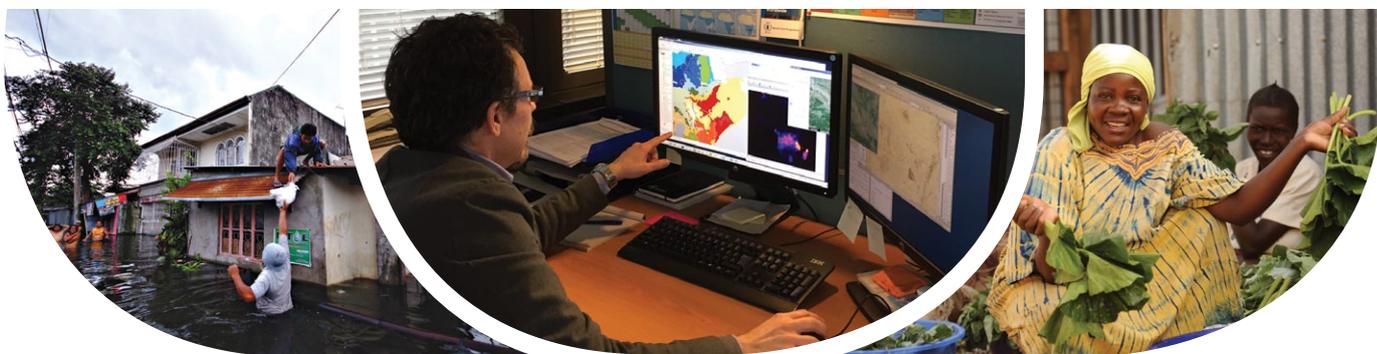




# THE ASSESSOR



## WFP's Food Security Analysis e-Newsletter

### HOT TOPICS

- **mVAM Launches an Open Databank to Provide Greater Access to Data**
- **El Niño Brings Drought to Southern Africa**
- **Haiti Market Assessment**
- **Multipurpose Cash Assistance for Syrian Refugees in Turkey**
- **Linking Gender Analysis to Market Assessments**
- **Focus on the Middle East, North Africa, Eastern Europe and Central Asia**



**vam**  
food security analysis





issue 44

# WHAT'S NEW?

## **mVAM** ..... page 3

VAM Talks Podcast: Episodes 2, 3 and 4

InSTEDD Platform Tools Training at WFP

mVAM in the Humanitarian Innovation Fund Report

Lessons Learned from Mobile Data Collection in Yemen

mVAM Launches an Open Databank to Provide Greater Access to Data

## **The Seasonal Monitor** ..... page 4

El Niño Brings Drought to Southern Africa

## **Market Analysis** ..... page 5

Haiti Market Assessment

Upcoming Price Monitoring Guidance

Mission to Gaza to Study Scaling Up Cash-Based Transfers

Read the Latest Market Monitor

## **Food Security Information Network** ..... page 5

News from FSIN's Resilience Measurement Technical Working Group

FSIN's Network of Practitioners: More Members, More Communication

## **Food Security Assessments** ..... page 7

Food Security Assessments Status

Multipurpose Cash Assistance for Syrian Refugees in Turkey

## **Inter-Agency Work** ..... page 8

Enhanced Response Capacity Project

Global Alliance for Urban Crises Nearing Launch

Inter-Cluster Working Group on Food Security and Nutrition

WFP Meets with DEVCO

## **Gender Analysis** ..... page 9

Linking Gender Analysis to Market Assessments

## **Stories from the Field** ..... page 9

Focus on the Middle East, North Africa, Eastern Europe and Central Asia

SNAP: A Regional Initiative for an Innovative Food Price Monitoring System

Monitoring the Secondary Impact of Cash-Based Transfer Programmes in Palestine

Market and Price Monitoring in Conflict-Affected Areas

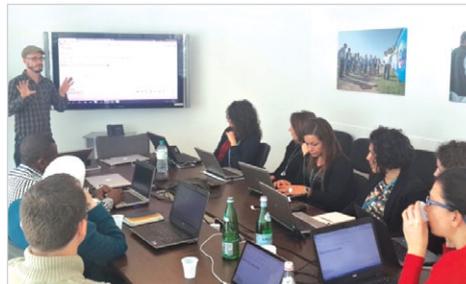
Advocacy and Capacity Development

## VAM Talks Podcast: Episodes 2, 3 and 4

[Mobile Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping \(mVAM\)](#) features in the second, third and fourth episodes of the “VAM Talks” podcast series. In the second episode, Jean-Martin Bauer, founder of the mVAM project, talks live from Juba about preparing mobile data collection in South Sudan. The third episode explores mVAM’s achievements and challenges explained by Professor Nathan Morrow, one of the authors of the [mVAM Review](#) conducted in August 2015. In the fourth episode, regional VAM officers in East Africa, West Africa and the Middle East are interviewed on the rollout of mVAM in their regions. You can access all podcasts on [iTunes](#).

