Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET)
Early Warning Team
Markets and Trade Advisor

Scope of Work

Introduction

The Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET) is an integrated set of activities funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and is intended to provide timely, accurate, evidence-based, and transparent food security early warning information and analysis. Created in 1985 in response to famines in East and West Africa, FEWS NET provides global coverage through a mix of presence and remote monitoring. FEWS NET's work is implemented across several pillars by a team of partners that includes the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the United States Department of Agriculture, the United States Geological Survey, the University of California-Santa Barbara's Climate Hazards Center, Kimetrica, and Chemonics International (Chemonics). Chemonics houses FEWS NET's Early Warning Team (EWT), also known as Pillar 1, a team charged with integrated emergency food insecurity analysis through a Washington-based technical office and more than 20 field offices.

Based on an in-depth understanding of local livelihoods, EWT members monitor information and data on factors that affect food security, such as weather conditions and climate, crops, pasture, markets and trade, and nutrition. The FEWS NET EWT produces regular reports, including Food Security Outlooks and Outlook Updates, emergency alerts, market and price updates, and global weather hazards analyses. FEWS NET makes reports available at www.fews.net and distributes them globally to governments, relief agencies, and other organizations engaged in humanitarian response and development programs.

The seventh phase of FEWS NET began in 2019. The work of FEWS NET EWT relies on close collaboration with international, regional, and national partners on food security data and information gathering and analysis. Major activities include joint monitoring and assessments, data exchanges, collaborative analysis and reporting, and technical capacity strengthening. FEWS NET supports local and regional food security networks to contribute to achieving the global objective of food security for all.

Position Description

FEWS NET's food security analyses, early warning of threats to food security, and food assistance decision support depend heavily on the monitoring and analysis of markets and prices associated with staple foods, cash crops, livestock, and labor. The markets and trade (M&T) advisor is expected to set the technical direction for this sector's work and advise the FEWS NET EWT Senior Management Team on associated technical and administrative priorities for the project. The M&T advisor provides leadership, guidance, and technical support to the FEWS NET EWT and partners in the areas of M&T monitoring, analysis, and reporting. The M&T advisor will work with members of the FEWS NET EWT technical team in the home, regional, and field offices, particularly the regional food security specialists-markets and trade (RFSS-MT), to design, execute, and coordinate activities in the M&T technical area. These activities will include providing key inputs to and drafting decision-support products, providing technical assistance and guidance to colleagues across the project, strengthening the capacity of the FEWS NET EWT and partners to conduct relevant market analyses, and leading efforts to improve sectoral scenario building and associated staff capacity strengthening. The M&T advisor will contribute to providing high-quality and effective early warning of threats to food security associated with price and market shocks, and support efforts to mitigate food insecurity and prevent food crises through the provision of actionable market-related food security analyses.

Responsibilities

The main responsibilities of the M&T advisor include, but are not limited to:

Technical Activities
- Leading monitoring, analysis, and reporting on sector-relevant issues for acute food insecurity early warning.
- Overseeing the production of monthly monitoring products reporting on market trends in countries the FEWS NET EWT monitors, including the Monthly Price Bulletins (national and regional) and Price Watch and Annex.
- Overseeing the production of Supply and Market Outlook reports (regional and national).
- Leading analysis and drafting of reports on market trends and policies, as needed, in relation to early warning projections and in close collaboration with members of the FEWS NET EWT home, regional, and field offices.
- Providing guidance to and overseeing staff responsible for compiling market data, including staple food prices, cross-border trade flows, crop production estimates, and commodity balance sheet estimates collected from countries monitored by the FEWS NET EWT.
- Ensuring the establishment and maintenance of systematic and efficient M&T data collection and management processes among home, regional, and field office staff.
    - Identifying, developing, and implementing innovative methods for the collection of critical M&T-related data, including but not limited to food/livestock prices, informal cross-border trade, labor wages, and stock information.
- Monitoring and analyzing international market and policy developments concerning staple food commodities and other commodities relevant to food security early warning analysis.
- Identifying emerging market issues and providing input to the analysis of regional and local food security conditions and decision-support processes.
- Contributing to technical discussions and the content of products and activities with an M&T-related element.
- Leading technical management of subcontractor activities related to M&T, including but not limited to initiating requests, developing scopes of work, liaising with subcontractor technical points of contact, liaising on subcontract administration with the Chemonics project management unit, and reviewing and approving deliverables.

