



# the assessor

Issue 36  
March– June 2013

**Welcome to  
Issue 36 of the  
Assessor, WFP's  
Food Security  
Analysis quarterly  
E-Newsletter!**

## What's new

- **FSIN**— A global effort to strengthen information systems for food and nutrition security and promote evidence-based analysis and decision making
- **Resilience Measurement for Food Security**, an emerging topic — Expert Consultation and Technical Working Group
- **mVAM** — Piloting mobile voice technology for household food security data collection.
- **Alert for Price Spikes—(ALPS)** - A new tool to track food price spikes at local level
- **The Global Food Security Update** latest issue [available](#)
- **The Market Monitor** latest issue [available](#)



**vam**  
food security analysis



## WFP VAM Key Publications

### Latest trends in staple food prices



### Latest trends in food security



# FSIN – a global effort to strengthen information systems for food and nutrition security and promote evidence-based analysis and decision making

In line with the 2011 [FAO/WFP Joint Strategy on Information Systems for Food and Nutrition Security](#), FAO and WFP – together with [IFPRI](#) – officially launched the **Food Security Information Network (FSIN)** in October 2012. FSIN aims to (a) establish a **Community of Practice** (CoP) to facilitate sharing of best practices in food security and nutrition information (b) help harmonize food and nutrition security (FNS) methods and tools to support improved analysis and communication, and (c) strengthen capacities of national and regional institutions in data collection, analysis, dissemination and use of information for decision making. A dedicated CoP is being established and a pilot capacity development needs assessments has taken place in South Sudan. The FSIN is supported by a Steering Committee comprising of **FAO, IFPRI and WFP** and an Advisory Board. The secretariat is hosted by WFP. To find out more about FSIN or join the Community of Practice, visit [www.fsincop.net](http://www.fsincop.net) or contact [fsin-secretariat@wfp.org](mailto:fsin-secretariat@wfp.org).

## Resilience Measurement, an emerging topic – Expert Consultation and Technical Working Group

In a food security context, resilience is defined as “the ability of a household to maintain a certain level of well-being (i.e. being food secure) by withstanding shocks and stresses”. This depends on available livelihood options and on how well households are able to handle risks.

Methods and tools are needed to measure resilience outcomes at household, community and national levels. Importantly for policy, programming and resource mobilization, the development of robust measures of resilience to food insecurity will also enable evaluation of the effectiveness of various initiatives specifically aimed at enhancing resilience to food security shocks. A number of different measurement approaches are being proposed by agencies working to address these measurement challenges. WFP VAM is working together with WFP resilience and prevention unit (OSZPR) on trend analysis work for numerous countries such as Niger, Yemen, South Sudan, Chad, Zimbabwe, Nepal and the Philippines.

An Expert Consultation meeting on **Resilience Measurement** for Food Security took place in February 2013 to take stock of the latest work on resilience measurement, identify key issues and agree on next steps for improving these approaches (a summary report of the meeting is available on request). In particular, the participants recommended that the FSIN take on a major role by facilitating the establishment of Technical Working Group on resilience measurement, which will develop technical guidelines on this topic. To date, the **Resilience Measurement Technical Working Group (TWG)** chaired by Mark Constanas, (Cornell University) and consisting of renowned experts in the field has been established and has begun working on these priorities. We will keep you updated on the activities and outputs of the TWG. To find out more on the activities of the TWG, please contact the FSIN secretariat at [fsin-secretariat@wfp.org](mailto:fsin-secretariat@wfp.org).



## \*\*NEW\*\* Special Focus

**The Special Focus series** provide latest information on countries, regions or key initiatives that are of high importance and/or concern from a food security and humanitarian perspective.

Find out the latest issues...



## mVAM – Piloting mobile voice technology for household food security data collection

With funding from the [Humanitarian Innovation Fund](http://www.humanitarianinnovation.org/), a new pilot project titled ‘**mVAM**’ has been launched. The mVAM project will monitor a panel of 300 households in both the **Democratic Republic of Congo** and **Somalia** through short mobile phone surveys once a month over a 12 month period. The surveys will be conducted over an interactive voice response (IVR) system or a live call. The objective of the pilot is to test the suitability of mobile voice technology for short food security surveys. The mVAM approach has the potential to increase timeliness and cost-effectiveness of data collection. The high frequency data collected could be used for enhanced monitoring and trend analysis. The use of voice technology also allows WFP to reach households that may not otherwise be easily reached for face to face interviews.

