IPC

Integrated Food Security Phase Classification

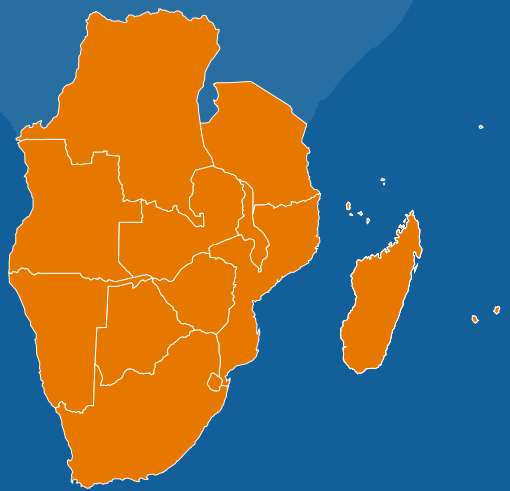
Evidence and Standards for Better Food Security and Nutrition Decisions

SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY

TOWARDS A COMMON FUTURE

IPC REGIONAL IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY FOR SOUTHERN AFRICA (2026 - 2030)

JANUARY 2026



IPC Technical Working Group (Vulnerability Assessment Committee) Chairs in Southern Africa

IPC Analysis Partners in Southern Africa

IPC Global Partners

IPC Funding Partners

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Abbreviations

AP	Analysis Platform
CILSS	Comité permanent inter-État de lutte contre la sécheresse au Sahel
CCLE	Cross-country learning exchanges
GSP	Global Strategic Programme
GSU	Global Support Unit
IPC	Integrated Food Security Phase Classification
NVAC	National Vulnerability Assessment Committees
PAFI	Protracted Acute Food Insecurity
PAMN	Protracted Acute Malnutrition
RAP	Regional Agricultural Policy
RAAp	Rapid Analysis and Action planning
RIASCO	Regional Inter-Agency Standing Committee
RISDP	Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan 2020-2030
RVAA	Regional Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis Programme
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SICA	Sistema de la Integración Centroamericana
TWG	Technical Working Group
VAC	Vulnerability Assessment Committee

i. Foreword

Food insecurity and malnutrition remain pressing and complex challenges confronting Southern Africa. Recurrent climatic shocks, economic volatility, conflict, poverty and other structural vulnerabilities continue to undermine livelihoods, stretch national capacities, and threaten the well-being of millions of people across the region. In this context, timely, credible, and harmonised evidence is indispensable for informed decision-making, effective coordination, and strategic investment in both emergency response and long-term resilience. With over half of the Southern African Development Community's (SADC) population expected to live in urban areas by 2030, hazards are becoming more widespread and more intense, while vulnerabilities grow deeper and increasingly multi-dimensional. Acute events unveil structural weaknesses, especially in urban contexts where social fabrics are looser. Detecting these vulnerabilities in relation to food and nutrition security requires advanced tools that guide concrete prevention programming, and rapid response.

Since its introduction to the SADC in 2012, the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), has become a cornerstone of food and nutrition security analysis in the region. Anchored in national systems and implemented through strong multi-stakeholder partnerships, IPC has enabled member states and their partners to develop a shared understanding of food insecurity and malnutrition, strengthen early warning, and guide prioritisation of humanitarian and development responses. The leadership of SADC, through the Regional Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis (RVAA) Programme and National Vulnerability Assessment Committees (NVACs), has been instrumental in embedding IPC within regional and national decision-making architectures. The SADC Secretariat chairs the regional IPC Technical Working Group (TWG), while government institutions host and chair IPC National Technical Working Groups in all SADC countries adopting it. Leveraging on partnership and comparative advantages, the IPC has strengthened regional and country humanitarian appeals, informing anticipatory actions, and bringing vital international attention to emerging and protracted crises.

Despite the challenging global financial context, regional and national Vulnerability Assessment Committee (VACs) work closely with international partners and donors to attain harmonised data collection and analysis systems that inform IPC Acute Food Insecurity and Acute Malnutrition analyses in 10 of the 16 SADC countries. The role of NVACs is crucial not only for ensuring the continuity of the IPC, but also to detect the areas of improvement.

This SADC IPC Regional Implementation Strategy (2026–2030) marks an important milestone in the evolution of IPC in Southern Africa. It reflects a collective ambition to consolidate gains, address persistent challenges, and reposition IPC as a more agile, forward-looking, and decision-oriented system, one that not only responds to crises, but also helps prevent them. The strategy responds to emerging needs articulated by member states, including stronger localisation and institutionalisation, improved timeliness, expanded geographical and thematic coverage, enhanced use of digital innovation in support of anticipatory action, and greater focus on underlying and persistent drivers of food insecurity and malnutrition. It reaffirms the lead role of the SADC Secretariat in steering IPC agenda within NVACs and countries, as well as in the region.

The strategy is firmly aligned with the IPC Global Strategic Programme III (2023–2026), as well as with SADC's regional policy frameworks, including the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) and the Regional Agricultural Policy. It underscores the importance of country ownership, regional coordination, and global solidarity, while promoting innovation, capacity development, and financial

sustainability. Notably, it positions Southern Africa as a key contributor to the advancement of IPC globally, particularly through the rollout of new tools such as the protocols for classification of Protracted Acute Food And Protracted Acute Malnutrition Crises (PAFI/PAMN) and strengthened linkages with early warning and anticipatory action mechanisms.

The successful implementation of this strategy will require a sustained commitment from member states, the SADC Secretariat, IPC global and regional partners, the IPC Global Support Unit (GSU), civil society, academia, and resource partners. We call upon all stakeholders to work collectively to operationalise this shared vision, invest in national and regional capacities, and safeguard the technical integrity and independence of IPC processes. Together, we can ensure that the IPC continues to serve as a trusted, evidence-based platform that supports timely action, protects lives and livelihoods, and advances resilience and sustainable development across Southern Africa.

We commend this strategy to all partners as a guide document for our shared principles and aspirations, and reaffirm our joint commitment to strengthening IPC as a vital public good for the region.

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ii. Executive Summary

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) encompasses countries and sub-regions with broadly similar socio-economic characteristics. However, significant differences exist in geo-climatic conditions, agro-ecological systems, and exposure to shocks at the sub-national level. The diverse hazards and vulnerabilities, along with varying capacities to prevent disasters leading to food insecurity and malnutrition, necessitate comparable diagnostic tools across countries to enable a harmonised regional response. A strong SADC Secretariat, well integrated with IPC regional platforms, positions the IPC to effectively address the evolving needs of decision-makers in preventing, mitigating, and responding to food insecurity and malnutrition in a holistic, multi-sectoral manner. Based on these premises, this strategy provides a comprehensive roadmap for the implementation of IPC in Southern Africa from 2026 to 2030.

The IPC was formally introduced in SADC in 2012 through a pilot led by the SADC RVAA Programme. Initial implementation included countries like Zimbabwe, Malawi, and Mozambique, with support coming from SADC, FAO, FEWS NET and WFP to standardise food security analysis. By 2024, IPC was active in 10 of the 16 SADC member states.[1]

The coordination of IPC in the region is aligned with and supported by the SADC RVAA Programme. The programme contributed significantly to the strengthening of National Vulnerability Assessment Committees (VACs), which brought on board the necessary linkages at the country level for partners involved in assessment and analysis. This linkage ensures coherence with broader regional food security analysis frameworks and reinforces synergies between IPC and VACs. National coordination mechanisms (TWGs) play a vital role in leading and embedding IPC processes within national structures.

In 2023, the third IPC Global Strategic Programme (2023-2026) was launched to identify the key strategic priorities for IPC globally. Since then, multiple consultations have taken place in paralell between the SADC Secretariat, the IPC GSU, and national VACs on the urge to reorient a common strategy for the use and development of IPC tools that inform better decision-making on short- to long-term food security and nutrition responses and programming. Since 2023, significant regional shocks and contextual changes—such as the lingering effects of COVID-19, El Niño/La Niña events in 2023, economic crises, droughts, cyclones, and now a shrinking funding environment for international humanitarian actors—have highlighted the need to reposition and refine the use of the IPC. These developments underscore the importance of more reactive, preventive, and holistic tools capable of detecting complex vulnerabilities early, linking them to rapid response mechanisms, and supporting robust policy measures to mitigate shocks. It is now time to assess these experiences and steer IPC into a new era where global, regional, and country partners leverage on strengths, address gaps, and refine the tool to meet evolving decision-making needs.

The SADC IPC Regional Implementation Strategy (2026–2030) underscores a robust alignment between the investment priorities of the IPC Global Strategic Programme III (2023–2026) [2] and the pressing themes consistently articulated by member states. This includes the urgent need to strengthen IPC as a dynamic,

[1] IPC is currently adopted in Angola, DRC, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Tanzania, and Zambia. Other countries not applying IPC include Botswana, Comoros, Mauritius, Seychelles, South Africa and Zimbabwe.
[2] IPC Global Strategic Programme III (2023-2026): https://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC_GSP_2023_2026.pdf

decision-support tool for long-term, evidence-based, and multi-sectoral planning. The strategy responds directly to calls made at the March 2025 Annual Oversight Meeting (AOM) in Harare, Zimbabwe, where stakeholders emphasised the imperative of institutionalising IPC to support food security and nutrition governance across sectors.

This regional strategy identifies the following critical areas where further progress can strengthen IPC implementation and impact across the region: (i) the need to foster a clearer and more shared perception of IPC ownership; (ii) opportunities to reinforce coordination and promote more integrated consolidation mechanisms; (iii) the potential to broaden partnerships and increase stakeholder plurality in IPC processes; (iv) the need to expand geographical coverage to ensure more comprehensive analysis; (v) enhancing the predictability and adaptability of IPC analyses to better respond to changing contexts; (vi) encouraging consistent and context-appropriate use of the IPC Acute Food Insecurity (AFI) scale, particularly in countries with low levels of acute food insecurity; (vii) strengthening financial sustainability and identifying pathways to improve efficiency; (viii) supporting greater autonomy of country and regional entities in guiding IPC processes; (ix) increasing the use of innovative technologies to enhance data collection, analysis, and storage; and (x) improving the overall quality, coverage, and frequency of data to underpin robust and timely IPC analyses.

To effectively address the above areas for improvement and unlock the full potential of IPC in terms of relevance, quality, and institutionalisation, this strategy outlines the following strategic investment objectives for the next five years:

a. **Strengthen IPC partnerships** through a multi-pronged approach, including the institutionalisation of IPC within national systems and simultaneously enhancing SADC's role in steering regional efforts while actively engaging in the Global Steering Committee of the IPC; Expand IPC collaborations to include new actors with expertise in sectors that indirectly influence food and nutrition security, such as health, shelter, economy, infrastructure, social protection, public spending, conflict, and others. Strengthening partnerships will also facilitate resource optimization through improved coordination—particularly in data collection—allowing for increased IPC coverage without significant additional costs. The strong institutional anchorage of IPC regionally and within the VAC systems is a remarkable opportunity for institutionalising the partnership and coordinating the development and use of the IPC within governmental and extra-governmental response mechanisms.
b. **Enhance IPC agility** by investing in IT innovations and streamlining processes to better respond to and anticipate food security and nutrition crises. The IPC AP will help reduce the duration of analyses, while optimising the depth and supporting the EW/AA function of the IPC. Integrating IPC into national early warning systems and existing thresholds for key parameters will improve timely, more frequent updates for early detection of vulnerabilities. Cost-effective measures like virtual modality for IPC updates, and increased use of national facilitators will support timeliness and sustainability of analyses. Capacity building and fast-tracking certification are essential for this purpose. Additionally, trend analyses using the IPC scale will help identify gaps in preparedness and resilience against recurring shocks, turning agility into a strategic opportunity to better understand vulnerabilities. VACs and SADC secretariat will coordinate the cost-reduction agenda on data collection, with the support of GSU. Tools should be streamlined across countries, and specific cost-cutting measures – such as focus on hotspots and clustering of districts with similar agro-ecological and vulnerability conditions should be examined. Where needed and feasible, joint multi-sectoral

assessments -integrating food security and nutrition as well as other relevant thematic domains– should be promoted.

c. **Enhance IPC relevance for decision making** by deploying modern technologies and digital tools, such as the IPC Analysis Platform, to sustain the needed early warning function of the IPC in contexts of high exposure to natural hazards. Regional champions should engage with RAAWG to define region-specific thresholds for Early warning and Anticipatory sustaining preparedness and DRR/M efforts. IPC predictive monitoring system such as the Rapid Analysis and Action planning (RAAp) of the IPC AP will become mainstream tools, once existing regional and country-specific thresholds for key parametres and proxy variables are integrated risk analysis/forecasting tools, and mobile data collection methods, to streamline analysis processes and improve accuracy, timeliness, and efficiency. In 2025 and 2026, GSU will promote capacity building efforts towards TWGs to ensure the transfer of knowledge and proficiency on the various technical guidance notes – conflict, gender, linkages AFI/AMN, disaggregated analyses – to boost the decisional autonomy of local actors and VACs on the use of such tools when needs arise. The PAFI prototypes – already tested in 2024 in Malawi and Namibia – will be rolled-out in most SADC countries by 2030 to guide the long term multi-sectoral agenda, unpacking the economic, social, environmental and physical vulnerabilities, to identify and address underlying causes of food insecurity and malnutrition.

d. **Preserve IPC quality and credibility** in the framework of localisation and empowerment of local entities on IPC, GSU will enhance the transfer of knowledge and skills towards national VACs which serve as the TWGs as well as other stakeholders through standardised trainings and cross-country learning exchanges (CCLE programme). These efforts will provide a large number of analysts with the required Level 3 IPC certification to facilitate analyses without major external support. The GSU will continue monitoring the Quality Assurance function of the IPC, and be present (in person or remotely) in analyses for this purpose. As the ownership of IPC lays with the partnership (regionally and at country level), a clear awareness raising agenda will be promoted towards the senior managers of ministries, institutions and extra-governmental partners, to emphasize the scope and nature of the various scales and ensure thorough, transparent and fast IPC processes and analyses, avoiding delays and any risks of interference with the technical processes.

