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SUMMARY REPORT OF THE JOINT THEMATIC EVALUATION OF FAO AND WFP SUPPORT TO INFORMATION SYSTEMS FOR FOOD SECURITY

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NOTE TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

This document is submitted to the Executive Board for consideration.

The Secretariat invites members of the Board who may have questions of a technical nature with regard to this document to contact the WFP staff focal points indicated below, preferably well in advance of the Board's meeting.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At the request of the Governing Bodies of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and WFP, the offices of evaluation of the two agencies initiated an evaluation of FAO and WFP support to information systems for food security, their first joint independent evaluation. The objective of the evaluation is to assess the extent to which FAO and WFP have separately and jointly contributed to improved and more effective ISFS, and how far these information systems have, in turn, contributed to improved decision-making.

Overall, FAO and WFP's support to ISFS is relevant to the needs for improved systems to provide food security information to national governments, donors, FAO, WFP, other United Nations agencies and international non-governmental organizations, although the knowledge and understanding of these needs remain uneven.

FAO and WFP ISFS products are more timely, analytically sound, accessible and cover more ISFS elements than in the past. Moreover, the systems are increasingly being built on partnerships and consensus. However, there is still some concern regarding important food security dimensions that are not being sufficiently addressed by the ISFS, particularly nutrition, gender and urban issues.

The organizational architecture and mandates of FAO and of WFP significantly influence the efficiency of their ISFS support. WFP, with the internally focused vulnerability analysis and mapping approach in support of its food assistance mandate, has developed an efficient single corporate ISFS. FAO, with its much wider mandate and dual function of both providing food security global information and building country/regional ISFS capacities, has provided far more fragmented ISFS support.

Among the various ISFS activities, communication remains a challenge, mainly due to the lack of a strategic approach and to an inadequate understanding of the decision-making processes, which the ISFS should inform.

The evaluation confirms the conclusions of many previous studies that the ISFS products supported by FAO and WFP are being used extensively in emergency and humanitarian decision-making. It is much harder to draw a causal line from ISFS products to decisions on development policy or interventions, although various ISFS products are often cited to justify decisions taken for development investment. Overall, an inadequate understanding in most ISFS of stakeholders' decision-making processes means that most ISFS products are not being used to their full potential, especially in development work.

The evaluation did not find national ISFS that continued to be fully functional following the end of external funding. It concluded that ISFS, when designed to serve both donor and national needs, are often not a funding priority for the national government. ISFS sustainability should therefore not be viewed as only an issue of national ownership and national budget. Rather, donors, United Nations agencies and international non-governmental organizations all have a vested interest in the continuation of well-functioning national ISFS.



The evaluation concludes that collaboration between FAO and WFP is greater than expected, challenging the common perception that FAO and WFP tend to compete rather than cooperate. Nonetheless, potential exists for greatly strengthening complementarity and collaboration in the area of ISFS support.

The evaluation recommends that FAO and WFP:

- each develop corporate ISFS strategies for the range of their ISFS work at national, regional and global levels, based on overall goals defined jointly and including means and plans for implementation;
- develop a joint FAO/WFP strategy for ISFS based on their comparative advantages;
- jointly maintain and strengthen their leadership in ISFS;
- promote ISFS which respond to identified needs;
- promote long-lasting national multi-stakeholder ISFS partnerships;
- strengthen the application of ISFS communication strategies based on a genuine understanding of food security decision-making processes; and
- work together to develop a joint FAO/WFP ISFS communication and advocacy strategy.

DRAFT DECISION*



The Board takes note of “Summary Report of the Joint Thematic Evaluation of FAO and WFP Support to Information Systems for Food Security” (WFP/EB.1/2010/7-B) and the management response in WFP/EB.1/2010/7-B/Add.1 and encourages further action on the recommendations, taking into account considerations raised by the Board during its discussion.

* This is a draft decision. For the final decision adopted by the Board, please refer to the Decisions and Recommendations document issued at the end of the session.



BACKGROUND

Context

1. After a decade-long series of droughts and famines, the 1974 World Food Conference concluded that the existing monitoring and information systems were inadequate. In response, new information systems for food security (ISFS) were developed by different agencies, including the Global Information and Early Warning System on Food and Agriculture (GIEWS) of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). Following repeated needs for emergency food aid during the 1980s and 1990s, the 1996 World Food Summit encouraged FAO to lead a United Nations inter-agency process to develop more effective information systems to track food insecurity and vulnerability. As a follow-up, the Food Insecurity and Vulnerability Information and Mapping Systems (FIVIMS) initiative was undertaken. Thirteen years later food insecurity remains a major concern, subject to increasingly complex threats such as climate change, accelerated urbanization, pandemics and global food price volatility. All this has created unprecedented challenges – but continued need – for stronger ISFS.
2. While specific projects and programmes have been assessed over the years, the area of ISFS as a major strategic theme has not been evaluated before. Thus, in the course of 2008, at the request of the FAO Programme Committee and with the agreement of the WFP Executive Board, the two agencies launched an independent joint evaluation of FAO and WFP support to ISFS.

