

**FOOD FOR PEACE  
INFORMATION BULLETIN (FFPIB)**

**MEMORANDUM FOR ALL FOOD FOR PEACE OFFICERS AND AWARDEES**

TO: USAID/W and Overseas Distribution Lists; FFP Awardees  
FROM: DCHA/FFP/D, Brooke Isham, Director  
SUBJECT: Trigger Indicators in Multi-Year Title II Assistance Programs  
DATE: March 15, 2010

FFPIB 10-01

**I. Purpose and Background:**

The purpose of this Food for Peace Information Bulletin (FFPIB 10-01) is to update and consolidate information on the function of trigger indicators and their role in signaling an emergency response under a Title II Multi-Year Assistance Program (MYAP). This FFPIB provides guidance to potential applicants and current awardees regarding the development of trigger indicators and emergency response plans in proposals and ongoing MYAPs. The guidance provided here builds on, and in some cases refines, trigger indicator guidance provided in Annex A of the *Fiscal Year 2010: Title II Proposal Guidance and Program Policies*, as well as *FFP Occasional Paper 5: Trigger Indicators and Early Warning and Response Systems in Multi-Year Title II Assistance Programs*.

**II. Definition of Trigger Indicators:**

Trigger indicators are used to signal the emergency threshold at which MYAP awardees should shift activities and/or request additional resources for activities to respond to a shock affecting the MYAP target community. By utilizing trigger indicators and the emergency response they signal, awardees will be able to respond quickly to food security emergencies in MYAP-targeted communities.

**III. Developing Trigger Indicators for Multi-Year Assistance Programs:**

1. Identify Potential Shocks: MYAP awardees must first determine the nature, scale and scope of the food security shocks likely to occur in MYAP-targeted communities. Examples of shocks include, but are not limited to, cyclones, price shocks, conflict, droughts and/or crop failure.
2. Develop Trigger Indicators and Emergency Response Threshold Levels: Awardees then identify the trigger indicators and emergency response threshold levels that signal when a MYAP target community is being subjected to unusual stress as a result of these shocks, and that a food security crisis is developing. In addition to monitoring the source of the shock (e.g. drought, prices), threshold levels must reflect a clear understanding of which coping behavior(s) (e.g. sale of assets, migration, alternative food consumption etc.) indicate “normal times” for the beneficiary community and which indicate that conditions have become so severe that an emergency food security response and/or Title II emergency resources are needed. Trigger indicators must be regularly monitored over the course of the MYAP and should include both field-level monitoring

activities and national-level data collection as appropriate. In order to avoid duplication of efforts with government authorities, awardees should consider using existing early warning systems that are already established to signal the shocks of greatest concern in a given country or region. Where possible, trigger indicators and monitoring activities should incorporate and/or augment existing mechanisms, such as national early warning systems and FEWS NET.

3. Develop an Emergency Response Plan: Finally, awardees must develop an emergency response plan that includes a description of emergency program activities, estimated beneficiary numbers and estimated resource requirements for communities most likely to be affected by each identified risk. Once this plan and estimated resource requirements have been approved by FFP, they become part of the MYAP structure. In the event that trigger indicators signal that an emergency response threshold has been reached, awardees may implement the approved emergency response plan by reprogramming existing MYAP resources and/or requesting additional emergency resources from FFP, as appropriate.
4. Key Considerations When Developing MYAP Trigger Indicators and Emergency Response Plans:
  - a. **Geographic Targeting:** Trigger indicators and the emergency response plan should only target MYAP beneficiary communities. Shocks affecting communities outside MYAP zones cannot be addressed through this mechanism; in this case, applicants may consider a SYAP.
  - b. **Identifying Most Likely Risk(s):** For the MYAP target area(s), awardees should take into consideration historic patterns of emergencies to help identify the types of likely risks, the historical scope and coping mechanisms used, as well as the level of response required. In addition, awardees should consider any indicators of likely new risks, based on current conditions (i.e., escalating violence leading up to an election in an area which is normally not at risk of conflict).
  - c. **Trigger Indicator Selection:** While climatic indicators such as rainfall can be useful indications that a food security emergency may be developing, such indicators alone are often not sufficient to trigger an emergency response to assist vulnerable groups. Critical emphasis should also be placed on coping mechanisms – both positive and negative – employed by Title II beneficiaries. Thus, trigger indicators should be developed and calibrated to track both external shocks, such as environmental factors, and human coping behavior.
  - d. **Trigger Indicator Monitoring:** Data collection must be systematic and recorded in a way that accurately tracks trends in trigger indicator values over time. Data collection can be done directly by the awardee or gathered from reliable secondary sources, i.e., other organizations which routinely gather such data. Anecdotal data are not sufficient to trigger an emergency response through this mechanism. Awardees are encouraged to work with FFP to develop a monitoring system that appropriately balances efficiency and methodological rigor.
  - e. **Approved Activities and Resource Levels:** It can be difficult to predict the amount of resources necessary for the pre-approved MYAP Emergency Response Plan when the size of the crisis is not known. For each type of risk identified (if there is more than one listed), awardees should calculate the possible need per beneficiary community when a crisis hits and use a multiplier corresponding to the number of communities affected to determine the total amount of resources required for response. Awardees are also encouraged to provide a scale of resource requirements that qualifies the severity of the crisis (i.e., the resources required assuming 100% of caloric needs are required; 75% of caloric needs are required; 50% of caloric needs are required, etc.). Lastly, awardees should indicate the length of time emergency response activities are anticipated to continue for each crisis response scenario.

#### **IV. Initiating the MYAP Emergency Response Plan:**

In general, the following steps must be taken by MYAP awardees, FFP/W, and USAID Mission or Regional Office (USAID/M/R) in order to use trigger indicators to initiate an approved emergency response plan. The preferred procedure may differ depending on the country program. Details will be clarified in consultation with the Agreement Officer's Technical Representative (AOTR) during the development and approval of the emergency response plan:

1. In the event that trigger indicators signal that an emergency threshold level has been reached, awardees determine the scale and scope of the emergency requirements and determine beneficiary targets, appropriate activities, and required resources.
2. If sufficient resources are available to initiate approved emergency response activities, awardees notify FFP/W and USAID/M/R staff to seek concurrence for the initiation of the emergency response plan using available MYAP resources.
3. If additional resources are necessary, awardees request additional funding and commodities from FFP/W and submit a supplemental Annual Estimate of Resources (AER) reflecting this increased resource level.
4. FFP/W verifies emergency needs in consultation with the awardees and USAID/M/R and includes this request for emergency resources, preferably in the following month's emergency resource allocation process.
5. Once FFP/W approves an additional allocation of emergency resources, the awardees may re-program existing commodities with the understanding that the additional emergency resources (consistent with 202e and ITSH policies) may be used in addition to or to replace MYAP commodities used in response to the shock.
6. MYAP documentation and FFP award documents are updated to record the infusion of emergency program resources into the MYAP.