
Mid-term Review

**THE DARFUR EARLY WARNING AND
FOOD INFORMATION SYSTEM**

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**SAVE THE CHILDREN - UK
With project funding from the European Commission**

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1 Executive Summary¹

1. *Background: the evolution of Early Warning and Food Security Information Systems in Darfur*

- SC/UK has been involved in Darfur since the wide scale famine of 1984 and the resultant relief operations. Following the famine the first SC information systems in Darfur focused on food aid monitoring and ad hoc nutrition and health surveys, but by 1993 a more typical food security 'early warning' system was established.
- Phases I and II (1993-2000) of the DFIS saw an evolution from an indicator based approach (crop assessment, nutritional surveys and market monitoring), to one supported by an increasingly sophisticated understanding of local livelihoods and local economies, and thereby an ability to interpret accurately the impact of a shock/s and trend indicator data (whether commodity price trends and/or production failures). The basis for this change, which is still the analytical framework for the DFIS, was the development of the Household Economy Analysis (HEA) approach. This approach, originally developed by SC UK, has been increasingly adopted by other agencies².
- The basic output and process of the system is focused around a seasonal (Sep/Oct) village and household survey, which collects and combines production, price and coping strategy information, and thereby produces a prediction of food needs for the following year. Ongoing market collection and specifically timed nutritional assessments (in most vulnerable areas) are additional components of the system.
- The project now covers IDPs in South Darfur and vulnerable populations in North Darfur and northern West Darfur.
- The current funding period is 3 years from 2002 to 2004. Since early 2003, the DFIS has had to adapt to the changing political-security environment in Darfur, which has affected the ways in which information has been gathered as well as the underlying livelihood base of many populations. At the same time this review was undertaken with an eye towards a potentially greatly changed funding environment, in the event of a peace agreement being signed within the country.

2. *Project Strengths*

- The DFIS has been able to maintain its core outputs and quality, in terms of early warning and food needs assessments, in spite of a significant turnover of staff in the last two years. With limited external support, the project has been able to train and bring on new staff to a good standard through its own planning and resources.
- The DFIS remains very much at the center of information sharing, joint analysis and joint planning in Northern Darfur. The degree of support for the project and its outputs is exceptional in El Fasher. All agencies consulted stress the importance and usefulness of the outputs and most agencies contribute staff to the assessment missions as and when they occur.

¹ The format and content of this report has borrowed heavily from the 2000 Evaluation – the 2000 report provides very useful descriptions of many aspects of the DFIS, which remain unchanged and therefore are relevant here.

² The Food Security Analysis Unit, run by the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation, and funded by the EC, uses HEA as the basis of its early warning and emergency needs analysis; FEWSNET, funded by USAID, uses HEA/food economy as its vulnerability analysis tool; the HEA has been at the heart of the Technical Support Unit of WFP, in southern Sudan, for many years.

- The project has been able to expand its coverage in to (northern) West Darfur, using the North Darfur model. New baseline information has been collected, rainfall and market data has been established, and the annual needs assessment process now includes West Darfur³.
- To date, in the face of a changed operating environment, namely the insecurity and political tensions in Darfur, the DFIS team appear to have adjusted admirably. The basic analytical approach (the HEA) can and is still being applied and combined with the team's local knowledge, to assess ongoing developments in the State.
- The ability of the team to express the situation and needs of the State, on behalf of the local communities, in the face of a much more tense relationship with the authorities, is still strong. This is demonstrated by SC's continued role in representation of the food security and emergency conditions in the State. SC is often asked by the Food and Water Emergency Committee (FWEC) to present situation updates to visiting high level delegations (at least 20 in 2002 & 2003). Although this role does give SC an overly strong role, it does guarantee some independence of expression, allowing for controversial messages to be expressed where local government staff may be reluctant to speak out.

3. Project Weaknesses

- Although all the evidence suggests that the quality of the analysis, in terms of early warning and food needs assessments, is good, the project has been weak at assessing the impact and accuracy of its own work. For example, the team have not conducted another food aid impact assessment study since one was carried out in 1999. Addressing this area would carry a great deal of weight with donors, who, to this mission, expressed their uncertainty or lack of understanding about HEA analysis and the predictive accuracy of the DFIS. Similarly, while the targeting workshops appear to have been well designed and implemented a thorough assessment of the lessons learned has not been conducted.
- The organisation and documentation of data and information could be much improved. Data and information, particularly HEA baseline information, is held on too many different computers and software packages. There is an urgent need to consolidate and organize the many years of knowledge built up by the project.
- HEA baseline information needs to be updated. Many existing HEA baselines are several years old and in some cases significant changes will have taken place to the underlying livelihood base of populations of concern.
- There is also much room for improving the integration of cross-sectoral analysis. The DFIS project itself contains a strong nutrition element, and the Darfur programme has capacity and activities in education, health and water. Although efforts have been made to stimulate a deeper analysis of, for example, the underlying causes of malnutrition, through short technical visits, this has proven insufficient for the project.
- Limited success has been achieved in improving national level co-ordination. This is partly the result of the particular circumstances of other organisations and partly SC's own capacity constraints at national level. For example, although a training exercise was undertaken with Oxfam in the Red Sea Hills in early 2003, their CSI project ran out of funding shortly afterwards. In addition, while relations and prospects for collaborative work with WFP were looking promising around 2001/2002, some changes in staff and strategy have made collaborations difficult in practice since. More success has taken place with the expanding Food Security Department of the MoANR, where technical engagement has been developing.

³ Due to security constraints, it was not possible to visit West Darfur but telephone interviews were conducted with the HAC representative and the Minister of Agriculture there. The DFIS project staff from that area were consulted in El Fasher.

4. Sustainability

- Given the potentially huge change in the funding and operating environment apparently imminent in Sudan, this review was conducted with an eye towards how the DFIS may become more sustainably run within government. In reality, while the principle of a 'handover' to government at some stage is recognized by SC and its staff, the uncertainties at the Darfur level (conflict, political tension, displacement etc) as well as at the national level (fact and nature of peace agreement), limit the ability to envisage, let alone plan for such a handing over.
- However, in this regard the DFIS is considered by many, from within and outside of Government, to be an excellent model of State level collaboration and planning around a sound information base. The FAO, who are conducting a review and planning exercise on behalf of the EC, for future information system/s in Sudan, see the DFIS as one of the most positive and impressive examples to draw upon. During the period of this review, a small presentation and seminar was conducted in Khartoum of the DFIS, on request of the Food Security Director within the MoANR. A representative from the EC also attended this seminar.
- In reality, the DFIS has played a major and long-term role in the transfer of skills to the government, through the regular activities of the project. However, it must also be mentioned that many of the staff that have joined the project (and many other UN and INGO projects) moved over from government positions, particularly from the APU of the MoAg.

