

Procedures for monitoring the right to food

The content of this handbook is based on FAO's guide *Methods to Monitor the Human Right to Adequate Food* (Volume I and II) written by Maarten Immink, Wenche Barth Eide and Arne Oshaug, with contributions from other members of the International Project on the Right to Food in Development and from FAO's Right to Food Team.

José María Medina Rey and María Teresa de Febrer (PROSALUS, Spain) adapted it to the "handbook" format. The translation into English of this handbook was done by Stephen Carlin and Beth Gelb.

The purpose of the MONITORING handbooks is to provide those responsible for monitoring the right to food with the conceptual, procedural and methodological background to monitor or follow up on right to food policies, programmes and projects from a human rights approach.

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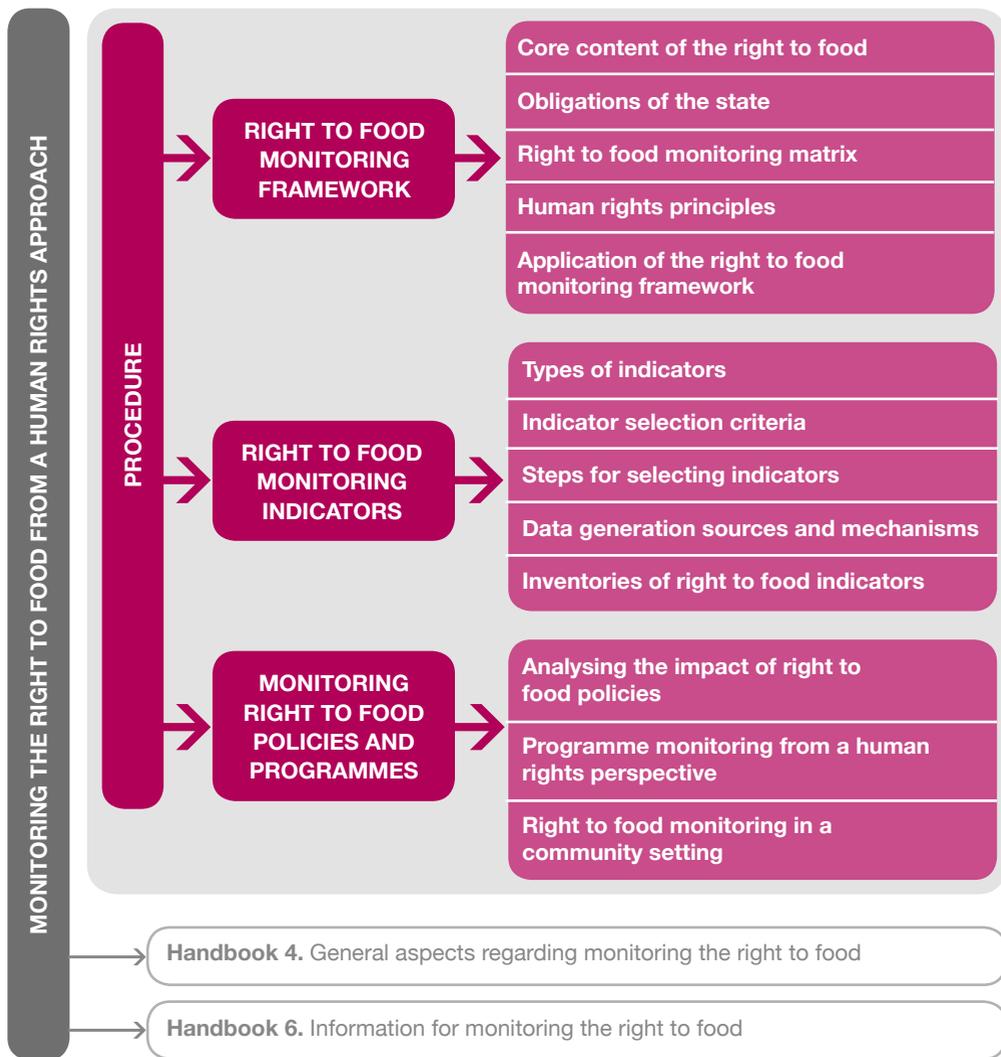
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The FAO glossary on the right to food is available at:
<http://www.fao.org/righttofood/knowledge-centre/glossary/en>

To develop a right to adequate food monitoring framework, three components must be taken into account that distinguish it from other conventional monitoring frameworks:

- core content of the right to food;
- obligations of the state;
- human rights principles.¹

These components must fit within a comprehensive framework that can provide guidance on how to monitor the right to adequate food and how to do so from a human rights perspective.

1.1. CORE CONTENT OF THE RIGHT TO ADEQUATE FOOD

The right to adequate food is based on and expands the concept of food security. Putting greater emphasis on each individual human being, it uses the elements of food security to define an individual right.

1. Please see Handbook 1 of this collection for details on core content, obligations and human rights principles.

CORE CONTENT COMPONENTS	IMPLICATIONS FOR RIGHTS-BASED MONITORING
Food availability	Monitoring should explicitly measure the different ways that people have of procuring food allowing them to feed themselves.
Supply stability	Monitoring should check whether food supply is stable over time.
Physical and economic accessibility	Monitoring should identify whether there are factors that limit the stable physical or economic access to adequate food, paying special attention to people in vulnerable situations (nursing babies, young children, the elderly, people with disabilities, persons with chronic medical problems [including those suffering from mental disease], victims of natural disasters, etc.).
Sustainability over time	Monitoring should look at the potential of policies to ensure food availability for both present and future generations.
Adequacy	Monitoring should do more than merely ensure that diet provides enough food energy (calories). It must also pay attention to the quality and safety of food, nutritional balance, and the acceptability of the diet in accordance with each person's culture.

