



vam understanding vulnerability food security analysis

OVERVIEW

Food security analysis is a core function of WFP’s work. It is the basis of all operations (Emergency Operations, Protracted Relief and Recovery Operations, and Country Programmes).

Prior to the design of operations in any country, WFP undertakes an analysis of the food security situation and answers some critical questions:

- **who** is food insecure or vulnerable?
- **how many** are they?
- **where** do they live?
- **why** are they food insecure or vulnerable?
- **how** is the situation likely to evolve and what are the risks threatening them?
- **what should be done** to save their lives and livelihoods?

Food security analysis provides information to:

- identify the **most appropriate type and scale of intervention**, whether food distributions, school feeding, support to re-establish livelihoods or more innovative interventions such as cash or voucher programmes;
- identify the **most food insecure people** to ensure **the most effective targeting**;
- ensure the **most efficient use of humanitarian resources**, by allocating funding according to needs.

WFP Food Security Analysis informs governments’ policies and programs and the wider UN community’s planning, programming and fund raising.

WFP conducts a wide range of analysis as information requirements depend on circumstances and differ at the various stages of the national, international and WFP programming and implementation cycles.

WFP’s strength is its flexibility to conduct **rapid assessments** when an emergency arises as well as **large household surveys** which give an in-depth understanding of food security situations and the ability to **monitor evolving situations** in countries with recurrent crises.

WFP has a unique capacity and experience of collecting data at household level in more than 80 countries.

The Food Security Analysis function is commonly referred to as VAM (Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping). This was the name of the first WFP service which was created in 1994 to analyse and map food insecurity. The name has remained ever since. Food security analysts in the field are called VAM officers.

SPATIAL ANALYSIS AND MAPPING

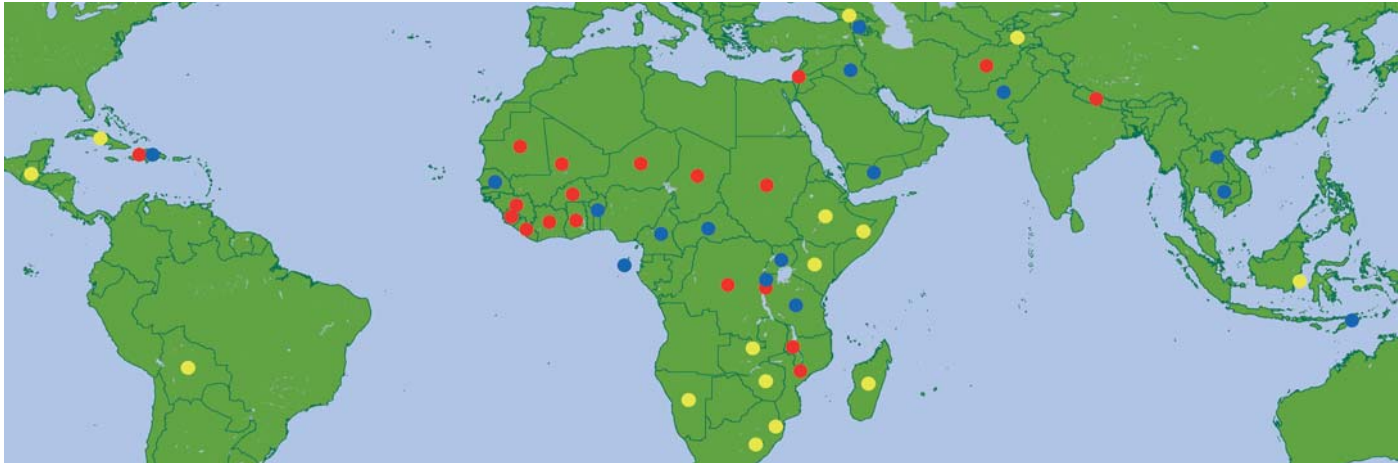
WFP uses the most advanced technologies including Geographical Information Systems (GIS), innovative satellite applications and Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs) to collect, manage and analyse data. For example, by analysing trends in rainfall patterns and regeneration of vegetation cover, potential bio-physical threats to food security can be identified and monitored over time. WFP uses GIS to combine survey data with geographical information to identify the root causes of food insecurity and vulnerability.

A UNIQUE NETWORK AROUND THE GLOBE

WFP has about 150 food security analysts (international and national) based at headquarters, in regional bureaux and in the countries where WFP operates.

PARTNERSHIPS

WFP undertakes food security analysis in **close collaboration with partners worldwide** including governments, FEWS NET, UN agencies such as FAO, UNHCR , UNICEF, WHO, and local and international NGOs. These partnerships ensure a shared understanding of food security problems and common priorities for action. Important partnerships have also been established with the World Bank, the Norway Statistics Institute and the International Household Survey Network to share or collect data communally.