5. Value of DFIS in North and West Darfur

- The project gives an early warning of approaching food crises, thereby providing the opportunity for timely intervention.
- The project provides a reliable estimate of food needs in North and West Darfur, and for IDPs in South Darfur. While the GoS/WFP Annual Needs Assessment was conducted separately to the Village and Household Survey in 2003, the results of the survey were influential in the final figures developed by WFP.
- The estimate takes into account the degree to which households themselves can make up the food deficit.
- The project ensures a degree of disaster preparedness by having information at hand for targeting, survey teams ready for rapid appraisal, and institutional systems established for coordinating a response.
- The project has developed an important information and experience base on Darfur, although as mentioned this still needs to be fully documented and organised.
- The project has built up a cadre of Sudanese SC/UK staff, as well as staff in partner agencies, who are trained in all aspects of survey work. These skills can be applied not just in relief planning but also planning other food security interventions.

2 Overview of the Recommendations

This mid-term review was carried out in the expectation that a consultant would be hired for an extended period of time to follow-up on the following recommendations – ToR in Annex II

1. Impact Monitoring and Evaluation

- The DFIS must incorporate in to its regular activities an assessment of its food needs predictions and any resultant food aid deliveries that took place. The 1999 food aid impact assessment exercise provides an existing and familiar model that could be replicated. This need only be done in one or two food economy zones per year.

- The DFIS needs to conduct a proper review of its targeting activities. Project documents suggest there are positive **and negative** implications of the efforts to raise awareness amongst communities of its methodology and criteria for calculating food needs and targeting food aid.

2. Database and Documentation Consolidation

- Database consolidation is urgently required. All data should be consolidated in to excel and word documents and Epiinfo where possible, and backed up in El Fasher and Khartoum . Hard copies of key trend data and reports should also be filed in El Fasher and Khartoum. Once completed basic training in excel and word and data management should be conducted, so all project staff are clear on how it is organized and accessed.
- All food economy baselines should be developed in a standard format – including narrative and quantitative aspects. The food economy profiles, of which one has already been drafted, provide such a format. This will involve extracting information from computers and reports as well as from the local knowledge of staff members. This could also be developed in to a food economies of Darfur booklet, as recommended in the 2000 evaluation.
 - Even where local livelihoods have been seriously disrupted due to the recent conflict, a record of the old food economy description is still important to document, as a reference and potential project planning tool.
- A briefing note highlighting and clarifying many of the common issues, (mis)perceptions and misunderstanding, around early warning and food needs identification, would be very useful for internal and external managers and donors. Most of the relevant material is available in existing project documentation⁴.
- Sites must be identified and prioritized for the updating of existing baselines and conducting impact assessments. Some areas have been relatively little affected by the recent conflict and may be suitable for conducting impact assessment studies, whether of food needs and food aid, or of project interventions. Sites for baseline updating should be prioritized according to the magnitude of livelihood change over recent years i.e. the greater the change expected due, for example, to continuous bad years, the greater the urgency for updating.
- Some nutrition baselines need re-doing where they were conducted using small samples. Nutrition baselines are also needed for some FEZs that do not have them. Clarification of when nutrition baselines are conducted by RC or by FEZ is required.

3. Integration of Analysis

- The DFIS project must establish a systematic process for improving the integration of analysis, linking food security, health and nutrition. This will provide the basis for the team developing a broader 'livelihoods based' analysis of communities in the State/s. All staff would benefit from such analysis, learning about each other's sectors and ultimately moving towards a deeper causal analysis of malnutrition, as well an improved understanding around access to health and education, and infringements of child rights.
- Two simple suggestions include:
 - Joint analysis of every nutrition survey (food security and nutrition staff) - this can be done using the forthcoming emergency nutrition assessment manual (to be published July 2004)
 - Use of the Livelihoods matrix⁵ for developing a broader understanding of the livelihood context for the State.

⁴ *Ships Passing in the Night*, Seaman, 1999; *DFIS Evaluation*, 2000; *Evaluation of SC's Response to the Drought in North Darfur*, Tanner, 2001; *How bad does it have to get*, Collins, 2001.

⁵ A simple format for looking at different sectoral and thematic characteristics by food economy/livelihood group

- i. Presentation and discussion of the food economy baselines and livelihoods matrix, once initially drafted should be undertaken with other partner agencies in the State

Exposure to wider analysis ...

- As part of learning from others, efforts are being made to explore possible exchanges or joint technical workshops with the Ethiopia programme (where SC operates a similar system to the DFIS, in the Somali region). This will also be looked in to regarding nutrition exchanges.

4. Flexibility in Data Collection and Assessment

- The changed operating environment in Darfur means the team must explore all possible sources of information, where and when access to the field is limited. For example, private traders and other people coming in or passing through El Fasher must be tapped for information and reliable networks established and maintained.
- The team must have the capacity for conducting several simultaneous assessments when and where access becomes possible. Mobilising Khartoum based staff with HEA skills must be part of that strategy.

5. National Level co-ordination and Linkage

- As described above the DFIS has had limited success in improving national level co-ordination. In the event of a peace agreement being signed (and in anticipation of it) the activities around food security information systems and interventions are likely to increase. Already the GoS Food Security Department and the FAO have shown great interest in SC's experience of community grain banks and information systems. SC is certainly well placed to influence the thinking and design of future such projects. However, to do this articulately and effectively, within a more 'competitive' environment, the food security capacity at Khartoum level will need to be strengthened and different options considered:
 - The recruitment of an international level food security adviser
 - Secondment or placement of an SC adviser within government or the UN (FAO or WFP)
- In addition to the above, liaison and co-ordination with SC southern Sudan, the Food Security Adviser (to be appointed) there, and the FSAG (Food Security Analysis Group) for the south will become increasingly necessary. SC Sudan (north and south) could usefully explore links in this respect.

6. Management – Technical links

- There is the suggestion from different quarters that management – technical links do not always work as clearly and efficiently as they could. To a large extent the success of the technical advisers depends on their own proactiveness, the quality of their advice and the relations they have established with the programme and project staff and managers they work with. Difficulties can develop where:
 - The advice and guidance of the adviser is not clear
 - The advice and guidance of the adviser is not agreed with by management
 - Management itself is not clear on what strategy or next steps need to be followed

If any of the above occur and they are not openly and quickly addressed and explained, decision-making can become delayed (or appear to be delayed) and plans not developed and put in to action.

It is important therefore that management is open and clear about the decision-making process, in order that feedback and discussion takes place and delays in implementing and following up on decisions do not take place.

7. Future funding options for the DFIS

Discussions took place with the EC and USAID about funding options, given that funding finishes at the end of 2004:

- USAID would be interested to look at a concept note for the DFIS, if it was based around meeting the information needs of the current emergency in Darfur.
- The DFIS is currently funded from the B7 2010 budget line, based on the EC Country Technical Paper.
- After 2004, a maximum of 2.5m Euros is available, in tranches of 400,000, under the call-for-proposals. 1m euro is allocated for Darfur.
- There will be 20m euro under the EC food security information systems budget line, for which FAO has been contracted to design the proposal. This money will not be available until at least well in to 2005.

One of the underlying themes of the EU's strategy for a post-peace Sudan is 'relief to development'. In this respect a new proposal for the DFIS could be developed where it met the information needs of all actors, from the relief to the development spectrums, based on a livelihoods analysis. This would fit naturally in to a further evolution of the DFIS, and has been suggested in past evaluations. Preliminary discussions were undertaken, particularly with Oxfam, in El Fasher, Khartoum and London, about if and how the DFIS could play such a role. As a joint or consortium based proposal this would be worth exploring.

