

THE ASSESSOR



Welcome to Issue 42 of THE ASSESSOR, WFP's Food Security Analysis e-Newsletter!

- Mobile Data Collection in Yemen
- First Two-Way Communication System in Democratic Republic of Congo
- Data4Food Hackathon
- Global Food Security Update: a new web product has been released
- The Seasonal Monitor: implications of the El Niño event
- Food Security Information Network
- Emergency Food Security Assessments
- Baseline Studies
- Market Analysis
- Inter-Agency Work
- Capacity Development and Guidance
- Focus on West Africa





Yemen Bulletin



Iraq Bulletin

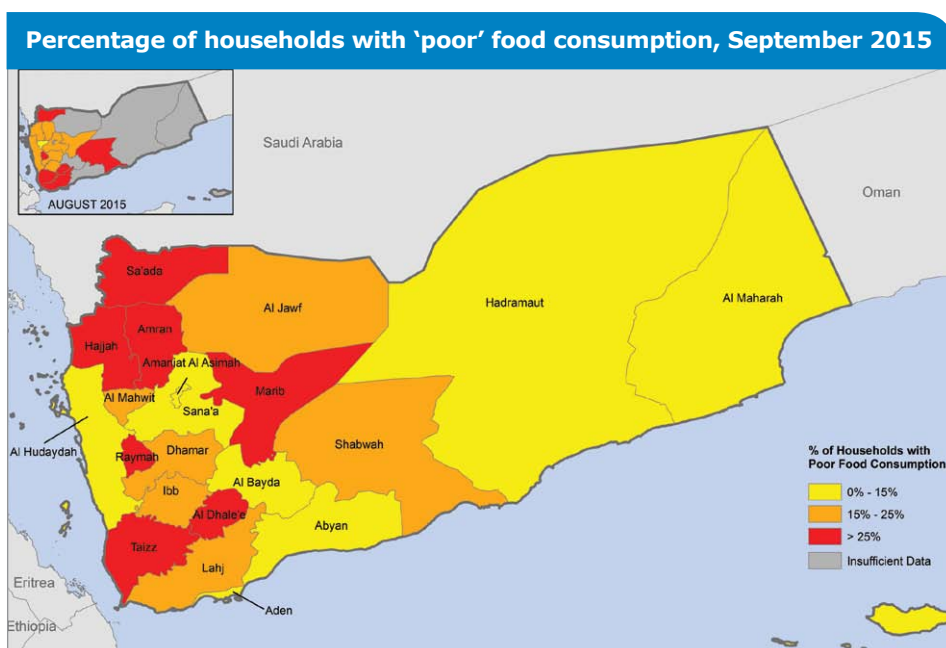


Learn about how Food Price Data is collected



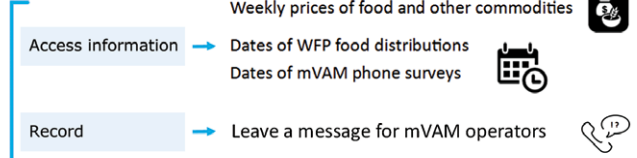
Mobile Data Collection in Yemen

High levels of insecurity in Yemen currently prevent the implementation of traditional face-to-face surveys. In order to monitor the impact of the conflict on food security, WFP has been using mobile VAM (mVAM), its remote phone-based data collection tool since July 2015. The live call interviews are conducted by a call centre outside Yemen using the Random Digit Dialing (RDD) method with 2400 respondents from 21 governorates on a monthly basis. The information used to calculate the Food Consumption Score (FCS) and reduced Coping Strategies Index (rCSI) is collected by phone. Additionally, through an open-ended question, respondents are given the opportunity to report on the food security situation in their communities. The map below shows the percentage of households with poor food consumption by governorate.



First Two-Way Communication System in Democratic Republic of Congo

A Two-Way Communication System (2WCS) has been developed by Cisco Systems to allow beneficiaries to access critical information and record their feedback.



The 2WCS is up and running in Mugunga 3 camp in DR Congo. Beneficiaries can call the interactive voice server and listen to pre-recorded tailored information in Swahili regarding, for example, food prices, WFP distribution dates and the security situation in their villages and leave voice messages for operators.

The calls are free which is essential to ensure participation as most people in the camp cannot afford the price of a phone call. Plans are underway to use interactive voice response for helpline calls in Somalia.

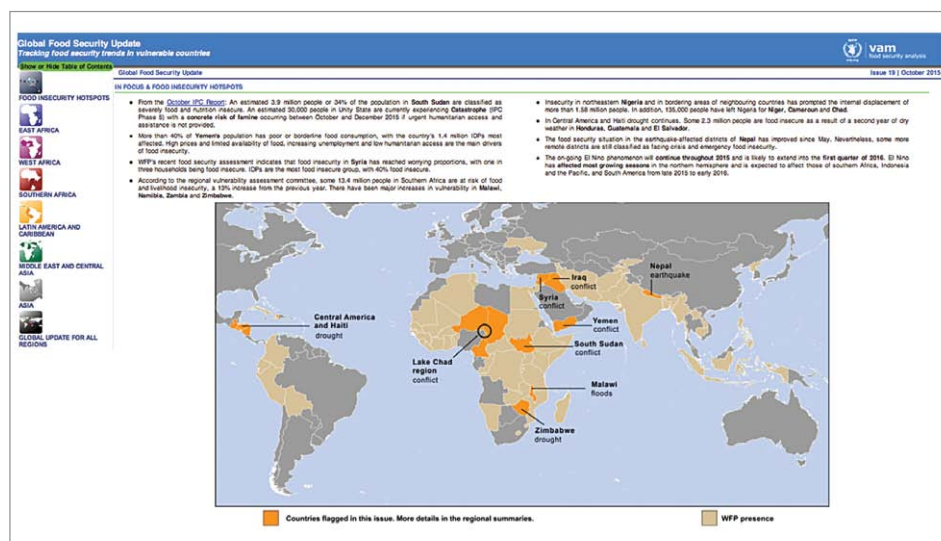
Data4Food Hackathon

mVAM continues to collect data by mobile in some of the world's most food insecure communities. The [Leiden University's Center for Innovation](#) invited mVAM to submit challenges for the 2015 [Data4Food Hackathon](#). The event took place in The Hague from 11-13 September 2015 and included a mix of attendees ranging from college students to technology and policy experts.

