



Assessing Food Insecurity in 2022/23 at National and Sub-National Levels in 50 Countries Vulnerable to the Effects of the Ukraine-Russia Crisis

Setting the scene

FAO’s mandate is to improve nutrition, increase agricultural productivity, raise the standard of living in rural populations and contribute to global economic growth. Among the key priorities to achieve this goal is the urgent need to eliminate hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition, both chronic and acute.

Towards this objective and according to its Constitution, the FAO plays a crucial role in providing up-to-date, reliable and actionable data on the state of food security and nutrition around the world to help guide long-term and emergency policy actions, and track progress toward these goals. In order to be effective, data needs to be timely and detailed. Timely information is indispensable to prompt rapid intervention, thus preventing conditions from deteriorating. Detailed information disaggregated at the sub-national level is necessary to ensure efficient use of the scarce resources available in support of the affected population groups.

The 2021 *State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI)* revealed that world hunger increased in 2020 under the shadow of the COVID-19 pandemic. Between 720 and 811 million people in the world may have faced hunger in 2020 – as many as 161 million more than in 2019. At the same time, nearly 2.37 billion people lacked access to adequate food in 2020 – an increase of 320 million people in just one year.¹

The current conflict between Ukraine and the Russian Federation is increasing the risk of a further deterioration of the food insecurity situation at global level.

While it is becoming clearer every day that the consequences of the current conflict are potentially far-reaching, there is an **urgent need for evidence** to assess such potential impacts on food security. Detailed information about the situation in different geographic areas and populations groups at the sub-national level is key to guiding countries to take effective action.

To fill this information gap and guide interventions, FAO proposes a programme of work, which will contribute to assessing the impact of the Ukraine-Russia crisis on the access to food of people living in the countries that are particularly vulnerable to likely consequences the war.

The proposed Programme is described below.

Programme Objective	Assessing food insecurity in 2022/23 at national and sub-national levels through the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES) measurement system in 50 countries vulnerable to the effects of the Ukraine-Russia crisis
Main Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect primary FIES data, representative at national and subnational levels (two rounds), through service providers or already existing national monitoring systems. Data collection is proposed in two phases: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Collection of baseline data in mid-2022; 2. Collection of follow-up data in early 2023.

¹ <http://www.fao.org/publications/sofi/2021/en/>

	<p>The two phases are bound to provide timely information, given that the effects on access to food will require time to materialize. A comparison of the results obtained in each phase will give valuable information on the evolution of food security in the targeted countries.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyse and support the analysis of the collected data and make the results available in a timely manner to country institutions to guide policies and interventions. •
Geographical Scope	Planned surveys are designed to be representative at National level and Admin 1 level. They will be conducted in 50 vulnerable countries , to be identified as such on the basis of a number of criteria related to their likelihood to be directly or indirectly affected by the consequences of the conflict (discussed later in this document).
Duration	2022 – 2023
Main counterparts at country level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ National Statistical Offices and Line Ministries (Agriculture, Planning, Health, Social Development) ▪ FAO Country and Regional Offices, and Resilience Hubs ▪ WFP, WB, UNDP, IFPRI, UNICEF, WHO and other international organizations
Investment cost	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 10,000,000 USD <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 4,500,000 USD: first round of data collection - 4,500,000 USD: second round of data collection - 1,000,000 USD: data analysis and reporting
Alignment to FAO Strategic Framework	Results contribute to the achievement of the FAO’s strategic narrative “Better Nutrition” (“Eliminate hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition in all its forms, including promoting nutritious food and increasing access to healthy diets”) and specifically to the priority areas “Nutrition for the most vulnerable” (“Identifying and ending food insecurity and malnutrition for the most vulnerable individuals in all contexts made the specific focus of targeted policies, strategies and programmes developed and implemented by countries”).

Relevance

The last four editions of *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World* (SOFI) revealed that the world has not been making progress towards the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Target 2.1, of ensuring access to safe, nutritious and sufficient food for all people all year round, with notable increases in hunger and food insecurity in 2020 under the shadow of the COVID-10 pandemic. No region of the world has been spared.²

² <http://www.fao.org/publications/sofi/2021/en/>

The current conflict between Ukraine and the Russian Federation has the potential to contribute to further significant deterioration of global food security. A document recently published by FAO shows the importance of both Ukraine and the Russian Federation in the global agricultural market, highlighting a number of different risks associated with the conflict.³ In particular, the potential impacts on food security are expected in countries that are highly dependent on imports of agricultural commodities, fertilizers and energy – especially from Ukraine and the Russian Federation. But consequences are expected to be dire also in countries where it is more difficult to accommodate changes in the established trade flows and where an increase in world food and energy prices can impair the ability of people to purchase enough and good quality food. This is going to be the case especially in countries that were already in critical conditions before the conflict.

