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Organization of the  
United Nations

# Evaluation of the project “Food and Nutrition Security Resilience Programme: Building food system resilience in protracted crises”



**Project Evaluation Series  
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# **Evaluation of the project “Food and Nutrition Security Resilience Programme: Building food system resilience in protracted crises”**

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## Abstract

This evaluation provides a final assessment of the FAO project “Food and Nutrition Security Resilience Programme (FNS-REPRO): Building food system resilience in protracted crises”. The project ran from 2019 to 2024, with a budget of USD 28 million, and sought to address the relationship between conflict and food insecurity in the Sudan (Darfur), Somaliland and South Sudan.

The evaluation provides an independent assessment of the project’s relevance and appropriateness of its underlying approach, as well as the contributions made to improved rural food security, nutrition and resilience. A mixed methods approach was used to gather data from project documents and monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning (MEAL) data, as well as conducting over 100 interviews, 20 focus group discussions, and field visits to South Sudan and Somaliland.

The evaluation found that, by seeking to upgrade whole food systems along selected value chains in fragile contexts, FNS-REPRO presented a novel and promising approach to addressing the interplay between conflict and hunger. The project design reflected the complex interactions between agricultural value chains, natural resources management and local conflict drivers. However, there was a lack of coherence between different components, e.g. building capacities on nutrition was not integrated into the work on agricultural value chains. The evaluation found clear results in terms of improving agricultural income generation capacity, local natural resources management and conflict management practices, and the engagement of women in decision-making processes. However, the evaluation also found a lack of partnerships with local private sector actors, which presents a sustainability risk for the results observed.

Eight recommendations are made for future projects: i) to broaden the value chain support to include a whole-of-systems approach, from production through storage and access to market; ii) to identify local partners to carry forward the natural resources management and conflict-management processes developed within the project implementation phase; iii) to dedicate specific budget lines to peacebuilding in future projects operating in similar fragile contexts; iv) to continue supporting engagement of women and young people in decision-making about natural resources management and agricultural value chain development; v) to develop a new partnership model for community-based outcome-level monitoring; vi) to review the evidence gaps across the revised theories of change, identifying areas where improved community-based outcome monitoring can provide further evidence; vii) to conduct a systematic analysis of the pathways to improve nutritional quality/diversity during project design stage; and viii) to prioritize project area-based management for future similar projects.



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## Abbreviations

AAP	accountability to affected people
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FNS-REPRO	Food and Nutrition Security Resilience Programme
MEAL	monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning
NRM	natural resources management
RIMA	resilience index measurement and analysis
RTEA	Resilience Team East Africa
WUR	Wageningen University & Research

# Map of Somalia



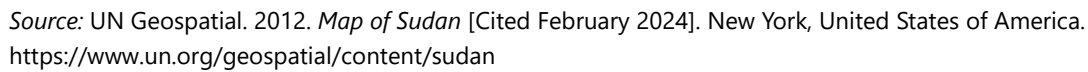
Source: UN Geospatial. 2011. *Map of Somalia* [Cited February 2024]. New York, United States of America. <https://www.un.org/geospatial/content/somalia>

## Map of South Sudan



Source: UN Geospatial. 2020. *Map of South Sudan* [Cited February 2024]. New York, United States of America. <https://www.un.org/geospatial/content/south-sudan-1>

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# Executive summary

## Introduction

1. The “Food and Nutrition Security Resilience Programme (FNS-REPRO): Building food system resilience in protracted crises” is a collaborative initiative funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and implemented by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in partnership with Wageningen University & Research (WUR). The project commenced in October 2019, with an initial completion date of September 2023, which was later extended to March 2024. FNS-REPRO aims to enhance food system resilience in regions affected by protracted crises, specifically targeting Somaliland, South Sudan and the Sudan.
2. The evaluation covered the implementation period from October 2019 to August 2023, and all activities implemented by FAO and its partners in the geographic areas in the three target countries: Sool and Sanaag in Somalia (Somaliland); Akobo, Aweil, Bor, Magwi, Renk, Torit, Wau, Yambio in South Sudan; and East Darfur and North Darfur in the Sudan.
3. The specific objectives of the evaluation were to:
  - i. assess the relevance and appropriateness of the project and its underlying approaches;
  - ii. assess the results and contributions of FNS-REPRO components (particularly the effectiveness of the different approaches used and, where possible, their impact and sustainability);
  - iii. assess the project’s implementation strategy, institutional arrangements as well as its management and operational systems;
  - iv. identify lessons learned, good practices and success stories that can be scaled up or fed into the broader policymaking efforts; provide actionable recommendations for future resilience-building programming.
4. Based on its objectives and scope, the evaluation seeks to answer the key questions outlined below:
  - i. EQ 1: To what extent was the project design relevant and appropriate to achieve the programmed outcomes?
  - ii. EQ 2: To what extent has the project built with and/or catalysed existing relevant initiatives at global, regional, national and subnational levels?
  - iii. EQ 3: To what extent has the project contributed to the expected outcomes (resilient livelihoods and food systems and sustainable localized peace) in the selected countries?
  - iv. EQ 4: To what extent has the project addressed cross-cutting aspects in design and throughout implementation?
  - v. EQ 5: What are the prospects for sustainability of the results achieved after project completion?
  - vi. EQ 6: To what extent were the management arrangements and governance structure of the project adequate to deliver the intended results in an efficient manner?
5. The evaluation employed a utilization-focused approach, emphasizing the practical application of findings for improving future interventions in similar contexts.

## Main findings

*EQ 1: To what extent was the project design relevant and appropriate to achieve the programmed outcomes?*

**Finding 1.** The FNS-REPRO project design met a clear and pressing need at the time and continues to do so to this day. The implementation of a livelihoods and resilience approach in the unstable and fragile contexts of the Sudan, South Sudan and Somalia, presented a novel and promising approach to tackling the needs identified in each country. The multicomponent project developed focused on agricultural value chains, with the aim of moving away from humanitarian emergency assistance and contribute to local peace, in line with United Nations Security Council Resolution 2417.

**Finding 2.** The activities outlined in the theory of change all present clear and reasonable steps towards improving resilience in the areas of food security and food systems, based on clear and structured needs assessments. Although the theory of change (TOC) well explains the interlinkages between value chains, natural resources management and the overall project objectives, it is less clear how these interact with or contribute to the project's aim of improving nutrition at the community level. Likewise, the inclusion of a separate project component for learning activities reduced the degree to which learning was embedded across the other project activity areas, and the absence of specific budget lines for peacebuilding or conflict management activities complicated efforts in this area.

**Finding 3.** The three value chains selected for support were well suited with potential in terms of sustainable growth local income generation and with clear potential for improving the resilience of local food systems and rural livelihoods in the face of continued conflict and climate risks. Nevertheless, in each case, the value chain selected presents a number of challenges and complexities arising for any attempt to upgrade them. These challenges have in some cases deterred private sector engagement in the past, which may explain some of the difficulties observed in building sustainable partnerships below (see Finding 11 on this point).

*EQ 2: To what extent has the project built with and/or catalysed existing relevant initiatives at global, regional, national and subnational levels?*

**Finding 4.** FNS-REPRO is broadly aligned with other relevant initiatives at global, regional and national levels by FAO and other actors, and the regional team has actively developed synergies with other donors around the project. Moreover, learnings from previous initiatives at country level were integrated into the design of project activities. However, leverage of private sector actors in the selected agricultural value chains remains weak, despite the best efforts of FAO to overcome this (see Finding 11).

*EQ 3: To what extent has the project contributed to the expected outcomes (resilient livelihoods and food systems and sustainable localized peace) in the selected countries?*

**Finding 5.** FNS-REPRO has made some tangible contributions to improving household resilience through improved agricultural production capacities and localized management of natural resources and conflict risks, but the scale and sustainability of these changes remains limited.

**Finding 6.** (*Output 1: Sustainable natural resources management*): Improvements in sustainable community-based natural resources management practices have been observed in each country. Primary areas of improvement relate to the development of natural resources management action plans and frameworks, as well as support to enhance inclusivity and functioning of the natural resources management (NRM) Committees at community level.

**Finding 7.** (*Output 2: Resilient livelihoods and food systems*): Value chain improvements have been recorded in all three countries. However, the systemic upgrading of the value chains is yet to be seen as a result achieved by FNS-REPRO.

**Finding 8.** (*Output 3: Nutritional capacity and practice*): Emerging improvements in nutritional capacity have been observed at the local level in each country, including increased nutritional diversity of crops grown by smallholder farms and in some cases increased diversity of crops consumed by households. In

addition, a small number of unanticipated positive consequences were also observed. No widespread changes in nutritional practices have been observed yet, and the choice of seeds for the demonstration gardens was not well-aligned to nutritional gaps identified in FAO's own baseline assessment.

**Finding 9.** *(Cross-cutting, sustainable localized peace).* FNS-REPRO activities supported a mix of locally embedded natural resources management Committees, conflict resolution mechanisms and demonstration farms that were associated with reductions in intercommunal conflict and conflict risk in each of the three intervention countries.

**Finding 10.** *(Output 4: contributions to the evidence-base):* The FNS-REPRO learning component contributed to project learning by helping the implementation teams adjust, revise and redefine the overall project and intervention approach at country level based on the context needs. However, there are limited results of FNS-REPRO contributions to "external learning" of other actors, including community members, policymakers, researchers and implementers of other initiatives.

*EQ 4: To what extent has the project addressed cross-cutting aspects in design and throughout implementation?*

**Finding 11.** Multisectoral context analyses were conducted during the inception phase and helped to increase the integration of gender and inclusion in project design, e.g. by identifying specific gender inequities and vulnerabilities for unemployed youth and identifying approaches to improve beneficiary selection across age and gender parameters in response. This in turn contributed to results in terms of increased engagement of women and young people in decision-making processes related to natural resources management and rural livelihood generation activities.

*EQ 5.: What are the prospects for sustainability of the results achieved after project completion?*

**Finding 12.** Improvements to the selected value chains and NRM systems highlighted in Finding 5 are nascent but tangible and evolving. The sustainability of the changes observed requires strong ownership by local partners and the engagement of private sector and governance structures to embed the progress made. At present, despite efforts made by FNS-REPRO teams in each country of intervention, the engagement of private sector actors across the value chains remains limited. More local ownership has been achieved regarding the NRM Committees and engagement of women's community groups in collective decision-making at local level. As such, the likelihood for sustained results after project completion remain mixed.

**Finding 13.** FNS-REPRO did have some success in promoting ownership by local women-led stakeholder groups, which suggests that some of the changes to female representation in decision-making structures and agribusiness production infrastructure may be sustained beyond project closure.

*EQ 6: To what extent were the management arrangements and governance structure of the project adequate to deliver the intended results in an efficient manner?*

**Finding 14.** The management arrangements for FNS-REPRO reflected the complexity of the project and the regional nature of the food insecurity and protracted crises in the horn of Africa. The role of the FAO Regional Offices and technical personnel added clear value to the project in terms of design, implementation and monitoring. The learning processes, contributed significantly to the adaptive

management processes used by FNS-REPRO, but struggled to provide significant community level primary data to contribute to wider learning outside the management cycle.

**Finding 15.** The monitoring framework was comprehensive and well-designed, but implementation of outcome level data collection was weak, limiting the ability of stakeholders both within and outside the project implementation team to see the results of FNS-REPRO activities at community level.

## Conclusions

**Conclusion 1.** FNS-REPRO presented a novel and promising approach to addressing the interplay between conflict and hunger in a context of protracted conflict and food insecurity (based on Findings 1 and 3).

6. The use of a resilience- and livelihoods-based approach in such fragile contexts, with the aim of reforming and upgrading whole food systems along selected value chains, was a distinctive feature of the project at the time of design. This is distinct from the prevailing use of continued humanitarian assistance responding to chronic food insecurity and food system shocks in the region in the years prior to FNS-REPRO. It has the potential to help move communities affected by protracted crisis and chronic conflict risk away from dependency on emergency food assistance towards more resilient agricultural production practice.

**Conclusion 2.** The complexity of the project design reflected a context-specific analysis of the interactions between agricultural value chains, natural resources management and local conflict drivers in remote and rural parts of Somaliland, South Sudan and the Sudan. But the cohesiveness between different component areas was lacking, with some missed opportunities mutually reinforcing linkages at community-level (based on Finding 2).

7. FAO conducted structured needs analyses during project design stage, which were then used to build a clear and evidence-based theory of change across each of the four project components. The use of context-specific analyses of food and seed systems in each location improved the selection of modalities, approaches and beneficiary groups. While each of the component activities made sense within their own right, there were only limited linkages observed between the different component areas, such as linking value chains improvements to local natural resources management and peacebuilding capacities. Project teams at country level appeared to lack clear area-based strategies for leveraging gains derived from FNS-REPRO's natural resources management components in the value chain upgrade and vice versa, and limited instances of budget lines moving between component areas.

**Conclusion 3.** The initial design of the nutrition component of the project lacked the strategic and context-sensitive pathway to improve nutritional knowledge, capacity and practice at community level. Nevertheless, small-scale improvements in nutritional diversity have been observed among direct participants in project activities in each of the three countries of intervention (based on Findings 2, 5 and 8).

8. The nutrition component was insufficiently integrated into the initial project design and project teams lacked the technical expertise and local partnerships to maximize the potential of the activities under this component. The linkages between natural resources management, agricultural value chain improvements and improved nutritional capacity were not clear at the initial design stage and opportunities were missed to identify the pathways to improved nutritional quality and diversity arising from results achieved in other areas of the project. These problems were partly mitigated by a redesign of the nutrition component at the mid-term phase, which led to some clear, but small-scale improvements in the diversity of crops produced and consumed by project beneficiaries. But wide-scale changes in nutritional knowledge, capacities and practices were not observed in the communities of intervention during the project lifecycle.

**Conclusion 4.** The conflict-sensitivity of the project could have been improved by assigning specific budget lines to this activity from the outset (based on Findings 2 and 9).

9. As outlined in Finding 9, FNS-REPRO activities made a number of contributions to reducing conflict risk in the communities engaged with. However, as per Finding 2, these results were achieved through a mix of support provided to thematic budget lines, such as natural resources management and drawing from regional and global FAO resources – external to the project budget – through the conflict and peace units in Rome and Nairobi. In contrast, the initial project design did not include specific budget lines for peacebuilding and conflict management activities. FAO largely mitigated this weakness once the multidisciplinary analysis was complete by pulling from i) FAO's global memorandum of understanding with InterPeace; ii) its conflict and peace analytical capacities (funded through the Global Network Against Food Crisis); and iii) the adaptation of Country Office budget lines to include specific activities supporting conflict management capacities at community level. Nevertheless, inclusion of a specific budget line for conflict risk reduction at the outset could have increased the gains seen in this area during implementation.

**Conclusion 5.** The use of a regional approach to project design and implementation added value to the technical expertise available to project teams and increased the potential for cross-country learning and contributions to the wider policy debate (based on Findings 2, 9, 11 and 14).

10. While the project activities and selected value chains differed according to country contexts, the use of a single regional project design allowed FAO's Regional Office to provide additional expertise in support of Country Office personnel, including on nutrition, conflict, resilience, monitoring, evaluation and learning, and private sector engagement. This support led to clear improvements in the conflict sensitivity of the programming, the coherence of the approaches taken towards natural resources management capacity building and allowed for a coherent logframe to be built across the three country contexts (see Findings 2 and 14 on this point). It further increased the potential for cross-country learning and discussion through WUR-led sensemaking and the Resilience Team East Africa (RTEA)-led review and planning activities, and periodic review and updates of progress in each country, challenges encountered and solutions found.

**Conclusion 6.** FNS-REPRO did yield clear results in each country in terms of improving agricultural income generation capacity, local natural resources management and conflict management practices, and the engagement of women in decision-making processes (based on Findings 5-9, 11 and 13).

11. In the absence of full endline surveys at this stage, evidence of changes at community level cannot be considered statistically representative. Nevertheless, the evaluation field visits did find tangible evidence of improvements in i) income-generating capacity of targeted farmers and farmer groups across the selected value chains in each country; ii) improved natural resources management capacities at local level in the intervention communities; iii) improved conflict management and resolution capacities, linked to reduced instances of natural resource-based conflict in some instances; and iv) improvements in the participation of women and youth in community-based decision-making. Lastly, unanticipated results were also observed regarding the impact of conflict resolution training activities on reduced risk of intimate partner violence in food insecure households.

**Conclusion 7.** The sustainability of the results observed along the selected value chains is somewhat limited by the lack of clear and longstanding partnerships with local private sector actors and governance

bodies. Nevertheless, the emerging results recorded thus far do put the project in a good position to develop such partnerships in the future (based on Findings 5 and 12).

12. Whilst income generation capacity has improved in each of the selected value chains, it remains to be seen how sustainable these results will be beyond the project lifecycle. Partnerships with private sector actors have, despite numerous efforts of outreach by FAO Country Offices, not yielded the type of locally-based ownership that would ensure continued investment support and market engagement required to make these gains sustainable. Likewise, while the efforts to reform the seed sector in South Sudan and upgrade the gum Arabic production and enhance intercropping in Darfur have yielded tangible results, changes to the policy frameworks and governance mechanisms for each of the respective value chains are required to ensure these results become embedded in each country. Nevertheless, initial momentum has been generated, which could, with strategic and sustained engagement of other actors, help to attract increased private sector engagement in the future. And the deliberate focus on working with partners based in local rural communities has the potential to positively impact sustainability through improved local capacity and practice.