3 Abbreviations

APU	Agricultural Planning Unit
CSI	Community Situation Indicators (Oxfam project)
DFIS	Darfur Early Warning and Food Information System
EW	Early Warning
HAC	Humanitarian Aid Commission
HEA	Household Economy Analysis
FSLU	Food Security and Livelihood Unit, SC/UK London
FWEC	Food and Water Emergency Committee
FSO	Food Security Officer
GoS	Government of Sudan
MoANR	Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
WFP	World Food Programme
ITDG	Intermediate Technology Development Group
SRC	Sudanese Red Crescent
SFC/TFC	Supplementary/Therapeutic Feed Centre

4 Background

4.1 Phase I and Phase II

SC UK has been involved in information collection since it became involved in Darfur during the 1984 famine. Until 1993 regular information collection concentrated on health and nutrition only. In 1993 the Darfur Early Warning and Food Information System (DFIS) was started to make SC's information work in Darfur more systematic and relevant to the needs of the State. Phase I of the DFIS ran from 1993 until 1996. Phase II from 1996 until 2001/2002. Phase III began as part of this funding cycle, in 2002.

During Phase I the EW system used an indicator (crop production, nutritional status and market monitoring) approach. At that time SC was developing a new approach to EW, based on models of rural economy, subsequently called the Household Economy Approach (HEA). The aim of this development was to move away from indicator methods towards an approach which could directly estimate the extent to which drought or other adverse events would affect a household's ability to access food and non-food goods. In 1996 the Phase I evaluation recommended the adoption of the HEA model. This was gradually incorporated by the DFIS.

In 1999 at the time of the Phase II mid-term review the new system was fully underway. The review commended the energy and competence of the team and suggested improvements on reporting. It was also pointed out that more work was needed to strengthen vertical links between El Fasher and Khartoum, and to promote national EW coordination. In addition, the Review recommended that SC institute regular monitoring of the displaced Dinka in the camps around Ed Daien, South Darfur. Finally the review recommended the use of the project's food security information for general programming.

A year later, the 2000 Evaluation Mission found that the DFIS Team had implemented most of the recommendations. A system for regular surveillance of the "Ed Daien displaced" was instituted at the end of 1999.

4.2 Current phase Phase III: 2002 – 2004

Following an external funding break covering most of 2001 and 2002, the current phase of the project started in early 2002. Significant disruptions have taken place over this period, with several senior staff changes⁶ as well as the serious insecurity that began in early 2003.

Technically and institutionally, the DFIS project has largely continued running in this phase as it had in phase II, and as described in the following pages. The most notable elements of the current proposal, beyond the basic EW and food needs identification, and those discussed as part of this review include:

- The expansion of the DFIS in to West Darfur;
- The training of Oxfam GB in the Red Sea Hills and, in relation, efforts to improve national level co-ordination with key partners;
- An intensification of food aid targeting activities;
- Further technical inputs to develop a causal analysis of malnutrition and to develop a broader livelihoods based understanding of Darfur

⁶ In 2001, the DFIS manager moved to the Khartoum office; in 2002, one of the Information and Research Officers resigned; for one year during 2002/2003, the new DFIS manager was absent, studying in the UK.

4.3 Terms of Reference

DFIS Phase II is a three year project scheduled to end in December 2004. This mid-term review was arranged from 17th – 30th January 2004, during which time 4/5 days were spent in El Fasher. (See Annex 4 and 5 for the timetable.) The review considered whether and how efficiently the planned activities are being implemented and whether the objectives of the project are being met. Other areas of focus included: the impact on State and Federal decision-making; community awareness of targeting and food security issues; capacity development of partners; improvement of national level co-ordination; future guidance in light of national (peace-agreement) and local level (conflict environment) developments.

The full Terms of Reference are given in Annex I.

5 Main Activities and Progress

This section briefly reviews the implementation of activities and verifies whether targets are being met.

5.1 Survey Work

The DFIS is primarily about survey work. The table below summarizes the various surveys and notes the different operating contexts in 2002 and 2003.

Survey Type	Purpose	2002 (stable)	2003 (conflict affected)
September Village and Household Survey = The Harvest Assessment	1. Assess food needs 2. Prepare predictions for forthcoming year 3. Prepare intervention plan to be used for advocacy	The September survey covered 73 villages. IDPs in Nyala Province (South Darfur)	The September survey covered 61 villages. IDPs in Nyala Province (South Darfur).
March-May Village and Household Survey = The Dry Season (follow-up) Assessment	1. Confirm and/or revise predictions 2. Detect early signs of stress	This survey was carried out in areas identified as high risk by the September survey.	This follow-up survey, in 2004, will depend on access as well as the latest situation updates and therefore prioritisation of sites to assess.
Nutritional Assessment (Nutritional surveys carried out by food economy/livelihood zone)	Measure the nutritional status of under-5 children to: - Provide normative, baseline picture. - Confirm severe food stress - Monitor impact of response	Surveys in 64 villages were done every six months to monitor changes in children's nutritional status in order to detect signs of food crisis. (HEA baseline profiles are used for predicting likely nutritional trends and interpreting nutrition results.)	As part of follow-up to Sept 2002 predictions, and following increased insecurity and related disruptions. April 2003 – 7 nutrition surveys undertaken (SFC/TFC centers established) October 2003 – 2 surveys November 2003 – 3 surveys (serious increases/high figures) Sept/Oct03 rapid MUAC assessment in war displaced areas
Market Monitoring (Market site selection based on food economy/livelihood zones)	1. Monitor supply and prices of major commodities 2. Determine terms of trade as an indicator of the purchasing power of the poor	9 sites in N Darfur covered; 1 site in S Darfur (Nyala town); 3 sites in W Darfur - 2 new market sites established in this period.	Same markets as 2003 Some disruption of data due to insecurity and some enumerators evacuated
Rainfall Monitoring	1. Complementary background information	6 rainfall gauges in N and W Darfur	6 rainfall gauges in N and W Darfur
Baseline Food Economy Profile	1. Provide the context by which to interpret indicator data	11 Existing baseline profiles. Geneia baseline conducted in Apr/May 02	No baseline work. Updating of baselines planned for 2004.

5.1.1 The Harvest Assessment and Dry Season Monitoring

Village and Household Surveys

Each September, over a three-week period, DFIS and its partners conduct a harvest assessment⁷. The survey sample usually covers about 70 villages in North and West Darfur State, selected randomly. The aim of the survey is: (i) to assess the type and scale of problems in a given year (i.e. "the problem specification"); (ii) to estimate harvest outcomes (or livestock production); and (iii) to assess the food/income gap which results after allowing for the ways that farmers themselves try to make up the deficit. DFIS surveys now use the HEA methodology. HEA has the advantage of linking harvest, market data and other relevant activities or coping strategies (including relevant income generating activities and social redistributive processes) together into a single economic model. Moreover, the analysis delivers an (metric tonnage) assessment of food needs.

