



**Country Specific Information: Haiti**  
United States Agency for International Development  
Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance  
Office of Food for Peace

**Fiscal Year 2013: Title II Request for Applications  
Title II Development Food Assistance Programs**

**Summary**

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID), through the Office of Food for Peace (FFP) and the Bureau for Food Security, anticipates that funds and commodities will be available for development food assistance program activities in Haiti in fiscal year (FY) 2013.

The anticipated overall funding for this program is approximately \$20 million annually for four years in support of one award, subject to the availability of funds and commodities. Up to \$8 million of annual funding is expected to be provided through Title II resources, while up to \$12 million of annual funding is expected to be provided through Community Development Funds (CDF). FFP anticipates that within the \$8 million of annual Title II resources provided, and as an exception to FFP policy, applicants will be permitted to propose Section 202(e) funding levels to support programmatic cost representing up to 25 percent of the total Title II food assistance program value of the application. Combined, the Title II and CDF resources are being made available to meet FFP's goal for multi-year development programming, which is to reduce risks and vulnerabilities to food insecurity and increase food availability, access and utilization/consumption, as well as to contribute to the overall poverty reduction and nutrition objectives of Feed the Future in Haiti. Applications that include monetization will not be considered.

In the Fiscal Year 2013 Request for Applications for Title II Development Food Assistance Programs (RFA) for Haiti and this Country Specific Information for Haiti, there is no specific geographic region predetermined or targeted as the program focus is national. The goal is to support the Government of Haiti (GOH) in their building of a national safety net system, taking into account the GOH's unprecedented prioritization of the design and development of a national safety net strategy as well as USAID/Haiti's focus on USAID FORWARD opportunities. This will require both a national focus with regards to furthering the design of the system and specific regional implementation. The design of both the national and regional aspects will require discussion and accord with the GOH.

This country specific information supplements a Title II RFA with a new submission date for FY 2013 applications for Haiti only. This document contains information on USAID/Haiti food security programming priorities; to eliminate redundancies, other FFP food security programming priorities found in the RFA for Haiti (such as gender) are not repeated in the country specific information.

## Strategic Partnerships

The success of the program will be dependent on the ability of the applicant to work directly with various GOH Ministries. At the national and departmental levels of the GOH, mechanisms for coordination, support, and participation among GOH Ministries and the applicant will need to be established and defined. Assurances of discussions and the development of such partnership should be evident in the application. It is expected that the lead Ministry will be the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor or *Ministère des Affaires Sociales et du Travail* (MAST) and contact will be required with the Director General of MAST, who will lead in the coordination efforts and facilitate initial contacts with other key actors. USAID/Haiti will support the relationship with MAST and other GOH counterparts as well as contribute to increasing the capacity to develop a national safety net system by providing technical assistance support directly to that Ministry.

## Food Security in Haiti

Haiti's high poverty levels have changed little over the past several years and it was ranked 158<sup>th</sup> out of 179 countries in the United Nations 2011 Human Development Index.<sup>1</sup> Economic and developmental stagnation continue in part due to a lack of improvement across many development indicators, including levels of undernourishment, underweight, and stunting among children; gross domestic product; and overall poverty. The Global Hunger Index (GHI), a tool designed to comprehensively measure and track hunger globally, and by region and country, ranks Haiti 77 out of 79 countries ranked.<sup>2</sup> To reflect the multidimensional nature of hunger, the GHI combines three equally weighted indicators in one index:

- 1) Undernourishment: the proportion of undernourished people as a percentage of the population (reflecting the share of the population with insufficient caloric intake);
- 2) Child underweight: the proportion of children younger than age five who are underweight (that is, have low weight for their age, reflecting wasting, stunted growth, or both), which is one indicator of child undernutrition; and
- 3) Child mortality: the mortality rate of children younger than age five (partially reflecting the fatal synergy of inadequate caloric intake and unhealthy environments).