**Conclusion 8.** The learning component of the project succeeded in developing the adaptive management capacity and practices of FNS-REPRO project personnel, and contributed to policy discussions about building food systems resilience, but broadly failed to deliver evidence about what worked for food systems resilience-building across the different contexts seen in the three countries. As a result, the project's contributions to regional and global level policy, thinking and practice on food systems resilience remains limited at the time of writing (based on Findings 2, 10, 15 and 15).

13. Weaknesses in the division of labour between FAO and the WUR (as observed in Findings 2 and 14, above), as well as the initial lack of local community-based data collection teams operating under the latter, meant that primary data about outcomes achieved within communities was lacking. These factors reduced the project's ability to fully capitalize on the potential relationships with the Global Network Against Food Crises or other regional and global policy fora. Nevertheless, the learning component did contribute to policy discussions about food systems resilience, most notably through high level events organized by FAO and WUR in the Netherlands and elsewhere, as well as the UN Food Systems Summits in 2022 and 2023. Moreover, it also had clear and tangible results in the area of building FAO's own capacity for adaptive management. The sensemaking approach designed and implemented with Wageningen's support, combined with the training provided by the University to FAO country teams, yielded an increase in confidence in using real-time data and sensemaking approaches to course correct and adapt to shifting contexts over time. And partnerships with local universities to support community-based data collection took place during the course of the project implementation

## Recommendations

**Recommendation 1.** (FAO RTEA and Country Offices, national and local administrations including line ministries and food system governance bodies): Broaden the support to selected value chains to include a whole-of-systems approach, involving the full range of stakeholders along the length of the value chain, from production through storage and access to market.

**Recommendation 2.** (FAO RTEA and Country Offices, national and local administrations including line ministries and natural resource management governance bodies): Build on the improved natural resources management capacities by identifying local governance and community partners with an incentive to continue the work of the NRM and accountability to affected people (AAP) committees and

follow-up with local leaders to ensure continued engagement of communities with the committee processes.

**Recommendation 3.** (FAO RTEA and Country Offices): Assign specific budget lines to future projects operating in similar thematic areas in contexts of protracted conflict, dedicated to peacebuilding activities to ensure that conflict risk reduction benefits from the improvements seen in local natural resources management capacities, as well as the potential impacts of improved income generation capacities on social cohesion.

**Recommendation 4.** (FAO RTEA, Conflict and Peace Unit, Country Offices, national and local administrations including line ministries and natural resource management governance bodies): Continue supporting peace champions and female and young members of NRM and AAP committees to enhance the engagement of women and youth in decision-making about natural resources management and agricultural value chain development.

**Recommendation 5.** (FAO RTEA, WUR project team and learning partners): Develop a new partnership model to improve the field presence and community-based outcome-level monitoring data generated by the learning component. The new partnership should include funding and terms of reference for country-based enumerators and data analysts to help collect and analyse outcome data across the value chain, natural resources management, nutrition and peacebuilding areas of FNS-REPRO's activities.

**Recommendation 6.** (FAO RTEA and WUR project team, FAO MEAL teams at country and regional level): Review the evidence gaps across the revised theories of change, identifying areas where an improved community-based outcome monitoring system can provide primary data. Assess the potential for evidence generation that compares results across the three country contexts and identification of lessons learned that can contribute to the global policy dialogue on responses to food insecurity in conflict-affected contexts. Design additional outcome-level data collection around the needs identified herein.

**Recommendation 7.** (FAO RTEA and Country Offices): Conduct a systematic analysis of the opportunities to improve nutritional quality and diversity during project design stage for future projects that aim to build food and nutrition security in protracted crises. Ensure that opportunities for improving nutrition are explored across the full range of impact pathways, whether through standalone nutrition-oriented activities or mainstreaming of good nutritional practices in other project components. Review the place of nutritional improvements in the FNS-REPRO theory of change. Where feasible, seek to maximize the positive impact of improved livelihoods and agricultural value chains on household nutritional quality and variety (see Finding 8). Where these links are not feasible, consider reallocating budget lines towards activities better placed to improve the resilience of communities to food insecurity and conflict.

**Recommendation 8.** (FAO RTEA, Country Offices and FAO MEAL teams at country and regional level): Review the potential for improving linkages between the FNS-REPRO components at a local level, by prioritizing area-based budgeting and management structures cutting across each thematic area and benefiting from multisectoral outcome level data collection to enhance adaptive management processes in real-time.

14. By addressing these recommendations, future programmes can enhance their effectiveness, sustainability and impact, ultimately contributing to more resilient food systems in regions affected by protracted crises.



# **1. Introduction**

1. This report presents the results of the final evaluation of the “Food and Nutrition Security Resilience Programme (FNS-REPRO): Building food system resilience in protracted crises”. The project was funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and implemented jointly by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and Wageningen University & Research (WUR). The project began in October 2019 and was expected to be completed in September 2023; however, it received a no-cost extension through 31 March 2024.

## **1.1 Purpose of the evaluation**

2. The evaluation was requested by FNS-REPRO Global Steering Committee in The Hague on 21 September 2022 and endorsed by its members. Ultimately the purpose of the evaluation is to provide FAO management and project teams with evidence-based lessons and best practices to enhance learning and inform future strategic decisions and programming for FAO and other stakeholders working in building food system resilience in the region.
3. Adopting a utilization-focused approach, and as requested by the FNS-REPRO Global Steering Committee, the objectives of the final evaluation are threefold:
  - i. Organizational and stakeholder learning and knowledge: To capture lessons learned from the project, in terms of what worked in project design, management, implementation and monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning (MEAL), but also documenting key challenges that affected project implementation and impact as well as opportunities to help inform stakeholder and policy priorities in selected value chains, natural resources management (NRM) and nutrition for future programming and scaling.
  - ii. Accountability and credibility: To promote accountability to the donor, to the Project Task Force (PTF) and the partners, and ultimately to the beneficiaries. This will entail a performance review of the project, at overall (regional and global), country project and output levels. It will also ensure transparency and openness about the performance and quality of the project. and
  - iii. Informing strategic and operational decisions: On the basis of the lessons learned, to help project partners decide how they can further reform and advance the goals of the project, what may need to change in the remainder of the FNS-REPRO implementation period, and what follow up actions may be desirable, if any.

## **1.2 Intended users**

4. The primary intended users of the evaluation are:
  - i. FAO, the project team, and the members of the PTF at FAO headquarters, Regional Offices and technical divisions, which will use the findings and lessons identified in the evaluation to finalize project activities; plan for the sustainability of the results achieved; and improve formulation and implementation of similar projects at national and global levels;

- ii. WUR, which will use the findings and recommendations to finalize project activities, plan for the sustainability of the results achieved and improve the formulation and implementation of similar projects at national and global levels;
- iii. the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, FNS-REPRO's donor, which will use the evaluation results for accountability, as well as drawing on lessons from this project to orient their funding and implementation decisions regarding future similar initiatives;
- iv. the embassies of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Somalia, South Sudan and the Sudan;
- v. the governments of the recipient countries, their line ministries and decentralized entities involved in the formulation and implementation of national agricultural strategies and policies; and
- vi. key implementation partners, development partners, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society involved in the sector, and other stakeholders.

### **1.3 Scope and objectives of the evaluation**

- 5. The evaluation has covered the implementation period from October 2019 to August 2023, and all activities implemented by FAO and its partners in the geographic areas in the three target countries: Sool and Sanaag in Somalia (Somaliland); Akobo, Aweil, Bor, Magwi, Renk, Torit, Wau, Yambio in South Sudan; and East Darfur and North Darfur in the Sudan.
- 6. The evaluation adopted the principles of being collaborative, learning-oriented and systemic. While assessing the project's relevance, effectiveness, organizational performance (efficiency) and sustainability, the evaluation took into consideration the fact that the context is characterized by multiple protracted crises and is, thus, highly volatile, fragile and conflict-affected, with recurring shocks and stressors (including climate induced).
- 7. The specific objectives of the evaluation are to:
  - i. assess the relevance and appropriateness of the project and its underlying approaches;
  - ii. assess the results and contributions of FNS-REPRO components (particularly the effectiveness of the different approaches used and, where possible, their impact and sustainability);
  - iii. assess the project's implementation strategy, institutional arrangements as well as its management and operational systems;
  - iv. identify lessons learned, good practices and success stories that can be scaled up or fed into the broader policymaking efforts; and
  - v. provide actionable recommendations for future resilience-building programming.
- 8. In order to meet the above objectives, the evaluation focused on FNS-REPRO contributions at the regional and global levels to food-system-resilience thinking, policy and practice beyond the project itself. It identified and assessed coherence between FNS-REPRO and other initiatives in the target countries, including initiatives funded by the donor, by FAO

and by other organizations, such as the Somalia Information and Resilience Building Action (SIRA), cash/voucher payment initiatives, Global Network Against Food Crises (GNAFC), and the Joint Resilience Initiative of the Rome-based agencies. Finally, the evaluation sought to assess the catalytic effect of FNS-REPRO by identifying and assessing FNS-REPRO's contribution to funding initiatives seeking to promote resilient food systems in fragile contexts.

9. Based on its objectives and scope, the evaluation seeks to answer the key questions addressing the respective Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC) criteria, as outlined below.
  - i. EQ 1: To what extent was the project design relevant and appropriate to achieve the programmed outcomes?
  - ii. EQ 2: To what extent has the project built with and/or catalysed existing relevant initiatives at global, regional, national and subnational levels?
  - iii. EQ 3: To what extent has the project contributed to the expected outcomes (resilient livelihoods and food systems and sustainable localized peace) in the selected countries?
  - iv. EQ 4: To what extent has the project addressed cross-cutting aspects in design and throughout implementation?
  - v. EQ 5: What are the prospects for sustainability of the results achieved after project completion?
  - vi. EQ 6: To what extent were the management arrangements and governance structure of the project adequate to deliver the intended results in an efficient manner?

## **1.4 Methodology**

10. The methodology for this evaluation adopted a theory-based approach. It relied on specific tools so that the Evaluation Team could understand the project design and its performance, the direction that the project took throughout implementation and future prospects, particularly to ensure the sustainability of results and generating lessons learned.
11. This evaluation adopted a participatory and transparent approach throughout the whole process: it involved the project team, central and provincial government departments, the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, FAO Resilience Team East Africa (RTEA), FAO Somalia, FAO South Sudan, FAO Sudan (the), WUR, direct beneficiaries, universities, local NGOs and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) which participated and directly engaged in implementing various components of the project at different levels. The information was triangulated to validate evidence and support the analysis that fed into conclusions and recommendations.
12. A mixed methods approach was applied to gather data from different sources and informants, as presented in the table below:

<b>Desk review</b>	A desk review was conducted to collect and analyse existing documents, outputs and monitoring reports (e.g. project documents and agreement, progress and thematic reports, past evaluations, learning papers, indicators tables and MEAL framework provided by the project team). This provided a better understanding of the context and structure of the project. A documentation repository was created using a shared drive to facilitate consultation and document sharing among the Evaluation Team.
<b>Semi-structured interviews</b>	Semi-structured interviews with key informants were conducted to collect information and evidence from the most relevant stakeholders (e.g. project personnel and key partner institutions involved in project design and implementation, relevant government stakeholders at provincial levels, local authorities and service providers). Most interviews were conducted remotely.
<b>Field visits to South Sudan and Somaliland</b>	The Evaluation Team, through different group settings and length of field visits, visited the counties of Wau, Aweil, Bor, Magwi, Torit, Yambio and Juba in South Sudan as well as the regions of Hargeisa, Sool and Sanaag in Somalia. In-person interviews and focus group discussions were held alongside on-site verification of project achievements and an assessment of the interest and capacities of beneficiaries and local stakeholders. The Evaluation Team also attended two sensemaking workshops in October 2023 (see below) facilitated by the project team to take notes of key stories of change from key actors of FNS-REPRO, reflections on emerging lessons and evidence that inform learning agenda product.
<b>Sensemaking workshop</b>	A collaborative sensemaking workshop was conducted in October 2023 towards the end of the main evaluation phase (data collection and analysis) to validate, organize and interpret findings and data. The workshop helped develop a shared understanding to move forward with the final report for learning purposes. The workshop was hybrid, spanned over two days and was attended by the regional and country project teams, Wageningen University & Research (WUR) and the Evaluation Team.
<b>Preliminary briefing to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs</b>	A preliminary briefing of draft findings of the final evaluation of FNS-REPRO was given to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) of the Netherlands. This allowed the Evaluation Team to receive further inputs and comments as well as additional areas of focus and analysis. It also helped the Evaluation Team to sharpen the final report

13. Data collection: primary data collection was done through interviews (both in-person and remote), focus groups discussions and on-site observation. Following the preliminary review of key documentation during the inception phase, a systematic desk review continued throughout the exercise. This allowed for an ongoing analysis of secondary quantitative and qualitative information and accelerated the triangulation of information. More than 100 interviews and 20 focus group discussions were conducted throughout the evaluation exercise.
14. Data analysis and triangulation: the methodology for this evaluation mixed quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques from primary and secondary sources. The evaluation team ensured triangulation by cross-checking and confirming findings and conclusions through the various sources. A series of recurrent remote team meetings were held to analyse data, facilitate the triangulation of sources, and discuss findings as part of the analytical process that benefits from different expertise brought by each team member.
15. Gender and minority groups: the United Nations Evaluation Group’s Guidance on Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation (UNEG, 2011) was used to shape and conduct the evaluation. In fact, the team used it as a basis to ensure that the gender and human rights aspects of the project are integrated into the evaluation. In terms of gender analysis, the Evaluation Team assessed the project’s contribution to the objectives presented in the FAO Policy on Gender Equality (FAO, 2020a). During data collection, the team ensured that all stakeholders were asked about gender issues related to the different activities to ensure an adequate gender focus in the report. The team

conducted a gender-disaggregated data analysis where available and assessed the extent to which the different needs, priorities, voices and vulnerabilities of women and girls were considered in the project's design, implementation (including targeting and coverage) and monitoring. During the data collection process, the Evaluation Team emphasized gathering women's views.

16. Ethical considerations: the evaluation was conducted in coherence with the 2020 United Nations Evaluation Group's Ethical Guidelines and Code of Conduct (UNEG, 2020) The Evaluation Team was responsible for safeguarding and ensuring ethics at all stages of the evaluation. The protocol included ensuring that respondent participation, particularly in focus group discussions, was voluntary. It was made clear to respondents that no personally identifiable information would be collected by the Evaluation Team and that all responses would be anonymous so that findings could not be attributed to specific respondents. Informants were invited to speak in the language they felt more comfortable with (including national languages, by relying on other local focus group discussion participants for translation).

## **1.5 Limitations**

17. The lack of available endline data, including resilience index measurement and analysis (RIMA) was a limitation. The Evaluation Team applied various data collection methods and worked closely with project personnel to ensure access to reliable data. In addition, the methodology ensured an adequate triangulation of data and information. However, the planned endline study and RIMA analysis, which were expected to provide quantitative data, were not completed by the end of the evaluation and their results were not available for use.
18. The conflict in the Sudan was a constraint. Due to the deteriorating situation, it was not possible for the Evaluation Team to conduct any field missions to the country. Additionally, delays and cancellation of remote interviews with stakeholders from Sudan happened consistently due to erupting fights thus limiting primary data collection in that country.
19. Security restrictions and access constraints to some areas of implementation were also a limitation. In Somaliland, some areas were not accessible without prior specialized training thus limiting the number of team members who would interact face-to-face with communities, while in South Sudan, bad infrastructure played a role in shortening some field visits.
20. In addition, the absence of independent translators within the Evaluation Team was a limitation. This meant that, during focus group discussions with community members, the Team relied on focus group participants to translate for each other, where one or several were unable to speak sufficient English. This method introduces potential bias in the translation, as community members themselves are not independent from the intervention and its effects.

## **1.6 Structure of the report**

21. Following this introduction, section 2 presents the background and context of the project, followed by findings in section 3 and conclusions and recommendations in section 4.



## 2 Background and context of the project

### 2.1 Overall description of FNS-REPRO

22. FNS-REPRO, funded by the Government of the Netherlands, is a four-year project of USD 28 million that contributes directly to the operationalization of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2417 by addressing the “cause-effect” relationship between conflict and food insecurity, in the Sudan (Darfur), Somaliland and South Sudan. The project agreement was signed on 23 September 2019. It became operational in October 2019 and the inception phase was completed in February 2019 (FAO, 2022a).

#### Box 1. United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 2417

In 2018, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 2417 (UNSCR 2417), which highlights the link between conflict and hunger and calls for urgent action to address food insecurity in conflict-affected areas. The resolution emphasizes the need to address the root causes of food insecurity in such areas, including poverty, inequality, and lack of access to land and other resources. It calls on the international community to support sustainable agriculture and rural development and to promote food security and nutrition for all. The Netherlands played a key role in the adoption of UNSCR 2417.

23. FNS-REPRO is based on the premise that strong, resilient livelihoods are people’s best defence against hunger and malnutrition: people with resilient livelihoods are better prepared for and can better cope with shocks and withstand hazards. Investment in resilient livelihoods aims to reduce humanitarian need and allow for more targeted allocation of humanitarian resources. The focus on food systems resilience aims to strengthen the enabling environment in which livelihoods operate and resilience takes shape. By implementing a livelihood and resilience-based approach within communities affected by chronically elevated conflict risk and protracted crisis, FNS-REPRO allows FAO and its partners to demonstrate strengthened cooperation across the humanitarian-development-peace (HDP) nexus, and to support efforts to reduce conflict risk and improve local conflict management capacity.

#### Box 2. FNS-REPRO expected results

Impact: Improve food and nutrition security and the capacity of households to withstand and adapt to shocks.