Plans for the coming months include a face-to-face baseline survey in both countries during which demographic profiling of the households will be done, consent for mobile phone surveys requested and a basic mobile phone distributed (if the households do not already have one). Phone surveys are scheduled to start towards the end of the year.

For more information on the project:

<http://www.humanitarianinnovation.org/projects/large-grants/mvam>

<http://www.wfp.org/stories/press-1-if-you-did-not-eat-yesterday-congo>

<https://www.devex.com/en/news/press-1-if-you-did-not-eat-yesterday>

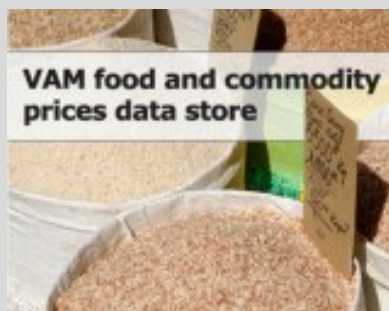
## Alert for Price Spikes (ALPS) - A new tool to track food price spikes at local level

In April, WFP launched the **food price indicator “Alert for Price Spikes” (ALPS)**. ALPS allows users to be aware of the latest abnormal changes in food prices. Food price crises are correlated with food security crises. Early detection of rising prices supports decision making and early action. Alerts are calculated using the latest available price data from the [WFP Food Price Database](http://www.wfp.org/food-price-database/) for selected markets and commodities. The tool measures how far the observed prices depart from the seasonal price trends. A price alert (at either “stress”, “alert” or “crisis” level) is generated when the observed price is above the seasonal price trend. To access the ALPS at-a-glance, click [here](http://www.wfp.org/alert-for-price-spikes/). From this page you will be able to access the individual price alerts by clicking on the commodity or market name.





## WFP VAM Tools



### WFP food price database

covers about 70 countries, more than 1000 markets and 200 commodities. Besides its use for internal WFP operational needs, it also serves as a source of information to aid professionals, scholars, students and anyone interested in food security, and specifically in staple food price dynamics.

## Emergency Assessments\*

**Djibouti:** The annual rural EFSA was carried out in the five regions of the Country. Despite a slight improvement in the food consumption pattern, the level of food insecurity in the country remains very high, with serious prevalence of both global acute and chronic malnutrition among under 5 children. The report will be available soon.

**Central African Republic:** On June 12<sup>th</sup>, the results of the Rapid Food Security Assessment conducted late May 2013 were presented to the humanitarian community and local government. The assessment highlighted the high impact of the crisis on food security with a risk of a nutritional crisis. Guaranteeing access to seeds to allow for planting will be a key issue in the recovery, together with humanitarian support at least until next harvest. The report will be available online in the coming weeks.

**Uganda:** A food security and nutrition study was carried out in Karamoja in May 2013 covering the extremely vulnerable households. The study will assist the country office in the decision on the size of its food basket.

**Malawi:** In May and June 2013, the Malawi Vulnerability Assessment Committee (MVAC) conducted the annual Food Security Assessment in 15 districts of the country: Karonga, Rumphi, Mzimba, Kasungu, Ntchisi, Mchinji, Salima, Dedza, Dowa, Mangochi, Machinga, Balaka, Zomba, Chikwawa and Nsanje. These districts are likely to be considered food insecure throughout 2013/14 food consumption season. Most households in these districts are expected to run out of their stocks by August/September 2013. The draft report should be available by the end of July.

**Central America:** Around 30% of coffee plantations in this region have been affected by a pest (coffee rust) which could have a very high impact both on income for producers and for daily laborers. Assessments were carried out in **El Salvador** and **Guatemala** (report not finalized yet), showing that support to this particular livelihood groups will be required in order to mitigate the effects of the income losses. The **El Salvador** report (in Spanish) is available [online](#).

