques and water management; (ii) extend the FAO activities to other needy localities such as Meleit and Saraf Omra; (iii) introduce farmer field schools and demonstration farms in FAO activities in Darfur; (iv) give more attention to quality of seeds and tools and introduction of new varieties; (v) provide more support to environment rehabilitation through the development of tree nurseries; (vi) introduce joint monitoring and evaluation system between FAO, the Ministries and the partners of FAO.

66. The meeting further identified that government vehicles are a target for hijacking by the rebel groups in Darfur. Therefore, during vaccination campaigns, the movement of veterinary authorities is quite restricted. However, they often coordinate with the FAO implementing partners and the Community Animal Health Workers (CAHWs) to deliver the veterinary services in inaccessible areas.

67. The Regional Veterinary Laboratory in Nyala is equipped and capable of supplying all the bacterial vaccines (HS and BQ) to meet the requirements of the three States. Delays in vaccines from Khartoum (Central Veterinary Laboratory) reaching the beneficiaries can be avoided if the vaccines are manufactured and purchased locally on contractual basis. Given reduced logistic costs, locally produced vaccines would also presumably be less expensive.

4.3 Project Management

68. Both projects were operationally supported by TCES based in the FAO headquarters in Rome, Italy, headed by the Senior Project Coordinator and administered by the section staff. In Sudan the responsibility for planning, implementation and liaison rests with the FAO Senior Emergency & Rehabilitation Coordinator based in the FAO Country Office for Sudan in Khartoum.

69. The OSRO/SUD/816 project began on 1 July 2008. After a lengthy inception period, three international candidates for the Support to Area Coordination positions (one in each of the three Darfur States) were screened, interviewed and submitted for approval to MoA in Khartoum. However, by the end of 2008, there was still no approval to recruit the candidates and eventually it was decided to continue the project by adapting the roles and responsibilities of the national staff in the field. It was at this stage that, in agreement with ECHO, a budget revision was submitted and approved to re-allocate the funds from international consultancies to other budget lines to undertake alternative activities. This was in part also the basis for a no-cost extension for three months (1 July to 30 September 2009).

70. Under the OSRO/SUD/917 project, international Cluster Coordinators were foreseen and were recruited as of November 2009.

71. Both projects relied considerably on FAO's partnership with implementing partners especially in the delivery of agricultural and veterinary inputs as well as training activities at field level. The choice of partnership approach by FAO, using implementing partners to deliver services, is considered a cost-effective approach. Local NGOs, CBOs, networks and CAHWs have access to areas inaccessible for both FAO and the INGOs. This has led to wider coverage of services with no inclusion or exclusion biases. In total 18 Letters of

Agreements (LOA) were signed with different partners during the course of the two projects. The LOAs between FAO and the implementing partners are the legal documents which oblige the implementing partners to ensure satisfactory planning, management and monitoring of the activities. Discussions and observations with FAO officials and the implementing partners revealed that there were some weaknesses regarding the reporting and M and E processes. For instance while progress reports reflect a lot of activities that were done on the ground, they tend to mention only stories of success without reporting on actual activities and the delivered inputs.

72. The evaluation was informed that because of delays in financial transfers from FAO, some implementing partners were compelled to borrow funds from other projects being managed by the organisations to keep the FAO projects operating. This is not an acceptable practice. While these delays may have been in part caused by late reporting by the partners, some flexibility should exist to ensure that time-bound agricultural activities are efficiently supported.

73. The evaluation also noted that the capacity of FAO to monitor the projects at field level was very limited and issues of insecurity also prevented staff visiting operational areas. Monitoring visits to project sites by FAO staff were irregular. Remote management modalities were applied. There was therefore considerable reliance upon the implementing partners to report on the progress of implementation which may not always have been sufficiently objective or impartial. Furthermore, feedback on the monthly updates prepared by the four FAO field offices and consolidated by Khartoum for further dissemination is only intermittently received by the field staff.

4.4 Technical and operational backstopping

74. Technical support provided by FAO to the FSL partners included training sessions, workshops, meetings, joint assessments and studies. Most of these were resourced through local technical institutions. Consultants are contracted either locally in Darfur or from Khartoum. This technical support approach proved to be effective and adequately addressed the partners' needs and overcame barriers like language, cost and time constraints.

75. Furthermore, technical backstopping was provided through a visit made by an Agronomist from FAO Rome who delivered and facilitated a training workshop on seed multiplication.

76. A Virologist (Dr. Magdi) from the Central Veterinary Laboratory in Khartoum, provided technical backstopping through a visit to El-Fashir Regional Veterinary Laboratory. He delivered and facilitated training of ten veterinarians on sampling techniques to identify and study viruses.

5. Project contribution to the development objective

5.1 Outputs and outcomes/results

5.1.1 The FSL's sector coordination capacity increased (result one of both OSRO/SUD/816 and OSRO/SUD/917)

77. Identification of FSL sector's partners and stakeholders: The projects have identified and mapped out the FSL partners. In total 64 partners have been identified and benefited from the coordination, technical backstopping and monitoring activities. This figure includes government departments, UN agencies, and civil society organisations (national and international NGOs, and community based organisations).