The annual assessment requires **logistical efficiency** and **careful planning**.⁸ After fieldwork, data is collated, and analysed. Draft results are then discussed by DFIS and the APU (the two technical agencies), and are verified by the State **Food and Emergency Water Committee**. The final report is widely distributed in the State and in Khartoum. The harvest assessment also requires a **major commitment in time energy and resources**. For three months, from September to November, the DFIS Team is primarily occupied in the survey. Moreover, SC provides approximately 80% of the resources required. However, this major commitment in time and resources is justified as the September survey feeds directly into the process of national EW and response.

Other Surveys in Darfur

In the past this survey fed directly in to the November/December HAC/WFP Annual Needs Assessment. However, in the last couple of years the WFP have been developing their own survey method. In practice the findings of the village and household survey still feed in to the WFP/ANA, as members of each survey include some of the same people and the results have to be compatible.

The APU still conducts its pre-harvest assessment as part of the village and household survey, and generates a food balance sheet (deficit) calculation as a result. Ongoing support is provided to the APU in terms of questionnaire design, data collection techniques, sampling techniques, data analysis techniques and report writing.

The FAO/GoS Food and Crop Supply mission is also conducted every year in Sudan, and incorporates the results of the village and household survey in to its final report.

Finding: The harvest assessment surveys continue to be professionally carried out, as a collaborative exercise. In spite of several DFIS staff changes over the last 2 years, continuity has been maintained, new staff have been trained, and interviews with all partners suggests that the surveys continue to be well prepared, organized and carried out. This is the major activity area for the project and has become routine.

The expansion of the DFIS to West Darfur (northern areas only) has meant that this area has now been incorporated in to the same planning and assessment exercise as North Darfur. Although the current insecurity did not allow a visit to West Darfur as part of this review, telephone interviews to Geneina as well as discussions with EI Fasher based staff and other organizations all suggest that the DFIS model has been successfully extended.

⁷ DFIS partners include HAC, MoANR, APU, Oxfam, and WFP.

⁸ Partners must be notified and their resources committed. Draft questionnaires are prepared and circulated. The sampling framework is worked out. The State Food and Water Committee is briefed. Survey teams are chosen. A week long training is carried out for survey participants. Vehicles are serviced. Food and fuel is arranged. Provincial and rural council authorities are briefed.

This duplication in surveying was raised in Khartoum and efforts need to be made to harmonise methods and consider running one survey.

Note on Changed Operating Environment ... the need for rapid emergency assessments:

The DFIS assessment timetable had become a routine operation, based around the timing of seasonal events and activities within the States. Given the changed operating environment, as a result of the insecurity and inaccessibility, information needs may now be determined by access and (anticipated) prioritization of affected populations, rather than purely by seasonal relevance. The 2003/4 annual needs assessment (Food Needs for War Affected Population) suggests that the team are able to apply their organisational and analytical skills according to this new scenario, where conflict rather than (or in addition to) drought is the main cause of food/livelihood insecurity.

Approximately 8 conflict related emergency assessments were carried out during 2003, for which the DFIS acted as focal point.

Currently, the DFIS is short of one Information and Research officer, due to an internal transfer to the Emergency Response Co-ordinator position. Additional HEA skills and local knowledge also exist in the Khartoum office, which may be useful in Darfur.

It is recommended that in principle this same system be maintained as it is. However, in recognition of the conflict-emergency conditions, and the consequent expected demands for urgent and rapid assessments (access permitting), the project must assess its capacity to respond quickly, and with sufficient skills and numbers should, for example, widespread access suddenly become available. The project must also make sure that expertise exists, within or amongst partners, to assess the different needs of vulnerable populations.

A comparison of the DFIS generated methodology and results with the WFP/ANA would be a useful exercise, and possibly an entry point to greater technical engagement between SC and WFP.

5.1.2 Baseline Household Food Economy Profiles

Since 1997, the team has completed 11 House Economy baseline profiles, covering different local livelihood groups from pastoralists to agro-pastoralists to farmers. The profiles give a picture of how households obtain food in a "normal" year, and how their food and income sources change in a bad year. In bad years, some sources contract and others expand. Those that can be expanded are often referred to as *coping strategies*. They reveal the extent to which households can make up food deficits using their own resources. Other information collected during baseline surveys includes household expenditure, labour flows and market dynamics. All information is organised by wealth rank (poor, medium, rich household), and a basic asset profile is recorded for each wealth group. Although not explicitly stated as such, HEA baselines contain a *livelihood analysis*, especially as it relates to food.

Once collected, baseline profiles provide a yardstick by which to measure the impact of any current year. Thus, **baselines are an essential precondition for reliable EW** because in EW all detected trends must be compared to some standard, i.e., the "norm". Otherwise, trend data is meaningless.

Finding: In the last 2 years, a further baseline has been conducted in West Darfur, with the support of the SC regional food security adviser, and involving training of all local partners. However, baselines in some areas are now becoming old and need updating. With the current conflict some baselines will need complete revision. Even in areas where livelihoods may have been massively undermined by the current conflict an old baseline report will remain an important reference of local communities and guide on how to get communities back on their feet. Many baseline profiles have still not been fully written up. It is urgent that this is addressed.

It is worth stressing that, over the years, practical field-based development of HEA baselines has allowed DFIS to popularise what might have remained a theoretical concept. Survey participants use it, hence it is meaningful: they understand it not as theory but as a practical approach to village survey work.

It is recommended that the baselines are properly documented, using formats suggested, prior to the end of this phase of project funding. In addition, baselines for updating must be prioritised according to the level of change anticipated since the original baseline, access to the field sites, and the need for current emergency assessments.

5.1.3 Market Monitoring

Market monitoring is carried out in 13 different sites across Greater Darfur (including Geneina and Nyala markets of West and South Darfur respectively). Market enumerators are drawn from various sources: SC UK, HAC and MoANR, amongst others.⁹ Since 1993, market monitoring has been the core of regular, routine survey work. Its prominence derives from the central importance of trade in rural livelihoods (whether grain, cash crops, livestock or labour). For instance, in North Darfur, a poor household in the millet farming *goz* areas gets roughly 35-45% of their annual food needs from the market **in a normal year**. This proportion rises in bad years. The proportion is also higher in wadi cash crop, mixed economy and pastoralist areas. Given rural people's high reliance on markets as a source of food, their economic resilience during periods of stress will be greatly determined by market conditions.

Finding: The market price monitoring system in general is well organised and run. Market forms and graphs are supplied to monitors in a timely way. Price trend data are collected and analysed on schedule. The two market enumerators interviewed were able to explain how the market data fitted in to the whole process of food security analysis and claimed the price data was also used by government to cross-check prices and estimate tax-able revenue!

A major current issue is the disruption to the market data collection system due to insecurity and the resultant evacuation of government staff (as market enumerators) to El Fasher. The factors influencing market prices and dynamics may also be different in some locations due to new/disrupted trade patterns, population movements etc as a result of the conflict.

It is recommended that the team ensure they extend their information network to capture from traders and returnees (to El Fasher) market, trade, and other related information, where the existing system has been disrupted.