Outcome: Resilient livelihoods and food systems and contributions to sustainable localized peace.

Output 1: Improved inclusive access to and management of local natural resources. The environment plays a key role in driving conflict in Somaliland, South Sudan and the Sudan. Communities depend on natural resources such as land and water for their socioeconomic activities and for sustainable livelihoods (primarily subsistence agriculture, including farming or pastoralism). Risks of natural resource degradation, resource-based conflict and impoverishment are further intensified by various factors, ranging from loss of access to water to labour migration. In addition, conflicts resulting from loss of access to resources impact women, men, youth, the elderly and children differently. The activities implemented to achieve this output include: i) rehabilitation of water points and catchments; ii) support for the implementation of natural resources management plans and land restoration activities; iii) training in good agricultural practices; and iv) dialogue and capacity development for sustaining peace at the community level.

Output 2: Improved livelihood and income opportunities along selected value chains. The bulk of resources under FNS-REPRO are programmed under this output. FNS-REPRO works on value chains that are essential to farming systems and target beneficiary resilience. FNS-REPRO supports: fodder and feed production in Somaliland by improving the availability and the quality of fodder and feed in Sool and Sanaag (and bordering areas); gum Arabic production in Darfur, rebuilding the capacity of small-scale gum Arabic producers and gum

Arabic producer associations to supply clean, dry hashab gum to traders and gum exporting companies; and seed system development in South Sudan, linking seed sector stakeholders to a more efficient and sustainable seed sector.

Output 3: Enhanced knowledge, skills and capacity of local communities around nutrition-sensitive livelihood support. Income generation, including through resilient food systems and value chains, is essential but not sufficient to improve nutrition outcomes. FNS-REPRO develops key activities that promote nutrition, including curriculum development and training on healthy diets and nutrition, food handling and storage, and basic hygiene and safety practices; as well as the promotion of kitchen or demonstration gardens; the promotion of producer groups and associations for women and youth; income-generating activities for women; and improving the nutrition behaviours of communities, based on their productive livelihoods and local availability and access to nutritious foods.

Output 4: Established and implemented learning mechanisms that reinforce field activities and facilitate improved policy and practice on food system resilience. The objective of this output is to design, guide, reinforce and learn from the implementation of sustainable approaches to food crises and food system resilience. This is being done through enhanced food security analysis and knowledge sharing; conflict analysis that informs conflict-sensitive design and implementation and supports contributions towards localized peace; strengthening of evidence-based strategic programming; consultation and learning events; and support to policy decision-making processes.

24. FAO, jointly with the Government of the Netherlands and WUR identified the value chains that could contribute to more resilient food systems, resulting in improved food and nutrition security and localized peace dividend: gum Arabic (the Sudan–Darfur), Fodder (Somalia–Somaliland) and Seeds (South Sudan). These were therefore the main focus of FNS-REPRO work in each of the countries, respectively. Overall, the project targeted around 100 000 households over four years across three livelihoods (pastoralists, agropastoralists, farmers) with special attention to gender, youth and specific groups, such as internally displaced persons (IDPs)/returnees and destitute pastoralists.

## 2.2 Country contexts

25. The countries selected for implementation were Somalia (Somaliland), South Sudan and the Sudan. For years, major drivers of food insecurity and malnutrition (conflict, climate extremes and economic shocks, in addition to growing inequalities), have continued to limit the quantity and quality of foods people can access in these countries.
26. Somaliland, which is relatively stable compared to Central-South Somalia, does have political and social clan fragility particularly in the disputed eastern territories of Sool and Sanaag. Much of its economic growth is attributable to livestock production and trade, which accounts for about 65 percent of its economy. Populations in Somaliland are recurrently acutely food insecure (IPC Phase 3 and above) demonstrating that the resilience of their food system is low.
27. In 2019, the Sudan, and the Darfur area in particular, were recovering from severe and widespread conflict with fragile political gains thanks to the incorporation of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur<sup>1</sup> into national interim constitution approved by parliament. Seventy percent of Sudan’s population is dependent on agriculture as its primary source of

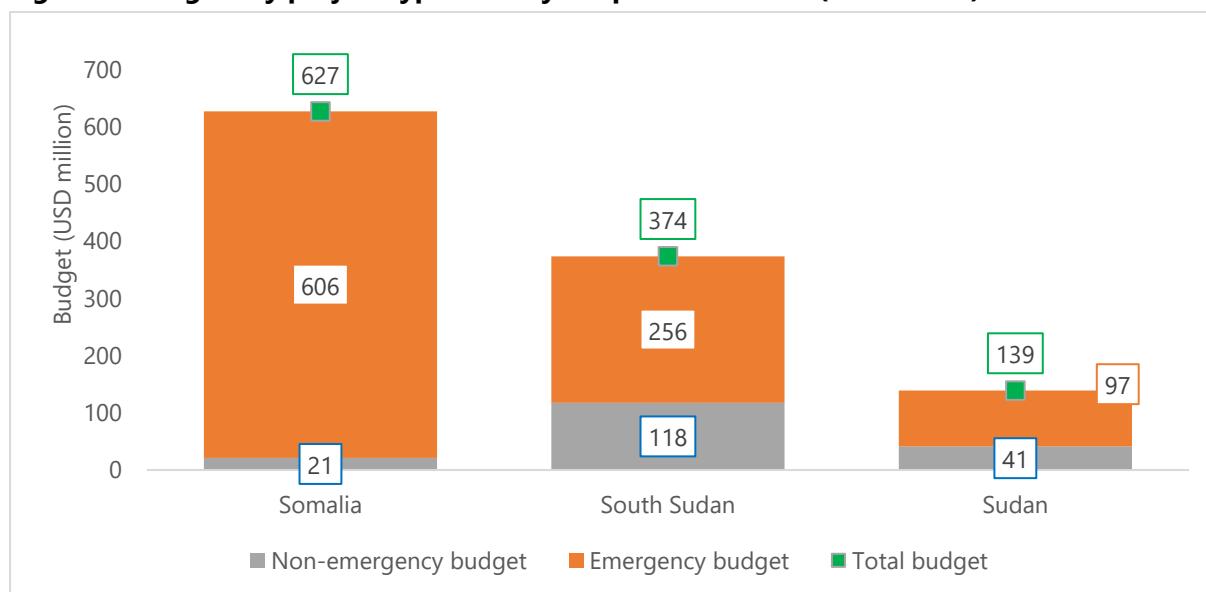
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<sup>1</sup> Finalized in 2011 at the All Darfur Stakeholder Conference (UNAMID. 2011), The Doha Document for Peace in Darfur is the framework for the comprehensive peace process in Darfur. It addresses the root causes of the conflict and its consequences, including power sharing, wealth sharing, human rights, justice and reconciliation, compensation and return, and internal dialogue, among others.

livelihoods, which in itself is dependent on the immediate availability of natural resources. The country has been facing macroeconomic challenges since the secession of South Sudan in 2011, while 5.67 million people are food insecure (IPC Phase 3 and above), the majority of whom are in conflict-affected areas of Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile states.

28. Long-standing crisis has continued to drive humanitarian needs in South Sudan, with high levels of severe food insecurity affecting over half of the population with estimates of 6 million people to be facing crisis (IPC phase 3) acute food insecurity or worse. The country ranks third on the Fragile States Index (n.d.) for 2019 and trade and marketing activities remain low due to insecurity, poor roads and infrastructure. Seed is a key factor in agricultural production system in South Sudan, but 85 percent of certified seeds are being imported into the country.
29. Somalia, South Sudan and the Sudan are part of the top ten recipient countries of FAO budget between 2018 and 2023, with most of the budget being spent on projects classified as emergency.<sup>2</sup> Figure 1 represents the distribution of budget across these three countries by type of project.

**Figure 1. Budgets by project types and by recipient countries (2018–2023)**



Source: Author's elaboration of FAO FPMIS. Data provided by the Evaluation Team.

## 2.3 FNS-REPRO organizational structure

30. FNS-REPRO management structure is articulated in National and Global Steering Committees involving FAO, WUR, the Government of the Netherlands (at both embassies and capital level), governments in targeted countries and selected international non-governmental organizations.

<sup>2</sup> Data extracted from Field Programme Management Information System (FPMIS).

### Box 3. FNS-REPRO management and implementation structure

#### At the global level:

FAO is responsible for the overall management of the project and is accountable to the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. FAO, in collaboration with relevant stakeholders and actors, is responsible for the implementation of Output 1, for the conduct the conflict analyses (under Output 4), for the facilitation of the linkages with relevant national and local government institutions, and for the coordination with Food Security Cluster Coordinators, other life-saving clusters (Nutrition, Health and Water, Sanitation, Hygiene [WASH]) and United Nations (UN) peacekeeping missions along the humanitarian-development-peace building nexus.

For the implementation of Output 2 and 3, which is the bulk of FNS-REPRO, FAO sub-contracted (international) NGOs with field presence and a track record of technical capacities in food and nutrition security and in building resilient communities.

Wageningen University & Research (WUR) is a key partner to FAO in the design and management of the project and is responsible for the implementation of Output 4. The participatory conflict analysis under this Output – designed to create a common understanding and starting point for the different stakeholders to design/inform FNS-REPRO interventions – is under the responsibility of FAO but in close consultation with WUR.

#### At the national level:

In Somaliland, the project works with: Ministry of Livestock and Rural Development, Ministry of Agriculture; Ministry of Water Resources; and Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, Local governments in the target regions, national NGOs including Horn of Africa Voluntary Youth Committee (HAVOYOCO) and Unique Vision Research and Development (UVRDO); local universities including Nugaal, Sanaag and Hargeisa Universities.

In the Sudan, the project works with: Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Forests, Ministry of Animal Resources, Higher Council for Environment and Natural Resources (HCENR), Forests National Corporation (FNC), State Ministry of Production and Economic Resources.

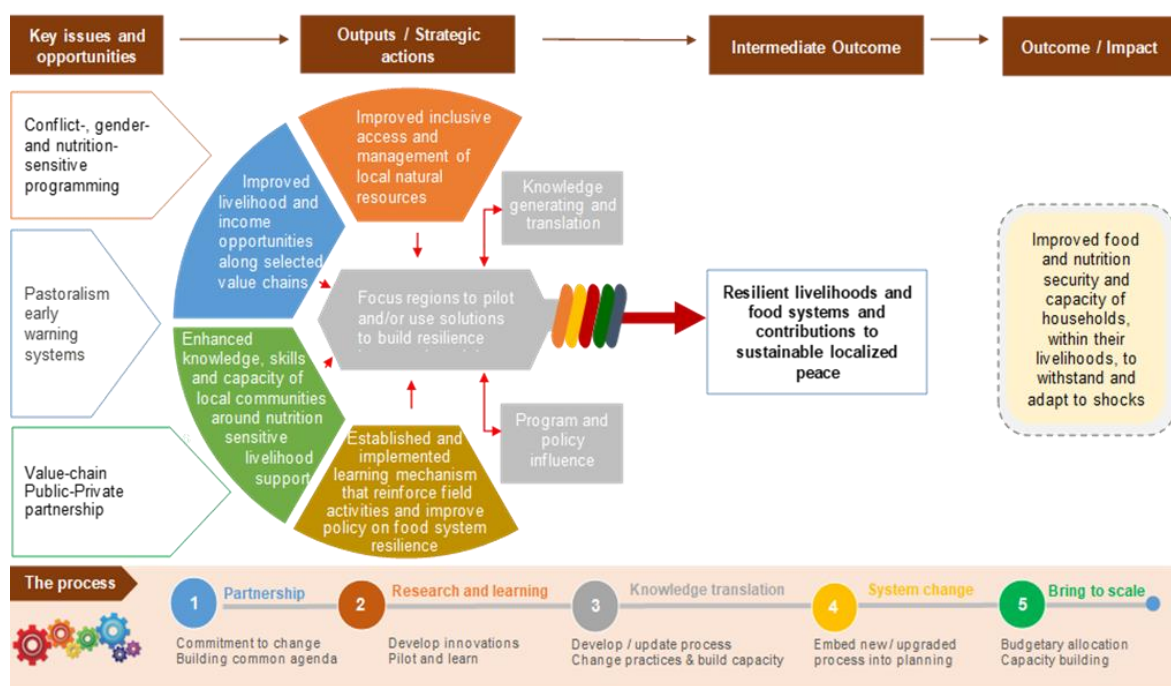
In South Sudan, the project works with: Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security; University of Juba; national NGOs including the South Sudan Grassroots Initiative for Development, Child Advocacy and Women Development Centre (CAWDC) and the Star Trust Organization; and nine separate international NGOs.<sup>3</sup>

## 2.4 FNS-REPRO theory of change

31. The FNS-REPRO global theory of change (TOC) described below is based on the principle that “***If*** the specificities of local livelihood and food system resilience in selected areas of the Sudan, Somalia, and South Sudan are understood by both local and international stakeholders, ***and if*** those stakeholders adapt their interventions, based on field realities and evidence of success, ***and if*** they can successfully co-create and coordinate with other stakeholders, ***then*** the overall resilience of livelihoods and food systems in areas of protracted crises will improve, contributing to addressing the root causes of food insecurity, malnutrition, destabilization, forced displacement and irregular migration”. To do this FNS-REPRO combine interventions aimed at creating economic and equal opportunities, using an ecologically-sensitive and conflict-sensitive area-based approach.

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<sup>3</sup> World Vision, Global Aim, Caritas Luxembourg, Save the Childre, VSF Germany, Christian Mission for Development, VSF Suisse, Peace Corps and World Concern.

**Figure 2. FNS-REPRO theory of change**

Source: FAO. 2020. *FNS-REPRO Inception report*. Rome. Internal document.

32. Furthermore, FNS-REPRO has the following strategic priorities:

- Maximize its catalytic role through resource mobilization and by enhancing synergies, to drive the necessary large-scale systems change needed for impact.
- Enhance partnerships with the private sector and identify additional opportunities for private-sector participation to guarantee a stable and reliable market for small-scale producers engaged in selected value chains.
- Strengthen conflict-, gender- and nutrition-sensitive programming, contributing to the humanitarian-development-peace nexus and the global Sustaining Peace agenda.
- Strengthen linkages with the Global Network Against Food Crises.

33. During the implementation period, FNS-REPRO teams developed revised theories of change at country level. These theories of change provided specific detail around the types of support to the selected value chains and natural resources management processes in each country. They also fed into a process that helped to redefine the nutritional capacity building component of the project. In doing so, project teams were able to articulate a more complexity-sensitive, systems-informed understanding of the contributions their project was making to reduced food insecurity and improve resilience in each country. The country-specific theories of change did not, however, entail significant revisions to the global theory of change presented above.



### 3 Findings

*EQ 1: To what extent was the project design relevant and appropriate to achieve the programmed outcomes?*

**Finding 1.** The FNS-REPRO project design met a clear and pressing need at the time and continues to do so to this day. The implementation of a livelihoods and resilience approach in the unstable and fragile contexts of the Sudan, South Sudan and Somalia, presented a novel and promising approach to tackling the needs identified in each country. The multicomponent project developed focused on agricultural value chains, with the aim of moving away from humanitarian emergency assistance and contribute to local peace, in line with United Nations Security Council Resolution 2417.

34. FNS-REPRO was built on the premise that resilient agricultural livelihoods can protect rural populations against hunger and malnutrition during shocks and crises, whether driven by conflict, climate change, disasters resulting from natural hazards, or complex combinations of each. Further, the project sought to build sustainable food system resilience at scale in communities living through protracted crises, while strengthening cooperation across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. As a result, a multicomponent project design was developed, to upgrade selected agricultural value chains in each of the three countries of intervention, support sustainable local natural resources management and conflict resolution processes at community level, improve dietary diversity and nutritional knowledge and practices, and generate learning about how these changes can be achieved in protracted crisis contexts (FAO, 2020b).
35. Targeting sustainable improvements in agricultural value chains in some of the least stable regions of the Horn of Africa has the potential to help communities affected by protracted crisis to move away from interventions providing humanitarian emergency assistance. In South Sudan, this involved supporting local production of seeds to replace imported grain; in Somaliland, it involved increasing livelihood opportunities by fostering sustainable fodder production, fodder banking, processing and commercialization, while in the Sudan, FNS-REPRO sought to build income generation capacity of remote communities in North and East Darfur through support to gum Arabic production. In each case, the project aimed to improve the ability of local communities to withstand shocks such as increased food price, drought, or conflict-driven hunger.
36. The project design demanded a conflict-sensitive and peace-supportive approach to be undertaken by FAO and its partners, which created the opportunity to foster learning and cooperation across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus through the learning agenda and its evidence-based and adaptive programming component. At its core, the project sought to enhance agricultural production and income generation – and the associated natural resources management processes underpinning them – in communities experiencing longstanding conflict risks between agriculturalists, pastoralists, displaced and returning populations. Doing so successfully demanded that FAO and its partner organizations consider conflict drivers and risks at local level, for example by ensuring beneficiary selection did not exacerbate pre-existing community tensions, or considering how natural resources management processes can best support conflict resolution at community level.
37. The interaction between food insecurity and conflict in fragile settings across the Horn of Africa was recognized by UN resolution 2417 and has continued to present both a clear

need and a potential lever for change in the years since the project design (Global Hunger Index, 2021; Action Against Hunger, 2023). FAO's decision to apply a livelihoods and resilience approach in unstable contexts with very high volumes of humanitarian intervention demonstrated a clear added value to the wider international response to fragility in this region, and has the potential to help communities transition away from dependence on emergency assistance and towards more resilient livelihoods and food production practices.