Information Systems for Food Security

3. The concept of ISFS is dynamic and understood differently according to place and context. In line with the use of the concept by major international stakeholders, including FAO, WFP, international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), donors and research institutions, this evaluation applies the following definition of ISFS:

An information system for food security refers to a series of inter-related food security information activities: method development and technical guidance, data generation, data cleaning and storage, data analysis and communication. These activities support one or several of the following major functions: baselines, early warning, needs assessments, monitoring of food security, and monitoring and evaluation of response activities to food insecurity.¹

4. The notion of national, regional and global ISFS is normally used when referring to overall information systems on food security based on multi-stakeholder platforms integrating the main line ministries, representatives of local governments, various national food security stakeholder groups such as farmer and trade associations and research institutions, along with external partners. These platforms are predominantly coordination mechanisms to monitor food insecurity in partnership with civil society.

¹ Examples of activities responding to food insecurity include emergency food aid, agricultural development assistance, food reserve management, market interventions, social safety nets, and nutrition and health programmes.

5. FAO has a mandate to generate, analyse and disseminate information related to food, nutrition and agriculture as a public good and to facilitate proper use of this information. In this context, FAO develops, maintains and supports a wide range of global, regional and national ISFS initiatives including GIEWS, FIVIMS, FAOSTAT, the State of Food Insecurity in the World (SOFI), Food Outlook and market surveys, among others. An important part of FAO's ISFS support consists of capacity development at regional and national levels through initiatives such as the Food Security Information for Action programme. Many of these initiatives aim at enhancing national and local capacities to generate and manage food security information in support of policy analysis and decision-making. FAO's ISFS portfolio remains dynamic as part of the changing demands and requirements for new focus areas such as the Right to Food agenda. It is expected that the current internal reform process in FAO guided by the 2007 Independent External Evaluation will further change the portfolio and lead to a greater streamlining of the ISFS functions within the Organization.
6. WFP's mandate requires effective food security monitoring for all programming and planning activities. Over the years the Programme has strengthened its ISFS initiatives particularly through the vulnerability analysis and mapping (VAM) unit established in 1994 to improve monitoring of vulnerability to food insecurity. In 2004, WFP developed a three-year Strengthening Emergency Needs Assessment Implementation Plan (SENAIP). The plan aimed at improving availability of pre-crisis information, strengthening assessment capacities and strengthening WFP's role in ISFS conceptual development and implementation. WFP's current Strategic Plan (2008–2013)² emphasizes the role of VAM to support a comprehensive understanding of both structural and emergency factors causing food insecurity.
7. Over the years, FAO and WFP have often worked jointly on various ISFS initiatives, most visibly through joint crop and food supply assessment missions (CFSAMs), a tool used in response to food emergencies since the 1970s. More recently both agencies alongside other partners collaborated on the development of the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) approach. Based on consensual food security analysis among different agencies the IPC seeks to promote transparency, clarity and understanding of the food security situation for better-informed decisions to respond to food insecurity. The IPC – like other major ISFS initiatives supported by FAO and WFP – is based on a continuous dialogue with donors who play a critical role in the overall ISFS agenda.
8. While both agencies are involved in promoting effective ISFS, they have had very different agendas in this field based on their different mandates. For FAO, support to ISFS takes two forms: i) supporting the creation and strengthening of effective ISFS in member countries and regions; and ii) providing global food security information as a public good. WFP on the other hand has primarily developed corporate ISFS to improve its own programme management and decision-making related to its activities as a means for meeting its overall food assistance objective. More recently, WFP is increasingly providing support to ISFS capacity development at national and regional levels. At the same time FAO's shrinking budget has led that agency to decrease its ISFS capacity development support.

² WFP Strategic Plan (2008–2011) was extended until 2013 as per Board decision 2009/EB.A/3.



