

Islamic Republic of Mauritania

Honour-Fraternity-Justice



African Risk Capacity (ARC)

Operational support plan for populations experiencing severe drought

Application for a Certificate of Good Standing

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Acronyms

ACF	Action contre la Faim (Action Against Hunger)
ARC	African Risk Capacity
CBA	Cost Benefit Analysis
CILSS	Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel
CIMS	Comité Inter Ministériel de Suivi (Inter-Ministerial Monitoring Committee)
CODEPs	Commissions Départementales (Departmental Commissions)
CRF	Croix Rouge Française (French Red Cross)
CSA	Commissariat de la Sécurité Alimentaire (Food Security Steering Committee)
EMEL	Hope (in the local language)
ESAM	Enquête de la Sécurité Alimentaire des Ménages (Household Food Security Survey)
GRET	Groupe de Recherche et d'Échanges Technologiques (Technological Research and Exchange Group)
GAM	Global Acute Malnutrition
WHO	World Health Organisation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
WFP	World Food Programme
SMART	Standardized Monitoring and Assessment of Relief and Transitions

Introduction

The African Risk Capacity (ARC) provides parametric weather insurance coverage to African governments for agricultural seasons in case of drought. In return for premium payments into the mutual,¹ governments are eligible to receive a payout of up to USD 30 million. With Mauritania's significant exposure to catastrophic drought events, the ARC could help to improve the management of this risk and, if disaster strikes, enable a more timely humanitarian response.

Droughts significantly threaten record GDP growth in sub-Saharan Africa. At the household level, the consequences of droughts can be devastating. An ARC cost-benefit analysis (CBA) examined existing evidence regarding the timing of household coping actions when faced with a drought and the likely long-term cost impacts of these actions. From this baseline, the study then estimates the economic benefits in acting early and thus protecting households' economic growth potential – that is intervening in time to prevent households' negative coping actions such as reduced food consumption, livestock death, and distressed productive asset sales, which, in the absence of external assistance, have increasingly pronounced negative consequences. The CBA calculates that getting aid to households in the critical three months after harvest could result in nearly USD 1,300 per household assisted in terms of protected economic gains².

In order to improve resilience to natural disasters, two key elements are required: risk management and investment. Investments that support long-term resilience against food insecurity can address chronic risks and provide a base of predictable on-going assistance that can support poor and vulnerable households to build assets and livelihoods, which will in turn develop resilience to cope with normal and somewhat frequent, mild shocks without external assistance. From this base level of investment, sound risk management becomes critical. This is where a tool such as ARC can offer the most value, providing dedicated contingency funds that can scale up safety net systems in a reliable, timely manner, allowing them to remain solvent and sustainable, protecting hard-won gains for households, and reducing countries' reliance on emergency appeals.

This Operations Plan outlines how ARC funds would be used in the case of a payout to Mauritania. It first outlines the general national drought conditions and the ARC risk transfer parameters for Mauritania. It then describes in detail the activities that would be pursued with ARC funds, and finally provides additional practical information on the implementation and monitoring of this Operations Plan.

A. Description

A.I General Drought Conditions

A.I.1 Context

Mauritania, a country in the Sahara-Sahel region, has a generally dry climate typified by low and irregular rainfall varying from 450 mm in the far south to 50 mm in northern two-thirds of the country.

¹ A mutual insurance company is owned and overseen by its members.

² Clarke, Daniel J. and Ruth Vargas Hill, "Cost-Benefit Analysis of the African Risk Capacity Facility," International Food Policy Research Institute, IFPRI Discussion Paper 01292, September 2013.

Mauritania also experiences repeated cycles of drought and the deterioration of natural resources, which significantly impact the production capacity and sources of income of its inhabitants. The country runs an annual food production deficit, with local production only covering approximately 30% of the food requirements during good production years. Furthermore, the food and nutritional security of rural and urban inhabitants depends to a significant extent on pastoral conditions and on international price fluctuations of staple products. On account of these background conditions, Mauritania has experienced recurrent food crises for several decades.

Food insecurity is also related to low incomes and precarious means of subsistence. The level of food insecurity in the country is exacerbated by biophysical hardships (including droughts, floods, locust plagues and outbreaks of animal diseases) as well as economic hardships such as price increases on international markets, on which the cereal supply of the country depends to a large extent. The result is that generally 10% of the population lives in a state of food insecurity throughout the year, with the rate growing to exceed 20% during the lean season.

The highest prevalence of food insecurity has traditionally been recorded in the Wilayas of the south and east of the country, with subsistence crop and livestock farmers generally the most severely affected by food crises. However, in recent years it has been noted that poor populations in urban areas are also starting to suffer from the adverse effects of decreases in their purchasing power in light of the continuous increase in basic food prices, as well as an increase in unemployment.

This situation is the underlying cause of the high mortality and overall acute malnutrition rates in the country. The infant mortality rate is around 77/1 000, the infant and child mortality rate is 118/1 000, the neonatal mortality rate is 43/1 000 and the maternal mortality rate is 626/100 000. The global acute malnutrition rate (GAM) for children aged 6 to 59 months is 11.8%, exceeding the World Health Organization (WHO) warning threshold of 10%.

The arable land surface area amounts to less than 1% of the country's total surface area. At independence in 1960, the population of Mauritania was mainly rural. Subsequently there has been a series of migratory inflows into urban centres caused by successive droughts, which degraded the natural environment in which rural populations had previously lived. This trend has upset a longstanding balance, and currently the majority of the country's population is sedentary (with more than 60% living in towns). Understandably, this change has profoundly affected the socio-economic lifestyle of inhabitants on which the country's production systems are based and whom are already affected by cyclical phenomena with devastating consequences such as high rainfall deficits and locust plagues.

Most crop and livestock production processes are outdated and result in poor yields. Access to sophisticated means of production and technology remains compromised by poverty and illiteracy, which is widespread among producers.

The phenomenon of food insecurity arises from these imbalances with the inevitable corollary of rising poverty, further entrenching it in a sort of vicious circle, in particular in the urban environment where the poverty rate reached 59% in 2005.

