



Summary of lessons learned paper from 2 year-development process



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This synthesis paper briefly reviews some of the key lessons learnt from 2-years application and development of the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, the IPC. Over these two years, IPC roll-outs and pilots have been ongoing in East and Central Africa, In West Africa, In Central Asia, South-East Asia and the Middle East. These experiences have highlighted key institutional issues, technical issues and lessons learnt on the usefulness of the IPC for food security analysis and for decision-making. This paper briefly synthesizes some of the essential lessons learnt and some specific country feedback on using the IPC.

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This summary is based on lessons learned from IPC experiences implemented so far:

- **In East and Central Africa**, the IPC is being used or has been introduced in Burundi, CAR, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, Southern Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda. Regional coordination, advocacy and training is ensured by the IPC Steering Committee of the Food Security and Nutrition Working Group (FSNWG). IPC maps are now produced on a regular basis in Somalia, Kenya, Southern Sudan and Burundi. DRC, Uganda, Tanzania have just produced their first maps through the summer 2008.
- **In Southern Africa**, the IPC has been introduced at the regional level in the South African Development Community (SADC) and the Regional Vulnerability Assessment Committee (RVAC), as well as in Zimbabwe.
- **In West Africa**, the IPC is being used in Côte d'Ivoire and has been introduced to stakeholders in Niger and Guinea- Conakry through training events and workshops. Work has just started to integrate the IPC indicators into the food security analytical framework (*Cadre Harmonisé*) developed and promoted by the Comité Permanent Inter-Etats de Lutte contre la Sécheresse dans le Sahel (CILSS), with Niger as the first case study.
- **In Asia**, WFP piloted the IPC in the context of Food Security Assessments in Indonesia, Cambodia and Sri Lanka, and in the context of a Food Security Monitoring System in Nepal.
- **In Central Asia and the Middle East**, WFP piloted the IPC in Tajikistan and in Iraq.
- In addition, **FEWS NET** uses the IPC approach in all countries where it is present (in Africa, Central Asia and Latin America) as a framework for its Food Security Outlooks.

1. Institutional lessons learnt

1.1. The IPC has the potential to provide a platform for a broad based partnership amongst diverse food security actors including government, international and donor representatives.

- 1.1.1. Within IPC national technical working groups, it is important to have strong engagement from line ministries together with UN and key NGOs in a multi-agency environment, in order to have a multisectoral approach and to build consensus over the judgment of the phase.
- 1.1.2. Stakeholders' buy-in is key to the success of the IPC analytical process. Expectations and roles of all team members should be agreed upon with anticipation.

1.2. Building complementarities with existing data collection/food security systems, and finding an institutional home for the IPC are essential.

- 1.2.1. The involvement of existing food security institutional structures is critical for identifying appropriate government and partner agency support.
- 1.2.2. It is useful to evaluate the various institutions relevant to food security before deciding where the IPC system should be lodged.
- 1.2.3. It is important the IPC be understood as an add-on to existing food security analysis and coordination systems to gain acceptance. Indeed, the IPC does not replace any process or methodology currently being used.
- 1.2.4. Continued awareness raising is required to sensitize practitioners and decision makers to the distinctions between IPC meta-analysis and needs assessment.

1.3. Once initiated, the IPC process should follow a number of important steps:

- 1.3.1. The national IPC technical working groups should receive substantial technical training in the IPC process supported by an experienced technical person and an IPC user guide.
- 1.3.2. Members are expected to be familiar with food security concepts. Often, a foundation training course on food security concepts and analysis needs to be organized.
- 1.3.3. Analysis sessions should be well prepared (tables filled in and shared in advance) prior to the analysis workshop.
- 1.3.4. Communication is critical to ensure acceptability of results vis-à-vis political expectations and pressure.
- 1.3.5. Lessons learned sessions after each classification exercise are important to evaluate the process and start planning for the next cycle

1.4. Some key sustainability aspects include:

- 1.4.1. Developing technical expertise over time is essential. It may take two or three cycles of IPC analysis before the national technical team is fully familiar with the approach and is confident in handling data and making classifications.
- 1.4.2. Decentralization of IPC analysis to sub-national levels is cost-effective and improves local knowledge of food security issues. However there must be resources and capacity development at sub-national level, with technical guidance and backup from the national level to maintain rigor, objectivity and credibility of the entire analysis.
- 1.4.3. In the initial stages of IPC introduction and usage, financial and technical support from outside the government system is very important. This support should be crafted as temporary and compliment the cost of the existing assessments.