The Evaluation

9. The objective of the evaluation was to measure the extent to which FAO and WFP have separately and jointly contributed to improved and more effective ISFS, and how far these information systems have, in turn, contributed to improved decision-making. The evaluation focused on the period 2002–2008 and on a set of representative ISFS products and initiatives of each agency.
10. The evaluation used a wide range of methods and information sources including: review of relevant documents; an analysis of past evaluations of ISFS work; individual and group interviews with informants in FAO and WFP, member governments, INGOs and foundations, donor agencies, United Nations agencies and research institutions; and a questionnaire survey of a broad range of ISFS stakeholders. Country case studies and regional assessments were carried out in February–March 2009 in: Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Chad, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, South Africa, Sri Lanka and Thailand. Visits and interviews were also conducted in a number of capitals in Europe and North America. The case countries and regions were selected based on a predetermined set of criteria, including level of food insecurity and presence of both FAO and WFP.
11. The evaluation used an evaluation matrix organized around fundamental questions on relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability, with special attention to coordination and collaboration between FAO and WFP.
12. The evaluation team comprised four independent international consultants working together with two evaluation managers from FAO and WFP. The offices of evaluation of FAO and WFP co-managed the evaluation. The evaluation was also supported by a panel of external experts.³

PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS

Relevance of FAO/WFP Support

13. The continuation of unacceptably high levels of food insecurity throughout the world makes the need for well-functioning ISFS indisputable. The evaluation found that FAO and WFP's leadership in developing and strengthening ISFS at global, regional, national and local level is relevant.
14. FAO is well recognized by all stakeholder groups for its unique position and role in providing global food security information and comparable multi-country information as a public good. Considering FAO's funding challenges the evaluation is concerned, though, about the agency's ability to sustain this leadership.
15. WFP's VAM approach represents a corporate vision for a single ISFS. The system integrates crucial ISFS functions: baselines, early warning, needs assessment and food security monitoring, in support of decision-making processes related to WFP's food assistance activities. In addition, information products generated by WFP/VAM are relevant not just for WFP: they are also used and considered highly relevant by a large number of humanitarian and development stakeholders.

³ Ms Margie Buchanan-Smith (independent consultant), Mr Todd Benson (International Food Policy Research Institute), Mr Dramane Coulibaly (Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel) and Mr Gary Eilerts (United States Agency for International Development).



16. The uneven knowledge and understanding of needs for ISFS support is evident from project and programme documents, evaluations and reviews, which provide patchy information on needs for FAO and/or WFP ISFS support. The information does not allow a comparative analysis showing needs priorities. It is not easy to understand, for instance, why some countries and regions rather than others have been selected for ISFS support, or why specific ISFS functions have been supported and not others.
17. The project-based approach that FAO has applied to a large degree for ISFS support at national and regional levels has normally involved the preparation of project documents with information on existing and relevant ISFS structures and activities. There is a risk that FAO's current move from specific national and regional ISFS support projects toward Headquarters-led ISFS support will lead to more standardized ISFS support and will reduce the flexibility to fully adapt to existing capacities, resources and demand at national and local level. This could further strengthen a general misleading perception among many ISFS stakeholders that FAO and WFP ISFS support is supply-driven.
18. While increasingly responding to changing needs, FAO's and WFP's adaptation of their ISFS support is mainly reactive, with insufficient capacity for proactive concept development to identify new or potential emerging issues and crises before they become established.
19. The work of FAO and WFP has strengthened certain ISFS functions more than others, particularly baselines – such as WFP's comprehensive food security and vulnerability analysis (CFSVAs) – and needs assessments. Of the other functions, the monitoring and evaluation of activities to promote food security and particularly responses to food insecurity appear to have received the least attention. Like many other organizations, FAO and WFP have well-established programme and project monitoring and evaluation systems for their own management. However, these systems are seldom linked to ISFS, so that support to general monitoring of responses to food insecurity is weak. Also, support to the early warning function has been steadily decreasing over the last decade, mainly as a result of FAO's discontinuation of a number of regional and country support programmes. This has been a result of reduced funding, leading to closure of many sub-regional and national programmes and projects.
20. Although generally designed to cover both, ISFS supported by FAO and WFP tend to concentrate on emergency/humanitarian contexts rather than long-term development situations. This focus is in large part a result of the history of ISFS and the associated terminology, which have mainly been developed for humanitarian settings. So while corporate ISFS initiatives such as GIEWS and VAM are relevant to both types of decision-making, they are generally perceived as humanitarian instruments, and hence needs for ISFS support tend to be addressed with typically humanitarian approaches and terminology.