Those engaging in monitoring duties should have a number of appropriate methods at their disposal, enabling them to generate information that covers all core content components and to ascertain the extent to which these components are actually being achieved.

1.2. OBLIGATIONS OF THE STATE

States that have ratified the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) have a set of economic, social and cultural human rights obligations, including the right to food, that they must fulfil. These obligations must be borne in mind when monitoring this right.

OBLIGATIONS OF THE STATE	IMPLICATIONS FOR RIGHTS-BASED MONITORING
Obligation to adopt progressive realization measures	Monitoring should check whether the state has adopted appropriate measures, that these bolster the progressive realization of the right to food, that maximum available resources are being allocated for this purpose and that there is no retrogression in the guarantee of this right.
Obligation not to discriminate	Monitoring must make sure that the policies, programmes, projects and measures adopted by the state to realize the right to food do not discriminate against anyone for any reason.
Obligation to respect	The monitoring process should examine the measures taken by the state to make certain that they do not pose any limitation or undermine in any way the right to food of any person.
Obligation to protect	Monitoring must also scrutinise the state's actions and omissions in applying the necessary legal and administrative measures to prevent the activities of third parties (individuals or companies) from having a negative effect on the right to food of any person.
Obligation to facilitate	Monitoring should analyse whether state policies, programmes and projects are actually building people's capacity (especially vulnerable groups and those facing food insecurity) to feed themselves.
Obligation to fulfil	Monitoring should confirm that there are no pockets of the population facing food insecurity and, if there are, should check that the state has taken appropriate measures to provide at least minimum essential levels of food to ensure they are protected against hunger.*

* This includes the concept of hidden hunger and therefore protection against micronutrient deficiencies.

1.3. MATRIX TO MONITOR THE RIGHT TO FOOD

The components of right to food core content and states' obligations can be set out together in a matrix to help identify and monitor specific policy measures and programmes for the realization of the right to food.

The matrix can be used as a collective guide to choose the type of policies and measures that will help in the realization of the right to adequate food, and in determining which process indicators and structural outcomes should be the target of rights-based monitoring.

		COMPONENTS OF THE RIGHT TO FOOD				
		Availability	Stability	Accessibility	Sustainability	Adequacy
OBLIGATIONS	Progressiveness					
	Non-discrimination					
	Respect					
	Protect					
	Facilitate					
	Fulfil					

1.4. HUMAN RIGHTS PRINCIPLES

Human rights principles are involved in both the outcomes and processes of policy and programme implementation and other state actions, and provide a regulatory basis for monitoring.

PRINCIPLES	IMPLICATIONS FOR RIGHTS-BASED MONITORING
Equality	Monitoring should focus on whether state policies, programmes, projects and measures treat all people equally.
Equity	Monitoring should check whether outcomes/benefits have been equitably distributed, i.e. according to the needs of each person or group, giving priority to those with the greatest needs.
Transparency	Monitoring should determine whether decisions by the authorities have been taken in a transparent manner and whether everyone has had access to necessary information.
Accountability	The monitoring process should be able to check whether the authorities responsible for the right to food must answer to their superiors and are held accountable to rights-holders in the discharge of their duties.
Human dignity	Monitoring should verify whether government measures that affect people's livelihoods and their ability to exercise the right to food are adopted in a way that respects people's dignity.
Participation	Monitoring of measures and public policies should confirm that individuals and groups can actively, freely, effectively and significantly participate in decisions that affect their lives, in particular, the ability to feed themselves.
Empowerment	Monitoring should determine whether rights-holders have been empowered through the relevant policies and programmes, i.e. whether the authorities have offered and facilitated choice, influence and control over the decisions affecting their livelihoods.
Rule of law	Monitoring should check that the authorities involved in the policies, programmes and measures under scrutiny have exercised their authority legitimately and in strict adherence with laws currently in force, while respecting established implementation procedures.

1.5. APPLICATION OF THE RIGHT TO FOOD MONITORING FRAMEWORK

To sum up, a human rights-based right to food monitoring framework should focus primarily on:

- gradually improving the different components of right to adequate food core content over time, especially focusing on vulnerable groups and those facing food insecurity;
- government compliance with the different categories of state human rights obligations;
- programme or policy formulation and implementation processes, to determine whether they satisfy human rights principles and, if they do not, propose corrective measures;
- the public resources allocated to the implementation of policies and programmes;
- the impact of policy measures on the underlying causes of food insecurity and vulnerability;
- institutional aspects, decision-making processes of relevant institutions, and the latter's capacity to implement them;
- the conduct of government officials regarding human rights obligations and principles;
- participation of rights-holders or their representatives and access to information.

MONITORING STATE ACTION AGAINST HUNGER
Manual developed by FoodFirst Information and Action Network (FIAN) on how to use
the Right to Food Guidelines as a monitoring framework

The full realization of the right to adequate food faces obstacles arising from a world where political, economic, social and, ultimately, structural transformation does not come about as fast or as pervasively as we would like. In many instances, these obstacles are the expression of states' unwillingness to comply with their international right to food obligations. In this regard, the international community (rights-holders, their representative organizations, United Nations bodies, etc.) has managed to promote the idea that state commitments should be subject to supervision by the society at large.

Civil society, grassroots organizations and social movements are very close to those suffering the consequences of failure to realize the right to food. Therefore, these organizations are perfectly situated to engage in monitoring activities because they can bear witness to the shortcomings and problems of state activity that interfere with or prevent the realization of the right. An adequate monitoring mechanism should help to review progress in implementing the right to food and to detect violations of that right or situations putting it at risk.