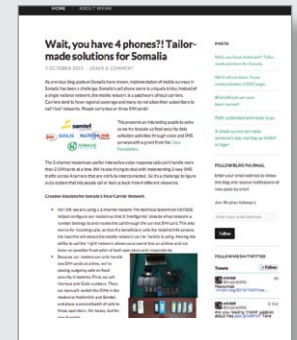
The winners of the Data4Food challenge created an app called '[What's the price?](#)' which helps Indonesian farmers access food price data in real time on their smartphones. This is potentially a great use of WFP food security data collected from high-frequency monitoring. The prototypes of the Data4Food Challenge were presented at the Milan World Expo.

Global Food Security Update: a new web product has been released

The Global Food Security Update provides a quarterly overview of key food security trends in vulnerable countries. A new online web product has been released for [October issue 19](#). The web product allows users to search for region specific information.



[Visit the mVAM Blog for further details](#)



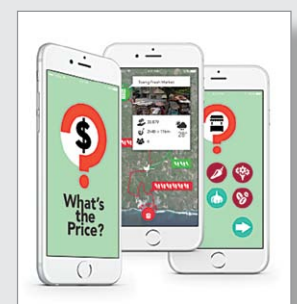
[Leiden University's Center for Innovation](#)



[Data4Food Challenge](#)



[What's the Price App](#)





The Seasonal Monitor: implications of the El Niño event

The Seasonal Monitor is now in its second year of operation. This has turned out to be a very busy year of activity due to the current El Niño event that developed from March 2015 and is expected to run until early 2016.

To assess the potential impact of the El Niño event in terms of 'where' and 'when', the team issued an [El Niño thematic seasonal monitor in July 2015](#), which was followed by an update in [September 2015](#).

In addition to the products highlighted above, which geographically provide a big picture perspective on multiple regions throughout the world; more detailed regional monitoring was captured through region-specific products. Drought related events and dry conditions featured prominently for those products covering [Central America](#), Ethiopia, Karamoja/Sudan and [South-East Asia](#).

El Niño Thematic Seasonal Monitor in July 2015



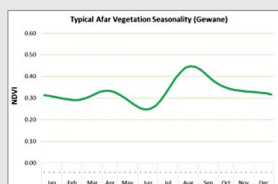
El Niño Thematic Seasonal Monitor in September 2015



Seasonal Monitor Central America



Typical Afar Vegetation Seasonality (Gewane)

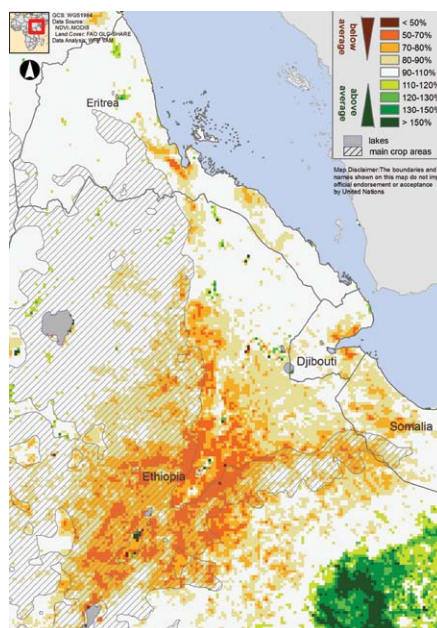


WFP Seasonal Monitor Regions

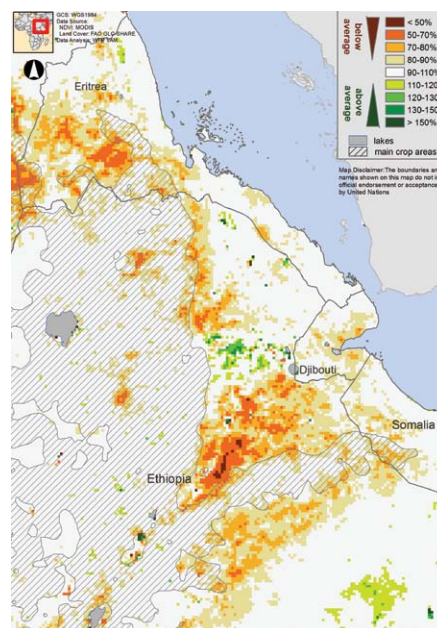


A double hit in Ethiopia's Afar region and beyond

Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti and Somalia NDVI (percent of average) 15 April-01 May 2015



Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti and Somalia NDVI (percent of average) 29 August-14 September 2015