5.1.4 Nutrition Surveys

The preferred use of nutritional monitoring is as a tool to confirm that a crisis is developing, and to quantify and monitor the effect of food aid or other intervention. The interpretation of small changes in nutritional survey data and the use of trends in nutritional data for predictive purposes are difficult. Some fluctuation in nutritional status occurs in all populations between years. It is important to collect seasonally specific data in order to be able to compare from year to year.

Until 1997, DFIS conducted anthropometric surveys of children (aged 6 months to 5 years) by two-stage cluster survey¹⁰. If the results indicated a fall in nutritional status in any local

⁹ On a weekly basis, enumerators monitor the supply and price of all major commodities. Findings are graphed on site, manually, using graph forms supplied by the Fasher office (monitors are later sent a computerised version). Data are then sent to the El Fasher office where it is compiled on computer, and an analysis run on monthly trends. Reporting is done quarterly although the frequency is increased during periods of food stress.

¹⁰ 4-5 clusters from each local council, 12 clusters for each Province.

council, a further survey was done and the sample size calculated according to population figures. These surveys were conducted in April and September each year.¹¹

This sample gave results only at provincial level and was therefore: (i) relatively insensitive to more local changes in nutritional status; (ii) difficult to interpret where small changes were observed; and (iii) not clearly related to the HEA findings.

In 1998 the sample frame was changed in order to improve the sensitivity of the surveys and to allow these to be more closely related to the HEA work. In March-May each year, a cluster sampling survey (30 clusters) is conducted of children in the more vulnerable food economy areas (Jebel Si, Goz, *Non-wadi*, Pastoral).¹² The number of children selected per cluster ranges from 20-30 depending on population and previous nutritional status.

If a fall in nutritional status is detected, the survey is repeated usually in April or September, and sometimes post-harvest, with some changes in sample size.¹³ The results of nutritional surveys can now be used to monitor expected changes in household food access, determined using the HEA.

Over the years efforts have been made to improve the understanding of the relationship between nutritional status and other factors. A 2002 evaluation of SC feeding programmes in Darfur made recommendations for the appropriate timing of food aid and supplementary feeding responses for the Goz, Pastoral and Tombac food economy groups, based on their (different) livelihood patterns, and therefore different factors affecting malnutrition. Concern has also been raised about the consistently high rates of acute malnutrition, even where SC is running a number of different interventions. As a result the programme has initiated research work to link the measuring of the impact of SC programmes on children's nutrition status, in Goz areas. *See following section for further details.*

DFIS also collects information, by recall, on disease prevalence. The current system combines information collection on diseases with the anthropometric surveys and involves little additional cost.

Similar to the food security assessment process the nutrition surveying had become routine, based on seasonality. In view of the conflict related disruptions to local livelihoods, nutrition surveys will also need to be flexible, and responsive to access and vulnerable populations. 4 surveys conducted in October and November 2003 were carried out on this basis.

Finding: The findings from the nutritional surveys have been regularly used to confirm the economic view obtained from the HEA analysis and for monitoring the development of the situation in different locations. The nutritional section uses standard techniques to a high technical standard and has been and continues to refine these techniques to make the output more useful to the EW component of the system.

There is however not enough joint analysis of the nutrition surveys within the DFIS, whereby nutrition and HEA officers are combining their sectoral and local knowledge to better interpret the nutrition data.

In order to improve the interpretation of nutritional data, as indicated above, a plan to evaluate the impact of the EC Humanitarian Plus programme has been designed. The conceptual aspects of this work have been raised and demonstrated to the team. The practical field work, initially the gathering of complementary nutrition and HEA baseline data, is being hampered by the current security situation.

¹¹ Nutrition results are expressed in terms of the percentage of NCHS reference weight for height. Analysis is done using EPI Info, a standard software package, and are expressed in a standard format as mean population values and malnutrition prevalence defined in the usual way.

¹² Children surveyed are between 60cm –110 cm. Length.

¹³ The random sample size is calculated on the basis of previously estimates of malnutrition prevalence. This would give a sample size between (approximately) 500 and 1500 in different areas.

The following section describes relevant recommendations.

5.2 Special Studies and Integrating Analysis

Two special studies have been initiated/carried out during the two years under review. In South Darfur, a study of the IDP population was carried out, in order to look at the affordability of health care; for North Darfur, an evaluation of the EC funded Humanitarian Plus projects has been designed, based on measuring the impact on children's nutritional status.

Changing the IDPs Livelihoods – Sanam El Naga settlement, South Darfur

This study was to combine an HEA analysis with a health based survey, to investigate the ability of IDP households to pay for health care.

The HEA component had two stand alone objectives:

- To review the adequacy of assistance provided and needs of settlers and use the findings for planning interventions to improve the livelihood of the settlers.
- To assess the interest of the settlers in returning to the south – their number, the support required for their return and the needs in the home area.

The HEA research and report are available from SC in Khartoum. Internal constraints have not led to the completion of the health survey.

Measuring the Impact of SC UK's Programmes in North Darfur on Nutritional Status of Children in Goz areas

Background

- According to our nutrition surveys, there have been very high rates of acute malnutrition (low weight for height) in children under 5 in the Goz areas of North Darfur over the past several years.
- SC UK has programmes which should impact on malnutrition e.g.: goat loans, village grain banks, food aid, health and water.
- Why do the high rates of malnutrition remain? What should SC UK be doing to improve the situation?
- The nutrition team has suggested that the problem may be that communities do not recognise malnutrition as a problem until the child is sick and that they may only treat malnutrition through traditional remedies. The team therefore suggests that we need a community nutrition programme to help educate communities about malnutrition.

Tasks

1. Describe the causes of malnutrition in a Goz area of N. Darfur (Sayeh)
2. Describe the theoretical impact of water, health and food security programmes on malnutrition
3. Identify indicators to measure the impact of these programmes on malnutrition
4. Develop a framework to analyse the impacts of these programmes/projects on malnutrition.
5. Identify potential gaps in the programme with respect to malnutrition

Learning objectives for SC staff

- Become (more) familiar with the causes of malnutrition in N. Darfur
- Learn about how your programme affects malnutrition
- Think more deeply about the links between the different sectors
- Consider the use of monitoring impact
- Start to consider gaps in the programme with respect to malnutrition

All the materials developed as part of this exercise are available from the SC office in Khartoum. The above activities served as a training and awareness raising exercise, especially in the conceptual issues. The fieldwork awaits access clearance, and may have to be reconsidered in light of the conflict influenced situation on the ground.

Integrating Analysis

In relation to the above studies, and in light of the Programme's efforts to develop a livelihoods framework, efforts have been made to further encourage links between the HEA baseline information and other sectors (access to health, water, education; issues around child protection), based in part on the DfID Sustainable Livelihoods Conceptual Framework.

It is recommended that given the remaining time period of the project, the need for consolidating and updating the existing information base, and the current conflict emergency conditions, the priority for further special studies is limited.

