



**Famine Early Warning Systems Network**



**Southern Africa  
Emergency Food Security  
Assessment and Monitoring**

**Annual Report  
October 1, 2004 to September 30, 2005**

**Contract AOT-I-805-00-00142-00  
Task Order No. 805**

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# FEWS NET TO 805 Annual Report 2004/05

## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. Background and Objectives

In response to the major regional drought affecting most of southern Africa in 2002, the USAID Regional Center for Southern Africa (RCSA) established a new Task Order under the umbrella Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET) activity. The Task Order (TO805), called "Southern Africa Emergency Assessment and Monitoring" started on 15 August 2002, at a time of increasing concern about the potential magnitude of the regional drought.

Funds from RCSA directly supported the activities of an unprecedented multi-agency alliance of technical units from the SADC Food, Agricultural and Natural Resources (FANR) directorate, NGOs, UN agencies and governments operating under the coordination of the SADC Regional and National Vulnerability Assessment Committees (VAC) and funded through donor support. In a twelve month period, the alliance conducted a series of three rolling food security assessments with comparable results in each of the six most-affected countries. The resulting broad consensus on the number, location and socio-economic circumstances of those most at risk of starvation strengthened the humanitarian response, which helped to mitigate the threat of a massive food crisis in the region. The impact of the VAC process in Zimbabwe was particularly important as it provided a consolidated and legitimate voice to NGOs as they participated in the assessment process alongside government, major UN agencies and donors.

By the end of the first year of TO805, the nature of the southern Africa emergency had changed. Although the drought continued on a reduced scale, the focus of the assessments began to shift away from the acute emergency phase toward a more holistic assessment of the reasons behind increasing levels of vulnerability in the region. In response, RCSA modified TO805 on 30 September 2003. This second phase of TO805 (from 30 September 2003-31 August 2004) included a stronger focus on rural livelihoods analysis and shifted regional activities to Botswana. Additional modifications of the contract in September 2004 extended the activity through 31 May 2005 (the end of this phase of the umbrella FEWS NET contract). RCSA further refined the TO objectives in September 2004, to coincide with the new Mission strategy and specifically with Strategic Objective 15: Rural Livelihoods Diversified in Southern Africa. A no cost extension, in line with the main FEWS NET contract, saw yet another extension to cover the period June to 30 September 2005.

For the current reporting period (Fiscal Year 2005 from October 1, 2004 to September 30, 2005), Task Order 805 has been working toward the following objectives:

**Objective 1. Improve early warning information and food security analysis in Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland**

**Objective 2. Improve analysis of cross-border food trade throughout the region**

**Objective 3. Improve capacity and information needed to assess and manage food security risks**

**Objective 1** focused on improving food security analysis in three southern Africa countries without bilateral USAID missions: Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland. This complemented current FEWS NET activities in Angola, Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe and allowed FEWS NET to provide more comprehensive regional analyses. This coverage was coordinated by the new Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland (BLS) advisor that was based in Gaborone. The BLS advisor was supported by the Regional Task Order 805 Manager based in Maputo and the Southern Africa Regional Representative based in Pretoria.

**Objective 2** concentrated on implementing a system to document and analyze cross-border food trade to improve assessments of regional food security. This work built on the pilot activity undertaken by FEWS NET in collaboration with the World Food Program. FEWS NET collaborated with other interested parties, including Michigan State University, to ensure the full and sustainable implementation of the cross-border trade analysis effort.

**Objective 3** emphasized developing the capacity of one or more regional organizations to forecast impending food shortages and to improve analytical models used to assess food insecurity. These regional partners included SADC units dealing with early warning, drought monitoring, remote sensing, disaster management, poverty analysis, vulnerability assessment, etc. as well as other regional organizations and universities.

The major accomplishments during the reporting year, which are outlined in detail in the section below, have been:

1. A major accomplishment has been the setting up of the joint WFP/FEWS NET regional cross-border food trade monitoring system. The data from the study is filling information gaps on unrecorded food trade data and provides an understanding of regional trade in staple foods, which is thought to be substantial and growing. An evaluation of the project in May 2005 was very encouraging as the system (despite some inherent weaknesses) was rated positively and interviewees conceded that it is providing data that was previously unavailable, and very useful to various categories of users. It was recommended that the project be continued for another three to five years.