2. Technical lessons learnt

2.1. Maintaining a global coordination of the IPC development is critical to ensure that the approach remains consistent across countries and allow inter-country comparisons.

2.2. A number of lessons have informed an initial revision of the IPC Manual (version 1.1). The most prominent include:

2.2.1. Until it is consolidated, the IPC process should focus on food security rather than broadening up to humanitarian issues. Thus the name was changed from “food security and humanitarian” to “food security” classification.

2.2.2. The severity of food security and the time factor (chronic versus transitory) should not be mixed in the scales. Thus the name of phase 2 was changed from “chronically” to “moderately/borderline” food insecurity.

2.2.3. Phases 1 and 2 of the scale have been broken down in 3 phases to allow for more sensitivity at the lower end of the scale.

2.3. A substantial technical revision is required to finalize the IPC approach, in particular:

2.3.1. Population thresholds must be developed and reviewed by experts for all indicators currently in the reference table. A few more outcome indicators, often available (e.g. some MDG indicators), as well as process or indirect indicators should also be identified and included in the IPC reference table.

2.3.2. How should pockets of humanitarian needs be recognised and dealt with? Options include to undertake the analysis down to the livelihood group in need; or to classify food security according to the worst-affected group.

2.3.3. There is a need for further clarity between the “current” and the “early warning” phases.

2.3.4. Whether and how the potential masking effect of humanitarian assistance should be taken into account in the classification must be further discussed.

2.4. In conducting an IPC analysis, some of the following technical issues may appear:

2.4.1. Filling in all 3 IPC templates for all areas is heavy. It may be possible to fill only template 1 (situation analysis) when time is an issue, and postpone the other two (causal analysis), though acknowledging that it will affect the capacity of IPC users to relate the situation analysis to responses.

2.4.2. The quality of the analysis ultimately depends on the quality and availability of data. When quality is not ensured, the initial IPC analysis may be weaker (less use of direct reference indicators, more judgement based).

2.4.3. Non-prescriptive response analysis is a useful exercise to identify and prioritize appropriate responses in both food and non-food sectors. But it is important that the response planning component be conducted separately from the response analysis.

3. Use and usefulness of the IPC

3.1. Usefulness of IPC for improving national food security systems:

- 3.1.1. The IPC helps to identify information gaps
- 3.1.2. The IPC helps to streamline existing information into a consistent situation analysis.

3.2. The IPC is instrumental in making the government own the analytical process.

3.3. Usefulness of IPC for consensus–building:

- 3.3.1. The IPC process acts as a catalyst for food security coordination among various stakeholders
- 3.3.2. The IPC is instrumental in reaching a consensus over the severity of food insecurity
- 3.3.3. The IPC map is recognized an excellent tool to communicate the information with stakeholders externally (local government, organizations, donor governments, media, etc.) and internally (e.g. senior management).

3.4. Usefulness of IPC for decision-making and resource allocation

- 3.4.1. The IPC increases transparency and accountability in how conclusions are made, enabling decision makers to demand well-organized evidence to support findings
- 3.4.2. The IPC facilitates the formulation of appropriate non prescriptive response options in spite of expected, complex and competing agendas.
- 3.4.3. The IPC helps decision makers to be strategic in their response to food insecurity, looking at food and non-food responses.
- 3.4.4. The situation-response linkage can be a basis for resource mobilization to specific audiences and the recommendations can be refined at planning level.
- 3.4.5. The situation-response linkage also provides opportunities for monitoring previous recommendations.
- 3.4.6. The IPC has been recognized to be useful for the planning and resource allocation process. It can be the basis for a joint response analysis, although additional elements are required (e.g. feasibility, operational factors etc.).
- 3.4.7. Linkages between IPC situation analysis and response planning could be facilitated and possibly institutionalized in future processes.

3.5. Use of IPC:

- 3.5.1. The IPC process requires national stakeholders' participation and ownership.
- 3.5.2. The IPC tool/classification itself may be used at the agency level, for instance to communicate the results of an assessment.
- 3.5.3. The IPC can be also used to help standardize monitoring systems and to mobilize funds for monitoring.

