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Tajikistan

Mitigating the locust spread in Tajikistan and neighbouring countries through Anticipatory Action

Context

In March–April 2022, Tajikistan witnessed an increase of Moroccan locust infestations in its southern areas. The infestation threatened the bordering regions of Afghanistan, namely Badakhshan, Balkh, Kunduz and Takhar provinces, with the potential of spreading to northern Samangan and Baghlan provinces. Most of the agricultural areas of the Afghan provinces are located on the banks of the lower Panj and Vakhsh rivers in proximity to the Tajikistan border. Pastures, and vegetable and orchard productions were at risk of being infested when crops were in early vegetation period.

Considering the prevalence of winds in the southern oblast of Khatlon, a cross-border invasion was highly probable. This triggered the activation of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations' (FAO's) Special Fund for Emergency and Rehabilitation Activities (SFERA) Anticipatory Action window, thanks to the contribution of the German Federal Foreign Office.

Due to timely and controlled anticipatory actions, locust infestations were properly treated in Tajikistan, preventing a direct threat to agricultural production and food security in the Khatlon region of Tajikistan. This in turn protected the livelihoods and food security of vulnerable populations at risk of being affected by the locust outbreak.

SFERA activation overview

Intervention areas	Vulnerable communities in ten locust-affected districts in Tajikistan–Dangara, Dusti, Farkhor, Hamadoni, Jaloliddin Balki, Jayhun, Nosiri Khusrav, Panj, Qubodiyon and Shahritus
Budget	USD 151 616
Population reached	20 000 households (2 000 households per district)
Sector	Crops, pasture hayfields
Anticipatory actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provision of operational assistance for locust survey and ground treatments• Purchase and delivery of equipment for survey and control operations
Implementing partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• State Enterprise Locust Control Expedition (SE-LCE)• Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) of Tajikistan

Anticipatory Action in Tajikistan



March 2022

Locusts hatched 20-25 days earlier than in previous years, in areas along the Tajikistan-Afghanistan border.

April 2022

Forecast of locust outbreak severely impacting food security; with limited capacities of Afghanistan's locust control authority, control efforts planned mostly in Tajikistan.



May 2022

Launch of anticipatory actions.

The anticipatory actions put in place allowed to protect the livelihoods and food security of 20 000 households in Tajikistan at risk of being affected by a locust outbreak.

Results

- Timely access to fuel and spare parts for vehicles and tractors allowed MoA to organize and conduct an anti-locust campaign with the aim of **reducing production losses** in the country. The area of chemical treatments was of 131 919 ha in 2022 (instead of the planned 120 000 ha), representing a 10.99-percent reduction compared with 2021. Control operations were conducted using mainly emulsifiable concentrate (EC) pesticides, with a total value of 24 927 litres.
- Timely treatment and anti-locust control actions by MoA **preserved food production** in order to withstand increasing needs. Overall, the 2022 anti-locust campaign saved agricultural crops, orchards and pastures for a total amount of about USD 91 million, according to SE-LCE estimates. This surpasses the USD 73 million saved in 2021.
- The basic **household food basket improved**, preventing food security deterioration. The Anticipatory Action intervention supported local market conditions and food availability, thus limiting value chain disruptions.
- Technical guidance and other education-related activities ensured that the implementing partner was adequately supported to **sustainably control locust spread**. The project partners benefited from the technical guidance and education material on good agricultural practices in areas of locust control.

Lessons learned

- The project needed to start earlier in order to implement all activities on time in a sustainable manner, as unforeseen and prolonged processes led to a delay in the launch. Therefore, more organized awareness raising activities on the project among staff could prove more effective, particularly with regards to the locust campaign.
- Engagement of partners and communities made it possible to overcome challenges regarding project implementation. Strong relationships, good communication, mutual understanding between FAO, implementing partners, the district agriculture department and the local community contributed to the successful implementation of the project despite the challenges (e.g. lack of chemicals, lack of water, etc.).

Media updates

FAO in Tajikistan shares news, stories and updates on its #AnticipatoryAction activities through the [FAO emergencies and resilience website](#) and on Twitter [@FAO emergencies](#).

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