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Madagascar

Anticipatory Action to avert a Malagasy migratory locust upsurge

Context

Madagascar is highly prone to natural hazards, including drought, floods, cyclones and locust crises. In the Grand Sud region, three years of consecutive severe drought have wiped out harvests and hampered people's access to food, leading to high levels of acute food insecurity and malnutrition. In late 2021, an outbreak of Malagasy migratory locust was expected to affect the upcoming agricultural season (November 2021–March 2022) if left uncontrolled, thus further aggravating an already dire situation. Such early warning triggered the rapid activation of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations' (FAO's) Special Fund for Emergency and Rehabilitation Activities Anticipatory Action window (SFERA-AA), thanks to the contribution of the German Federal Foreign Office.

SFERA activation overview

Intervention areas	**Grand Sud Region, specifically: Menabe, Atsimo Andrefana, Ihorombe and Anosy**
Budget	USD 960 580
Population reached	1 million people at risk
Anticipated hazard	Outbreak of Malagasy migratory locust
Sector	Crops
Trigger	400 000 ha of pasture and crops forecast to be infested by the Malagasy migratory locust in districts with dire food security situation
Anticipatory actions	• Providing direct support to locust surveillance and control operations • Strengthening government capacity for locust control
Implementing partners	Ministry of Agriculture, particularly the National Locust Control Centre (IFVM)

Anticipatory Action in Madagascar

June 2021
Government action plan for locust campaign

September 2021
Forecast of potential outbreak of Malagasy migratory locust

October 2021
Start of the Anticipatory Action intervention

November 2021–March 2022
Main agricultural season in the Grand Sud of Madagascar

The intervention helped protect farmers from the impact of locusts on the main agricultural season in the Grand Sud of Madagascar.

Media updates

FAO in Madagascar shares news, stories and updates on its #AnticipatoryAction activities through the FAO emergencies and resilience website and on Twitter @FAOMadagascar.

Features

- Lutte antiacridienne : intensification de la campagne à Madagascar
- Madagascar : le risque d'invasion acridienne est écartées
- Madagascar: Lutte antiacridienne - Zéro culture touchée par les criquets cette année
- LUTTE ANTIACRIDIENNE - "Il y a peu de chance qu'une invasion de criquets se produise cette année", rassurent les acteurs de la lutte anti-acridienne
- Situation de forte résurgence d'invasion acridienne: le MINAE et le FAO se mobilisent pour le maîtriser
- Lutte antiacridienne : Vantardise du ministère de l'agriculture et de l'élevage

Results

The intervention was timely and truly anticipatory. The action started in October 2021 with trainings on GPS use and spraying techniques for locust control, ahead of the main agricultural planting season starting in November. Furthermore, the project allowed to use helicopters for accessing areas difficult to reach during the rainy season.

A severe deterioration of the locust situation has been prevented. Without timely surveillance and control of the upsurge, a Malagasy migratory locust plague affected two-thirds of the country in 2013, resulting in rice crop losses of up to 40 percent. While the campaign is not over yet, this is not the case today. In fact, the Grand Sud Region has not suffered any major crop damage from locusts.

Participants in training sessions showed an improvement in their skillsets on ground spraying techniques. The evaluation revealed that all the themes treated were well developed and well assimilated.

Lessons learned

The strengthening of national capacities was critical to enhance ability to anticipate future locust threats. FAO worked hand in hand with the Ministry of Agriculture, particularly the IFVM. A monitoring cell has been set up within the IFVM to collect and systematize all meteorological, ecological and locust data as well as information on damage to crops and pastures. Monthly and decadal monitoring bulletins have been established.

The action showed the importance of impact-based forecasting for targeting and communication. The trigger for Anticipatory Action was a forecast that at least 400 000 ha would be infested by the Malagasy migratory locust, covering six regions and 21 districts of Madagascar. It was estimated that 4.25 million people were exposed to this risk, of whom approximately 1 million at risk of losing their livelihoods and facing higher food insecurity.

Pre-arranged finance for preparedness is crucial to ensure the success of anticipatory actions. Preparatory activities can start as early as July in order to allow rapid implementation of the locust control campaign upon early warning signs of potential outbreaks.

Anticipatory finance from SFERA-AA was timely, but complementary resources were late. There was a significant time gap between the availability of funds for the SFERA-AA project and the other contributions. This had an impact on the procurement process and therefore on the smooth running of the campaign. In the future, further resource mobilization efforts are needed to ensure activities can be conducted at the necessary scale.

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