## InSTEDD Platform Tools Training at WFP

mVAM has been collaborating with InSTEDD since 2013, with deployments of [Verboice](#)<sup>1</sup> and [Pollit](#)<sup>2</sup> in vulnerable areas of Goma, Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Galkayo, Somalia. These tools have allowed mVAM to run food security surveys and provide communities with information on food distribution and prices. In February, InSTEDD was invited to train staff on [their tools](#), on everything from the basic uses of certain applications to advanced troubleshooting for local installations. For more details on course contents, please visit the [blog](#).



Nicolás presenting Verboice

## mVAM in the Humanitarian Innovation Fund Report

The Humanitarian Innovation Fund has published an article on mVAM’s successes, challenges and future plans for developing and implementing mobile phone surveys in remote areas. The [article](#) explores how mVAM has improved humanitarian interventions and sets out opportunities for scaling up operations with other organizations that use remote data collection.

## Lessons Learned from Mobile Data Collection in Yemen

High levels of insecurity in Yemen prevent the implementation of traditional face-to-face surveys. To monitor the impact of the conflict on food security, WFP has been using mVAM in Yemen since July 2015. Survey respondents are contacted through a call centre and asked a short series of questions on household food consumption and coping. Around 2,400 people are consulted in each round of data collection. Most respondents give feedback every month, allowing mVAM to offer a [trend analysis of food security indicators](#). Some great lessons have been learned from using mobile surveys in Yemen: 1) working with a professional call centre with trained operators is a real asset; 2) qualitative open-ended questions provide rich information on community food security; 3) the success rate in reaching respondents is influenced by the time of day of the call; and 4) random digit dialling can be effective, especially in populated governorates.

1. Verboice is a free, open-source tool for creating and running applications that interact via voice, allowing users to listen and record messages in their own language and dialect or answer questions with a phone keypad.
2. Pollit is a free, open-source tool for conducting polls using text messages.



### [mVAM](#)



### [VAM Talks on iTunes](#)



### [Verboice](#)



### [Pollit](#)



### [Humanitarian Innovation Fund Report](#)





## mVAM Launches an Open Databank to Provide Greater Access to Data

mVAM has released an [open databank](#) that contains Food Consumption Scores, the Reduced Coping Strategies Index and food prices. A corresponding [Application Programme Interface \(API\)](#), launched at the same time, will allow data to be exchanged automatically across partner websites, databases and systems, thereby permitting the analysis of real-time data. Open access to this food security data will benefit both WFP and the wider humanitarian community: the timely availability of accurate information will facilitate better analysis for informing policies and programmes.

To find out more about mVAM, visit [www.mvam.org](http://www.mvam.org), follow us on Twitter [@mobileVAM](#) or contact mVAM at [wfp.mvam@wfp.org](mailto:wfp.mvam@wfp.org)

