

AGRICULTURE CLUSTER MEETING

Meeting Nr. 25

Thursday 13 November, 13:00, Chatrium Hotel, Yangon

Agenda

1. Information Management
2. Strengthening of Agriculture Cluster Field Coordination
3. Cluster Viability
4. Poultry distribution plans
5. Agriculture Cluster Technical Fact Sheets
6. Soil Testing
7. Periodic Review
8. Update from Agriculture Cluster TWG Forestry and Mangroves
9. Update from Agriculture Cluster TWG Fisheries and Aquaculture
10. Update from the Agriculture Cluster TWG Livestock and Animal Health
11. Update from agriculture cluster township focal points:
 - Bogale: focal point GAA
 - Dedaye focal point CFESVI
 - Labuta: focal point UNDP
 - Khungyangon: focal point IDE
 - Pyapon: focal point Mingalar Myanmar
12. AOB
 - Reminder: Monthly Financial Tracking Update
 - Agency announcements

Meeting Minutes

Rene Suter opened the meeting with a new agenda item and the observation that several clusters are looking at exit strategies and strengthening of linkages between the different clusters. He then introduced William Affif of WFP, representing the Food Cluster. The Food Cluster is completing the transition from the emergency phase to early recover work and is incorporating food for work and supplemental feeding in their early recovery plans. The cluster aims to have up to 40,000 beneficiaries participating in these activities in the next three to four months. They will review the type of activities they are undertaking that link agriculture and community based development. In December they will have a list and map of activities and a map and will meet with organizations in the agriculture cluster to see how their activities can complement each other.

1. Information Management

The new Agriculture Cluster Information Manager, Carol Livingston, was introduced. Carol will work with Cluster members to update the Cluster database, which had originally started as an overview of the activities of organizations at township level. The Cluster database has since been developed and refined and now addresses a significant number of data points in each sector. These data points can help organizations identify gaps and potential overlaps for subsectors and items during the planning process. At the same time, the database should not put too much of a burden

on individual agencies; however, it can only be useful if it is updated regularly and reflects reality. Organizations have asked to use the database to identify appropriate geographic and sub sectoral targets when planning, including the Red Cross, which recently used the database to help plan a large livelihood project with a significant agriculture component. In the PONREP process the database helps shows the achievements of the cluster, however the database needs further data and refinement. It would be helpful if cluster members could point out the areas where data collection efforts should now be focused.

UNDP and others have a centrally located database or database section, however other organizations keep more detailed information at township level. Vincent Roger of Mercy Corps felt that data would be more useful if the cluster was involved at township level.

In OCHA data is developed through township hubs and other clusters. William Affif offered to share feedback on how the Food Cluster developed data and obtained information. Food Cluster information, which is less complex than the data for the Agriculture Cluster, comes to Yangon and there is not a systematic database at township level. The Food Cluster also receives information from partners.

Action Points

- A bilateral meeting will be held between the Food and Agricultural Cluster to share lessons in data collection.
- Carol will meet with Cluster members to discuss data collection issue and collect available data.

2. Strengthening of Agriculture Cluster Field Coordination

The Agriculture Cluster has focal points in five townships and has been looking at various ways to strengthen coordination at township level. Trainings have been held in the townships concentrating primarily on technical aspects and coordination mechanisms at township level need further strengthening. One idea is to have people stationed in certain key townships attached to existing focal points or dedicated key individuals in other locations. Another idea is to strengthen capacity of individual agencies who have taken on the focal point task.

Mingalar Myanmar acts as focal point in Pya Phon and offered the following lessons from its experience. Mingalar Myanmar and Nargis action group agreed to meet every two weeks in meetings which are separate from OCHA meetings. Other agencies like IDE are quite active and Mingalar Myanmar felt it would be helpful if IDE would participate. One constraint that Mingalar Myanmar felt as a focal point was that organization representatives often could not explain the organization's plans in any detail. Each attendee should be give specific information before attendees are sent. There also needed to be better communication between organizations, especially those that are not represented at township level but which may work within a township. The Nargis Action Group is willing to participate and share information on activities, which currently include boat building, livelihood, monsoon crops and livestock breeding. A meeting is held every other Thursday at 9 a.m. in the OCHA office. Every other Thursday at 9 o'clock at OCHA office. Mingalar Myanmar would want

support in the form of a person providing coordination at township level and improved outreach to organizations that are not currently part of the coordination process.

