

the assessor

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**Welcome to
Issue 38 of the
Assessor,
WFP's Food
Security Analysis
E-Newsletter!**

What's new

- **VAM innovative mobile tools for data collection**—towards an integration of GRASP and mVAM
- **Using mobile text for food security surveys in a conflict setting**—Lessons from WFP VAM
- **Consolidated Approach for Reporting Indicators of Food Security (CARI)**—A new approach for measuring food insecurity
- **FSIN agenda**—Key priorities for 2014
- **Focus on Asia**—Key initiatives and achievements in the region



vam
food security analysis



The way ahead: towards an integration of two VAM innovative mobile tools - GRASP and mVAM

In line with its strategy to modernize data collection in order to reduce costs and delays between data collection and reporting by increasing the use of mobile technology for face to face and remote data collection, VAM is integrating two promising mobile solutions: GRASP and mVAM.

GRASP (georeferenced real-time acquisition of surveys platform) is an application that allows questionnaire design, data collection, transmission and analysis in real-time through the use of mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets, for face-to-face surveys. It is designed to work offline during data collection and can send data using either mobile internet, sms or Wi-Fi.

GRASP will serve as a back end platform for data collected through mVAM (including SMS, live and automated voice calls). GRASP's capabilities will be enhanced to handle mVAM front end applications allowing remote data collection using mobile technologies such as use of voice response system or SMS. GRASP will also take into account the features and strengths of other data management applications being used within WFP.

The development of a more fully integrated GRASP/mVAM system is planned for early 2015, after the conclusion of mVAM's on-going pilot activities.

WFP VAM Key Publications

Latest trends in staple food prices



Using mobile text for food security survey in a conflict setting – lessons from WFP VAM

Thanks to widespread mobile phone ownership, many survey respondents can now be contacted through their mobile phones, offering the possibility of much cheaper, faster and more timely data collection. VAM's testing of SMS questionnaires that took place in July, August and September 2013 has been published by the [Humanitarian Practice Network \(HPN\)](#).

Results showed that mobile text messaging prove to be a user-friendly, rapid, low-cost way of collecting data from households. In light of these findings, the focus question is no longer *whether* mobile text messaging should be used to collect household food security data, but rather *how best* the technology should be integrated into existing information systems. Future integration will take into account the trade-offs and complementarities of different data collection methods. Read more on the lessons learned in the original article posted [here](#).

This activity is part of the wider [mVAM project](#), launched in 2013 and piloting different ways to collect food security data through the phones that people own (live voice calls, automatic calls, SMS). Funded by the [Humanitarian Innovation Fund](#), live phone surveys are now underway in DRC and will soon start in Somalia. For more information and regular updates, please visit the [mVAM blog](#).

Latest trends in food security



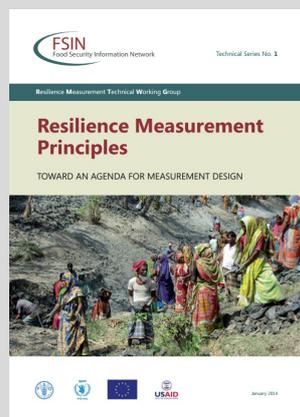
CARI – A new approach for measuring food insecurity

The **Consolidated Approach for Reporting Indicators of Food Security (CARI)** is a new WFP method used to analyze and report the level of food insecurity within a population. It is the final outcome of a two-year research project to develop a standardized approach for assessing and

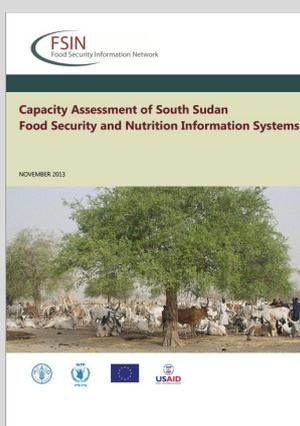


Latest FSIN Key Publications

FSIN technical Series No. 1



Capacity Assessment of South Sudan Food Security and Nutrition Information Systems



reporting household food insecurity in a systematic and transparent way. The project was initiated in response to the wide diversity of methods that had been used previously. Central to this approach is an explicit classification of households into four groups: food secure, marginally food secure, and moderately and severely food insecure. The classification of households into one of these groups is presented within the CARI food security console, a key output in the form of a half-page output table which summarizes key input indicators and aspects of food insecurity. The CARI approach is intentionally designed to feed into and augment IPC analysis. [Find out more about CARI here.](#)