78. Out of the 64 FSL stakeholders FAO selected 13 partners, representing 20% of the total stakeholders, for the direct implementation of the project activities in 34 major geographical areas across the Darfur region targeting 68,858 vulnerable households. The partners selected included five government departments, seven INGOs and one NNGOs. The criteria for selection of partners are geographical coverage, experience in the field of intervention and reputation from previous agreements with FAO and other food security partners. The partnership is formalised through LoAs which represent a contractual arrangement with more emphasis on operational capacity and accountability for the piece of work in hand. The LoAs are of short term nature (3 to 9 months) and do not reflect a strategic partnership whereby the partners express longer term commitments to common goals. Given the context in Darfur, fostering long term strategic partnership particularly with well established local NGOs and CBOs, is essential for reaching the more inaccessible areas and populations. Forging strategic partnership represents one of the weaknesses in the projects implementation and consequently FAO approach in working with partners.

79. **Coordination meetings:** fortnightly meetings at State level and monthly meetings at Khartoum level have been conducted on a regular basis. FAO as a sector lead in consultation with WFP the co-chair and other partners drafted the Terms of Reference for FSL Sector/Cluster coordination in the three Darfur States. The coordination mechanism includes the FSL Sector main coordination forum supported by three Working Groups: Crop Production, Livestock and Environment. The regular well documented coordination meetings provided a very solid platform for food security coordination in the three Darfur States. It also further strengthened relationship between the different stakeholders notably the government partners in the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Livestock and Forestry National Corporation.

80. **Assessment of partners existing implementation capacities and gaps/additional requirements:** this activity was one of the key challenges to be undertaken in the FSL sector. The need to assess the partners' capacity had become more critical following the expulsion of NGOs from Darfur. However, the partners' capacity assessment did not take place. There is some suggestion that FAO opted not to implement the activity due to the fact that UNDP was undertaking a similar activity – however the mission believes that a FSL specific capacity assessment would still have been useful.

81. **Training of implementing partners (data collection, analysis of SPSS, EXCEL, report writing):** one training workshop on data management was conducted in Khartoum for building the capacity of 15 staff from the three ministries of agriculture in the Darfur region. As a result of this capacity building a quarterly newsletter, which serves the purpose of updating the Agriculture and Livestock situation in Darfur, has been developed and functions to fill a gap in the agriculture information system. However, the training sessions were only of limited coverage in terms of both the quality of the materials and the quantity of the beneficiaries.

82. **Conducting of basic technical studies** was planned covering: local seed supply and seed market systems; livelihoods diversification and enterprise development; case studies on community access to key natural resources; and case studies and documentation of good practices on pasture and range land rehabilitation. An FAO international consultant in agronomy from Rome facilitated a workshop on seed multiplication, seed vouchers and seed fairs. The workshop was conducted in June 2009 and attended by representatives from 22 partners in South and West Darfur. The workshop report was produced and disseminated. However, other technical studies planned in the project document (OSRO/SUD/816) have not been implemented. Discussions with FAO in Khartoum did not explain why the studies were not conducted as planned. Meetings of the evaluation mission with the Khartoum

based Senior Emergency Coordinator and his deputy, which might have provided valuable insights, were postponed and in the end did not take place.

83. Conducting technical consultation workshops on livestock sub-sector rehabilitation: a workshop on livestock programming was conducted by FAO in Nyala in January 2009. The workshop was attended by 75 persons working in the FSL Sector in Darfur. The participants were from the government, local NGOs, international NGOs and the UN. One of the main topics discussed during the workshop was the issue of free services versus user fees – and an important and positive result was the agreement amongst all partners on the way forward⁴. It was stressed by the State Ministry of Animal Resources that all partners working in the livestock sector in Darfur should start moving towards cost recovery in areas where there are service providers either in the government or private sector providers - to avoid undermining sustainable systems. Another recommendation was related to reviewing the community animal health workers (CAHW) network by identifying the best practices, seeking legal recognition for the CAHWs and improving supervision. Unfortunately the Ministry is unsatisfied with the lack of followup since the workshop in terms of documentation and institutionalisation of the free services/user fees.

84. Technical backstopping to needs assessments by implementing partners: FAO organised and delivered training on needs assessment. The objective of training was to improve the quality of need assessment. The training was attended by 49 staff from the Darfur State governments and NGOs. Feedback from the trainees indicated that the training was relevant and has substantially improved their assessment capacities.

85. Production and dissemination of rapid FSL assessments reports: WFP in collaboration with HAC, FAO and ministries of agriculture conducted the joint Darfur Food Security and Livelihoods Assessment (DFSLA). The assessment report was disseminated to the food security stakeholders in Darfur and beyond. Identification of the most vulnerable individuals and communities and their needs regarding the FSL interventions in Darfur in 2009 has been made possible through the joint Darfur FSL Assessment, the three Pre and Post Harvest Assessments conducted by the state ministries of agriculture and the rapid livestock assessment in the Northern part of North Darfur which was conducted by COOPI in collaboration with FAO.

86. This project also enabled FAO in collaboration with WFP to implement a **monitoring system** of food security using sentinel sites and collect data every three months. This system was implemented in West and North Darfur in 2009 and it has improved and strengthened the FSI information system for action. State government and other food security and livelihood stakeholders are appreciative of the system developed.

5.1.2 Vegetable production capacity increased (result two of both OSRO/SUD/816 and OSRO/SUD/917)

87. The evaluation was able to directly assess activities where vegetable production was promoted in two areas, namely Kebkabiya (OSRO/SUD/ 816) and Kutum (OSRO/SUD/917) in North Darfur. A random household survey was undertaken of over 200 beneficiary households.