Sustainability and long-term perspective are at the core of this vision. The strategy promotes the gradual transition from ad hoc IPC analyses to fully institutionalised, country-owned plural processes embedded in national Vulnerability Assessment Committees (VACs).

Theory of Change

The Theory of Change for the SADC IPC Regional Implementation Strategy (2026–2030) is built on a clear understanding of the region's key challenges. These challenges inform the strategic objectives, which in turn guide the expected outputs and outcomes. This logical pathway ensures that targeted actions directly respond to identified gaps and drive progress toward the long-term impact.

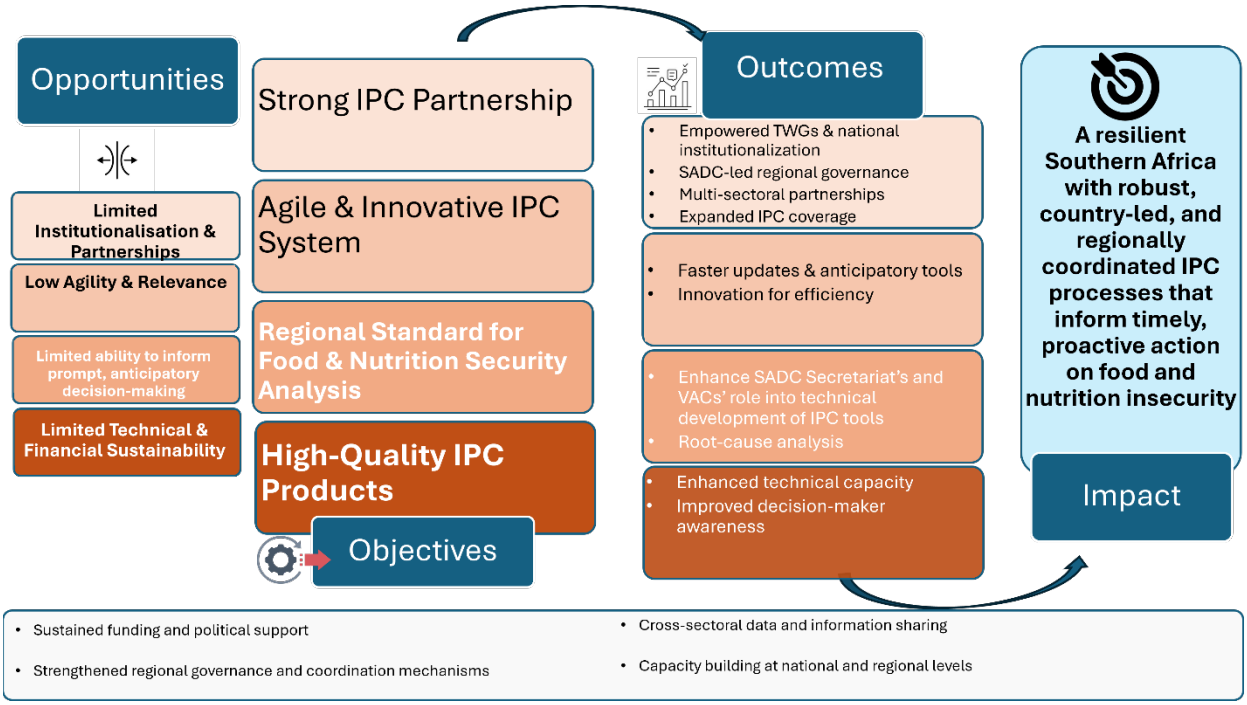

Figure 1: Theory of Change

By 2030, Southern Africa will achieve robust, country-led, and regionally coordinated IPC processes that inform proactive and timely actions to detect, prevent and address food and nutrition insecurity and strengthen resilience to crises.

1. Overview of Food Insecurity and Acute Malnutrition Drivers in Southern Africa

Southern Africa faces persistent and multifaceted challenges to achieving sustainable food and nutrition security, driven by a complex interplay of climatic, economic, social, and political factors. Recurrent droughts, floods, and other climate-related shocks continue to disrupt agricultural production cycles and productivity, livelihoods, and access to adequate and nutritious food. These environmental stressors, coupled with economic shocks, rising food prices, conflict, and social inequalities, exacerbate vulnerabilities and contribute to widespread food insecurity and malnutrition across the region. In the recent past the manifestation of the factors in unpredictable patterns have continued to significantly affect the livelihoods of the communities in the region.

Malnutrition remains a critical concern in selected hotspots, particularly among children under five years of age, pregnant and breastfeeding women, and other vulnerable populations. Malnutrition not only impairs health and development but also undermines resilience, economic productivity, and broader social well-being. This situation is further complicated by the high poverty levels in the rural areas that deny the communities the opportunity to recover from shocks whenever they happen. Addressing nutrition alongside food security is, therefore, central to improving health outcomes and fostering sustainable development in Southern Africa. Nutrition data collection systems are not consistently integrated within VAC systems, which hampers the ability to monitor seasonal peaks in hotspot areas and to identify blind spots where Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) may rise unexpectedly due to food insecurity and other direct or indirect factors.

Recognising these urgent challenges, SADC is committed to strengthening a harmonised, evidence-based approach for the analysis and reporting of food and nutrition insecurity. Since 2004, IPC has provided a globally recognised and scientifically rigorous framework that integrates food security and nutrition data to classify the severity of crises. This enables governments, humanitarian agencies, and development partners to accurately identify populations at risk and prioritise interventions.

This strategy lays out the pathway for institutionalising the IPC at national and regional levels within SADC, and defining the most pressing strategic axes and thematic areas of investment to ensure that IPC serves the original function of informing decision making for addressing food insecurity and malnutrition, mindful of the rapidly evolving contexts and needs of governments as well as UN agencies and other partners. This strategy emphasises capacity development, increased agility, increased autonomy, and multi-sectoral collaboration. It aligns with existing key regional frameworks, including the SADC Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP)[3] and the Regional Agricultural Policy (RAP)[4], underscoring a shared commitment to eradicate hunger, reduce malnutrition, and build resilience among vulnerable communities.

The region aims to enhance evidence-based decision-making, optimise resource allocation, and strengthen early warning and response mechanisms. This strategy embodies a holistic and proactive approach essential for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 2 (Zero

[3] SADC Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) https://www.sadc.int/sites/default/files/2021-08/RISDP_2020-2030.pdf

[4] SADC Regional Agricultural Policy (RAP) https://www.knowledgehub.ccardesa.org/sites/default/files/ickm-documents/01_RAP-Opening-1_0.pdf

Hunger) and SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being) with a linkage to other SDGs that support remotely the food and nutrition sector. The net effect of these approaches and linkages is to effectively mitigate current and future food and nutrition security challenges across the region.

Southern Africa continues to grapple with significant food and nutrition security challenges, many of which are persistent and structural, while others are cyclical or driven by acute and recurrent shocks. Over 50 million people in the region are food insecure during lean seasons, with many facing Emergency (IPC Phase 4) or worse conditions.

***These challenges are shaped by a complex interplay of hazards and drivers*:**

Climate shocks: Recurrent droughts, cyclones, floods, and prolonged dry spells disrupt agricultural production, reduce water availability, threaten livestock systems and are responsible for emergence of new crop and livestock pests and diseases. While climate change continues to increase the frequency and intensity of these events. Natural disasters are very common in countries such as Mozambique and Madagascar, where the compounded effects of climate change, including frequent cyclones, storms, and flooding, recurrently strike communities already living on eroded or marginal lands. Mozambique, which has experienced successive climate events like Cyclones Idai (2019), Kenneth (2019), and Freddy (2023), sees entire districts pushed from moderate to acute food insecurity within weeks, underscoring the fragility of rural livelihoods[5] [6]. Madagascar's Grand Sud, on the other hand, is prone to recurrent droughts compounded by land degradation, leading to cyclical food crises that further erode community coping capacity[7].

Economic shocks: High food prices, currency depreciation, and inflation have significantly eroded household purchasing power. Many economies are struggling with low and unsustainable growth, limited fiscal space, and rising unemployment, further limiting access to food. The impact of global economic downturns have serious effects on both supply and market chains of key production factors and impact negatively the struggling economies in the region.

Conflict and insecurity: In localised areas such as northern Mozambique and several provinces of the Democratic Republic of Congo, conflict has displaced communities, disrupted markets, and constrained humanitarian access, while general insecurity has affected communities in southern Madagascar. Protracted conflicts in these areas have impoverished communities and resulted in dependency on external food assistance.

***These drivers and shocks interplay with structural and infrastructural vulnerabilities associated to underlying causes of food insecurity and malnutrition*:**

Food and nutrition insecurity in Southern Africa is deeply rooted in broader vulnerabilities as follows,

Physical vulnerability: Poor infrastructure, inadequate health systems, and limited access to clean water and sanitation exacerbate food utilisation and increase disease burdens. Conflict in northern Mozambique and other localised natural resource-based conflicts keep causing displacement and disruption of critical

[5] FRC. (2019). *Mozambique: Cyclone Idai Emergency Appeal*.
[6] UN OCHA. (2023). *Mozambique: Cyclone Freddy Flash Update*
[7] IPC Madagascar. (2022). *Acute Food Insecurity and Malnutrition Analysis – Grand Sud*

services and livelihoods. Prevention and mitigation for floods, cyclones and tropical storms remain critical to preserve the life and food security of entire communities.

Social vulnerability: Gender inequality, high youth unemployment, urban poverty, and marginalisation of vulnerable groups (e.g., the elderly, orphans, persons with disabilities) affect equitable access to food and nutrition services. At the same time, very few countries in Southern Africa have strong or scalable social protection mechanisms capable of cushioning populations from the transition into acute food insecurity or malnutrition after even minimal shocks. For instance, in Zimbabwe, while social assistance programmes exist, their reach and reliability remain constrained by fiscal limitations and political instability, leaving many vulnerable households without effective safety nets[8]. Similarly, in Angola, the absence of well-developed cash transfer systems makes it difficult to rapidly support at-risk populations during lean seasons or in the aftermath of shocks[9].

Economic vulnerability: Widespread poverty, dependence on informal employment, and livelihood fragility reduce the ability of households to withstand shocks and meet food and nutritional needs. According to SADC, in 2019, extreme poverty levels (people living on less than US$1.90 per day) were at 51 percent. The percentage of poor people will continue to decline in the near future, reaching 34 percent by 2043 but the number of extremely poor people will climb from 180.5 million to 209.8 million by 2043[10]. Economic vulnerability is prominent in contexts like Malawi, Mozambique, Madagascar and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), where limited income-generating opportunities, particularly in rural areas, systematically hinder households' financial access to food. In Malawi, for instance, the dependence on rain-fed subsistence agriculture and limited livelihood diversification options leave large portions of the population exposed to price volatility and harvest shocks.[11] Similarly, in the DRC, chronic underinvestment in infrastructure and markets restricts economic mobility and keeps millions reliant on informal, low-income activities[12].

Environmental vulnerability: Land degradation, deforestation, and loss of biodiversity compromise long-term food system sustainability and intensify the impact of climate-related shocks like droughts and flooding—often associated with El Nino and La Nina events—posing continued threats to lives and livelihoods. The recent effects of drought in 2024 in Zambia, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Malawi and recurrent droughts in southern Madagascar, as well as frequent cyclones affecting Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Madagascar are symptomatic of the tangible risks communities face. Erratic agricultural productivity is linked to limited access to inputs, reliance on rainfed agriculture, land degradation, and low levels of mechanisation hinder food production and limit resilience. While households seek to improve their livelihoods, the coping strategies employed such as charcoal burning have resulted into environmental degradation which in turn reduce productivity.

These shocks and vulnerabilities identified above create a systemic risk environment in which small shocks can escalate quickly into humanitarian emergencies, particularly for already marginalised populations such as subsistence farmers, displaced persons, and female-headed households[13].

[8] UNICEF Zimbabwe. (2023). *Social Protection Budget Brief*
[9] World Bank. (2022). *Angola Social Protection Review*.
[10] https://futures.issafrica.org/geographic/recs/sadc/
[11] FAO & WFP. (2023). *Hunger Hotspots: FAO-WFP early warnings on acute food insecurity*
[12] IPC DRC Analysis. (2023). *Integrated Food Security Phase Classification*
[13] SADC RVAA Programme. (2023). *State of Food and Nutrition Security and Vulnerability in Southern Africa*

***Counting on regional strengths*:**

Despite the challenging environment of hazards and structural vulnerabilities, the strong institutional set-up on food security, nutrition, and DRR/M within the SADC region offers remarkable advantages. RVACs and NVACs, SADC Secretariat, line ministries and technical institutions within the 16 countries work as one to leverage existing knowledge, as well as technical and financial resources to formulate regional policies aimed at strengthening national development and communities' resilience, while anticipating disasters affecting people's stability and access to food and other essential needs.

The existence of VAC systems with annual data collection cycles provides a robust foundation for monitoring, and analysis. The SADC secretariat can play an even more sound role in facilitating well-coordinated regional efforts, including within the IPC regional TWG. The secretariat will also play a crucial role in signalling specific country needs or emergencies in the Global Steering Committee fora, which comprises dedicated sessions to high representatives of resource partners. The region also attracts a wide spectrum of donors, ranging from emergency responders to development agencies and investment banks, thereby offering multiple funding opportunities.

Food security policies that enhance productivity, availability, as well as access to food, are often prioritised within government agendas, creating conducive policy environments. Increasingly, the focus of interest has shifted to prevention of disaster and mitigation of their impacts on lives and food security. VACs will count on an IPC that encompasses this early warning and DRR/M dimension of preparedness to guide finance-based forecasts. Furthermore, there is significant potential for increased investments in development initiatives. The already established framework for Anticipatory Action provides a solid basis for proactive disaster risk management, positioning the strategy for effective and sustainable implementation.

The high literacy and IT proficiency rate across the region supports capacity building efforts and the development of a pool of highly qualified and certified analysts and facilitators. The high level of connectivity enables data collection methods through digital tools and tablets, expediting the monitoring and analysis.

2. The IPC Governance and Technical Framework

IPC is an innovative multi-stakeholder global initiative aimed at enhancing food security and nutrition analysis to inform decisions. From a governance perspective, IPC is the result and the function of a partnership which exists at global, regional and national levels. The core engine of IPC at country level are the national TWGs represented by governments, civil society, regional bodies and international agencies, and fosters rigorous processes, ownership and consensus-driven outcomes. Coordinated by chairs and co-chairs, the TWG steers and plans all IPC processes including analyses, that are conducted by a largely represented analysis team. In several countries, an IPC Senior Management Group (SMG) comprising non-governmental heads of agencies and organisations exists, tasked with keeping a continued dialogue on IPC with senior officials of governmental entities hosting IPC, and raising awareness of decision makers as needed.

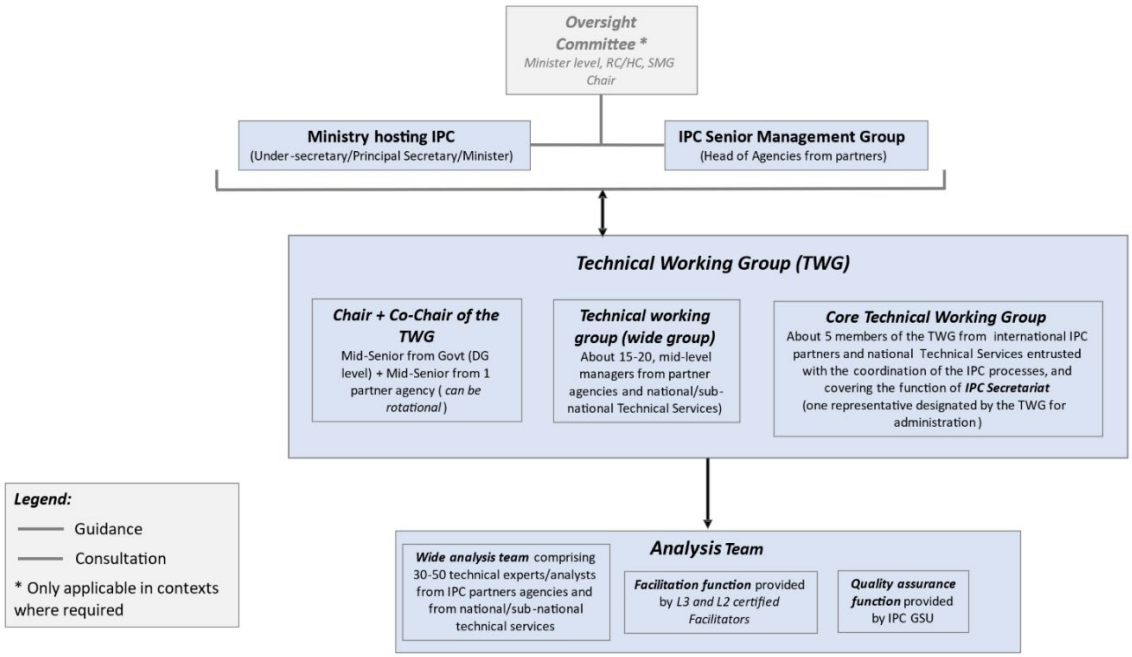

Figure 2: The typical IPC governance structure

From a technical perspective, the IPC makes use of the following analytical framework[14] which outlines the contributing factors to food security, including the causal factors, ongoing acute events and the food security pillars which determine the kind of outcomes that manifest in terms of food consumption, changes in livelihoods, nutrition and mortality.

[14] IPC Manual Version 3.1 https://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ipcinfo/manual/IPC_Technical_Manual_3_Final.pdf

Its strength lies in its ability to integrate a wide range of evidence from causal factors, impact and outcomes, including highlighting the drivers' physical, social, economic, and environmental vulnerabilities that impact populations.

The IPC Analytical Framework is a suitable tool for the SADC region. The interplay between physical[15], social, economic and environmental vulnerabilities with frequent shocks and other acute events are duly covered in the causal factors of acute food insecurity and malnutrition determining an impact on availability, access and utilization of food. Specific outcomes on food consumption, livelihood adaptation and change, nutrition and mortality enable to classify and quantify acute food insecurity and malnutrition adopting standard thresholds and protocols. The same framework is applied to all IPC countries, granting comparability across units of analyses, countries, regions, and globally.

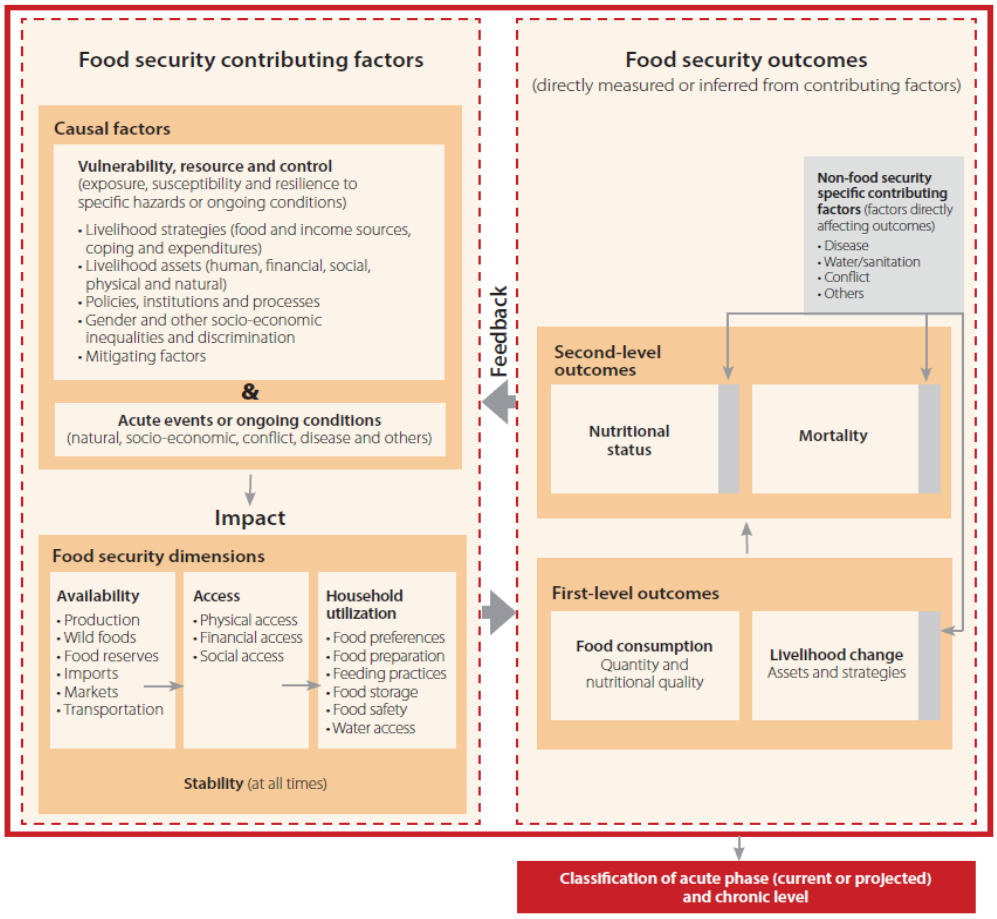

Figure 3: The IPC Analytical Framework

[15] Physical vulnerabilities include: health status, malnutrition levels, and physical access to food and essential services

In addition to the IPC Analytical Framework's ability to detect acute food insecurity and malnutrition using wide range of multi-sectoral data, the IPC offers a variety of tools that could support in-depth analyses of interest for the SADC region. These include:

- Persistent Acute Food Insecurity and Acute malnutrition (PAFI and PAMN) classifications, with roll-out expected in 2026 including in SADC countries
- IPC Communication Guidelines to enhance communication on Acute Food Insecurity and Malnutrition[16]
- Urban food insecurity analysis – roll-out expected by 2026
- Gender-sensitive IPC food security analyses[17]
- IPC guidance note on conflict analyses[18]
- IPC Globally Led Analyses[19]
- IPC Population in Need of Humanitarian Assistance (PINHA)[20]

[16] https://www.ipcinfo.org/ipcinfo-website/resources/resources-details/en/c/1156984/
[17] https://www.ipcinfo.org/ipcinfo-website/resources/resources-details/fr/c/1156889/
[18] https://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC-Guidance-Note-Conflict.pdf
[19] https://www.ipcinfo.org/ipcinfo-website/resources/resources-details/en/c/1159025/
[20] https://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC-Guidance-Note-may-2023.pdf

3. The IPC in Southern Africa

The IPC was formally introduced and piloted in SADC through the Southern Africa Development Community Regional Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis Programme (SADC RVAA) in 2012. This pilot involved several countries, including Zimbabwe, Malawi, DRC and Mozambique. The rollout was supported by organisations such as FAO, FEWS NET, WFP, and SADC, as part of broader regional efforts to standardise food security analysis. Over the years, more SADC member states began adopting and using IPC, especially for AFI analysis. As of 2024, IPC was implemented in 10 of the 16 SADC countries[21] reflecting significant progress in regional adoption. The IPC Global Strategic Programme II (2018-2022) invested significant efforts in empowering national VACs and TWGs in steering their IPC plans and agendas. The IPC Global Strategic Programme III (2023-2026) is pursuing in the same direction. It enhances the decentralisation through increased capacity development and leverage on local governance structures, while adding some critical axes and thematic focus of interest such as anticipatory action, urban, and Chronic/Persistent Acute Food Insecurity angles.

The coordination of IPC in the region is aligned with and supported by the SADC RVAA Programme. The programme contributed significantly to the establishment of National VACs, which brought on board the necessary linkages at the country level for partners involved in assessment and analysis. This linkage ensures coherence with broader regional food security analysis frameworks and reinforces synergies between IPC and national VACs. TWGs play a vital role in leading and embedding IPC processes within national structures.

Under the RVAA programme, VACs across the SADC region conduct periodic assessments to inform both short-term humanitarian response and longer-term development planning. While these country-led processes follow similar methodologies, they vary in depth and comparability.

IPC countries and years they joined

- Angola (2019)
- DRC (2012)
- Eswatini (2016)
- Lesotho (2016)
- Madagascar (2016)
- Malawi (2012)
- Mozambique (2016)
- Namibia (2019)
- South Africa (2020, dormant)
- United Republic of Tanzania (2017)
- Zambia (2018)
- Zimbabwe (2012, dormant)

In this context, the IPC adds substantial value by providing a standardised, consensus-based analytical framework that enhances regional comparability and coherence. Through IPC's harmonised outputs, SADC and its partners are better equipped to prioritise needs regionally, identify food insecurity hotspots, and coordinate cross-border or thematic responses, particularly in areas such as disaster risk reduction and management (DRR/M), resilience-building, and emergency preparedness.

Beyond technical alignment, IPC results play a growing role in regional decision-making and advocacy. During the 2023–2024 El Niño season, IPC analyses helped substantiate SADC's regional appeal and calls for anticipatory action, reinforcing early warnings with credible evidence on projected food insecurity[22].

[21] IPC is currently adopted in Angola, DRC, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Tanzania, and Zambia. Other countries not applying IPC include Botswana, Comoros, Mauritius, Seychelles, South Africa and Zimbabwe.
[22] SADC (2023). *Southern Africa Regional El Niño Preparedness and Response Plan*

Governments and regional institutions, including SADC and the Southern Africa Humanitarian Roundtable, have increasingly relied on IPC projections to advocate for early funding and technical mobilisation, including at global donor platforms.

Furthermore, IPC analyses feed directly into flagship global reports, such as the *Global Report* on Food Crises (GRFC)[23] and the Hunger Hotspots (HHR)[24]. These platforms have brought specific SADC countries to the forefront of international attention. For example, Madagascar was spotlighted in 2022 for the IPC-documented "climate-induced Famine-like conditions" in the Grand Sud[25], while Mozambique featured prominently between 2021 and 2023 due to the deteriorating food security situation in the north and central regions, exacerbated by conflict and climate shocks[26]. The visibility generated by these reports helped catalyse donor attention and humanitarian resource flows to otherwise under-prioritised crises.

The IPC complements RVAA processes not only by enhancing methodological rigor and cross-country comparability, but also by amplifying the visibility and political weight of food security crises at both regional and global levels. By institutionalising the IPC across SADC, member states will be better equipped to monitor and respond to the full spectrum of vulnerabilities undermining food and nutrition security, enhancing resilience, informing policy, and improving outcomes for the region's most at-risk populations.

[23] https://www.fsinplatform.org/report/global-report-food-crises-2025/
[24] https://www.fightfoodcrises.net/hunger-hotspots
[25] IPC Madagascar. (2022). *Acute Food Insecurity and Malnutrition Analysis – Grand Sud*.
[26] GRFC (2023). *Global Report on Food Crises 2023* – FSIN, WFP, FAO.

4. Key Challenges to IPC Consolidation in SADC

SADC is one of the most actively engaged regions in IPC, with most countries adopting its methodologies since 2012. All countries have established strong institutional frameworks embedding IPC into their decision-making processes. The SADC Secretariat is also represented on the IPC GSC, reflecting a strong regional commitment. The rapid evolution of decision-making needs—spanning predictive information for early response, DRR/M, and long-term multi-sectoral development policies—necessitates a reflection on the main challenges IPC is facing in this transition period. These challenges primarily constrain the full utilization of IPC for decision-making. The most significant constraints are summarized below and grouped into the following thematic axes:

a. Institutionalisation and partnership
b. Agility and relevance
c. Ability to inform prompt, anticipatory decision making
d. Technical sustainability

These axes will streamline the definition of strategic objectives and planned pathways and actions in the following sections of this strategy.

a. Institutionalisation and Partnership

1. Interpretation of IPC ownership

In the SADC region, IPC analyses are government-led and conducted through a pluralistic and participatory process. Consensus is ultimately reached within the IPC Analysis Team (AT) and the TWG. According to IPC protocols, this consensus is sufficient to validate the results at the conclusion of the IPC workshops. While the formal acknowledgment of findings by national institutions is considered a vital step for fostering country ownership and enhancing the use of IPC in program planning, this additional step has sometimes resulted in significant delays between the completion of the analysis and its publication.

In 2024, the IPC analyses for acute food insecurity and malnutrition in SADC countries were released, on average, approximately 50 days after the last day of the IPC workshop, and nearly 60 days from the start of the analyses. Since IPC acute analyses are tailored to inform immediate response and decision-making, this delay renders the results largely unusable for timely planning and resource mobilisation efforts, compromising their effectiveness for advocacy and rapid action.

In a few exceptional cases, analyses have not been approved for publication at all, despite substantial technical and financial investments by state services and IPC partners. Although in most instances the delays are due to bureaucratic procedures, prolonged publication timelines risk undermining the credibility of the IPC process and may fuel skepticism among critics who perceive the process as being politicized.

2. Coordination and Consolidation

SADC Secretariat has played an instrumental role in promoting IPC across the region, with its leadership proving essential in advancing the initiative. Despite this growing engagement, IPC analyses keep facing planning constraints or are not released in a fully coordinated manner. IPC analyses are concentrated in

the space of three months – typically between May and July – and often overlap. Additionally, although the Southern Africa region includes several countries with similar agroclimatic conditions, there is currently no mechanism—such as the one in place in West Africa—to harmonize and consolidate regional findings.

An increased coordination would enable IPC to provide decision-makers with a comprehensive regional perspective, a prerequisite for prioritising responses and guiding investment decisions. A more performant regional coordination between IPC GSU, regional IPC partners, SADC Secretariat and the RVAC represents an outstanding opportunity for regional institutions to better serve member countries, avoiding overlaps and facilitate joint planning, analysis, and strategic action with no disruptions and providing an exhaustive, harmonised regional diagnostic.

3. Plurality

Plurality is a key landmark of IPC. Different partners with different lines of expertise around food security, nutrition, health, conflict, agriculture, economy and any other collateral aspect to food security is crucial for the technical success of any IPC analysis. At the same time, a plurality of intent gains in legitimacy when IPC processes are supported by a wider spectrum of partners.

In most of the Southern Africa countries, the number of partners involved remains limited compared to other regions. The number of international NGOs is lower than in other sub-African regions and in other continents like Asia/Near East and Latin America and the Carribean (LAC). Such gap is not necessarily compensated by the presence of national civil society organizations. All IPC partners – SADC Secretariat, TWGs, VACs, UN, iNGOs as well as resource partners - should engage regionally and at country to secure NGOs' engagement in IPC processes, making their participation free of charge if this is a pre-requisite for their participation.

Nonetheless, even considering the 21 global IPC partners represented in the IPC GSC[27] - the level of participation remains slightly lower than in other regions. GSU monitoring shows that around 60 percent of IPC global partner agencies and organisations participated in regional and country-level activities in SADC between January 2024 and March 2025, compared to over 70 percent in LAC and Asia/Near East regions.

Financial barriers, inadequate communication and scarce resources of national CSOs are key obstacles that IPC champions will have to address to increase plurality in the next five years.

b. Agility and Relevance of the IPC

1. Fragmented Coverage

Geographical gaps hinder the possibility to produce a comprehensive regional diagnostic on a yearly or bi-annual basis. Angola and Zimbabwe, among the early adopters of IPC, are currently inactive. South Africa joined in 2020 for one emergency analysis and did not conduct others since then. Botswana may

[27] Action Against Hunger, CARE, CILSS, FAO, FEWS NET, Global FSC, Global Nutrition cluster, IFPRI, IGAD, EU JRC, Oxfam, SADC, Save the children international, SICA, World Bank, UNICEF, WFP, WHO. At the time of writing of this strategy (May 2025), two new members joined the Global Steering Committee: CRS and REACH/IMPACT.

be interested in joining the IPC. These countries are among the six not conducting IPC and represent opportunities for expanded coverage. The terms of expansion, though, must be rooted on clear advantages for the respective governments. The chronic reform agenda, the analysis of Persistent AFI, as well as other innovative IPC digital tools and approaches may respond better to decision makers needs in these countries. Achieving institutional buy-in within individual countries is essential to develop an exhaustive regional overview of both acute and persistent food insecurity and nutrition trends, as exemplified in West Africa.

Conversely, countries like Madagascar, Mozambique, and Tanzania lack full coverage, underscoring the need for innovative, resource-efficient solutions. In a context of shrinking resources, leveraging partnerships and enhancing coordination—such as through sampling optimization of VAC surveys, or strengthening Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviews (CATI) analyses—is critical to sustain coverage without compromising on quality. Recognizing that shocks can impact all regions, including food-secure areas, strategic efforts are required to increase the coverage and avoid exclusion errors in the effort to ensure regional resilience and fully support anticipatory action and response mechanisms.

2. Predictability and Agility

The coordination of analyses in the region is hampered by an unaligned calendar among VACs, which limits timely sharing and collective interpretation of data. In addition, analyses in the same period tend to overlap, challenging the mobilization of adequate support from regional partners and the IPC GSU. Delays often arise due to uncertain commitments to costly VAC surveys in a shrinking funding environment. The overlap of 10-12 IPC analyses in the space of three months—mostly June to August—requires some reflection on the necessary level of autonomy and capacity of countries and region to address multiple support requirements by the regional IPC community of partners as well as by countries.

As a result, decision-makers often face difficulties in anticipating when results will be available, complicating planning and timely responses. The planning process remains largely non-transparent, with limited clarity on expected timelines for results delivery, further weakening financial contribution efforts.

A clear funding cycle ratified in each country ratified before the beginning of fiscal year, should warrant provision for at least one IPC analysis in each country and for one or more IPC updates any time it is required during the year, similarly to what happens in West Africa.

3. Efficiency

While SADC governments are increasingly funding food security surveys, IPC processes in the region remain heavily reliant on costly data collection exercises. This limits the ability to conduct timely updates, especially in response to sudden shocks. Virtual and hybrid analyses, used by nearly half of IPC countries globally, remain underutilised in the region despite good connectivity. Leveraging streamlined tools, virtual modalities, and focusing assessments on hotspot areas could significantly enhance the agility and responsiveness of IPC updates.

4. Financial Sustainability

The high costs of data collection and workshop organisation, ranging from $15,000 to $60,000 per analysis, requires substantial support from external partners. This dependency, coupled with a shrinking

funding environment, challenges the long-term sustainability of IPC processes. Reducing workshop costs and harmonising survey tools across countries can ease this financial burden and ensure more regular, sustainable IPC updates over time.

c. Technical Sustainability of the IPC

1. IPC Comparability and Use of the IPC AFI Scale in Countries with Low Levels of Acute Food Insecurity

IPC provides a standardised framework for comparing the severity and magnitude of food security and nutrition across countries. The definitions of its five phases and levels are consistently applied throughout each nation, including within SADC, and among SADC countries and the main humanitarian crises globally, ensuring full comparability. However, indicators used by IPC may exhibit certain peculiarities in the SADC region, due to their limited capacity to discern gaps in food consumption and coping mechanisms driven by specific contextual factors—such as monotonous diets—as opposed to a situation of hardship and vulnerability. To address these specificities, the IPC incorporates the analysis of a wide range of contributing factors and relies on expert judgment to scrutinise and interpret indicators that may only partially reflect the reality. The convergence of indicators and contributing factors—underpinned by expert consensus—provides a more accurate and comprehensive depiction of the actual food security and nutrition situation. The interactions between acute and persistent food insecurity are also influenced by structural gaps and cultural practices that require thorough unpacking. While many SADC countries report lower levels of severity—measured by the proportion of populations in IPC Phase 4 or above—compared to other regions, the magnitude often remains high due to substantial populations in IPC Phase 3. Additionally, the region can experience seasonal or post-shock increases in severity, with some countries facing high levels of persistent AFI. The PAFI scale is particularly valuable in identifying contexts characterised by systematically high levels of acute food insecurity, which are often driven by structural and systemic factors.

2. Data Quality, Coverage and Frequency

With regards to data, while several systems exist for reporting on food and nutrition insecurity, major challenges persist.

- **Fragmentation of data:** Data are often collected and analysed by different institutions using varied methodologies, limiting comparability and harmonisation. Unsustainable system of data storage limits access to such data rendering it unusable or inaccessible by other institutions.
- **Limited integration**: Food security data are often not systematically linked with nutrition, missing opportunities for holistic analysis.
- **Insufficient frequency**: In many cases, surveys are conducted infrequently and not synchronised with other related surveys, and real-time data for early warning is lacking.
- **Insufficient geographical and thematic coverage:** Due to financial and logistical constraints, existing systems reporting on food and nutrition insecurity often cover only subnational regions—typically areas of major vulnerability—or report at levels that are not suitable for granular decision-making, such as the first administrative layer (e.g., provinces, regions, states) rather than districts or municipalities. Additionally, some countries in the SADC region do not follow harmonised analysis tools, which might hamper larger coordination and response capacity. This variability also limits the

ability to present a comprehensive regional picture in global fora, partly affecting the visibility and advocacy potential.

- **Capacity gaps:** Some member states lack the technical capacity or resources to conduct regular, in-depth food and nutrition security assessments or maintain robust surveillance systems.

3. Low Exploitation of New Technologies for Data Collection, Data Analysis and Data Storage

New digital technologies offer significant potential to reduce resource footprints during survey planning, data collection, and IPC analysis. Currently, suboptimal use of CATI and cumbersome data analysis processes extend IPC cycle durations and increase operational complexity. Although data is stored in the cloud, there is a lack of systematic visualization and organization through dashboards that enable multi-functional interoperability across countries and thematic domains. For instance, Mozambique has begun developing an integrated multi-sectoral dashboard. Establishing a regional, integrated data cloud with a user-friendly interface for visualisation and analysis would greatly enhance data usability, while granting an additional layer of transparency for all actors in the region.

IPC can contribute to this workstream, by integrating the innovative digital tools recently developed (Analysis Platform, Rapid Analysis and Action planning/RAAp. PAFI, various AI-applications to feed predictive modelling, Etc.) to generate early alert signals, which could support and streamline these data streams during the early implementation phases of this strategy, fostering more efficient and timely decision-making.

4. Reliance on the IPC Global Support Unit

While the IPC Global Support Unit (GSU) is fully dedicated to supporting the partnership by providing technical assistance for training, analysis, and report writing, its involvement should be requested based on specific needs. This is particularly relevant in countries that are in the early stages of IPC implementation, in situations of high severity or rapidly deteriorating conditions, when dealing with complex datasets that require facilitation support, or when introducing new protocols and tools. In such cases, the GSU's expertise can be instrumental in ensuring the quality and consistency of the analysis process. However, in SADC the GSU often fill a void in facilitation of analyses that could be handled by country actors, being them experts from state technical services or from other IPC partners. This is mainly due to the difficulties of supporting a complete capacity building process with experts in countries bringing enough IPC Level 2 facilitators and IPC Level 3 leads that would ensure more autonomy in facilitating analyses when the conditions for GSU support described do not apply. In turns this is due to the high degree of turnover in analysis participation, which does not allow to stabilise and capitalise on competencies.

Addressing the complex food and nutrition challenges in Southern Africa requires both a deep understanding of underlying vulnerabilities and the ability to report on them in a standardised and actionable manner. The IPC, when institutionalised across the SADC region, will continue to strengthen the capacity of member states to analyse, monitor, and respond to these challenges in a coordinated, evidence-based, and effective way.

5. Vision and Strategic Objectives

a. Vision

By 2030, Southern Africa will achieve robust, country-led, and regionally coordinated IPC processes that inform proactive and timely actions to detect, prevent and address food and nutrition insecurity and strengthen resilience to crises.

b. Strategic Objectives

The IPC regionally heads towards an extraordinary alignment of strategic objectives with the global IPC axes. According to the IPC Global Strategic Programme III (2023–2026), the IPC partnership must continue to provide essential, high-quality and timely information on food security and nutrition crises to guide decision making at national, regional and global levels. This is only possible if: (1) the IPC is a strong partnership; (2) the IPC is an agile system built on innovation; (3) the IPC is the global reference for expanded analyses on crises -including by developing standards for deeper and more integrated analyses, as well as for improved forecasts; and (4) the IPC delivers high quality products – implying a continued momentum on capacity building.

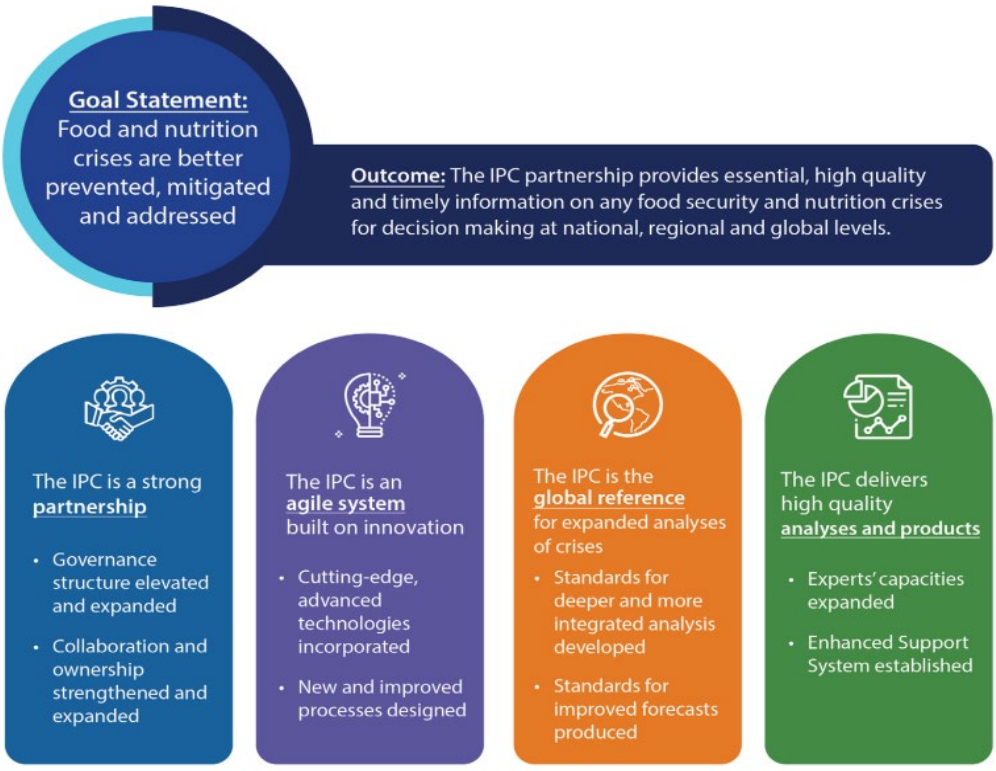

Figure 3: IPC Global Strategic Programme III (2023–2026) - Goal Statement

The four strategic objectives encompass numerous strategic outputs, outlined below, and provide a comprehensive framework for addressing the four key areas of improvement identified in the preceding section of this strategy.

The IPC Global Strategic Programme III (2023–2026) resonates strongly with the strategic direction of the SADC IPC Regional Strategy (2026–2030). Both share a core ambition: to institutionalise the IPC as a trusted, country-led and multi-sectoral tool, fully embedded within national food security and nutrition systems, and capable of informing both emergency response and long-term development planning. This alignment reflects SADC member states' repeated calls for improved analytical capacity, better regional comparability, and enhanced policy relevance, particularly in light of recurring climate shocks, economic volatility, and rising humanitarian needs across the region.

In SADC, the four intermediate outcomes find full applicability and become tangible elements to ensure that IPC is agile, sustainable, qualitative, and relevant. To realise the vision of SADC IPC Strategy, the following strategic objectives have been identified as key pillars of IPC implementation and expansion in the region:

Strategic Objective 1: *IPC is a Strong Partnership*

Strategic Outputs:

1. *Empower Technical Working Groups and consolidate IPC institutionalisation in national systems*

IPC is already embedded within government structures in many SADC member states, reflecting strong national ownership and recognition of its value in guiding food security and nutrition policy. However, institutionalisation must go beyond structural inclusion. There remains a need to create more deliberate and routine opportunities for intergovernmental dialogue around IPC results—spaces where different ministries and agencies can jointly interpret findings, discuss implications, and identify coordinated actions and areas for improvement. Institutionalisation also means empowering and elevating the role of TWGs in engaging directly with line ministries and being accountable for decisions delegated to them by permanent secretaries or ministers, reducing unnecessary escalation and improving responsiveness.

TWGs should have the authority to set analytical agendas in collaboration with partners, deciding what tools to use, where, when, and why, based on national priorities and contexts. This level of empowerment ensures that IPC processes are not only technically sound but also strategically aligned with decision-making needs, ultimately reinforcing IPC as a nationally led and politically relevant process. For the full empowerment, TWGs chairs and coordinators must be fully aware of the various IPC tools and scales to be adopted to gather exhaustive diagnostic in response to an evolving hazards landscape. Similarly, senior officials within line ministries and institutions should be aware of IPC potential and nature.

Priority Pathways:

- Strengthen the institutionalisation of IPC processes within national and regional food and nutrition security coordination frameworks.
- Strengthen the anchoring of IPC through formal country level governance structures such as national IPC TWGs with multisectoral representation.
- Integrate IPC into national development plans, disaster risk management frameworks, public budgets, and early warning and resilience strategies – such as the RAAWG's workstream.
- IPC GSU to promote capacity building events towards SADC secretariat, VAC chairs and TWG chairs and coordinators on existing IPC guidance tools, scales, and digital tools.
- GSU and SADC Secretariat—with support of VACs/TWGs—to conduct campaigns of awareness raising of senior officials of local governments, institutions and partners at country level, on the scope and nature of the different IPC scales.
- Produce tailored Terms of Reference for TWGs and other governance entities of IPC nationally, based on the standard terms of reference.
- To avoid delays in publication of IPC reports, implement the IPC Country Support Planner, which helps define a release date of the IPC report as the initial step of the planning of the analysis.
- Awareness raising of decision makers – through SADC Secretariat, TWG Chair and SMGs of IPC partners at the country level – on the importance to avoid delays in publication.
- Ensure that publications happen ideally in the two weeks following the analysis. Should the TWG require more time, the preliminary results should be shared with national stakeholders and published in the IPC website preferably within three weeks following the analysis, using the following disclaimer *"Preliminary findings pending official release at country level"*. Please refer to Protocol 3.3, page 79 of the IPC technical manual 3.1 for more information.

2. Further promote role of SADC in steering the IPC in the region

SADC Secretariat is the co-chair of the regional IPC TWG. The secretariat is a bridge between IPC regional staff and VACs and brings-in the required regional political legitimacy to root IPC in the governmental response mechanisms to food insecurity, malnutrition, DRR/M. It has played an instrumental role in promoting IPC across the region, with its leadership proving essential in advancing the initiative. Its strategic positioning and established partnerships make SADC a natural and ideal partner to enhance coordination in IPC planning. It has assured the coordination – hand in hand with the RVACs - in times of high uncertainty and transition for the RVAA programme.

Strengthening the secretariat's role further could enable it to take on an even more strategic function in the region. Experiences from West Africa (with CILSS) and Latin America (with SICA) have shown that when a trusted regional institution supports the planning, preparation, facilitation, and reporting of IPC analyses, the processes become more efficient, better coordinated, and more responsive to country needs. This approach also allows for economies of scale, facilitates harmonization of findings across countries, and supports quality assurance by ensuring consistent application of IPC protocols. A stronger

role of SADC in steering the IPC in the region would support alignments of calendars for IPC analyses – to the extent technically feasible – and allow to produce regional products ultimately mobilizing higher degree of resources and coordinated response mechanisms favoring correct prioritization. SADC active participation in IPC global governance in political and technical bodies would ensure instances emerging in Southern Africa are brought to the attention of the global forums.

Priority Pathways:

- Conduct awareness raising events on IPC for SADC management
- Fast track SADC Secretariat's certification on the various IPC scales.
- Review and consolidate the Terms of reference of the IPC Regional TWG.
- Promote exchanges with CILSS to detect concrete similarities and build upon virtuous regional examples.
- Encourage joint planning and analysis to ensure that IPC outputs inform integrated, multi-sectoral interventions addressing both immediate and structural food and nutrition vulnerabilities.
- Advocate for high-level political support and institutional buy-in to ensure sustained commitment and ownership.
- Schedule periodical coordination consultations between SADC Secretariat, other co-chairs of the regional IPC TWG and RVAC to monitor the implementation of the strategy, identify problems and critical pathways to solve them.

Schedule frequent coordination meetings between IPC GSU, VACs and the SADC Secretariat to ensure efficient planning of analyses

3. Foster strong multi-sectoral partnerships

Strengthen collaboration among governments, regional bodies, UN agencies, technical agencies, civil society, and resource partners. A coordinated and inclusive approach ensures resource optimisation and greater impact in addressing food and nutrition crises. Within this framework, the IPC is co-owned and governed by the IPC Global Partnership, which brings together these diverse stakeholders under a shared commitment to evidence-based food security and nutrition analysis. Promoting country-led and regionally embedded IPC processes anchored in national systems but supported by the IPC partnership ensures legitimacy, sustainability, and collective accountability across sectors.

A critical element to consider is the expansion of the regional partnership to integrate development actors and additional global partners that have recently joined the IPC GSC, such as CRS, REACH, UNDP, IFPRI and the World Bank, when representatives are available and ready to engage. These partners are an additional

resource, particularly for the roll-out of the Persistent Acute Food Insecurity and Persistent Acute Malnutrition scales globally, and in the SADC region.

Priority Pathways:

- Promote strong and inclusive partnerships across government agencies, regional bodies (e.g., SADC, RIASCO), UN agencies, civil society, resource partners, and academia.
- Foster the creation of high-level advisory groups or senior management committees to promote engagement with senior government officials and ensure accountability at the highest levels.
- SADC Secretariat and IPC GSU to reach out to new IPC partners seeking their engagement in various IPC workstreams as well as in the governance structures of the IPC.

4. Promote financial sustainability

To ensure the long-term financial and technical sustainability of IPC analyses across Southern Africa, it is essential to embed IPC activities within national and regional planning and budgeting frameworks. Secure dedicated budget lines within national government allocations for food and nutrition security and integrate IPC processes into routine monitoring and early warning systems. In addition, leverage strategic partnerships to mobilise complementary technical support and financial resources, while encouraging resource partner alignment with national IPC priorities. Establishing multi-year financing strategies and fostering government ownership will be critical to reducing reliance on ad hoc external funding and ensuring IPC remains a core tool for decision-making in both humanitarian and development contexts.

Priority Pathways:

- Mobilise diverse funding sources, including domestic budgets, regional development funds, and international partners, to finance IPC activities such as training, data collection, analysis, and dissemination. This includes engaging ministries of finance and planning to mainstream IPC into national financing frameworks and public sector programming.
- Coordinate technical partners and governments to align timelines, tools, and resources, and promote joint multi-sectoral assessments that reduce parallel efforts and foster a shared evidence base for programming and policy decisions.
- Develop multi-year sustainability plans at country and regional levels, co-owned by VACs and IPC TWGs, that set out clear investment needs, technical roadmaps, and institutional milestones to achieve long-term viability.
- Applying an integrated model of sustainability, rooted in national ownership, innovation, and strategic coordination, this strategy aims to ensure that IPC remains resilient, cost-effective, and impactful in the face of evolving food and nutrition security challenges.
- Consider establishing budget quotas that include a minimum contribution percentage from partners and government actors and explore the opportunity to set contribution caps for external and governmental stakeholders, to minimize costly amendments and increase efficient planning.

Achieving sustainability of IPC systems in the SADC region requires a multi-pronged approach that goes beyond resource mobilization to include institutional ownership, operational efficiency, and long-term planning. The strategy envisions a shift toward nationally driven and technically autonomous IPC processes, anchored in government structures and supported by coordinated investments.

5. Expand and strengthen IPC coverage

Increase geographic and thematic outreach of IPC analyses, particularly in fragile and underserved areas. Invest in more frequent and inclusive analyses covering Acute Food Insecurity (AFI), Acute Malnutrition (AMN), and Protracted Acute Food Insecurity (PAFI) & Protracted Acute Malnutrition (PAMN) Crises and Emergencies[28]. Ensure that TWGs' members fully master the available IPC scales and tools such as the various guidance on conflict, gender, PINHA[29], risk of Famine, disaggregated analyses.

Priority Pathways:

- The IPC Regional TWG, SADC Secretariat, and IPC GSU regional support unit will engage with VACs and TWGs at the country level to identify geographical and thematic gaps and areas for improvement in IPC analyses, aligned with the current strategy.
- These entities will also coordinate with senior government officials in countries not currently adopting IPC to explore opportunities for resumption, emphasizing the regional strategy's focus on empowerment, decentralization, and the strategic steering of IPC processes.
- These entities will also explore the opportunity to promote regional harmonisation and consolidation pathways of IPC results from country-level analyses, to produce an exhaustive and reliable regional IPC diagnostic and snapshot guiding allocation of surge resources if needed.

Strategic Objective 2: *IPC is an Agile System*

Strategic Outputs:

6. IPC adopts financially and technically agile processes that enable timely updates and anticipatory actions

Priority should be given to institutionalising more agile and frequent IPC updates, linked to a clear multi-year funding cycle. Risk-focused scenario building, remote analysis techniques, and rapid assessments should reduce the budget footprint, while enabling IPC to function in full respect of the quality standards and with no harm to its credibility. This includes support to countries in resuming or scaling up IPC in

[28] Previously referred to as Chronic IPC.
[29] IPC People in Need of Humanitarian Assistance tool guidance (2023): https://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC-Guidance-Note-may-2023.pdf

contexts where regular assessments are not yet institutionalised, ensuring flexibility without compromising methodological rigour. CATI surveys should be deployed more systematically.

Increasing efficiency through innovation—adopting cost-saving measures such as virtual trainings, remote analysis, and use of the IPC Analysis Platform (AP) can reduce significantly the duration and costs of in-person workshops. These tools allow for real-time collaboration, lighter logistics, and broader participation while maintaining quality and rigor.

Data collection streamline analysis processes by clustering similar administrative units (e.g. districts with shared characteristics) and prioritising joint assessments that integrate food security and nutrition data. This not only ensures methodological consistency but also maximises analytical reach while minimizing duplication of effort.

Priority Pathways:

- Explore ways to streamline data collection tools used by VACs identifying critical modules and reducing the duration of interviews to reduce costs.
- Consider reviewing sampling frames of VAC assessments (e.g. by clustering together similar nearby districts along same agro-ecological and livelihood zones) to reduce the costs.
- Increase the use of satellite imagery and data collection through less costly approaches such as CATI-based surveys. CATI could be used in hotspots for a second rounf complimentary to the main VAC survey, if resources for in-person were available.
- Conduct virtual IPC updates following the indication of RAAP or in preparation for conditions of high risk of occurrence of socks such as cyclones.

7. Promote innovations to support efficiency and prompt anticipatory actions

Harnessing digital innovation to modernize food security analysis is a key priority of IPC across the region. Building on advancements in mobile data collection, cloud-based collaboration, and remote sensing, the SADC IPC strategy promotes the adoption of real-time, interoperable platforms to streamline data gathering, analysis, validation, and dissemination—particularly in emergency or fast-changing contexts. The regional Data cloud puts SADC in an advantageous starting point for use of interconnected data streams and platforms expediting analyses, updates and, eventually, decision making.

IPC information—covering results, trends, drivers, and contributing factors—can be integrated into national and regional early warning systems, humanitarian response dashboards, and development frameworks. Existing regional and country-level EW/AA frameworks can be streamlined to incorporate IPC, ensuring its full integration. Digital tools such as the Rapid Analysis and Action Planning (RAAp) within the IPC Analysis Platform (AP) can be embedded into routine VAC activities, enabling automatic and objective detection of alerts when drivers and assumptions deviate from expected trajectories. The RAAp serves as a decision-support tool, signalling when an IPC update or intervention is required to maintain timely and accurate analysis.

Other digital innovations, including context-specific technological innovations, remote sensing, and AI applications, help detect anomalies in the behaviour of some indicators or contributing factors as opposed to the long-term trends, and could thus be streamlined by TWG in preparation of analyses as well as in between analyses periods. These innovations will be pursued in close collaboration with VACs, national statistics offices, and academic institutions to ensure sustainability, local ownership, and relevance to regional needs.

Priority Pathways:

- Operationalise the AP across SADC countries as the primary digital space for planning, conducting, and reviewing IPC analyses. Where feasible, integrate this with early warning systems, forecasting models, and disaster risk monitoring platforms to ensure timely updates and enhance anticipatory action based on emerging risks.
- Promote context-specific technological innovations that improve IPC coverage and accuracy, especially in fragile, conflict-affected, or geographically remote areas. This may include the use of geospatial tools, community-based monitoring, and hybrid methodologies adapted to operational constraints.
- Integrate IPC into existing national early warning and anticipatory action frameworks, leveraging the IPC's early warning function using projections and Rapid Analysis and Action Planning (RAAp).
- IPC GSU, SADC Secretariat, and RVACs to contribute to the Regional Anticipatory Action Working Group (RAAWG) with the goal of identifying regional thresholds for EW, integrating them into IPC digital tools like RAAp, and establishing suitable financial allocation mechanisms for preparedness and shock response, utilising the IPC EW functionalities.
- Ensure that structural vulnerabilities—economic, physical, environmental, and social—identified through the rollout of the IPC Persistent Acute Food Insecurity (PAFI) scale in SADC, are incorporated into regional EW maps and monitored as hotspots for anticipatory action and preparedness.
- IPC GSU and SADC Secretariat to conduct a study to identify areas of low resilience by analyzing IPC fluctuation trends over historical series, providing insights into regions most susceptible to shocks.

Strategic Objective 3: *The IPC is a Global Standard for Expanded Analyses of Crises*

Strategic Outputs

8. Enhance SADC Secretariat's and VACs' role in technical development of IPC tools

Thanks to its diversity, the SADC region serves as an innovation hub for various workstreams, many of which highly relevant to IPC. Cutting-edge climate forecasting technologies and research tools for seasonal productivity prospects are critical components that enhance IPC accuracy and early warning function. Both the SADC and LAC regions offer compelling case studies for rethinking the Chronic IPC scale, which has now been fully reformulated into the Persistent Acute Food Insecurity (PAFI) and Persistent Acute Malnutrition (PAMN) scales. These new scales aim to prevent recurrent food security crises by addressing the root causes of food insecurity and malnutrition through a comprehensive, holistic approach. The region has been instrumental in testing numerous tools, including PAFI prototypes, AFI/AMN interlinkages, gender-based analyses, conflict assessments, and PINHA.

To maximise the wealth of expertise and information within the region, a greater involvement of the SADC Secretariat and relevant VACs in IPC platforms—such as the IPC Technical Advisory Group (TAG)—is highly recommended for the ongoing development and refinement of IPC tools and methodologies.

Priority Pathways:

- Systematic participation of SADC Secretariat and ad-hoc participation of selected VACs in discussions at the global IPC TAG.
- Continued support to develop and test new tools, leveraging on the close collaboration between SADC secretariat, VACs and dedicates teams of the IPC GSU including.
- Consolidate IPC protocols to better detect vulnerabilities across new thematic areas such as urban domains, PAFI, multi-sectorial analyses, disaggregated analysis

9. Addressing underlying, structural root-causes to avert acute food insecurity and acute malnutrition

In response to the needs expressed by decision makers worldwide, including member states of SADC, IPC GSU and global partners have dedicated significant time and resources to the reform of the Chronic IPC scale, now called PAFI and PAMN. PAFI brings-in a new scale of IPC analysis that is complementary to AFI analyses, with the scope to rewrite a narrative on how to avoid recurrent food insecurity by resorting to holistic, multi-sectorial policies from local institutions and development partners, alongside the typical IPC partners of AFI/AMN analyses.

Once fully rolled out in SADC region, PAFI will offer a thorough mapping of underlying vulnerabilities, of coping capacity and sensitivities, or resilience to shocks, as well as indicating what are the main root causes of food insecurity and malnutrition.

Priority Pathways:

- IPC GSU to conduct awareness raising events on the PAFI scale for decision makers and technical officers within SADC secretariat, VACs, TWGs, and regional partners.
- By 2030, all SADC countries adopting IPC should have conducted PAFI analyses.
- GSU, regional partners, SADC Secretariat and the RWAAG to explore the potential linkages between PAFI on the EW/AA workstreams.

Focus on the IPC Chronic reform – the new Persistent Acute Food Insecurity Scale (PAFI)

The IPC launched a reform of the Chronic Scale in 2022. Since then, various angles were discussed and tested. The Global Steering Committee of the IPC has eventually endorsed the roll-out of the final phase of the IPC Chronic / now called PAFI, in 2025. PAFI addresses recurrent concerns from decision makers about why, despite investments in preventive and corrective response measures, acute food insecurity continues to manifest repeatedly. It is specifically designed to quantify the segment of the population persistently affected by acute food insecurity as opposed to those transitionally food insecure, and to identify the structural underlying causes.

The rollout of PAFI entails some amendments to the existing governance set-up, whereby new partners such as UNDP, World Bank, IFPRI, as well as other line ministries with portfolio on long-term transformative development (e.g. ministry of transport and infrastructure, ministry of treasure, ministry of local development, etc.) feature prominently in the ad-hoc sessions and deliberations of the TWG.

From a technical standpoint, PAFI is a multi-stepped analysis, The revised protocols provide guidance to:

- **Component A - Estimate persistent acute food insecurity and malnutrition and identify protracted crises and emergencies***.* This step is ideally done virtually, through a desk review for optimizing efficiency.

- **Component B - Identify the underlying causes of persistent acute food insecurity and malnutrition**
    - B1: Identification of immediate causes*:* Adopting a problem tree analysis focusing on two levels of imminent causes of persistent AFI, ideally conducted virtually.
    - B2: Identification of root causes. This step applies to critical countries with high AFI results and complex socio-economic environments. Analysts gather in person to develop a problem-tree of six-eight levels trying to unpack why PAFI occurs, and where.

- **Component C: Identify the critical pathways to address the underlying causes of persistent acute food insecurity and malnutrition**. This discussion happens at the presence of wide range of actors including development actors and institutions, gathering in person to define a road map to address root causes of acute food insecurity by area, or cluster of areas.

Strategic Objective 4: *The IPC Delivers High Quality Analyses and Products*

10. Strengthen technical and analytical capacities

Decentralising and delocalising capacities of technical nature and empower decisional autonomy by IPC TWGs—intended as the whole constituency of IPC partners in any SADC country—continues to be a critical priority of the IPC Global Strategic Programme III (2023–2026), as well as of the present strategy. This entails continued capacity strengthening programmes by dedicated GSU teams including Communication, Technical Development, Quality Assurance and Country Support teams. Enhancing the knowledge and skills of National Vulnerability Assessment Committees, which serve as the TWGs, and other stakeholders can be done through standardised training, cross-country learning exchanges (CCLEs), fast-tracked IPC certification and continuous learning. In particular, an acceleration of the normative IPC Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3 trainings is required to ensure that the region has the critical mass of lead facilitators and co-facilitators of analyses, to conduct analyses with limited external support and structured mentorship for countries implementing IPC.

Priority Pathways:

- Conduct at least one regional Level 2 and Level 3 training annually to produce continued proficient core-mass of analysts and facilitators due to the high degree of turnover in analysis participation, which does not allow to stabilize and capitalize on competencies
- Double the number of Level 2 and Level 3 certified (currently counting two effectives in the region) by 2026.
- Conduct annual regional consultations to brainstorm on certification gaps regionally, and by country, and strategise on the use and adoption of the various new IPC thematic guidance tools.
- Identify critical IPC focal points for data preparation using the AP, within TWGs/VACs.
- Promote regional peer-to-peer exchanges, collaborative cross-country learning events (CCLEs), and joint analysis exercises to build a critical mass of skilled IPC practitioners across SADC.
- Document lessons learnt in the implementation of IPC and monitor in-country capacities.

11. Reinforce the IPC communication structures and processes

Communication for actionable knowledge is one of the four key functions of the IPC. Thus, consolidating capacity to dedicated staff within VACs, external partners and SADC Secretariat on communication tools, and the IPC style guide is a critical expected outcome and area of immediate investment for IPC. Effective communication of IPC results is critical to ensuring that analysis translates into timely, evidence-based decisions for both humanitarian response and long-term development planning. In the SADC region,

strategic communication will be embedded as a core pillar of IPC implementation at both national and regional levels.

With the support of IPC GSU, the SADC Secretariat and VACs must develop and implement comprehensive IPC communication strategies at country and regional levels that are aligned with the IPC Global Communication Guidelines and the IPC Style Guide. These strategies will ensure consistent, policy-relevant, and accessible dissemination of IPC results to decision-makers, media, and the general public.

These strategies will need to highlight the urge to proceed with prompt release of the IPC reports. In accordance with the IPC Technical Manual Version 3.1, IPC analysis results must be released within 21 calendar days of the end of the analysis workshop. In cases where this is not met, results must be published with a disclaimer clearly indicating the delay and potential implications for data relevance and use. To streamline release and visibility, each IPC process must follow a pre-agreed communication support timeline, beginning with defining the release date at the start of the analysis process. This timeline will cover key milestones, including report drafting, technical review, clearance processes, stakeholder briefings, and media engagement.

Targeted dissemination tools such as executive summaries, policy briefs, ministerial-level presentations, media toolkits, and stakeholder briefings should be considered in the communication strategies, to increase the visibility and uptake of IPC outputs. Special emphasis will be placed on briefing decision-makers at national, parliamentary, and SADC regional levels to ensure IPC evidence informs emergency declarations, budget planning, and development programming.

Ensure IPC outputs are consistently used to guide humanitarian appeals (e.g. HRPs, flash appeals), contingency planning, social protection triggers, and agriculture and nutrition investment plans, while reinforcing principles of transparency, neutrality, and accountability.

Lastly, the communication strategy should provide full clarity on the acknowledgment process of the results of IPC analyses, who acknowledges results, and when, which are the outcome of technical consensus.

Priority Pathways:

- Identify critical focal points for Communication within TWG/VACs as eligible for specific trainings on IPC style guide for dissemination products, software, communication support timeline and digital tools.
- SADC Secretariat and IPC GSU to identify plan of action for communication capacity building strategy, and prioritisation of countries for drafting the communication strategy.
- Communication focal points within selected countries, together with SADC and the GSU should coordinate and draft country-specific communication strategies highlighting all critical aspects of the IPC communication timeline, the IPC Style Guide, targeted dissemination tools, awareness raising campaigns for senior officials.
- IPC GSU and SADC Secretariat to engage in a capacity strengthening pathway of regional communication focal points within SADC.

12. Raise decision makers' awareness on the nature, scope and usability of IPC products

Awareness raising campaigns towards senior governmental and non-governmental officials are critical investments to ensure that decision makers have a thorough understanding of the objectives of different IPC scales and tools, as well as of the IPC governance structure and the role in it of the partnership. These campaigns will also underline the importance of the prompt release of dissemination materials, notably IPC reports, considering the delays each country in the region faces to gather the clearance from the highest level, compromising on the immediate use of results for orienting response and for advocacy towards resource mobilisation.

Lastly, these awareness campaigns emphasis will also be made to ensure that decision makers are aware and able to identify relevant IPC tools and analyses specific to their countries for instance, gender, conflict, PINHA, AP, AFI, Chronic, AMN.

These campaigns can be coordinated by SADC Secretariat, VACs and regional GSU coordinator and are addressed to senior officials such as ministers, permanent secretaries, directors of technical institutions, as well as UN and iNGOs senior officials.

Priority Pathways:

- Detect countries with major needs and define a list of priorities of action.
- IPC GSU to interact with country communication focal points and SADC Secretariat to identify gaps and brainstorm on tailored solutions for promoting IPC to decision makers.
- Include awareness raising events in IPC country communication strategies
- IPC GSU and SADC to produce tailored materials for presenting IPC to decision makers.

An additional way to raise awareness about the IPC is through engagement with national media, and international media when relevant. The media is a very effective way to amplify IPC's key findings and key messages to a wider audience, as well as increasing public understanding about IPC processes. To ensure journalists are properly equipped to communicate IPC findings and messages accurately and effectively, select national media outlets and journalists should be identified to receive IPC communications training, supported by GSU, drawing on key resources including the IPC Communications Guidelines and IPC Famine Factsheet. TWGs should also receive training/support on how to prepare key messages for media ahead of publications of IPC reports and can be offered media interviews preparedness training and support on request.

Priority Pathways:

- SADC to identify key media to engage and invite for IPC communications training.
- SADC to develop a media engagement strategy.
- IPC GSU to support SADC on developing training materials for media and deliver training on request.
- SADC to develop talking points for media ahead of publication of IPC products, highlighting key messages and key findings.
- IPC GSU to support media interview preparation training for relevant SADC members.

6. Thematic Focus Areas for Consolidation and Customisation in SADC Countries

The IPC in Southern Africa must address a variety of interconnected challenges that influence food and nutrition security. These thematic areas represent critical entry points for more inclusive, context-specific, and forward-looking IPC analyses. They provide the lens through which IPC can capture the complexity of vulnerabilities and food insecurity drivers, and ensure analyses are relevant for a broad spectrum of humanitarian and development actors. Below, a list of critical thematic areas of high relevance for SADC region. For some of them IPC guidance tools have been developed. Others are undergoing.

- **IPC and Urban Food Security:** Urban areas, which are rapidly growing in the region, are increasingly vulnerable to food insecurity due to rapid urbanisation, reliance on market-based food systems, informal employment, and limited social protection coverage. IPC urban analyses adapt classification protocols to reflect urban-specific drivers such as income volatility, and the absence of informal safety nets which play critical role in rural areas. These analyses help tailor interventions to urban livelihoods and inform urban resilience planning. A workstream is under development to refine the IPC tools.
- **IPC and Disaggregated Analysis:** Incorporating gender, age, disability status, income level, and other socio-demographic markers into IPC analysis enhances its relevance and inclusivity. Disaggregated data enable a more nuanced understanding of vulnerability and access to food and nutrition, ensuring that interventions address the needs of marginalised and at-risk populations, including women, children, the elderly, and persons with disabilities.
- **IPC and Disaster Risk Reduction/Management (DRR/M):** IPC provides critical information to support DRR/M efforts by identifying populations at risk and informing strategies to mitigate the impacts of hazards. The synergies arising from frequent acute food insecurity and PAFI analyses help detect areas of major vulnerabilities and lowest resilience and coping capacity to withstand shocks. When embedded within national DRR frameworks, IPC data can guide contingency planning, adaptive safety nets, and climate risk management initiatives, ultimately contributing to long-term resilience building.
- **IPC Risk Analysis Approach (RAAp) and Anticipatory Action:** The IPC Risk Analysis Approach (RAAp) represents a critical innovation in the way food security risks are monitored and responded to. By tracking key risk indicators in near-real-time during the projection period, the RAAp enables IPC Technical Working Groups (TWGs) to identify deviations from earlier projections

and the assumptions underpinning them to trigger IPC updates or new analyses depending on the degree of deviation at the country level. In the SADC region, where recurrent climatic shocks, conflict, and economic instability continue to threaten food security, integrating the RAAp into national and regional Anticipatory Action (AA) frameworks significantly strengthens early warning-to-early action linkages. AA initiatives aim to mitigate the impacts of predictable crises before they fully unfold by taking pre-emptive, evidence-based measures, such as releasing contingency funding, positioning supplies, or scaling up social protection programs. By aligning IPC RAAp with AA mechanisms at both national and regional levels, SADC countries can more effectively move from reactive humanitarian responses to proactive, risk-informed planning and resource allocation, ultimately reducing the impact of crises on vulnerable populations. The IPC RAAp provides the analytical backbone for AA by:

- Flagging deviations in key risk indicators that signal the likelihood of a worsening food security or nutrition situation;
- Triggering IPC updates or new analyses, which in turn can serve as actionable evidence for decision-makers to implement anticipatory measures;
- Offering a structured, country-led mechanism for tracking evolving risks and adjusting response plans accordingly.

RAAp is an excellent tool to fulfil the early warning dimension, while IPC projections, PAFI analysis of vulnerabilities, and trends acute food insecurity and acute malnutrition analyses can provide an exhaustive toolset in support of preparedness policies and anticipatory action mechanisms.