**Finding 2.** The activities outlined in the theory of change all present clear and reasonable steps towards improving resilience in the areas of food security and food systems, based on clear and structured needs assessments. Although the TOC well explains the interlinkages between value chains, natural resources management and the overall project objectives, it is less clear how these interact with or contribute to the project's aim of improving nutrition at the community level. Likewise, the inclusion of a separate project component for learning activities reduced the degree to which learning was embedded across the other project activity areas, and the absence of specific budget lines for peacebuilding or conflict management activities complicated efforts in this area.

38. The theory of change was based on clear and structured needs assessments during design and inception phases, and used the information gathered to support activity design and targeting. FAO conducted three key needs assessment activities during the project design stage: i) food and seed system resilience assessments in each country of intervention; ii) the RIMA baseline survey analysing resilience levels in each community; and iii) the multidisciplinary context analysis conducted during the inception stage. The food-fodder system resilience assessment (FoSRA) demonstrated needs in each of the three value chains selected: gum Arabic in Darfur, the Sudan; livestock fodder in Somaliland; and the seed sector in South Sudan. The RIMA assessments added further information about natural resources management systems at community level, and the multidisciplinary assessments provided information about the conflict drivers and risks associated with rural food systems in each country.
39. Following these needs assessments, FNS-REPRO was designed to include a combination of activities across four core components: i) improving productivity across the selected agricultural value chains with a view to improving food system resilience to shocks and conflicts in the future; ii) improving sustainable and equitable access to and management of natural resources in rural communities where natural resources management has clearly identified potential impacts on food security and conflict risk; iii) improving local knowledge, capacity and practices on nutrition to improve nutritional diversity among rural population groups; and iv) generating evidence and learning about what works for improving food system resilience in protracted crises.
40. Notably, there was a clear understanding of the potential interaction between improved income generation through agricultural value chain upgrading work on the one hand, and the improved capacity to manage natural resources upon which those value chains depend, on the other. Thus, for example, the work to improve rangeland management in Somaliland helped to support the fodder production activities implemented in the same areas, while the natural resources management Committees supported in the Sudan helped to ensure sustainable management of the resources needed to increase gum Arabic production in previously underdeveloped areas.
41. Nevertheless, some challenges were identified regarding the definition of learning as a specific sub-component, rather than being embedded across each aspect of the project.

The MEAL framework was developed in consultation with the learning component team at WUR, which helped to define learning questions and data needs disaggregated at country, regional and global levels, with the aim of building learning for food system transformation at both policy and practice levels. But the resulting framework lacked a clear articulation of stakeholder categories and learning objectives for i) affected communities; ii) project teams and partners; and iii) the wider policy and research community. A clearer articulation of each learning objective and stakeholder group could have helped embed learning processes in each of the project subcomponents. Likewise, initial confusion regarding the division of labour between learning and project monitoring activities was found to have contributed to weaknesses in the community-level outcome monitoring system.

42. Moreover, the initial theory of change lacked a clear articulation of how the project would improve nutritional capacity and practices at community level beyond increased income generation, or an understanding of how the improved value chains and natural resources management capacities would feed into improvements in nutritional practice at community level. In the case of South Sudan, the choice of the seed sector as the critical value chain had obvious spillover potential on nutritional quality and diversity, but in Somaliland and the Sudan, this was not the case. And no clear consideration was given to the possible negative impacts of improved livelihoods on nutritional practices.
43. In addition, the project design did not include specific budget lines for peacebuilding or conflict management activities. Instead, the work done in this area – which was critical to FNS-REPRO's contributions to sustaining peace – was achieved through a mix of support provided to thematic budget lines, such as NRM, and drawing from regional and global FAO resources – external to the project budget – through the conflict and peace units in Rome and Nairobi, such as i) FAO's global memorandum of understanding with InterPeace; ii) its conflict and peace analytical capacities (funded through the Global Network Against Food Crisis); and iii) the adaptation of Country Office budget lines to include specific activities supporting conflict management capacities at community level. Nevertheless, inclusion of a specific budget line for conflict risk reduction at the outset could have increased the gains seen in this area during implementation.
44. The revised theories of change at country level went some way to overcoming these shortcomings. Notably, they helped identify clearer pathways of change for improving nutritional practices at community level in each country and refocused activities towards interventions, such as the farmers gardens, where FAO could leverage pre-existing capacities to help foster improved nutritional diversity. Nevertheless, these changes occurred at the project mid-point, which may have impacted on the ability of the project to deliver results in the area of nutrition, as outlined in section 3.5 below.

**Finding 3.** The three value chains selected for support were well suited with potential in terms of sustainable growth local income generation and with clear potential for improving the resilience of local food systems and rural livelihoods in the face of continued conflict and climate risks. Nevertheless, in each case, the value chain selected presents a number of challenges and complexities arising for any attempt to upgrade them. These challenges have in some cases deterred private sector engagement in the past, which may explain some of the difficulties observed in building sustainable partnerships below (see Finding 11 on this point).

45. FNS-REPRO was designed around value chains that can contribute to more resilient food systems resulting in improved food and nutrition security and localized peace in the target areas. The premise was that agricultural livelihoods are people's best defence against

hunger and malnutrition dividend. Given the challenging context of conflict and food insecurity in the target areas, investing in value chains that address more immediate needs of vulnerable communities and which also promote economic growth is a logical choice. The selection was based on the ability of the value chain to directly improve food insecurity and reduce causes of conflict. Also, FNS-REPRO conducted baseline studies to identify the value chains that would have the most impact and consulted beneficiaries regarding their most important sources of livelihood and income [FB006]. To this extent, the project's activities were built around the gum Arabic value chain (agroforestry) in the Sudan, the fodder value chain in Somaliland and the seed systems in South Sudan (FAO, 2020c, p.14).

### ***Gum Arabic***

46. The gum Arabic value chain in the Sudan was a good choice due to its potential for intercropping with cash crops such as groundnuts and sesame (agroforestry) and the direct improvement of income. Investing in the value chain has the potential to create economic growth, reduce poverty and increase food security for rural communities.
47. Gum Arabic is a renewable and sustainable resource and a well-established export product. It is naturally abundant and is a significant part of the local economy when combined with crops. It has a high market value, with prices that are relatively stable compared to other agricultural commodities. Also, it is a drought-resistant crop that requires minimal labour and inputs, making it a suitable option for small-scale farmers. Furthermore, it can create additional jobs and can help reduce conflict by managing natural resources.
48. Working on this value chain can promote environmental sustainability, which is a key component of development in the fragile context of North and East Darfur affected by climate change, desertification and conflicts. Within an agroforestry approach, it can help in diversifying income sources and reducing vulnerability of rural populations to climate change and natural disasters. Furthermore, gum Arabic production requires minimal inputs, reducing the financial burden for small-scale farmers. It is a multipurpose product, making it attractive to traders and investors.
49. Sustainable and resilient production of gum Arabic can provide farmers with improved income and food security. It has great potential for rural job creation through value addition, such as producing gum-based products, which can increase profitability and create additional employment opportunities, particularly for women and youth. With the proper technical support, the gum Arabic value chain can help promote environmental sustainability and protection of natural resources. It also has the potential to ensure access to markets if infrastructure is available.
50. On the other hand, gum Arabic is not directly related to food security and the increased income of FNS-REPRO beneficiaries is mostly due to other crops such as groundnuts and sesame [FB005]. The production and market of gum Arabic is highly seasonal and the market for gum Arabic can be unpredictable and may operate at small scale, making it difficult for farmers to access the necessary resources and to establish effective value chain. It can be heavily affected by wildfires and pests (e.g. desert locusts).
51. One of the main challenges is the low price at farm gate, compared to other crops such as groundnuts and sesame [FB005]. This is mostly due to poor infrastructure leading to high transportation costs, lack of auctions and markets, lack of finance, as well as presence of many intermediaries and traders that impose low prices on producers. Also, the technology

required to process gum Arabic is highly complex and requires a high level of technical expertise and resources, which may not be available. Finally, the industry is notoriously prone to corruption, making an intervention potentially difficult and less successful. The economic case behind gum Arabic in North and East Darfur is clear only through the lens of agroforestry.

52. While this is an important value chain for the Sudan – it is the country's largest export – the target areas are not particularly attractive for companies due to the difficult access and insecurity. Nevertheless, the sector already has a vast network of producers, traders, retailers and buyers, so it is possible to build on that to create a lasting and impactful intervention with limited resources. In conclusion, the gum Arabic value chain is relevant in the Sudan as well as in the target areas. It is a viable option for a value chain development project, as it has the potential to provide long-term stability and resources in the target areas. Another option could have been livestock, which is the main source of livelihood in North and East Darfur. However, with an eye to resilience building, the focus on agroforestry make sense to promote livelihood diversification and reduce dependency on livestock. Agroforestry is also an excellent approach to natural resources management and conservation [FB005].

### **Fodder**

53. The animal feed and fodder value chain in Somaliland has direct and long-term impacts on communities because it provides farmers with extra resources to sustain their livelihoods and reduces susceptibility to food insecurity. Improving fodder production can contribute to economic growth, employment opportunities in rural areas and improved livelihoods from agriculture. It can help improve nutrition by increasing the availability of sources of minerals, vitamins and proteins for both people and their livestock. Also, strengthening this value chain can have positive impacts on the environment and biodiversity by supporting conservation efforts and promoting sustainable livestock production.
54. Across Somalia, livestock production accounts for 85 percent of total export earnings and provides livelihood opportunities to over 70 percent of the Somali population (Cherogony, 2012). Investing in fodder production can support the entire livestock sector and provide livelihood opportunities to the millions of people living in pastoral and agropastoral communities. Additionally, targeting the fodder value chain can have spillover effects on other sectors, such as dairy and meat processing.
55. On the other hand, the value chain is capital intensive, which means that high investment and long-term financial commitment are necessary to promote the systemic upgrading. Also, it heavily depends on the availability of livestock, which may decrease during periods of drought, insecurity or conflict, as well as on access to external markets that could pose additional risks such as low demand, unreliable performance and greater cost of inputs.
56. Working on livestock in conflict-affected areas is usually challenging due to mistrust of institutions, inadequate collection/processing infrastructure, limited credit, and volatile conflict dynamics. Also, without proper management of natural resources, it can increase competition and tensions between pastoralists and agropastoralists, leading to an increase in conflict. Finally, the value chain involves stakeholders from different countries across the region which may pose a challenge regarding policy changes, sector reforms and investments.

57. The economic case behind animal feed and fodder is that the fodder value chain is expected to generate increased income for small-scale farmers, improve market access and strengthen their competitiveness in the local and global markets. This in turn should lead to increased economic growth, improved nutrition, better access to resources and improved livelihoods. However, the link with nutrition is only indirect. Also, fodder production can diversify incomes of conflict-affected people while creating markets for unused land, thereby reducing tension and vulnerability to conflict.
58. Other possible value chains in Sool and Sanaag could be frankincense resin (the harvesting of which is a long-standing practice among local communities and has value-addition potential as part of the global essential oils market), honey and fruits (both demonstrate potential for value addition). However, livestock (mostly shoats and camel) is the main source of income in the target areas and the fodder value chain can have a strong impact on food insecurity and economic stability.
59. Specifically, in Sool and Sanaag there is good market potential for animal feed and fodder. These areas are strategically located near Berbera and Bosaso ports. Livestock traders usually buy fodder in these areas to fatten their animals before shipping them to the Gulf. In addition, there are also some dairy farms nearby that are purchasing animal feed and fodder.
60. In conclusion, the fodder value chain in Somaliland is probably the most relevant one to be targeted by an intervention such as FNS-REPRO – and there are not many other options. This value chain has the potential to benefit livelihoods, promote economic growth, create jobs and increase access to food, thus providing a lasting solution to the conflict-food insecurity nexus. Additionally, best practices from the intervention could be easily scaled and expanded with the support of local and regional partners.

### **Seed systems**

61. Improving seed systems in South Sudan is a promising way to address food insecurity in the country. Targeting the seed value chain is relevant as the country has a high potential for agricultural growth, but productivity is hindered by various factors, including limited access to high-quality seeds. Improving the seed value chain is a sustainable approach as it not only improves yields in the short term, but also builds the capacity for long-term agricultural development. It has the potential to benefit many households and to have a ripple effect on other aspects of agricultural development (e.g. marketing support, agricultural extension services, irrigation infrastructure). Also, working with smallholder farmers to improve their access to quality seeds has a positive impact in terms of their livelihood and employment opportunities in agroprocessing, marketing and storage.
62. On the other hand, the seed value chain is complex and requires significant investment and planning, especially in South Sudan where logistics is very challenging. For example, without access to certified seed, quality yields may be compromised due to low germination rates and plant diseases. Inputs needed might be expensive and not affordable by smallholder farmers. Access to higher quality seeds does not always equate to increased output as other (costly) inputs such as fertilizers and irrigation are still often needed. Also, seed theft, especially in high-conflict areas, could be an issue and there were reported cases of it [FB004].

63. Other possible value chains are livestock, dairy and aquaculture. The former has the potential to provide income and generate employment opportunities for the many livestock owners in the country. However, livestock in South Sudan is mostly linked to social and traditional values, rather than commercial value, and it is a huge source of conflict. Due to insecurity and livestock theft, investments in this value chain could be quite risky. The latter could also provide better access to protein-rich fish, something currently unavailable in some areas due to insecurity (there are other FAO projects supporting this sector already). However, there might be environmental and sustainability concerns related to this value chain.
64. The economic case behind seed systems in South Sudan is strong due to its long-term effects on food security, crop diversity, job opportunities and economic stability. Producing, conserving and distributing improved varieties of quality seeds will increase crop yields, allowing individuals and families to generate more income and become more food secure. In turn, this can reduce poverty, promote economic growth and create jobs, thus helping to reduce the risk of conflict. Currently, large volumes of seed are coming from Uganda, due to limited production capacity of certified seeds in the country [FB004].
65. Furthermore, by investing in research and capacity building, the seed value chain can help to strengthen the resilience of the local population and contribute to long-term agricultural sustainability. In conclusion, the selection of the seed value chain for addressing the cause-effect relationship between conflict and food insecurity in South Sudan is sensible. Although this is not the only option, it provides a direct way to increase yields through better inputs and to improve nutrition and has the potential for fostering economic growth and increased employment in rural areas.
66. Overall, it is a viable option, especially compared to the other value chains, although significant investment in terms of finance, infrastructure and safety measures are needed to ensure its sustainability and effectiveness. Maize and groundnuts could be prioritized for import substitution. In addition, FAO has been working on seed systems for very long (mostly emergency response) and the intervention is an attempt to develop a local seed sector by promoting community-based seed production, to break the current dependency on humanitarian assistance [FB004].

*EQ 2: To what extent has the project built with and/or catalysed existing relevant initiatives at global, regional, national and subnational levels?*

**Finding 4.** FNS-REPRO is broadly aligned with other relevant initiatives at global, regional and national levels by FAO and other actors, and the regional team has actively developed synergies with other donors around the project. Moreover, learnings from previous initiatives at country level were integrated into the design of project activities. However, leverage of private sector actors in the selected agricultural value chains remains weak, despite the best efforts of FAO to overcome this (see Finding 11).

67. At the global level, FNS-REPRO has established initial links through informal consultation with the Global Network Against Food Crises led by the FAO Regional Office, as well as the UN Food Systems Summit in 2021, the UN Food Systems Summit + 2 in 2023, and the Netherlands Food Partnership, while at regional level it aligned activities with relevant IGAD initiatives and platforms (i.e. the Food Security and Nutrition Working Group, the IGAD Drought Disaster Resilience and Sustainability Initiative and the Food Security, Nutrition and Resilience Analysis) (FAO, 2020c, p.98). Furthermore, the FAO Regional Office took a

strategic approach to developing synergies with other donors around the FNS-REPRO project including, for example, the Swedish investment in funding livestock early warning systems, the African Development Bank investments in seed systems in South Sudan, and the African Development Bank plans for investment in eastern Africa feed sector development.

68. At national and subnational levels, value chain development is a critical component of FAO programming, and FNS-REPRO has been influenced by those for the selection of value chains. However, it was reported that in Somaliland, consultation with the government at design stage was minimal and community consultation was not done until the inception phase [AS006, AS007].
69. FNS-REPRO is aligned with and contributes to FAO’s programmatic frameworks, as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1. FNS-REPRO alignment to FAO programmatic frameworks**

<b>FAO Corporate Organizational Outcome(s)</b>	BL3 – Agriculture and Food Emergencies BL4 – Resilient Agrifood Systems
<b>Regional Priorities / Regional Initiative(s) if applicable</b>	FAO regional initiative on building resilience in Africa’s drylands
<b>Country Programming Framework (CPF) Output(s)</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>i. Somalia (Somaliland): FNS-REPRO will contribute to CPF Outcome 1: Natural resources are sustainably managed and binding constraints addressed in key productive sector value chains, leading to productivity gains, increased value addition and enhanced opportunities for decent work; and Outcome 2: Resilient agriculture, livestock, fisheries and forestry sectors, leaving no one behind, malnourished or hungry.</li><li>ii. South Sudan CPF: FNS-REPRO will contribute to government Priority Area 1: Sustainable production and productivity of agriculture sector; Priority 2: Institutional capacity and knowledge management; Priority 3: Sustainable use of natural resources and climate change; and Priority 4: Resilience of local agrifood systems against disasters and climate.</li><li>iii. The Sudan CPF: FNS-REPRO will contribute to government Priority 2: Sustainable agriculture (crops, livestock, fisheries, forestry) and natural resources management, as well as government Priority 3: disaster risk management and resilience building.</li></ol>

Source: Elaborated by the Evaluation Team.