Technical Capacity Development and Guidance
- Providing technical assistance and guidance to enable home, regional, and field office staff to deliver high-quality market information and analyses pertaining to food security analysis, early warning, and associated decision support.
- Identifying key M&T analytical support needs and establishing, refining, or enhancing methods, tools, and guidance to meet those needs. This will involve coordination with the quality assurance and methods advisor.
- Regularly reviewing the consistency and accuracy of price projections and other M&T-related food security forecasting in FEWS NET EWT early warning analysis and incorporating associated learning into sector methods, processes, and products.
- Providing assistance with the design and implementation of market assessments and with the improvement of price and market monitoring methods.
- Providing technical assistance and guidance for remote monitoring start-up activities related to markets and price monitoring.

- In collaboration with members of the home office, transferring knowledge and providing short-term training to strengthen the capacity of field teams to understand the structure and functioning of markets and to monitor, analyze, and report on food commodity markets and other markets that determine household food security.

Inter-Pillar Collaboration
- Engaging with the FEWS NET Data and Learning Hub (also known as "Pillar 2" and the "Hub") to ensure that the M&T data FEWS NET uses is appropriately uploaded, organized, and accessible via FEWS NET's data storage and data access platforms.
- Managing, through the Hub's help desk tickets and other mechanisms as appropriate, ongoing collaboration and coordination around M&T-specific inter-pillar activities.
- Advising and collaborating with future implementors working under FEWS NET's analysis of the dynamics of food, nutrition, and livelihood security pillar (Pillar 3) to identify key M&T-related evidence base gaps to be filled and/or provide technical inputs/insights to ensure relevance to and consistency between relevant Pillar 3 work and early warning analysis.

Leadership, Representation, and Global Collaboration
- Supervising a home office-based team of market analyst(s) in addition to short-term consultants.
- Contributing to the identification of priority M&T activities in line with the strategic orientation of the FEWS NET project.
- Designing, executing, and leading technical and operational work in the M&T discipline.
- Monitoring and, as appropriate, contributing to activities undertaken by the FEWS NET EWT that aim to enhance capabilities in market monitoring, early warning, and associated decision support.
- Seeking collaboration with partners to enhance the quality and impact of M&T work for food security early warning purposes.
- Liaising with international partners to exchange information and promote a dialogue on market and institutional issues pertaining to food security early warning.
- Contributing to FEWS NET's capacity building and institutional strengthening objectives.
- Facilitating training workshops and the transfer of FEWS NET market monitoring and analysis methods, tools, and systems to regional and international organizations.

Qualifications
- Fluency in English required; French and/or Spanish language skills desirable.
- Education and experience in a discipline relevant to the M&T work of FEWS NET (e.g., PhD and at least two years of relevant experience; Master's degree and at least four years of relevant experience; Bachelor's degree and at least six years of relevant experience; less than a Bachelor's degree and at least eight years of relevant experience).
- Relevant education includes, especially, agricultural economics. Relevant work experience includes humanitarian and/or development work, of which at least two years must be directly relevant experience in food security, contingency and response planning, and decision support; overseas and management experience highly desired.
- Detailed knowledge of, and experience with, global network M&T partners.
- Experience with implementing USAID projects and associated field operations, programs, policies, and procedures is desirable.
- Excellent writing and presentation skills.
- Excellent interpersonal skills.
- Excellent computer skills; GIS applications and mapping, and statistical software skills are an advantage.

Location and Reporting

The M&T advisor is typically based in the Washington D.C. Home Office and works under the supervision of the deputy chief of party-analysis. While the preference is for the M&T advisor to be based in D.C., qualified candidates living outside of D.C., and in countries where FEWS NET operates outside of the U.S. will also be considered. The M&T advisor will collaborate with the Washington-based technical team, regional technical experts, and other technical staff in the field. The M&T advisor will be required to travel domestically and internationally, security permitting.