88. Vegetable production under OSRO/SUD/816: FAO supported the distribution of **vegetable seeds and tools** in the Kebkabiya area through Oxfam and RI who targeted 1,700 households. Oxfam distributed 110 kg of onion, 170 kg of okra, 85 kg of water melon and 24 kg of tomato. In addition, 1,700 rakes and 1,700 digging hoes have also been

⁴ Free services by FAO and partners and the cost recovery approach by the state ministries of animal resources in the three Darfur states, depending on the vulnerability status of the population as well as accessibility criteria.

distributed to the beneficiaries. However, these activities have been transferred to Kabkabiya Small Charity Organization since the expulsion of some INGOs from Sudan on March 2008. Due to this interruption in services, the evaluation mission has focussed more intensively on RI assistance.

89. Relief International (RI) had also distributed seeds and tools to 1,381 beneficiaries in Kabkabiya town, Kabkabiya rural, Saraf Omra and Sireif Bani Hussein in villages not covered by Oxfam. They distributed 283 kg of okra, 141 kg of water melon, 56 kg of tomato and 283 kg of onion to the beneficiaries as well as 2,835 rakes, 2,835 digging hoes and 150 treadle pumps

90. RI has organised **training to local farmers** across 24 sites in Kebkabiya and Saraf Omra localities. All training sessions were facilitated by RI trained village extension agents (VEAs). In these sessions about 2,370 farmers participated, of whom 1,380 were IDPs and 2,370 were residents from the host community. 60% of the trained farmers were female. Focus of these sessions was on the agricultural practices of vegetable production, namely tomato, onion, leafy vegetables and Alfa. RI agricultural field monitors also conducted extension training to 1,638 farmers, of whom 964 were IDPs and 674 were host community residents. The sessions focused on agricultural practices of onion, tomato and citrus crops as well as vegetable harvest and post harvest techniques.

91. RI after selection of qualified builders and contractors constructed a number of **shallow wells** in the Kebkabiya area, based on certain criteria, among which at least two IDP women headed household are benefiting from the selected shallow well. The VEAs and the agricultural field monitors were monitoring and supervising the construction and management of the shallow wells.

92. **Vegetable production under OSRO/SUD/917:** The Kutum area is one of the famous vegetable production areas in North Darfur State along Wadi Kutum, one of the known fertile Wadis in Darfur. Most of the vegetables produced in this area are during winter season, which starts from October up till June before the start of the rainy season. This type of cultivation is lead by women, and the project was targeting about 1,500 IDPs and host communities in Kutum town, Fata Barno and Kutum rural areas. Preference was given to women headed households. Each household received about 270 grams of assorted seeds, one hoe and each five beneficiaries share one treadle pump. The activities undertaken since the start of the project were as follows:

- (i) Selection of targeted locations (villages) according to the following criteria: accessibility allowed by the security situation; not supported in the previous winter season, and; availability of shallow wells for irrigation.
- (ii) Selection of 1,500 households as project beneficiaries based on the following criteria: households who have not received seeds from the previous winter season; households who have access to irrigated land; households who lost their previous year's harvest and are not able to access/afford seeds through own production or from the market, and; female head household, IDPS and returnees.

Details of project beneficiaries in Kutum area:

Location	Categorisation of beneficiaries	Number of Females	Number of Males	Total HHS
Fata barno camp	Returnees /IDPS	778	242	1020
Dalol	IDPS	91	146	237
Karama	IDPS	20	35	55
Zariba west	Residents/IDPS	74	33	107
Zariba East	Residents/IDPS	42	39	81
Total		1005	495	1500

Vegetable seeds

Type of seeds	No. of households	Amount of seeds/household in grams	Total amount of seeds procured in Kg
Okra	1500	100	150
Onion	1500	50	75
Water melon	1500	50	75
Cucumber	1500	50	75
Tomato	1500	20	30
Totals	1500	270	

Agricultural hand tools

Item	Quantity
Digging hoe	1,500
Treadle pumps	25

- (viii) Training of 25 farmers on using treadle pump.
- (ix) Distribution of 25 treadle pumps to the farmers.
- (x) Training of about 313 farmers on topics of land preparation, crop rotation, sowing dates, irrigation, fertilisation and post-harvest operations (preservation, marketing and storage). The following table gives details of the trained farmers:

Location	No. of Round	No. of farmers trained	% covered from the total
Fata Barno	5	140	14%
Zariba East	1	61	76%
Zariba West	1	69	65%
Dallol	1	43	19%
Total	8	313	20%

5.1.3 Certified seed production (result three of OSRO/SUD/816)

93. A total of 513 farmers in North and South Darfur were trained and assisted to become certified seed growers, 180 for cereals (sorghum and millet) and 333 for potato seed multiplication. LOAs were signed with the Agricultural Research Stations (ARS) in Nyala and El Fashir to support the propagation of foundation seed by ARS and certified seed multiplication through contracted farmers. At the end of the growing season ARS in both States collected a total of 54 metric tons of certified seed (11mt of millet and 43mt of sorghum) which was cleaned, packed and delivered to FAO for further distribution. The quality of seeds was good, but the quantity was well below the target of 80mt, because of damage to the millet crop by Quella Quella birds.

94. Kutum Agricultural Extension & Development Society (KAEDS), a local NGO, was selected by FAO for the implementation of the potato seed multiplication in North Darfur. KAEDS organised training for 75 farmers on cultural practices of potato seed multiplication. The production per farmer was about 150kg. Four metric tons of potato were finally procured by FAO from the farmers for re-distribution (by KAEDS) to 330 households in February 2009. However, the climatic conditions for potato germination were not favourable that year and production was down to 60% of planned. This led to an increase in the market price for potatoes of nearly 400% which was beneficial to some farmers.