70. Previous and ongoing efforts were taken into consideration while designing and implementing FNS-REPRO. For example, in South Sudan, the project linked up with the World Bank-funded Resilient Agricultural Livelihoods Project and worked to improve resilient livelihoods through food and nutrition security of vulnerable communities, especially women-headed households in Wau and Torit counties of South Sudan. The project also built on a decade of FAO’s work on Community-based Seed Production and Supply (CBSPS) projects. While these projects were crucial for humanitarian relief, they fell short in propelling seed-related efforts towards self-sustaining, market-driven local seed enterprises, which is one of the aims of FNS-REPRO. Seeds continued to be imported from foreign sources, often faltering due to factors such as inadequate storage, transportation hurdles, and the impacts of changing environmental conditions and related shocks and stressors. Instead, FNS-REPRO took an integrated approach to seed systems development. For example, FAO could conduct seed fairs in areas where humanitarian assistance is

needed and support FNS-REPRO producers to sell their seeds and tap into that market opportunity [FB004]. In Somaliland, synergies with other projects are reported, regarding water conservation and harvesting [FB006], with the project building specifically on the interventions and networks of the Somalia Information and Resilience Building Action.

71. However, linkages with the private sector remain weak or non-existent, which has potential negative impacts on the sustainability of the value chains component in particular (see Finding 11 for more on sustainability). Engaging with private sector companies is challenging in the contexts in which FNS-REPRO has worked, most notably due to the insecurity and logistical challenges of working with rural communities in these countries. Nevertheless, without a clear strategy for engaging private sector actors in the design of the activities themselves, FAO has struggled to attract private sector engagement in the value chain upgrading activities in Somaliland, Darfur and rural South Sudan. This is despite several efforts made by FAO Country Offices in each location (see section 3.5 for more information on these efforts and the impact on sustainability).

*EQ 3: To what extent has the project contributed to the expected outcomes (resilient livelihoods and food systems and sustainable localized peace) in the selected countries?*

**Finding 5.** FNS-REPRO has made some tangible contributions to improving household resilience through improved agricultural production capacities and localized management of natural resources and conflict risks, but the scale and sustainability of these changes remains limited.

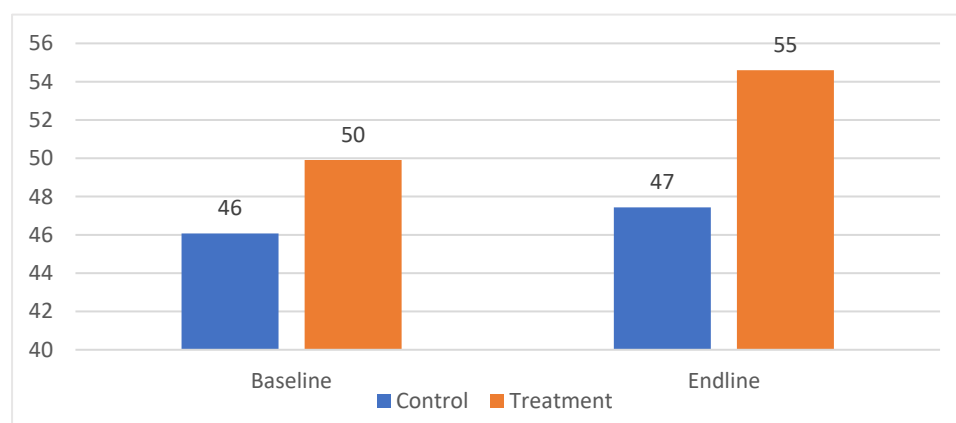
72. In both Somaliland and South Sudan, FNS-REPRO yielded improvements to household level resilience in beneficiary households, which significantly outstripped those of similar non-beneficiary households.<sup>4</sup> Using FAO's RIMA methodology, survey teams were able to establish an increase in household resilience – as measured by the resilience capacity index (RCI) – after the project was completed, which was greater than that observed for non-beneficiary groups.<sup>5</sup> In South Sudan, a 10.00 percent increase in RCI scores was observed for beneficiary households, while only 2.17 percent was observed for similar household who had received no FNS-REPRO support. In Somaliland, this figure was 27.76 percent for beneficiary households, and 13.27 percent for non-beneficiary households.

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<sup>4</sup> Endline data is not available for the Sudan, due to the ongoing armed conflict in the country at the time of FNS-REPRO completion.

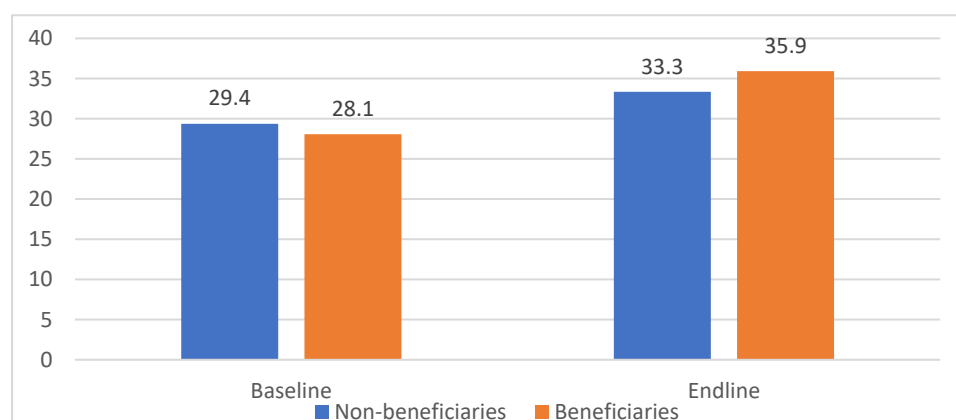
<sup>5</sup> The RCI measures a household's capacity to withstand stresses and shocks that have long-lasting effects. It is a composite index which looks at the relationship between a core set of four context specific variables of resilience, namely: assets, social safety nets, adaptive capacity and access to basic services (FAO, 2024a).

**Figure 3. Estimated resilience capacity index values for control and treatment at baseline and endline in South Sudan**



Source: FAO. 2024. *Endline Report – FNS-REPRO: Resilience Index Management and Analysis*. South Sudan.

**Figure 4. Estimated RCI values for control and treatment at baseline and endline in Somaliland**



Source: FAO. 2024. *Endline Report – FNS-REPRO: Resilience Index Management and Analysis*. Somaliland

73. Underneath these broader metrics of improved household resilience, FNS-REPRO also demonstrated improvements in income generation and productive capacities, in line with the country-specific logframes and theories of change developed for the project:

**Table 2. Summary of results against key logframe indicators for Somaliland**

Indicator	Baseline value	Endline value
RCI (rescaled for baseline and endline)	28.1	35.9 (28% increase)
Mean annual income (USD)	279	454
Percentage of household (HHs) who reported increased income	0%	68.4%
Percentage of HHs who reported increased fodder production	0%	14%
Percentage of HHs who reported increased livestock production.	0%	58.5%

Source: FAO. 2024. *Endline Report – FNS-REPRO: Resilience Index Management and Analysis*. Somaliland.

**Table 3. Summary of results against key logframe indicators for South Sudan**

	Baseline		Endline	
	Non-beneficiaries	Beneficiaries	Non-beneficiaries	Beneficiaries
Overall income	56 675	60 500	76 938	89 136
Employment	23 296	21 493	18 212	21 537
Skilled labour	11 292	11 305	20 600	23 430
Agricultural casual labour	17 006	17 824	26 292	28 876
Petty trade	32 773	27 624	26 311	28 375
Sale of charcoal and firewood	22 487	18 648	27 056	31 969
Sale of wild fruits	12 619	10 077	11 960	16 695
Sale of agricultural produce	26 062	26 127	48 593	54 752
Sale of livestock and related products	15 443	12 815	40 495	36 413
Sale of fish	10 548	10 850	24 900	17 239

Source: FAO. 2024. *Endline Report – FNS-REPRO: Resilience Index Management and Analysis*. South Sudan.

74. In addition, there are some clear and powerful examples of outcomes achieved by FNS-REPRO in terms of improvements in local natural resources management capacity (see Finding 6), improvements to income generation capacity in the selected value chains (Finding 7), and contributions to reduced conflict risks at the local level, both in terms of reduction of conflict drivers and improvements in community capacities to mitigate conflict risks (Finding 9). Some improvements in nutritional knowledge and capacity of targeted communities have also been observed (Finding 8). Only limited results were observed in terms of FNS-REPRO's contributions to the global and regional knowledge base regarding what works for improving food security and resilience in protracted crises (Finding 10).
75. However, while these results are clear and observable for the beneficiary households, the wider scale and sustainability of the changes observed remains open to question at this stage, and the contribution to the wider evidence base remains very limited. This is partly a function of the time frames involved in changing wider food systems, embedding local ownership in new production practices, and transforming the humanitarian aid architecture in protracted food crisis (Wageningen University & Research, 2022). But it also reflects the design of the project, which focused on driving improvements in specific parts of the food system and natural resources management processes of specific communities in each country, rather than addressing wider systems change from the outset.

**Finding 6.** (*Output 1: Sustainable natural resources management*): Improvements in sustainable community-based natural resources management practices have been observed in each country. Primary areas of improvement relate to the development of natural resources management action plans and frameworks, as well as support to enhance inclusivity and functioning of the NRM Committees at community level.

76. The project strengthened community-level frameworks for planning and management of access to natural resources, engaging diverse interest groups, including women, youth and community elders, and promoting positive interactions among livestock keepers and between livestock keepers and farmers in specific locations. The training provided by the project to members of NRM Committees and communities on natural resources management, gender and conflict management, and the NRM action plans developed with the support of the project have contributed to improved inclusive access and management

of local natural resources as well as improved management of resource-based conflicts (see below for more information on the effects of the NRM activities on local conflict-management practices) (UN South Sudan. 2022; UN Sudan, 2018; FAO, 2023a; FAO, 2024c).

77. The inclusive composition of NRM Committees and participation of women and young people in activities of the Committees sought to address concerns about the inclusivity and transparency of local NRM decision-making processes. Women engaged in NRM Committees that were supported through FNS-REPRO noted an improvement in the understanding of elders regarding their role in NRM decision-making and the impacts of NRM decisions on them. In the Sudan, for example, the project supported dialogue between elders and women and elders and youth in Darfur. Women engaged in guided discussions on challenges and opportunities for women’s engagement in decision-making about NRM. Discussions were open, moving from a position of elders having sole decision-making rights, to an awareness and acceptance of the impact of decisions on women. Finally, the understanding was reached that women need a space in the resolution of community conflicts over NRM. As a result, women are now sitting at the decision-making table in places where they previously had no access, for example in gum Arabic producer associations.<sup>6</sup>

**Finding 7.** (*Output 2: Resilient livelihoods and food systems*): Value chain improvements have been recorded in all three countries. However, the systemic upgrading of the value chains is yet to be seen as a result achieved by FNS-REPRO.

78. In Somaliland, the project contributed to improve income opportunities along the fodder value chain in Somaliland for 17 target communities, through the establishment and training of fodder value chain associations in each village/settlement, the construction of fodder processing facilities, the provision of fodder processing machines, the training on good agricultural practices (GAPs), and the organization of study tours for some community members to visit relevant FAO projects (i.e. SIRA project and RBA resilience project) in other regions of Somaliland [AS009]. Through cooperatives and groups, targeted communities are now able to exploit the potential of fodder production and have been exposed to best practices on grass harvesting and processing that were never done before in the area [FB006]. The impact of this increased capacity on improved harvests and associated income generation is subject to external factors. Most notably, the missed rainfalls of 2020, 2021 and 2022 meant that most communities did not harvest significant amount of fodder or report increased incomes in that period [AS013], but data from August and September 2023 indicate significant amounts of fodder harvested following the good rains in this year. Also, so far, the project has not worked substantially on market system development, despite the creation of the fodder value chain associations, and there is no improved linkage with traders (fodder and livestock), animal fattening facilities, and local financial institutions [AS008].<sup>7</sup>
79. In South Sudan, the project promoted farmer-led seed enterprise models, along with the construction of stores and supply of equipment and tools, the strengthening of community seed systems and cooperatives, and the development of decentralized seed quality control boards (SQCBs). Individual farmers that are engaged in seed multiplication as a business

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<sup>6</sup> ND002: FAO Regional Office.

<sup>7</sup> The project team is planning to focus on these aspects during the remaining project life span.

have been linked to SQCBs and seed labs. Also, the project selected and trained “champions” for seeds multiplication that received certified seeds from FAO [FL002, FL006, MO003]. The project focused on ensuring that farmers grew quality seeds with good germination rates thereby enhancing the production of seeds for sale and home consumption [FL0011].<sup>8</sup> There is evidence of an increase in seed production that resulted in most households having enough seeds for their own consumption and marketing, specifically, it is reported that a good number of women and youth benefited financially from the sale of seeds [FL005, FB004]. However, seed producers mentioned that they were not linked to financial services, which would have solved one of their major bottlenecks for expanding their productive capacity [FL003, FL005]. Also, it was reported that the intervention is focusing on marginal crop that are of limited interest for the existing private sector and do not compete with it [FB004]. The project addressed the issue of quality seeds and the timely supply of these seeds to farmers through institutional strengthening of two key players in the value chain – seed labs, seed quality control boards and the National Seed Research Centre [FL002]. Finally, it is reported that some seed producers were able to sell their seeds through the seed fairs for a value amounting to SSP 30 million [FL001], while others were not able to sell during seed fairs but rather sold their produce as “grains” for a much lower price, resulting in losses [FL003, FL005].

80. In the Sudan, FNS-REPRO constructed two gum Arabic collection centres, and promoted intercropping with Acacia trees and pre- and post-harvesting techniques. It supported the development of small-scale gum Arabic producers and of targeted Gum Arabic Producers’ Associations (GAPAs) to supply quality gum Arabic to local traders/companies. It was reported that, due to the agroforestry approach adopted by the intervention, productivity increased for groundnuts and other crops that are intercropped with Hashab (*Senegalia Senegal*) trees [FB005].

**Finding 8.** (*Output 3: Nutritional capacity and practice*): Emerging improvements in nutritional capacity have been observed at the local level in each country, including increased nutritional diversity of crops grown by smallholder farms and in some cases increased diversity of crops consumed by households. In addition, a small number of unanticipated positive consequences were also observed. No widespread changes in nutritional practices have been observed yet, and the choice of seeds for the demonstration gardens was not well-aligned to nutritional gaps identified in FAO’s own baseline assessment.

81. The initial inclusion of nutrition as a component in the FNS-REPRO added a degree of complexity to the theory of change. The linkages between NRM, agricultural value chain improvements and improved nutritional capacity were not clear at the initial design stage. Furthermore, in the absence of regional technical personnel capacity dedicated to lead the nutrition component, the project implementation suffered from a lack of attention to this area in the first half of project implementation. This meant that opportunities were missed to identify appropriate partnerships and the pathways to improved nutritional quality and diversity arising from results achieved in other areas of the project. These problems were partly mitigated by a redesign of the nutrition component at the mid-term phase, partly in response to the sensemaking activities undertaken in the learning component, and partly due to the engagement of a nutrition expert to review and draw lessons learned in this area. FNS-REPRO established demonstration farms and vegetable gardens in each country

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<sup>8</sup> See the two examples from the South Sudan country case study.

- of intervention. These activities sought to engage community members in activities designed to increase nutritional diversity of crops grown by smallholder farmers and improve local understanding knowledge and capacity regarding the health benefits of consuming a nutritionally diverse diet.
82. Monitoring suggests that access to diverse crops and vegetable consumption has increased in each community across the three countries of intervention. In the Sudan, data shows an increase in consumption of garden-grown vegetables to five times per week over the course of the project, while access to garden-grown vegetables has been improved in each country, with the focus on improving access to the following crops per country (FAO, 2023b):
- i. Somaliland: Okra, Pigeon pea, Maize, pumpkins, watercress, Radish, melons, watermelons, Lemons, Lubia, countertops and Guavas;
  - ii. South Sudan: okra, tomato, collards, amaranth, eggplant, carrot, pumpkin;
  - iii. the Sudan: vegetable seeds (eggplant, tomato, cabbage, etc.) and fruit seedlings (mango, guava and lemon).
83. But the selection of seeds and vines for the community gardens in each country did not relate clearly to a well-informed baseline assessment of nutritional gaps at community-level. FAO’s own baseline report in 2021 for Sudan, for example, showed that access to and consumption of vitamin A rich vegetables and dark leafy greens was particularly low. The selection of seeds presented above does not fill this gap, but options could have been identified through, for example, working with local universities and nutritional experts during activity design stage.
84. Some unintended consequences were identified, including the spontaneous use by community members of fodder processing machines in Somaliland to mill maize, sorghum and lentil mixes. Likewise, there was one recorded instance in Sudan of a community member who had undertaken FNS-REPRO training on nutritional diversity as well as value chain development, who then went on to open a small restaurant specifically designed around providing nutritionally-balanced meals for community members. Such results are anecdotal, but they do speak to the potential for unanticipated outcomes resulting from the FNS-REPRO activities in each country.

**Finding 9.** (*Cross-cutting, sustainable localized peace*): FNS-REPRO activities supported a mix of locally embedded natural resources management Committees, conflict resolution mechanisms and demonstration farms that were associated with reductions in intercommunal conflict and conflict risk in each of the three intervention countries.