● **CFSVAs and FSMS**

- Afghanistan
- Burkina Faso
- Burundi
- Chad
- Congo (DR)
- Cote d'Ivoire
- Ghana
- Guinea Conakry
- Haiti
- Liberia
- Malawi
- Mali
- Mauritania
- Mozambique
- Nepal
- Niger
- Occupied Palestinian Territory
- Sierra Leone
- Sudan

● **CFSVAs**

- Armenia
- Benin
- Cambodia
- Cameroon
- Central African Republic
- Dominican Republic
- Iraq
- Laos

● **FSMS**

- Pakistan
- Rwanda
- Sao Tome & Principe
- Senegal
- Tanzania
- Timor Leste
- Uganda
- Yemen
- Bolivia
- Cuba
- Ethiopia
- Georgia
- Guatemala
- Kenya
- Indonesia
- Lesotho
- Madagascar
- Namibia
- Somalia
- Swaziland
- Tajikistan
- Zambia
- Zimbabwe

WFP ASSESSMENTS AND FOOD SECURITY ANALYSIS

WFP has several assessment tools that, applied at different points in time during the programme cycles, will bring the appropriate information at the right time.

The assessment tools are closely integrated and inform the **WFP Food Security Information Strategy**.

A Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis (CFSVA), also referred to as pre-crisis baseline study, provides an in-depth picture of the food security situation during a non-crisis year (at normal times).

A CFSVA contains a breadth of information (food consumption patterns, education, nutrition, markets, livelihoods), in particular, profiles of food insecure, an analysis of risks, vulnerability and the underlying causes. It usually covers an entire country and is valid for up to 5 years. The baseline study provide information to design recovery operations and country programmes. It is used as a benchmark against which to measure change after a crisis. It informs contingency planning and preparedness.

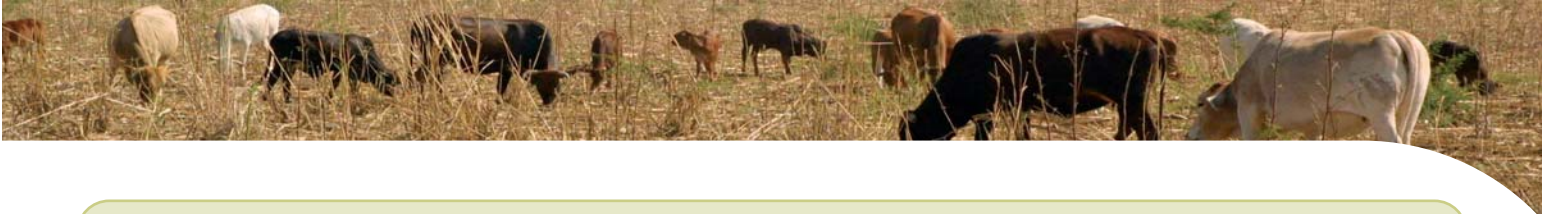
An Emergency Food Security Assessment (EFSA) is undertaken following a disaster or a shock. It covers geographic areas affected to determine the impact on households and their livelihoods and to provide response recommendations on food and non-food assistance options. It is the basis for the design of relief and recovery operations. It identifies the number of people in need, and the appropriate type and duration of assistance. The EFSA can be in the form of an initial, rapid or in-depth assessment.

Joint Assessment Missions (JAM) are conducted in collaboration with UNHCR to understand the situation, needs, risks, capacities and vulnerabilities of refugees or internally displaced people (and host populations) with regards to food and nutritional needs.

Crop and Food Supply Missions (CFSAM) are conducted jointly with FAO, usually for emergencies related to agricultural production or overall food availability problems. The mission analyses the supply and demand for staple foods, estimates any uncovered staple food import requirement for the coming year and analyses households' access to food.

A Food Security Monitoring System (FSMS) is an ongoing activity to track changes in the food security conditions. In particular, it provides advanced notice of a deterioration of a situation. It triggers an EFSA when the situation deteriorates progressively, or in case of a shock. It provides information to adjust contingency plans, when the food security situation has deteriorated significantly and supports programme monitoring by providing food security information about areas with and without assistance. Major emphasis is placed in aligning the various data collection activities (CFSVA, EFSA, FSMS) in terms of the selection of indicators, timing and methodology to enable the information from one assessment activity to feed into another, influence programming decisions at the most critical time and enable solid monitoring and evaluation.