5.1.4 Animal health protected (result four of OSRO/SUD/816 and result three of OSRO/SUD/917)

95. Livestock represent the lifeline for many people in Darfur. This is especially true for women who raise cattle, goats and chicken and make up about 60% of household labour (brick making, agriculture, house cleaners, and casual labourers in buildings). The interventions of the two projects were intended to mitigate the risk and vulnerability of food insecure groups through wide coverage. Animal vaccination campaigns and treatments have been conducted to protect livestock against the most common epidemic diseases (HS, BQ, Sheep pox, PPR, Anthrax).

96. The main **outputs** of the two projects in the livestock domain are the following:

- (i) Vaccination of cattle, camels, sheep and goats against HS, BQ, PPR, Anthrax and Sheep Pox. The total animals vaccinated and hence protected against common epidemic diseases were 875,147 heads. Treatment of sick animals (223,420 heads) mainly against wounds, internal parasites and pneumonia.
- (ii) Training of 156 CAHWs in handling animal health and vaccination in rural and nomadic settings and the supply of equipment (veterinary working tool package, back bags and bicycles or donkeys).
- (iii) Training of 17 Veterinarians on disease surveillance, and serum sampling and analysis.
- (iv) Provision of research equipment and reagents to El Fashir Regional Veterinary Laboratory (not yet received at the time of the mission).

97. The **outcomes** of the two projects were the following:

- (i) Animals of 32,300 households (IDPs, returnees, nomads and rural poor) are protected against major contagious devastating diseases in a humanitarian context. There were no outbreaks reported during the project period. Vaccination targets were met and surpassed.
- (ii) Empowerment of local technical institutions, coordination mechanisms is in place and training of CAHWs as technical outreach for inaccessible rural areas.
- (iii) Awareness for livestock producers on protection of their livestock and capacitated them on food processing (cheese-making) to minimise milk spoilage and improve family incomes.

Intervention (ND/SD/WD)	OSRO/816	OSRO/917
Animals vaccination	351,000 heads	875,147 heads.
Animals treated	136,484	86,936
Laboratory staff training		17
CAHWs training*	126	30
Vaccination/treatment Kits for CAHWs	126	30
No Households benefiting	7,800 HHs	24,500 HHs
No Localities N. Darfur	5 plus all the IDP camps	5 plus all the IDP camps
No Localities S. Darfur	18 plus all the IDP camps	
No Localities W. Darfur	25 and IDP camps	25 and IDP camps

*CAHWs: Community Animal Health Workers.

5.1.5 Natural resources based rehabilitated (result five of OSRO/SUD/816)

98. In total 380 hectares of land was rehabilitated by planting improved pasture seed (exceeding the 200ha originally planned). The intervention was undertaken by UMCOR, a local NGO operating in Ed Daein and Bahr el Arab localities of South Darfur during the 2009 rainy season. A total of 2.2 metric tons of pasture seed was broadcasted (by 155 trained broadcasters) on degraded fallow land donated by local leaders and the fodder was protected to grow to maturity. The *Blepharis Linarifolia* plants demonstrated the best growth rate.

99. CONCERN, an international NGO, mobilised communities in West Darfur to establish a tree nursery in Wadei Bardi (near Geneina) and produce 25,000 seedlings (the project had originally aimed to produce 50,000 seedlings). The seedlings were in turn distributed and planted during the 2009 rainy season in Kulbus, Mornei and Umshalaya through the rehabilitation of 100 hectares for the benefit of some 5,000 households..

5.2 Gender and social inclusion issues

100. The projects were sufficiently sensitive to gender and social inclusion issues. Issues of gender were addressed in decision-making processes and women as well as men were consulted and involved in the design of interventions. IDPs and host communities with particular reference to women headed households were specifically targeted in the vegetable production component of both projects. 60% of the beneficiaries receiving inputs and training under vegetable production were women.

101. Under the livestock component of the projects, the evaluation noted that Community Committees in most areas have a quota for women memberships (25%). Out of 10 CAHWs trained in Malha, six of them are females. Vulnerable women are targeted in income generation activities and trained in food processing activities. The projects appropriately addressed the gender issues and no group or individuals were intentionally left out.

5.3 Capacity development

102. Technical backstopping is taking place and is provided through different mechanisms at two levels; a) FSL cluster, and b) FAO direct project implementation. At the FSL Cluster level technical support is at early stages and results and outcomes are yet to be established. However, at FAO direct implementation level, the joint assessments, workshops; meetings and production of materials are playing a substantial role in the capacity building of partners. Respondents to the evaluation team indicated that role played by FAO is crucial. However, this role requires further strengthening. For example, the assessment of partners capacities which was planned as part of ECHO funded projects has not been conducted. Additionally, partnerships established by FAO tended to focus more on the implementation nature of projects (signing of LoAs) paying less attention to long term strategic partnership. This represents a missed opportunity particularly in the Darfur context where building the capacity and working in partnership with international and local NGOs and CBOs is of paramount importance in improving the humanitarian response and reaching out to affected areas and populations.

103. It was apparent that the FAO recognised the importance of conducting technical studies on key relevant food security and livelihoods aspects. However, the work in this area has not been given the due priority. For example, only one workshop on seed multiplication (out of four similar activities) was conducted. Additionally, the work on the strategic plan for the FSL Sector is still under development and the work in the vulnerability assessment and mapping is on going.

104. The cluster coordination meetings and the Livestock Working Groups have identified needs and gaps and have set priorities. This is a capacity development of the personnel in local institutions (MoAR and MoA) and local NGOs. Moreover, the institutional capacity development created through the provision of technical assistance, training and equipment has elevated the competence level of the technical staffs at the MoAR.