2. Organization of a regional training workshop held August 1 - 5 during which FEWS NET was the main trainer for staff of national early warning units in the region. The objective of the training, conducted in collaboration with SADC FANR and WFP, was to introduce basic food security and early warning concepts and approaches to new staff of NEWUs; and to train on how to synthesize core food security information and data into a bulletin. The workshop evaluation revealed that

participants rated the training as highly successful, with all the presentations rated as “very good”.

3. Lastly, FEWS NET involvement in the regional and national VAC processes through which guidance and support has been provided to improve the processes through adoption of improved methodologies and strengthened capacities for data analysis. A methodology review (championed by the FEWS NET regional representative) culminated in a consultation that was held September 19 - 21, 2005. The results of the review and the outcome of the consultation will help inform future planning and development of VA toolkits and the adoption/ advocacy of best practices in vulnerability analysis.

## **B. Southern Africa food security context — 2005/06**

A number of Southern African countries are facing reduced crop harvests from the 2004/05 season—below both last season and the 5-year average—because of poor crop growing conditions, and, in some cases, poor access to requisite inputs. Across much of the central part of southern Africa, the rainfall performance was poor during the 2004/05 season, resulting in reduced crop yields in many areas. The first half of the season was marked by an erratic start, which was followed by prolonged dry spells (or mid-season drought) over many parts of the region. Negatively affected areas include much of Mozambique and Zimbabwe, southern and central Malawi, northern South Africa, southern Zambia, and northern Namibia.

Results of the national vulnerability assessments and crop estimation surveys as well as the joint FAO/WFP Crop and Food Supply Assessment Missions (CFSAM) to selected countries of the region indicate a very tight food supply and limited food access during the 2005/06 consumption year. The number of food insecure people requiring humanitarian assistance in Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Zambia, and Zimbabwe is estimated to be at least 10 million, significantly above last year’s assessment of 5.29 million, while food aid requirements are currently estimated at 813,000 MT.

Table 1 below depicts the food aid requirements and the numbers of food insecure people in the affected countries as assessed by the national VACs for the 2005/06 consumption period and compares it to findings of the 2004/05 and 2003/04 assessments. The table shows that more people have been assessed as likely to suffer some degree of food shortage (or missing food entitlements) as compared to the 2003/04 marketing year, and last season, which was much better in terms of food crop production for Zambia, Malawi, Mozambique and even Zimbabwe. The amount of food aid required is however less than was assessed in 2003/04, because a large number of people in some of the countries will only require assistance during the critical hunger period.

**Table 1: 2005/06 WFP estimated numbers of food insecure people and food aid requirements compared to 2004/05 and 2003/04**

Country	2003/04 Marketing year		2004/05 Marketing year <sup>4</sup>		2005/06 Marketing year <sup>6</sup>	
	Assessed Number of Food Insecure <sup>1</sup>	Assessed Food Aid Requirements <sup>2</sup>	Assessed Number of Food Insecure	Assessed Food Aid Requirements	Assessed Number of Food Insecure	Assessed Food Aid Requirements
Lesotho	375,000	32,900	948,300	43,000	548,800	20,244
Malawi	677,000	31,000	1,340,000	56,000	4,224,400	269,600
Mozambique	856,000	144,000	187,000	49,000	587,499	69,755
Swaziland	207,000	24,000	262,000	28,300	226,640	27,020
Zambia	430,000	37,300	215,665	14,548	1,232,661	118,335
Zimbabwe	4,002,000	610,000	2,341,000 <sup>5</sup>	177,700	3,900,000 <sup>7</sup>	308,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,547,000</b>	<b>879,200</b>	<b>5,293,965</b>	<b>368,548</b>	<b>10,720,000</b>	<b>812,954</b>

Notes:

1/ Numbers of food insecure sourced from WFP EMOP 10290.0 document. 2/ Assessed food aid requirements sourced from the FAO/WFP CFSAM reports of 2003. 4/Assessments of food aid needs and numbers of the food insecure sourced from the July 2004 FAO/WFP CFSAM reports except for Zambia which was sourced from VAC report, June 2004. 5/ Numbers from VAC rural assessment only. 6/ Sourced from the June 2005 VAC presentations to the Stakeholders meeting of 7 - 8 July 2005 pending final reports, and June 2005 FAO/WFP CFSAM Reports. 7/Preliminary results provide a range of 2.9 - 3.9 million people

The countries most concerning are, in order of priority, Zimbabwe, Malawi and Mozambique. In order to revise current food aid projections and refine targeting criteria accordingly in each of these countries, FEWS NET recommends continued monitoring of food insecurity indicators, such as the availability of employment opportunities, labor rates, and staple food prices.