Local cereal production during the past decade was in the range of 77 162 tons per annum for the low production years of 2002-03 (approximately 16% of requirements), to 151 406 tons per annum

for the 2008/09 season and for years of relatively good production (approximately 30% of requirements).

Despite the volume of investments in this sector, and priority given to them, it has not been possible to increase production to a level where the deficit can be absorbed, thereby ensuring food self-sufficiency. Indeed, over the past decade, Mauritania has only been able to produce 30% of its cereal requirements.

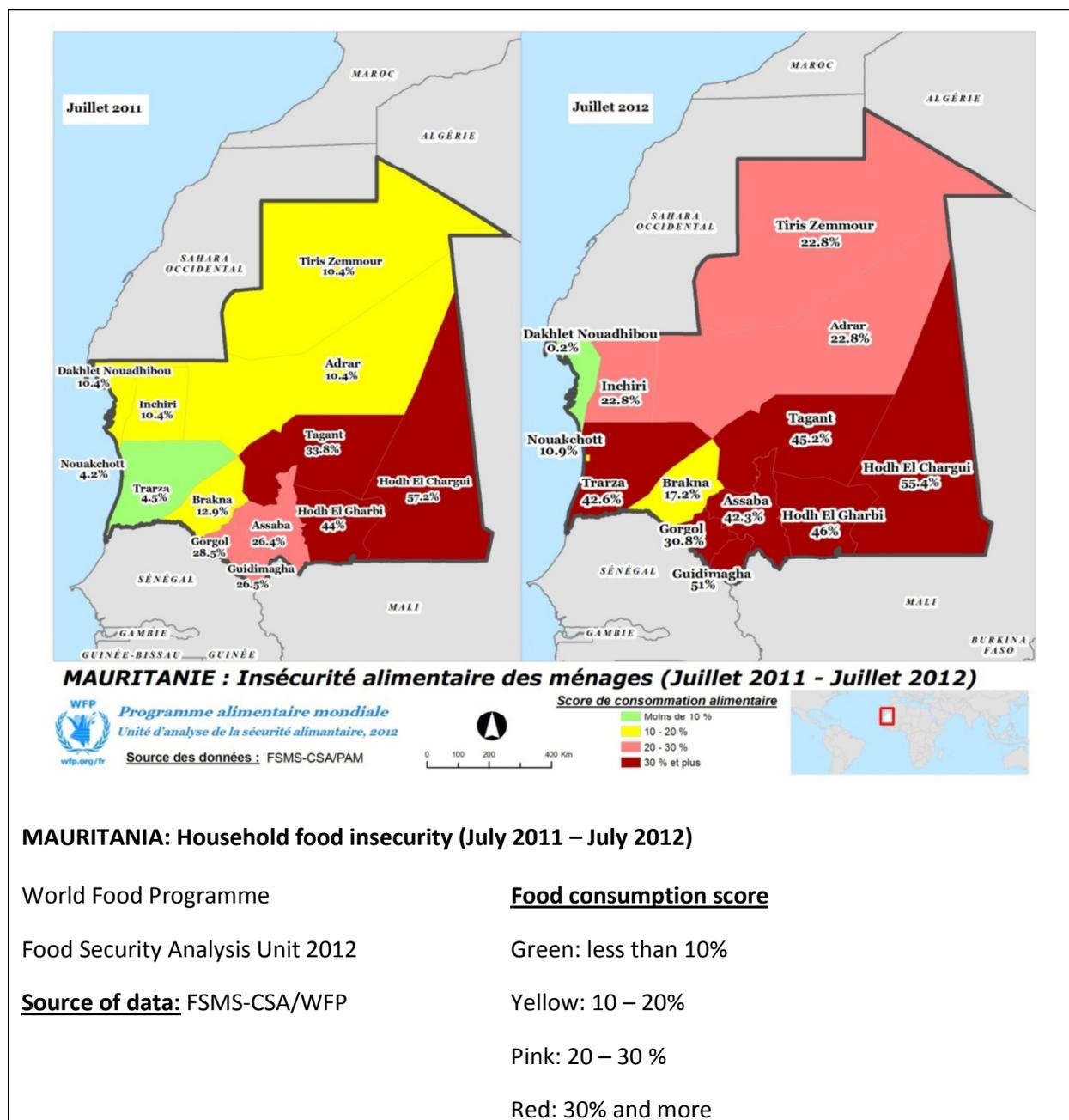
The need for food products therefore remains largely unsatisfied by local production and the country has to import at least 70% of its food requirements annually, including more than 300 000 tons of cereals. For this reason, the country is considered by food security specialists to be structurally deficient with regard to cereals.

Added to the inherent problems of the inadequacy of local production and the instability of income, there are substantial difficulties in supplying a vast country typified by scattered populations, anarchic settlement and isolation of inhabited areas.

The precarious nature of living conditions in the rural environment and the increasing vulnerability of inhabitants living in peri-urban areas account for a large proportion of the population that permanently live in a situation of food insecurity. As such, this proportion is poised to increase during years of particularly low production or natural disaster.

The recurring and idiosyncratic crises experienced by Mauritania are closely related to climate change and the regional context of a complex crisis. These crises have led to a troubling public health situation, slow and only partial reconstitution of the national herd, almost inexistent food stocks and many households waiting for the first harvests to come in. According to Enquête de la Sécurité Alimentaire des Ménages/Household Food Security Survey (ESAM) and Standardized Monitoring and Assessment of Relief and Transitions (SMART) surveys carried out in July 2012, one-third of Mauritanian households, or more than one million people suffer from food insecurity. This translates directly to malnutrition, which afflicts more than one-tenth of the food insecure households. These surveys have also discovered that the crisis has expanded to new areas, including Adrar, Inchiri and Trarza as well as peri-urban areas of Nouakchott and the south and south-east, which had already been affected.