Market analysis is undertaken to provide critical information on food availability on and the functioning of markets on which households overwhelmingly depend to acquire food. While major emphasis is placed on integrating market analysis in EFSA, CFSVA, FSMS, CFSAM, the ongoing efforts aim at expanding the analysis to support market-based interventions. With the corporate strategic shift from food aid to food assistance and the increasing complexity of food security (e.g. global food, fuel and financial crises in 2008 and 2009), the importance of market analysis in support of food security analysis has increasingly taken a central stage. Several market-based measures (e.g. cash and vouchers or local purchases) depend on market information to achieve effective results.



HIGHLIGHT ON FINANCIAL CRISIS

In the wake of the global financial and economic crisis, the WFP's Food Security Analysis Service developed an **Economic Shock and Hunger Index (ESHI)** to better understand which countries were likely to become more vulnerable to food insecurity. The ESHI analysis considered key financial and economic factors as well as broader food security indicators to understand the food security implications on 126 lower and middle income countries.

To understand the impact of the global financial crisis on the households' food security in the developing world, the ESHI analysis was followed by case studies in five countries: **Armenia, Bangladesh, Ghana, Nicaragua and Zambia.**

Case study countries were selected to observe specific transmission channels between global and domestic economies -such as remittances, exports, currency depreciations, foreign direct investments or official development assistance etc.- through which other countries with similar characteristics could also be impacted. The case studies contributed to the **State of Food Insecurity in the World 2009** report, the first ever to be prepared jointly by FAO and WFP.

KEY FACTS IN 2009

- In 2009, WFP conducted **137 food security analysis assessments**, nearly the same number as in 2008. This high number is mainly due to the persistence of economic shocks at households level and to the need for increase market-related assessments.
- To ensure **quality assessments** and analysis and foster **standardization** across the organisation, several important guidelines were released in 2009:
 - **Emergency Food Security Assessment Handbook;**
 - **Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis Guidelines;**
 - **Joint Assessment Missions guidelines** (with UNHCR);
 - **Crop and Food Supply Assessment Mission guidelines** (with FAO);
 - **Technical Guidance Sheets** related to specific issues;
 - Guidance in analysing governments' capacities to respond to a crisis. Ongoing methodological work covers assessments of **food security in urban areas** and the **integration of nutrition and food security assessment analysis.**
- The use of **PDA's became more widespread during 2009**, allowing for reduction of errors and of time lag between collection and processing and elimination of paper consumption. SMS text messaging for monitoring was widely introduced and wireless networks for immediate data transmission investigated.

2009-2010 STRATEGY

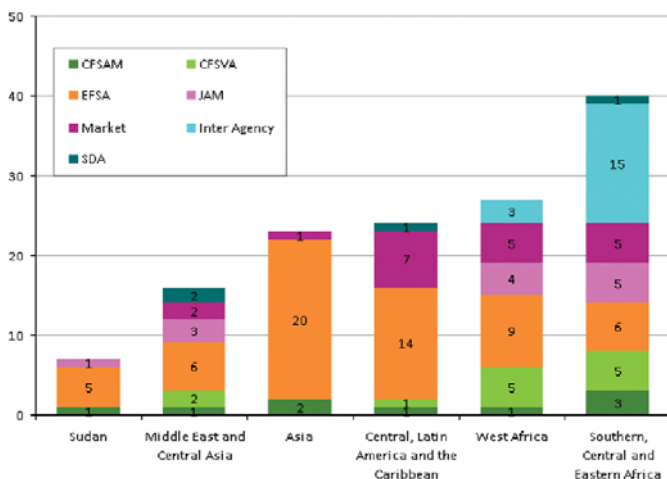
As new challenges such as climate change, increasing natural disasters, rapid urbanisation or the more recent global crisis with high food prices arise, understanding the multi-faceted dimensions of food insecurity is more crucial than ever.

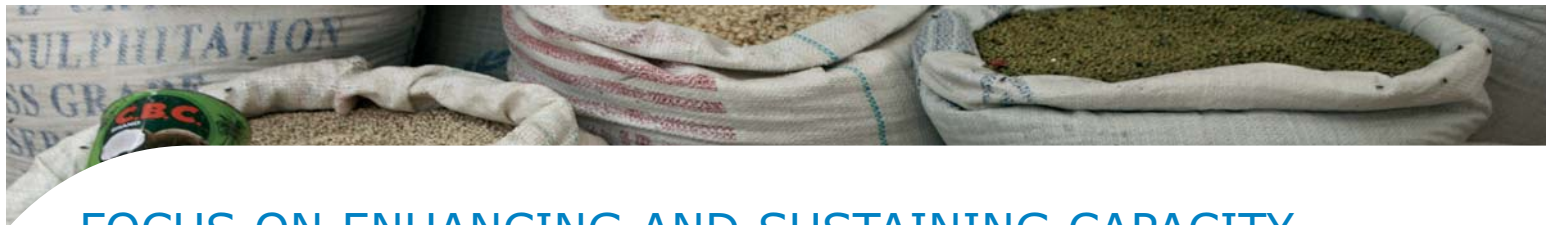
To respond to new types of crises, WFP has evolved into a food assistance agency and has developed new innovative tools, such as cash/voucher program or Purchase for Progress. The food security analysis function is also adapting itself to shape WFP's response.