This manual, developed by FIAN, includes a battery of key questions to help monitor right to food issues. The purpose of these questions is to determine the extent to which the state is adhering to each of the right to food guidelines; its will and the effort it is making to realize this right; whether the necessary rules and institutions are in place to promote its realization; whether measures (policies, programmes, etc.) contribute to that realization; if they respect human rights principles; and, lastly, the results achieved by the state.

These questions are varied given that the right to food is related to very diverse fields of state activity, but all of them are based on the right to food guidelines and take a human rights approach.

The information generated in this monitoring process can be an asset to civil society organizations striving to:

- help bring about a fundamental change in national authorities;
- raise awareness among the general public about infringements of the right to food and their consequences;
- base their claims on specific cases of infringement;
- draft alternative reports for submission to the human rights monitoring bodies of international organizations such as the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR).

(This manual can be freely downloaded in PDF format from the FIAN website: <http://www.fian.org>)

Indicators are practical and useful for:

- promoting the realization of human rights and measuring their degree of implementation;
- drafting and promoting claims filed before duty-bearers;
- fostering public policies and programmes that facilitate the effective realization of human rights.

An indicator is nothing more than an instrument. However, when it is properly designed and fed with quality data, it is useful to the extent that it can make the monitoring or assessment exercise more objective and transparent, providing a concrete monitoring methodology.

When using human rights indicators, it is best to measure a small number of relevant features likely to help improve the realization and exercise of the human right in question, or evaluate the efforts being made by duty-bearers in fulfilling their obligations.

2.1. TYPES OF INDICATORS

Indicators can be **quantitative** or **qualitative**:

- Quantitative indicators are those that are expressed, or can be expressed, mainly in quantitative terms as figures, percentages or indices.
- Qualitative indicators go beyond statistics, are qualitative in nature, and use information arranged descriptively or categorically.

Human rights indicators can likewise be classified as fact-based (**objective**) or judgement-based (**subjective**). This distinction is not necessarily based on whether or not reliable or repeatable data collection methods are used to define the indicators. It has more to do with the information contained in the indicators in question:

- objective indicators: objects, facts or events that can, in principle, be observed or verified directly;
- subjective indicators: those based on perceptions, opinions, assessments or judgements made by people.

In practice and in the context of certain human rights, this distinction between objective and subjective information is often difficult to make. Objective or fact-based indicators, as opposed to their subjective or judgement-based counterparts, are objectively verifiable and may be easier to interpret when comparing the human rights situation in a country over time or between different populations.

Depending on what is being monitored, a distinction can be drawn between **structural, process and outcome** indicators.

Structural indicators reflect the ratification and adoption of legal instruments and the existence or creation of basic institutional mechanisms deemed necessary for the promotion and protection of human rights. In other words, they refer to the human rights commitment of states.

When defining structural indicators for different rights it is important to highlight the need for specific policy statements on issues directly related to the implementation of these human rights.

Some structural indicators may be common to most human rights, while others are relevant to specific human rights or only to a particular attribute of a human right.

Process indicators measure the efforts made by duty-bearers to convert their human rights commitments into the desired results. In other words, these indicators are continuously evaluating the specific policies and measures adopted by duty-bearers.

It is easier to assess the accountability of the state regarding its human rights obligations when process indicators are defined as an intermediate step, which can be monitored, between commitment and outcome.

Process indicators are more sensitive to change than outcome indicators, and are therefore more appropriate for tracking the progressive realization of the right or reflecting the efforts made by states parties to protect that right.

Outcome indicators capture individual and collective achievements reflecting the extent to which human rights are being exercised in a given context. Over time, an outcome indicator consolidates the impact of different underlying processes (which can be captured by one or more process indicators), and often evolves slowly and is less sensitive to momentary changes than a process indicator.

Process and outcome indicators are not always mutually exclusive. A process indicator applied to one human right can be an outcome indicator in the context of a different one. The guiding rule here is to ensure that at least one outcome indicator that can be closely identified with the exercise of that right or attribute is defined for each attribute of a right.

REQUIREMENTS FOR USEFUL INDICATORS IN THE MONITORING OF HUMAN RIGHTS

- They must be defined explicitly and precisely.
- They must be based on a structured and acceptable data collection, processing and dissemination methodology.
- They must be available on a regular basis.
- They must be relevant and effective in measuring what they are supposed to measure.
- They must be simple, timely and few in number.
- They must be reliable.
- They must be based on a transparent and verifiable methodology.
- They must adhere to international human rights standards and generally accepted statistical criteria.
- It must be possible to disaggregate them on the basis of vulnerable or marginalized population group at the local level, and on the basis of illegal grounds of discrimination.

2.2. INDICATOR SELECTION CRITERIA

Technical or statistical criteria as well as practical criteria that reflect human rights principles and approaches should be taken into account in the selection of indicators.

Regarding **technical criteria** we would note, *inter alia*:

- **Measurement of change:** Monitoring implies measuring change over time. The indicator should be used to measure differences over time with minimal errors.
- **Validity:** The indicator should be a valid and true representation of a given phenomenon and should be equally valid for all categories or classes forming part of a disaggregated analysis. This is important for making valid comparisons between different population groups or between different locations.
- **Ease of preparation:** Where possible, the data needed to construct the indicator should be generated from simple measurement techniques, thus providing more opportunities to participate in monitoring activities while reducing costs.
- **Specificity:** The indicator should be specific to a given phenomenon with a view to preventing different interpretations.