Fig. 1: Map of Food Insecurity in Mauritania



MAURITANIA: Household food insecurity (July 2011 – July 2012)

World Food Programme

Food consumption score

Food Security Analysis Unit 2012

Green: less than 10%

Source of data: FSMS-CSA/WFP

Yellow: 10 – 20%

Pink: 20 – 30 %

Red: 30% and more

A.I.2 Vulnerability

The agricultural potential of Mauritania is limited and precarious, as the usable agricultural area (UAA) is less than 0.5% of the country’s territory. According to the statistics provided by the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Farming, the potential usable agricultural land is approximately 502 000 ha. However, nearly half of this potential usable land (220 000 ha) consists of land (Diéri and Bas-fonds), that is highly dependent on rainfall. Flood-recession land (Bas-fonds and Walo) constitutes nearly 28% of this potential, and is just as dependent on rainfall, run-off water and the quality of hydraulic infrastructure as Diéri.

National food production consists of local cereals (production varying between 50 000 and 166 000 tons per annum depending on the year), rice (average annual production of 30 000 tons), dates (average annual production of 15 000 tons), red meat (production of 38 000 tons per annum), aviculture (2 000 tons per annum), milk (422 000 tons per annum), fish and vegetables. Nevertheless, the demand for food products remains largely unsatisfied by local production.

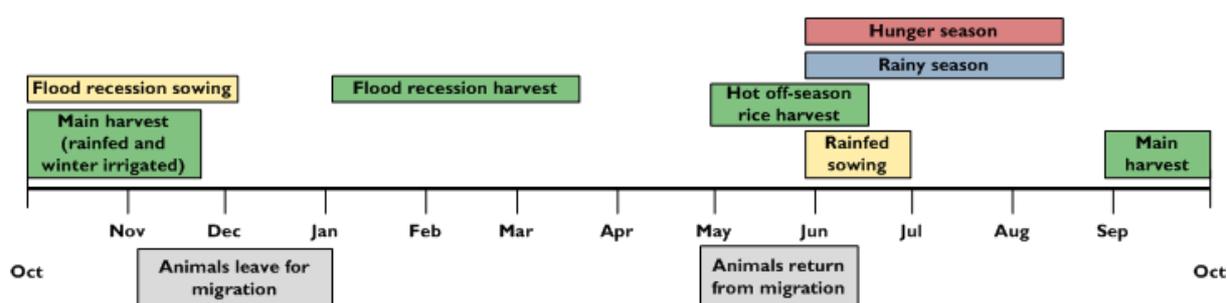
As indicated previously, the country has to import nearly 70% of its food requirements each year. On the basis of an average cereal consumption of 176 kg/person/year, Mauritania's requirements amount to nearly 400 000 tons per year for an average annual production of 149 000 tons, i.e. an average cereal needs coverage rate of 37.3%. Added to this are other requirements in various foodstuffs, particularly sugar (consumption: 30 kg/person/year) and vegetable oils (consumption: 7 kg/person/year).

The forestry and pastoral potential of the country is significant (1 380 000 hectares, i.e. 13% of Mauritania's territory). However this potential is generally impeded by the overuse of land as a result of the fact that many forestry and pastoral areas cannot be cultivated because of a shortage of water. The deterioration of climatic conditions since the great drought of 1968-73 has been an aggravating factor in the process of desertification. The national production of meat is estimated at 74 600 tons per year, with a consumption of 50 800 tons annually of which 9 900 tons are consumed by the producers. The annual increase in milk production has remained moderate between 1987-96 (1.2% per year) and milk imports have dropped by 2% per year. Milk forms one of the basic foods for Mauritians - for livestock farmers as well as crop farmers.

Livestock farming is a key pillar of food security in Mauritania. Analyses have shown that this activity is not only the best placed to serve as currency but also as precautionary savings, over and above the important nutritional contribution that it makes in producing milk and butter. Additionally, while controlled fishing production is on the order of 600 000 tons per year for a renewable potential production estimated at 1 511 000 tons, the fact remains that actual production is much greater as proven by the gradual drop in deep-sea fishing yields. Sand is being removed from coastal dunes which are responsible for keeping the ecological balance of the coastline and protecting lower-lying areas from flooding by sea-water. The consequence is not only a threat of destabilising the coastal ecological equilibrium, but there is also the risk of sea flooding in the city of Nouakchott.

Mauritania has a dry season which runs from October to May and a rainy season, which covers the period from June to September. The latter is commonly considered to be the lean season.

Fig. 2: Seasonal calendar and significant events in Mauritania



Source: FEWSNET.

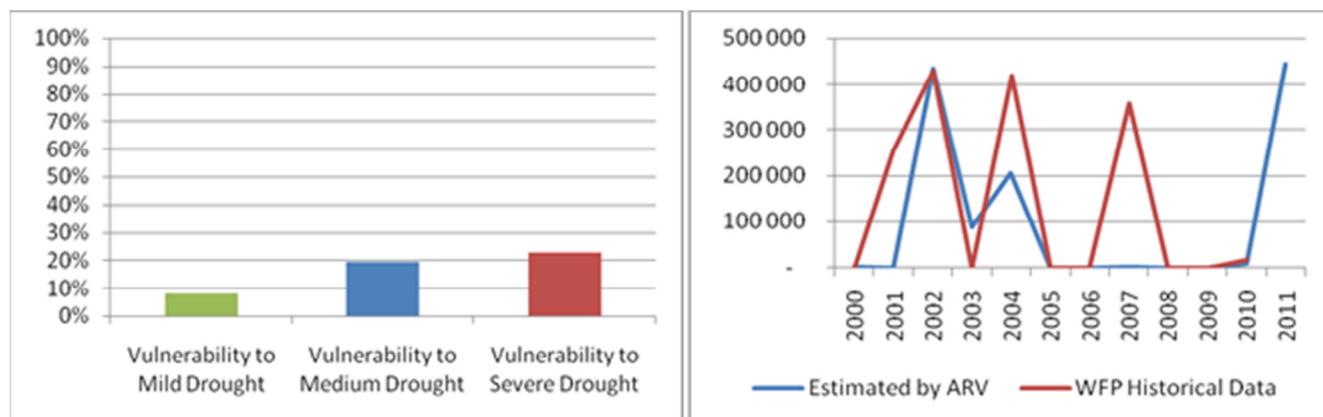
A.1.3 Frequency of Drought and its Impact

Close to 80% of the surface area of Mauritania is located north of the 17th parallel. The country therefore has a Saharan-type climate with low and irregular rainfall and significant inter-annual variations of between 20 – 50 mm in the north and 400 – 500 mm in the south over the period 1970-88. In fact, over the period 1960-07, rainfall dropped by 30 – 60% in various agricultural and economic areas of the country and caused the 150 mm isohyet to move to the south to approximately the position of the 250 mm isohyet, i.e. an extension of the desert by an additional 150 000 km³.