Haiti is one of three countries in the world with “extremely alarming” 2012 GHI scores. Although its scores did fall by about one quarter from 1990 to 2001, most of the improvements noted during this time frame were reversed in subsequent years. The devastating January 2010 earthquake, although not yet fully captured by the 2012 GHI due to insufficient availability of recent data, pushed Haiti back into the category of “extremely alarming.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Human Development Report 2011 UNDP

<sup>2</sup> The Economist Intelligence Unit 2012 publication

<sup>3</sup> See GFSI usage and additional information on how the index was created on [www.foodsecurityindex.eiu.com](http://www.foodsecurityindex.eiu.com)

High poverty levels continue to hinder Haitians' ability to access basic services, as well as to grow or otherwise acquire and adequately utilize the food needed for a productive and healthy life. Domestic agricultural production accounts for about half of the food available in the country; the other half is imported. Purchasing food -- which requires cash -- is a significant means by which households obtain food, even in rural agricultural areas. Adding to the high prevalence of poverty, imported food commodity prices (and prices of some domestically grown food) have increased significantly since 2007, further exacerbating difficult food security outcomes. According to the *Evaluation of the Spring Agricultural Season 2012*, national production for the 2012-2013 season is expected to represent a 42 percent decrease in corn production and a 33 percent decrease in sorghum production from last year's agricultural seasons. Legume production is down by 6 percent over the same period.<sup>4</sup> This year, the spring season, which represents approximately 50 percent of total annual production, saw between 40 and 80 percent loss in harvests as a result of drought and a tropical storm. Food security is both highly vulnerable to local climate conditions and environmental constraints, as well as to global food and fuel price fluctuations.

In Haiti, factors that affect households' abilities to effectively utilize food are multi-faceted and include poor dietary intake, health and nutritional status, poor water and sanitation practices, poor quality of care (both maternal care practices and availability of and access to basic medical services), and widespread poverty. The high burden of micronutrient malnutrition is also of concern. The infant mortality rate is estimated at between 54 and 62.4 infants per 1,000 live births and the under five mortality rate, at between 72 and 87 children per 1,000 live births, is the highest in the Latin America and Caribbean Region.

### **USAID/Haiti and FFP Programming Priorities**

USAID/Haiti and FFP consider that this is the appropriate time to shift Title II programming to more directly support the continued development of a GOH safety net program, an approach consistent with Feed the Future and USAID Forward in Haiti. Consideration should therefore be made to make this four-year program cycle consolidate the achievements gained and positive strategic direction in nutrition and agricultural production under previous Title II cycles while reorienting programming to GOH owned food security goals and objectives. The intention is to cement a lasting impact as it is unlikely that sufficient institutionalization at the GOH level has occurred to ensure continued, sustained results after programs end despite the very positive impact of the Title II programs during past decades. Past programs have been less focused on increasing the capacity of the GOH while concentrating on directly building community capacity. Given the current context in Haiti, the potential to support the

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<sup>4</sup> *Evaluation de la Campagne Agricole de Printemps 2012*, Coordination Nationale de Sécurité Alimentaire (CNSA), Haitian Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agriculture Organization, World Food Program, USAID, FEWSNET, Aba Grangou, September 2012

development of a national safety net system that will have an impact on food security beyond the life of Title II development food assistance requires a programmatic shift in the way this important resource is used.

The award made under this four-year program cycle will aim to establish a national structure and foundation for activating and implementing a food voucher distribution mechanism as a component of the national safety net system. The GOH is requiring coordination of all partners in the design and implementation of this system. Other entities, such as the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank, are also playing a role in the development of this system and it is expected that the applicant will be engaged with these partners. For example, the food voucher component will be designed based on the programming experiences and lessons learned from short-term food voucher programs implemented in Haiti over the past two years.<sup>5</sup> Any further design and development of tools piloted and used will be required to incorporate the lessons learned from these food voucher programs and transition from emergency, short-term programs to a sustainable component of the GOH's national system.<sup>6</sup> The applicant will also collaborate with the World Bank funded *Kore Fanmi* program as the GOH may replicate elements of this program nation-wide as part of the social safety net system. In addition, the applicant will implement a nutrition-focused program that complements food voucher activities by supporting nutritional awareness, behavior change, consumer education, and both public and private capacity improvements in the sector, such as healthy eating advertising and promotion of nutritious recipes using local foods.

