

Joint Guidelines

for Crop and Food Security Assessment Missions (CFSAMs)



January 2009



FAO/WFP

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FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
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*FAO/WFP Joint Guidelines for Crop and Food Security
Assessment Missions (CFSAMs)*

*This handbook has been prepared by the United Nations
Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World
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Foreword

There have been FAO/WFP CFSAMs since the late 1970s. As they took place over the years, ranging from a dozen to nearly thirty annually, they have come to be recognized as critical parts of the information countries, UN, and donor agencies, as a need to plan for and respond to food crises.

The previous version of the CFSAM Guidelines appeared in 1996 and was, at the time, a major step forward in formalizing the methodological issues addressed by such missions. Since the basic outline of Assessment Mission reports has not fundamentally changed, much of the 1996 material is still relevant and appears in an updated form. However, after ten years, both FAO and WFP felt it was necessary to update the Guidelines; there were several reasons for this:

- The experience of the last ten years clearly shows that CFSAMs are taking place in a greater variety of situations and increasingly complex crises. Some were undertaken in response to “classic” situations of disaster-induced food shortfalls, while others have taken place in quick onset disaster situations (e.g. Aceh Province after the Tsunami, Bolivia in early 2007), in the context of complex emergencies (e.g. Kosovo, Iraq, Timor Leste) or in transition/reconstruction periods (e.g. Angola, Côte d’Ivoire, 2004);
- It was recognized that some areas of investigation needed to be given greater emphasis. These include the role of markets, policy and political economy issues, and domestic effective demand as a determinant of commercial imports. Methodological advances have made it possible to address these issues even within the limits of time and resources available to a CFSAM;
- Advances in certain technologies and methods (for instance remote sensing and analysis of earth observation data, geo-spatial analysis) needed to be incorporated;
- A large part of what makes a CFSAM successful is related to process issues and enhanced arrangements needed to be formalized for institutional collaboration in planning and implementing missions and working with observers and a variety of partners while retaining full independence of view and expression.

The new Guidelines have been extensively discussed between FAO/GIEWS and WFP/Food Security Analysis Service and have been reviewed by some of our major partners. We trust that they will be useful for planning future CFSAMs and training CFSAM teams and, by providing practical guidance, help generate ever more accurate and timely assessments and thus contribute to saving human lives and scarce resources.

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The process was conducted under the general guidance of Alexander Sarris, Director of the FAO Trade and Markets Division, and John Aylieff, Director of the Assessment, Analysis and Preparedness Branch of WFP. Within both organizations, many people from various units and divisions have contributed to this work. At FAO, valuable input was received from the Trade and Markets and Emergency Operations Divisions (EST,TCE), from the Agricultural Development Economics Division (ESA), the Nutrition and Consumer Protection Division (AGN), the Environmental Assessment and Management Unit (NRCE), and from the Food Insecurity and Vulnerability Information and Mapping System (FIVIMS). Within WFP, several technical units contributed, in particular the Vulnerability and Mapping Service (ODAV) and the Economic Analysis Service (PDPE). Several WFP Country Offices and Regional Bureaux added the essential "field perspective".

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While all these contributions are gratefully acknowledged, any errors or omissions remain the responsibility of FAO/ESTG and WFP/Food Security Analysis Service.

Rome, November 2008

About these guidelines

Purpose

These guidelines provide basic information and practical guidance for anyone who participates in a FAO/WFP Crop and Food Security Assessment Mission (CFSAM) - whether as a FAO/WFP core team member, a government or other agency participant, or a donor observer. They can also be of use to organizations and individuals who provide information for such a mission or need to use the findings of a CFSAM report.

Structure

The guidelines comprise six parts. Parts III to VI follow the basic structure of the report that a CFSAM team is expected to produce.

Part I describes the general objectives of CFSAMs, when they are conducted, who should normally be involved, the guiding principles, the basic concepts and methodologies, and the standard outline for a CFSAM report. These are elements that everyone contributing to a CFSAM must be familiar with.

Part II provides guidance on how to plan and undertake a CFSAM. It specifies what needs to be done in advance as well as what should be done during the period (usually 3 to 4 weeks) in which the mission is undertaken in the country concerned. It describes the process according to which the report is prepared and finalized.

Part III provides guidance on analysing the socio-economic context, agricultural production and market conditions. Chapter 6 suggests what needs to be done at the outset in terms of analysing and summarizing the *background* to the crisis and the *context*. This is essential for defining the focus of the mission's activities, interpreting data, and formulating recommendations. Chapter 7 explains what a CFSAM mission is expected to do in relation to assessing domestic *agricultural production*. The principal focus is on the current (or forthcoming) main, staple-crop harvest but the analysis must also include secondary harvests, cash crops and livestock. Chapter 8 outlines how the team should analyse the characteristics and functioning of *markets*, and *market flows and prices*, the implications for food security in different areas and for different population groups and the possibilities for local purchase by the government, WFP or other agencies. Some of this analysis can - and should - be done prior to the start of the mission itself, in most cases.

Part IV describes how a CFSAM team should analyse the overall food supply situation in the country. Chapter 9 describes how to prepare a national *staple food balance sheet*. Chapters 10 to 12 provide guidance on estimating and forecasting stocks, estimating requirements for food consumption and other uses, preparing projections for external trade, which are essential for preparing a balance sheet.

Part V provides guidance on analysing information on the *food security situation at household level* including identifying at-risk population groups, the nature and severity of their food insecurity, their prospects for the coming months, and their expected food

access shortfalls - hence the type, scale and timing of the assistance (food and/or non-food) they will need in order to have safe access to adequate food in the coming year.

Part VI provides guidance on bringing the various analyses and perspectives together - notably the (macro-level) *conclusions* in relation to the food supply situation and the (micro-level) conclusions concerning the emergency assistance needs of crisis-affected households. It suggests how the team may identify the most appropriate and feasible *response options* (food and/or non-food) and preparing *recommendations* for an assistance strategy (including targeting arrangements) and the indicators that need to be monitored during the coming months to detect changes in the situation and needs.

The **annexes** (at the back of the printed version of these guidelines) provide some tools and additional guidance on specific topics that may be useful to many CFSAM mission members while planning, conducting, and writing CFSAM surveys and reports.

The **technical notes** on the accompanying CD-ROM provide more detailed guidance and tools that may be of use to topic specialists within the overall CFSAM team. Also included is an annotated *report template* in electronic form (MS-WORD), which may be used to help write a CFSAM report.

The guidance in parts I and II is intended for anyone involved in preparing for or helping to organize a CFSAM, or participating in or reading the report of a CFSAM.

The guidance in parts III to VI is addressed to members of CFSAM missions - the "core team" of FAO and WFP staff members or consultants and also other national and international personnel who contribute to the work of the mission and participate in field visits. The "you" in those parts refers to all those individuals.

Background

In 1985 FAO produced *Guidelines for Use by FAO Crop Assessment Missions to Africa*, to provide: "a methodological framework for FAO missions making pre-harvest forecasts of production of main crops in African countries". This was followed in 1987 by FAO/GIEWS *Methodology for the Assessment of Food Supply Situation and Requirements for Exceptional Assistance Arising from Crop Failure or Unusual Crop Surpluses*.

From the early 1990s, *Crop and Food Supply Assessment Missions* (CFSAMs) have been increasingly called on to assess situations in countries where food supplies and people's access to food had been affected by conflict, social strife, poor governance, inappropriate policies or economic mismanagement as well as in countries facing food crises due to natural phenomena (droughts, floods, cyclones, etc.). In many cases, human-induced crises were combined with adverse weather conditions, external economic shocks or public health problems such as HIV-AIDS and malaria. At the same time, trade has been liberalized in many countries, increasing the importance of private commercial imports in national food supplies, and there were considerable advances in methodologies for both early warning of food crises and food needs assessments. Accordingly, the guidelines underwent a major revision in 1996 with increased attention to household food access in parallel with the analysis of the overall food supply situation, and the increasing involvement of WFP in what became joint FAO-WFP missions.

Since then, the job of assessing the impact of a shock, forecasting food supply conditions and defining short-term measures to be taken to address resulting problems, has become even more demanding. Meanwhile, national capacities for assessments have increased considerably in a number of countries.

In the last few years and especially since early 2004:

- FAO and WFP have jointly taken steps to further improve the process and methodology of CFSAMs through a joint critical review, technical discussions, consultancies, and technical workshops or expert consultations with interested partners.
- The understanding of the role and importance of markets and of the complex interactions between public and private sectors has increased and CFSAMs now seek to understand and take account of the factors that determine domestic effective demand and influence commercial imports.
- CFSAMs have routinely included “observers” from donor agencies and this has greatly contributed to the transparency of the process and to better understanding between all parties. FAO, WFP and key donor agencies have jointly developed guidelines for observers (which are presented in **Annex 5**).
- CFSAMs have undertaken more extensive analysis of crop-related remote sensing data at both national and regional levels through collaboration between FAO and space agencies and research organizations in Europe and the USA.
- CFSAMs have been undertaken without any *a priori* assumption that substantial amounts of food aid would be an appropriate response.
- A few CFSAM exercises have included a 2 to 3 month preparatory phase with initial consultations, compilation of data and other preliminary work at country level prior to the arrival of the mission.

The present guidelines represent an up-dating and refinement of the 1996 guidelines taking account of the above developments and challenges, the need for a flexible approach that can be applied to different agricultural systems, food markets and food insecurity problems, and the importance of considering a range of potential response options including non-food as well as food aid interventions. The broadening of the objectives is reflected in the new title: *Crop and Food Security Assessment Missions*.

Glossary (key terms)

Agro-ecological zone: a land resource mapping unit defined in terms of climate, land and soils, and/or land cover, and having a specific range of potentials and constraints for land use. (See *Agro-ecological Zoning Guidelines*, FAO 1996)

Apparent per capita (staple) food consumption: the figure for estimated average per capita consumption derived as the residual from (staple) food balance sheets for the last few years.

Coping strategies: activities that people resort to temporarily in order to obtain food, income and/or services when their normal means of livelihood have been disrupted.

Core team: the CFSAM core team is composed of a small number of FAO and WFP staff members or consultants from outside the country who are responsible for the final report and recommendations.

(A large number of other in-country personnel also participate in and contribute to the CFSAM process both during the preparatory phase and during the mission itself.)

Effective demand: the actual economic demand for particular goods or services that is supported by a capacity to purchase. It is a combination of the felt needs of consumers and their purchasing power.

Elasticity of demand: the price (or income) elasticity of demand - the percentage change in quantity demanded in response to a given percentage change in price (or income). Basic foods typically have a low price elasticity of demand, meaning that an increase in price would induce a proportionally much smaller decrease in quantity demanded.

Food access: the households' ability to regularly acquire adequate amounts of food through a combination of their own stock and home production, purchases, barter, gifts, borrowing or food aid.

Food availability: the amount of food that is physically present in a country or area through all forms of domestic production, stocks, commercial imports and food aid.

In the specific context of a food balance sheet, *projected food availability* is the total amount of staple food that is expected to be available in the country (or area) during the coming marketing year including opening (carry-over) stocks, domestic production, public- and private-sector commercial imports, and food aid.

Food consumption: is the food that households and individuals actually consume. It is a function of food access and the intra-household use of that food, and is influenced by social norms within the community.

Food insecurity: a situation in which people lack secure access to sufficient amounts of safe and nutritious food for normal growth and development and an active and healthy life.

People (households) who do not have assured safe access to sufficient food throughout the year are said to be “food-insecure”.

Food insecurity may be caused by the unavailability of food, insufficient purchasing power, inappropriate distribution, or inadequate use of food at the household level. Food insecurity may be chronic, seasonal or transitory.

Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food for a healthy and active life (World Food Summit Plan of Action, paragraph 1, 1996).

Household food security is the application of this concept at the household level. People (households) who have assured access to sufficient food throughout the year are said to be “food-secure”.

Food utilization refers to the use that is made of food.

According to general food security literature and analyses, food utilization refers to: (a) households’ use of the food to which they have access, and (b) individuals’ ability to absorb nutrients - the conversion efficiency of food by the body.

In the specific context of a food balance sheet, *projected food utilization* refers to the forecast *requirements* for staple foods during the coming marketing year including food for human consumption (“food use”), for use as seed, fodder and industrial purposes, plus post-harvest losses and exports.

Import parity price (IPP) is the price at the border of a good that is imported.

Livelihoods comprise the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities required for a means of living linked to survival and (future) well-being. *Livelihood strategies* are the practical means or activities through which people have access to food and other necessities, or have an income to buy them.

Livelihood zone: an area that is reasonably homogeneous and distinct from neighbouring areas in terms of main food production and income activities, cultural practices and hazards affecting food security.

Malnutrition: a pathological state resulting from too little (or too much) consumption of essential nutrients.

Marketing year: a 12 month period immediately following the harvest of the main cropping season. For example, in much of southern Africa the main season harvest starts in March and goes on until May, consequently April to March is used as a marketing year. (See FAO/GIEWS website for a complete list of marketing years for various countries.)

Observers are representatives of donors or other entities who are invited (with the host government agreement) to accompany the team through all stages of the CFSAM. They may observe and comment on all aspects but have no direct input into, or control over, the final report. Guidelines for observers are presented in **Annex 5**.

Status-quo estimate (SQE) is the figure used for average per capita (staple) food consumption for the forthcoming marketing year assuming that consumption should be maintained at recent historic levels.

Vulnerability (for food security purposes) refers to the susceptibility of a household/ community to factors that place them at risk of becoming food insecure or malnourished. It is a combination of the degree of households' exposure to risk and of their ability to cope with shocks.

Yield (for CFSAM purposes) refers to the actual whole grain yield obtained at harvest time - a figure that accounts for losses incurred during harvesting and threshing excluding post-harvest losses.

In this handbook the terms "**shock**" or "**crisis**" are used to describe the event(s) that caused the current or impending food security crisis. This includes both sudden "shocks" (e.g. due to a flood or conflict) and "crises" that develop progressively (e.g. due to drought or economic collapse).

Acronyms & abbreviations

R&CD (WFP)	WFP Representative and Country Director
CFSAM	Crop and Food Security Assessment Mission
CFSVA	Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Assessment (WFP)
CPI	Consumer Price Index
CSO	Central Statistics Office
EFSA	Emergency Food Security Assessment
ESTG (FAO)	FAO Global Information and Early Warning Service
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FAOR	FAO Representative
FBS	Food Balance Sheet
FEWS-net	Famine Early Warning System (supported by USAID)
FSIS	Food Security Information System
FSM	Food Security Monitoring
FSR	Food Security Review (by FAO/GIEWS)
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIEWS	Global Information and Early Warning System on Food and Agriculture
GIS	Geographic Information System
IPC	Integrated (humanitarian) Phase Classification
IPP	Import-Parity Price
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
NDVI	Normalized Difference Vegetation Index
PET	Pictorial Evaluation Tool
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
RB (WFP)	Regional Bureau
RS	Remote Sensing
SQE	Status Quo Estimate (for food consumption)
TOR	Terms of Reference
VAM (WFP)	Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping Service, WFP
WFP	World Food Programme



indicates a reference, or link, to another document that is not included in the printed version of these guidelines - the handbook - but is available on the associated CD-ROM.