However, two simple suggestions to develop a cross-sectoral analysis include (the conceptual frameworks developed for the Humanitarian Plus evaluation are useful reference tools):

- Joint analysis of every nutrition survey (food security and nutrition staff)
- Use of the (provided) Livelihoods matrix for developing a broader understanding of the livelihood context for the State.
 - i. Presentation and discussion of the food economy baselines and livelihoods matrix, once initially drafted, should be undertaken with other partner agencies in the State

Possible future studies:

- A retrospective of DFIS market data (namely, the relationship between price, supply, demand and production trends) to confirm or refine current assumed market principles.
- If needed, a detailed analysis of pastoralist societies, looking at local variation in determinants of vulnerability and resilience.

5.3 Targeting workshops

The utilization of the HEA approach means that the final major output of the DFIS, the estimation of food needs, is disaggregated by livelihood groups and wealth groups. In order that there is a strong and transparent link between the analysis of needs and the delivery of assistance, communities are involved in targeting workshops. These workshops are designed to make transparent the needs methodology and results, allow feedback and discussion and attempt to justify and gain support for (from the community leaders) the targeting methodology that will follow.

Finding: The content and reporting of the workshops is of a high quality and they are carried out on a regular basis at different administrative levels. These workshops provide another forum for refreshing (for some government and agency staff) and making relevant the concepts of early warning, food security analysis and response, as well as specific targeting issues (for community representatives). However, the process for recording and learning from the experience of this targeting exercise is weak. Targeting is a complicated issue and, from the reports that exist, show both positive and negative implications and results of the workshops. Insensitive targeting may put additional strains on community coherency and support mechanisms, and these may arise out of inevitable inaccuracies, such as population estimates, used by SC – i.e. are legitimate claims by the community that the targeting methodology is not appropriate.

It is recommended that a review of the targeting process is carried out, in order to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the system, and make any necessary modifications.

5.4 Reports: Are they timely? Are they read?

DFIS produces a wide assortment of documents. The range of reports includes: (i) periodic Bulletins; (ii) the Annual Harvest Assessment (November/December); (iii) baseline food economy summaries; (iv) periodic nutrition survey results; (v) miscellaneous reports, e.g., workshop reports.

The DFIS Team work to a tight schedule imposed by regular deadlines. A source of delay in producing reports is in editing as these are written in English. However, the quality of reporting is good with regular use of maps, graphs and tables.

Reports have their place in documenting events. However, the real work lies in making sure that reports **get read**, if not in the entirety at least the salient points. In practice this calls for a commitment in time to follow-up reports with donors. Response to EW is rarely secured through reading a report. What secures a response is discussion, and personal contact. **Report follow-up is the critical link between EW and response.** Indeed, a common goal of EW is to use the information as a lobbying tool to mobilise action to food crises. A communication strategy for lobbying will focus on presenting briefs to donors which lay out in blunt terms scenarios of various levels of intervention. Ultimately, it is this direct communication between SC/UK and its donors that provides the trigger for decision-making.

***Finding:** Where the reports have been read, the quality is praised, and compares favourably with equivalent reports in and outside of Sudan. However, reports are not reaching everyone they could do, often, but not only, due to the inefficiency of internal agency circulation. In light of this as well as the inevitable turnover of staff, regular updating of the distribution list should be undertaken, as well as follow-up telephone calls to key recipients, to assure receipt, encourage reading and feedback as well as arranging any required follow-up.*

The personal network and contact at the Head of Agency level is strong, putting SC in a good position to advocate on the basis of recommendations made by the DFIS.

5.5 Staff Training

There have been several training exercises in the course of this project period, and other related capacity building exercises, a summary of which includes:

There have been two large HEA trainings (3-4 weeks; 10-15 trainees) that have involved SC and partners:

- the expansion of the DFIS in to West Darfur involved training, fieldwork and analysis of the new baseline (May 2002)
- training for the Oxfam CSI project in the Red Sea Hills (Jan/Feb 2003)

- The Khartoum food security adviser attended several global internal food security related workshops:
 - The annual HEA practitioners meetings;
 - The food aid – food security working group meetings
 - A food security, health and nutrition workshop

- The Food Security officer from South Darfur was seconded to the SC Tanzania programme for 5 weeks, to participate in developing HEA profiles for an Access to Health study.

- The Nutrition Officer from S Darfur was seconded to the Ethiopia programme for 3 months (between July and October 2003), to support the implementation of an OTP nutrition programme.

- 2 nutrition officers attended an intensive epidemiology and medical training course at London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine

- A mapping and graphic design workshop was held for 7 staff from the North and South Darfur sites and Khartoum (Feb/Mar 03)

- Over the course of the review period several technical support visits have been undertaken by SC regional and global advisers in food security and nutrition.

- The head of the DFIS project was supported (by the British Council) to undertake a Masters in Development Studies, at UEA, from Sept 2002 to Sept 2003, upon which he returned to his post in EI Fasher

Finding: one of the strengths of the DFIS and the SC Sudan programme is its emphasis on internal capacity building. This is admirably achieved through both incoming support visits and secondments and visits of staff to other SC country programmes and activities. However, time and resource constraints mean this is rarely sufficient to meet the demands and needs of a large team.

There is also a concern within the team that resources and decisions in relation to training and support, are being centralised at Khartoum level.

It is also recognised within the field and Khartoum offices that a reasonable continuity of support is required – short consultancy type visits are not always enough.

It is recommended that the food security consultant (retained over several months) assesses that systems are in place that identify and support field based training needs.

5.6 Capacity Building and Coordination at State and National Level

DFIS has a long history of forging local partnerships, and this is to their credit. For instance:

- The annual harvest survey is a joint survey conducted with the MoANR and the APU, and with assistance from members of the Food and Emergency Water Committee, in Darfur, including international and local NGOs and the UN.
- DFIS and the APU analyse their data separately. Afterwards, they meet to discuss their findings.
- The market monitors collect information for the DfIS but are the employed staff of different government ministries
- The targeting workshops include participation from all DFIS's local partners.
- Presentations and briefings to visiting delegations are conducted through the FS and W Cttee and the DFIS
- Nutrition surveys use staff from partner agencies

SC UK has worked with technical line ministries and other partners for about 10 years. A very large number of government and non-government staff have worked with this (evolving) DFIS system over the years. Those involved have clearly benefited from the demonstration of good practice in both the technical and co-ordination spheres. This model of good practice is widely recognised (see following section).

Capacity building at State level clearly suffers from the usual problem of high staff turnover in government departments. While many of the Sudanese staff who do leave government, join NGOs or UN agencies in the State, their skills are often still available through their resultant posts.

The success of the DFIS at the State level has, in part, led to various initiatives to support other regional information systems as well as equivalent efforts at the national level. The most notable example to date at the regional level, was a 4-week training and collaboration with the Oxfam CSI project in the Red Sea Hills, in early 2003. This was an excellent collaboration, and may have had significant knock on effects at the national level, if it had not lost its funding a few months later. As a result, Oxfam have had limited capacity in food security in Sudan.

SC UK has a good history of working with WFP, in many different countries, particularly in methodological developments¹⁴. At the beginning of this DFIS funding period, links with WFP

¹⁴ SC UK technical secondments and joint work in the field of food security analysis has taken place over the years in southern Sudan, Somalia, Burundi, Rwanda, Afghanistan, Tanzania and southern Africa.

were strong and collaborative work looked likely. However, changes in key WFP staff and strategy, at the Khartoum level, have meant little joint work has taken place, and relations have sometimes been strained.