105. The training of the CAHWs (initial and refreshing courses) has capacitated and enabled them to identify common disease symptoms and participated in vaccination and drenching campaigns. They are very effective in livestock protection as a national and individual source of economy. The project trained trainers insofar as women trained in cheese making are now

training other women in their communities. This is an effective way of dissemination of simple technology in the rural communities.

5.4 Environmental issues

106. Access and control of natural resources has been violently contested over the past years between nomadic pastoralists and the sedentary agrarians in Darfur. Tensions between the groups and tribes often arise and this has resulted in negative impact in the environment. Pasture lands and firewood have been controlled by the rebel groups in many areas. The pastoralists have been forced to graze on the same lands for longer periods; this has resulted in overgrazing. Indigenous systems of local governance, which previously resolved disputes over natural resources, have suffered from upheavals and political interferences. The Native Administration system has been polarised in the three Darfur States.

107. Under the OSRO/SUD/917 project, funds for tree nurseries were allocated in West Darfur. About 56,000 seedlings were produced and distributed with a survival rate of 65% (CONCERN). To mitigate pressure on tree logging for firewood, 400 stoves were distributed from the same fund to women-headed households in IDP camps, El Geniena, West Darfur.

108. As mentioned earlier in the text, the two projects didn't allocated funds for range rehabilitation and management. Natural range is the backbone for livestock production in Darfur on which more than 70% of the population depend for their livelihoods.

5.5 Sustainability: institutional, social, technical and economic

109. The involvement of the government represented by line ministries and department and the chairing of the working groups by the concerned departments is one of the key factors in making the cluster/sector approach sustainable. The government has designated senior technical staff members with sufficient decision making capacity to chair the working groups meetings and to feed into the wider cluster coordination. The buy-in from the government and allocation of resources (human and time) are key factors in contributing to the sustainability of the approach.

110. Additionally, the government is using the working groups' forum to discuss and coordinate its long term plans with partners. This is particularly relevant for the livestock sector where the issue of cost recovery versus free services to conflict affected population had been discussed in length and a conclusion was agreed and adopted.

111. The participation of the government counterparts in the FSL Coordination activities has provided good training opportunities and exposure to good practices which will inform the government future planning and programming.

112. For the project to be sustainable, it should possess the ability to generate the resources necessary for continuation or transformation of the project. Vaccine development in Sudan is under the control of the Ministry of Technology (Soba Central Veterinary Laboratory) and is financed by the Ministry of Finance. The amounts of vaccines produced annually depend on the amount of budget allocated by the Ministry of Finance for that purpose and not on the actual number of animals need vaccination for that particular vaccine in the country. The gap in vaccine production can be filled if the Regional Veterinary Laboratories are activated (e.g. Nyala). Thus, the institutional sustainability of the vaccination intervention is guaranteed because the CAHWS are trained as supporting delivery mechanisms to deliver vaccines to the most vulnerable groups in the most remote areas. However, the registration of CAHWS as legal personnel to deal with veterinary vaccines and drugs must take place otherwise the level of sustainability reduces significantly.

113. Assessment of the prospects for long-term use of project outputs and outcomes including further development of acquired capacities, from an institutional, social, technical and economic perspective is further needed.

5.6 Project current and potential impact

114. A household survey (vegetable production) and focus group discussions were undertaken during the evaluation with the specific purpose of ascertaining the impact that the projects had achieved. These were undertaken in the two localities of Kutum and Kebkabiya both in North Darfur. The results of the household survey conducted with both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of the projects are presented in **Annex 6** to this report. There are some points that support the positive and negative impact the interventions have had on the beneficiary households and their communities. The key findings are summarised below:

- the selection of beneficiaries was undertaken according to the set criteria from FAO with emphasis on poor farmers from IDPs, women headed households and very poor farmers from the host community. Of the surveyed beneficiaries about 71% were from the IDPs and the remaining percent from the host community;
- a number of poor, women headed households were excluded from the targeting because project resources were insufficient;
- all the beneficiaries interviewed received the prescribed amount of seeds and tools;
- over 51% of the beneficiaries interviewed indicated that the tomato seeds were of bad quality. However, over 77% of the beneficiaries rated the quality of other seeds they received, as good. Nearly 82% of the respondents rated the quality of tools as good;
- the timing of inputs was too late for crops such as tomato and onion which require transplanting before a suitable period prior to cultivation in the fields (30 -45 days);
- only 53.5% of the beneficiaries have cultivated the five crops, namely tomato, onion, okra, water melon and cucumber. The reasons for that are: (i) late arrival of FAO inputs; (ii) Irrigation problems and poor watering equipment; (iii) low amount of rains during the previous season; and (iv) security threats.

115. A homogenous focus group of beneficiary men and women ascertained that the FAO support enhanced vegetable production and, hence, increasing yield, of the supported crops, the following table show how yield of these crops has increased compared to last year's yield:

Crop Yields - Beneficiaries	2009 winter season	2010 winter season
Onion (avg #sacks/feddan)	16.7	18.8
Tomato (avg #sacks/feddan)	28.1	28.8
Okra (avg #sacks/feddan)	5.5	6.6
Water melon (piece/feddan)	14.4	17.1
Cucumber (avg #sacks/feddan)	6.3	8.9

Source: Field survey May/June 2010.

116. In addition to providing for household consumption, the beneficiaries stated that, the majority of their produce is usually marketed, either in the village, nearby villages or the town markets. The income generated could be used to pay for market goods purchased (see annexes for more details). The source of irrigation water for vegetable production depended mainly on shallow wells along the wadis. On average the distance from the irrigation source to the field were found to be around 23 metres. In terms of access to irrigation equipment, about 41% of the beneficiaries interviewed used pumps to irrigate their crops, whereas 30% use traditional bucket means. The remaining beneficiaries use other means available.

