

The CARI and the IPC

This fact sheet aims to give an overview of the World Food Programme’s Consolidated Approach to Reporting Indicators of Food Security (CARI), and how it can be utilised within the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) process.¹

What is the CARI?

In response to the diversity of methods used to determine food insecurity across WFP analyses, the Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping (VAM) unit in Rome began work on developing a standardised approach. The CARI is the result of this work – it is an updated approach to analysis of **primary data from a single household survey**, and is used to classify individual households according to their level of food insecurity. The household surveys require rigorous sampling methods; the CARI can therefore be used to provide a representative estimate of food insecurity within the target population.

VAM has always been at the forefront of developing assessment methods and tools which provide the best measure of household food (in)security, and which best meet the needs of WFP’s food assistance programmes. The CARI serves as a transparent and robust methodology, allowing rapid analysis of primary data which results in the identification of areas and populations most in need of assistance.

How is the CARI Constructed?

The CARI assesses two dimensions of food security:

- 1) The **current status** of households (assessed based on food consumption patterns)
- 2) The **future coping capacity** of households (assessed based on economic vulnerability and asset depletion)

These two dimensions are assessed using a selection from five indicators (see Table 1), the combination of which produces a Food Insecurity Index. Depending on which indicators are selected, a specific formula is used to determine the final food security outcome for each house-

Table 1: The CARI matrix

Domain		Indicator
1. Current Status	Food Consumption	1. Food Consumption Score: based on variety and frequency of foods consumed, households are allocated into acceptable, borderline or poor food consumption groups.
		2. Food Energy Shortfall: daily per capita calorie intake is calculated and compared to thresholds of 2,100kcal and country-specific minimum daily energy requirement.
2. Coping Capacity	Economic Vulnerability	3. Poverty Status: household consumption value is calculated and compared to established poverty line and food poverty line.
		4. Food Expenditure Share: households are categorised based on share of total expenditures directed to food; percentage thresholds are established as an indicator of economic vulnerability.
	Asset Depletion	5. Livelihood Coping Indicator: households are categorised based on severity (stress, crisis or emergency) of livelihood coping strategies employed.
Food Insecurity Index		

¹ Note that there is an annex to this fact sheet, which provides more technical details on similarities and differences between the CARI and IPC.

² Refer to the CARI Technical Guidance for the specific formulas.

The CARI and the IPC

As IPC analyses rely exclusively on secondary information, reliable data is essential. As stated in the IPC Technical Manual, “the IPC approach incorporates and is strengthened by specific analytical methods.” The CARI is an analytical method designed to be an input to the IPC process. All five indicators included within the CARI approach can be incorporated within IPC analysis; the IPC Technical Manual provides guidance on where each indicator sits within the IPC Analytical Framework (see Table 2). The CARI approach ensures that WFP data incorporated within IPC analysis is highly reliable and standardized.

Table 2: CARI Component Indicators within the IPC Analytical Framework

CARI Component Indicator	IPC Analytical Framework	
1. Food Consumption Score: based on variety and frequency of foods consumed, households are allocated into acceptable, borderline or poor food consumption groups.	Household Outcomes	Food Consumption Score
2. Food Energy Shortfall: daily per capita calorie intake is calculated and compared to thresholds of 2,100kcal and country-specific minimum daily energy requirement.		Food Quantity
3. Poverty Status: household consumption value is calculated and compared to established poverty line and food poverty line.	Indirect Evidence	Hazards and Vulnerability: Percentage of population under the national poverty line
4. Food Expenditure Share: households are categorised based on share of total expenditures directed to food; percentage thresholds are established as an indicator of economic vulnerability.		Access: Percentage of income spent on food
5. Livelihood Coping Indicator: households are categorised based on severity (stress, crisis or emergency) of livelihood coping strategies employed.		Livelihood Change: Ownership of productive assets and recent changes in ownership

For outcome indicators, IPC provides specific thresholds to guide classification into the five IPC phases of acute food insecurity. For the two outcome indicators which appear in both the IPC and the CARI, these thresholds are the same.³ For indirect evidence, the IPC does not provide thresholds, but states that this evidence must be analysed within its context.

Given the IPC “convergence-of-evidence” approach, which requires food security analysts to evaluate the body of evidence as a whole, the manner in which CARI is utilised during IPC analyses may vary. In some IPC workshops, analysts may choose to incorporate the CARI Food Security Index. In others, analysts may opt to separately consider each of the CARI component indicators. WFP recommends that the CARI approach and results be presented and described in detail during the IPC exercise, alongside the presentation of all other data. The CARI Food Security Index results should be considered in the IPC classification reference table as best determined by the IPC analysis partners in liaison with VAM officers.

Both the CARI and the IPC aim to improve comparability, rigour and transparency of evidence. The CARI approach is applied to a **single household survey**, intended to accurately measure household level food insecurity. This data and analytical method is intended to serve as a critical input to IPC analyses.

³ See the technical annex for more specific detail on comparison of thresholds