As for the **criteria reflecting human rights principles**:

- **State obligations and core content:** The monitoring framework should include process and outcome indicators that reflect states' obligations to respect, protect, facilitate and fulfil, as well as the core content of the right to adequate food.
- **Action monitoring:** The information provided by the indicator should contribute to the reshaping of the action and better decision-making by both duty-bearers and rights-holders.
- **Ease of use:** The indicator should provide clear and transparent information so that the users for whom it is intended can understand it and draw their own conclusions.
- **Disaggregation:** It should be possible to disaggregate both process and outcome indicators into all specific population groups and specific geographical areas. This is essential because it can help detect discriminatory practices in the process of implementing the right to food and other measures, and it will gauge the impact of policy measures or programmes for the realization of the right to adequate food in the different population groups as well as whether the recipients are truly reaping the benefits from food and nutrition security programmes.
- **General application:** The indicator should be relevant to most, but also sensitive to different social and cultural interpretations.

Another important aspect to consider in the selection of indicators is the possible **causal link between categories of indicators** (structural–process–output). Once a structural indicator is identified to measure the commitment of the duty-bearer, we should define a process indicator that reflects ongoing efforts to meet that commitment and an outcome indicator to consolidate the results of these efforts over time. This causal relationship between the indicators selected in the three categories can make monitoring more effective and help improve accountability.

CRITERIA FOR THE SELECTION OF INDICATORS TO MONITOR FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY IN THE FEDERATIVE REPUBLIC OF BRAZIL (National Food Security Council)

Indicators for monitoring food and nutrition security must:

- already be in use in an existing monitoring system with a reliable source of information;
- consist of information that is frequently and systematically compiled;
- be based on information that can be disaggregated by gender, ethnic group and geographical area;
- be easily understood by the general public;
- be able to verify the effectiveness of public policies;
- enable monitoring of one of the following dimensions of food and nutrition security:
 - food production;
 - food availability;
 - access to food;
 - food quality;
 - food consumption patterns;
 - nutritional status;
 - access to education, health and sanitation.

2.3. STEPS FOR SELECTING INDICATORS

Having identified the key attributes of the human right on which we are working (in our case, the right to food), for each attribute these three steps should be followed:

1. Identify structural indicator(s)

These are indicators that relate to:

- a. constitutional and legal provisions on the right to food and regulatory gaps;
- b. stated policies (or lack thereof) for the realization of the right to food;
- c. institutional framework for the fulfilment of state obligations.

2. Identify process indicator(s)

This requires identification of duty-bearers and their duties as well as the activities entrusted to the relevant institutions, policies and programmes related to the desired outcomes, national or global best practices, and internal shortcomings when it comes to implementing the right to food. Process indicators should not be limited to financial aspects (e.g. resources allocated to a particular school meal programme) but should also look at the results of the activities or programmes (increased coverage of school meal programmes, credit for small farmers, etc.), and should act as a bridge between structural and outcome indicators.

3. Identify outcome indicator(s)

The definition of these indicators is based on identification of the desired effects associated with compliance with human rights obligations and with the exercise of the right to food, as well as the link with the required processes. The outcome indicators selected must readily relate to the exercise of the right to food and the selected process indicators. Outcome indicators typically reflect the accumulation of several processes, and may therefore be few in number and overlap with several attributes or components of the core content of the right to food.

2.4. SOURCES AND MECHANISMS GENERATING DATA FOR INDICATORS

We can distinguish at least four broad categories of data generation mechanisms that could prove useful in the development of indicators to monitor and assess human rights.

1. Fact-based data

Factual information primarily describes human rights violations and identifies victims and perpetrators. This information is recorded in a standardized way, using common definitions and classifications based on a human rights regulatory framework, with a view to compiling and consolidating relevant data.

2. Socio-economic and administrative statistics

These refer to aggregate data sets and indicators based on objective quantitative or qualitative information related to standard of living and other related aspects. This information is compiled and disseminated by the state through administrative registries and surveys, often in collaboration with national statistics agencies and following the guidelines of international organizations.

Following are the sources commonly associated with the development and compilation of economic statistics:

- **Administrative data:** information generated and collected by the relevant sector ministries and government regulatory authorities. The use of a standard methodology for collecting information from civil and administrative registries, usually with a reasonable degree of reliability and validity, makes administrative statistics indispensable to achieve greater transparency, credibility and accountability in human rights assessments. Alone, these data do not provide a full assessment of the human rights situation in a given context as they may not cover all relevant aspects of the effective realization and exercise of such rights, or that coverage may be incomplete or contain reporting biases, not to mention the deliberate communication of erroneous data.
- **Statistical surveys:** Statistical surveys are used to collect quantitative and qualitative information directly on subsets of the population. Unlike a census, where every member of the population is polled, a statistical or sample survey collects data from a fraction of the target population in order to draw conclusions that can be extrapolated to the entire population. In this regard, sample surveys are an efficient way to collect information on situations in which a census is impossible or where administrative data is unavailable. Well-structured statistical samples, including samples from which disaggregated statistics may be obtained (such as ethnic group), may require a considerable allocation of resources. Surveys are also important sources of information to check the veracity of administrative data.
- **Censuses:** A census is a complete listing of all members of the population of a country or of any other territory. Countries typically conduct censuses to obtain data on the population, housing, agriculture and industrial establishments, normally every ten years. This is a crucial resource to obtain disaggregated socio-economic statistics and to generate samples for statistical surveys.

3. Perception and opinion surveys

The aim of perception and opinion surveys is to poll a representative sample of individuals who are asked to express their personal opinion on a given issue. The nature of the information collected is predominantly subjective and cannot be quantified directly. Default or closed response formats with ordinal or cardinal scales are normally used to aggregate data and transform these perceptions of opinions into indicators. Responses may be obtained through in-person interviews, self-administered questionnaires or telephone interviews.

The reliability and validity of the results is almost entirely contingent upon the design of the questionnaires, the wording of the questions (and pre-testing) and the skill of the interviewers.