117. Regarding access to other inputs, there were no available means of credit (in cash) due to the collapse of the banking system during the on-going conflict. Access to agrochemicals and technical services were available to variable degrees. Access to improved seeds was mostly for vegetables.

118. The survey examined household food consumption and calculated a dietary diversity score. The household survey revealed that households in the study area now consume 7 different food groups on a regular basis. The results, however, show no difference in the variety of foods consumed on a weekly basis by vegetable production beneficiaries compared with non-beneficiaries. As there was no baseline survey taken by the project, the interpretation of this is difficult. The lack of difference may indeed mean that the production of vegetables did not have direct impact on household consumption (households may, for example, have sold all of the vegetables produced). Alternative analysis which are in part supported by the comparison of socio-economic variable across beneficiary and non-beneficiary groups would suggest that beneficiaries were poorer than non-beneficiaries and therefore the fact that there is no difference in their dietary diversity is in fact positive. The lack of a definitive answer serves to highlight the importance of doing baseline surveys – so that before/after comparisons can be made to strengthen inferential analysis.

119. There were no reported disease outbreaks in livestock in the three Darfur states from 2008 to 2010 indicating that animal health interventions had a protective effect. The health status of the herds has remained stable and the assumption is that the number of animals per household has increased. This in turn has improved the livelihoods of households and the communities.

120. However, the increase in the number of animals per households has a negative impact on range resources management. The stocking rates increase per unit grazing area and that leads to overgrazing which in turn disturbs the balance between animals and their ecosystems.

121. New local livestock markets (small ruminants and poultry) were developed at village levels and at IDP camps as a result of the increase in the number of animals per households.

122. The projects have had a positive impact on camel nomadic groups of North and West Darfur. The mortality rates in camels were reduced from 10% to as little as 2% due to the vaccination of the herds against the HS killing disease. The projects' coverage of cow herders in South Darfur was between 10 to 13% at IDP camps and sedentary rural areas. The cattle nomadic groups however benefited least from the projects.

123. Sheep herders in North Darfur benefited from both vaccination and treatment. Some herders commented that the vaccination caused abortion in sheep. However, the combination of internal and external parasites and the poor pasture conditions (quantity and quality) are the main causes of abortion, not the vaccination. Extension services are necessary here to contain these stereotypes so that sheep owners don't deter from vaccinating their animals in the future.

5.7 Overall effectiveness of intervention

124. Generally from a socio-economic perspective, the project has been implemented efficiently and inputs delivered according to what was planned in support of the project objectives. Most of the activities have been implemented according to what was planned.

5.7.1 FSL sector's coordination capacity increased

125. All the FSL partners appreciated the role played and support provided by FAO in the coordination of the FSL Sector. Meetings with the States Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Animal Resources, UNOCHA, WFP, national and international NGOs have further confirmed the benefits derived from the coordination forum. The FSL Cluster stakeholders stated that the cluster was particularly effective in the following: a) conducting joint assessments; b) targeting of humanitarian response; c) avoiding duplication and overlap in the food security and livelihood interventions; and d) understanding activities of other partners (who is doing what and where). Plans are in place for introducing information management, developing the cluster strategy and contingency plan.

126. There were some misconceptions about the cluster approach⁵ when it was first introduced in Sudan. Some partners viewed it as emphasising more the humanitarian agenda at the expenses of recovery and development. However, this has subsided and the cluster approach is gaining more momentum particularly in Darfur. The evaluation mission noted less sensitivity to the terminology and the word cluster is often interchangeable with the sector approach without losing the focus on both.

127. The recruitment of dedicated cluster coordination staff by FAO in each state in Darfur has contributed substantially to the progress made in the FSL Cluster. The availability of the Darfur Region FSL Cluster coordinator provided leadership in the sector which contributed to the overall coordination. It was quite clear that the additional human resources provided to FAO improved coordination, programming and delivery of FSL assistance. The project partners have all commended FAO for being objectively neutral and apolitical partner in leading the coordination of the FSL cluster/sector. Funds provided by ECHO have enabled FAO to be the lead and the first and only partner that has full-time dedicated staff to the coordination of FSL and an overall cluster lead for the wider Darfur region. This has demonstrated FAO's added value, boosted its image and raised its profile in Darfur.

128. **Production and dissemination of FSL Assessments and report:** There has been good coordination between FAO and partners including WFP as co-lead in the Food Security Cluster in producing and disseminating relevant information. Assessments are conducted jointly by the FSL stakeholders and reports are shared widely. Each office in Darfur's three states produces a monthly food security update which is sent to Khartoum for compilation and dissemination. Though the updates are received by Khartoum regularly, the dissemination of the reports and feedback to different offices in Darfur has been irregular.

129. All the reports and updates on food security are produced in English language. This tends to favour larger organisations that use English. Local actors, including government partners without fluency in English, benefit least from the materials produced and meetings attended. This highlights the need for having suitable translation facilities to be provided.

130. Coordination in the FSL however needs to be supported and strengthened by inter-cluster linkages which are linked to the wider Darfur coordination. Inter cluster coordination is currently weak and in some instances does not exist. Designated sector coordinators for sectors other than FSL need to be in place for improved humanitarian response in Darfur.