The result of the successive years of drought which affected the country during the 1970s and 1980s was that soil and plant cover degradation was aggravated, thus destroying a large part of the country's pasturage. More recently, the 2011 drought, which resulted in a crop yield of 40% less than the previous five-year average, had a negative impact on the food security of approximately 700 000 people according to estimates of WFP.

Food security in Mauritania, which depends on rain-fed agriculture, traditional agricultural practices and the import of foodstuffs, is increasingly precarious and local and generalised droughts as well as an increase in prices are forcing the inhabitants to resort to negative adaptation mechanisms to obtain humanitarian assistance.

Fig. 3: Vulnerability to drought, frequency and estimate of the population affected



An ARC payout is able to provide emergency funds in a short space of time, which will enable the Government of Mauritania to scale up social protection systems to get assistance to vulnerable households impacted by drought, thereby saving lives and protecting livelihoods.

The purpose of this Operations Plan is to delineate the use of an ARC payout in advance so that if Mauritania receives such a payout in the wake of a drought, it will be prepared to use the funds immediately and effectively, capitalizing on the advantages of early intervention. Therefore this Operations Plan takes into account existing national systems and deploys an ARC payout to support activities to reach needy households with assistance in a timely and cost-effective manner.

³ See <http://www.fao.org/DOCREP/004/AB591F/AB591F10.htm>

A.II Selection of General Risk Transfer Parameters

A.II.1 Extent of Coverage and Expected Frequency of Payout

Collective discussions were held by the Government to discuss the requirements and objectives for the setting of risk transfer parameters. There was a consensus that for Mauritania, given the high severity and high frequency of drought, a five-year return period and a USD 13.5 million maximum payout should be selected. The Risk Transfer Parameter sub-working group then validated the selected parameters with the results of the Africa RiskView customisation works stream – particularly using the country’s historical drought response costs.

Based on the below parameters and the current stage of ARV customisation, the expected premium of the insurance policy is expected to be between USD 2.5-3 million. This policy will ensure risk transfer of approximately USD 13.5 million. The premium will be paid in one instalment at the time indicated for all payments – with the first payment most likely due in February 2014.

Mauritania Risk Transfer Parameters:

- Attachment point: 1-in-5 years
- Coverage limit: USD 13.5 million

A.II.2 Geographic Areas of Implementation

This Operations Plan would be implemented in all the regions in Mauritania which would be affected by the drought. Initiatives selected for implementation within the framework of the intervention executed in terms of a payout are supposed to cover all populations that are declared to be vulnerable throughout the territory following a needs assessment survey.

A.III Activities:

A.III.1 Overview of Activities

Drought in Mauritania leads to deterioration in food and nutritional security of households and animals as a result of food and grazing shortages.

Based on the existing drought risk management system, the Government of Mauritania has identified the following two primary channels for the use of ARC funds to reduce the impact on affected households:

1. Distribution of **free foodstuffs to vulnerable households** with no income and which are seriously affected by drought; and,
2. Targeted **cash transfer** programmes (whether or not they are conditional), allowing beneficiaries direct and efficient access to the food products which they need the most.

These initiatives have been chosen because of they are practical and rapidly provide aid to inhabitants in a drought situation in order to fulfil their need for food and protect their means of subsistence at the same time.

To date, drought response activities have been implemented on an ad hoc basis in emergency situations, and have not amounted to a permanent country-wide programme. However, to deal with an increase in food insecurity resulting from the 2011 rainfall deficit, in 2012 the Government, through the *Commissariat à la sécurité alimentaire* (CSA: Food Security Steering Committee), initiated the multi-sectoral response plan known as “EMEL (Hope)”. EMEL consists of various aspects including “*Boutiques de solidarité*” (Solidarity Shops) the purpose of which is to boost the purchasing power of low-income households in rural, urban and peri-urban environments by the sale of subsidised foodstuffs. ARC activities will fall into this overall drought response framework.

With the support of the WFP, these initiatives would target the most vulnerable rural households in the target areas of the Gorgol, Brakna, Assaba and Guidimagha wilayas (food distribution) as well as vulnerable households in the city of Nouakchott (cash transfer). The following beneficiaries represent the most sensitive sectors of the population, which suffer the most and therefore will be given priority in the activities undertaken using ARC funds with intervention starting from November. These are:

- Households which are headed by single women or which include handicapped persons or persons suffering from illnesses which prevent them from working;
- Vulnerable families with small children and/or pregnant or breastfeeding mothers; and,
- Households that experience food insecurity, also taking the gender aspect into account.

This document provides an overview of these alternatives for integrating an ARC payout into Mauritania’s existing drought response mechanisms. It will identify how an ARC payout could be used effectively and outlines the associated Operations Plan for putting these funds into the hands of beneficiaries. In its simplest form, this document will describe how the Government of Mauritania could spend a potential USD 30 million payout from ARC and ensure that these funds reach beneficiaries within 120 days, the critical time period identified by the ARC CBA, after which asset depletion at the household level begins..