85. In Somaliland, this included a reduction in conflicts between pastoral and agropastoral communities over farm boundaries and ownership of natural resources including water and pasture in Sool and Sanaag provinces, which was associated by community members with the work of FNS-REPRO in engaging community “peace champions” and local government bodies. Community members also reported an increased confidence in the fairness of the conflict dispute mechanisms following FNS-REPRO activities, and an increased willingness to work through resource conflicts using the dispute mechanisms supported by the project. Community elders linked this to improved social cohesion and communication resulting from i) the engagement of previously conflicting community members in the Livestock Development Hubs (LDHs) supported by FNS-REPRO; and ii) the promotion of collective

action in harvesting fodder at scale. The community-based peace champions and conflict prevention and management training was also cited as useful in helping to manage land, water and pasture-related disputes as they arose (FAO, 2022b).<sup>9</sup>

86. In South Sudan, the evaluation recorded evidence of accountability to affected people (AAP) committees and demonstration farms being established and run by members of different and sometimes conflicting tribes in Yambio, Torit County and Bor.<sup>10</sup> Tensions arising between community members have been recorded in the past, and linked to food insecurity, poor harvests and displacement patterns. Sexual and gender-based violence has also been linked to localized increases in food insecurity across all regions of South Sudan. In this context, the AAP committees and demonstration farms were credited with contributing to a reduction in inter- and intracommunal tensions. Critically, this included contributions through two pathways: i) reducing localized food insecurity as a driver of conflict; and ii) improving cohesion between community groups. As one group chair of a demonstration farm in Torit County put it:

*Lack of food is often a cause of tension in the household, but our members have testified that the vegetables they get from here have contributed to a reduction in tension over food provision during hard times. This is one of the benefits of the project. Also, our members are from different tribes – the Acholi, Madi, Peri and Lotuku. We all interact well with each other. Between the Peri – Lotuku, and Madi – Acholi there have been tribal conflicts over time, but in our group the members co-exist. We have also seen improvements in community relations between and among the mentioned tribes (FAO, 2022c, p.3).*

87. In the Sudan, NRM Committees established by FNS-REPRO contributed to the local conflict management capacities through improved natural resources management and dispute resolution. Conflict prevention and management training provided to Committee members, government technical personnel and customary institutions were cited as improving the interaction between formal and customary institutions and their effectiveness in building and sustaining localized peace. Rehabilitation of water sources were also credited with reducing conflict risk arising from natural resources management disputes, as well as the creation of fire lines and demarcation of livestock routes, which also led to less destruction of the rangelands (FAO, 2022d).<sup>11,12</sup>
88. The sustainability of these assets depends on the degree to which local partnerships can be fostered and maintained. As detailed in section 3.5 below, the peace-sustaining effects of the natural resources management mechanisms established in each country have the potential to be sustained beyond the project lifetime, most notably through the ongoing effects of the increased capacities in conflict prevention and management, the partnerships with local governments and universities and the natural resource management action plans developed with FNS-REPRO support. This does, however, depend on continued ownership and buy-in from local partners. The evaluation could not find specific evidence that such

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<sup>9</sup> FL011: FAO Country Office personnel Somalia.

<sup>10</sup> Focus group discussions in Bakiwiri, Yambio and Anyidi, Bor, South Sudan (July 2023); EB010.

<sup>11</sup> ND012: FAO Country Office.

<sup>12</sup> FB005: FAO Country Office.

ownership existed, beyond commitments to continue using and engaging with the NRM Committees and demonstration farms made by members of each at local level.<sup>13</sup>

89. Participation in FNS-REPRO activities has contributed to increased trust between ethnic communities with history of intercommunal conflict. The participatory approach to conflict risk analysis undertaken by FNS-REPRO teams during the inception and implementation phases brought together members of communities with histories of conflict between them. Subsequent engagement of members of both communities, with careful beneficiary selection and targeting that took account of the risks for exacerbating pre-existing tensions, helped to build trust between community members in, for example, fodder production and processing activities in Somaliland, seed producer groups in South Sudan, and demonstration farms in Sudan. Community members provided evidence of the improved trust and reduced conflict risks that arose following their participation in the FNS-REPRO activities. Critically, they cited the improved awareness and understanding of the needs and challenges faced by members of different ethnic groups as having a positive impact on their willingness to engage peaceful conflict resolution through the locally-embedded natural resources management committees established by the project.<sup>14</sup>
90. Conflict prevention and management activities undertaken by FNS-REPRO to reduce intercommunal conflict risk also translated into spillover effects on intimate partner violence risk reduction within the household. In Somaliland, community members reported that scarcity of resources and associated reduced food availability led to increased risk of intimate partner violence (IPV) at household level. This was associated with pre-existing beliefs and expectations on male household heads to provide food, which, in a context of drought and reduced yield, led to tensions inside the household which sometimes resulted in physical violence directed towards female household members and children. But FNS-REPRO training on conflict management, intended primarily to reduce intercommunal conflict risk, in fact provided women in affected communities with tools and capacities that helped them to identify IPV threats and vulnerabilities and provide support for peers in their community. Women who had been training in Sool and Sanaag then went on to extend support to other women in their communities who were affected at household level, thereby increasing the community capacity to mitigate IPV risk. In South Sudan, a similar pattern was recorded by beneficiaries of the conflict prevention and management training. In this case, it related to the engagement of women in conflict resolution processes which had previously been male-dominated but which, through FNS-REPRO's activities, allowed women to participate and engage in conflict management decision-making in their communities. Beneficiaries reported that participation in the training meant they began to be looked at as role models within their communities and allowed them to intrahousehold violence risks and engage with vulnerable households to reduce risks accordingly (FAO, 2022b).<sup>15</sup>
91. Lastly, the project had a positive impact on the fluency of FAO technical personnel in the dynamics of conflict drivers and risk. The engagement of the FAO conflict analysis unit at both headquarters and regional level provided an opportunity for Country Office technical

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<sup>13</sup> ND009: FAO Regional Office, ND010 and ND011: FAO Regional and Country Office teams.

<sup>14</sup> MG001: beneficiary South Sudan; AS009: partner institution Somaliland; AS011 and AS012: partner institutions in South Sudan.

<sup>15</sup> ND002: FAO Regional Office personnel.

teams, with specializations in NRM, agricultural value chains and nutrition, to enhance their understanding of conflict drivers and the risks associated with project design, targeting and beneficiary selection. Country Office and regional teams reported that engagement in the conflict risk analysis during the project inception phase, as well as continued engagement with the conflict specialists at headquarters and regional level, helped improve their understanding of key issues and concepts in the conflict prevention and management field, as well as their application to potential conflict risks associated with their work. The partnership with InterPeace to provide community-level conflict prevention and management training also provided an opportunity for FAO Country Office personnel to engage in the process of analysing community conflict risk and key drivers associated with agricultural production and natural resources management.<sup>16</sup>

**Finding 10.** (*Output 4: contributions to the evidence-base*): The FNS-REPRO learning component contributed to project learning by helping the implementation teams adjust, revise and redefine the overall project and intervention approach at country level based on the context needs. However, there are limited results of FNS-REPRO contributions to “external learning” of other actors, including community members, policymakers, researchers and implementers of other initiatives.

92. FNS-REPRO was designed to contribute to wider policy and learning on what works for building food systems resilience in protracted crises. The primary mechanism for this learning was the partnership with WUR, which led a specific project component dedicated to learning. Some contributions were made to the project-level learning about challenges faced at country-level, which fed into the annual adaptive management cycle developed and employed by WUR and FAO RTEA, in collaboration with FAO Country Offices. This learning had tangible effects on project design and adaptation during the project life cycle, contributing to the development of revised country-specific theories of change, a redesign of the nutrition component and adaptations to programming in Somaliland in response to the drought.<sup>17</sup>
93. However, learning for the wider policy and research community was very limited. Some links were established between the FNS-REPRO team at FAO’s Regional Office and the Global Network Against Food Crises. WUR also engaged with research and policymaking actors including the Netherlands Food Partnership, the Dutch government, the food security coordination hub and the nexus coalition. But only limited contributions to the global evidence-base emerged from these interactions (e.g. through food and seed system resilience assessments, value chain assessments, stories of change and policy briefs). A key factor limiting the wider learning was the limited outcome-based data collection at community-level. This was partly the result of an unclear division of labour between the learning partner and the FAO Monitoring and Evaluation Teams. It was also partly the result of the limited field presence of WUR in areas of FNS-REPRO intervention, which reduced the opportunity for household surveys during implementation. But likewise, it is not clear that a comprehensive review of the evidence base for the casual assumptions made in the project theories of change – both initial and revised – was made. Such a review could, for example, have mapped the available evidence supporting the assumption that improving income generation capacity for producers in agricultural value chains would lead to

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<sup>16</sup> ND002: FAO Regional Office personnel.

<sup>17</sup> CA005-007, ND004-009: FAO and WUR project implementation teams.

improved food security and resilience in rural communities within fragile contexts. In the absence of such an evidence mapping, the opportunities were limited for strategically designing an evidence generation system that targets specific information gaps and leverages project results for wider evidence generation. This in turn limited the opportunities for evidence dissemination through the partnership with GNAFC and other global initiatives.<sup>18</sup>

*EQ 4: To what extent has the project addressed cross-cutting aspects in design and throughout implementation?*

**Finding 11.** Multisectoral context analyses were conducted during the inception phase and helped to increase the integration of gender and inclusion in project design, e.g. by identifying specific gender inequities and vulnerabilities for unemployed youth and identifying approaches to improve beneficiary selection across age and gender parameters in response. This in turn contributed to results in terms of increased engagement of women and young people in decision-making processes related to natural resources management and rural livelihood generation activities.

94. FNS-REPRO conducted, with the support of the Regional Office in Nairobi, multisectoral context analyses that looked at conflict and insecurity drivers across political, economic, natural resources management, demographic and cultural factors. These sought to identify areas where the activities planned by FNS-REPRO might contribute to reduced – or possibly increased – conflict risks in the communities in question. As a result, the project activities and beneficiary lists were amended and developed to address gender inequities and specific vulnerabilities for unemployed young people in the communities of intervention.
95. The impact of FNS-REPRO activities on gender disparities can be observed by comparison of baseline and endline RIMA results for beneficiary households in Somaliland. In Somaliland, significant positive impact was observed for the food security indicators for female-headed households, while only insignificant gains were observed for male-headed ones. Moreover, significant positive impacts were observed on income from livestock production for both male and female-headed households, reflecting the degree of both male and female involvement in the fodder value chains in Somaliland (FAO, 2024b). In South Sudan, the RIMA endline survey did not include equivalent analysis of the impact on gender disparities, while in the Sudan, no endline survey was conducted due to the ongoing conflict at the time of project closure.
96. AAP committees, gum Arabic, fodder and seed producer groups took deliberate steps to mobilize women and youth to become members and increased the voices of women in community decision-making and agriproduction. The mandates of the AAP and NRM Committees ensured inclusion of women and young people in their constitution, and members also received gender training. These interventions resulted in improved capacities for women and youth, as evidenced by their increased participation in project activities, and uptake of opportunities, both as individual producers and as leaders of producer groups.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> ND004, ND006, ND009: FAO and WUR project implementation teams.

<sup>19</sup> For example, in Nzara (Yambio, South Sudan) farmers groups were formed, in which 60 percent of the members were women, and there were cooperative societies led by women. The most successful seed producer in Yambio is a woman, and the most successful farmers group in Bor is made up of women.

97. In Somaliland, specific risks were addressed regarding the radicalization of young unemployed people in rural areas leading to engagement in conflict and violent crime. Youth unemployment across Somaliland remains high, at 75 percent (IOM, 2013). The context analysis and annual sensemaking workshops run by FNS-REPRO developed strategies to address some of these concerns. This included targeting young people as beneficiaries in the fodder value chain activities, offering training through the livestock development hubs, and providing training across the fodder value chain. Young people in the intervention communities in Sool and Sanaag were then able to become involved in fodder production and trade, leading to reports of increased income opportunity among them. Lastly, young people were selected to be peace champions under the peacebuilding activities implemented through FNS-REPRO, which led to reported improvements in the recognition and position as role models of the selected young people for their peers at community level.<sup>20</sup>
98. The project also sought to respond to gender-specific disadvantages faced by women in pastoral communities across Somaliland. The baseline context analysis conducted for FNS-REPRO identified limited access to income and other resources for women in these communities, in some cases resulting in women relying on cash transfers provided through FAO emergency programming to maintain their livelihoods. FNS-REPRO personnel sought to address this through inclusion of women in consultative meetings at community level, giving space to women to voice their concerns to community leaders, and giving women specific representation in the natural resources Committees. Women also received training on fodder production, conflict resolution and nutrition-sensitive agriculture. Gender-disaggregated data on livelihoods and income within these communities is not yet available, but will be collected through the RIMA endline study (FAO, 2022b).
99. In South Sudan, the project improved gender-equitable livelihood and income opportunities for women in seed producer groups and farming collectives. The FNS-REPRO context analysis identified gender inequity regarding income levels and involvement in seed production among rural women in each of the intervention zones. Disadvantages included inequitable access to markets due to the remoteness of their locations and the means of transport required, as well limited access to tools and machinery for farming. In response, female participation in group farming approaches was prioritized, leading to greater representation of women in the seed multiplication producer groups as well as on the natural resources management Committees supported through the project's NRM activities. The evaluation field visits recorded increased income opportunities and improved livelihoods for women in the seed producer groups, as well as increased involvement in decision-making regarding access to land, access to farming inputs and training and stronger bargaining power at market (FAO, 2020d).<sup>21</sup>
100. In the Darfur region of the Sudan, the project provided gender and nutrition training to help increase female participation in decision-making about natural resources management and conflict resolution. FAO monitoring data reports an improvement in awareness of the interaction between gender and nutrition at community-level, as well as

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<sup>20</sup> AS007: local government representative, Erigavo District, Sanaag.

<sup>21</sup> FL003: beneficiary South Sudan, FL005: beneficiary South Sudan..

the adoption of more sustainable nutrition and food production practices across the community.

101. One of the factors supporting gender-sensitivity of the FNS-REPRO programming was the engagement of locally based NGOs, community structures and universities. The project utilized the expertise of local partners to help design and implement gender-responsive activities, including through i) the conduct of context analysis and assessment of gender balance and youth participation in agricultural production across the selected value chains in country; and ii) the targeting and selection of women and young people identified as being vulnerable to gender inequalities and youth unemployment, respectively.<sup>22</sup>
102. One potential hindering factor for increasing gender-sensitivity might be the gender-breakdown of FNS-REPRO personnel in Country Offices. While the RTEA gender balance was reasonably good (four male personnel members, six female), numbers for FNS-REPRO personnel in Country Offices were much less balanced:

**Table 4. Gender breakdown of FNS-REPRO personnel in FAO Country Offices**

Country Office	Male personnel	Female personnel
Somaliland	12	2
South Sudan	14	6
Sudan	8	2

Source: Author's elaboration of FAO internal data by the Evaluation Team.

103. However, it is important to note that the evaluation found no evidence of a lack of concern for gender disparities within Country Offices during data collection. On the contrary, the consideration of gender dynamics in project targeting, and the integration of gender-sensitive programming, as outlined above, was reasonable for each Country Office.

*EQ 5: What are the prospects for sustainability of the results achieved after project completion?*

**Finding 12.** Improvements to the selected value chains and NRM systems highlighted in Finding 5 are nascent but tangible and evolving. The sustainability of the changes observed requires strong ownership by local partners and the engagement of private sector and governance structures to embed the progress made. At present, despite efforts made by FNS-REPRO teams in each country of intervention, the engagement of private sector actors across the value chains remains limited. More local ownership has been achieved regarding the NRM Committees and engagement of women's community groups in collective decision-making at local level. As such, the likelihood for sustained results after project completion remain mixed.

104. The project has started to work on the upgrading of the selected value chains in each country of intervention through the creation of institutions, the training of producer groups and other actors, and the creation of market linkages. It is likely that relevant government institutions will continue to build on the results of FNS-REPRO after project closure. But it is less likely that market linkages between producers and other actors will continue unless there is a concerted effort to upgrade the entire structure of the value chains by ensuring vertical and horizontal linkages across each step from inputs through production, storage,

<sup>22</sup> FT001; FT003; FL00X.

access to market and sale, and including community-driven value chains in the informal economy.

105. In response, the FAO regional team has made significant efforts to advance the importance of resilient food systems with other actors over the previous two years. This has yielded some results, most notably the interest of the African Development Bank in supporting and developing the animal feed and fodder sectors in Somaliland, with public-private partnerships as the centre of the discussion. Likewise, FNS-REPRO has, in each country of intervention, sought to build the capacity of implementing partners based in the community, notably those in rural areas closest to the communities whose resilience the project aims to build. This capacity development can be expected to have a positive influence on the sustainability of results achieved at the local level.
106. Nevertheless, long-term sustainability will depend on the achievement of systemic changes in value chain structures and governance approaches. FNS-REPRO has worked on the foundations for sustainability through the formation of new governance structures that are owned by the target communities. In Somaliland, for example, the project fostered the creation of institutions at community level such as the NRM Committees, the fodder producer groups (some of them are formal cooperatives), the peace Committees, and the Livestock Development Hubs. It has also built the capacity of locally-based NGOs and universities in or near the rural communities benefitting from the project activities, as well as building permanent structures and materials, such as fodder shades, with longer-term sustainability potential. In South Sudan, the project strengthened decentralized institutions of importance to the seed value chain, including the Seed Quality Control Board and the Seed Lab. However, evidence of long-term engagement of the existing private sector is limited.<sup>23</sup>
107. Despite some effort, linkages with private sector remain weak or non-existent. One of the main challenges is that private companies are not attracted to work in most of the target areas due to the challenging logistics and insecurity. This aspect poses some challenges to the long-term sustainability of the intervention.
  - i. In the Sudan, the project reached out to several export companies to close the supply/demand gap. For example, FNS-REPRO discussed with OLAM to post their focal persons in the target areas to collect gum Arabic from producers through auction markets. Unfortunately, due to the ongoing conflict, this has not been possible yet [FB005]. Also, FNS-REPRO has submitted a preliminary screening form to the FAO Project Support Division for prospect engagement with Fair Factory for Manufacturing and Packing Gum Arabic (FOGA) – a Dutch-Sudanese enterprise that sells fair and organic gum Arabic. FOGA failed to close any deal with Gum Arabic Producers' Associations so far, due to their inability to secure loans from commercial banks, which was blamed on the current political situation. Also, the project tried to link producers to AfriTech – part of a joint venture with Nexira – which exports more than 50 percent of Sudan's gum Arabic to France. AfriTech felt that the production of gum Arabic in the target areas is too low and didn't want to take the risk, especially in view of the current political environment

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<sup>23</sup> FL002, FL006, CA004.

and in the absence of incentive policies. Finally, FNS-REPRO also engaged in discussions with Elements trading company to formulate partnership agreements with GAPAs in project areas in North and East Darfur, but nothing materialized thus far. Finally, a template for a win-win smart partnership agreement was developed to fit the context in Darfur and facilitate business between export companies and GAPAs (FAO, 2023c).