### [mVAM Open Databank](#)



### [Haiti Market Assessment Report](#)



### [The VAM Shop](#)



### [The Seasonal Monitor](#)



## El Niño Brings Drought to Southern Africa

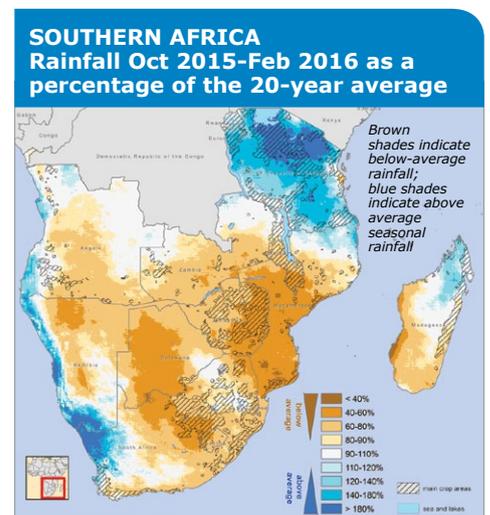
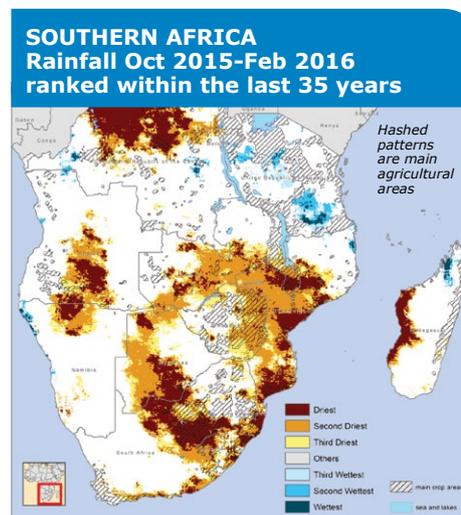
The current growing season in southern Africa (October 2015 – April 2016) has been affected by one of the strongest El Niño events on record, which has damaged regional crop production and undermined food security. The impact and intensity of El Niño has caused regional-scale drought comparable to that of 1991-92 – the worst drought ever recorded, and one which caused a major food security crisis.

The lack of rain has been severe and widespread, particularly up to mid-February (see below the map on the right). Many places have seen the driest or second driest conditions of the last 35 years (see below the map on the left).

The drought has meant prolonged delays in the start of the agricultural season and extremely unfavourable conditions for crop development. Regional crop production is set to fall sharply for the second year running: South Africa's maize crop is expected to be 27 percent lower than last year and 38 percent below the five-year average.

Recent above-average rainfall from the end of February has come too late to be of significant benefit in the worst hit areas because the early season drought has caused irreversible losses.

Consequently, food prices across the region have risen sharply, and the number of people requiring humanitarian assistance is now estimated at 31.1 million. This figure is expected to increase further, peaking in late 2016 to early 2017. The countries most affected are Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Lesotho and Malawi.



## Haiti Market Assessment

The persistent El Niño-driven drought has significantly impacted Haiti since the beginning of 2015 and caused considerable crop losses; thus 2015 agricultural production was the worst in the last 35 years. According to the Emergency Food Security Assessment in December 2015, 1.5 million people are severely food insecure. WFP plans to scale up its food assistance programmes from March to September 2016, providing unconditional cash and food rations to 1 million people affected by the drought. To inform the programme design, WFP analysed the capacity of markets to respond to the introduction of cash-based transfers. To read details of the results, please see the [Haiti Market Assessment report](#).

## Upcoming Price Monitoring Guidance

VAM is developing price monitoring guidance on how to organize data collection efforts. The document aims to avoid the unnecessary proliferation of datasets that do not serve WFP’s information needs. Well-rooted and consolidated data collection and dissemination practices will create a common ground for better quality standards. VAM has already been compiling and collating monthly prices for more than 1,200 markets in 75 countries where WFP operates. This information is available in the global [VAM Food and Commodity Prices Data Store](#) and in the country-specific pages of the [VAM Shop](#). The guidance will be released in Q2 2016.

## Mission to Gaza to Study Scaling Up Cash-Based Transfers

WFP and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency, Gaza will conduct a macroeconomic study starting in Q2 2016 to assess Gaza’s local market capacity to sustain a large-scale rollout of cash-based transfers (commodity voucher). The study aims to analyze 1) commercial imports to Gaza and review past restrictions on food imports; 2) domestic food production, taking into account reliance on externally sourced inputs; 3) humanitarian food imports and the secondary trade or selling of these; and 4) the risks of using cash based-transfers at this scale in Gaza.

## Read the Latest Market Monitor

[The Market Monitor Issue 30](#) was released in January. This bulletin examines trends in staple food and fuel prices, the cost of the basic food basket and consumer price indices for 69 countries in Q4 2015.

## News from FSIN’s Resilience Measurement Technical Working Group

As part of its work to advance the measurement of resilience, the Resilience Measurement Technical Working Group has produced [six technical briefings](#) for field practitioners and is currently finalizing a seventh and final paper on quantitative analysis methods. The paper elaborates on the concepts presented in [Technical Series Nos. 1](#) and [2](#), which gave guidance on methods that can be used to construct variables and examine relationships as part of resilience measurement.