In Labutta, the cluster holds a meeting every two weeks. Communication is important but difficult and it was felt that it would be better to have external support both on coordination and on technical inputs. World Concern noted that when a coordinator is present things work well, but when they leave coordination falls apart. Someone needs to go door-to-door, informing organizations of when Cluster coordination meetings will be held and gathering information.

Action Points

- FAO ECRU to identify potential focal points or townships where a dedicated Agriculture Cluster support person could be placed.
- FAO ECRU to draft TORs listing duties of a cluster township support person and person specifications.

3. Cluster Viability

The OCHA situation report, released every other Thursday, offers the Agriculture Cluster a platform to showcase activities, achievements, plans and concerns and cluster participants were encouraged to submit information to the Cluster Information Manager for inclusion. Other forms for raising cluster visibility were discussed, including newsletters or a publication highlighting cluster achievements. Mingalar Myanmar felt that what communities wanted was a newsletter for farmers, while other cluster members felt there could be political problems with some donors in the way work may be presented.

Action Point

- FAO ERCU to draft an English language newsletter and investigate practical potential for farmer newsletter.

4. Poultry Distribution Plans

Dr. Ye discussed FAO's distribution plan for chicken and duck packages in the Ayeyarwady and Yangon Divisions. Over 45% of Ayeyarwady chickens and nearly 53% of ducks were lost in the cycle, while Yangon lost slightly over 3% of poultry.

FAO will provide a chicken package consisting of 9 pullets and one cock and a duck package containing 13 females and two males. Chicken distribution will begin at the end of this month with both chicken and duck distribution continuing until around the 15th of February. Biosecurity training for farmers on restocking poultry and ducks and training on the management and health care of restocked chickens and ducks will also be undertaken.

5. Agriculture Cluster Technical Fact Sheets

FAO ERCU is in the process of consolidating the Technical Fact Sheets. They will be uploaded onto the website as soon as the website is stable and the fact sheets are finalized.

Action Point

- FAO ERCU to finalize Technical Fact Sheets and upload to website when possible.

6. Soil Testing

FAO has done additional soil tests for several agencies and would like to gather this information with information from any testing done by other organizations into a map to show testing results as a whole, particularly with regard to salinity.

UNEP is starting work and has held a planning meeting. UNEP wishes to systematically analyze salinity and wants to work together to find what has been done, identify gaps and assist in filling them.

Action Point

- Cluster members to share salinity test results.

7. Periodic Review

Data collection is underway for the periodic review and the team will soon be able to analyze it and put it together. The review team has asked for thresholds for interpretation of results for analytical data.

8. Update from Agriculture Cluster TWG Forestry and Mangroves

The first meeting of this new thematic working group was held last Wednesday. Cluster members shared experiences. The key benefit of the group is networking but technical working group members identified specific technical and logistical issues to address in future meeting. Meetings will be held every other Thursday.

Action Point

- Organizations that want to be part of the forestry and mangrove technical working group should contact FAO or UNEP to be included in the participant list.

9. Update from Agriculture Cluster TWG Fisheries and Aquaculture

The Fisheries and Aquaculture Technical Working Group will now meet at 2 p.m. every other Thursday. The program for today consists of an introduction to the main types of fishing boats in the Delta based on information from three townships and the data on the 3W database. There will be a feedback session on whether the information

is accurate, whether data is missing and how useable the 3W database is in terms of identification of gaps, etc.

A FAO naval architect consultant is scheduled to arrive on 22nd of November. Boatbuilding is a main activity in the sector at the moment and is challenging in terms of building good boats. Other organizations are invited to take the opportunity to raise issues with this expert.

Action Point

- Organizations that wish to take advantage of the naval architect's presence should contact FAO Fisheries.

10. Update from the Agriculture Cluster TWG Livestock and Animal Health

Training is being given by group members to farmers on chicken and duck issues at the township level: there are also plans for training at farmer level on fund management.

11. Updates from Agriculture Cluster Township Focal Points

Apologies were made by focal points for most townships for not attending the meeting. Mingalar Myanmar reported from Pyapon that there is a call for a proposal for funding mangroves from ASEAN in Pyapon and Bogale. More information can be obtained from ASEAN.

Action Point

- Organizations interested in funding for mangrove projects should contact ASEAN..

12. AOB

Monthly financial tracking updates are due by the 21st as per standard procedure. The updates will be compiled for the cluster and forward it to the Humanitarian Coordinator.

There is to be a mailing list to co-ordinate trainings for all the sectors.

Action Point

- Cluster members should submit their financial tracking updates by the 21st to Carol Livingston (carol.livingston@gmail.com).