- ii. In Somaliland, FNS-REPRO engaged in discussions with transporters and fodder and livestock traders, but so far very limited engagement is reported due to the limited volumes of fodder produced by the beneficiaries. No formal contracts were signed although some traders are reportedly buying from the Livestock Development Hubs (FAO, 2023d). It was reported that engagement of the private sector didn't happen right from the beginning because only stakeholders present in the target areas were mapped. Instead, private companies and financial service providers are mostly located in other areas or in the Gulf region [FB006].
- iii. In South Sudan, FNS-REPRO promoted two innovative farmer-led seed enterprise (FLSE) models to establish partnerships between private seed companies and producers, namely the contract seed production and the quality declared seed (QDS) production. Organizations like World Concern Development Organization (WCDO) supported the formation of 11 seed growers' cooperatives. However, connecting FNS-REPRO's seed producers to stable and continuous markets was one of the main challenges. It is reported that FAO procurement guidelines discouraged seed companies from committing to buying and marketing seeds from the producer groups. On the other hand, FAO South Sudan created an opportunity for local procurement to allow locally registered private seed companies to bid for the supply of quality declared seeds to support FAO's humanitarian seed requirements. In addition, the project linked the seed trader Kordofan Limited with seed producers in Jur river county (Marial Bai, Udici and Kangi Payams), which sold at least 300 MT of quality declared seeds to the company in 2022. Also, the company Pro-seed has been able to market over 500 MT (cumulatively) through the local procurement system of FAO (FAO, 2023e).

**Finding 13.** FNS-REPRO did have some success in promoting ownership by local women-led stakeholder groups, which suggests that some of the changes to female representation in decision-making structures and agribusiness production infrastructure may be sustained beyond project closure.

- 108. Women represented more than half the total participants in the project. The project ensured women were empowered with the necessary skills and farming input; and benefitted from the sale of seeds and farm produce. Women participated in the project as stakeholders and beneficiaries, such as within the partner organizations, the established government institutions, and communities – seed producer groups.
- 109. The baseline report and resilience analysis (FAO, n.d.) conducted for FNS-REPRO identified barriers to women's empowerment in agriculture. These included aspects of cultural norms that hindered women and youth participation in decision-making; access to productive resources such as land and income; access to skills and capacity building.
- 110. In response, FNS-REPRO sought to ensure gender inclusivity across project implementation. Women have taken up leadership roles in the farming groups and

cooperatives where they work. In Somaliland, some of the more effective farmer groups are women-only. Evidence for the implementation of the FNS-REPRO project showed a good number of women had leadership roles in the beneficiary groups as well as some mentioned as leaders under the local authority structure (FAO, 2020d).

111. The empowerment of women within the beneficiary groups has also been shown to have an impact on the overall household well-being. A good number of women, who joined the FNS-REPRO project as individuals, had autonomy over the proceeds of the sale of seeds from the group, of which the majority of members mentioned having utilized the resources to increase household assets, take their children to boarding schools and invested in a business, e.g. pig farming.<sup>24</sup>

*EQ 6: To what extent were the management arrangements and governance structure of the project adequate to deliver the intended results in an efficient manner?*

**Finding 14.** The management arrangements for FNS-REPRO reflected the complexity of the project and the regional nature of the food insecurity and protracted crises in the horn of Africa. The role of the FAO Regional Offices and technical personnel added clear value to the project in terms of design, implementation and monitoring. The learning processes, contributed significantly to the adaptive management processes used by FNS-REPRO, but struggled to provide significant community level primary data to contribute to wider learning outside the management cycle.

112. The management arrangements for FNS-REPRO involved multiple stakeholders both within and outside FAO Offices in three countries of intervention. Implementation was led by FAO Country Offices in Somalia, South Sudan, the Sudan and RTEA, in partnership with the WUR in the Netherlands. The project design and budget was managed by the RTEA, which also provided guidance and support to Country Offices implementing activities under components 1, 2 and 3 on agricultural value chains, NRM and nutrition. WUR implemented component 4 on learning. FAO's regional conflict adviser for East Africa, with support from the Conflict and Peace Unit at FAO headquarters, advised on conflict analysis and conflict-sensitive project design, and engaged with InterPeace to deliver conflict and peacebuilding training at community level.
113. The regional management of the project helped to increase the conflict-sensitivity of the project design, implementation and monitoring systems, and allowed the RTEA and WUR to provide support and technical assistance to Country Offices on nutrition, resilience, communication and visibility, adaptive programming and private sector engagement. The RTEA and WUR also provided significant inputs to both the initial theory of change, which provided a coherent project theory across all three countries of intervention, and the revised theories of change, which provided greater contextualization and systems thinking at country level. FAO's regional conflict adviser played a critical role in bringing conflict-sensitivity into the project design in each country and across each project component. This included overseeing the multidisciplinary context analysis that assessed linkages between conflict, gender, NRM, livelihoods and agricultural value chains in each country; and then co-designing improvements to programming to ensure greater conflict sensitivity, for example by ensuring that beneficiary selection did not worsen interclan conflict dynamics and implementing training on conflict management and dialogue processes between farmers and herders. Lastly, the Regional Office was able to support Country Offices in

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<sup>24</sup> FL005.

integrating conflict risk reduction objectives into the logframe and design MEAL systems to capture stories of change at community level.<sup>25</sup>

114. The learning component itself contributed significantly to the adaptive management processes used by FNS-REPRO, but struggled to provide significant community-level primary data to contribute to wider learning outside the management cycle. FNS-REPRO adopted an adaptive programming approach, co-developed between FAO RTEA and the WUR team implementing the learning component of the project. This style of programming was new for the country teams in question, and the development of the adaptive management cycle, supported by trainings from WUR for FAO personnel, helped to embed new practices within FAO. As a result, project activities were reviewed annually and fed into a sensemaking process which helped identify changes in context and emerging areas of need to address in the next annual cycle. This adaptive management approach was key to accommodating to the contextual changes derived from shocks and stressors that hit the region during the project’s lifespan such as droughts, floods and conflicts. Most notably, the approach led to revisions of activities towards emergency response in Somaliland following drought, and played a role in influencing the redesign of the nutrition component in the second year of the project. In doing so, the sensemaking processes built the awareness and capacities of implementing evidence-based and adaptive programming cycles at country for FAO Country Offices and participating partners. However, the learning component struggled to provide significant community-level primary data to contribute to wider learning about what works for building resilience in protracted crisis contexts. This is primarily due to an unclear division of labour between FAO monitoring teams and WUR, as well as the initial lack of community-level presence and enumerators under the Wageningen contract. To an extent, the latter problem was resolved through partnerships developed between Wageningen and local universities in South Sudan, the Sudan and Somaliland. Nevertheless, community level primary data collection on outcome level change remains a gap in the FNS-REPRO monitoring and learning systems (see below).<sup>26</sup>

**Finding 15.** The monitoring framework was comprehensive and well-designed, but implementation of outcome level data collection was weak, limiting the ability of stakeholders both within and outside the project implementation team to see the results of FNS-REPRO activities at community level.

115. The logframe covered each of the components of FNS-REPRO with clear and measurable indicators at output level. Outcome level indicators were included, but with less clarity, particularly on the intended modalities for measuring changes that cut across the project components and contributed towards increased resilience across the food security, nutrition and peace nexus. Monitoring systems provided a significant amount of information about outputs and performance, with regular updates shared with donors and the wider public on activities conducted and results in terms of agricultural produce and income generation. However, less information was collected about outcome level change. The endline RIMA surveys are designed to respond to this need, and should be conducted in line with the project plan in the first half of 2024. Some stories of change have also been

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<sup>25</sup> ND002, ND008, ND009: FAO Regional Office personnel members; ND012, AS008 AS009: FAO and partner organizations in Somaliland, Sudan and South Sudan.

<sup>26</sup> CA007, FB001, ND003, ND006, ND007: learning component team members; ND008, ND009, ND010, ND011: FAO Regional and Country Office personnel.

collected from community members, particularly concerning the interaction between food security, natural resources management and conflict drivers. But these have not been fully developed into a systematic and regular reporting system to feed into the adaptive management or wider learning processes. As a result, at the time of the evaluation data collection, there are significant gaps in outcome level data availability across the project.



## 4 Conclusions and recommendations

### 4.1 Conclusions

**Conclusion 1.** FNS-REPRO presented a novel and promising approach to addressing the interplay between conflict and hunger in a context of protracted conflict and food insecurity. *(Based on Findings 1 and 3)*

116. The use of a resilience- and livelihoods-based approach in such fragile contexts, with the aim of reforming and upgrading whole food systems along selected value chains, was a distinctive feature of the project at the time of design. This is distinct from the prevailing use of continued humanitarian assistance responding to chronic food insecurity and food system shocks in the region in the years prior to FNS-REPRO. It has the potential to help move communities affected by protracted crisis and chronic conflict risk away from dependency on emergency food assistance towards more resilient agricultural production practice.

**Conclusion 2.** The complexity of the project design reflected a context-specific analysis of the interactions between agricultural value chains, natural resources management and local conflict drivers in remote and rural parts of Somaliland, South Sudan and the Sudan. But the cohesiveness between different component areas was lacking, with some missed opportunities mutually reinforcing linkages at community-level. *(Based on Finding 2)*

117. FAO conducted structured needs analyses during project design stage, which were then used to build a clear and evidence-based theory of change across each of the four project components. The use of context-specific analyses of food and seed systems in each location improved the selection of modalities, approaches and beneficiary groups. While each of the component activities made sense within their own right, there were only limited linkages observed between the different component areas, such as linking value chains improvements to local natural resources management and peacebuilding capacities. Project teams at country level appeared to lack clear area-based strategies for leveraging gains derived from FNS-REPRO's natural resources management components in the value chain upgrade and vice versa, and limited instances of budget lines moving between component areas.

**Conclusion 3.** The initial design of the nutrition component of the project lacked the strategic and context-sensitive pathway to improve nutritional knowledge, capacity and practice at community level. Nevertheless, small-scale improvements in nutritional diversity have been observed among direct participants in project activities in each of the three countries of intervention. *(Based on Findings 2, 5 and 8)*

118. The nutrition component was insufficiently integrated into the initial project design and project teams lacked the technical expertise and local partnerships to maximize the potential of the activities under this component. The linkages between natural resources management, agricultural value chain improvements and improved nutritional capacity were not clear at the initial design stage and opportunities were missed to identify the pathways to improved nutritional quality and diversity arising from results achieved in other areas of the project. These problems were partly mitigated by a redesign of the nutrition component at the mid-term phase, which led to some clear, but small-scale improvements in the diversity of crops produced and consumed by project beneficiaries. But wide-scale

changes in nutritional knowledge, capacities and practices were not observed in the communities of intervention during the project lifecycle.

**Conclusion 4.** The conflict-sensitivity of the project could have been improved by assigning specific budget lines to this activity from the outset. *(Based on Findings 2 and 9)*

119. As outlined in Finding 9, FNS-REPRO activities made a number of contributions to reducing conflict risk in the communities engaged with. However, as per Finding 2, these results were achieved through a mix of support provided to thematic budget lines, such as natural resources management and drawing from regional and global FAO resources – external to the project budget – through the conflict and peace units in Rome and Nairobi. In contrast, the initial project design did not include specific budget lines for peacebuilding and conflict management activities. FAO largely mitigated this weakness once the multidisciplinary analysis was complete by pulling from i) FAO's global memorandum of understanding with InterPeace; ii) its conflict and peace analytical capacities (funded through the Global Network Against Food Crisis); and iii) the adaptation of Country Office budget lines to include specific activities supporting conflict management capacities at community level. Nevertheless, inclusion of a specific budget line for conflict risk reduction at the outset could have increased the gains seen in this area during implementation.

**Conclusion 5.** The use of a regional approach to project design and implementation added value to the technical expertise available to project teams and increased the potential for cross-country learning and contributions to the wider policy debate. *(Based on Findings 2, 9, 11 and 14)*

120. While the project activities and selected value chains differed according to country contexts, the use of a single regional project design allowed FAO's Regional Office to provide additional expertise in support of Country Office personnel, including on nutrition, conflict, resilience, monitoring, evaluation and learning, and private sector engagement. This support led to clear improvements in the conflict sensitivity of the programming, the coherence of the approaches taken towards natural resources management capacity building and allowed for a coherent logframe to be built across the three country contexts (see Findings 2 and 14 on this point). It further increased the potential for cross-country learning and discussion through WUR-led sensemaking and RTEA-led review and planning activities, and periodic review and updates of progress in each country, challenges encountered and solutions found.

**Conclusion 6.** FNS-REPRO did yield clear results in each country in terms of improving agricultural income generation capacity, local natural resources management and conflict management practices, and the engagement of women in decision-making processes. *(Based on Findings 5-9, 11 and 13)*

121. In the absence of full endline surveys at this stage, evidence of changes at community level cannot be considered statistically representative. Nevertheless, the evaluation field visits did find tangible evidence of improvements in i) income-generating capacity of targeted farmers and farmer groups across the selected value chains in each country; ii) improved natural resources management capacities at local level in the intervention communities; iii) improved conflict management and resolution capacities, linked to reduced instances of natural resource-based conflict in some instances; and iv) improvements in the participation of women and youth in community-based decision-making. Lastly, unanticipated results were also observed regarding the impact of conflict resolution training activities on reduced risk of intimate partner violence in food insecure households.

**Conclusion 7.** The sustainability of the results observed along the selected value chains is somewhat limited by the lack of clear and longstanding partnerships with local private sector actors and governance bodies. Nevertheless, the emerging results recorded thus far do put the project in a good position to develop such partnerships in the future. *(Based on Findings 5 and 12)*

122. Whilst income generation capacity has improved in each of the selected value chains, it remains to be seen how sustainable these results will be beyond the project lifecycle. Partnerships with private sector actors have, despite numerous efforts of outreach by FAO Country Offices, not yielded the type of locally-based ownership that would ensure continued investment support and market engagement required to make these gains sustainable. Likewise, while the efforts to reform the seed sector in South Sudan and upgrade the gum Arabic production and enhance intercropping in Darfur have yielded tangible results, changes to the policy frameworks and governance mechanisms for each of the respective value chains are required to ensure these results become embedded in each country. Nevertheless, initial momentum has been generated, which could, with strategic and sustained engagement of other actors, help to attract increased private sector engagement in the future. And the deliberate focus on working with partners based in local rural communities has the potential to positively impact sustainability through improved local capacity and practice.

**Conclusion 8.** The learning component of the project succeeded in developing the adaptive management capacity and practices of FNS-REPRO project personnel, and contributed to policy discussions about building food systems resilience, but broadly failed to deliver evidence about what worked for food systems resilience-building across the different contexts seen in the three countries. As a result, the project's contributions to regional and global level policy, thinking and practice on food systems resilience remains limited at the time of writing. *(Based on Findings 2, 10, 15 and 15)*

123. Weaknesses in the division of labour between FAO and the WUR (as observed in Findings 2 and 14, above), as well as the initial lack of local community-based data collection teams operating under the latter, meant that primary data about outcomes achieved within communities was lacking. These factors reduced the project's ability to fully capitalize on the potential relationships with the Global Network Against Food Crises or other regional and global policy fora. Nevertheless, the learning component did contribute to policy discussions about food systems resilience, most notably through high level events organized by FAO and WUR in the Netherlands and elsewhere, as well as the UN Food Systems Summits in 2022 and 2023. Moreover, it also had clear and tangible results in the area of building FAO's own capacity for adaptive management. The sensemaking approach designed and implemented with Wageningen's support, combined with the training provided by the University to FAO country teams, yielded an increase in confidence in using real-time data and sensemaking approaches to course correct and adapt to shifting contexts over time. And partnerships with local universities to support community-based data collection took place during the course of the project implementation.

## 4.2 Recommendations

124. On the basis of the conclusions presented above, the Evaluation Team makes the following recommendations for FAO and its partners to build on the successes seen so far and make improvements, where possible. The recommendations are made with a view to stimulating further reflections based on this project for FAO's future activities.