The [Food Security Information Network \(FSIN\)](#) has also commissioned a paper by the working group chair, Mark Constatas, following a recommendation from the FSIN/African Union Committee Technical Consultation for FSIN that the group develop communication materials on the definitions of resilience. The paper,



[Main Outputs of the Resilience Measurement Technical Working Group](#)



[The Market Monitor issue 30](#)



[Food Security-Related Academic Courses 2016](#)

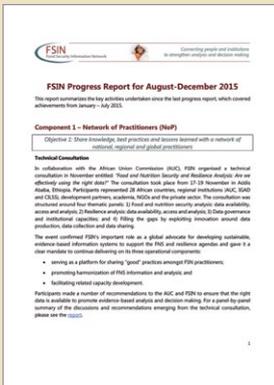




**Gender and Food Security Resources**



**FSIN Progress Report**



**FSIN Factsheet**

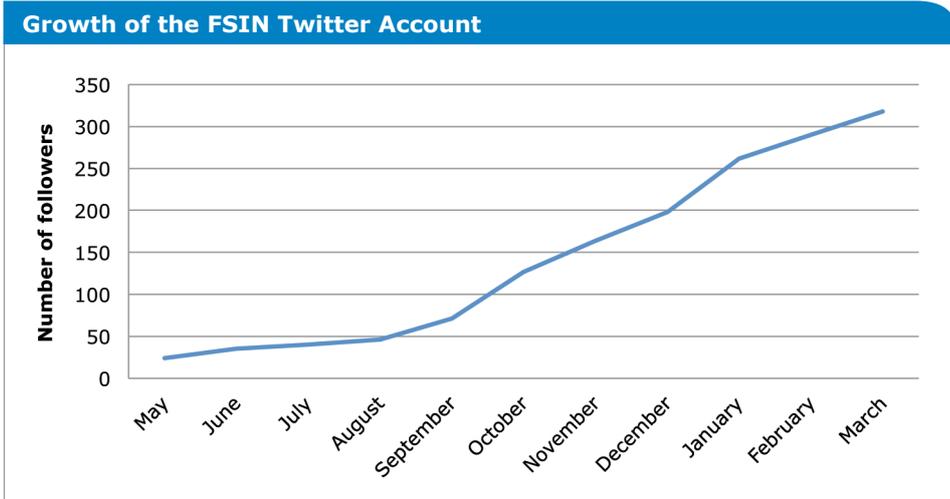


tentatively titled *Four versions of resilience for development: Implications for programming and measurement*, will explain the various ways in which the concept of resilience is used as a focal point for measurement in development.

Exemplifying how the working group can help efforts to harmonize resilience measurement practice, Dr Conostas recently attended a conference that explored opportunities for convergences between the analytical approaches used by FAO (i.e. Resilience Index Measurement and Analysis studies) and those used by Technical Assistance to NGOs (i.e. Pastoralist Areas Resilience Improvement and Market Expansion studies). The common analytical model, presented in Technical Series No. 2, was a shared point of reference in the two days of meetings, which were held in Tucson, Arizona. Leaders from FAO and USAID also took part, underlining the technical importance and strategic value of harmonized resilience measurement.

**FSIN's Network of Practitioners: More Members, More Communication**

The Network of Practitioners counted over 1,100 members in 98 countries by the end of March 2016. To increase visibility and interact with practitioners, FSIN launched its [Twitter account](#) in May 2015. Since the start of this year, the account has grown by more than 60 percent, helping FSIN to extend its reach and increase awareness of its work.



To share learning resources with practitioners, FSIN has compiled a list of [global food security-related academic courses](#). The document lists over 130 courses in 59 countries that are available at graduate or undergraduate level. FSIN has also created [Gender and Food Security Resources](#), an overview of the current tools and guidelines used to ensure a gender perspective in food security and nutrition programmes and assessments. The document offers examples of guidelines, indices, case studies, reports and e-learning courses that may be of help to those analysing food and nutrition security.