The consequences are expected to be considerable and warrant an extraordinary and close monitoring effort, on top of the exercises that are currently in place. **The time is now to begin building the necessary evidence base that can properly inform policy action.**

Methods

UN Member Countries and the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) have stressed the importance of a monitoring system characterized by conceptually clear and internationally established methodology and standards, as well as nationally representative data produced on regular basis.⁴ In the area of food security assessment, **the definition of analytic protocols leading to valid and reliable indicators that are comparable across countries is of the essence.** FAO works towards this objective, by promoting the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES) measurement system and directly engaging in and supporting regular data collection, analysis and dissemination activities.

The FIES is a metric of severity of food insecurity at the household or individual level derived from data collected directly from people in surveys. It has been used thus far mainly to produce the annual estimates of the Sustainable Development Goal indicator 2.1.2 “Prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity in the population”. However, if applied frequently, the FIES can also be used to assess recent food insecurity and **provide valuable information on the evolution and the impact of crises** like the COVID-19 pandemic and the conflict in Ukraine.

Collection of FIES data disaggregated at sub-national (administrative 1) levels (regions, provinces) is important to enable identification of potential hotspots and to guide policy interventions at country level. Such detailed information can also help to identify vulnerable population groups. In 2020 and 2021, the FAO Statistics Division collected FIES data to assess the potential effect of the COVID-19 pandemic in food crisis countries, providing detailed sub-national information to guide national actions and inform FAO’s strategy.

Overall, countries are converging on standardized protocols to monitor food security and nutrition. Nevertheless, **there are still important data gaps and only few countries in the world, among those collecting data, are truly financially and technically independent.** In SOFI 2021, for example, country-level estimates of

³ <https://www.fao.org/3/cb9013en/cb9013en.pdf>

⁴ See for example: the global indicator framework adopted by the General Assembly on 6 July 2017 and contained in the Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on Work of the Statistical Commission pertaining to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development ([A/RES/71/313](#)); final report of the 47th Committee on World Food Security (https://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/cfs/CFS47/Report/NF097_47_REPORT_en.pdf).

moderate or severe food insecurity were based on FIES data collected by FAO, with the exception of 42 countries for which estimates were based on official national data. **The establishment of a food security monitoring system capable of collecting timely food insecurity data to guide strategic policies and country level interventions is of the essence.**

In order to give some insights on the potential effect of the Ukraine-Russia conflict on food security of people living in the countries that are particularly vulnerable to likely consequences the war, the **methodological approach is to collect two rounds of data in each country using the FIES tool.** The first round, to be collected in the next six months, will constitute the baseline and would determine the current state of food security in those countries. After six months of the baseline, a second round of data collection is proposed. A comparison of the results obtained in each round will provide evidence on the evolution of food security in the context of the conflict.

Expected results and main activities

The **immediate goal** of the Work Programme is to contribute to monitor the impacts of the Ukraine-Russia crisis on people's food insecurity in vulnerable countries. The **overall goal** of the Programme is producing and strengthening food security statistics to inform monitoring frameworks, classification systems, and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) assessments to guide policies and interventions.

In particular, the Programme of work aims to focus on the following **fundamental aspects requiring urgent attention**:

- 1) Data collection.** FAO will collect, analyze and disseminate primary FIES data, representative at national and subnational levels (two rounds), in about 50 countries particularly vulnerable to the potential impacts of the war. The data collection will be implemented through selected service providers or through already existing country level monitoring systems. The proposal is to plan **two rounds of data collection**: Round 1 mid-2022: collection of baseline data; Round 2 six months later to monitor impacts on food security at national and sub-national levels.

Two main criteria are proposed to identify the countries to be prioritized for the FIES data collection:

- The extent of their dependency on cereal imports from Russia and Ukraine as a share of net import in total supply (see Annex).
- GDP per capita.

The first criterion considers the extent to which a country is directly affected by the change in trade flows generated by the conflict; the second one considers the extent to which the country can accommodate a higher import bill, both in terms of logistics and in terms of increased import bills. Special consideration will be given also the countries that were already in critical conditions before the conflict, whose situation may be affected by the higher international food prices.

- 2) Data analysis and technical support.** FIES data analysis requires sophisticated technical skills to apply correct methods and derive correct indicators. FAO will analyze the data collected and provide technical support for the analysis of the data collected by countries.
- 3) Dissemination and communication of results to guide actions.**
 - a. FAO will work with national institutions and country-level partners to communicate the results in a timely and effective manner to guide policies and interventions. In the same way,

through the work with country members, the results are expected to inform food security classification systems (like the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) or the Cadre Harmonisé (CH)) in the case of food crisis countries.

- b. FAO will develop a strategy for communicating the results of the data collected in a timely and effective manner, via a technical reports, Policy Briefs and other communication products.

Timeline

The proposed activities will be implemented as follows:

Activities	2022								2023			
	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April
Preparation (procurement, survey design)	x	x										
Data collection (round 1)			x	x	x							
Data analysis (round 1)					x	x	x					
Data dissemination and reporting (round 1)						x	x	x				
Data collection (round 2)								x	x	x		
Data analysis (round 2)									x	x	x	
Data dissemination and reporting (round 2)										x	x	x

Annex