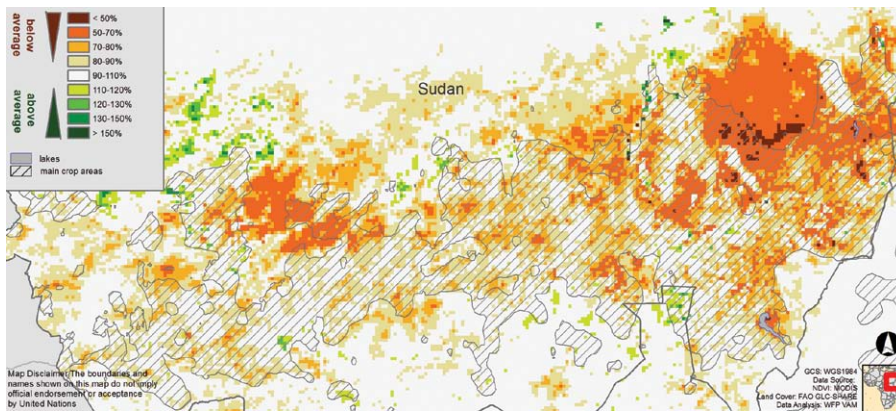


Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI) in late April 2015 (left) and early September 2015 (right) as a percentage of the 12 year average. Orange shades for below average conditions, green shades for above average levels. Data clearly shows the extent to which vegetation growth in both growing seasons has been affected by severe rainfall shortages.

Parts of Ethiopia with a dual (bimodal) season have faced serious problems for both seasons. Most severe impacts are noted in the Afar region, where a severe drought affected both the first and the second seasons, hitting pastoralists particularly hard.

Poor prospects for Sudan's agricultural and pastoral regions

Sudan NDVI (percent of average) 29 August-14 September 2015

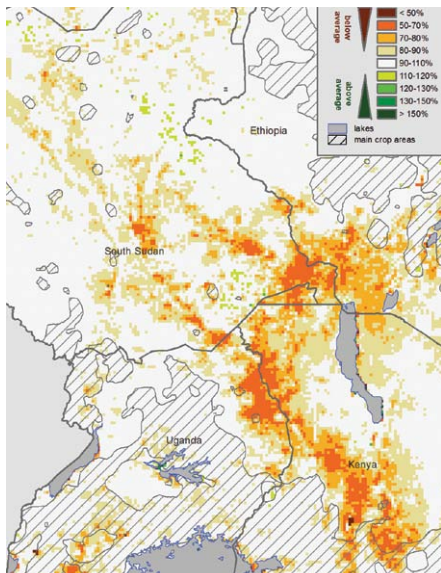


NDVI in early September 2015 as a percentage of the 12 year average. Orange shades for below average conditions, green shades for above average levels. Strong evidence of very poor ground conditions across the agricultural plains of Sudan.

Late arrival of the rains coupled with drier than average conditions across most of central and eastern Sudan resulted in very poor crop and pasture development as well as reduced area planted.

South Sudan, Karamoja and Turkana - dryness persists

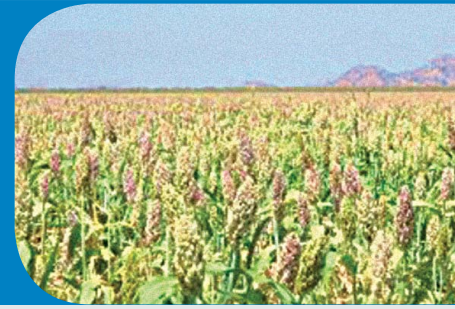
South Sudan, Uganda, Kenya, and Ethiopia NDVI (percent of average) 29 August-14 September 2015



NDVI in early September 2015 as a percentage of the 12 year average. Orange shades for below average conditions, green shades for above average levels.

Persistently drier than average conditions since July have affected crop and pasture development in SE South Sudan, Karamoja (Uganda) and Turkana (Kenya).

Southern Africa, the Horn of Africa and the Indonesian regions are now about to experience growing seasons under the influence of El Niño – the Seasonal Monitor will continue detailing the potential impacts as the seasons unfold.



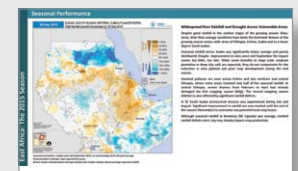
East Africa, the 2015 Season



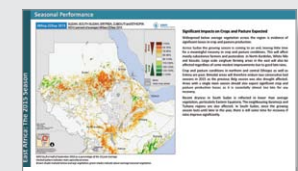
East Africa, the 2015 Season: Highlights



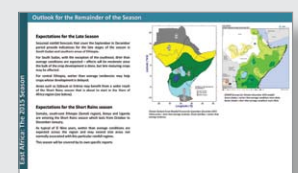
East Africa, the 2015 Season: Seasonal Performance



East Africa, the 2015 Season: Seasonal Performance

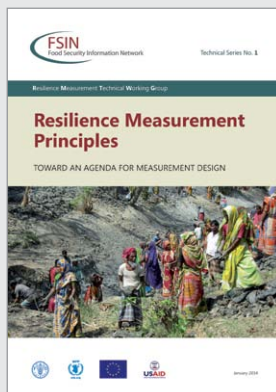


East Africa, the 2015 Season: Outlook for the Remainder of the Season





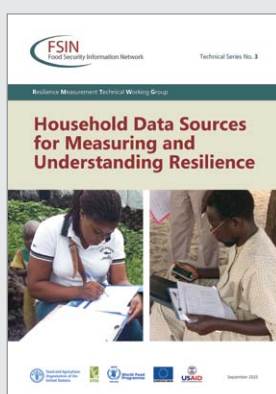
[Resilience Measurement Principles](#)



[A Common Analytical Model for Resilience Measurement](#)



[Household Data Sources for Measuring and Understanding Resilience](#)



Food Security Information Network

The Food Security Information Network (FSIN) continues to be at the forefront of key challenges in Food and Nutrition Security (FNS) and resilience measurement through its sponsorship of Technical Working Groups (TWGs). The following activities were undertaken:

Launch of Technical Briefings produced by the Resilience Measurement Technical Working Group

As part of the overall effort to advance resilience measurement, four technical briefings were produced for field practitioners. The papers elaborate on the concepts presented in [Technical Series No. 1](#) and [2](#) regarding the definition, principles and proposed analytical model for resilience measurement. The papers are accessible on the [FSIN website](#):

- **[Household Data Sources for Measuring and Understanding Resilience](#)**: explores the potential value of national and multi-national data sets that offer indicators, high-level aggregate findings and measurement approaches useful for resilience.
- **[Qualitative Data and Subjective Indicators for Resilience Measurement](#)**: examines the role of qualitative data in increasing understanding of resilience dynamics and highlights the importance of including subjective assessments.
- **[Measuring Shocks and Stressors as part of Resilience Measurement](#)**: considers the most comprehensive ways in which the occurrence and effect of shocks and stressors from multiple sources can be measured with the greatest degree of accuracy.
- **[Systems Analysis in the Context of Resilience](#)**: emphasizes the importance of collecting measurement data at various levels (e.g. individual, household, community) to focus attention on how dependencies that exist over multiple levels may affect resilience.

A fifth technical briefing is being drafted on estimation procedures for resilience measurement.

The TWG's work was used to design a second Resilience Context Analysis (RCA) in South Sudan, where a draft RCA report was presented at a validation workshop in September. The RCA conclusions are expected to be used to establish a 'resilience results framework' for the country.

Update on Measuring Food and Nutrition Security Technical Working Group

The Food and Nutrition Security Technical Working Group (FNS-TWG) has continued developing a detailed inventory of food and nutrition indicators and evaluating their value to FSIN stakeholders for guiding policies and programmes. The FNS-TWG presented initial elements of its assessment of indicators in mid August, at the meeting of the [International Association of Agricultural Economists](#) in Milan. The TWG's report will be produced by early November and will be presented at the November Addis technical consultation (see below). The FNS-TWG will also launch a survey directed at the FNS community of indicator users, assessing the reliability and availability of various indicators for different purposes and contexts. Readers of The Assessor may be contacted to take part in this survey.

Update on Harmonization of Global Food Price Datasets Working Group

In order to improve cost-efficiency and interoperability of the food price datasets held by FAO, FEWS NET and WFP, a draft proposal has been developed for a common commodity coding system, which will be shared with the TWG members in October.

The TWG conducted a survey to take stock of existing market price data collection methods and guidelines in different countries. A draft report which analyses the results of the survey and contains recommendations for the development of common guidelines for price data collection has been produced and is undergoing internal review.

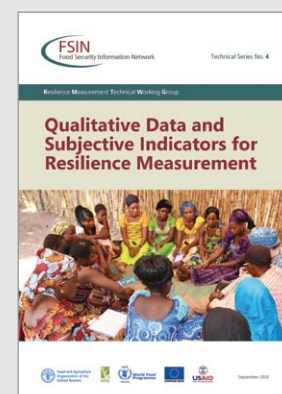
Technical Consultation on Food and Nutrition Security and Resilience Analysis coming up

FSIN has begun organising a [technical consultation](#) in collaboration with the African Union Commission (AUC) titled: "Food and Nutrition Security and Resilience Analysis: *Are we effectively using the right data?*" The consultation will take place in November 2015 in Addis Ababa and will build upon the findings and recommendations of the African Union-United Nations Economic Commission for Africa conference on "[Information for Meeting Africa's Agricultural Transformation and Food Security Goals \(IMAAFGS\)](#)" in October 2014. The overall objective is to improve food security, nutrition and resilience analysis in Africa by effectively using the right data as a basis for evidence-based decision making and monitoring. The expected outcome is to develop a framework to strengthen national food security and nutrition information systems and statistical capacities. The conference is a key means of sharing, and requesting feedback on, the work of the FSIN's TWGs with a broad group of national and regional practitioners.

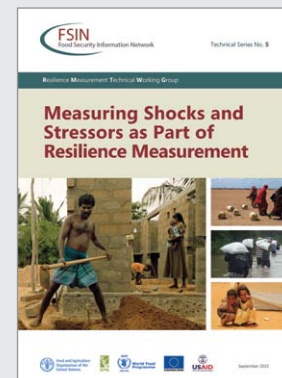
To find out more about FSIN, visit www.fsincop.net, follow us on Twitter [@FSIN_News](https://twitter.com/FSIN_News) or contact the FSIN secretariat at fsin-secretariat@wfp.org



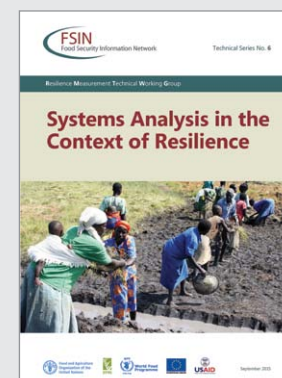
[Qualitative Data and Subjective Indicators for Resilience Measurement](#)



[Measuring Shocks and Stressors as part of Resilience Measurement](#)

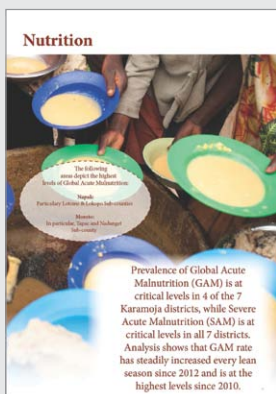
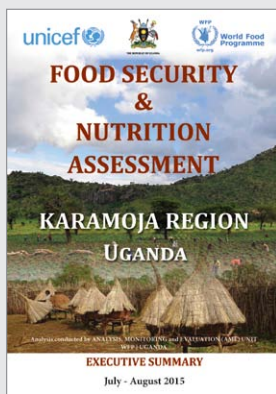


[Systems Analysis in the Context of Resilience](#)





[Food Security and Nutrition Assessment in Karamoja Region \(Uganda\) Report](#)



Emergency Food Security Assessments¹

Lebanon: A Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees (VASyR) was conducted in June 2015 to explore whether their situation has stabilized or continued to deteriorate as it had from 2013 - 2014. The survey was based on the 2014 VASyR questionnaire to ensure comparability and the 2015 food and cash targeting questionnaire to obtain the information needed to apply the targeting criteria.