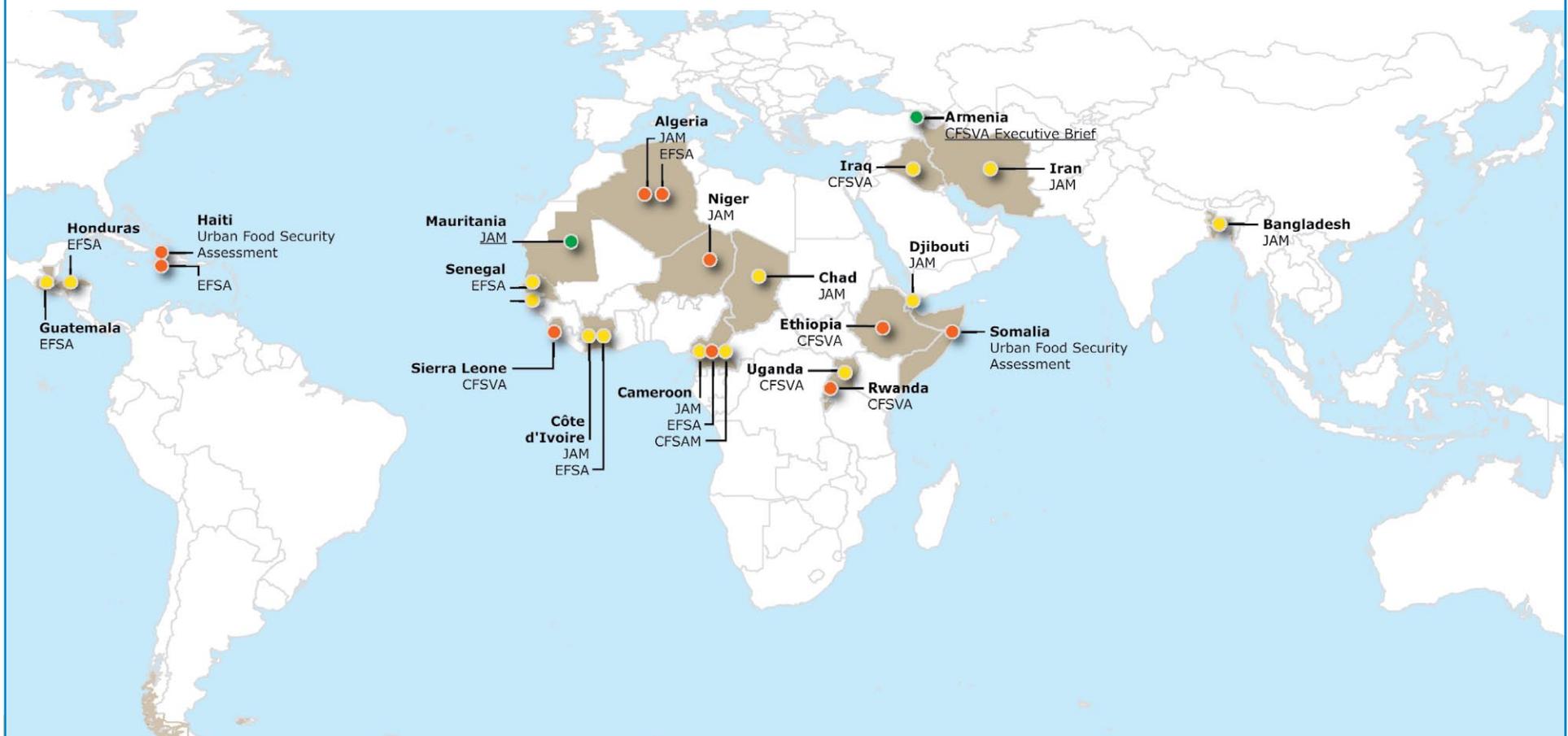
FSIN has published its latest [progress report](#), covering activities from August-December 2015. The report summarizes key achievements including outcomes from the technical consultation, advancements by technical working groups and an update on capacity development activities in South Sudan.

To find out more about FSIN, visit [www.fsincop.net](http://www.fsincop.net), see our recently published [factsheet](#), follow us on Twitter [@FSIN\\_News](#) or contact the FSIN secretariat at [fsin-secretariat@wfp.org](mailto:fsin-secretariat@wfp.org)

# Food Security Assessments Status

The map below shows planned, ongoing and recently completed food security assessments conducted by VAM in collaboration with partners. These include Emergency Food Security Assessments (EFSA), Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analyses (CFSVA), Joint Assessment Missions (JAM), Crop and Food Security Assessment Missions (CFSAM) and Urban Food Security Analysis.

For details on food security assessments please see the [VAM Factsheet](#).



**Legend**

- Planned assessments
- Ongoing assessments
- Recently completed assessments
- Food Security Assessment countries



### [Enhanced Response Capacity Project](#)



### [Review of Targeting of Cash and Food Assistance for Syrian Refugees in Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt](#)



### [Global Alliance for Urban Crises](#)



### [Adapting to an Urban World Project](#)



## Multipurpose Cash Assistance for Syrian Refugees in Turkey

An Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) for basic needs is being implemented to help Turkey cope with the presence of 2.5 million Syrian refugees. To prepare for the safety net, WFP is planning to increase its caseload from 70,000 to at least 585,000 off-camp refugee beneficiaries across Turkey. There will be a shift from providing food assistance to giving a multipurpose cash grant. The basic needs response aims to be fully aligned with and complementary to existing government-run social protection programmes.