## **Purpose**

The GOH's development of a social safety net strategy recognizes that the responses to the problems of poverty and food insecurity need to be nationally led and adapted to Haiti's socio-economic context as well as to its fiscal, institutional, technical, and administrative capacities. As such, it is vital that programs designed to reach the same goals be adjusted in support of this strategy. Safety nets are the component of social protection targeted to the people in greatest need, and in Haiti will be critical to increasing community and national resilience to social, environmental, and economic shocks. It is important to lay basic groundwork for safety nets that are fiscally and politically sustainable as well as to build on existing structures and best practices rather than create parallel processes. In Haiti, an extensive number of non-governmental organizations operating more or less independently in the country often target this same, needy population. It is critical to work with the government to ensure government design and ownership of these programs and to fit within the overall strategic goal. Safety nets require a high level of institutional coordination, particularly across Ministries, between central and local authorities, between GOH and international partners, and among partners themselves. The GOH's initial

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<sup>5</sup> Food Voucher Programs: Action Contre La Faim (ACF (2010); Mercy Corps 2010; CARE 2011/12; CRS 2011/12

<sup>6</sup> Notes from the Food Voucher Workshop in Jeremie – September 2012

strategy considers all of these facets, and although nascent, is structured, in theory, to facilitate coordination.<sup>7</sup>

A key lesson from other countries centers on the importance of establishing safety nets before crises hit. Haiti's vulnerability to disasters and crises, combined with the depth of its poverty, underscores the need for a well-established and responsive national safety net system in addition to other risk management efforts. International support for a GOH-led effort to build this system will contribute to the development of a single, well-functioning national safety net with enhanced coverage, performance, capacity and readiness to respond to shocks, as opposed to fragmented projects to address these concerns.

According to the World Food Program, "a national safety net system involves the progressive harmonization, connection and integration of various activities – assessments, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) – into a coherent policy framework, including clear institutional mechanisms, financing arrangements, solid information management arrangements such as an integrated beneficiary database, and linkages to other initiatives."<sup>8</sup>

Benefits from a systemic approach include:

- Reduced disaster risk and need for emergency response. When basic systems are in place and government-led, countries can reduce emergency response time and use resources more effectively by expanding or "surging" existing programs to incorporate disaster affected populations;
- Enhanced process effectiveness and efficiency. An institutionalized system of targeting, delivery mechanisms, integrated beneficiary databases, and M&E tools helps identify gaps in coverage, reduce costs and duplication of efforts, and enhance coordination;
- Accountability and openness to learning. A safety net continuously improves and refines itself. This includes establishing a consultative process and generating open and accessible data to enhance accountability towards beneficiaries, civil society, government and development partners; and
- Strengthened ownership and social contracts. Weak social contracts between citizens and the State can be a factor fuelling instability. Safety nets are a crucial part of social contracts and should strengthen ownership of and alignment with national priorities. An important element in formalizing social contracts is the translation of commitments into legislation.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> *Aba Grangou* Strategic Framework

<sup>8</sup> World Food Program – Social Safety Nets – 2012

<sup>9</sup> IBID

## Program Description

The GOH's national social safety net strategy is comprised of various components that together make up a "system" per the description above. Although less than one year old, the government has demonstrated their intent to implement this strategy. Their efforts have already prompted significant interest, engagement, and multi-donor support and assistance. FFP's programming will support and assist GOH efforts to strengthen, sustain and institutionalize several components of this strategy through the design and implementation of the following activities and tools:

- Identification of most vulnerable households and participant selection;
- Food voucher programming targeting households and school students;
- Nutritional outreach, education and support;
- Complementary services; and
- Disaster risk reduction (DRR).