4. Some lessons learnt from specific country applications

Country activities	Institutional issues	Technical issues	Use and Usefulness of IPC
Cambodia	- Stakeholders discussions should be initiated with anticipation.	- Standard indicators and thresholds should be developed for indirect evidence. Draft indicators and thresholds were developed locally.	
Côte d'Ivoire	Lessons on the IPC training workshop: - It should be preceded by foundation training on food security. - It should be done using real country data.	- IPC analysis sessions should be prepared and analysis templates pre-filled in before the analysis workshop takes place. - The first two phases (1 & 2) should be broken down in 3 phases (i.e. an additional phase should be introduced).	- The IPC should be used for advocacy for monitoring resources (to standardize future surveys in line with the IPC, and to extend them to the whole country). - IPC results should be communicated to donors and operational partners who were not part of the process.
DRC	The potential benefits from decentralization are important: IPC analysis has been undertaken, using a decentralized approach (provincial level ministries in the driving seat). However, these required higher than expected investments in capacity building whilst the actual independence of the analysis may have been slightly weakened by local politics considerations		To be potentially used in the planning and resource allocation process of the pool fund of the Humanitarian Advocacy Group (HAG)
Indonesia		- The first two phases (1 & 2) should be broken down in 3 phases. - Additional standard indicators and thresholds should be developed for direct evidence. Draft indicators and thresholds were developed locally.	- The IPC proved a useful type of assessment in the context where recent enough data was available, while time and resource was not available to conduct a survey considering the size of the country.

Country activities	Institutional issues	Technical issues	Use and Usefulness of IPC
Iraq		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Thresholds need to be better defined for all key outcome indicators in the IPC reference table. 	
Kenya	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The IPC provides a platform for a broad based partnership amongst diverse food security actors including government, international and donor representatives. - It is important that the IPC should be established within existing food security institutions or coordination mechanisms - The relevant parts of government must endorse the use of the IPC in the country. - It is important that should be understood as an add-on to existing food security analysis and coordination systems to gain acceptance. - Learning events are important to take stock and plan on the next round of IPC analysis. - Developing technical expertise over time is essential as it may take two or three cycles of PC classification before the national technical team is fully familiar with the tool - Decentralization of the IPC analysis to sub-national administrative levels is cost-effective and improves local knowledge of food security issues. However there must be resources and, capacity development at the sub-national level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The incorporation of 'chronic food insecurity' aspects requires further attention. Proposals to increase the sensitivity of the lower end of the crisis scale, incorporating resilience of households in different livelihoods to shocks, should be tested. - Additionally, there is a need to develop a chronic scale that provides information about recurrent food insecurity - Awareness raising and training efforts help to identify shortcomings which the IPC could address e.g. consistency of terminology, cut offs for various indicators. - The situation analysis should be insulated from any pressures associated with response planning. - Non-prescriptive response analysis is a useful exercise to identify and prioritize appropriate responses in both food and non-food sectors. - It is important that the response planning component be conducted separately from the response analysis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The IPC helps to identify information gaps and to streamline existing information into a consistent situation analysis. - The IPC increases transparency and accountability in how conclusions are made, enabling decision makers to demand well-organized evidence to support findings. - IPC has made it easier for the multiple stakeholders to reach technical consensus in situation analysis and make appropriate non prescriptive response options in spite of expected, complex and competing agendas. - The IPC enables decision makers to be strategic in their response to food insecurity. The situation-response linkage can be a basis for resource mobilization to specific audiences and the recommendations can be refined at planning level. This linkage also provides opportunities for monitoring and evaluating the impact of previous recommendations. - The standardized classification criteria used in IPC allows comparison of the severity of situations from one place to another within a