The information gathered from perception and opinion surveys of households gives us the individual perspective or the “voice of the people” in assessing human rights. However, methods focusing on the collection of subjective information may not produce reliable and valid indicators fit for ongoing human rights monitoring. Moreover, they may not be appropriately representative due to coverage limitations. In any case, this method can sometimes produce information that supplements other types of indicators in human rights assessments. It can also be used to obtain first-hand information which, depending on its usefulness, can be expanded through other data generation methods.

4. Expert opinions

Data based on expert opinions are those generated by combined assessments of the human rights situation with the help of a limited number of “informed experts”. The information generated is mainly based on opinions (subjective) and must be quantified by means of an encoding process.

One of the major advantages of using information based on expert opinions is that it can be compiled very quickly and used effectively to present a preliminary assessment of the situation. These assessments often accurately depict the general situation. On the other hand, they often stray from data reliability and comparability standards, which in turn may influence their acceptance by the public. Therefore, their usefulness as a human rights assessment method is limited.

2.5. INVENTORY OF RELEVANT RIGHT TO FOOD INDICATORS

The right to food monitoring teams working in a specific geographical context may get some interesting ideas by consulting the lists of indicators from other inventories. Some of these inventories of indicators are specific to the right to food, and most are geared to monitoring food insecurity and malnutrition.

However, indicators should be adopted only after careful analysis of the purpose, availability of information, technical capacity, etc.²

Of the different right to food and food and nutrition security indicator inventories, following are three outstanding examples that may provide useful guidance.

2. Please see Handbook 6 in this collection for further details.

Indicators to monitor World Food Summit commitments

The final statement of the first World Food Summit held in Rome in 1996 included a series of commitments and an action plan to achieve them. The Committee on World Food Security compiled and selected indicators to monitor these commitments. At its 26th session in 2000, it presented a paper entitled *Suggested Core Indicators for Monitoring Food Security Status*. It included a compendium of more than 100 indicators used by Food Insecurity and Vulnerability Information Mapping System (FIVIMS), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the United Nations concerning food security and nutrition outcomes and vulnerability factors.³

A list of seven core indicators, representing a common set of variables that were considered most closely related to food security, nutrition and vulnerability, were identified for the purpose of drawing comparisons between countries and compiling a set of easy-to-use data to monitor worldwide progress in achieving the goals set during the World Food Summit. These indicators were related to food consumption and health and nutritional status.

At its 37th session, the Committee on World Food Security endorsed the proposal to revise the set of core food security indicators and the process to do so, and recommended that FAO improve the method it uses to measure subnutrition, paying particular attention to improving the timeliness and reliability of the data and parameters used. This proposal was presented at The State of Food Insecurity in the World (SOFI) in 2012.

SHARED CORE INDICATORS FOR MONITORING FOOD SECURITY ⁴		
FACTORS DETERMINING FOOD INSECURITY	OUTCOMES	VULNERABILITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Average food supply sufficiency.- Food production index.- Food price index.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Prevalence of subnutrition.- Proportion of food spending by the lowest-earning fifth of the population.- Percentage of children under five suffering from stunted growth.- Percentage of children under five suffering from wasting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Volatility of domestic food prices.

3. The core indicator document with the complete list can be found in the documentation of the 26th session (2000) of the Committee on World Food Security on FAO's website: <http://www.fao.org/unfao/bodies/cfs/cfs26/cfs2000-e.htm>

4. The values of these indicators are available on the website The State of Food Insecurity in the World: <http://www.fao.org/publications/sofi/en>

Right to food indicators proposed by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)

In 2006 the OHCHR published the document titled *Principles and Guidelines for a Human Rights Approach to Poverty Reduction Strategies*⁵ offering a condensed and systematized version of previous works published in 2002 and 2004. In addressing the right to food, it establishes five key objectives and 13 indicators to monitor progress.

INDICATORS RELATING TO THE CORE CONTENT OF THE RIGHT TO FOOD	
KEY TARGETS	INDICATORS
1. All people to be free from chronic hunger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Proportion of people with inadequate intake of dietary energy. - Proportion of adults and adolescents with low body mass. - Proportion of underweight among under-five children (low weight for their age).
2. Elimination of gender inequality in access to food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Proportion of males and females with inadequate intake of dietary energy. - Proportion of male and female adults and adolescents with low body mass. - Proportion of underweight boys and girls.
3. All people to be free from food insecurity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Proportion of households not able to have two square meals regularly. - Proportion of household expenditure on food. - Variability of prices of staple foods.
4. All people should have access to adequate food with nutritional value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Proportion of poor people with inadequate intake of protein. - Proportion of poor people with inadequate intake of micronutrients.
5. All people to have access to safe food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Proportion of poor people vulnerable to consumption of unsafe food. - Proportion of people exposed to public information and education.

In 2012, the OHCHR published *Human Rights Indicators: A Guide to Measurement and Implementation*.⁶ This guide includes some explanatory tables with indicators related to human rights, including the right to food. These tables organize examples of indicators around four aspects of the right to food: nutrition, food safety and consumer protection,

5. This publication is available in English on the OHCHR website: <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/PovertyStrategiesen.pdf>

6. This publication is available in English on the OHCHR website: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Indicators/Pages/HRIIndicatorsIndex.aspx>

food availability, and accessibility of food. For each of these aspects, it organizes the indicators into three groups: structural indicators (9 examples), process indicators (22 examples) and output indicators (7 examples). Four of the examples are indicators used in monitoring the Millennium Development Goals. In addition, there are several indicators that are consistent with those used to monitor World Food Summit commitments and with the 13 indicators for monitoring key right to food targets.

Indicators proposed by the IBSA Project

IBSA stands for indicators, benchmarks, scoping and assessment. They refer to an initiative undertaken at the University of Mannheim (Germany) in collaboration with the Non-governmental Organization FIAN International to launch and institutionalize a process to encourage the use of indicators and benchmarks for assessing compliance with the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights by States Parties.