Findings suggest Syrian refugees in Lebanon are resorting to increasingly corrosive coping mechanisms as they struggle to earn enough money to cover most basic human needs. It found that the average monthly household expenses by far exceeded monthly income. The gap is explained by households taking on burdensome debt. Some 89% of households now have debts averaging almost \$900. Families are less likely to consume nutritious food groups including vegetables, fruit, vitamin A rich food, dairy, eggs and iron rich food (fish and meat) than a year ago, increasing their risk of micronutrient deficiencies. Out of the 1.2 million households registered in Lebanon just over 129,600 are now considered food secure. The report will be published in mid November.

Uganda: A [food security and nutrition assessment report](#) on the Karamoja region in Uganda was published in August. Findings suggest nearly half of households are food insecure mainly due to a lean season decline in household level food stocks and food price rises. While the food security status has marginally improved since July 2014, Global Acute Malnutrition levels have deteriorated to the highest levels since 2010.

Democratic Republic of Congo: An EFSA was conducted in Province Orientale in September 2015 to follow up on the food security situation of the conflict-affected population and internally displaced persons in particular. The report will be released mid November. An assessment of internally displaced persons in the Kivu region is ongoing. It is based on the same Food Security Cluster methodology used in the previous Feb/March 2014 survey and will be a multi-sectoral approach between the government, international organisations and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs).

Upcoming EFSA's

- Central African Republic
- Chad
- Ivory Coast
- Senegal

1. Emergency Food Security Assessments (EFSA's) are undertaken following a disaster or a shock. They study the affected geographic areas to determine the impact on households and their livelihoods and to provide recommendations on food and non-food assistance options. They are used to design relief and recovery operations as they identify the number of people in need and the appropriate type and duration of assistance.

Baseline Studies²

Ongoing CFSVA activities are taking place in **Rwanda, Mali, Kenya, Mozambique and Ethiopia**. For details on the activities please see [The Assessor issue 41](#).

Update on Rwanda: The CFSVA report has been shared with the National Institute of Statistics and the Ministry of Agriculture for their comments. A final, edited version will be available by early November.

Update on Mali: The [Mali Enquête Nationale sur la Sécurité Alimentaire et Nutritionnelle](#) report was approved for publication in July 2015. It is based on a national survey of over 8,500 households, and middle upper arm circumference measurement of over 15,500 children aged 6-59 months. The report found that food insecurity affects a quarter of the Malian population. This is primarily due to an early pastoral dry season, and insecurity in Gao, Timbuktu and Kidal. In the north, insecurity has curtailed market supply and household food access, and pushed up prices. In addition, the nutrition situation has deteriorated in comparison with the last SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, time bound) survey (2014), particularly in Mopti where Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) rates for children aged 6-59 months reached 8%.

Update on Kenya: The CFSVA report is expected in early 2016.

Update on Mozambique: A food security trend analysis (data from 2006, 2009 and 2013) is undergoing final editing. The report is expected by the end of 2015.

Ethiopia: Data collection is ongoing for the Household Expenditure and Consumption Survey and the Welfare Monitoring Survey. The survey spans more than one season, and field work is scheduled to end in July 2016.

Sierra Leone: A first CFSVA was conducted in 2010 indicating that nationally almost half of households were classified as food insecure during the lean season. As the CFSVA findings are valid for three to five years, a second CFSVA is currently being undertaken. It will provide information on the agricultural context, food situation, markets, livelihoods, coping strategies, education, health and expenditure patterns of households. Data collection is ongoing and was completed by 20 October. A report will be published by the end of Q4.

Syria: A report was drafted on the causes of food insecurity in Syria and the major issues that expose conflict-affected Syrians to further risk. It is the first country-wide food security survey that has ever been done in Syria and will provide the first baseline from which food security impacts can be monitored. Key findings give cause for serious concern. One in three Syrians is food insecure. The report will be published mid November.

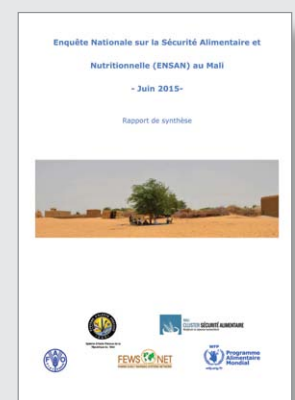
2. The Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis (CFSVA) is also referred to as pre-crisis baseline study. It gives an in-depth picture of the food security situation during a non-crisis period (normal times). It is used as a benchmark against which to measure change after crisis. It also informs contingency planning and preparedness.



[Baseline Studies, The Assessor issue 41](#)



[The Mali Enquête Nationale sur la Sécurité Alimentaire et Nutritionnelle Report](#)





Adapting to an Urban World Report



Adapting Food Security Assessments for Urban Environments

A four page [project document](#) was produced in September on the Adapting to an Urban World project. The document presents the overall project, outlines the work accomplished to date, the challenges, lessons learned and upcoming activities.