131. The main challenges facing the FSL cluster are summarised below:

- insecurity affecting access to areas and food insecure populations;

⁵ the UN IASC has established global and country "clusters" as a way of addressing gaps and strengthening the effectiveness of humanitarian response through building partnerships. The cluster approach ensures predictability and accountability in international responses to humanitarian emergencies, by clarifying the division of labour among organizations, and better defining their roles and responsibilities within the different sectors of the response.

- limited number and capacity of partners, particularly local partners;
- weak inter cluster linkages limiting the potential of the FSL sector;
- limited and unpredictable funding for the sector; and
- gaps in sectoral information.

132. The state level coordination forums (FSL Cluster and three working groups) meet fortnightly and feed into each other. The regular well documented coordination meetings provided a very solid platform for food security coordination in the three Darfur states. It also further strengthened the relationship between the different stakeholders, notably the government partners in the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Livestock and Forestry National Corporation. The only short-coming noted by the evaluation is that the Range and Pasture Department (Ministry of Agriculture) was not represented in either the Livestock Working Group or the Environmental Working Group in the three states.

133. At Khartoum level, the coordination meetings are taking place monthly and feed into the coordination at Darfur level. However, there is erratic feedback received from Khartoum office on the coordination at national level. Minutes of the meetings are not regularly shared. Updates received from the Darfur offices for compilation and further circulation are not systematically produced and circulated. These short-comings are making the national coordination less felt at Darfur level, expressly on information sharing.

134. Concerns were raised during the evaluation by small national and international organisations with limited capacities concerning the excessive demand for the FSL cluster meetings. There are three working group meetings and one combined FSL Cluster meeting making a total of four meetings in two weeks, not to mention other commitments including other sectoral meetings. FAO as FSL sector lead is responsible for ensuring that the sector meetings are well managed, productive and responsive to small organisations needs. Meetings can be rationalised to cater for the need of the different stakeholders.

5.7.2 Vegetable production capacity increased

135. The assessment of the evaluation is that both projects have proved their effectiveness by targeting the most vulnerable groups in the population. But analysis and interviews in the project areas showed that, the selection of the targeted beneficiaries encountered some problems. The FAO implementing partners failed to produce a verified list of beneficiaries, especially in Kabkabiya area. It may be worth mentioning in this regard that the FAO partner in Kutum area has done a very good job compared to others.

136. These interventions by FAO which were implemented by partners in the surveyed areas were partially criticised in the focus group discussions conducted during the evaluation. There were complaints that the provision of seeds and tools was undertaken without ample knowledge of the indigenous farming systems in these areas. The study found cases where farmers considered some seeds irrelevant in terms of their quality and quantity i.e. tomato and okra seeds. But the general consensus was that without the FAO seed and tools intervention, the farmers would have had to resort to sell all their assets to buy food.

137. Furthermore, farmers felt that the provision of seed was prescribed by FAO rather than determined according to the farmers' own preference. Hence some of the seed was not that appropriate to the context and situation. Farmers also requested more attention to training, the application of natural fertilisers, fencing of farms and better access to irrigation.

138. A significant issue was that seeds and tools had not been distributed at the desired time. Nearly all the interviewed farmers mentioned that to have agricultural inputs in February for the winter season, is the wrong month, since the winter season starts earlier in November and extends up till May or June, the start of the rainy season. They also added

that seeds of transplanted plants such as onion and tomato need to be brought earlier for their seedlings to reach the sowing dates.

5.7.3 Animal health protection

139. The two projects under consideration have supported conflict affected households (IDPs, returnees, pastoralists, host communities, rural people) whose livelihoods depend on livestock. The veterinary inputs (vaccination, deworming and treatments) were procured locally (not imported) and are provided free of charge to the most vulnerable households. However, the Ministries of Animal Resources and Fisheries in the three States are adopting the cost recovery policy in vaccination and treatments. This has created a great concern and uneasiness among the humanitarian actors, FAO and its FSL partners.

140. The vaccines are relevant to the common diseases known for the region (HS, BQ, FMD, Anthrax, Sheep Pox and PPR). The institutional capacity of FAO, in terms of staffing, local knowledge and experience, is considered optimum. Promotion of participation of the community was given top priority by the projects. However, some of the respondents interviewed during the evaluation complained (e.g. community leaders in Malha, North Darfur) of poor consultation of beneficiaries at the stage of projects' design and implementation. The States and Locality governments, however, affirmed the relevance and ownership of the projects and were indeed within the priorities of the five years States strategy. FAO and the government are working together to cover the needs of the vulnerable groups and to fill the gaps. Nevertheless, demands, relevance and ownership are appropriately acknowledged by the government and by the beneficiaries in the two projects areas.

5.7.4 Overall Assessment

141. Effectiveness measures objectives that are established in the projects documents. In the two projects, and during the analysis of the logical framework, interventions have achieved all the objectives. The implementing partners and the community participation have played a key role in these achievements. In spite of the insecurity that prevails in most of the interventions localities and the use of remote modalities in monitoring, the program effectiveness is moderately satisfactory. The wide coverage of the program and the advocated selection criteria of beneficiaries (based on most vulnerable, IDPs, widows) and the high level of community participation have improved the implementation processes and added value to effectiveness of the interventions.

142. The resources provided didn't cover all the needs of the beneficiaries, especially the de-worming of animals for internal parasites, but vaccination protection was complete. The adequacy of distribution schedules of inputs was poor; often delay is associated with delivery. However, the beneficiary's view of the interventions was very positive and compassionate.