To help WFP's country office in Turkey with the preparations, VAM has provided recommendations on 1) which provinces to target; 2) the transfer value for food needs, by re-examining the reference food basket and its cost; and 3) how to establish a minimum expenditure basket for a basic needs approach.

## Enhanced Response Capacity Project

The Enhanced Response Capacity Project saw UNHCR and partners working together in 2014–2015 to improve capacity, coordination and evidence for multipurpose cash grants and to explore the protection risks, benefits and outcomes of cash-based interventions. WFP contributed in preparing tools, particularly those related to [targeting and vulnerability analysis for cash-based programming](#). Under the initiative, there was a [review of targeting approaches](#) in Lebanon and Jordan in the light of the changing and challenging refugee situation, conducted with the support of WFP.

## Global Alliance for Urban Crises Nearing Launch

WFP attended at a meeting in Barcelona in early March for the pre-launch of the [Global Alliance for Urban Crises](#). This initiative seeks to bring together city leaders, urban professionals, the development community and the private sector in order to broaden the humanitarian response strategies used in urban areas in the aftermath of natural disasters and other crises. It will be formally launched in May at a Special Session of the World Humanitarian Summit. WFP and the global Food Security Cluster are supporting the initiative as part of the partnership in the [Adapting to an Urban World](#) project.

## Inter-Cluster Working Group on Food Security and Nutrition

The Inter-Cluster Working Group was set up to strengthen the linkages between Food Security and Nutrition clusters in countries. Together with FAO, VAM is co-leading the workflow of advocating and supporting the use of appropriate tools and guidance for conducting joint nutrition and food security assessments and programming in different national contexts.

## WFP Meets with DEVCO

WFP has provided International Cooperation and Development (DEVCO) with an overview of the food security crisis in 2015 and a country-by-country outlook of the food security situation, including the number of food-insecure individuals. A report will be published in Q3 2016 and will be used by DEVCO and ECHO as a reference for 2016, in particular for the PRO ACT resilience-building portfolio.

## Linking Gender Analysis to Market Assessments

To investigate the linkages between gender analysis and market assessments in West Africa, the Regional Bureau in Dakar integrated gender in the [Lake Chad Regional Market Assessment questionnaires](#) for the first time.

Preliminary results from the assessment reveal key gender disparities in markets, including the high representation of male wholesalers and female small-scale vendors (whose vulnerability to shocks is much higher), lower capital and stocks among female market actors, and unequal access to financial services. The integration of gender in market assessments helps to identify areas in which market vulnerabilities are likely to be gender-specific, information that can be used to design market-based programming.

In addition to the new data collection questionnaires, a Technical Note has been created to help colleagues and partners conduct gender-integrated food security and market assessments. The [Technical Note](#) gives guidance on which questions need to be included on gender and empowerment in market assessments, and how responses should be analysed. This will enable WFP and partners to design and monitor gender-equitable market-based interventions.

## Focus on the Middle East, North Africa, Eastern Europe and Central Asia

### SNAP: A Regional Initiative for an Innovative Food Price Monitoring System

The Regional Bureau in Cairo has launched the Safety-Nets Alert Platform (SNAP) initiative, which is currently in its first phase. SNAP is an innovative food price monitoring system with state-of-the-art analytical tools that will improve food security early warning, risk management and social protection in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. SNAP seeks to help WFP and decision-makers to take action and devise timely, evidence-based policies and programmes in support of the most vulnerable.

The idea behind SNAP is to monitor food prices based on a multi-hazard analysis. This is linked to a system that can trigger an early warning and alert for action.

The platform consists of four main interconnected components, encompassing analytical and operational tools:

1. Price Monitor & Spike Sentinel: These tools are built on WFP's food price monitoring platforms and existing national services and capacities in the region. Data sustainability will be a key consideration. The existing tool, [Alert for Price Spikes](#), which detects abnormality in food prices, will be adapted to the region.
2. Shock Analyzer: This component builds on the [Shock Impact Simulation Model](#). For SNAP, the model is adjusted to accommodate the diverse and unique contexts of MENA/CIS<sup>3</sup> countries. The tool will allow users to build their own country-specific scenarios and display results in an easy-to-understand and policy-relevant manner.
3. Online Information System: SNAP will bring together the above elements through a user-friendly online platform for specific countries in the MENA/CIS region. The platform will predict risks and recommend the best social protection measures to adopt, thus augmenting national capacities to manage risk and promote timely safety nets.