- **Madagascar:** The Madagascar urban assessment (in Antananarivo, Tulear and Tamatave) has concluded data collection and is finalizing analysis. A report is expected by the end of the year.
- **Somalia:** The Somalia Food Security Cluster is leading the development of an urban assessment in Mogadishu, which has a rapidly growing urban population, including a large number of internally displaced persons. A consultant will lead the process from mid-October, with data collection expected to start in mid-November. The exercise is intended to improve urban food security analysis within Somalia, and increase coordination between NGOs and UN agencies operational in Mogadishu. The results will also contribute to global learning on urban food security and vulnerability assessments, feeding into the Adapting to an Urban World project. An assessment report is expected in early 2016.
- **Haiti:** Working with the Coordination Nationale de la Sécurité Alimentaire, the Adapting to an Urban World project team is planning an assessment in Port au Prince. This exercise will identify indicators to be used in an urban food security monitoring system, managed by the CNSA, and will also contribute to overall project learning. Data collection is expected to start in November, with a report published in early 2016.

Market Analysis

VAM Devises a New Scoring Method to Rank Vulnerable Countries

Since the world food price crises in 2007/08 WFP has faced an ongoing internal challenge to rank vulnerable countries. As a result, VAM has been developing a Global Food and Nutrition Insecurity Score (GFNIS) building on previous, less complex attempts. The latest version of the index embeds the most important statistical features required for a solid composite index based on the four pillars of food security (availability, access, utilization and stability). The two main objectives of the GFNIS are: 1) to create an analytical index to cluster countries with relatively similar food and nutrition security profiles; 2) to identify priority countries for food assistance and WFP resource allocation. A report with a methodological description will be finalised by the end of 2015.

Advisory Mission to Malawi on Cash Based Transfers

A mission was conducted in mid September to support the Malawi country office with the upcoming lean season response. The objectives of the mission were twofold: on one hand to support the country office in designing an evidence-based Cash Based Transfer (CBT) response and on the other hand to support the policy dialogue and advocacy with governments, donors and NGOs. The first food production deficit in a decade has led to high food prices, and localised food shortages are to be expected during the lean season. Given this situation, the mission recommended the implementation of electronic vouchers, which can be designed to shield beneficiaries against inflation. The vouchers also protect WFP against food cost increases and provide higher supply side certainty.

Lebanon Market Assessment

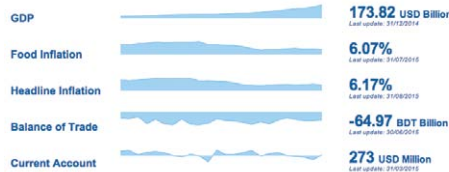
The Lebanon market assessment report will be released early November. The report examines the impact that three years of WFP market-based food assistance for Syrian refugees has had on traders, and it explores the pros and cons of alternative transfer modality options. For details on the objectives of the report, please see [The Assessor issue 40](#). Increasingly VAM market analysis includes the mapping of 'food deserts', i.e. specific regions/geographies where food access via the market is inadequate. The aim of the report is to understand the link between areas/shops where Syrian refugees can redeem WFP e-cards and the food security status of those refugees. It also provides suggestions of where and how to improve WFP interventions in Lebanon.

Launch of Key Economic Indicators for all countries in the VAM shop

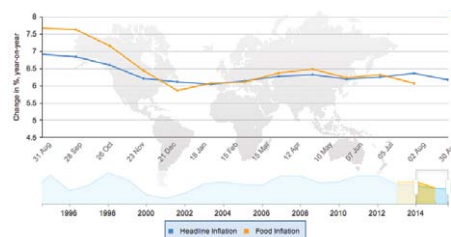
VAM has introduced a new feature in the [VAM Shop](#) which provides the latest data for all countries for six key economic indicators. All indicators are presented in user friendly graphs with zoom functionality and images. Data can be downloaded for further analysis.

Economic Indicators for Bangladesh

Economic Indicators



Economic Indicators - Inflation for Bangladesh



[The Market Monitor issue 29](#) was released in October 2015 and is available online. The bulletin examines trends in staple food and fuel prices, the cost of the basic food basket and consumer price indices for 70 countries in the third quarter of 2015 (July to September).

Inter-Agency Work

Joint Assessment Missions³

In August, WFP and UNHCR led a Joint Assessment Mission (JAM) in southeast Mauritania's Mbérria camp, which is populated mostly by refugees from Northern Mali. This assessment updates the 2013 JAM, and aims to understand the current food security and nutrition situation of refugees, in addition to their self-reliance capacity and options. Outputs from the process will include a strategy and joint plan of action specific to the Mbérria camp. The fieldwork took place from August 21st-25th, and a final report is imminent.

- JAMs are conducted in collaboration with UNHCR to understand the food and nutrition situation, needs, risks, capacities and vulnerabilities of refugees or internally displaced people.



Lebanon Market Assessment Report, The Assessor issue 40



VAM Shop - Economic Indicators for Bangladesh



The Market Monitor issue 29





Multi-Sector Initial Rapid Assessment



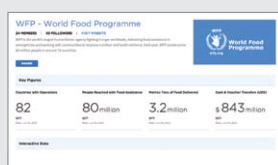
OCHA's Humanitarian Data Exchange (HDX)



VAM Shop



WFP HDX



Upcoming JAMs

- Cameroon
- Ivory Coast
- Niger
- Algeria

Upcoming CFSAMs⁴

- Cameroon
- Central African Republic
- Senegal

Integrated Food Security Phase Classification

Pilots have been continuing for the Integrated Phase Classification (IPC) for nutrition with WFP involved in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Somalia in August. WFP is a member of the nutrition working group which will finalize the nutrition classification based on results of the pilots.