Links have developed with the Food Security department of the MoANR, in Khartoum, which has seen an expansion in recent years. The links have mainly been on the basis of information exchange and awareness raising, based on the DFIS experience.

Finding: At the State level, capacity building and coordination have been taking place well, and serve as a widely praised model. At the national level, no agency or government ministry is willing (or able) to force the issue of food security monitoring, analysis and response, on to the table (including SC UK), in order to harmonise systems and methodologies and improve understanding and preparation for a 'post-peace' Sudan

It is recommended that,

- ***at the State level, little needs to be done in this area apart from a continuation of current practices and a monitoring of if and how the changed political – security conditions may hampers working relationships.***
- ***at the National level, given SC UK's strong position, due to its experience and expertise (Global and Darfur/Sudan specific), sufficient resources and capacity must be available to adequately engage in national capacity building and coordination initiatives, around food security.***

6 Sustainability of the DFIS

Given the potentially huge change in the funding and operating environment apparently imminent in Sudan, this review was conducted with an eye towards how the DFIS may become more sustainably run within government. In reality, while the principle of a 'handover' to government at some stage is recognized by SC and its staff, the uncertainties at the Darfur level (conflict, political tension, displacement etc) as well as at the national level (fact and nature of peace agreement), limit the ability to envisage, let alone plan for such a handing over.

However, in this regard the DFIS is considered by many, from within and outside of Government, to be a useful model of State level collaboration and planning around a sound information base. The FAO, who are conducting a review and planning exercise on behalf of the EC, for future information system/s in Sudan, see the DFIS as one of the most positive examples to draw upon. During the period of this review, a small presentation and seminar was conducted in Khartoum, explaining the DFIS, on request of the Food Security Department's Director within the MoANR. A representative from the EC also attended this seminar.

In reality, the DFIS has played a major and long-term role in the transfer of skills to the government, through the regular activities of the project. However, it must also be acknowledged that many of the staff that have joined the project (and many other UN and INGO projects) moved over from government positions, particularly from the APU of the MoANR.

7 Management and Organisation

There is the suggestion from different quarters within the programme, that management – technical links do not always work as clearly and efficiently as they could. To a large extent the success of the technical advisers depends on their own proactiveness, the quality of their

advice and the relations they have established with the programme and project staff and managers they work with. Difficulties can develop where:

- The advice and guidance of the adviser is not clear
- The advice and guidance of the adviser is not agreed with by management
- Management itself is not clear on what strategy or next steps need to be followed

If any of the above occur and they are not openly and quickly addressed and explained, decision-making can become delayed (or appear to be delayed) and plans not developed and put in to action.

It is important therefore that management is open and clear about the decision-making process, in order that feedback and discussion takes place and delays in implementing and following up on decisions do not take place.

8 Monitoring and Evaluation

EU project regulations require a Mid-term Review as well as a Final Evaluation. These activities were scheduled as planned. In addition, the DFIS Team designs an annual work-plan and monitors its activities against this plan.

Finding: As has been pointed out in previous sections, in general activities are performed to a good standard and according to schedule. This is based on many years of experience and internal capacity building. However, learning and improvements are arguably slower than they could be due to the lack of systematic impact monitoring and evaluation.

It is has been recommended in the relevant previous sections what areas need further work in this respect.

9 Achieving Project Results

The overall objective of the project is to improve food security through early warning and advocacy activities in Sudan.

The specific objectives are:

- Technical support will be extended to enhance national and state planning and response mechanisms in food security in Darfur and in particular emergency/s
- Early warning information will be used to secure resources from donors to ensure that adequate food is available for the affected communities, in particular children. EW information will be made available to the EU delegation in Khartoum on a regular basis in order to assist their planning, as well as to other donors.
- The capacity to plan and implement effective response in Darfur will be improved in SC UK

From a technical point of view, the DFIS has consistently proven to be an effective early warning system, generating a high quality and common State-wide position as to the need (or not) for emergency assistance.

However, the question must be asked: what did these results achieve? Did they fulfil the overall project objective?

Unfortunately, but predictably, food aid and nutrition responses are often late and less than the needs identified:

- In 2002, 70% of food needs were met, but of that 42% was distributed late (by about 6 months)

- An evaluation of the DFID funded emergency feeding programmes in late 2002 found that centres were started up to 6 months late, due do delays in securing donor support and transport problems
- An evaluation in 2002, of SC's response to the drought in 2001, again highlighted serious delays in response, in spite of the credibility of the early warning message

While certain factors fall outside the control of SC in securing a response, particularly the political will of donors and, if their decision is favourable, the timeliness of the release of resources in order to overcome logistical constraints.

However, there are also certain issues that may cause blockages or delays, that are within the control of, in this case SC, to improve:

- a) efficient internal communication and report preparation activities
- b) personal relations with the donors
- c) sensitivity to the policy of the donors, in order to get the most appropriate advocacy message across
- d) evidence of the cost of no, late, or limited response
- e) being more politically challenging

points a) – c) have been extensively highlighted in past evaluations, and therefore were not closely investigated as part of this review.

The last point will be emphasised here as it relates to other issues raised in this report and to discussions with two donors, DfID and the EC, in Khartoum during this review. The issues raised by these donors were based around the following questions:

- What is the status or credibility of HEA these days?
- How does the DFIS check the early warning predictions it made, in order to learn and improve for the following year?

Although perfectly valid questions, the fact that they are asked suggests that the programme is not engaged with these donors to a sufficient extent, from a technical point of view.

The answer to the first question is that HEA is arguably more widely accepted than it has ever been¹⁵. However, that is not to say that there are many issues and complications in the application of HEA, for early warning and food needs identification, which makes using it a less than perfect science, and one that needs a technical engagement with those that both criticise it and are interested in it.

In answer to the second question, and as stressed as a weakness in this review, the DFIS is not systematically checking the impact of its work (and predictions). It does have the capacity to do so and the HEA methodology is an approach that allows this to be done to a significant degree of accuracy (the last such assessment was in 1999)

Addressing this second question through a systematic assessment process would also yield evidence in relation to point d) above, and would therefore also enhance the understanding of credibility of HEA.

It is recommended that briefing materials are prepared from existing SC documentation that highlight many of the common issues, (mis)perceptions and misunderstanding around early warning and food needs identification. In relation, SC must assess its ability to engage at a

¹⁵ The Food Security Analysis Unit for Somalia, run by the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation, and funded by the EC, uses HEA as the basis of its early warning and emergency needs analysis; FEWSNET, funded by USAID, uses HEA/food economy as its vulnerability analysis tool; the HEA has been at the heart of the Technical Support Unit of WFP, in southern Sudan, for many years.

high technical level in the more competitive food security environment that is already developing.