Currently, the Food Security Analysis Service at HQ and VAM officers in the field focus on the following priorities:

- **Analyze and monitor emerging food security challenges:** WFP will further strengthen methodologies for risk analysis, assessments in urban areas and understanding the impact of climate change on food security.
- **Strengthen the link between food security analysis and programming:** Work will focus on improving the quality of recommendations in particular for non-food responses in assessments.
- **Further develop food security analysis skills of WFP and partners' staff:** To undertake more sophisticated and timely analysis, WFP needs to have a solid capacity. WFP is currently implementing a capacity building program to upgrade the skills of its experienced analysts, strengthen WFP and partners' capacity in market analysis and initial assessments (after a sudden onset crisis).
- **Further strengthen the integration between Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) and CFSVA, FSMS, EFSA:** The purpose is to reinforce the integrated use of all sets of information and data, including M&E, for effective management of programmes.
- **Strengthen existing Food Security Monitoring Systems and increase their number:** An increasing number of countries need to have an FSMS in place, with particular emphasis on food prices and their impact. The FSMS are built up in partnerships with the UN, NGOs and national governments.
- **Continue to participate and provide active support to refine the Integrated Food security Phase Classification (IPC):** The IPC is a tool under development whose purpose is to compare food security situations, for geographical targeting and prioritization of resources (see next page).

FOOD SECURITY ASSESSMENTS 2009





FOCUS ON ENHANCING AND SUSTAINING CAPACITY

To keep up with the WFP's changing mandate and evolving analysis methods, continued investment is required in capacity-building activities. Through the **Enhancing capacities in food security and response analysis (ENCAP)** project, WFP supports learning of staff and partners through a range of activities:

- Standard course materials for “core” and “specialized” analysis training, i.e. methodologies for undertaking different types of Emergency Food Security Assessments, analysis of quantitative food security indicators, market dynamics or nutrition data;
- Tools to assist Regional Bureaux and Country Offices conduct a strategic analysis of their capacity-building needs, and to ensure effective monitoring and evaluation of training activities;
- Materials to share guidance, tools and lessons learned to strengthen capacities in analyzing responses options;
- A database to track the capacities of WFP staff and consultants and assist in their deployment.

A comprehensive **Food Security Analysis Learning Toolkit** has been established to highlight upcoming training activities and facilitate access to the course materials when they become available.

DEVELOPING A STANDARD CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM TO COMPARE THE SEVERITY OF FOOD SECURITY SITUATIONS

WFP is working with FAO and seven other partners* to develop the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC). The IPC is a standardised scale that classifies food security situations by severity into five phases.

- **Phase 1** - generally food secure
- **Phase 2** - moderately/borderline food insecure
- **Phase 3** - acute food and livelihood crisis
- **Phase 4** - humanitarian emergency
- **Phase 5** - famine/humanitarian catastrophe

The IPC is not an assessment methodology per se. It integrates information and analyses from diverse sources to classify food security according to reference outcomes that are drawn from recognized international standards whenever possible (e.g. on nutrition). The IPC approach was first developed by the Somalia Food Security Analysis Unit (FSAU). It is now being refined to make it possible to use the IPC across different countries and contexts. The goal is to develop and advocate for a commonly accepted and standardized tool for classifying food insecurity to facilitate comparison between countries and over time. To date, the IPC has been introduced in a total of 14 countries in Southern, Eastern and Central Africa and South East Asia. Since 2009, the partners are engaged in a substantial technical revision of the IPC approach based on lessons learned from pilots, and in the institutional consolidation of the process.

*CARE International, FAO, FEWS NET, the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (EC-JRC), Oxfam GB, and Save the Children UK/US)

IMPROVED DATA QUALITY MANAGEMENT FOR BETTER FOOD SECURITY RESPONSES

In 2009, WFP joined the **International Household Survey Network (IHSN)**, an initiative that aims at strengthening aid accountability and effectiveness through systematic data management and enhanced availability, accessibility and quality of survey data in developing countries. Through the provision of metadata, WFP makes data collected during assessments readily available to external users. Initial training of WFP staff on IHSN tool kits/software applications for the metadata started in 2009, and an IHSN questions database was developed to enhance standardization and increase comparability of key indicators at households' level.

Many of these activities have been made possible through the generous support from:

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Contact:

All food security assessments reports are available online.
<http://www.wfp.org/food-security>

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