Efficiency of FAO and WFP Support

21. In WFP, ISFS activities are coordinated by a unit at Headquarters, which ensures coherence of ISFS work at country, regional and Headquarters levels. The Strengthening Emergency Needs Assessment Implementation Plan (SENAIP) has improved efficiency in meeting internal demand for ISFS products for decision-making processes related to WFP food assistance. This has mainly been achieved through improved technical guidelines, greater standardization of the information system processes and better adaptation of emergency needs assessments and baselines to WFP's programming needs.



22. In FAO, many units at Headquarters are responsible for developing and supporting different aspects of ISFS at national, regional and global level. While FAO also has country and regional offices, ISFS support to national and regional counterparts is mostly developed and implemented directly by Headquarters technical units. The discrete nature of FAO's ISFS support with many different actors who often do not coordinate and without an overall ISFS strategy leads to unstructured and often inefficient interactions with partners who find it difficult to understand who is doing what in FAO.
23. FAO has been advocating for many years for cross-sectoral national ISFS to be placed in overarching structures with the capacity to ensure that different line ministries, for instance, will provide relevant input to ISFS work. However, FAO's structural link with ministries of agriculture, and its historical tendency to view food security mainly in terms of calorie availability from grain production, have led to frequent placing of FAO-supported national ISFS in agricultural production divisions of these ministries. Placing these multi-sectoral platforms in a single line ministry significantly limits the ability of the ISFS to engage other crucial ministries and food security stakeholders, increases the potential for duplication and reduces overall efficiency.
24. Communication is a critical element for the efficiency of any information system. While some progress has been made in the recent years, the evaluation found that among the various ISFS activities, communication continues to be a challenge: a decisive factor reducing the efficiency of ISFS in informing decision-making is poor communication of ISFS products. For example, products are often widely disseminated but without adequate criteria for why, to whom and how the information should be communicated. This results in inefficient targeting of diverse users, poor timing and mismatch between content of the products and needs and capacities of the decision-makers. There is strong demand for improved presentation of ISFS information, giving greater attention to short, targeted policy briefs for decision-makers in donor agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or the concerned countries. Since few ISFS systematically monitor the use of their products, they are not able to adjust to evolving needs.
25. The credibility of assessments can be undermined or questioned by inappropriate choices of words in press releases and other media-oriented communications. There is a need to strike a careful balance between the more evidence-based but overly technical ISFS products and the more emotional appeal of media advocacy communication for the wider public.
26. The evaluation found little evidence of consideration of cost-effectiveness as a basis for different types of ISFS support from the two agencies. Alternative solutions were generally not presented in project documents, nor was comparative analysis showing why FAO or WFP should provide the ISFS support and not other organizations.

Usefulness and Accessibility of ISFS Products

27. Most FAO and WFP ISFS information products are easily accessible to the public. There is increased attention to covering all core food security elements – availability, access, utilization and stability – and therefore to including relevant data on a wide range of issues, but there are some gaps. According to the survey conducted by the evaluation, ISFS users found that overall FAO- and WFP-supported ISFS have a limited coverage of nutrition, gender and urban food-security issues. This finding was corroborated during interviews that furthermore indicated the lack of integration of livestock and fishery data in ISFS. While many users appreciate the increased availability of data related to access and use, some referred to poor integration of the data in many ISFS products. The Organisation for



Economic Co-operation and Development and government decision-makers in particular seek integrated information products that do not leave it to the user to combine several datasets.

28. While in the past WFP was often perceived to have the tendency to inflate needs assessments, there is increasing recognition of the credibility of more recent WFP food security data. WFP's VAM work is well-known and appreciated among ISFS stakeholders, including national governments, donors, INGOs, the mass media and research institutions.
29. Overall, the evaluation found that assessments are generally done in a timely manner. For instance, emergency assessments take place quickly after being triggered by early warning from annual crop assessments, which are also undertaken appropriately according to the agricultural calendar. Dissemination of food security information is often delayed by long analysis and editing processes and multiple layers of approval, including by governments in the concerned country or region. However, both FAO and WFP have shown efforts to overcome these challenges.
30. Food security information arrived at through country-level consensual processes was found to be much more credible for decision-makers and consequently more likely to be used. Participation in consensual information generation or analysis was considered very important by both FAO and WFP, as well as by other institutions involved in generating food security information. This approach was often visible through the presence of multiple logos on food security information documents. Nonetheless, it is still far from generalized practice to produce information backed by consensus across the full range of stakeholders, including governments, other national partners, donors, United Nations agencies and INGOs.
31. The stronger the multi-stakeholder partnerships underpinning a national ISFS, the more likely that its ISFS products will have an impact on decision-making. Positive examples of consensus-based ISFS products were observed by the evaluation in Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Kenya, Mozambique and Somalia. All of these national ISFS are strongly supported by FAO and WFP and in several cases FAO in particular had had a central role in their creation.