A.III.2 Evaluation of Eligibility Criteria for Each Initiative:

Time-sensitivity / catalytic effect

These two initiatives – free distribution of foodstuffs and cash transfer – were selected for their practicality and quickness as well as the benefits to inhabitants in a drought situation where food scarcity is prevailing. These two initiatives have the advantage of having proven themselves in emergency programmes undertaken by the country in the past.. Even if food assistance remains an ad hoc intervention in case of hardship, the cash transfer programme is nevertheless an activity that the Government and its partners have initiated in the peri-urban environment with the goal of helping inhabitants suffering from structural poverty. It is envisaged that the programme would eventually be permanently extended throughout the territory. In order to do this, a computerised population database will be put in place with the technical assistance of WFP and the World Bank.

Protecting means of subsistence:

These two initiatives will be key channels for the Government to protect the lives and livelihoods of drought-affected households in the wake of crisis.

Delay in implementation: These two activities can be initiated, implemented and finalised within the time period specified by the ARC Contingency Planning Standards and Guidelines: shortening the response times by reaching beneficiaries within 120 days and executing the initiatives within 180 days.

A.III.3 Activity 1: Free Food Distribution

A.III.3.1 Overall Objective

The overall purpose of this activity is to respond rapidly to the immediate needs of inhabitants affected by drought in order to save lives and prevent the loss of means of subsistence (including cattle, equipment, etc.).

A.III.3.2 Expected Outcomes and Outputs (logical framework):

- **Outcome 1:** aid reaches targeted households more quickly
- **Outcome 2:** faster implementation of the initiatives set up within the ARC framework
- **Outcome 3:** improved food consumption by targeted households throughout the whole duration of the food aid initiative
- **Output 3.1:** Food commodities distributed in required quantity and quality to target households within the prescribed timeline

A.III.3.3 General Drought Response Strategy

General description of the activity

The purpose of the first activity is to provide food assistance to inhabitants affected in the wake of a drought by the distribution of foodstuffs.

Mauritania has extensive experience in managing and monitoring food distribution activities. In the past, these activities, with the support of WFP, have targeted the most vulnerable rural households in the areas of Gorgol, Brakna, Assaba and Guidimagha wilayas.

Under the ARC, the strategy pursued through this initiative would be to respond to the effects of a drought resulting in scarcity of food by rapidly making available enough food to avoid the loss of human life over a period of five months to affected inhabitants (a total of 549 286⁴ people or approximately 109 875 households). Each household would receive a monthly ration consisting of 50 kg of wheat and 4 litres of oil, i.e. 250 kg of wheat and 20 litres of oil for five months (February to June).

An estimate of the requirements of the activity would be conducted on the basis of previous food security survey results (see below). This method will contribute to accommodating needs during an emergency intervention after a drought. For a reference year of 2012, the estimates for a payout of USD 30 million are as follows (see budget for details):

⁴ This represents 80% of the total number of the food insecure people reported in the 2012 assessment survey.

Initiative 1: Free distribution of foodstuffs:

- **Wheat: 27 464 tons** with a total cost estimated at: **4 092 136 000 UM** (at 130 000 UM/ton purchase price; 25 000 UM/ton primary and secondary transport cost, and 4 000 UM/ton implementation cost, i.e. 159 000 UM/ton (all inclusive)
- **Oil: 2 197 tons** with a total cost estimated at: **942 513 000 UM** (at 400 000 UM/ton purchase price; 25 000 UM/ton primary and secondary transport cost, and 4 000 UM/ton implementation cost, i.e. 429 000 UM/ton (all inclusive)

Total cost of Initiative 1: 5 153 293 000 UM (or approximately USD 17,166,771⁵)

Coordination

At the national level, the ARC response for both Activities 1 and 2 would be coordinated by the Food Security Steering Committee (CSA). The CSA is a task force entrusted by the Government with the implementation of the national food security policy. The purpose of this policy is to ensure the availability of basic foodstuffs throughout the country, in particular during times of crisis. It also contributes to implementing the objectives of the national poverty reduction policy through supporting and promoting basic development activities as well as combating malnutrition in children through implementing management programmes for acute malnutrition in children younger than five years and in pregnant or breast-feeding mothers. It also helps in providing information, analysis and monitoring of food security indicators through its early warning system in order to prevent food crises.

The CSA falls under the authority of the Prime Minister and is run by a Commissioner appointed by decree with the same rank, prerogatives and benefits as those of Ministers. The CSA Commissioner is invested with all the powers necessary to ensure its organisation, functioning and management, in accordance with its assigned mission, subject to the powers attributed to the Supervisory Board.

At the operational level, this Activity would be coordinated and implemented by the CSA with the support of its partners such as WFP and the NGOs who work in the sphere of food security.

Operations

Food local procurement: Foodstuffs are purchased by the Government through a local call for tenders issued in anticipation, or by an agreement in accordance with the Procurement Code (see Annex 1), through the CSA's Technical Committee in charge of monitoring markets and supplies. The execution period of this contract shall not exceed one month. This mechanism has proven itself during previous emergency operations where pre-qualifying local suppliers have always been able to demonstrate efficiency and resourcefulness by importing the quantities ordered in order to deal with the crisis.

The logistics to bring foodstuffs from the advanced delivery point to distribution sites in the field will be provided by the CSA fleet which has a transport capacity of 1 200 tons per trip (the average trip is estimated at five days). This means that in one month, 7 200 tons can be delivered throughout the country. This logistical capacity will bring supplies to all points in the country involved in the emer-

⁵ According to the United Nations Operational Rate of Exchange of 330.19 MRO / USD, effective as of 1 November 2013. <http://treasury.un.org/operationalrates/OperationalRates.aspx>

agency plans and in case of great need it could be extended by using pre-qualifying private transporters. The distribution of foodstuffs to identified and selected beneficiaries is done through CSA structures as well as decentralised State structures. The State may also make use of support from WFP and NGOs if necessary.

Needs Assessment

General: The identification of risk areas occurs twice during the agropastoral campaign. This needs assessment survey will be jointly conducted by the CSA and WFP during the interim campaign in late July and during the final campaign in late December. Instead of making specific quantitative surveys, the identification procedure of rural food insecure areas is based on a series of qualitative assessment factors and indicators affecting food security. Each rural area in all Moughataa (departments) of the country, is classified according to its degree of vulnerability.