WFP is addressing the current food aid needs through the on-going Regional Protracted Relief and Rehabilitation Operation (PRRO), which started in January 2005, and is aimed at addressing the impact of the "triple threat" of food insecurity, HIV/AIDS and weakened capacity for governance on vulnerable populations. WFP (ODJ) announced that it would not launch an emergency appeal addressing the current acute and chronic food insecurity, but would instead expand the existing PRRO.

## II. RESULTS

FEWS NET activities in southern Africa with RCSA's Task Order 805 support have focused on providing reliable and timely food security and vulnerability analysis and disaster related information critical for decision making; and the most critical users of our information remain the donors such as USAID/FFP, USAID/OFDA and DFID as well as regional humanitarian organizations that need our information for informed decision making and targeting of interventions. The focus has been on strengthening and building capacity of national level information systems in collaboration with our key regional partners and networks. As a member of the SADC Regional VAC, FEWS NET has contributed to the widespread acceptance and adoption of the livelihoods based approach to vulnerability and food security analysis and has assisted several of the NVACs in setting up livelihoods baselines and profiles to provide context for food security and vulnerability reporting. In this regard, FEWS NET has been in the forefront in bringing objectivity in current VA assessments ensuring that best practices are

documented and creating platforms for dialoguing on methodological issues including issues of regional standardization and harmonization through discussions of a common conceptual framework for vulnerability analysis.

This section is organized according to the three objectives and major tasks that were included in the work plan operational during this period. The objectives and major tasks are summarized below:

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Major Tasks</b>
Objective 1. Improve early warning information and food security analysis in Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland.	1.1. Improve availability of food security monitoring information in the BLS.  1.2. Assist national structures in the BLS to improve early warning and food security analysis capacity  1.3. Support VAC processes in Swaziland and Botswana  1.4. Support Botswana's assessment of needs to create a VAC to support national processes
Objective 2. Improve analysis of cross-border food trade throughout the region	2.1. Improve information on regional food trade and regional price trends to better assess regional food security
Objective 3. Improve regional capacity to assess and manage food security risks	3.1. Strengthen contingency planning and seasonal coordination mechanisms in southern Africa  3.2. Improve regional (RVAC) and national (NVAC) vulnerability assessment committee processes  3.3. Support emergency assessments of the food security situation

Specific accomplishments per the TO805 work plan covering the period October 1, 2004 to September 30, 2005 are detailed below, organized by work plan objective.

***Objective 1: Improve early warning information and foodSecurity analysis in Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland***

- Improve availability of food security monitoring information in Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland (BLS).
- Hired and trained new Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland (BLS) FEWS NET advisor which included visits to Lesotho and Swaziland (where current food security data were collected and used for national food security reports as well as contributing to the regional report); as well as meetings with potential partners for the BLS activity in both countries and in South Africa. The networks established in the BLS have already been useful in providing key early warning data and information for inclusion in the regional reports.

- Both the BLS advisor and FEWS NET regional representative provided technical support to the Swaziland, Botswana and Lesotho national early warning units through backstopping visits to the three countries providing hands-on training, sensitizing and creating awareness of the critical nature of early warning information for food security among key partners and policy makers such as the WFP country offices, the national disaster agencies, and key government decision makers. Capacity development and strengthening focused on support to understanding methods for food balance sheet analysis, and overall food security analysis. The result is that these NEWUs have received guidance on early warning and vulnerability concepts and methods thus enhancing capacity for improved food security analysis.
- FEWS NET provided direct technical support and equipment to the NEWU staff in Lesotho where the NEWU had been dormant for more than a year due to lack of staff training and poor equipment. In response, the BLS Advisor backstopped the NEWU office which is now functional (the first food security bulletin was published in May 2005), and FEWS NET procured two desktop computers and a printer for the office to enable them to conduct their work more efficiently and effectively.
- Similar support to the Swaziland NEWU; where after a needs analysis, a proposal was developed to provide both equipment and computer related training to the staff of the NEWU. Two computers and two printers were provided in September 2005 as part of the strategy to improve data storage, analysis and reporting.
- FEWS NET BLS Advisor provided food security briefs to U.S. Embassies in Lesotho and Swaziland on the current food security situation in each country.