The IBSA mechanism basically consists of four elements:

- i. indicators representing the core content of the rights under the Covenant;
- ii. using benchmarks as goals for the implementation of those rights;
- iii. the scoping process, a joint mechanism involving the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the State Party to define and agree on indicators and monitoring benchmarks for a given period; and
- iv. a regular assessment of mechanism outcomes.

During the period 2004–2009, the IBSA initiative first defined right to adequate food indicators and later, during phase two, validated those indicators nationally in three countries (Spain, Ghana and Colombia). The first phase resulted in 37 right to food indicators which were reduced to 25 during phase two.⁷ The OHCHR worked closely with the IBSA process during both phases and contributed to the identification and validation of the indicators. The result is that the two sets of right to adequate food indicators are very similar.

7. IBSA Project findings are still pending publication.

EXAMPLES OF RIGHT TO FOOD INDICATORS PROPOSED BY IBSA

Structural indicators	- Legal recognition of the right to adequate food and related rights.
	- Existence of a national independent human rights institution engaged in economic, social and cultural rights (ESCR).
	- Procedural mechanisms to provide adequate, effective and prompt remedies.
	- National strategy on implementing the right to food.
	- Food safety and consumer protection legislation.
	- Nutrition and nutrition adequacy legislation.
	- Instruments to ensure cultural or traditional food use and nutrition.
	- Mechanisms to ensure a functioning market system.
	- Programme for disaster management.
	- National policy statement on agricultural production.
	- Protection of labour conditions and enhancement of access to labour.
Process indicators	- Number of right to food-related complaints filed, investigated and adjudicated in courts and other relevant institutions.
	- Percentage of claimants in right to food-related claims benefiting from legal aid.
	- Percentage of public officials handling right to food issues who have not benefited from education in ESCR (in particular the right to food).
	- Percentage of the population covered by public programmes on nutrition education.
	- Proportion of persons from vulnerable groups covered by protection programmes.
	- Coverage of programmes guaranteeing access to productive resources.

EXAMPLES OF RIGHT TO FOOD INDICATORS PROPOSED BY IBSA (cont.)

Outcome indicators	- Percentage of population undernourished.
	- Percentage of population with micronutrient deficiencies (iodine/iron/vitamin A).
	- Percentage of population that is overweight or obese.
	- Percentage of available food per capita from domestic production.
	- Proportion of the population with access to sanitation.
	- Proportion of the population without access to a source of treated water.
	- Percentage of the population living in poverty or extreme poverty.

Indicator matrix to monitor the right to food

In any right to food monitoring process, the indicators to be used for each specific context must be defined. To that end, in addition to consulting existing indicator inventories, a matrix is also helpful in organizing and systematizing the indicators that those responsible for monitoring have selected or defined.

AIM OF MONITORING	TYPES OF INDICATORS	COMPONENTS OR ATTRIBUTES OF RIGHT TO FOOD CORE CONTENT		
		Availability, stability and sustainability in terms of supply	Physical and economic accessibility	Adequacy and utilization
Monitoring of commitments	Structural indicators			
Monitoring of efforts	Process indicators			
Monitoring of achievement	Outcome indicators			

We can say that public policy is the set of objectives, decisions and actions carried out strategically, by an authority with political power and government legitimacy, to solve the problems that citizens and the government itself consider a priority and which affect a sector of society or a specific geographical area. In this sense, all public intervention generates an alteration of the natural state of things in society; the effects or impacts sought with each public policy are often contained in its objectives and are the reason for its existence.

Public policy is not always the result of a linear, consistent and orderly design or formulation process, but is rather subjected to a complex social and political process with many interacting forces. The problems detected by society do not always coincide with those that are ultimately the target of public policy. That is why a distinction is drawn between a systemic agenda, covering a set of issues of concern to society at a given point in time, and a political or institutional agenda addressing the problems on the systemic agenda which the public authorities consider a priority.

The following stages can be identified in the construction of public policy:

1. identifying the problem;
2. formulating alternatives to solve the problem identified;
3. adopting one of the possible alternatives;
4. implementing the selected alternative;
5. evaluating the results of the implementation.

At the implementation stage, public policies become programmes and projects to which resources are allocated to carry them out. The programme, considered as a set of actions

aimed at achieving one or more objectives, applies the general ideas of the policy to a particular situation, allocating resources and assigning responsibilities.

That is why it is usually more feasible to monitor programmes, owing to their more structured and specific nature. As concerns public policy, the best approach may be to assess its impact, since precisely one of the most important criteria for assessing public policy is whether public action has achieved the intended impacts and/or has caused other unwanted ones.

When developing programmes to implement public policy, things do not always go as planned. It is therefore very useful to monitor what happens between design and implementation to learn of possible deviations and devise corrective mechanisms for public action where needed.

3.1. ANALYSING PUBLIC POLICY IMPACTS FROM A HUMAN RIGHTS PERSPECTIVE

When deciding how to approach the analysis of the impacts of a particular policy or set of policies it is important to realize that:

- Policies often have direct and indirect impacts depending on their specificity and the number of transmission channels or mechanisms that are required to make the policy effective.
- Policies can have short- and long-term impacts, so it is important to consider how long they have been in place so as to include the impacts of long-term policies in the analysis.
- A human rights approach to an analysis of policy impacts must take into account both the magnitude and distribution of impacts on different groups.

The main concern from a human rights approach is to achieve equity in the distributional effects of policy impact, especially when determining how they affect food insecurity and vulnerability and their impact on vulnerable groups.

The **Poverty and Social Impact Analysis** (PSIA) is an analytical approach that is particularly suited to analyse policy impact from a human rights perspective and to conduct rights-based monitoring. PSIA is a general framework of analysis used to study the impact of policy reform on the well-being of different groups of people, especially the poor and vulnerable.