**Recommendation 1.** *(FAO RTEA and Country Offices, national and local administrations including line ministries and food system governance bodies):* Broaden the support to selected value chains to include a whole-of-systems approach, involving the full range of stakeholders along the length of the value chain, from production through storage and access to market. *(Based on Conclusions 6 and 7)*

125. As identified in Conclusion 6, FNS-REPRO created tangible but nascent results in the selected value chains in each country. Moreover, as noted in Conclusion 7, these results have the potential to bring about larger scale changes in their respective food systems, but only if the newly established practices and capacities are fully owned by local private sector and governance partners in each country. To date, efforts to engage such partners have had limited results. In the future, FAO RTEA should work with Country Offices to design private sector engagement plans which focus on co-design and local ownership, to allow FAO's Offices to exit from the intervention and ensure longer-term sustainability.
126. FAO RTEA and Country Offices should seek to engage local partners in the co-design of activities that can help embed the new practices underpinning improved agricultural income generation in a wider whole-of-systems approach. But going beyond the identification of specific activities for local partners to take on, a whole-of-systems strategic approach should consider the wider value chain, beyond the increased production achieved by the project to date, and focusing on storage, transport to market, certification, quality assurance and the wider food governance system. Entry points for partnerships, local, regional and international, should be identified, as well as potential support actions for FAO Country Offices and Regional Offices.

**Recommendation 2.** *(FAO RTEA and Country Offices, national and local administrations including line ministries and natural resource management governance bodies):* Build on the improved natural resources management capacities by identifying local governance and community partners with an incentive to continue the work of the NRM and AAP committees and follow-up with local leaders to ensure continued engagement of communities with the Committee processes. *(Based on Conclusions 6 and 7)*

127. The natural resources management component of FNS-REPRO had clear and tangible results at the local level. FAO must capitalize on these important results rather than let them vanish after the project ends, by i) identifying local governance and community partners who have an interest in continuing the work of the NRM and AAP committees after project completion; and ii) conducting follow-up activities with local leaders to encourage continued engagement with local dispute resolution mechanisms. FAO should find the most appropriate contractual modalities for doing this. Agreeing contractual arrangements such as Technical Cooperation Programmes with appropriate partners might be a useful step in the first instance. But in the longer-term, the results of the project will only be sustainable if FAO can successfully advocate for self-funded engagement of local actors in the NRM Committees themselves.

**Recommendation 3.** *(FAO RTEA and Country Offices):* Assign specific budget lines to future projects operating in similar thematic areas in contexts of protracted conflict, dedicated to peacebuilding activities to ensure that conflict risk reduction benefits from the improvements seen in local natural resources management capacities, as well as the potential impacts of improved income generation capacities on social cohesion. *(Based on Conclusion 4)*

128. The original project design did not include dedicated resources for conflict risk reduction, despite the interaction between conflict and hunger being central to the project design. Future FAO projects in these areas should ensure that conflict-sensitivity is embedded from project design stage, including budgeting for activities that improve local capacity to manage and mitigate conflict risks arising from natural resources and agricultural practices.

**Recommendation 4.** *(FAO RTEA, Conflict and Peace Unit, Country Offices, national and local administrations including line ministries and natural resource management governance bodies):* Continue supporting peace champions and female and young members of NRM and AAP committees to enhance the engagement of women and youth in decision-making about natural resources management and agricultural value chain development. *(Based on Conclusion 6)*

129. The support to peace champions and female and young members of NRM and AAP committees was one of the areas with clear observable results in terms of women's empowerment and demonstrated improvements to community resilience. These results could be built upon through a process of community-led participatory design to generate new avenues for improving community capacities to reduce resource- and livelihood-based conflict risk in the future.

**Recommendation 5.** *(FAO RTEA, WUR project team and learning partners):* Develop a new partnership model to improve the field presence and community-based outcome-level monitoring data generated by the learning component. The new partnership should include funding and terms of reference for country-based enumerators and data analysts to help collect and analyse outcome data across the value chain, natural resources management, nutrition and peacebuilding areas of FNS-REPRO's activities. *(Based on Conclusion 8)*

130. Future interventions by FAO to address the food systems upgrading in protracted crises should aim to improve the community-based outcome-level monitoring systems in order to generate primary data to underpin wider learning about what works and what factors contribute to, or hinder, results achieved. This should include quantitative and qualitative community-based outcome monitoring data, with a focus on measuring both expected and unexpected outcomes that cut across the value chain, natural resources management and nutritional pillars of activity. Analytical approaches to identify contributory factors to results achieved, while assessing the role of external actors and factors, should be prioritized. While partnering with a dedicated learning actor has benefits in this regard, the division of labour between such a partner and FAO's internal monitoring and learning systems should be clearly outlined, and any future partnership should put local field presence and partnerships with local universities at its centre, in order to facilitate co-creation of knowledge processes and enhance learning and programming for the development of local food systems governance.

**Recommendation 6.** *(FAO RTEA and WUR project team, FAO MEAL teams at country and regional level):* Review the evidence gaps across the revised theories of change, identifying areas where an improved community-based outcome monitoring system can provide primary data. Assess the potential for evidence generation that compares results across the three country contexts and identification of lessons learned that can contribute to the global policy dialogue on responses to

food insecurity in conflict-affected contexts. Design additional outcome-level data collection around the needs identified herein. *(Based on Conclusions 8)*

131. WUR and FAO project teams undertook extensive work to redesign the country-level theories of change for the FNS-REPRO project. Future projects could benefit from an evidence map covering the casual assumptions underpinning each revised theory of change, to support identification of areas for further research as well as hypotheses to be tested in future projects. In particular, evidence generated by comparison between country cases, and lessons learned that can contribute to the global policy dialogue in 2024 onwards, should be prioritized. Future projects in this area should use the evidence mapping to help design outcome-level data collection frameworks, by prioritizing the areas where such data can add greatest value to the evidence-base.

**Recommendation 7.** *(FAO RTEA and Country Offices):* Conduct a systematic analysis of the opportunities to improve nutritional quality and diversity during project design stage for future projects that aim to build food and nutrition security in protracted crises. Ensure that opportunities for improving nutrition are explored across the full range of impact pathways, whether through standalone nutrition-oriented activities or mainstreaming of good nutritional practices in other project components. Review the place of nutritional improvements in the FNS-REPRO theory of change. Where feasible, seek to maximize the positive impact of improved livelihoods and agricultural value chains on household nutritional quality and variety (see Finding 8). Where these links are not feasible, consider reallocating budget lines towards activities better placed to improve the resilience of communities to food insecurity and conflict. *(Based on Conclusion 3)*

132. FNS-REPRO has demonstrated emerging results in terms of improving nutritional diversity and capacity at local level in each of the three countries of intervention. But the integration of nutritional capacity building within the other three pillars of the project was unclear at design and demonstrated only limited synergies at the time of the evaluation in 2023. Future programming in this area should start with a strategic analysis of the different pathways through which improved rural livelihoods and food systems upgrading can influence nutritional practices, mirroring that developed in South Sudan with contributions and support from FNS-REPRO teams. Opportunities should be identified for improving nutritional capacity and practice through i) improved understanding and awareness on nutrition and food handling and preservation; ii) improved income generation to access food at market; iii) improved production of a diversity of healthy food crops; and iv) any other contextually relevant pathways identified at project design stage. Where such links are not clear or practicable, resources should be redirected to activities with a clearer link to the interaction between hunger and conflict in protracted crises.

**Recommendation 8.** *(FAO RTEA, Country Offices and FAO MEAL teams at country and regional level):* Review the potential for improving linkages between the FNS-REPRO components at a local level, by prioritizing area-based budgeting and management structures cutting across each thematic area and benefiting from multisectoral outcome level data collection to enhance adaptive management processes in real-time. *(See Findings 2 and 14, and Conclusion 2)*

133. FNS-REPRO budgeting and management structures were designed along the four core components of improvements to value chains, natural resources management, nutrition and learning. These components cut across all countries and areas of intervention, with limited space for reallocation of activities and budget lines between components in response to changing contexts at the local level. While the adaptive programming approach developed under FNS-REPRO did lead to increased levels of flexibility beyond

the standard approach undertaken by FAO in similar contexts, these adaptations were hindered, rather than supported, by the separation of the four core project components. Future projects could benefit from assigning budget lines on an area-based planning model, allowing for greater flexibility between components and, potentially, greater synergies and interactions between components at the local level. Such a system could be supported by improved use of multidisciplinary context assessments and outcome-monitoring systems designed to capture the interaction between natural resources management, food systems development, local nutritional capacity and conflict risk reduction and management.



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## Appendix 1. People interviewed

Name	Surname	Institution/agency	Role
<b>FAO</b>			
Ahmed	Elmi	FAO Somalia	Senior Animal Production Associate
Atyam	Bettie	FAO Subregional office for Eastern Africa	Conflict-Sensitive Programming Specialist
Bakker	Sanne	FAO Subregional office for Eastern Africa	Nutrition Expert
Bigi	Alberto	FAO headquarters	Emergency and Rehabilitation Officer
Ferrand	Cyril	FAO Subregional office for Eastern Africa	Senior Agricultural Officer
Idriss	Mohamud	FAO Somalia	Project Associate – Conflict and Learning
Joosten	Koen	FAO Subregional office for Eastern Africa	Resilience Specialist
Kardash	Abdelmonem	FAO Sudan	Technical Adviser
Kivuva	Nathan	FAO Subregional office for Eastern Africa	MEAL Specialist
Margret	Asha	FAO South Sudan	Monitoring and Evaluation Officer
Mayol	Jacob	FAO South Sudan	Extension Assistant
Maunder	Nicolas	Independent evaluator	Team Leader – Evaluation of Global Network Against Food Crises (GNAFC)
Mbugua	Erastus	FAO Somalia	Fodder Production Officer
MdTafiqul	Islam	FAO South Sudan	Head of office in Wau
Mohamed	Fathi	FAO Sudan	Monitoring and Evaluation
Ndungu	Jane	FAO Somalia	Project Specialist
Ngesa	Oscar	FAO Subregional office for Eastern Africa	Econometrician
Njue	Sophycate	FAO Somalia	Senior Livestock Officer
Nyombe	Maurice	FAO South Sudan	National Professional Officer
Omolo	Danvers	FAO South Sudan	MEAL Specialist
Paluku	Christol	FAO South Sudan	Land Tenure Specialist
Russo	Luca	FAO headquarters	Lead Technical Officer
Siddig	Abdelmoneim	FAO Sudan	National Technical Specialist
Vairi	Jackson Alex	FAO South Sudan	Volunteer
Wani	James	FAO South Sudan	Natural Resources Management Officer
Yusuf	Abdideeq	FAO Somalia	Animal Health Officer
<b>Wageningen Centre for Development Innovation (WCDI)</b>			
Boerema	Eelke	WCDI Regional	Food System Resilience Officer
Brouwer	Herman	WCDI headquarters	Senior Adviser MSPs
Debons	Pascal	WCDI headquarters	Adviser Food & Nutrition Security
Idle	Ahmed	WCDI Somalia	Learning Agenda Focal Point & NRM Expert
Kusters	Cecile	WCDI headquarters	Senior Adviser PMEL
Malkowsky	Charleen	WCDI headquarters	Food System Resilience Adviser
Ngalamu	Tony	WCDI South Sudan	Learning Agenda Focal Point & Seed System Expert
Schrader	Ted	WCDI headquarters	Senior Adviser Value Chain Development
Van Uffelen	Gerrit-Jan	WCDI headquarters	Senior Adviser Food System Resilience
<b>Government of the Netherlands</b>			
Duku	Robinah	Embassy of the Netherlands in South Sudan	Policy Officer – Food and Nutrition Security

Name	Surname	Institution/agency	Role
Kinyanjui	Stephen	Embassy of the Netherlands in Kenya	FNS-REPRO Focal Point for Somaliland
Van Der Wal	Frits	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Senior Policy Adviser – Food and Nutrition Security
Van Dam	Rineke	Embassy of the Netherlands in Kenya	Regional Humanitarian Coordinator
<b>Somalia</b>			
Abdirizak	Aden	Nugaal University	President
Ahm	Abdirizak	Unique Vision Research and Development Organization	Chairman
Ahmed	Farhan	Ministry of Livestock	Director of Planning in Hargeisa
Eidle	Ahmed	Sanaag University	Project Manager
Haji Ahme	Mohamed	Somaliland Government	Governor of Caynabo district
Hussein	Farhia	Horn of Africa Voluntary Youth Committee	Gender Officer
Kinjuanji	Wamalma	IGAD Centre for Pastoral Areas and Livestock Development	Animal Health Expert
Mahdi	Adam	Unique Vision Research and Development Organization	Project Manager
Xariir	Ibrahim	Horn of Africa Voluntary Youth Committee	Executive Member
Yusuf	Ismail Haji	Somaliland Government	Mayor of Erigavo district
<b>South Sudan</b>			
Albert	Singbaghe	Star Trust Organization	Finance Officer
Andruga	Dominic	Ministry of Agriculture, Environment and Forestry	Project Extension Officer
Barnabas	Hon. Alison	Ministry of Agriculture, Environment and Forestry	State Minister of Agriculture, Western Equatoria State
Biar	John Ateny	Ministry of Agriculture, Environment and Forestry	Bor County Director and Member of the Seed Quality Control Board
Crop	Justus	Peace Corps Organisation	Project Manager
Deng	Isaac	Government of South Sudan	Representative of the Rehabilitation Relief Commission in Kangi village
Diko	Victor	Worldvision	M&E Officer
Galemgebe	Samuel	Global Aim South Sudan	Project Coordinator
Kitara	Innocent	Government of South Sudan – Seed Multiplication Research Centre	Seed Scientist
Simon	Beeyo	Worldvision	Project Manager
Machar	Chol	John Garang University	Teaching Assistant
Majok	Santino Uquak	World Concern	MEAL Officer
Malual	Paul Angeth	Bor County Seed Producers Group	Chair and Member of the Seed Quality Control Group
Mannix	Augustine	Ministry of Agriculture, Environment and Forestry	Director, Magwi County
Mutinda	Christopher	Caritas Luxembourg	Head of Finance & Admin
Olia	Enoch	Ministry of Agriculture, Environment and Forestry	Project Extension Officer
Ondonto	Bosco	Ministry of Agriculture, Environment and Forestry	Field Extension Officer, Magwi County
Pacoto	David	Caritas Luxembourg	Project Manager
Rabach	Nicholas	VSF Germany	Project Manager
Yomima	Lilian	Worldvision	Gender and Protection Assistant

## Appendix 2. Evaluation matrix

The matrix maps each of the evaluation questions and their associated sub-questions across key informant interview (KII) and focus group discussion categories used to gather evidence against them. In addition to key informant interviews, all questions and subquestions were answered through literature review project team documentation, theory of change indicators, resilience index measurement and analysis (RIMA) background files and Field Programme Management Information System (FPMIS) documentation.

Criteria	EQ	Sub-EQ	Community		Country partners	FAO Delegation	Regional FAO team	Global FAO team	Literature review
			KII	Site visit	KII	KII	KII	KII	
Relevance and coherence	<b>1. To what extent was the programme design relevant and appropriate to achieve the programmed outcomes ?</b>								
		1.1. How closely aligned were the program components to the specific livelihoods, food security and nutritional capacities of the targeted households at the time of programme design?	x	x	x	x	x		x
		1.2. How far did the programme design integrate activities to support sustainable localized peace?	x		x	x	x	x	x
		1.3. To what extent did the programme maintain its relevance and appropriateness over time as the context evolved?	x		x	x	x		x
	<b>2. To what extent has the programme built with and/or catalysed existing relevant initiatives at global, regional, national and subnational levels ?</b>								
		2.1. How has the programme design and implementation been influenced by other relevant initiatives?	x		x	x	x	x	x
		2.2. In what ways has the programme managed to catalyse or amplify the achievements of other relevant initiatives?	x		x	x	x	x	x
Effectiveness	<b>3. To what extent has the programme contributed to the expected outcomes (resilient livelihoods and food systems and sustainable localized peace) in the selected countries?</b>								
		3.1. To what extent has the programme contributed to improved inclusive access and management of local natural resources? (Output 1)	x	x	x	x	x		x
		3.2. To what extent has the programme contributed to improving the livelihood and income opportunities along selected value chains in the programme areas? (Output 2)	x	x	x	x	x		x
		3.3. To what extent did the programme contribute to enhanced knowledge, skills and capacity of targeted communities around nutrition? (Output 3)	x	x	x	x	x		x
		3.4. To what extent has FNS-REPRO informed programme implementation and policy and practices on food security through the learning agenda? (Output 4)			x	x	x		x
Cross-cutting	<b>4. To what extent has the programme addressed cross-cutting aspects in design and throughout implementation?</b>								
		4.1. To what extent has the programme contributed to sustainable localised peace?	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
		4.2. To what extent has the programme addressed, in design and throughout implementation, the specific needs of women, youth and the most vulnerable groups in the target countries/ communities?	x	x	x	x	x		x
		4.3. To what extent has the FNS-REPRO increased evidence-based knowledge about context specific solutions to food and nutrition security in protracted crises?			x		x		x
		4.4. To what extent have the partnership arrangements in different levels contributed to the programme results?		x	x	x	x		x
Sustainability	<b>5. What are the prospects for sustainability of the results achieved after programme completion?</b>								
		5.1 To what extent is the programme exit strategy appropriate to sustain achieved results?	x	x	x	x	x		x
		5.2. To what extent has the programme promoted ownership by the engaged stakeholders (e.g. local partner organizations, communities, government and private sector)?	x	x	x	x	x		x
Organizational performance	<b>6. To what extent were the management arrangements and governance structure of the project adequate to deliver the intended results in an efficient manner?</b>								
		6.1. To what extent were the management arrangements and governance structure supportive of adaptation to changing context to correct project implementation?			x	x	x		x
		6.2 To what extent were the Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning arrangements (framework, plan, etc.) adequate to support adaptive management, implementation and accountability?				x	x		x



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