

21. GLOBAL FOOD SECURITY ANALYSIS AND MONITORING PLATFORM

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| ACTION AREA | FOOD SYSTEMS RESILIENCE |
| SOLUTION CLUSTER | SYSTEMIC APPROACHES TO CRISIS MANAGEMENT |
| THEMATIC AREA | UNDERSTANDING AND FORECASTING FOOD CRISES |
| SUBMITTED BY | UK |

SUMMARY

Vision: A global monitoring system for agriculture, food systems and food security that aims to **rationalize and build on existing monitoring systems and tools to make analysis global, better, faster and cheaper**. This solution would build off of existing global standards (such as the IPC as the global standard for food security analysis), work with the UN and IFIs who contribute with their relevant workstreams, and use advanced data tools (such as artificial intelligence and cloud based tools) to provide more consistent, frequent and comprehensive data analysis that learns from dependent relationships between weather, agriculture and food insecurity. An improved global monitoring system would enable users to make longer-range forecasts to better prioritize, make funding decisions, and target their programmes and investments.

Main outcomes:

- Achieve robust global end-to-end food security forecasting and monitoring and enable relevant interventions to maximise their support to inclusive and sustainable food security
- Support funders and implementers to target relevant interventions in an optimal and aligned way and be more effectively in lifting people sustainably out of hunger and food insecurity

WHAT RISK, SHOCK, STRESS IS THE SOLUTION TRYING TO ADDRESS?

Covid-19 has highlighted long-standing weaknesses in the humanitarian and development system for food security, including also famine prevention: Some 40+ countries are facing severe food insecurity at crisis, emergency level or worse, but the world has some idea of scale and depth of the challenge. Those suffering multiple shocks, including from climate and conflict, are worst affected.

However, 100+ countries currently undernourished populations²⁴, about whom we not really know where these are, who these are, how bad it is, and we do not know the full scale of the problem. We also do not know how these figures relate to chronic hunger.²⁵

The world does not have a singular source of information to provide real-time assessments of people in increasing food insecurity, with the geographic scale to cover any country of concern, the ability to update forecasts frequently and consistently in near real-time, and with multi-stakeholder consensus building, for the analysis of the data to have broad ownership.

Without this system, global policy makers and funders are left piecing together reports from various international organisations, which poses a number of challenges for harmonised, strategic, and timely

²⁴ 920mn in 90+ countries as per [WFP Hunger Map](#) (6 May 2021). WFP cannot monitor more countries.

²⁵ As set out in the FAO's annual flagship publication, the "[State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World](#)"

action. This leads to **sub-optimal allocation of scarce resources** and **risks those people and geographies that need support most to be un- or underserved** (not least because work elsewhere may be easier and considered better value for money, in the absence of strong data and analysis).

There is a globally accepted standard for food security analysis classification, the so-called [Integrated Food Security Phase Classification](#) (IPC). While there is a chronic and an acute IPC food insecurity scale, the IPC is currently mostly used for humanitarian response and is largely unknown among development players. The chronic scale, on the other hand, is unknown among humanitarians. Given its role and unifying character, the IPC has good potential to become a "common language" and help breathe life into the much-debated humanitarian-development nexus.

The IPC, currently supported by US, EU and UK, and used widely, provides a standardised analytical framework with agreed sets of core indicators for acute and chronic food insecurity and for nutrition. Leading international organizations are working to actively improve the state of food security analysis, including the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the FEWSNET, the World Bank, the UN World Food Program and others. Their work is based on the IPC. A vision of a strong future information system would build on the IPC as the accepted standard methodology and classification and draw on all relevant existing work by other actors, while building a strong, innovative independent global system. IPC analyses can also benefit from better data availability and provision. The IPC does not itself collect data but draws in available data from reliable sources.

HOW THE SOLUTION IMPROVES/ENHANCES RESILIENCE OF FOOD SYSTEMS?

At this time, no food system in the world is resilient as it fails to feed about 1bn and nourish 2bn people, many of whom need to employ destructive coping mechanisms of environment and selves to protect their lives and livelihoods. A better understanding of who is food insecure, how much, where, when and why and what could be done about in any particular context at any given time is expected to be a necessary, albeit in itself insufficient enabling foundation towards making food systems more resilient.

IS THE SOLUTION GAME-CHANGING?

Clearly a **game changer**, without much improved analysis and monitoring, enhancing existing work to global scale and making the total more than the sum of its parts, the enabling conditions for the delivery of needs-based impact are not met. The expectation is that interested donor Member States seed-fund, ideally supplemented by domestic resources, and participating agencies build in work that is already funded through their core operations. Once the global platform is up and running, the need for dedicated new funding after the first 5 years will be comparatively minimal.

The wasted funding in poorly informed and targeted interventions is significantly higher without such a global system, not to mention the physical and economic loss of inaction due to a lack of robust analysis. Once the world achieves its ZeroHunger Goal, scale and depth of monitoring could be scaled back. This is unlikely to be case as early as 2030.

HOW CAN THIS SOLUTION ADDRESS THAT PROBLEM?