3. Commonwealth of Independent States.



### Gender Analysis in Market Assessments



### Technical Note on Use of Gender- and Empowerment-Integrated Market Assessment Surveys



### Alert for Price Spikes

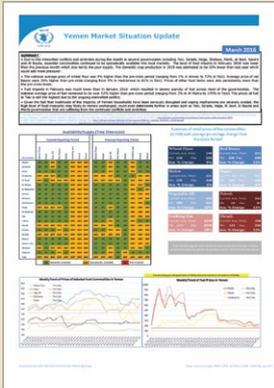


### Shock Impact Simulation Model





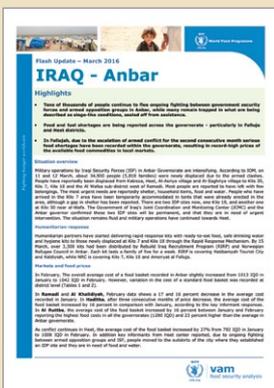
Yemen Market Situation Update



Ukraine Monthly Market Update Bulletin



Iraq mVAM Bulletin

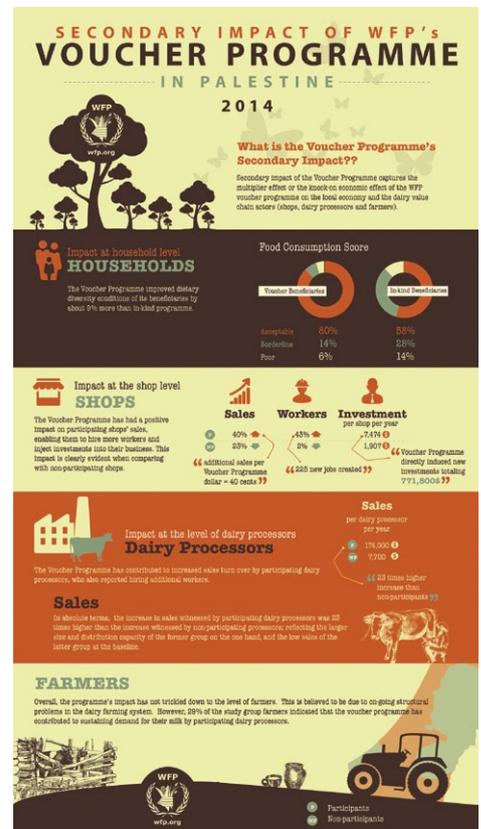


4. Policy Advisory & Capacity Building: This component includes improving technical skills and know-how, standardizing price monitoring and alert services, and consolidating national capacities, as well as developing a common discourse on policy options in relation to price volatility and risk management. In parallel, SNAP promotes better national and regional policy dialogue and coordination.

The first phase focuses on three countries: Yemen, Lebanon and Kyrgyz Republic. This will allow the Regional Bureau in Cairo to test the platform and its tools in three different contexts – the emergency in Yemen, the refugee population in Lebanon and as part of a well-structured partnership with the government in Kyrgyz Republic. Based on these pilot projects, a second phase is intended to expand the initiative to other countries and eventually to hand over the platform to the governments of the pilot countries.

Monitoring the Secondary Impact of Cash-Based Transfer Programmes in Palestine

WFP Palestine developed a monitoring system to capture the secondary economic impacts of cash-based transfer (CBT) programmes. The system was piloted in 2011 and rolled out two years later. It assesses the direct impact of CBT on beneficiary households, as well as changes in the supply chain of dairy produce – one of the main locally produced CBT commodities. The monitoring system aims to trace how the economic effects of the voucher system trickle down through the various local actors of the dairy supply chain (from dairy processors, to local producers/farmers and retailers). Data is collected using experimental and quasi-experimental procedures that allow the monitoring system to measure impact through counterfactual evidence. Hence, for each of the four categories<sup>4</sup> of voucher programme target groups, a comparison group with similar pre-programme attributes has been identified. In 2013 and 2014, data was collected from a representative sample of all categories of target and comparison groups. A new round of data will be collected in 2016, which will include a gender perspective as well as the impact on the dairy supply chain and beneficiaries.