**Laos:** An EFSA has just been finalized in Luangprabang in the Northwest of the country. In March 2013, the Government of Lao PDR reported concern that approximately 35,000 people (5384 households) in 119 villages across 9 districts of Luangprabang province had lost their crops due to a number of shocks including drought (delayed and infrequent rain fall), rodent and pest infestation during the 2012 growing season. According to the provincial government, these vulnerable people were in need of food assistance for the remaining months of the year, until the next harvest in November 2013. In response to the request from the national government, the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) sent an assessment team composed of members of four clusters (Food Security, Health, Nutrition and WASH) to conduct a joint assessment in the affected villages and to determine the impact of shocks on the reported communities. The EFSA found that 12,5% of the affected population are severely food insecure and require immediate food assistance for a minimum of 3 months to bridge the gap of the lean season.

*\*Emergency Food Security Assessments (EFSA) are undertaken following a disaster or a shock. It covers affected geographic areas to determine the impact on households and their livelihoods and to provide response recommendations on food and non-food assistance options. It serves as the basis for the design of relief and recovery operations as it identifies the number of people in need and the appropriate type and duration of assistance.*



## Recently posted on [wfp.org](http://wfp.org)

[Sri Lanka - Food Security in the Northern and Eastern Provinces, 2012](#)

[Tajikistan - Integrated Food Security Phase Classification \(IPC\), June 2013](#)

[Nepal - Crop Situation Update: A Joint Assessment of the 2013 Winter Crops including Comprehensive Data on the 2012/13 Overall Crop Production, July 2013](#)

[Syrian Arab Republic - FAO/WFP Crop and Food Security Assessment Mission, July 2013](#)

[Ethiopia - Monthly Market Watch, June 2013](#)

[Centrafricaine - Evaluation rapide de la sécurité alimentaire, Juin 2013](#)

[Mauritania - UNHCR/WFP Joint Assessment Mission: Staying a Little Longer - Malian Refugees in Mauritania, May 2013](#)

[Kenya - Food Security and Outcome Monitoring, 2013](#)

[West Africa and the Sahel - Food Security and Humanitarian Implications, June 2013 \[French\]](#)

[Cambodia - Food Price and Wage Bulletin: No. 52, June 2013](#)

## Baseline Studies\*

Baseline studies in **Senegal**, **Benin** and **Madagascar** are in progress with initial findings expected by September. A CFSVA in **Liberia** has also recently been completed and a final report will be available in the coming weeks.

**Ghana:** In collaboration with the Ghana Statistical Service, Ministry of Food and Agriculture, and other partners, WFP conducted the [second Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis \(CFSVA\)](#), following the first nationwide such survey conducted in 2009. This CFSVA focuses on the more food insecure regions of the north, providing district level information. The depth and wealth of information provided enables stakeholders in the food security and nutrition sector in Ghana to tailor their interventions to address the unique needs of the most vulnerable people in each district.

**Ethiopia:** WFP is working closely with the Central Statistical Agency (CSA) to complete the CFSVA based on the 2010 Household Consumption and Expenditure (HCE) survey. The analysis will have five reporting levels based on the representativeness of the data. The analysis will have five reporting levels based on the representativeness of the data. These include: a) major urban centers, b) medium sized towns, c) rural areas, d) regions (urban+rural) and e) the nation as a whole.

**Uganda:** WFP worked closely with the Uganda Bureau of Statistics to produce a new CFSVA which has just been [published online](#). The CFSVA makes use of data from the Uganda National Panel Survey (UNPS) as part of the Living Standards Measurement Study - Integrated Surveys on Agriculture (LSMS-ISA), a household survey project implemented by a team at the Development Research Group at the World Bank. The panel survey will allow for future research and analysis on food insecurity in Uganda through a strong relationship with Uganda Bureau of Statistics.

**Cambodia:** The *Small-Area Estimation of Poverty and Malnutrition in Cambodia* report was published in April 2013. The report is a joint effort between the National Institute of Statistics of the Ministry of Planning of the Royal Government of Cambodia, the United Nations World Food Programme Cambodia, and Massey University, New Zealand. It contains commune-level estimates of poverty (incidence, gap and severity) and malnutrition (stunting and underweight) as well as corresponding GIS maps. The report includes detailed statistical analysis of the Cambodia Socio-Economic Survey 2009, the General Population Census 2008, the Cambodia Demographic and Health Survey 2010 and the Cambodia Anthropometric Survey 2008. The report is available [online](#).