Value of SC/UK's EW System in North Darfur

1. The project gives an early warning of approaching food crises, thereby providing the opportunity for timely intervention.
2. On current evidence, the project provides a sound basis for estimating food needs in North Darfur for the GoS/WFP Annual Needs Assessment. The estimate takes into account the degree to which households themselves can make up the food deficit.
3. The project ensures a degree of disaster preparedness by having information at hand for targeting, survey teams ready for rapid appraisal, and institutional systems established for coordinating a response.
4. The project has developed a database of information that is enormously informative about the way local economies work in N. Darfur. This database can be used as a valuable teaching tool for local partners learning about food security.
5. The project has built up a cadre of Sudanese SC/UK staff, as well as staff in partner agencies, who are trained in all aspects of survey work. These skills can be applied not just in relief planning but also planning other food security interventions.
6. The project holds long-term data sets based on regular village, household and market surveys. This database puts SC/UK in a unique position to explore relationships and test assumptions about variables such as nutrition and the economy, or millet price and sorghum supply. Long-term trend data gives an important historical perspective, and is an important archive.

7. Expanding the Uses of EW Information: Food Security, Livelihood support and Development Planning

Baseline profiles using the HEA approach yield substantial data on household food security and local livelihoods, including:

- How households obtain food in a "normal" year
- The "expandability" of these food and income sources in a bad year
- Seasonal cropping calendars, labour calendars, weekly routines
- Household expenditures
- Access to resources such as water
- Links between wealth groups in a community (through labour, gifts etc)
- Market dynamics (grain, livestock, and labour)

Once this information is collected, it has been integrated into the EW system. However, repeatedly, the question has arisen: how can baseline information be used not just in EW but also in generating ideas for innovative programming and development planning? The idea is appealing. The problem is two-fold: (1) In so much as it provides a detailed understanding of

the food economy and some data on household expenditure it is useful. However, it cannot provide concrete guidance on designing a discrete project--it simply does not ask the right questions for project planning; (ii) The HEA model was designed around a specific purpose (i.e., understanding the local economy in terms of household access to food). Other questions about household access to water or health services comprise a separate body of inquiry, involving a different range of variables. Consequently, the solution cannot be found in simply tacking on a few questions to the standard HEA field assessment.

HEA information can be helpful to the extent that it increases an understanding about rural livelihoods and can define priorities for intervention. Hence, it can be a *screening tool*: it can narrow down the range of options to the most important.¹⁶ In addition, baseline field inquiries yield data that help define the scope of a development problem.¹⁷ Furthermore, what could be adapted is the HEA *method of inquiry*, and the use of modeling to estimate needs in a particular sector. Here again, the Darfur programme may be in a good position to benefit from methodological developments in other SC/UK country programmes and the head office.

¹⁶ For example, take this typical development question: If we assume that our target population are poor farmers, and we want to increase food security, do we prioritise agriculture or income generation?

¹⁷ For instance, an HEA baseline profile can show that women and children are spending x hours per day on water collection, as well as x amount of money yearly.

ANNEX I

Mid-term Review ToR

Objective of the Review

The purpose of the mid-term review is to help SC UK to assess whether the DFIS project was implemented as planned in the original proposal document and in the manner most likely to meet the stated objectives. The review should include assessment of project activities, use of output and its impact on decision making, and project capacity, including the technical capacity in North Darfur, south Darfur and Khartoum. The review process should be participatory including technical staff and management teams at different levels.

The review output will be used by both the project management and technical teams, as guide to enhance the project planning process and reinforce the technical development.

Issues to be reviewed:

The adviser in participation with the project technical and management teams review the relevance of project activities and its performance, from January 2003 to October 2003. The reference documents will be the proposal and activities plan and output.

Reviewing whether and how efficiently the planned activities were implemented and with output. This should include examining organisation, management, and monitoring of the project activities.

Reviewing whether the objectives of the project are being met. The following elements should be considered to assist in this review process:

Rapid review of the project outputs, with particular reference to the food security monitoring systems, which uses both food economy baseline, regular monitoring/surveys

Assess clarity and impact of the project's output on decision-making processes at State and Federal levels

Assess impact of the attempts made by the project to:

To raise community awareness on targeting and food security issues

To develop the capacity of the project partners, specified in the project, in North and West Darfur, to enhance their food security monitoring, planning and response mechanisms

To develop the capacity of OXFAM and WFP to enhance their food security monitoring and needs assessments

Assess the attempts made by the project to pick up co-ordination at national level and/or use of the existing co-ordination forums, for lobbying and advocacy, in order to enhance planning and response mechanisms, especially to improve the relief programming for the drought prone areas of Sudan. This should include building of networks and building of an understanding of national food security issues.

Advise on whether and how the project activities could be developed in the remaining period of the project, considering the staff capacity and the changing context.

Reporting:

A report is required to be prepared by the advisor containing the review and recommendations.

Timing:

Two weeks in January

ANNEX II

Food Security Consultant ToR

ANNEX III

ITINERARY AND PEOPLE MET

17 Jan - 30 Jan 2004

- 8 Jan Briefing with John Seaman
- 16 Jan Travel from London to Khartoum, via Nairobi

Khartoum

- 17 Jan Evening arrival from Nairobi
- 18 Jan Read project files. Meet with Abdul Hamid, Musa, El Fateh
- 19 Jan Meet WFP / VAM; Min of Ag Head of Food Security Department

El Fasher

- 20 Jan Travel to El Fasher, North Darfur.
Presentation of activities by DFIS team.
- 21 Jan 1-day workshop to discuss issues. Ismael Adam Tahir, Abdul Rahim Hussein, Omer Haroon, Mohammed el Hafiz, Fatima Mohammed Ali, Ismael El Rashid, John Jenaro, Abdulla Adam Eisa, Rohwaida Hassan Taweel, Dr Ali Abaker, Nor Ed Deen Eisa, Helen Martin.
- 22 Jan Met with Ibrahim Ahmed Hamid and Ibrahim Omer, HAC; Jamal Mohammed Saleh, Tawila RC administrator and Mohammed Bulla, Kutum Agricultural Officer (market enumerators); Ismail Adam Al Tahir, SC/UK Area Manager (North Darfur).
- 23 Jan Met with DFIS manager – Abdul Rahim Hussein, DFIS Rsearch & Information Officer; Afaf Mohammed Mahmoud, DFIS Nutritionist.
- 24 Jan Met with Adam Harri Bosh, Minister of Agriculture; Abdulla Abdul Latif Acting DG and Director of Agricultural Services Department and Abaker Mohammed Abaker, Director of Soil Conservation Dept; Haroon Arga, DG MOH and Fatima Sharif, Head of Nutrition Section MOH; Mohammed Ibrahim, Oxfam; Barakat Faris Badri, SRC; Zein Al Abdeen Mohammood and Mohammed Sidig, ITDG;
- 25 Jan Return to Khartoum

KHARTOUM

- 26 Jan Met with Jean Claude DuMont, NGO co-ordinator, EC; Erminio Sacco, Food Security Information Systems Consultant, FAO; Paul Symons and EU; HAC?
- 27 Jan Presentation preparation; Met with Matt Bough, DFID.
- 28 Jan Presentation to MoANR (EU in attendance); met with WFP/VAM

29	Jan	Met with USAID, Doug Mercado; De-briefing to Kate and Musa; Abdul Majid Saleh, Oxfam
30	Jan	Travel to Nairobi