Although it was not specifically designed to analyse food and nutrition policy, PSIA can be an important tool for assessing the impact of policy measures on food security. PSIA must be participatory, which means including relevant stakeholders, disseminating the results and conclusions of the analysis and contributing to public debates on policy.

The PSIA identifies a number of steps to be carried out in the analytical process:

- Identify the policy or policy package to be analysed.
- Reach a consensus among stakeholders regarding the issues that the analysis should address.
- Identify interest groups.
- Build or adapt an analytical model that addresses the hypothesis of how the policy affects or has affected food security.
- Assess the institutional and political environment to understand how it affects the application of policies and the risks involved.
- Conduct an inventory of existing information sources, identifying missing information and deciding on an information gathering and analysis method.
- Conduct the analysis, draw conclusions and make recommendations regarding the reformulation of the policy or adoption of compensatory measures.

3.2. PROGRAMME MONITORING FROM A HUMAN RIGHTS PERSPECTIVE

Programmes and policies are intertwined; programmes implement a set of activities to achieve certain goals and objectives defined by policies. Programme assessment and monitoring generally examines the impact that a programme has or has had in relation to the objectives, and also looks at the operational aspects of the programme to detect problems that prevent it from advancing as planned.

Policy-makers and legislators are likely to have greater interest in monitoring the impacts of the programme, while groups representing beneficiaries of the programme (i.e. rights-holders) may want to place greater emphasis on monitoring the implementation of the programme, including the implementation of its normative bases, in addition to social control mechanisms and appeal instruments.

When addressing programme monitoring, it is important to consider both the external and internal environment of the programme itself.

External environment

The external environment of the programme refers to the sphere within which it is implemented and with which it interacts. Programme design and implementation processes and their impact are conditioned by political, socio-economic, legal, regulatory, institutional and other factors that could be affected over the long term by the way the programme is managed and operated. However, their relationship with the programme is most likely unidirectional and short-term and therefore these factors need to be understood and accepted. There are several aspects to consider within the external environment:

FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION STATUS

This involves identifying food security and nutrition issues and addressing the questions *who*, *where* and *why*, for which the results of a *vulnerability analysis* will provide the necessary answers. In the case of highly focused programmes, the analysis should focus primarily on the programme target groups.

A *causal analysis* is vital in order to identify the underlying causes of food insecurity and vulnerability of the specific group in question. This provides a benchmark against which to assess whether the programme design and implementation processes attempt to tackle one or more of the underlying causes of the food situation facing the target population. Therefore, a reduction in food insecurity and vulnerability can be expected and an increasing number of people will be able to exercise their right to adequate food.

THE POLITICAL, LEGAL AND BUDGETARY FRAMEWORK OF THE PROGRAMME

This implies identifying the political basis underlying the programme, the type of legislative mandate it has, and how it is funded. This information helps in understanding programme design and facilitates the monitoring of programme impacts in contrast with policy objectives. A *public budget analysis* can be used to monitor programme allocations and actual expenditure which may affect its implementation. Understanding and monitoring the political, legislative and budgetary framework forms part of programme sustainability monitoring.

INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK OF THE PROGRAMME

It is important to understand what institutions are involved in the programme at the different levels and what their roles and responsibilities are, and then to monitor their ability to support the programme externally. To this end we suggest the *analysis of roles and capabilities methods*.

PROGRAMME GUIDELINES AND STANDARDS

Most programmes have a regulatory basis that should be reflected in their design and implementation processes. These externally defined guidelines and standards must be known and understood so that they can be assessed from a human rights perspective and taken into account when monitoring the implementation of the programme. Guidelines and standards may cover any or all of the following aspects: programme beneficiaries, programme management, accountability procedures, standards and quality of programme goods and services, the programme's operational procedures, design of the facilities where programme services are provided, number and composition of staff in relation to programme beneficiaries, etc. The most commonly used human rights principles for this are *transparency, accountability and non-discrimination*.

SOCIAL CONTROL MECHANISMS

This involves identifying which institutions, organizations or bodies outside the programme have the vocation or mission to monitor programme operations and impacts, or are under obligation to do so.

APPEAL INSTRUMENTS AND INSTITUTIONS

In some cases programme beneficiaries may lodge a legal or quasi-legal claim against the responsible institutions when their legally recognized rights are not being fulfilled. Such claims may be lodged with human rights commissions, ombudsmen or, in some countries, the courts. It is essential for programme beneficiaries and their representatives to have adequate access to information about the programme to make claims.

Internal environment

This refers to all the processes taking place in the context of programme implementation, starting with its design, what will be offered and who will benefit. The human rights

principles applied to assess and monitor the programme's internal process are *equality, non-discrimination, transparency, accountability, empowerment and participation*.

PROGRAMME DESIGN

Programme design must be assessed to check whether it addresses one or more of the causes underlying food insecurity and vulnerability in a specific population group. The following programme design components need to be evaluated: expected impact of the programme, programme objectives and strategies, selection of target groups, scheme and selection criteria, operating procedures, participation of rights-holders (or their representatives), human and financial resources, and funding mechanisms. Programme monitoring should cover the actual introduction of the changes proposed as a result of the monitoring process.

PROGRAMME DUTY-BEARERS

Programme duty-bearers are all the people or institutions directly responsible for its implementation and operation. The analytical approach of roles and capabilities can also be applied here. From a human rights perspective, the programmes developed in collaboration with families should define their role and show how the programme can help strengthen the capacity of families to meet their responsibilities.

PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION AND OPERATION

We need to describe the basis on which internal programme implementation and operation processes can be assessed and monitored. Following are some key elements that can be included:

- degree of programme operation compliance with the rules and standards defined for that purpose;
- geographic diversity of programme implementation methods and operations;
- efficient selection: who is included or left out of the selected group;
- programme monitoring, impact on decision-making, and programme operations;
- participation of rights-holders or their representatives in decision-making and programme operations;
- appeal procedures.

Programme impact is not limited to targeted groups but can also extend to non-target groups (external effects), either intentionally or unintentionally. Results and conclusions concerning programme impact should take stock of conclusions relating to its internal and external environment. End results, such as a change in the number of right to food infringements or the enhanced well-being of people, are likely due to a number of factors and changes, some of which are over and above the direct impact of the programme. Therefore, such changes cannot be attributed exclusively to the programme (called the attribution gap). This would require a complex analysis of which factors outside the programme, exerting a positive or negative effect on the desired results, were identified, and of their effects independent of those of the programme.

Possible steps to follow when monitoring a programme

- **Form a programme monitoring team** comprising members of the institutions and organizations that are best informed about the programme, and who can provide all the monitoring and assessment knowledge needed in the relevant technical areas while also possessing management and administrative skills. At least one team member should be familiar with human rights principles and approaches in the context of programme assessment.
- Programme monitoring should have a **clear mandate** which needs to be widely disseminated and understood, particularly by authorities and staff, to ensure that results and conclusions have maximum impact on programme implementation or reformulation processes.
- **Define the monitoring domain:** what questions need to be answered regarding the implementation and impact of the programme. A checklist should be drawn up. This should be a broad consultation process with the maximum participation of a wide range of stakeholders.
- Establish a “human rights **gold standard**” for the programme. It is important to see everything related to the process and the impact of the programme in order to fully comply with all of the dimensions of human rights. This “standard of excellence” should help with the analytical work insofar as it provides greater clarity, by examining what aspects of the implementation and impact of the programme do not conform to human rights principles.

- Establish a **monitoring scheme** detailing the activities to be conducted, data sources to be consulted, the data collection methods that should be used, the results that should be achieved within a given time frame, and institutional and individual responsibilities. The scheme should explicitly indicate how the human rights-based monitoring process should be conducted.
- Have a clear vision of who the **beneficiaries of the results** of the assessment / monitoring are, how results will be disseminated to each target group, and try to ensure that results and conclusions translate into corrective follow-up actions by the different stakeholders.

3.3. MONITORING THE RIGHT TO FOOD IN A COMMUNITY SETTING

Monitoring at the community level potentially offers a good opportunity to engage in human rights-based monitoring. The greater the direct involvement of community residents in monitoring, the more likely it is that the monitoring process will comply with human rights principles. However, the fact that a community group becomes involved in monitoring does not necessarily mean that it is participatory, inclusive, transparent or empowering.

For a community monitoring process to really be based on human rights, it must meet the following standards:

- The monitoring programme must be established by the community.
- Community residents should have equal opportunities to participate in the monitoring process.
- Participation should promote and strengthen capacity.
- The community should be fully informed of the results.
- Participants should be held accountable to the whole community.

Community-level monitoring can be conducted by the community residents themselves, by extra-community actors or monitors, or a joint monitoring effort can be devised.

When monitoring is carried out by extra-community monitors, the underlying process is essentially inductive, based on a predetermined conceptual framework. Monitoring conducted by the residents of a community is a more deductive process based on the perceptions of residents.

Monitoring conducted by the community for the community

There may be different reasons why a community engages in monitoring:

- The community has decided that it is important to understand how living standards in the community are changing and how this change affects the most vulnerable households.
- Changes are taking place in the region where the community is located and the latter wants to understand how these changes affect its most vulnerable members.
- The community wants to understand and monitor how the local government uses public resources in order to participate in decisions concerning budget allocations and use of public resources.

Monitoring conducted by the community for the community requires organization. A monitoring committee needs to be formed to take decisions and gather information from the entire community.

One area that requires special attention, especially in isolated rural areas, is the exchange of monitoring information with the community.

Extra-community monitoring of community conditions

Secondary data analysis can be used to identify where the most vulnerable population is located and some of the reasons why these people suffer from chronic food insecurity. Rarely are secondary data sources sufficient to define food security conditions in specific communities, and therefore these data need to be supplemented by other methods. A useful tool for community monitoring is the **community food security profile**:

- analyses communities facing chronic food vulnerability;
- links the community's food security conditions with the political, social, economic, institutional and environmental issues affecting it;
- provides more precise information on the selected geographic area;
- identifies areas of vulnerability in priority areas;
- provides a better understanding of seasonal dynamics in specific areas;
- can be used to monitor community-based projects and the impact of national programmes on a community.

The task of designing and implementing a community food security profile has three key stages:

- (a) Develop a conceptual framework that provides a structure for the development of the profile methodology, tools and analysis.
- (b) Since one cannot include all communities, decide on a sampling frame from the secondary data analysis and consultation with key informants.
- (c) Design the information methodology and prepare data collection instruments.

This collection of RIGHT TO FOOD HANDBOOKS has been compiled from publications forming part of the Right to Food Methodological Toolbox prepared by FAO's Right to Food Team.

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For more information on the Right to Food Methodological Toolbox, visit the website: www.fao.org/righttofood or contact us at: righttofood@fao.org

RIGHT TO FOOD HANDBOOKS

1. The right to food within the international framework of human rights and country constitutions
2. Development of specific right to food legislation
3. Review of the compatibility of sectoral laws with the right to food
4. General aspects regarding monitoring the right to food
5. Procedures for monitoring the right to food
6. Information for monitoring the right to food
7. Assessment of the right to food
8. Advocacy on the right to food based on the analysis of government budgets
9. Who's who in the right to food
10. Right to food training

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