### **1.2. Assist national structures in Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland to improve early warning and food security analysis capacity.**

- FEWS NET's Regional Representative and the BLS Advisor participated in the FAO/WFP Crop and Food Supply Assessment missions (CFSAMs) in Swaziland and Lesotho in May 2005. The objective of these CFSAMs was to verify and validate the information coming out of government-led assessments and forecasting surveys. The role of FEWS NET (a core member of the VAC structure in the region) was to ensure that there are linkages between the CFSAM and the VAC, ensuring that results from the VAC were available albeit in preliminary form – to the CFSAM mission before its departure for report finalization in Rome. The result was a much closer and more participatory working arrangement between observers on the mission, as well as better working relations between the CFSAM and the NVACs.
- FEWS NET provided technical assistance to the newly hired officers in the NEWU offices of Lesotho and Swaziland. Both offices are now functioning well, with food security reports being produced on a regular basis. The BLS Advisor also initiated basic computer training for NEWU technical assistants, and purchased computers and printers for the two NEWUs in

order to facilitate data management and storage, analysis of secondary data and strengthen capacity to conduct early warning activities.

- Trained staff of national early warning units in the region at a workshop organized by FEWS NET from August 1- 5. The objective of the training, conducted in collaboration with SADC FANR and WFP, was to introduce basic food security and early warning concepts and approaches to new staff of NEWUs; and to train on how to synthesize core food security information and data into a bulletin. In addition to participants from the BLS, the training included other NEWU staff from Mozambique, Malawi, and Zambia. The result is that the NEWUs involved in the training have received guidance on early warning and vulnerability concepts thus enhancing capacity for improved food security analysis.

### **1.3 Support VAC processes in Swaziland and Lesotho.**

- FEWS NET provided backstopping support to the Swaziland VAC throughout the reporting period where areas for further collaboration were discussed and agreed upon and assistance provided in finalizing plans for the launch of their recently completed assessment of vulnerability among communities in the Lowveld. The result is stronger linkages with FEWS NET have been established enabling provision of direct support as requested.
- FEWS NET provided backstopping support to the Lesotho VAC throughout the reporting period where areas for further collaboration and capacity building were discussed and agreed upon. Discussions for resuming the support on VAC methodology development, improvement of baseline data and analysis and training using the "FEG integrated spreadsheet" as an analytical tool reached an advance stage. Due to pressure from on-going VAC assessment, it was not possible for FEWS NET to provide this support during the reporting period. The training will now be conducted in January 2006. The result is stronger linkages with FEWS NET have been established enabling provision of direct support as requested.
- FEWS NET participated and assisted in VAC assessments in both Lesotho and Swaziland. The VACs are multi-agency groups that foster a consensus view on overall vulnerability and food insecurity in a particular country. VAC reports form the basis for informed decision making; facilitating a coordinated response among humanitarian and donor agencies. The VAC data are also used as an input into the CFSAM final report especially on the needs analysis section of the joint FAO/WFP report that informs humanitarian agencies globally of the current food needs status in a particular country.
- FEWS NET participated as an active member of the SADC Regional Vulnerability Assessment Committee (RVAC) on a variety of activities/ meetings/ teleconferences, including support to NVACs. Key VAC partners include SADC Food Security Early Warning System (former REWU), RRSU, SC (UK), WFP, FAO, and OCHA. The result was a high degree of coordination and collaboration within an active vulnerability assessment network providing technical and financial support to national level vulnerability assessment activities in the SADC region.

- FEWS NET provided additional financial support from USAID/RCSA through the TO805 budget to engage a team of three consultants to conduct a study/review of the methodologies that have been used by different national VACs to conduct their vulnerability analyses. The review culminated in a Regional Consultation on VA methodologies held September 19 - 21, 2005. The results of the study and workshop will help inform future planning and development of VA toolkits and the adoption/ advocacy of best practices in vulnerability analysis. The FEWS NET (TO805) contribution to this process reinforces the collaborative nature of RVAC activities and will enhance the credibility and objectivity of the outcome of the consultation. Many stakeholders expect that this workshop will provide the basis for improving current approaches bringing about a degree of standardization in methodologies for comparability across countries.

#### **1.4. Support Botswana's assessment of needs to create a VAC to support national processes.**

- Provided technical guidance to the lead officer of the Botswana NEWU on necessary steps to improve current needs assessment methodologies in the country. The process to bring about such improvements needs the participation of all key stakeholders in the Inter-ministerial Disaster Task Force currently overseeing the needs assessment process. A request for FEWS NET support has been made and this will be followed-up in the period prior to the next round of assessments.

### ***Objective 2. Improve analysis of cross-border food trade throughout the region***

#### **2.1. Improve information on regional food trade and regional price trends to better assess regional food security.**

- Participated as key member of the technical steering committee (FEWS NET and WFP) overseeing the implementation of the cross-border trade monitoring system in southern Africa. The system is tracking cross border trade in maize, rice and beans along common borders of six selected countries. In the reporting period, thirteen issues of the Cross Border Food Trade Bulletin were produced between July 2004 and September 2005 and disseminated widely to interested readers. The bulletins and data were also posted on the East Africa RATIC website. Partners include FEWS NET, WFP, the CFNRs, and other national market information systems. The result is that data from this monitoring system is filling an information gap by capturing unrecorded trade, and provides a better understanding of regional trade in staple foods.
- Through on-going efforts to collect country level food retail price data, extend information networks to the private sector and the role played in implementing the cross-border trade monitoring system in the region, helped enhance the role of trade information in enabling the formal and informal sectors to play a role in strengthening regional food security. FEWS NET presentations on the cross-border information at fora such as

the FANRPAN policy dialogues (June 21-22) and SARPAN workshops (October 2004; May 24-25) have also helped to enhance and create further awareness of the role of “unrecorded” trade in the region, and the importance of ensuring governments implement appropriate policies that facilitate this kind of trade. The result is better understanding of the role of the informal and private sectors in food security for improved decision making and response planning.

- An evaluation of the project in May 2005 received a very favorable review: the system (despite some inherent weaknesses) was rated positively and interviewees conceded that it is providing data that were previously unavailable, and very useful to various categories of users. It was recommended that the project be continued for another three to five years. The result is that FEWS NET and WFP regional offices have maintained the activity and are actively seeking further funding to ensure that the system continues to function efficiently and to provide this critical data.

***Objective 3. Improve capacity and information needed to assess and manage food security risks***

- 3.1 Strengthen contingency planning and seasonal coordination mechanisms in southern Africa
- Supported disaster preparedness and management networks by maintaining and expanding network contacts throughout the reporting period. FEWS NET (BLS Advisor) participated in the InWEnt/ Lesotho DMA Symposium on “Information Sharing and Communication for Disaster Risk Management” held in Maseru, Lesotho August 9 - 10. The result is continued engagement and collaboration in regional initiatives in the area of disaster and risk reduction, as well as improved disaster and preparedness management through exchange of information, dialogue and collaboration.
- Contributed to response planning activities in the region by assisting in gathering, analyzing and reporting relevant information and by participating in various briefings (such as the SADC /UN Regional Stakeholder Meeting July 7 - 8, the MSU/FANRPAN meeting of June 21 - 22), workshops and meetings, as requested. The result ensured that FEWS NET information, analysis and assistance were available to support response planning.
- 3.2. Improve regional (RVAC) and national (NVAC) vulnerability assessment committee processes.
- A key activity under the RVAC during this period was the development of the regional five year program that will provide a framework for implementation of VA related capacity building activities within the region and in member States. All the VA-related activities contribute towards enhanced capacity of the regional and national VACs to support and undertake vulnerability assessments and to set up monitoring systems that will result in improved food security analysis. The result is enhanced

understanding and capacity to conduct emergency and vulnerability assessment and monitoring in the region.

- Participated in the organization of the Regional Consultation on VA methodologies which was held September 19 - 21, 2005. The consultation was a culmination of the study/ review of the methodologies consultancy that was engaged by the RVAC in the previous reporting period. The results will help inform future planning and development of VA toolkits and the adoption/ advocacy of best practices in vulnerability analysis. The FEWS NET contribution to this process reinforces the collaborative nature of RVAC activities and will enhance the credibility and objectivity of the outcome of the consultation. Many stakeholders believe this workshop has provided the basis for improving current approaches bringing about a degree of standardization in methodologies for comparability across countries.
- Provided backstopping support to the national VACs in Lesotho and Swaziland which included providing guidance on the development of their work plans, planning for better linkage between the VAC assessments of May 2005 and the FAO/WFP CFSAM missions held the same month; and providing support in the finalization (analysis and report writing) of the two countries VAC assessment reports. BLS advisor provided assistance throughout the VAC assessment exercise in Lesotho; while the Regional representative backstopped the Swaziland VAC and provided guidance during preliminary analysis that coincided with the CFSAM mission.
- Supported vulnerability assessment networks at regional and national level by actively participating and contributing to RVAC meetings and activities, participating in partner meetings (such as the Strategic Analytical and Knowledge Support System (SAKSS) - Southern Africa workshop held 4-5 Feb), and maintaining distribution lists for dissemination of various vulnerability and emergency assessment products. As an on-going activity, the result is improved exchange of information on vulnerability assessment-related activities.

### **3.3. Support emergency assessments of the food security situation.**

- As member of the SADC RVAC participated in the organization of the Regional Stakeholder Meeting on the Food Security Status and Interventions held in Johannesburg South Africa: July 7 – 8, 2005. The objectives of the meeting were to reach agreement among all stakeholders on the current food security situation in the region, based on the NVAC and CFSAM information; and to review existing capacities and identify gaps towards addressing acute and chronic food insecurity in the region and reach consensus on the way forward. Main partners included the SADC RVAC, UN/RIACSO, national VACs, including CFNRs and other stakeholders, particularly humanitarian agencies and donors. The main results include a high degree of collaboration and consensus among key partners and a framework for providing technical and financial support in a coordinated manner.
- Supported disaster preparedness and management networks by maintaining and expanding network contacts throughout the reporting

period. Main collaborating partners included key UN agencies in RIACSO (especially OCHA and UNDP/BCPR), and the German Capacity Building Programme - InWent. FEWS NET (BLS Advisor) participated in the InWent/ Lesotho DMA Symposium on "Information Sharing and Communication for Disaster Risk Management" held in Maseru, Lesotho August 9 - 10. The result is continued engagement and collaboration in regional initiatives in the area of disaster and risk reduction, as well as improved disaster and preparedness management through exchange of information, dialogue and collaboration.

- Provided backstopping support to the national VACs in Lesotho and Swaziland which included providing guidance in planning for the May 2005 VAC assessments, planning for better linkage between the VAC and the FAO/WFP CFSAM missions held the same month; and providing support in the finalization (analysis and report writing) of the two countries' VAC assessment reports. The BLS Advisor provided assistance throughout the VAC assessment exercise in Lesotho; while the Regional Representative backstopped the Swaziland VAC and provided guidance during preliminary analysis that coincided with the CFSAM mission.

### **III. OBJECTIVES NOT MET**

There was one activity not accomplished during this performance period, "the Lesotho livelihoods activity" under Objective 1.

The activity to create the Lesotho integrated spreadsheet was to take place in January 2005. The objective was to develop a national integrated spreadsheet for food security scenario analysis for Lesotho and to train VAC members in its use. This included preparatory work with network partners to introduce the spreadsheet, review whether available food economy baseline information is complete, and plan subsequent work.

#### **Reason for the delays and/or unaccomplished objectives**

FEWS NET has local technicians and government partners now trained on basic livelihood work and methodology in the majority of the 24 countries in which FEWS NET operates. Over the past two years, the Southern Africa regional and national VACs have agreed on the use of integrated spreadsheet methodology as one of the key tools in developing harmonized livelihoods based food security analysis across the region. However, the development of this tool to be used by network partners is a more in-depth process, and relatively new. Expertise to create this complex spreadsheet, and training on its proper use, truly does not yet exist in the region. The spreadsheet creation requires tailoring a detailed approach to the needs of Lesotho, and therefore this is not an "off-the-shelf" product or service that FEWS NET provides. It therefore requires one of FEWS NET's livelihoods experts to adapt this tool locally and to work with network partners to customize it to their needs, making it as useful to them as possible. FEWS NET planned to provide this specific targeted assistance using expertise of Alex King, who has worked with members of the Lesotho VAC and is well aware of the details of the issues involved.