Food Security Information Network (FSIN)* - Key Priorities for 2014



The [Food Security Information Network \(FSIN\)](#) was launched by FAO, IFPRI and WFP in October 2012 to enable developing countries to build sustainable food and nutrition information systems. The global community of practice that was launched in September 2013 has grown considerably and now has over 600 members. The FSIN CoP links a broad range of actors to facilitate the exchange of experiences and best practices. A key achievement in 2013 was the establishment of a **Resilience Measurement (RM) Technical Working Group (TWG), along with a dedicated RM CoP of 390 members.**

The key priorities agreed for 2014 are:

- **Establish a TWG on Measuring Food and Nutrition Security**
Food security and nutrition are concepts that have been extensively debated and defined across different professional communities of practice. Consensus exists that a proper understanding of these concepts requires integrating dimensions of food security and nutrition. However, a lively and long-standing debate exists regarding “how best to measure” both food security and nutrition. In light of this, FSIN is establishing a second TWG on **Measuring Food and Nutrition Security** to identify and harmonize food security and nutrition indicators for monitoring and analysis. The TWG will provide scientific guidance on a core set of FNS indicators.
- **Review of globally-managed market price databases**
The FSIN will sponsor a review of globally managed data repositories of food price data to assess complementarities and overlaps. The results will be discussed with stakeholders to enable the harmonization of existing market price databases, while ensuring greater coverage and sharing of data.
- **Delivery of Resilience Measurement (RM) outputs:**
The TWG will promote adoption of best practice in resilience measurement through collaborative development of three primary outputs:
 1. a paper on resilience measurement principles and definition of resilience ([available online](#));
 2. a common analytical framework for resilience measurement; and
 3. technical guidelines for resilience measurement.

In addition, FSIN will reach out to the broader CoP through a facilitated on-line discussion. The TWG will participate in international science and policy conferences to foster a larger debate and scientific exchange (including the [Resilience Montpellier 2014 Conference](#) organized by the Resilience Alliance Network and [IFPRI's 2020 Addis International Conference](#) in May 2014).



Baseline Studies*

Benin: Data were collected for the Benin CFSVA in February and March 2013. The analysis was based on two surveys – a household-level survey of 15,000 households and a key informants' survey of 750 villages. Results are reliable at national, department and commune levels and they are indicative of the situation in the pre-lean season period. Nationally, 1.1 million people were found to be food insecure (representing 11% of all households). A third of households (34%) were classified as being marginally food secure. The departments of Couffo, Mono, and Atacora had the highest prevalence of food insecurity (more than 25% each). Within departments, food insecurity was found to be unevenly spread; indeed, in some specific communes more than 40% of households were classified as food insecure. The report is available [online](#) [French].

Burundi: Data collection for the Burundi CFSVA carried out in conjunction with the Government and other stakeholders has been completed in February 2014. The objective is to update the information on the food and nutrition security in **Burundi** covering issues of availability, access, utilization as well as markets, livelihoods, coping strategies, health and nutrition in rural and urban areas. It will also cover gender and protection aspects related to food security and nutrition. The findings of the CFSVA will provide benchmark information for monitoring progress on food security and nutrition programmes in Burundi. The CFSVA findings will also be used as key inputs for future food security and nutrition programme design.