Theory of Change: IF decision-makers better understand who is food secure, how much, at what time, and for what reasons, in which part of the world, and if this analysis is combined with robust recommendations for response actions and options to drive long-term change, THEN the enabling conditions are set for those with the greatest need to be supported, for those with need of any kind to receive more adequate and timely support earlier, and for the tendency of food insecurity to deteriorate into crises and emergencies to be mitigated, ultimately giving hope to the scale of humanitarian food security emergencies reducing.

Major assumptions:

- That much improved knowledge and understanding remove the excuse of lack of data and analysis for not providing support.
- That much improved knowledge and understanding leads to increased and better action and that political incentives or lack of attention and interest do not always prevent effective support.

Key risks and unintended consequences: That the world may reach the end of compassion and the peak of cynicism by not acting in the face of much improved knowledge and understanding at global level. That affected people become dispirited by their needs being known, however, assistance not forthcoming.

WHAT IS THE EVIDENCE GENERATED IN THE FIELD OR IN ACADEMIA TO SUPPORT THIS IDEA?

It is difficult to provide evidence for the lack of something that inhibits progress. The UK has therefore commissioned a broad landscape analysis of existing food security initiatives and instruments and of agriculture data and monitoring tools, to provide a good overview of which serve complementary purposes and a foundation on which a global food security monitoring platform that also enables the agriculture sector to maximise its contribution can be built. The report is forthcoming.

- (May 2021, [forthcoming](#), commissioned by FCDO UK), Landscape review of food security and agriculture data, analysis and monitoring systems
- Also a range of studies by Tufts [Feinstein Center](#), FAO, [IFPRI](#), World Bank, eg World Bank WP (2020), Stochastic Modeling of Food Insecurity, World Bank WP (2020), Predicting Food Crises

HOW WILL YOUR GOVERNMENT SUPPORT THIS IDEA?

Champions: Key donor Member States have discussed and are supportive of the concept. Concrete finance will be discussed at the next stage.

The platform will be built on the IPC as the accepted international gold standard on food security analysis. **All organisations, institutions and other stakeholders already involved with or supportive of the IPC** should be supportive of the IPC methodology “going global”. **All multilateral, regional & national agencies working on relevant elements** to help the world better understand the status of global food insecurity & obtain frequent updated data & analysis are expected to contribute their USP to the platform.

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN LEADING THIS SOLUTION AND ADVOCATING FOR A COALITION OF THE WILLING?

All leading donors are directly or indirectly investing in data and analytical tools and platforms. There is currently no instrument that brings them together and helps them synergize and cohere. Many of these instruments are needed, but none in themselves can take global monitoring and analysis for decision-making to the next level. This will require to build upon them, strengthen synergies and coherence and expand geographic scope while filling data gaps, including through proxies.

Several bilateral development agencies have been discussing the idea of improved and expanded monitoring systems. In 2020 the informal Development Ministers contact group for COVID-19 endorsed a call to develop an expanded and improved food security forecasting and monitoring system. We are working with like-minded partners, and will agree on leadership arrangements in the coming months.

IS THIS A NEW CONCEPT OR HAVE YOU ALREADY DISCUSSED IT WITH OTHER MEMBER STATES OR PARTNER?

New but discussed with other Member States and selected multilateral organisations at the brainstorming stage.

IS THIS SOLUTION APPLICABLE AT GLOBAL LEVEL (WITH ADAPTATIONS TO SPECIFIC LOCAL CONTEXTS) OR IS IT MEANT TO BE APPLIED IN SPECIFIC CONTEXTS OR PARTICULAR COUNTRIES?

Yes, global, with a particular focus on those struggling with food insecurity. As per its approach it will draw on local, national and regional data and analysis that meet the required confidence level for robustness.

FINANCIAL SOURCES THAT ARE CURRENTLY SUPPORTING (OR MAY PROVIDE SUPPORT) TO THIS IDEA. ADDITIONAL OPTIONS TO EXPLORE TO RAISE FUNDS (PUBLIC, PRIVATE FUNDS, INNOVATIVE FINANCING MECHANISM)?

To be determined once costed

HOW DOES THIS SOLUTION CONTRIBUTE TO (A) EMPOWER WOMEN AND COMBAT GENDER INEQUALITIES, AND (B) THE FULFILMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS, ESPECIALLY THE RIGHT TO FOOD AND THE RIGHT TO WATER, (C) MAKE USE OF INNOVATIONS (TECHNOLOGIES, INSTITUTIONS, PROCESSES)?

A food security analysis and monitoring platform of global reach aims to identify those groups and individuals with the greatest needs at any one time, including women, as gender disaggregation of data and analysis is aimed for. If better analysis then informs better targeting and more relevant approaches as per time of delivery and context, and is based on need, this should greatly benefit all those with demonstrated need. The approach is based on a recognition of the human right to food, and respects individuals' rights to sufficient quality and quantity of water for drinking and personal uses.

The platform is expected to use Artificial Swarm Intelligence to further improve the scope of data, expert analysis and consensus-based decision making.