In July 2015, VAM's dedicated IPC Quality and Compliance Officer with the IPC Global Support Unit began implementing [IPC Quality Reviews](#) in Bangladesh, Djibouti and Uganda, to assess the technical quality of analyses in these countries and, where necessary, the process and the IPC governance structures. The objective is to support the countries in improving their future analyses and in producing higher quality products.

Inter-Agency Standing Committee Multi-Sector Initial Rapid Assessment guidance

A revised guidance of the [Multi-Sector Initial Rapid Assessment](#) was posted in August to incorporate lessons learned from version 1. WFP was a member of the ad-hoc needs assessment working group which produced this revised guidance. It is a joint needs assessment tool that can be used in sudden onset emergencies and provides a process for collecting and analysing information on humanitarian needs to inform strategic response planning.

World Humanitarian Summit-Geneva Global Consultation: open data and humanitarian response

WFP teamed up with [OCHA's Humanitarian Data Exchange \(HDX\)](#) at the peak of the Ebola emergency in order to help share its data with the wider humanitarian community. A session was held on the HDX platform to explore the impact of open data in humanitarian response. Participants were given the possibility to showcase their open data achievements and future plans. WFP presented the mVAM initiative and its food price data. It also highlighted the advantages of collaborating with HDX. This included a surge in traffic on both the [VAM Shop](#) and [WFP HDX](#) website indicating that having an open access policy is a valuable way of sharing information. It was also noted that partnership organisations published reports using data that had been shared in this way, further emphasizing the importance of the open data partnership with HDX.

4. Crop and Food Security Assessment Missions (CFSAMs) are conducted with FAO in response to a government request. They are usually used for emergencies related to agricultural production or for overall food availability problems.

Capacity Development and Guidance

Corporate Multifunctional Cash Based Transfer Training

The overarching objective of the corporate multifunctional training on CBTs is to support WFP country offices in taking decisions on the appropriateness and feasibility of different CBTs and to familiarise country offices with monitoring and evaluation issues specific to CBT programmes. VAM prepared the training material for its module of the e-learning course and facilitated the trainings in Myanmar and Algeria. Topics covered during the VAM training sessions include: 1) an understanding of the objective and key components of market assessments; 2) an understanding of how market assessment reports can assist programme decisions; 3) an overview of key price indicators for price trends, price seasonality and market integration; and 4) an overview of traders' questionnaire sections and general issues about sampling markets and traders.

EFSA Trainings in Nigeria

In September 2015, two EFSA trainings were held in Abuja (Nigeria). The trainings are part of a larger emergency preparedness agreement aimed at strengthening capacities of the [National Emergency Management Agency \(NEMA\)](#). A total of 41 people were trained, with the majority working for NEMA. A few participants from partner organisations including FAO, FEWSNET and Red Cross also attended the trainings.

Food Consumption Score Nutritional Quality Analysis (FCS-N)

A revised Food Consumption Score (FCS) data collection module was circulated and the [Food Consumption Score Nutritional Quality Analysis \(FCS-N\)](#) guidance was disseminated in August. The FCS-N is an analytical tool developed by the VAM assessments team which uses data derived from the FCS module to provide information on three specific nutrients: hem iron, vitamin A and protein. The FCS-N helps to understand household level nutrient adequacy and attempts to improve the link between household food access/consumption and nutritional outcomes. Outputs from this innovative analysis can help select the appropriate food transfer modalities (food, cash or vouchers) and feed into decisions on nutrition-sensitive programming.

Drought Monitoring for Action: a remote sensing 'Mapathon'

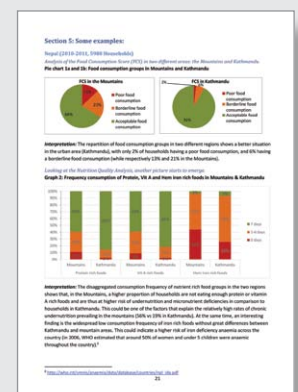
VAM held a training on a 'Mapathon' event which aimed to fill gaps in drought analysis and monitoring through a two day session held in Jakarta on 28-29 September. Participants with strong GIS skills were invited to improve their understanding of relevant remote sensing datasets for drought monitoring and to learn how to create their own maps that utilize satellite data. In total, 14 government staff and 9 UN and NGO staff participated in the workshop. Participants were mostly data analysts or GIS practitioners.



[National Emergency Management Agency \(NEMA\)](#)



[Food Consumption Score Nutritional Quality Analysis \(FCS-N\)](#)

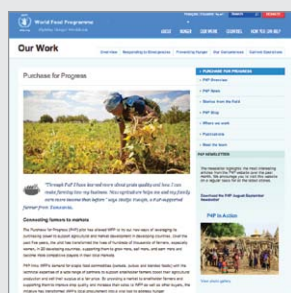




WFP Gender Policy Report



Purchase for Progress (P4P)



Niger Bulletin



Focus on West Africa

VAM Launches a New Initiative: Empowering West African women through market-based food assistance

VAM recently launched an initiative to investigate the linkages between gender and markets in West Africa, exploring how gender analysis in market assessments can improve WFP market-based food assistance. This follows the 2015 [WFP gender policy](#) call for food assistance to move beyond addressing cyclical symptoms of food insecurity and malnutrition to generate sustainable impact. In addition, the initiative responds to the increase in recent years of market-based approaches to fight food and nutrition insecurity.