Myanmar: Food Security, Poverty and Nutrition Survey (available [online](#)): On 14 January 2014, WFP Myanmar in cooperation with Save the Children and the Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development presented the findings of a joint survey on food security, poverty and nutrition in the country's Dry Zone. Based on data collected in June and July 2013, the survey results found that:

- more than one quarter of all interviewed households in the Dry Zone (26.1%) live below the poverty line and almost every fifth household (18.5%) is food insecure;
- undernutrition is a widespread problem in the Dry Zone; global acute malnutrition among children under five years is at 12.3% describing a "poor" nutritional situation*. Chronic malnutrition among children under five years is found to be at 27.5%, equally qualifying for a "poor" nutritional situation*, illustrating the impact of underlying causes in the Dry Zone. Underweight is at 27.2% (*according to WHO Child Growth Standards).

Based on the success of the first phase, the government requested WFP Myanmar to expand the survey to cover Bago, Yangon and Ayeyawardy regions, as well as Shan, Sagaing, Kachin and Chin regions. Data collection in the Bago, Yangon and Ayeyawardy regions was completed at the end of 2013, reaching 1,800 households in 150 villages. In addition, a qualitative survey of rural areas in Yangon is being conducted in order to better understand food security and poverty patterns. All surveys are being implemented with the Ministry of Livestock Fishery and Rural Development. The findings will help experts better understand the linkages between poverty, food security and nutrition across the country.

Bangladesh: WFP Bangladesh has conducted a study titled "Food security and Nutrition Assessment in Selected Urban Slums". Multidimensional risks, shocks, as well as coping and adaptation strategies will be examined in detail. The report is expected to be published by the third quarter of 2014.

* *Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis (CFSVA), also referred to as a 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.*

WFP VAM Key initiatives and achievements in 2013

vam understanding vulnerability
food security analysis

Overview

The food security analysis function is a core element of WFP work. It is the basis for the design of all operations (emergency operations, prepared relief and recovery operations, as well as recovery programmes). From the design of operations to recovery, WFP undertakes an analysis of the food security situation and assesses some critical questions:

- WHO is food insecure or vulnerable?
- HOW many are there?
- WHY? Is it they themselves?
- WHY are they food insecure or vulnerable?
- HOW is the situation likely to evolve and what are the risks (increasing them)?
- WHAT should be done to save their lives and livelihoods?

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Spatial analysis and mapping

WFP uses the best available technologies including geographic information systems (GIS), computer-aided applications and mobile data collection platforms (PDAs, smartphones, tablets) to collect, manage and analyse data.

Using the power of GIS, WFP combines and analyses geo-referenced household survey data with a variety of spatial data from international networks and local sources to create detailed information on rainfall and vegetation cover.

A unique network around the globe

WFP has over 100 food security analysts (international and national) based at headquarters, in regional offices and in the countries where it operates.

Partnerships

WFP collaborates with partners worldwide including governments, UN agencies such as FAO, UNICEF, UNHCR, UNDP, UNFPA and local and international NGOs. These partnerships result in a shared understanding of food security problems and common priorities for action.

Strong partnerships have also been established with the World Bank, the Interagency Food Security Assessment Mechanism (IFSAM) and the International Emergency Remote Sensing to Share or collect data internationally.

WFP VAM Tools



WFP food price database covers about 70 countries, more than 1,000 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.



Recently
posted on
wfp.org

Africa

Central African Republic - [FAO/WFP Markets and Food Security Assessment Mission, April 2014](#)

Ethiopia - [Monthly Market Watch, February 2014](#)

Senegal - [Bulletin Mensuel d'Information sur les Marchés Agricoles, Février 2014](#)

West Africa and the Sahel - [Food Security and Humanitarian Implications, February 2014 \[English & French\]](#)

Middle East

Yemen - [Monthly Market Watch, February 2014](#)

Asia

Afghanistan - [Market Price Bulletin, March 2014](#)

Cambodia - [Food Price and Wage Bulletin, February 2014](#)

Kyrgyz Republic - [Monthly Price and Food Security Update, February 2014](#)

Nepal - [Crop Situation Update: A Joint Assessment of the 2013 Summer Crops and Outlook of 2013/14 Winter Crops, February 2014](#)

Nepal - [Market Watch, February 2014](#)

Pakistan - [Education Atlas, March 2014](#)

Pakistan - [Market Price Bulletin, February 2014](#)

Market Analysis

Field Market Assessments

Market assessments are currently ongoing in **Burundi, Republic of Congo and Sudan Darfur**.

