

Call for Proposals – 2014 cycle

FAO Voices of the Hungry project promotes research on food insecurity, based on data from the Gallup® World Poll

Background

FAO's [Voices of the Hungry \(VoH\) project](#) is developing a new global standard for estimating the number of people experiencing food insecurity, called the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES). This global food security measure will make it possible to provide annual information regarding levels of severity of food insecurity based on people's self-reported experiences, with great potential to inform international and national policy making as well as global monitoring of the development agenda objectives.

The FIES builds upon established tools such as the USDA Household Food Security Survey Module and the Latin American and Caribbean Food Security Scale, which have been tested and validated in developed and developing countries. The FIES is an experience-based metric of severity of food insecurity that relies on people's direct responses to eight questions regarding their economic access to adequate food. Since this measurement tool is not specific to any particular sector such as nutrition, agriculture or economics, the FIES can contribute to a multidisciplinary understanding of the phenomenon of food insecurity.

The VoH project is using the Gallup® World Poll (GWP) as a vehicle for data collection. GWP is a branch of Gallup, Inc. that has been conducting nationally representative surveys in more than 150 countries annually since 2005. The FIES was incorporated into the GWP questionnaire in January 2014, making it possible for FAO to provide annual country-level estimates of the prevalence of food insecurity at different levels of severity.

The results will be cross-culturally comparable and based on a nationally representative sample of adults. The measurement of food insecurity of individuals rather than households will enable exploration of possible gender differences.

The Voices of the Hungry project will provide **open access** to all country-specific raw data of the 8 FIES items and key demographic variables (gender of respondent, urban/rural, income, employment, education), along with a suggested severity classification format based on Item Response Theory for cross country comparability.

However, in addition to the data that will be made publically available, the VoH project is granting a limited number of licenses to obtain access to the full archive of GWP datasets from 2005 forward, including the FIES in 2014, as part of the arrangement with Gallup. This serves one of the primary objectives of the Voices of the Hungry project, which is to promote innovative high-level research that will contribute to deepening our understanding of food insecurity in the world through exploration of the data generated by the GWP.

One-year licenses will be granted to access GWP microdata for all countries surveyed. It should be noted that this Call for Proposals is to provide data licenses to selected researchers only, and that **no financial support will be provided to applicants awarded a license**.

Call for Proposals

GWP data licenses

FAO will grant access, through a competitive process, to seven individual researchers to the complete set of Gallup World Poll data from 2005 through the end of the 2014 cycle, the first year in which the FIES data was collected.

Licenses will be granted to individual researchers only and not to research consortia or universities. License holders will be able to use the original microdata received from Gallup for a one year period from the date of access. License holders can keep, share and disseminate any tables and variables created from the original datasets for research purposes during and also after the license period. However, the original microdata at the respondent level for Gallup variables is not to be shared with non-license holders with the exception of the FIES + demographic variables (age, gender, income, urban/rural residence and education) which will be provided via open access on the FAO website starting in the 2nd quarter of 2015. At the conclusion of the one year license period, the individual level respondent data for all GWP datasets shall be removed from the computer of the license holder and erased.

Value to researchers

While the GWP data pertaining to food security and basic demographics will be publicly available, license holders will have access to the **complete** GWP datasets starting from 2005. These rich data sets include indices related to a wide range of topics, including: business and economics, citizen engagement, communication and technology, environment and energy, food and shelter, government and politics, health, law and order, religion and ethics, social issues, well-being, and work. The data from each country (approximately 140-150 per year) contain all GWP core questions, country-and region-specific questions, and the 8 item FIES for 2014 only. GWP included a single (core) question pertaining to food security beginning in 2005, which was modified in 2006, allowing potential longitudinal analysis. The integration of the FIES module into the Gallup questionnaire starting in 2014 will

allow research into individuals' responses about food security *and* these other aspects of their lives, providing a more holistic picture of their experience.