In 2014, WFP implemented [CBT](#) activities in 12 West African countries reaching 2.6 million people. Approximately 70,000 farmers – including 27,500 women – have sold 46,350 mt of cereals through the [Purchase for Progress \(P4P\)](#) programme in Burkina Faso, Ghana, Liberia, Mali and Sierra Leone. P4P promotes full integration and capacity development of women farmers, yet in many of these activities, women's roles are often underestimated and their full economic potential is not well understood. The initiative is thus essential for VAM to strengthen links between gender analysis and market assessment, and to support the WFP West Africa regional gender strategy.

The initiative is being conducted in collaboration with academic institutions and implementing partners in West Africa and overseas, and will support WFP and partners in designing and delivering market-based interventions with explicit gender equality goals. In particular, regional and national partners will play an important role and be invited to provide technical inputs and help identify policies and a way forward for improving integration of gender analysis in market analysis. In May 2016, a regional consultation will be held with partners to review study findings and determine ways forward.

The initiative also includes the development of the [Women's Empowerment in Markets Index \(WEMI\)](#), a supplement to the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI). VAM intends to use this opportunity to test the utility of [mVAM](#) remote data collection technologies in collecting and analysing gender-sensitive market data in West Africa. This initiative will further contribute to an overall investigation into the possibilities and limitations of applying such technologies in the context of gender analysis and food security.

mVAM in West Africa

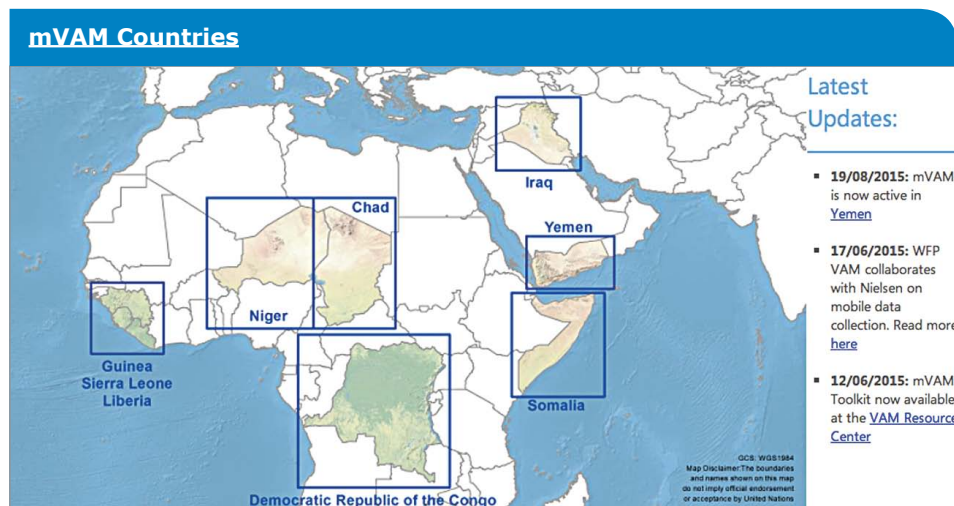
In the West & Central African region, mVAM is up and running in five countries: Chad, Guinea, Liberia, Niger and Sierra Leone. VAM has conducted over 30,000 questionnaires on food security and price information to monitor conditions in the Ebola affected countries.

In addition to regular monitoring in the Ebola affected countries through SMS, mVAM has used additional modes of data collection, namely Interactive Voice Response (IVR) and call centres (currently in Guinea) to determine the relative advantages and disadvantages of each mode for remote monitoring. The three most common modes of data collection in mVAM (SMS, IVR and call centres) are currently being analysed with face-to-face interviews to inform future mVAM deployments.

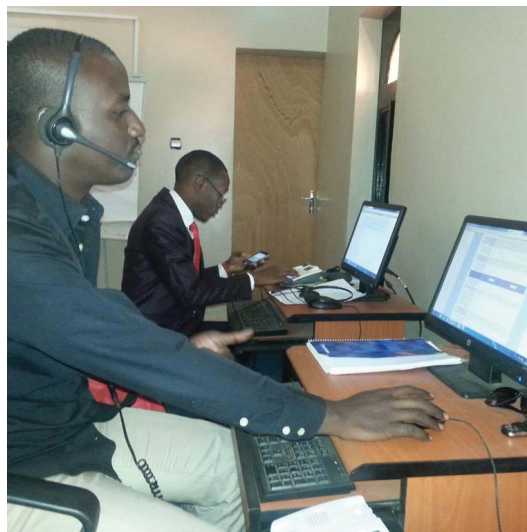
Since the beginning of 2015 in Niger, mVAM has partnered with a call centre to reach WFP beneficiaries in the Diffa region. Beneficiaries are asked questions regarding food consumption, coping strategies, the sources and prices of food and service utilisation (e.g. has your child received a screening?). According to an [analysis](#) published in August, VAM concluded that out of the 316 interviewed households, by using the FCS indicator, it was found that 3% of households have a poor FCS indicative of very inadequate food consumption. A further 65% were found to have borderline FCS.

In Chad, mVAM also used a call centre to reach beneficiaries in two refugee camps: Goz Amir (Sudanese refugees) and Belom (Central African Republic refugees). Beneficiaries were asked standard module questions regarding food consumption and coping strategies, allowing WFP to monitor food assistance in these two camps.

As mVAM expands in the region, it continues to refine its tools and tactics for remote data collection to increase speed, quality and reach. Lessons learned from mVAM deployments will be shared with interested country programmes to allow them to be better informed on how best to integrate mVAM in line with their information needs. In the near future, several countries in the region are considering using mVAM, including Cameroon and Nigeria.



Beneficiary providing mVAM with information on food consumption



mVAM call centre in Niger

VAM food and commodity prices data store



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Link to VAM Food and Commodity Prices Data Store:
<http://foodprices.vam.wfp.org>

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WFP's Food Security Analysis e-Newsletter

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