In detail: The Mauritanian information and warning system evaluating vulnerability and needs in case of a drought consists of various components for collecting indicators to monitor the situation and analyse information from various sources. This system, organised from the local level all the way up to national level, is integrated into the regional mechanism for the prevention and management of crises piloted by the Comité permanent Inter-Etats de Lutte contre la Sécheresse dans le Sahel/Permanent Interstates Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS), which ensures a permanent watch over the food situation of the nine countries of the Sahel region, including the border and coastal countries.

In Mauritania the following elements, in normal circumstances, serve as information tools and are also used during periods of hardship to evaluate needs following a drought:

- The annual CILSS/FAO/WFP agricultural season evaluation mission;
- FEWS NET monthly reports which provide updates on the emergency situation;
- The findings of CSA-WFP vulnerability survey missions;
- WFP food situation evaluation missions;
- Various bilateral cooperation agency missions (e.g. GIZ, USAID, AFD, etc.)
- The market information system (SIM)

The current official mechanism is the Food Security Observatory which publishes:

- A bi-annual newsletter;
- A monthly news flash; and,
- Maps of areas at risk in March and October each year.

Areas at risk of food insecurity are identified each year at two key points of the agricultural season: a provisional identification in July, in the middle of the rainy season which will make it possible for the CSA Programme Directorate and other decision-makers to schedule initiatives; and a final identification of risk areas in December, at the end of the main rainy season, flood recession, marketing gardening and water-catchment farming seasons.

The survey on monitoring household food security (ESAM), which is carried out twice per year jointly by the CSA and WFP, will be used as a tool to identify vulnerable areas within which the risk areas will

be determined, and subsequently beneficiary populations will be determined by the targeting method based on vulnerability criteria.

Targeting

Vulnerable communities with low income exposed to food insecurity as a result of scarcity of food caused by drought are identified through the semi-annual ESAM survey (monitoring household food security).

On the basis of the needs identified, food quotas are allocated to communities depending on their vulnerability rates and population levels after which the quotas are divided up between villages through a well-honed CSA process: CODEP (Department commission) meetings chaired by administrative authorities and attended by municipal authorities, technical departments and NGOs.

Implementing partners work with traditional authorities to manage a community-based targeting process in order to select the most vulnerable households within the most vulnerable villages within the Department that the ESAM reported to be affected. Households targeted will include moderately and severely affected food insecure households with special attention given to those households headed by women and children, and those with elderly, disabled, chronically ill people and orphans.

A.III.3.4 Logical Framework

1. Food distribution			
Result chain	Performance indicators	Means of verification	Risks and hypotheses
Outcome 1: Aid reaches targeted households more quickly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First contact with the targeted beneficiaries within 120 days of the disbursement of the ARC funds to the country concerned 	CSA, partners	Presence of appropriate and sound structures, as described in the <i>Operations Plan</i>
Outcome 2: Faster implementation of the initiatives set up within the ARC framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall duration of 180 days from set up to execution 	Implementers activities reports, CSA reports	Identification of a sufficient number of beneficiaries
Outcome 3: Improved food consumption by targeted households throughout the whole duration of the food aid initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement in households' food consumption scores (% of communities that have a higher score) 	VAM assessment (CSA and WFP)	Availability and immediate delivery of food
		Secondary data from Early Warning System, Food Security Observatory, WFP	
Output 3.1 : Food commodities distributed in required quantity and quality to target households within the prescribed timeline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 549 286 beneficiaries that actually receive food aid • 27 464 tons of wheat and 2 197 tons of oil actually distributed, broken down by type of activity and foodstuff 	Monitoring field visit by CSA officials. Monthly Distribution report from implementing partners	

A.III.3.5 Action Plan

Initiative	Month												Structure responsible for implementation
	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Responsible party
General													
Receipt of funds													CSA via the Treasury
Preparedness for response: Identification of local pre-qualifying suppliers, tender for supply of foodstuffs													CSA issues the tender or the agreement in accordance with the Public Procurement Code to the private sector (local traders)
Needs assessment survey													CSA, WFP, FAO, FEWS NET are role-players involved in the process
Free Food Distribution													
Identification of needs													CSA and its partners based on vulnerability studies
Identification and selection of beneficiaries													CSA, CODEPs, local authorities, communities, cooperating NGOs, work together to identify the beneficiaries
Delivery of foodstuffs to the various sites													The CSA fleet supplemented by private carriers
Distribution of foodstuffs													CSA, decentralised State structures, partner NGOs

A.III.4 Activity 2: Cash Transfer**A.III.4.1 Overall objective**

The overall purpose of this activity is to respond rapidly to the immediate needs of inhabitants affected by drought in order to save lives and prevent the loss of means of subsistence (cattle, equipment, etc.).

A.III.4.2 Expected Outcomes and Outputs (logical framework):

- **Outcome 1:** aid reaches targeted households more quickly
- **Outcome 2:** faster implementation of the initiatives set up within the ARC framework
- **Outcome 3:** improved food consumption by targeted households throughout the cash transfer
- **Output 3.1:** distribution of cash to beneficiaries within the time required so that they can participate in the rehabilitation and renovation work in order to have access to sufficient, good quality food.

A.III.4.3 General Drought Response Strategy**General description of the activity**

The purpose of the second activity is to transfer money to vulnerable inhabitants when an analysis of the market proves that foodstuffs are available.

Recently, Mauritania has started putting in place cash transfer programmes. In the rural environment, cash transfers (15 000 UM per month per household) were made over a period of three months to 15 000 households in a state of severe food insecurity in 2012, benefitting approximately 75 000 people. This was followed by the distribution of foodstuffs for another three months during the peak of the 2012 lean season (May, June, and July). Furthermore, approximately 12 500 highly vulnerable households in the city of Nouakchott (nearly 10% of all households) received cash transfers of the same amount for six months starting in August 2012.

Other projects, financed by the European Union (EU), included cash transfers in the context of broader strategies to fight food insecurity and malnutrition in children and pregnant and lactating women. These projects were implemented in 2011 by WFP and its NGO partners in Gorgol, by Spain's ACF in Guidimagha, by the French Red Cross (CRF) in Gorgol and by the Research and Technology Exchange Group (GRET) in Brakna. Transfers varying from 13 000 to 22 000 UM per payment per household, depending on the case, were generally paid out on three occasions during the lean season (May, June, and July) to a relatively small number of beneficiaries (fewer than 500 households in each project).

In the past, these WFP-supported initiatives targeted the most vulnerable households through a "pure" programme of cash transfers in the city of Nouakchott.

With ARC funds, the cash transfer response strategy consists of coming to the aid of 50 000 vulnerable households in peri-urban and rural areas affected by drought, which will provide them with work,

carrying out public interest initiatives. The impact of drought is very clear in the peri-urban environment where most vulnerable households – newly established after a rural exodus discussed above – continue to draw their income from agricultural and pastoral activities. For example, vulnerable people from Nouakchott return to rural areas at the end of each lean season to work in agriculture (either in their own fields or as agricultural workers). The vulnerable inhabitants of the large regional urban centres often own a small area of land or a small herd (either belonging to them or where they are employed as herders). They also work in support activities such as selling straw or collecting wild fruits. This situation is further exacerbated by the daily price increases of basic products for low income groups.

As part of the cash transfer, each household will receive a sum of 1 550 UM per day worked for a period of 45 days over five months, amounting to nine days per month., This amounts to an additional income of 13 950 UM per month per targeted household or 69 750 UM for the five months (from February to June). The administrative costs to implement this operation are estimated at 2%. The activities are generally classified as public works, and include cleaning up garbage, sand removal, clearing tracks and all other labour-intensive activities that the local commission, consisting of representatives of the inhabitants, may consider necessary during times of drought (the activities selected will contribute to mitigating the impact of the drought).

This activity will start after a market analysis, which considers market prices, food commodity supply, availability and trader behaviour, has been undertaken in order to determine the areas where cereals are available. Depending on market variability, the cash entitlement can be adjusted to ensure that targeted households are able to meet minimum food requirements while ensuring cost efficiency through the transfer modality.

An estimate of the requirements of the Activity would be done on the basis of previous food security survey results (see below). This method will contribute to accommodating needs during an emergency intervention after a drought. For a reference year of 2012, the estimates for a payout of USD 30 million are as follows (see budget for details):

Initiative 2: Cash Transfer

Total cost of Initiative 2: 4 257 750 000 UM (or approximately USD 12,894,848⁶)

Coordination

At the national level, the ARC response for both Activities 1 and 2 would be coordinated by the CSA.

At the regional level, the response would be coordinated by the Governor through the steering committees with the support of the local authorities in areas of intervention as well as partner NGOs.

Operations

Cash is transferred according to the findings of the vulnerability survey and the market survey which will determine the availability and prices of foodstuffs on the market. From February to June, the

⁶ According to the United Nations Operational Rate of Exchange of 330.19 MRO / USD, effective as of 1 November 2013. <http://treasury.un.org/operationalrates/OperationalRates.aspx>

beneficiaries will have access to food coupons amounting to an average monetary value of 13 950 UM so that they can purchase the equivalent in food from previously selected traders. A verification process in place will allow checking the beneficiary details against a distribution list. A household representative will be identified to receive the cash for the household. WFP will assist the Government in surveying and targeting beneficiaries while partner NGOs will provide support to the Government in implementing the initiative in the areas in which they work.

Needs Assessment

The identification of risk areas via a needs assessment for the cash transfer programme is conducted in the same way as for Activity 1.

Targeting

The cash transfer programme will target households that are the most vulnerable to food insecurity following the findings of the ESAM (as mentioned above). In effect, the programme will target peri-urban areas where inhabitants have come from rural areas affected by the drought. These people are often forced by distress in the rural environment and the disruption of their means of subsistence (e.g. lack of water, pasturage and low harvests) to go to cities to survive and then set up informal settlements around Nouakchott and the big cities where households' living situations are extremely precarious and food insecure. The CSA, backed by WFP, has been able to set up a database with information on the vulnerability profile of such inhabitants. This updated database, which, for the time being, covers Nouakchott and will eventually be extended to other regions of the country, makes it possible to refine targeting, which can then be conducted in only five days. Therefore, when there is a drought, people suffering from structural food insecurity are targeted as well as those whose vulnerability increases as a result of some kind of related hardship.

Under ARC, the household targeting system will be administered by a steering committee chaired by the regional Governor. 45 neighbourhood committees will pre-identify beneficiaries in accordance with accepted vulnerability criteria. Professional interviewers who conduct the surveys will then check the quality of the pre-targeting in order to validate the initial list. This exercise will be co-steered by the National Bureau of Statistics under the supervision of the National Human Rights Commission.

Affected households with able-bodied people who are able to work are selected to participate in community sanitation work and/or the renovation of community assets (e.g. sand removal, clearing of tracks, garbage clean-up, etc.) defined jointly by the communities and local authorities.

Furthermore, vulnerable households headed by single women or including handicapped people or people suffering from illnesses which prevent them from working will receive priority assistance free of charge. Similarly, vulnerable families with young children and/or pregnant or breast-feeding mothers will receive preference.

A.III.4.4 Logical Framework

Cash transfer			
Result Chain	Performance indicators	Means of verification	Risks and hypotheses
Outcome 1: aid reaches targeted households more quickly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First contact with the targeted beneficiaries within 120 days of the disbursement of the ARC funds to the country concerned. 	CSA, partners	Presence of appropriate and sound structures, as described in the <i>Operations Plan are in place</i>
Outcome 2: faster implementation of the initiatives set up within the ARC framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall duration of 180 days from set up to execution 		Identification of a sufficient number of beneficiaries
Outcome 3: improved food consumption by targeted households throughout the cash transfer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement in households' food consumption scores (% of communities that have a higher score) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VAM assessment CSA and WFP • Secondary data from Early Warning System, Food Security Observatory, WFP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timely funding • Availability and immediate delivery of food • Availability and efficiency of the partners involved
Output 3.1: Distribution of cash to beneficiaries within the time required so that they can participate in the rehabilitation and renovation work in order to have access to sufficient, good quality food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of community infrastructures rehabilitated and renovated • 50 000 households that actually receive cash to participate in the work (households) • 250 000 impoverished people that receive cash 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring field visit by CSA officials. • Monthly Distribution report from implementing partners 	Participation by the target communities in the identification, planning, setting up and monitoring of projects linked to means of subsistence

A.III.4.5 Action Plan

Initiative	Month												Structure responsible for implementation
	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Responsible party
General													
Receipt of funds													CSA via the Treasury
Preparedness for response: Identification of local pre-qualifying suppliers, tender for supply of foodstuffs													CSA issues the tender or the agreement in accordance with the Public Procurement Code to the private sector (local traders)
Needs assessment survey													CSA, WFP, FAO, FEWS NET are role-players involved in the process
Cash Transfer													
Identification of needs													CSA and its partners (WFP) based on the vulnerability studies
Identification and selection of beneficiaries													CSA will use the database put together with the help of the WFP
Carrying out of rehabilitation and renovations													CSA, State technical departments, local authorities
Cash transfers to beneficiaries													CSA effects the transfers using financial institutions
Monitoring and assessment													CSA, decentralised administrative authorities

A.III.5 Institutional and National Coordination Framework

A.III.5.1 Management of ARC funds

ARC funds will be received by the Treasury when a payment is initiated. Then, following the public finance procedures of Mauritania, these funds will be allocated to the CSA in an account held in the name of ARC. The CSA, which falls under the supervision of an inter-ministerial crisis committee chaired by the Prime Minister, will proceed with the implementation by ensuring that all disbursements made are transparent. In implementing the plan, funds will be disbursed according to management procedures in effect according to the needs (purchase of foodstuffs or cash transfer) and deadlines for each stage of the process. Funds would be transferred to the bank accounts of partners whose assistance may be requested in carrying out operations in order to allow them to execute the tasks assigned to them.

A monthly report on disbursements as well as on operational aspects will be sent to the ARC by the coordinating structure.

A.III.5.2 Monitoring and Evaluation System (M & E):

Monitoring at the national level will be conducted by CSA officials through monitoring missions in the field, with a mission report on the progress of operations and problems encountered. Claims committees established in communities will act when they receive claims from citizens, as will the staff traditionally appointed for this task, i.e. inspectors whose mission is to supervise and evaluate initiatives managed by the CSA.

At the local implementation level the decentralised Government structure and implementing partners will conduct monthly monitoring of the operational indicators with regard to distribution and target beneficiaries. Typical indicators will include quantities and types of food commodities distributed and purchased, timeliness of distributions and number of beneficiaries by gender and age. This information will be analysed to reflect the percentage of planned tonnage versus actual distribution, percent of planned beneficiaries and actual ration and cash transfer versus planned ration (size and composition), and cash transfer, which will allow for performance and progress appraisal of each activity.

Evaluation and internal auditing: The CSA has a general inspectorate consisting of six sections which will carry out financial monitoring, as well as the State Inspectorate which monitors all public financing activities. This internal monitoring should be based on the organisation of a decentralised system which empowers all administrative levels (community, county and regional).

Evaluation and external auditing: The CSA in its capacity as coordinating body will see to the submission of a monthly operational and financial report to the ARC. A final operational and financial report will also be submitted at the end of operations to the ARC in accordance with the specimen report and presenting a detailed comparison of the budget as per the Final Implementation Plan (FIP) and actual expenditure. An audit by the Auditor General at the end of operations would be conducted according to terms of referenced developed by the ARC Secretariat.

Diagram of monitoring roles and responsibilities:

Monitoring tool	Inter-Ministerial Monitoring Committee (CIMS)	Technical Monitoring Committee	Regional Monitoring Committees	County Monitoring Committee	Partners
↓					
Made up of	- The Prime Minister - Other relevant Ministers	- Ministry of the Interior - CSA - Ministry of Rural Development	- The Governor of the Region - The Heads of the Regional Technical Departments - Elected officials	- The Prefect - The Heads of the County Departments - Elected officials	- WFP - FAO - NGOs
↓					
Responsibility	Decision-making with respect to mobilising the necessary resources in order to respond to the emergency	Coordination and conducting of supervisory missions in the field	Coordination and monitoring of initiatives at the regional level	Coordination, execution and monitoring of the initiatives at county level	Participation in assessing needs, identification of beneficiaries and implementation in partnership with Government

A.III.6 Risks and Hypotheses:

The main risks that could interfere with the realisation of the proposed initiatives are:

- Delays in disbursements
- Not adhering to the transport schedules
- Political instability
- Lack of cooperation by the communities in the implementation of the initiatives

B. Additional Documents

- Mauritanian EMEL plan
- Impact assessment of cash transfer programmes in Mauritania

C. Budget

Total budget of the 2 initiatives: 9 577 129 680 UM (or approximately USD 29,004,905⁷)

Items	Tonnage	Cost in UM	Beneficiaries (households)
Initiative 1: Free food distribution			
		5 153 293 000	109 875
Wheat purchases	27 464	3 231 967 000	
Oil purchases	2 197	942 513 000	
Total food	29 661		
Transport costs		860 169 000	
Implementation costs		118 644 000	
<i>Sub-total</i>		5 153 293 000	
Initiative 2: Cash transfer			
		3 557 250 000	50 000
Implementation costs		697 500 000 (2%)	
<i>Sub-total</i>		4 257 750 000	
Audit costs		13 090 680	
Monitoring		155 996 000	
Grand Total		9 577 129 680	

⁷ According to the United Nations Operational Rate of Exchange of 330.19 MRO / USD, effective as of 1 November 2013. <http://treasury.un.org/operationalrates/OperationalRates.aspx>