4. The four categories of voucher programme target groups are 1) beneficiary households; 2) participating dairy processors whose products can be obtained through the vouchers; 3) participating farmers who supply fresh milk to the participating dairy processors; and 4) participating retailers.

## Market and Price Monitoring in Conflict-Affected Areas

In response to the dynamic situation in conflict-affected areas, countries within the region have developed flexible and unique market and price monitoring systems. Key features include 1) a systematic approach to analyse and monitor food availability; 2) a mixed approach using both quantitative and qualitative data; and 3) the use of alternative data collection modalities.

In Yemen, the country office has developed a high-frequency monitoring tool that easily captures market volatility, one of the main issues that has affected Yemeni markets from the beginning of the current conflict. Every week, the country office monitors local price volatility and the availability of the partial food basket across six governorates. The [Yemen Market Situation Update](#) is published every month in partnership with the Cash Working Group.

In Ukraine, in collaboration with a third party monitor (Kiev International Institute of Sociology) and using data provided by the National Bureau of Statistics, the country office monitors market indicators from government and non-government controlled areas. In addition to the data received from the government, the country office conducts key informant interviews that add a qualitative component to publically available data. Information is shared through the [Monthly Market Update bulletin](#), which covers monthly prices as well as macroeconomic information and indicators on livelihoods, income and food supply.

In Iraq, the country office has been using [mVAM](#) for weekly data collection on market prices in six conflict-affected governorates. Data is reported in the [monthly mVAM bulletin](#) and is primarily used to adjust interventions addressing food security and vulnerability in specific areas within the country. This modality of data collection, done in partnership with Islamic Relief Worldwide, complements market data collected by WFP field monitors in the country.

## Advocacy and Capacity Development

In relatively stable contexts, the Regional Bureau in Cairo prioritises advocacy and capacity development initiatives.

In Kyrgyz Republic, VAM work has been reviewed from the perspective of government priorities, comparative advantage and sustainability. The process has yielded two major results: 1) [joint government/WFP/FAO price monitoring for food security](#); and 2) [WFP/Ministry of Agriculture National Food Security Atlas](#). These initiatives are included in the National Food Security and Nutrition Programme for 2015-17, demonstrating the government's long-term commitment to these activities.

In Jordan, the country office has helped the Department of Statistics to carry out a food security survey as part of the Households Expenditures and Income Survey (HEIS). The latest [report](#) using the 2013 HEIS data has just been released in March 2016 by the Department of Statistics and WFP.

The Armenia country office has finalized a Comprehensive Food Security, Vulnerability and Nutrition Analysis, which has been conducted by WFP and UNICEF in collaboration with the National Statistics Services (NSS). The analysis has been carried out using 2014 Integrated Living Conditions Survey (ILCS) data as well as other available secondary data. WFP has recommended that the Government of Armenia continue the analysis for future ILCs and to this end, a further collaboration with NSS, including data analysis training to NSS staff, is being planned.

## VAM food and commodity prices data store



### Recently posted on wfp.org

- Yemen  
[Market Situation Update](#)
- Iraq  
[mVAM Bulletin](#)
- Yemen  
[Food Security Monitoring Bulletin](#)
- Democratic Republic of Congo  
[Rapid Assessment on Food Security in North and South Provinces of Ubangi](#)
- South Sudan  
[Market Price Monitoring Bulletin](#)
- Syrian Arab Republic  
[Market Price Watch Bulletin](#)
- Ethiopia  
[Monthly Market Watch](#)
- Mali  
[Food Security Monitoring Bulletin](#)
- Pakistan  
[Market Price Bulletin](#)
- Democratic Republic of Congo  
[Food Security Monitoring Bulletin](#)
- Southern Africa  
[El Niño: Undermining Resilience](#)
- Afghanistan  
[Market Price Bulletin](#)
- Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone  
[mVAM Food Security and Markets Update](#)
- Malawi  
[mVAM Bulletin](#)
- Syrian Arab Republic  
[mVAM Bulletin](#)
- Yemen  
[mVAM Bulletin](#)
- Cameroon, Chad, Niger, Nigeria  
[Lake Chad Basin Crisis – Regional Market Assessment Preliminary Observations](#)
- Ukraine  
[Market Update](#)
- South Sudan  
[Special Working Paper on Devaluation of South Sudan Pound](#)
- Indonesia  
[Food Security Monitoring Bulletin: Impact of El Niño](#)

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

# THE ASSESSOR

WFP's Food Security Analysis e-Newsletter

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All food security assessment reports are available online: <http://vam.wfp.org>

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