**Cambodia:** WFP partnered with the Identification of Poor Households (IDPoor) Programme at the Ministry of Planning of the Royal Government of **Cambodia** to produce the *IDPoor Atlas*, a tool for service providers to plan and target programmes for poverty reduction and social protection. The IDPoor Atlas presents demographic, socioeconomic and vulnerability data collected in 2010 and 2011 from roughly 570,000 rural households in 10,700 villages in 20 of 24 provinces in Cambodia. Maps, graphs and tables are used to enhance visualisation, comparison and interpretation of IDPoor data at the national, provincial and district levels.

**Sri Lanka:** A CFSVA was conducted together with GoSL covering the Northern and Eastern provinces of **Sri Lanka**. Data collection took place in March-April 2012. **Key findings:** general food security has improved in the Northern and Eastern Provinces between 2011 and 2012 from an estimated 65 to 40 percent of the households being food insecure. The improvement in food security is attributed to: the reduction in poverty levels measured through expenditure as a proxy for income; the increased number of days' consumption of protein rich foods; a change in the livelihood strategies; and a general increased agricultural production in 2012. Despite this improvement, an **estimated 1.1 million people** require food assistance under different modalities. According to the findings of the assessment, it is recommended to continue the food assistance for vulnerable households until they achieve sustainable livelihoods. Further the pregnant and lactating mothers should receive nutritious food. The report is available [online](#).



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**Nepal:** The [Nepal Thematic Report on Food Security and Nutrition 2013](#) updates the status of food security and nutrition in **Nepal** and analyzes key food security trends over the past 15 years. This report is based primarily on the findings of the Nepal Living Standards Survey (NLSS) 2010/11 and represents a comprehensive and reliable source of information on the status of national and regional food security and the nutritional status of the population.

*\* 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 (normal times). It is used as a benchmark against which to measure change after crisis, and also inform contingency planning and preparedness.*

## Market Analysis

### Field Market Assessments

**Kenya:** In May 2013, WFP published a comprehensive market study on the **Market Dynamics and Financial Services in Kenya's Arid Lands**. The objective of this survey is to better understand how markets function in the Arid Lands and what capacity they may have to respond to increased demand. It explores the feasibility of alternative transfer delivery mechanisms in the Arid Lands based on cash or vouchers. This will inform decision makers when programming food assistance and livelihood interventions including how these options impact on gender dynamics. The analysis focuses on the market systems with different supply side actors and their behaviour, the enabling environment and how markets perform with regards to food supplies, e.g. how are markets integrated and whether prices exhibit seasonal and volatile patterns. The report is available [online](#).

**Sierra Leone:** In March 2013, WFP carried out a rapid market assessment in Sierra Leone. This assessment was initiated by the Sierra Leone Country Office as a precedent to expand their cash and voucher activities in the year 2013. The assessment covered the areas of Freetown, Kambia, Port Loko and Moyamba. The objective was to gauge the market functioning and the feasibility of a market-based programme intervention such as cash or voucher transfers in the realm of food assistance. The mission found out that while, generally, conditions were favourable to deploy a cash and voucher programme, some challenges and risks remain. The report is currently submitted for review to partners and counterparts in Sierra Leone and will be finalized soon.

**Sudan:** A market assessment was undertaken in Nyala, South Darfur to study the market functioning and provide baseline information on market dynamics and the results were released in March 2013. It evaluates the feasibility to locally deliver food assistance by introducing non-food transfer modalities in Internally Displaced persons (IDP) camps close to the city, where WFP has already been implementing in-kind food distributions. Additionally, it provides insights to ascertain the most efficient and effective transfer modality options. The report is available [online](#).