Table 4 . Summary of ECHO Program Ratings by Evaluation Team

Criteria	Rating	Score
Portfolio Performance		
• Relevance	Satisfactory	4
• Effectiveness	Moderately satisfactory	3
• Efficiency	Moderately satisfactory	3
• Overall Impact	Satisfactory	4
• Sustainability	Moderately satisfactory	3
• Innovation	Moderately satisfactory	3

Performance of partners		
• FAO	Moderately satisfactory	3
• IPs	Satisfactory	4
• Government	Least satisfactory	2

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

143. Delays and eventually the suspension of international recruitment of Support to Area Coordinators (M&E, information and reporting) impacted adversely on the technical capacity available to implementing partners and the monitoring of the project OSRO/SUD/816. Ultimately however, the recruitment of designated cluster coordination staff by FAO in each state in Darfur proved very effective in terms of leadership, coordination and the delivery of strategic inputs within the sector.

144. Recommendation to ECHO: Funding should be maintained to ensure that the human and material resources are available for FAO to continue supporting the FSL coordination in Darfur including coordination at national level.

145. Coordination of activities within the FSL sector of the Darfur region has enhanced the quality of assessments and the sharing of information between stakeholders; it is furthermore demonstrating a positive impact on food insecure households and elimination of geographical overlapping of response interventions. However, demands on the time of implementing partners are expected to attend meetings has been unreasonable, information has not been communicated in appropriate languages and inter-sectoral coordination remains weak and ineffective. The work is in progress in producing the FSL cluster strategy and contingency plan. Guidance on producing the two in terms of minimum deliverable has not been developed by OCHA yet.

146. Recommendation to FAO: The FSL sector meetings (including working groups) should be better rationalised and focused to ensure convenience and inclusiveness of all stakeholders.

147. All relevant publications (particularly assessment reports, monthly updates, bulletin, assessment questionnaires and training materials) should be translated from English to Arabic to ensure wider benefits and application.

148. Advocate with OCHA and other UN cluster leads for strengthened Inter-sectoral coordination through the designation of full time cluster leads for all sectors and organisation of regular inter-sectoral meetings.

149. FAO Cluster Coordinators (with the support of the Darfur Region Coordinator) should accelerate the work on finalizing the FSL sector strategy and contingency plan (support, if required, should be sought from the national or global sector leads/focal points).

150. FSL Coordination meetings also take place in Khartoum in conjunction with those in the Darfur region, but information, analysis and feedback from Khartoum is insufficient to provide an integrated picture and to effectively support the FSL sector in the region.

151. FAO Khartoum office, in its role in coordinating the nation FSL cluster, must actively disseminate all relevant reports to the offices of all FSL stakeholders at both

national and state level and provide timely feedback on FSL reports submitted from the field.

152. FAO has an established partnership with state governments and civil society organisations in Darfur which has proved very effective in the short-term to deliver interventions across the region including to areas that have been very inaccessible due to the conflict. However, this partnership is short-lived; it is based upon a sub-contractual relationship and focuses on the implementation of specific projects without considering fostering longer term partnerships that are more strategic in the long term.

153. Recommendation to FAO: Foster long term strategic partnerships with relevant institutions and organisations in Darfur with special attention to local NGOs and CBOs. The terms and conditions of this partnership should be reflected in an arrangement other than the existing LoAs (e.g. MOU) which would better facilitate the transfer of technical skills, knowledge and lessons learned. Alternatively the existing LoAs should be reviewed to better accommodate the spirit of a strategic partnership.

154. FAO possesses a capacity building potential that has not been fully utilised by partners and was not reflected in partnership agreements. Furthermore, only limited use was made of FAO technical back-stopping during the projects, and insufficient priority was accorded to conducting important technical studies envisaged under the two projects.

155. Recommendation to FAO: FAO should introduce in Darfur more effective methods of training farmers through the application of demonstration farms and farmer field schools to help upgrade knowledge and attitudes.

156. FAO should continue to support the implementing partners (NNGOs, CBOs) within the FSL cluster in training and technical backstopping to build capacities for effective partnerships.

157. All interventions have been effective in targeting the most vulnerable populations including IDPs and women-headed households as intended. In some areas the resources available meant that not all vulnerable households could be targeted. Nomadic groups in particular were somewhat marginalised by the projects. There were in some cases insufficient evidence to the evaluation of the selection of beneficiaries and beneficiary lists.

158. The vegetable production capacity of target households has been increased and surplus production has already supplemented household income as well as replaced lost assets. This however could have been further optimised amongst beneficiaries if there had been more effective consultation with farmers on the type of seeds required (such as preferred varieties of carrot, beetroot, pepper, radish etc), varietal quality seed had been provided well in advance of the planting season, and if available water harvesting and irrigation systems had been rehabilitated.

159. Recommendation to FAO: Factor in closer consultation with farming communities in the design of future interventions, engaging technical departments of the Ministry of Agriculture more effectively in the implementation of projects, and introducing procurement systems that are efficient and effective in supporting target communities reliant upon agricultural seasonal cycles.

160. The livestock protection intervention has been very effective at containing any further outbreak of animal disease during the course of the projects and contributing to restoring livestock numbers in the region. Collaboration with government veterinary services and the training of CAHWs has been particularly important for the coverage and sustainability of the exercise.

161. Recommendations to FAO and MoAR: CAHWs must be supported to form an Association and become legally registered under the supervision of the State Ministry of Agriculture; CAHWs should be capacitated to buy vaccines and drugs for dispensing through cost-recovery to communities ensuring vital service provision in the remote areas.

162. Technical and financial support should be provided to Nyala Regional Veterinary Laboratory to produce quality vaccines (HS and BQ) for 40 million livestock in the region.