Country activities	Institutional issues	Technical issues	Use and Usefulness of IPC
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Linkages between IPC situation analysis and response planning could be facilitated and possibly institutionalized in future processes. - In the initial stages of IPC introduction and usage financial and technical support from outside the government system is very important. 		<p>country, as well as over time (in terms of how a situation is worsening or improving).</p>
<p>Nepal - adaptation of the IPC to a FS Monitoring System</p>	<p>Setting up locally based food security (FS) consultation networks/forums (formed by key stakeholders) is necessary to share / verify FS information and building consensus on the classification decision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In the context of a monitoring system in particular, it is not sufficient for an external mission with limited time available to facilitate the IPC process, but it should be coordinated by the permanent Country Office team. However, an orientation for the country team can be necessary. - Training on FS should precede the phase classification process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The terminology of the phases and their general description may need to be further detailed to be understandable to local users. - Standard IPC indicators had to be adjusted to the local context and to monitoring purposes. Some of the IPC reference indicators could not be used either because they were not available at small geographical scale or not sensible to short-term changes that had to be captured for monitoring purposes. Indicators and thresholds for indirect evidence were therefore developed locally. - Some of the IPC indicators (i.e. coping, hazards) should be extended to all of the IPC Food Security phases. - Part 1 of the IPC analysis template should be reorganized to facilitate the situation analysis at local level and improve 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - IPC is an excellent approach to conduct a FS situation analysis and to communicate information. However the tool has to be adapted when used for monitoring purposes. - Local FS consultation forums, using the IPC tools, can be a basis for a joint situation/response analysis, funds mobilization and FS coordination.

Country activities	Institutional issues	Technical issues	Use and Usefulness of IPC
		the transparency of the classification decision.	
South Sudan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Government ownership is key to success: the IPC process in South Sudan has been led by the government since its onset. - The existing Livelihoods Analysis Forum has provided the right institutional home for initiating the process. - On the longer term the IPC will be part of the National Food Security Council currently under formation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The IPC builds on existing methodologies: the IPC analysis has been largely based on the livelihoods data derived from HEA and has permitted to put this information into a commonly agreed food security perspective. - Livelihoods zoning has been superimposed with administrative units to facilitate the process of decision making by local administrators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The IPC has been instrumental in reaching a consensus over the severity of food insecurity and in making the government own such analytical process, which in the past was essentially managed by external agencies.
Tajikistan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The IPC process should be supported by a food security analyst at local level, rather than on staff from regional or HQ offices. - Division of labor should be agreed upon between partners at the onset. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Phase 2 of the scale should be broken down in 2 phases, to highlight the different level of food security in the country (and avoid that the whole country falls into one phase only). - Name of phase 2 "chronically food insecure" can mislead an IPC working group in classifying food security according to the time factor rather than severity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The IPC process allows identification and agreement on strengths and weaknesses of earlier reports and assessments, for the benefit of future work. - The IPC can be used for monitoring purpose with possibly some adaptation (incorporation of process indicators, identification of representative livelihood zones, etc.)

5. Sources of information

This compilation paper includes lessons learned and technical papers from field users and headquarters:

- *IPC Manual version 1.1*, CARE International, FAO, FEWS NET, the EC Joint Research Center (JRC), Oxfam GB, Save the Children UK, Save the Children US and WFP, July 2008
- *JRC Notes on the IPC Manual version 1.1*, JRC, July 2008
- *Validation et leçons apprises du premier exercice d'analyse IPC, Abidjan*, FAO and WFP, Décembre 2007
- *Work plan for version 2*, IPC Technical Working Group Meeting, May 2008
- *An initial mapping / stock taking exercise of assessment and analysis tools in the Central and East Africa region*, OCHA, December 2007
- *Report on the IPC learning workshop*, Kenya KFSSG, April 2007
- *Lessons learned during WFP-led pilot implementation of the IPC, Indonesia (December 2006), Cambodia (February 2007), March 2007*
- *IPC In Kenya, Lessons Learnt, Short Rains Assessment 2007*, updated draft, FAO, April 2008
- *Lessons Learnt from the Implementation of the IPC in Kenya to date, draft/not for circulation, FAO, September 2008*
- *FAO position paper on IPC technical addendum, IPC Technical Review Process Stage 1*, FAO, November 2007
- *Report on the IPC Learning and Planning Workshop*, October 2007, Nairobi, Kenya
- *WFP Technical inputs to revising the IPC Manual*, WFP September 2007
- *Preliminary Synthesis Report of IPC Online Technical Forum*, FAO, March 2007
- *IPC Working Group Session*, Kenya February 2007

The IPC Global Partners:



