



Integrated Food Security Phase Classification

Evidence and Standards for Better Food Security and Nutrition Decisions



Implementing the IPC at the Country Level

19 YEARS OF IMPACT

The IPC is a global authority on food security and nutrition analysis.



Over 30 Countries:

The IPC scales are currently used in over 30 countries, some of which are experiencing the world's worst food and nutrition crises.



US \$6 billion:

Every year, the IPC informs around \$6 billion in food crisis response decisions globally.



600 Trained:

Every year, the IPC trains around 600 food security and nutrition analysts on different scales and at various levels.

Cover: WFP Central African Republic, 2021

From April through August 2021, 2.29 million people in the Central African Republic (CAR) were likely to be in high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above), almost half of the population covered by the analysis.

The IPC has been working with CAR since 2012.

Introduction

Once a country formally expresses an interest in implementing the IPC, the process of introduction and institutionalisation starts with awareness-raising activities, led by IPC global partners and/or the Global Support Unit (GSU), an operational arm of the IPC Global Steering Committee, hosted at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. The IPC's institutional home is identified and the IPC Technical Working Group (TWG) is established through a consultative and inclusive process. When institutionalisation is fully achieved, the IPC is embedded in national food security and nutrition structures and systems. IPC institutionalisation promotes ownership, accountability and sustainability, considering existing structures and processes at the national level. Fundamental guiding principles are:

- The implementation of IPC processes should be demand-driven, ideally by the government where feasible.
- Findings must be evidence-based, and participation partners should commit to an inclusive process, plurality, and technical consensus-building.
- The leadership of IPC processes depends on the country's context, comparative advantages and responsibilities. All efforts should be made to engage and build the capacity of national stakeholders, promote ownership and strengthen the institutional process.
- Agencies commit to a multi-year process.
- The IPC analysis is conducted in a timely manner.
- Organisations participating in the IPC commit to sharing data.
- The IPC should be applied as an iterative learning process.

WHAT IS THE IPC

The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) is an innovative multi-stakeholder initiative to improve analysis and decision-making on food security and nutrition.

Using the IPC classification and analytical approach, governments, UN agencies, NGOs, and other stakeholders work together to determine the severity and extent of acute and chronic food insecurity and acute malnutrition situations within countries, according to internationally recognised standards.



Implementation

The IPC process begins with forming an in-country working group, referred to as the IPC Technical Working Group (TWG), hosted by the government where feasible and composed of relevant national stakeholders, and usually including representatives of the government, United Nations agencies, technical agencies and NGOs. These TWGs can be either new groups or embedded within existing coordination structures. The TWGs are the foundation of country-level implementation and are crucial for ensuring the consistency, sustainability and use of the IPC.

Since its introduction in 2004, the IPC has become the internationally accepted reference for food security analysis and, increasingly, for acute malnutrition crises. The IPC has considerable advantages for both analysts and decision-makers, including:

- **The setting of the global standard:** The IPC provides a common language for classifying the severity and magnitude of acute and chronic food insecurity and acute malnutrition. It is applicable across and between regions and countries over time.
- **Based on consensus:** Situations involving food-insecure and malnourished populations are multifaceted, complex and subject to interpretation. One of the hallmarks of the IPC is multi-sectoral collaboration and technical consensus. This ensures that the analysis results are widely accepted and acted upon and that the response is both targeted and effective.



Photo: IPC, 2019

An IPC - Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) consolidation and dissemination event in Windhoek, Namibia.

The IPC has been working with the Southern Africa region since 2008.



- **Country ownership:** The IPC promotes country leadership and ownership. It engages with and relies on country-based experts.
- **Quality Assurance:** As one of the four IPC functions, the overall purpose of Quality Assurance tools and procedures is to ensure that IPC products meet global standards and respond to the needs of decision-makers. Technical rigour, an effective, transparent, multi-partner process, and good governance contribute to producing quality IPC analyses that effectively inform plans, programmes and policies.
- **Capacity development:** This is the stepping-stone of Quality Assurance and aims to ensure the professionalisation, decentralisation and sustainability of IPC technical capacity. It entails developing capacities at the country and regional levels and at the global level to implement and support the IPC in line with international standards. Modalities include standard and tailored training, cross-country learning exchanges and a certification programme, among other things.
- **Only the essentials:** Rather than promoting complex information to decision-makers, the IPC is demand-driven and focused on providing essential information that is reliable, consistent and accessible. This information can then be used to assess current response shortfalls, plan the response size, and identify target areas.
- **Support when needed most:** The IPC informs most of the largest global food insecurity and nutrition funders and billions of dollars in response every year, including for quick decision-making during unexpected crises.



Photo: UNICEF Ethiopia, 2021

An IPC analysis update conducted on Tigray and the neighbouring zones of Amhara and Afar concluded that 5.5 million people were facing high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above) between May and June 2021, of which over 350,000 people were in Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5).

The IPC has been working with Ethiopia since 2018.



Photo: WHO Madagascar, 2021

Over 500,000 children under the age of five were expected to be acutely malnourished through April 2022, of which over 110,000 were likely severely malnourished and required urgent life-saving treatment.

The IPC has been working with Madagascar since 2016.



Funding

At the planning stages, it is essential to ensure that the overall resources required are well identified, including:

- Availability of requisite financial and human resources to conduct analysis;
- The feasibility of the number of units to be analysed and classified. The scope of analysis should be adjusted based on what is affordable and relevant;
- Training needs for in-country working group members.



Photo: OCHA Nigeria, 2021

Over one million children in North East Nigeria were expected to be acutely malnourished, including over 600,000 facing severe malnutrition in 2021. Over 123,000 pregnant or lactating women were also expected to suffer from acute malnutrition.

The IPC has been working with Nigeria since 2019.



How it Works

The IPC Analysis Cycle includes four inter-linked stages that need to be followed for each IPC analysis to produce high-quality products and effectively communicate results. An analysis cycle usually takes between one and three months, although chronic food insecurity classifications may take longer depending on the analysis coverage and other parameters.



Plan: TWGs should develop annual calendars, taking into account seasonal considerations and decision makers' needs. Given that the IPC Acute Food Insecurity and Acute Malnutrition classifications are based on recent data, the calendar should foresee that IPC analyses are preceded by data collection. At this stage, the TWG should define the unit of analysis, geographic coverage and validity period for each planned analysis. Along with the calendar, financial requirements and resources for IPC implementation should be identified. A communication plan should also be developed to ensure that IPC findings are timely and efficiently communicated. For Acute classifications, annual planning should be directly linked to the Humanitarian Programme Cycle – including developing the Humanitarian Needs Overview/Humanitarian Response Plan – when the cluster system is activated. The TWG should thus plan IPC activities in close collaboration with both Food Security and Nutrition Clusters. IPC planning should be flexible enough to allow IPC Acute analyses to be called in response to unforeseen events (e.g. sudden onset crisis).



Photo: OCHA Yemen, 2020

Over 2.25 million cases of children under the age of five, and more than a million pregnant or lactating women, likely suffered from acute malnutrition in 2021 in Yemen.

The IPC has been working with Yemen since 2012.



Prepare: Preparing includes activities to ensure that analysts are adequately trained and that requests for external technical support, including communication support, are secured as needed. The TWG should proceed with logistical and financial arrangements at this stage and ensure that relevant stakeholders are informed about the analysis process and dates. During preparation, the TWG should confirm the unit of analysis and geographic scope foreseen in the planning stage and identify, gather and re-analyse evidence as needed and feasible. At this stage, all evidence should be evaluated against the reliability criteria and organised and included in the analysis worksheets. During this process, analysts should ensure that minimum evidence requirements will be met. Preparations should also extend to communication activities, such as preparing dissemination events. Preparation can take from one week or more, depending on the scale being used and the amount of data re-analysis needed.



Analyse and Communicate: At the core of IPC analysis is the workshop itself, where the TWG convenes analysts from relevant agencies and sectors to undertake the convergence of evidence following the IPC protocols, agree on classification and population estimates, complete the IPC Report, conduct a self-assessment exercise and request a Quality Review if needed. The analysis process typically includes a week-long analysis workshop, which other supporting activities can follow. Once the analysis has been completed, the TWG is encouraged to hold a meeting with decision-makers to present and discuss the findings. Then, IPC communication products are strategically disseminated as soon as possible after the completion of the analysis. At the national level, countries are encouraged to conduct communications and outreach activities around the analysis outcomes including press conferences and press releases, among others. At the global level, the IPC GSU publishes the analysis on its website www.ipcinfo.org and disseminates results through its global mailing list and social media platforms.



Photo: OCHA South Sudan, 2020

Analyses in 2020 in South Sudan showed populations in six counties facing 'Famine Likely' or 'Catastrophe' conditions.

The IPC has been working with South Sudan since 2011.



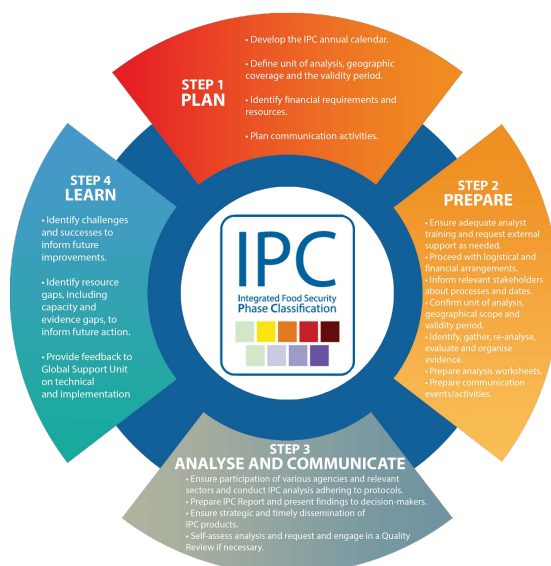
Learn: Learning ensures constant self-improvement by informing action needed before the subsequent analysis. TWG members are required to reflect on challenges encountered, such as inadequate evidence, inconvenient timing of analysis, as well as resource and capacity gaps faced, and are encouraged to develop a plan to address them. Furthermore, learning from the country analysis is also fed back to the GSU to develop and review technical guidance and training materials as well as refinements in global coordination and country support.



Photo: CARE Honduras, 2021

In 2021, 3.3 million people faced high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above) and required urgent action. Of these people, 616,000 were likely in Emergency (IPC Phase 4).

The IPC has been working with Honduras since 2012.





Building Consensus

The IPC is based on consensus-building. Building a technical consensus is important for two main reasons. First, food security and malnutrition analysis requires expertise from a wide range of disciplines (food security, livelihoods, nutrition, markets, agriculture and others, depending on the situation) as well as in-depth knowledge of the local context. The consensus-based process brings together experts from different disciplines and perspectives to evaluate and debate the evidence culminating in the final classification. Second, bringing technical experts from key stakeholder organizations together in the analysis process ensures that the analysis results will be more widely accepted and acted upon in a coordinated manner. Thus, consensus-building is key to promoting rigorous and unbiased food security and nutrition classifications.

How the Country Benefits

The analysis team classifies and maps food insecurity and malnutrition situations within geographical areas - defined according to the national administrative divisions (e.g. provinces, prefectures, counties etc.) or other ways - and the proportion of affected people within those areas. Key outputs of an IPC analysis include maps and population tables showing the severity and magnitude of the current and/or projected food insecurity or malnutrition prevalent or likely to be prevalent in each area, information on key factors contributing to or driving the current situation, as well as the most likely scenario for the projected situation.



Photo: UNICEF Angola, 2021

The worst drought in the last 40 years and rising food prices resulted in high acute food insecurity in the Cunene, Huila and Namibe provinces of South-Western Angola.

The IPC has been working with Angola since 2018.



Photo: OCHA desert locusts, 2020

The East and Horn of Africa region faced one of the worst infestations of desert locusts in 2019/2020 - whose destructive impact caused large-scale crop damage and worsened food insecurity in countries already affected by recurrent drought, conflict and high food prices.

The IPC has been working with the East and Central Africa region since 2004.



When Consensus is Not Reached

Consensus is not always achieved. Disagreements may relate to a particular area, or the analysis overall. In these situations, the best approach is to address the disagreements within the analysis team through neutral facilitation and seek an agreement at the country level to avoid delays. If this is not possible, the dissenting organization(s) can decide to disagree with the analysis results, in which case the minority view may be documented and communicated to decision-makers. However, if the disagreement relates to classification in IPC Phase 4 or 5, an external quality review of the alternative analysis (reflecting the minority view) may be requested either by the Technical Working Group or partner(s) supporting the minority view. When there is a breakdown in a consensus, there are two processes which may be triggered:

- **Real-time Quality Review:** A GSU-led process, external quality reviews are carried out to ensure overall quality, technical rigour and neutrality;
- **Famine Review:** Famine Reviews can be triggered when there is a breakdown in technical consensus regarding a Famine or Famine Likely classification. The Famine Review Committee (FRC) is a team of leading independent international food security and nutrition experts tasked with ensuring technical rigor and neutrality of the analysis.



Photo: IPC, Zimbabwe, 2019

In 2020, 2.61 million people (27% of the analysed population) in rural Zimbabwe faced high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above), while nearly 2.9 million people (29%) were in Stressed (IPC Phase 2).

The IPC has been working with Zimbabwe since 2012.

IPC

Integrated Food Security
Phase Classification



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