- **IPC and Nutrition (Acute and Persistent Malnutrition):** IPC Acute Malnutrition (AMN) and Persistent Acute Malnutrition (PAMN) analyses offer structured approaches to assess both short-term and persistent nutrition crises. These tools provide decision-makers with vital evidence to design timely interventions that not only address nutrition deficits but also tackle the underlying drivers of chronic malnutrition, such as poverty, poor health services, and inadequate care practices.
- **IPC and Data Collection Processes:** High-quality, timely, and standardised data collection is fundamental to IPC's credibility. Strengthening national data systems including household surveys, nutrition assessments, and market monitoring is essential for generating reliable IPC analyses. Collaboration with national statistics offices and sectoral ministries can enhance data alignment with IPC protocols and promote the use of shared indicators.
- **IPC Protocols for Classification of Protracted Food & Nutrition Crises and Emergencies:** These enable the identification of populations that persistently experience Crisis or worse outcomes (IPC Phase 3 or above) across multiple seasonal cycles. The analysis helps unpack the structural and systemic vulnerabilities that drive chronic need, such as poor infrastructure, weak markets, inadequate services, land degradation, and social exclusion. This analysis expands the IPC's relevance to medium- and long-term development planning, making it a vital tool for multi-sectoral actors working on resilience, livelihoods, poverty reduction, climate adaptation, nutrition, and governance. It helps distinguish acute shocks from entrenched conditions and provides an evidence base for targeted, durable investments that address the root causes of persistent vulnerability. Furthermore, these protocols facilitate the engagement of development-focused partners, including but not limited to the World Bank, UNDP, IFPRI, and others, by generating spatially and demographically disaggregated data that aligns with development indicators and informs cross-sector programming (e.g. social protection, basic services, livelihood

recovery, natural resource management). As part of the SADC IPC strategy, these protocols will be further institutionalised to strengthen the linkages between humanitarian and development agendas and to support governments and partners in transitioning from emergency response to sustainable solutions.

- The **Population in Need of Humanitarian Assistance (**PINHA) helps detect the mitigating effects of humanitarian food security assistance (HFSA) , defining the levels of food insecurity (Phase 3 or worse) in absence of such assistance been delivered. It focuses on areas of analysis where HFSA is considered significant according to IPC definition.
- The new **IPC Analysis Platform** (AP) is an IT support platform to run analyses in a more organic, holistic and less fragmented manner than before. It takes the relay from the ISS. At the time of writing of this strategy, the AP had been rolled out in numerous SADC countries including Namibia, Malawi and Eswatini. Before the end of 2025, three more countries should adopt it (DRC, Lesotho, Zambia). By 2026, the AP will be introduced across all member states to streamline data processing, improve user accessibility, and enhance the timeliness of analyses.
- Other IPC guidance notes such as **gender-sensitive analyses** and **conflict-sensitive approaches** will ensure more inclusive and context-specific analyses. These tools will be introduced through a phased approach, including regional consultations and trainings, pilots, technical support missions, and incorporation into IPC normative guidance. Their rollout will be closely coordinated with national IPC Technical Working Groups and aligned with regional priorities identified under the SADC RVAA Programme.

7. Plan of Action (2026–2030)

a. Yearly Breakdown

This yearly breakdown provides a structured timeline of strategic actions and milestones that will guide the implementation of IPC across Southern Africa from 2025 to 2030. It reflects a phased approach that balances the consolidation of IPC in countries already conducting regular Acute Food Insecurity (AFI) analyses, while supporting expansion to the remaining SADC member states. Each year builds on the previous, ensuring a logical progression in institutionalisation, capacity building, technological innovation and agility, and sustainability. The plan is informed by the priority strategic axes and thematic focus areas, aligning with regional policy goals and national priorities.

Year	Strategic Focus	Key Actions and Milestones
2026	Institutional Anchoring and Baseline Development	• Reaffirm IPC institutionalisation in operational countries and support entry in up to 2 additional countries. • Deliver Level 1 trainings in all countries and organize one regional Level 2 training. • Formalise IPC governance structures (TWGs, high-level advisory committees) in all participating countries. • Align IPC with national DRR frameworks and early warning systems. • Promote and initiate urban IPC analyses. • Develop national communication strategies. • Undertake at least two lessons learned exercises across the region. • Expand Cross country learning exchanges (CCLEs). • Roll out IPC PAFI analyses in at least two countries. • Roll out IPC Analysis Platform (AP) analyses in at least two countries.

2026	Capacity Development and Early Expansion	• Deliver IPC Level 1 and Level 2 trainings to at least 75 percent of TWG members. • Increase regional CCLEs engagement. • Increase number of countries leading own analysis to four. • Expand IPC PAFI analyses in at least five countries. • Begin integration of IPC into public sector budgets and food/nutrition policies. • Launch initial anticipatory action protocols informed by IPC projections. • Expand IPC analyses to include disaggregated data. • Promote mobile-based data collection platforms in at least three countries. • Enhance linkages between food security and nutrition. • Roll out IPC AP analyses in all countries. • Pilot integration of IPC AP and early warning systems. • Develop country-level sustainability plans and transition roadmaps.
2027	Data System Strengthening and Midterm Review	• Develop and implement standardized IPC compatible data collection tools • Expand IPC analyses to include disaggregated data • Conduct regional midterm strategy review and adjust plan as needed. • Promote mobile-based data collection platforms in at least six countries. • Scale use of IPC Analysis Platform and integrate with early warning systems.
2028	Governance Consolidation	• Institutionalise IPC financing through government-led sustainability plans. • Expand IPC to cover sudden-onset shock response in fragile/hard-to-reach areas. • Increase advocacy and dissemination of IPC outputs at ministerial and parliamentary levels.
2029	Regional Leadership and Integration	• Host SADC IPC Summit with participation from governments, resource partners, and NGOs. • Establish regional IPC investment plan for 2030–2035. • Link IPC outputs more directly to multi-sectoral contingency planning. • Strengthen communication channels between TWGs and national planning departments.
2030	Review, Transition, and Strategic Renewal	• Conduct endline evaluation of the 2026–2030 strategy. • Develop post-2030 regional IPC strategy in consultation with stakeholders. • Complete country-level sustainability reviews and transition roadmaps. • Consolidate IPC as a core national tool for early warning and planning.

b. Cross-Cutting Activities

In addition to the yearly milestones, several cross-cutting activities are essential for ensuring the coherence, efficiency, and sustainability of IPC implementation throughout the strategy period. These activities span governance, coordination, advocacy, resource mobilisation, and performance monitoring. They support the functioning of IPC processes at both national and regional levels, reinforce accountability, and ensure that IPC outputs are translated into timely, informed decisions. Regularly executed across the region, these cross-cutting components provide the backbone for robust and adaptive IPC systems.

Governance	Annual steering committee meetings quarterly Regional TWG meetings, Annual TWG consultations, TWG meetings.
Advocacy	High level awareness raising meetings, policy briefs and ministerial engagement.
Monitoring	Real-time dashboard, population tracking tool, certification database, annual reports.
Funding	Resource partner engagements/briefings, government funds matching.

8. Monitoring and Evaluation

A robust monitoring and evalucation framework will include annual progress reviews, lessons learned, certification tracking, and country-level feedback loops.

a. Key Results Framework

Strategic Objective	Key Indicators	Means of Verification	Frequency	Responsibility
Institutionalize IPC processes	Number of countries with IPC institutionalised in national food security systems	VAC/TWG reports; GSU report	Annual	IPC Focal Points; SADC IPC Unit
	Number of active national TWGs	Meeting records; TORs; minutes	Biannual	TWGs
Build technical capacity	Number of trained/certified IPC analysts and facilitators	GSU database; training reports	Annual	IPC GSU; TWGs
	Percentage of IPC analyses led by national teams	Analysis reports	Per analysis cycle	TWGs
Improve data quality and integration	Percentage of analyses using integrated food, nutrition, and vulnerability data	Analysis protocols; reports	Per analysis	TWGs
	Availability and use of harmonized data management systems	TWG updates	Annual	TWGs
Promote use of IPC in decision-making	Number of response plans and policies informed by IPC results	Policy documents; program reports	Annual	Governments; Humanitarian partners
	Timeliness of IPC communication products post-analysis	Publication and release records	Per cycle	TWGs
Strengthen multi-sectoral coordination	Number of sectors regularly participating in IPC processes (e.g., agriculture, health, nutrition, climate)	TWG attendance records	Biannual	TWGs
Ensure financial and technical sustainability	Percentage of IPC-related activities funded by national government budgets	TWG reports;	Annual	IPC Leads
	Number of multi-year financing agreements or resource mobilization strategies developed	Funding proposals; signed agreements	Annual	TWGs
	Availability of national IPC sustainability plans (technical and financial)	IPC country workplans	Annual	TWGs
	Percentage of IPC analyses conducted without external technical support	Analysis reports	Annual	TWGs

b. Learning and Adaptation

- **Periodic knowledge sharing forums** within countries and cross-country learning sessions to promote learning across countries.
- **Annual regional workshops** to review progress, share innovations, and revise implementation plans.

9. Implementation Framework

a. Role of the SADC Secretariat

The SADC Secretariat, through its Disaster Risk Reduction Unit (DRR), Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources (FANR) Directorate and the Regional Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis (RVAA) Programme, serves as the regional custodian and political anchor for the IPC in Southern Africa. It provides strategic oversight and facilitates alignment of IPC implementation with regional policy frameworks, such as the SADC Food and Nutrition Security Strategy, the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP), and disaster risk management instruments. The Secretariat convenes and co-chairs the Regional Technical Working Group (RTWG), fosters coordination among member states, and lobbies for technical and financial resources for IPC activities. It also ensures that IPC outputs feed into regional decision-making forums, including RIASCO, SADC Council of Ministers, and SADC Heads of State Summits and are integrated into regional alerts, early warning bulletins, and strategic planning. Moreover, the Secretariat plays a key role in advocating for IPC institutionalisation at the national level, supporting peer exchange across countries, and championing the use of IPC in regional preparedness, response, and resilience-building efforts. Through its facilitative leadership, the SADC Secretariat ensures the coherence, visibility, and strategic positioning of IPC as a regional public good.

b. Role of the Regional Technical Working Group (RTWG)

The Regional Technical Working Group (RTWG) serves as a key operational and coordination mechanism within the IPC implementation framework in Southern Africa. Comprising technical experts from regional institutions, Civil Society, UN agencies, and development partners, the RTWG provides strategic guidance, quality assurance, and technical backstopping to national IPC processes. It plays a pivotal role in harmonising methodologies, facilitating capacity development across countries, and ensuring consistency with global IPC standards. The RTWG works closely with the SADC Secretariat, particularly through the RVAA Programme, to align IPC activities with broader regional food and nutrition security frameworks. It supports the rollout of new tools, review of assessment tools, and advocates for financial and technical resources for IPC. Additionally, the RTWG acts as a conduit between the IPC Global Support Unit (GSU) and country-level TWGs, ensuring that innovations, updated protocols, and global best practices are effectively adapted to the regional context as most regional institutions have country presence. Through its facilitative and technical leadership, the RTWG enhances regional coherence and drives the strategic objectives of IPC institutionalisation, capacity strengthening, and analytical expansion.

c. Role of National Technical Working Groups (TWGs)

At the national level, IPC Technical Working Groups (TWGs) are the backbone of IPC implementation, driving the planning, coordination, execution, and communication of IPC analyses. Comprised of multi-sectoral experts from government ministries, UN agencies, Civil Society, and academic institutions, the TWGs ensure that IPC processes are inclusive, evidence-based, and technically robust. They are responsible for organising and conducting AFI, AMN and PAFI analyses, validating data inputs, applying IPC protocols, and producing consensus-based results. TWGs also lead the rollout of new tools such as urban IPC, PAFI, and disaggregated analyses, and provide critical inputs for national contingency planning, humanitarian appeals, and policy dialogue. Embedded in national food and nutrition coordination structures (e.g., VACs, food security clusters, nutrition taskforces), the TWGs act as a bridge between IPC technical outputs and decision-making platforms. They work under the guidance of the government and receive technical support from the Regional TWG and IPC GSU. Strengthening the institutionalisation, capacity, and continuity of TWGs is essential for sustaining high-quality, country-led IPC implementation across the region.

d. Role of the IPC Global Support Unit (GSU)

The IPC Global Support Unit (GSU) provides overarching technical leadership, global coordination, and institutional stewardship for the IPC initiative, ensuring consistency and quality across all regions. In Southern Africa, the GSU plays a crucial role in supporting the implementation of the regional strategy by offering normative guidance, developing and refining IPC protocols, and facilitating the rollout of new tools such as the IPC AP, PAFI, PINHA, and disaggregated analysis modules, including guidance notes. The GSU works in close collaboration with the SADC Secretariat, the Regional TWGs and national TWGs to provide technical backstopping, remote and in-country support, and training of facilitators and analysts. It also ensures that Southern Africa is integrated into global IPC processes, including technical consultations, global capacity-building efforts, quality assurance reviews, and lessons-learned exercises. Furthermore, the GSU contributes to advocacy, resource mobilisation, and strategic partnerships by linking regional actors to global resource partners, policy platforms, and research institutions. Its role is instrumental in maintaining the credibility, neutrality, and continuous improvement of IPC as a trusted global standard for food and nutrition security analysis.

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