

FACT SHEET

The Sahel Joint Planning Cell

Periodic droughts in the Sahel—the arid belt in West Africa dividing the Sahara Desert from the tropic zones to the South—have increased with alarming frequency. In 2011, irregular rainfall combined with civil conflict, high food prices, and other shocks including locust infestation, prompted a crisis that left more than 18 million people food insecure in 2012. In response, a new USAID Sahel Joint Planning Cell (JPC) formed to bring together humanitarian and development teams to build resilience to the region’s recurring shocks and help curb the Sahel’s cycle of crisis.

The multi-sectoral, Dakar-based JPC focuses on Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, and Senegal, with country-specific circumstances informing programming and funding levels. The JPC combines existing and new programming to support resilience-building efforts across the Sahel, prioritizing new resilience investments based on joint analyses of chronic vulnerability, USG comparative advantage, and an optimal enabling environment. Countries prioritized for new USG resilience investments are currently Niger and Burkina Faso.



GOALS

Guided by an evidence-based, proactive strategy, **JPC programming will combat food insecurity and build resilience among vulnerable populations in partnership with regional institutions, international development partners, and host governments.** Supporting effective country-led plans is key to this resilience approach. Based on lessons learned from the Horn of Africa, the Sahel JPC will scale-up innovations by sequencing, layering and integrating humanitarian and development programs across the region to maximize impact.

The JPC will leverage and coordinate existing humanitarian and development assistance activities, and in targeted areas make new resilience investments in coordination with multilateral and other bilateral donors as well as regional organizations and national governments as part of a coordinated multinational approach.

CRITERIA

The Sahel JPC drafted a strategy based on **joint problem analysis with a focus on three critical criteria:** 1) **chronic vulnerability**, including the number of emergency caseloads and high malnutrition rates; 2) **‘comparative advantage’** or the presence of both humanitarian and development assistance; and 3) **‘enabling environment,’** considering factors such as the level of host-country commitment, partnership, and forward-leaning plans.

IMPACT

The JPC aims to build resilience and boost economic growth. By sequencing, layering, and integrating new investments with existing programs, we aim to reduce humanitarian caseloads in the region by several hundred thousand while benefiting millions. By improving the ability of vulnerable populations to adapt to the region’s recurring shocks and stresses and enhancing host-government capacity to manage risk, we are working to save and improve lives and help the people of the Sahel emerge from cycles of crisis to a pathway toward development.