### *1) Identification of Most Vulnerable Households and Participant Selection*

The National Food Security Coordination Agency or *Coordination Nationale de Sécurité Alimentaire* (CNSA) and its partners conduct food security surveys on a regular basis. Other government agencies also conduct various surveys and censuses, including the Haitian Institute for Statistics and the Ministry of Agriculture's Research and Statistics Unit. A recent survey found that just under 40 percent of the population in Haiti suffers from food insecurity.<sup>10</sup> Given the reality of widespread poverty and the significant number of food insecure, the need for a trusted and effective mechanism to help identify and select beneficiaries is paramount. The working social safety net strategy requires the development and execution of a socio-economic survey and vulnerability analysis tool. Although some work has already been done in this area with the World Bank *Kore Fammi* project and other partners, given that refining and further testing of the vulnerability analysis tool is still needed, the applicant will work with MAST to identify a contributing role for itself (i.e., the applicant) in this activity. This tool will allow better targeting of beneficiary households for certain safety net interventions, such as food vouchers. It is expected that scale up of tool use will occur once the tool has been refined and tested.

Heightened coordination, comparability of approach, process of validation, agreement of protection, ownership, and use of data are all factors that will need to be reviewed and agreed upon by all to ensure that the tools utilized and resulting database shall serve the needs of all relevant sectors (food security, nutrition, health, agriculture, water, etc.). In addition to providing a solid and consistent basis for beneficiary selection, this survey process would enable coordinating and linking with GOH entities for

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<sup>10</sup> National Food Security Survey June 2012 CNSA and partners

the documentation and registration of a population that is mostly un-documented. This is a significant issue, particularly in rural Haiti where birth and death certificates are not consistently issued. The GOH, namely the Ministry of Interior, the Minister Delegate to the Prime Minister in Charge of Promoting the Peasantry and MAST, considers the documentation of this population to be a critical and necessary step in Haiti's development process. Support to the GOH in this activity will include and enable:

- Better targeting the most vulnerable population by designing and conducting socio-economic surveys that identify the households that make up this population. The current targeting mechanism uses community and local authorities to identify the beneficiaries of the population. As a result, it is inevitable that some beneficiaries are not the most vulnerable and that some vulnerable families are left out of the program.
- Reducing the overall proportion of the population depending on food assistance. Based on the CNSA data and other surveys, depending on the year, between eight and 12 percent of the population may be identified as "extremely vulnerable" which could qualify them to be included in a social safety net food program. The applicant should note, however, that because of duplication and redundancy caused by insufficient coordination, there is high probability that these percentages include double counting in many instances and applicants should guard against double counting.
- Reducing the amount of resources provided for safety net programs. To complement the previous point, a well-defined and valid method to identify beneficiaries is necessary to avoid dependencies and to improve efficiency.
- Documenting citizens to open avenues. Documentation of citizens allows for more options, allowing other critical aspects of governance and development to be promoted by ensuring that they are able to participate in programs and are legal entities counted in the society. Access to services is often predetermined by being documented – from having a birth certificate to being registered and having government-issued identification. If well-coordinated, as beneficiaries are identified to be registered for safety net programs, they can become documented citizens at the same time.

## *2) Food Voucher Programming Targeting Households and School Students*

USAID and the GOH already collaborate in the designing and building of the national safety net. FFP's Emergency Food Security Program food voucher activities have contributed directly to the objectives of the strategy and were selected by the GOH to be an integral part of the national safety net. The GOH has expressed strong interest in continuing this partnership through the design and implementation of a national food voucher program.

A national food voucher system has the potential to dramatically reduce hunger in targeted households as well as increase sustained demand for local food commodities and their production. Over the past decades, humanitarian assistance – or support to the most food insecure and poor – has been provided through activities that have received minimal intervention or oversight from the GOH. This program:

- whether designed to reach the 10 to 15 percent most food insecure households at all times;
- or as a mechanism that would be seasonally implemented during hunger/lean seasons;
- or developed to be a “surge” emergency mechanism that would be jump started when and where a food emergency was identified, for a pre-determined number of months

will be a GOH owned national food voucher program that will provide a strong safety net mechanism for targeted food insecure households. While able to be designed to potentially serve all three objectives above, an important first step of the applicant during the design phase of this application will be to determine – along with GOH counterpart MAST – which of these objectives should be the initial focus of the program.

The initial design of this program can examine the use of both paper and electronic vouchers (i.e., through mobile phone technology) in its development. There are pros and cons to both approaches and the applicant is expected to research and compare their flexibility, efficiency, and cost-effectiveness. Both methods may be proposed, and depending upon regional appropriateness, both methods may be recommended for development and use. This design issue will need to be discussed with MAST and it is likely that if the applicant proposes a single method, that method will require a focus on electronic vouchers, as USAID’s strategy supports improving programming in mobile banking and the GOH has also expressed a preference for this approach.

The applicant will also need to include an explanation of how the design of the national food voucher system will support the consumption of local agricultural goods, thereby encouraging increased production. An increase in the household’s purchasing power of food commodities for 10 or 12 percent of Haiti’s most food insecure population across all 10 departments of the country would certainly impact local production if that increase targeted local agricultural goods. Narrowing the list of food items that can be purchased with a food voucher to include only or mostly locally produced nutritious foods would ensure this impact, depending on the availability of these foods. Consideration of the value of vouchers must also be described, including a justification for the monthly amount proposed. In current food voucher programs, 2,000 gourdes (approximately USD \$50.00 equivalent) is provided to a household monthly. Potential adjustments include dividing this amount into two - one part staple food, one part fresh vegetables - and reducing the value of the monthly voucher, while adjusting the total monthly amount based on household size, among other considerations and changes/fluctuations.

The GOH social safety net strategy includes increasing school feeding as a safety net mechanism. The applicant will design a pilot that uses food vouchers as the mechanism by which students access their daily hot meal. The pilot would eliminate the school as the entity in charge of the preparation and delivery of meals. The preparation of meals would instead be handled by private food preparers (traditionally, women have this role) outside of the school and the prepared meals would be catered to schools daily. These vouchers would be regularly redeemed by the National School Canteen Program or *Programme Nationale de Cantines Scolaire* (PNCS) or by a banking institution such as Fondkoze. Some advantages of this modified system include:

- School personnel are not burdened with non-educational tasks such as meal preparation, one of the criticisms of the traditional school lunch program;
- Involvement of the private sector in this program will promote job creation in the food preparation sector, encouraging a sector that is primarily managed by women;
- Better oversight and training of nutrition, sanitation, and hygiene in food preparation will improve the overall quality of this undertaking and have benefits beyond school meals;
- Opportunities to buy food locally are increased with this approach. In addition, local procurement by private food preparers to source school meals is likely to have a lower potentially negative impact on consumer prices than otherwise could occur when local procurement is carried out by large entities, such as the PNCS or the World Food Program;
- It is expected that these meals will be more diverse and fresher;
- Although cost comparisons would need to be made, it is expected that the cost per meal may be lower because of reduced costs associated with transportation and storage of commodities; and
- This pilot would be implemented on a small scale, partnering with the PNCS, and evaluated before being scaled up or replicated.

### *3) Improving Nutritional Outreach, Services, Education and Support*

In direct support of the overarching goal of preventing malnutrition related to Millennium Development Goal 1, “...*reduce by half the proportion of people who suffer from hunger*”, which is echoed in the objectives of GOH’s social safety net strategy, this component focuses on the first 1,000 days of life as the window of opportunity during which malnutrition can and should be prevented. Whereas the components described above will require CDF resources to fund activities with a national scope, this third component will be regionally targeted in specific food insecure communes with the highest levels of stunting. It will rely on Title II commodities for use as supplemental food and Section 202(e) and Internal Transport, Storage, and Handling (ITSH) resources as complementary funding. All children less than two years of age and pregnant and lactating women in these areas should be considered for

prioritization for mother and child health and nutrition activities aimed at improving food utilization at the household level and preventing the long-term negative effects of chronic child malnutrition. It is expected that the applicant will work with the Ministry of Public Health and Population or *Ministère de Santé Publique et Population* (MSPP) to identify specific design requirements of this component.