Burundi: With support from the WFP regional office in Nairobi, the objective of the assessment is to determine the appropriateness of a cash distribution to beneficiaries during the emergency response to the floods.

Sudan Darfur: Primary data from a recent market assessment are now being analysed in Rome with an expected report in the coming weeks. The assessment will estimate the capacity and potential of **Darfur's** local markets for cash and voucher programming and review the impact of previous voucher programmes on markets.

Kenya: A market assessment focusing on refugees in **Kenya** recently occurred in March 2014. The objective of the assessment is to inform the feasibility of cash transfer programmes.

The **WFP Market Monitor issue no. 22** is available [online](#). The bulletin examines trends for the period July-September 2013. This issue contains a special focus on the food security implications of social-political tension and economic slowdown in **South Sudan** as well as on the impact of the closure of the tunnels from Egypt into the **Gaza Strip**.

Market Analysis Tools

WFP Price Monitoring Database: *Since 2008, the WFP VAM Unit has been gathering market prices for most consumed staples to strengthen food security analysis and support programmes. The data covers about 70 countries, more than 1,000 markets and 200 commodities. In addition to secondary sources, the price database relies on data collected by WFP country offices in most food insecure areas. Besides its use for internal WFP operational needs (cash, voucher and local procurement interventions), 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. The data can be accessed at <http://foodprices.vam.wfp.org/>*

Food Security Monitoring

The **Global Food Security Update** issue no.13 is available [online](#). The bulletin covers the food security situation in more than 50 countries for the period August-October 2013, and it contains In Focus sections on food insecurity projections in **South Sudan** and **Central African Republic**.



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Interagency Work

Haiti multi-hazard map - A new tool for planners and policy makers

This unique map is to be used by a wide range of NGOs, urban planners, and policy makers to assess vulnerability and risks. It is an essential tool to support preparedness and planning before a disaster strikes and can be used to promote safer construction, raise public awareness and inform mitigation planning and implementation. The map was created by WFP Haiti in collaboration with OCHA. WFP's field experience provided quality data on flood prone areas, storms and droughts. WFP will be working hand in hand with the National Center for Geo-Spatial Information (CNIGS) and other partners to regularly update the map. WFP will also ensure that the maps and details on the methodology are available through the [CNIGS web portal](#) so that humanitarian professionals and development partners can easily access and refine the information. It is also available on the WFP website [Haiti country page](#) [French].

Joint Assessment Missions (JAM)*

Djibouti. The UNHCR/WFP Joint Assessment Mission (JAM) for the two refugee camps - Ali Addeh and Holl Holl was completed in December 2013. From the assessment the number of refugees has increased to over 23,000 from 13,000 in 2009. The JAM report was released in February 2014. The report indicates that food security remains a major problem in the camps and that there are no durable solutions for the refugees living in the two camps.

Rwanda. A Joint Assessment Mission (UNHCR/WFP) was carried out in **Rwanda** covering five refugee camps hosting in total 72,440 refugees. The aim was to assess the overall health and nutritional status, the food ration and food security status, level of self-reliance, adequacy of basic services provided, interaction between refugees and the host population and to identify additional needs among the refugees. A report including findings and recommendations from the mission is under development.

**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)

South Sudan. CFSAM was carried out in November/December 2013 to estimate cereal production and assess the overall food security situation. The report was released in February 2014 and it is available [online](#).

Nepal. Crop Situation Update: This February 2014 edition of the Crop Situation Update covers the 2013/14 (Nepali Fiscal Year 2070/71) summer crop production and the outlook of winter crops for the same period. In addition, it also looks at the trade of key cereals between the period of 2012 and 2013. The joint assessment report is available [online](#).

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

FAO/WFP Markets and Food Security Assessment Mission

Central African Republic: To better understand the current food security situation, an FAO/WFP Mission visited CAR in March. The mission aimed to assess the impact of the wider economic disruptions on the food sector. More specifically, it focused on how the crisis has impacted commercial food suppliers, the purchasing power of the population and the potential mitigation measures that the international community could employ. The report is available [online](#).

Cluster. The VAM unit has supported the Global Food Security Cluster (gFSC) in identifying core food security indicators for assessments. The indicators list can be found [here](#). WFP is part of the quality programming working group that is about to finalize also a practical handbook for cluster coordinators on standard food security indicators.



Focus on Asia

Sri Lanka Livelihood mapping and zoning

In late January 2014, WFP Sri Lanka together with the Ministry of Economic Development hosted a 3-day livelihood mapping and analysis exercise with 34 participants from a wide range of Government departments and ministries. Livelihood analysis provides a useful lens through which to understand vulnerability to climate risks, hazards and shocks, as well as to food and nutrition insecurity. While employed extensively in the Africa region, livelihood zoning has not been widely used in Asia, apart from exercises in Tajikistan and Afghanistan conducted by FEWSNET, nor has it been conducted in middle income countries, making the experience in Sri Lanka the first of its kind.

At the conclusion of the 3-day workshop, 19 rural livelihood zones had been identified and profiled. Each of the zones is associated to a different resilience profile, based on the relative food security status, the climate-sensitivity of household income, and livelihood diversity. The analysis is also being incorporated into a larger Atlas on Livelihoods, Food Security and Vulnerability in Sri Lanka, anticipated to be released in late March 2014. The results of the two exercises are currently being used to inform the new country strategy.

This activity has been implemented as part of C-ADAPT – a global strategic initiative funded by the Government of Sweden’s fast-track climate finance to enhance our understanding of the links between climate risk and food security. Similar exercises in the Asia region will be supported through this initiative.

Use of eWIN for Typhoon Haiyan EMOP M&E in the Philippines

The intense and rapid scale up of WFP’s emergency response to Typhoon Haiyan, reaching 3 million people in the initial aftermath of the disaster, required a comprehensive monitoring system capable of efficiently monitoring the enormous number of food distributions and post-distribution use, as well as the functionality of market systems in affected areas. Building on the success of eWIN as a data management system for the Typhoon Haiyan Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment, eWIN was again used as a post-disaster monitoring system. More than 100 field monitors were trained and received eWIN tablets for data collection; participants in the training included both WFP field monitors as well as third party monitors. The utilization of eWIN allowed for a flexible approach so that for those situations when data collection had to be done using traditional paper questionnaires in the field; data entry subsequently occurred on office based computers where eWIN was installed.

VAM Regional Bureau hosts collaborative Workshop with NSS from around Asia

The year 2014 promises to be one full of fruitful collaboration for WFP in the Asia Region: The first week of February 2014 saw WFP VAM officers and counterparts from the National Statistical Systems (NSS) from 10 countries gathered together to discuss opportunities for closer collaboration in food security analysis. The 3-day workshop, titled “VAM Cooperation with the NSS: Food Security Analysis based on National Survey Data”, heralded the soft launch of several key pillars of the VAM Strategy for the Asia region that place strong emphasis on engaging NSS in joint food security analysis to “get more mileage out of national surveys”.

For more information on the presentations, outputs and tentative work plans resulting from the workshop, please contact [Siemon Hollema](#) or [Ellen Kiøsterud](#).

Capacity strengthening for the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS)

In 2014, the WFP Bangladesh has received a financial grant from DFID to enhance the capacity of the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) in systematic monitoring of poverty, food security and nutrition. Monitoring activities will utilize a “Panel Survey” approach with close linkages to BBS’s Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES). The project period is from January 2014 to June 2017.

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WFP field monitor using the data management system eWIN on a tablet computer for Haiyan EMOP post distribution monitoring in Capiz Province, Philippines.



WFP VAM officers and counterparts from the NSS at a the “VAM Cooperation with the NSS: Food Security Analysis based on National Survey Data” workshop held in Bangkok.

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