However, RCSA's preference was to utilize local resources to provide this service, in lieu of bringing in an expatriate consultant. We were not able to find someone locally with the adequate expertise and training at creating this highly specific,

customized integrated spreadsheet for livelihoods based food security analysis for Lesotho. When the activity failed to occur as planned (January 2005), and after we had made alternate arrangements and received RCSA approval; it was discovered that the Lesotho VAC network partners were no longer able to participate as they were now fully involved in the May 2005 assessment. It is our intention that this activity be conducted during the next phase of FEWS NET, contingent upon VAC preparations, which we would work to support them in readying. FEWS NET is currently in discussions with the Lesotho VAC to provide technical assistance to complete this work, which is tentatively planned for January 2006.

#### **IV SUCCESS STORIES**

##### **Establishment of cross-border food trade monitoring in southern Africa**

A major FEWS NET accomplishment has been the establishment of the joint WFP/FEWS NET regional cross-border food trade monitoring system. The project concept came out of a meeting organized by USAID/REDSO in mid-December 2003 to discuss the potential expansion of the Regional Agricultural Trade Intelligence Network (RATIN) into southern Africa. FEWS NET participants agreed that monitoring cross-border trade was important as this would fill an information gap that has long been recognized by food security analysts. Based on these discussions, a scope of work was developed and circulated to potentially interested parties. FEWS NET's discussions of the SOW with the WFP regional VAM officer were instrumental on getting WFP on board and partnering with FEWS NET to implement the project. Modalities of the joint implementation were agreed upon; and a technical steering committee (TSC) was set up (2 members from FEWS NET and 2 from WFP). The partners (WFP and FEWS NET) took every opportunity to give briefings on the project (soliciting donor and user interest). Through these briefings, USAID/RCSA agreed to provide some funds to help support some of the second phase activities.

##### **FEWS NET and the Importance of Markets**

Many FEWS NET field staff are not economists and need guidance to better integrate market and trade analysis into their work. The Washington-based Technical Team is helping FEWS NET do this because it is clear that a better understanding of markets and trade will translate into improvements in FEWS NET monitoring, reporting, assessments, and a merging with the livelihoods approach. This will lead to a fuller understanding of food security at the regional, national, and sub-national levels.

During the pre-implementation stage, a Zambian consulting firm was contracted to carry out the initial preparatory phase that including background reviews, a study tour to observe RATIN activities in East Africa, visits to the border posts and the capitals of participating countries, and development of a system ready for implementation in southern Africa. The study took place from March to June 2004, in time for actual implementation during the 2004/05 marketing season. Border monitors began collecting data in July 2004; and an initial report covering the months July-September was produced in October 2004. Since then, thirteen issues of the Cross Border Food Trade monthly report have been produced and disseminated widely to interested readers. The bulletins are posted on the FEWS NET and East Africa RATIN websites (as well as other sites e.g. SARPN and South Africa National Department of Agriculture).

An evaluation of the project in May 2005 provided a very positive review of the cross border monitoring work, highlighting that data were provided that was

previously unavailable, and the information in the bulletins was very useful to various categories of users. It was recommended in the evaluation that the project be continued for another three to five years.

### **Regional Training Workshop for NEWU staff**

Another major accomplishment has been the organization of a regional training workshop held August 1 - 5 during which FEWS NET was the main trainer for staff of national early warning units in the region. The objective of the training (which was conducted in collaboration with SADC FANR and WFP) was to introduce basic food security and early warning concepts and approaches to new staff of NEWUs; and to train on how to synthesize core food security information and data into a bulletin. The workshop evaluation revealed that participants rated it as highly successful, with all the presentations rated as "very good". This strengthening of technical capacity of one of FEWS NET's major network partners will make a big difference to technical competence of current staff - most of whom had hitherto not received any training. The result is that the NEWUs involved in the training have received guidance on early warning and vulnerability concepts thus enhancing capacity for improved food security analysis.

### **Updated policy matrices for Malawi and Zimbabwe**

In 2002, FEWS NET staff, led by former regional representative Bruce Isaacson, worked with the Southern Africa Development Community's (SADC) Food, Agriculture, and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN) to analyze national monetary, fiscal, agricultural, trade, and social safety net policies as those that impact most on food availability and access to food. FEWS NET recently updated the Malawi and Zimbabwe policy matrices as input to the 2004 USAID Famine Forum. It is important to update matrices regularly so that elements can be integrated into monitoring and reporting as they provide essential context to understand market behavior.