The RFA for Haiti provides a standard description of Title II activities in support of the first 1,000 days approach for the prevention of chronic malnutrition. The design of this component should refer to the RFA and may include:

- Improving access to and quality of health services, including family planning and nutrition services, in coordination with MSPP partners;
- Focusing on the particularly high levels of anemia in pregnant women and children under 5 years of age in Haiti;
- Direct distribution of a nutritionally sound basket of Title II commodities including, but not limited to, fortified blended foods to pregnant and lactating women and children 6-23 months to prevent and treat malnutrition;
- Linking program participants with other ongoing opportunities/activities, targeting water, sanitation, and hygiene, or in areas emphasized by the GOH, the U.S. Government, or other donors. Coordination of nutritional activities will be critical to improving the effectiveness of interventions;
- Advocating and supporting opportunities for improving the knowledge of the consumer regarding nutritional foods. This may include coordination within the nutrition sector and universities and the development of university-based capacity in Haiti in the field of nutrition; and/or
- Engaging in the promotion and processing of locally produced commodities to improve nutrition, including fortification of these commodities, when appropriate and feasible.

The links with the *Food Voucher Programming Targeting Households and School Students* component above as nutritional outreach and education may also support improved quality of school meals.

#### *4) Complementary Services*

While households are participating in food voucher and preventing malnutrition activities, the applicant needs to identify complementary services that can be provided in order to take advantage of the fact that these participants have already been identified and accessed. This component is cross-cutting and provides wrap around services to participants of the three components described above. Some services, such as health services that are expected to be part of the preventing malnutrition activity, are already included in previous components. The availability of other services will depend on ability to link other

GOH and donor programs to this application's program participants in addition to services implemented through this application's activities. Other services may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- **Literacy training.** Households enrolled in the food voucher program are likely to be illiterate and mostly landless. Linking these participants to adult literacy training will increase their abilities to take advantage of other opportunities that may be available.
- **Bio intensive home gardening.** As most targeted households are likely to be landless, targeting these households with training and extension services to improve households' capacity to increase access to nutritious foods will support nutritional behavior change communication and improve household capacity to access nutritious foods.
- **Savings and loans.** Support community-based, informal savings groups to assist with market access and small scale initiatives to establish and strengthen economic opportunities for women and youth, including income-generating activities and access to markets.

The applicant will indicate how to best link these services with the targeted participants of the safety net system. In essence, services will need to be established and participants will need to have access to these services. Ultimately, the applicants will be expected to connect with GOH Ministries and agencies that provide these services and work to ensure they will be made available to the critical safety net beneficiaries.

#### *5) Disaster Risk Reduction*

USAID and the GOH continue to highlight DRR programming as a priority. There is a direct link between the food security status of Haiti's poor and the vulnerability of this same population to shocks; the population benefitting from the national safety net system suffers the most from the natural disasters and environmental shocks that affect Haiti regularly. To make a sustained and structural difference, both improved government capacity and long term support are required for progress towards reducing vulnerability to risk in Haiti. Clearly, programming to reduce food insecurity requires strategies to reduce risk and vulnerability to disasters at the community as well as the national level. The applicant may describe how it will support the GOH's early warning monitoring and contingency planning. This might include collaboration and support to the CNSA with regards to identification, analysis, and prioritization of regional food insecurity data as a contribution to the targeting of regions to be supported with food voucher programming.

#### **Gender**

Please refer to the FY 2013 RFA for Haiti for information on gender.

## **Evaluation Costs in Budget**

Subject to the availability of funds, the baseline and final evaluation will be conducted by an external evaluation firm contracted and centrally managed by FFP. However, as indicated in an announcement from FFP to the Food Aid Consultative Group (FACG) via email on November 9, 2012, at this time applicants are requested to include both baseline and final evaluation funding costs in their initial applications.

## **Resources**

The Technical and Operational Performance Support (TOPS) Program, funded by FFP, manages and maintains The Food Security and Nutrition Network resource library, which features practical implementation-focused guides, tools, and training materials in a number of relevant program areas: <http://www.fsnetwork.org/>