To learn more about the GWP, please read the [description of Gallup's methodology](#) and the [full list of the GWP core questions](#).

Two-Step Application Process

Please read all instructions carefully before beginning your application. Note that all materials should be submitted in English.

Step One: Letter of Interest

Applicants are invited to submit their **Curriculum Vitae**, along with a **one page Letter of Interest** (not to exceed 800 words) to call-proposal-voh@fao.org.

A suggested format for the **one-page Letter of Interest**:

- Name and address of researcher
- Institutional affiliation and address
- Summary of food or nutrition security research to date
- Brief summary of proposed research project using the GWP data to study food security

Approximately 25 applicants who submit a Letter of Interest in Step one will be invited to submit a Research Proposal (Step two). They will be given a unique identification code and a confidential copy of the **Worldwide Research Methodology and Codebook** to use for constructing their proposal. This document contains a copy of the core questionnaire and a list of demographic variables collected, as well as a more in-depth explanation of Gallup's sampling and survey methods. Additional information on the FIES module and the analytic work being carried out by FAO using Item Response Theory models will also be provided.

Step Two: Research Proposal

For those invited to proceed to step two, proposals will be submitted using the online application form available on a dedicated website using an identification code provided by FAO.

Research proposals must be submitted in English and should not exceed 4000 words. The submitted proposal should include the following:

- A. Executive summary of the Research Proposal.
- B. Research objectives and question(s) that will be explored using the FIES and GWP microdata.
- C. Background section on the topic(s) to be researched and brief summary of relevant literature.
- D. Geographic scope of research with respect to countries included in the GWP data (single country, set of countries, global)
- E. Methods
 - a. Description of GWP variables that might be used for the research
 - b. Discussion of descriptive and analytical approaches
 - c. Preliminary description of how the FIES data will be processed and used in the analysis.
- F. Expected outcomes and potential contribution of this research to advance knowledge about food security and society, to improve food security measurement and/or to assist with policy and programming. Plans for dissemination of results.

Review criteria for Step one and Step two.

Selection Criteria and Review Process

In both steps of the selection process, the VoH Research Advisory Board will take into consideration the geographic scope of each proposal (country or regional focus) and strive to achieve regional representation in the selection process with respect to location of the institution as well as geographical focus of the research.

Selection criteria for Step 1:

1. Master's degree or equivalent (or currently enrolled in a Master's level program of study)
2. Research experience in food security or related field
3. Relevance and importance of proposed research topic.

Selection criteria for Step 2:

Full proposals will be reviewed by members of the VoH Research Advisory Board and evaluated based on the following criteria:

1. Proposal written in a logical and clear manner. **Points: 4**
2. Experience of the researcher (previous research, publications, work experience). **Points: 3**
3. Research objectives: The proposal addresses information gaps (with appropriate reference to existing literature in the background section). The research will contribute to: knowledge about food insecurity, including

possible determinants, outcomes, and associations with social characteristics; or to methodological issues related to measurement of food security. **Points: 6**

4. Methodology: The research questions can be addressed adequately using the GWP microdata including the FIES. Proposal demonstrates appropriate use of the FIES and GWP data and conceptual and analytical understanding of food insecurity scales. **Points: 5**
5. Plans for dissemination of results. **Points: 2**

Application Process Timeline

Letters of Interest can be submitted to call-proposal-voh@fao.org until **March 20, 2015**. Applicants will be notified by **April 1, 2015** whether or not they have been selected to submit a research proposal. Approved applicants will be provided an ID code to access the online Research Proposals submission. The deadline for submitting proposals is **June 1, 2015**.

Keep in mind that applicants must first submit a Letter of Interest, and if selected, they will receive an identification code needed for the online submission process. *Research proposals will only be considered if submitted using the online form.*

Notification of the final outcome will be made by **August 15, 2015** and licenses will be delivered to those applicants whose proposals have been selected by **August 31, 2015**.