### Market Analysis Tools

**Food Price Indicator:** WFP VAM together with OMEP (WFP Emergency Preparedness and Response branch) developed a new food price indicator (FPI) based on monthly food prices that are stored in the [WFP food price database](#). It is a ready-to-use quantitative indicator that measures seasonal price trends of main staples in 64 countries. It gives a score from 0 to 10 depending on how high prices usually are during a given month compared to the average and thereby reflects periodic vulnerability. It is already used by in-house decision-makers, e.g. as an input for resource allocation decisions.





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## Interagency Work

### Joint Assessment Missions (JAM)\*

**Burkina:** The UNHCR/WFP Joint Assessment Mission was finalized early June and the results presented to UNHCR/WFP management. The assessment focused on food security situation of Malian refugees in Bobo-Dioulasso, Sag-nioniogo, Mentao and Goudebou sites.

**Malian refugees in Mauritania:** The May 2013 UNHCR/WFP Joint Assessment Mission evaluated food and nutrition security conditions in the camp host communities one year after the outbreak of the crisis in Mali. The JAM exercise was intended to allow UNHCR and WFP to improve assistance programs and develop a joint plan of action for 2013 –2014.

**Key findings:** Although assistance programs in Mbera have improved, the nutrition situation remains serious and vulnerability to food insecurity is heterogeneous in Mbera camp. The food security status of the local population is better than expected, but the presence of the refugee community has led to widespread environmental impacts. The mission estimates that humanitarian assistance will have to continue, increasingly supporting self-reliance and livelihoods, expanding blanket feeding and introducing school feeding. A beneficiary identification exercise, domestic energy programs and exploring the feasibility of cash and voucher transfers are recommended by the mission. The report - that was produced in just a few weeks - is available [online](#).

**South Sudan:** A JAM was completed in May 2013 and the report is currently being prepared. Preliminary results indicate the need for supplementary feeding and also recommended advocating for refugees to have access to agricultural land.

**Syria Crisis:** Joint Assessment Missions (JAM) in collaboration with UNHCR are taking place in Jordan, Iraq and Lebanon to assess the food security and nutrition situation of refugees from Syria.

The “*pratical guide to planning and implementation of Joint Assessment Missions*” will be disseminated shortly. It includes the process for JAMs (timelines, steps, roles and responsibilities) as well as technical guidance sheets on JAMs in urban areas, protection issues in JAMs, transfer modalities, market analysis in JAMs and rapid JAMs for new refugee influx.

*Joint Assessment Missions are conducted in collaboration with UNHCR to understand the situation, needs , risks, capacities and vulnerabilities of refugees or internally displaced people regarding food and nutritional needs.*

### Crop and Food Security Assessment Missions (CFSAM)

**Syria:** The 2012-13 Crop and Food Security Assessment Mission for Syria took place from May 18 to June 8, 2013. The Mission analysed the impacts of the on-going conflict on agricultural and livestock production performance, market conditions and household food security. The mission assessed the drivers of households food insecurity; estimated the cereal balance sheet, food assistance requirement, and; recommended immediate actions required to address issues related to food and livestock production and households food access problems. The report is available [online](#).

*CFSAMs are is undertaken jointly by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and WFP at the request of national governments. They assess agricultural production and overall food availability as well as the extent to which the population can meet their basic food needs.*



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## Food Security Monitoring

The WFP Food Security Monitoring unit is working with the WFP Monitoring and Evaluation team (M&E) on expanding **Food Security Outcome Monitoring** at WFP. WFP VAM would bring its expertise in information systems, survey implementation and data management to support M&E activities. The Community and Household Surveillance (CHS) approach in **Southern Africa** – which tracked food security outcome indicators for beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries – could be adapted and used in other regions. A joint VAM-M&E mission took place in **Ethiopia** in April 2013 and made recommendations to implement a CHS-type approach in the country; this type of support would be available to other country offices. VAM and M&E would, in the future, establish joint guidance on Food Security Outcome Monitoring.

**Democratic Republic of Congo:** From June to August, WFP DRC will be conducting another round of household data collection by SMS, using the services of [GeoPoll](#), an open mobile polling platform. The information will be used for monitoring. This follows a successful pilot test conducted in January 2013. A representative from GeoPoll visited WFP VAM in May. The company will be offering SMS surveys in several African countries in 2014.