Use of ISFS Products

32. While food security frameworks used by FAO and WFP such as FIVIMS, GIEWS or VAM are valid for both humanitarian and development contexts, there is more explicit use of ISFS products for humanitarian decisions than for development ones. This seems to be the result of a general perception of the main functions of the ISFS model. ISFS terminology such as "needs assessment" or "early warning" is typically used in humanitarian contexts.
33. Although current national ISFS are generally designed to cover a wide range of situations, the systems analysed by the evaluation tended to concentrate on humanitarian rather than development issues. National governments most often reported using food security information for such activities as crisis mitigation, contingency planning or the management of the emergency food security reserve. Likewise, ISFS are responsive to decision-making calendars tied to emergency response planning, such as the Consolidated Appeals Processes.



34. While the evaluation was also able to observe the utilization of ISFS products to justify development programmes and policies or Poverty Reduction Strategies, development actors were clearly not using information generated in humanitarian contexts to its full potential for longer-term development policy and planning.
35. More recent initiatives in both agencies, such as FAO's ongoing study on the role of food security analysis in decision-making and WFP's work on its own ISFS information products through the SENAIP, have been successful in increasing understanding of decision-making processes for food security policies and programmes, including WFP's internal food assistance programming. This kind of understanding of stakeholders' decision-making processes is essential to ensure optimal utilization of food security information.

Sustainable Benefits

36. The evaluation found that overall FAO/WFP ISFS support strengthened integrated ISFS structures in many countries, including all those visited by the evaluation team. Moreover, while WFP carried out ISFS work in the 1980s and 1990s primarily for internal corporate use, the agency is now playing a central role in the functioning of national ISFS in many countries. The more successful ISFS are usually based on partnerships or networks between national governments, United Nations agencies, donors and INGOs, where all have a say and a clear stake. FAO and WFP have been instrumental in building these partnerships.
37. However, the evaluation did not find examples of "sustainability" in line with the common definition of this concept, where it means the taking over by national institutions of the full funding and operation of an ISFS following the end of external support. All ISFS where external funding had come to an end had suffered significant setbacks, and in many cases the systems had all but ceased to function. There are examples of national ISFS depending mainly on national government funding, but these examples were not found in low-income, food-deficit countries.
38. The evaluation has great concerns regarding the project-based approach to ISFS support, which is the basis of almost all of FAO's assistance and a limited amount of that of WFP. Project-based assistance is inconsistent with longer-term sustainability of ISFS as it is discontinuous, with projects lasting for limited periods due to dependence on external funding, and often with no follow-up or realistic exit strategies.
39. The evaluation found that within the framework of support to national ISFS, both FAO and WFP provided extensive training programmes to ISFS throughout the current decade, on the assumption that this would promote institutional sustainability. However, while the training might have been effective in the short term, it did not lead to lasting ISFS institutions as it was not planned in a framework of longer-term institutional sustainability. Therefore, the evaluation concludes that while national capacities have been strengthened, the assumption that this will lead to sustainable institutional change is not valid. Capacity development has been too focused on outputs and on individual capacity, and has lacked a strategic approach, needs assessments, and enough attention to the institutional contexts or follow-up on post-training support and to capacity retention.

Complementarity and Cooperation

40. Documents, interviews and country case studies of the evaluation have all shown evidence of coordination and cooperation between FAO and WFP. Cooperation around ISFS support was found to take place in the field more commonly than at the headquarters level. It was observed, however, that this cooperation is mainly based on interpersonal interaction and ad hoc opportunities and arrangements, rather than on a strategic vision and formal agreements. While this can work in the short term, longer-term goals require greater corporate strategic coordination.
41. The evaluation found positive examples of collaboration for ISFS that have been brought about by donors who played a crucial role in promoting constructive ISFS cooperation between the two agencies.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall Assessment

42. **Relevance.** Overall, FAO and WFP's support to ISFS is relevant to the needs for improved systems to provide food security information to national governments, donors, FAO, WFP, other United Nations agencies and INGOs – although the knowledge and understanding of these needs remains uneven. The international leadership of both FAO and WFP for conceptual development, technical guidance and general support to ISFS development and functioning has been crucial for the form and existence of ISFS in general, whether they are single-function systems, limited-coverage structures or global, integrated ISFS.
43. **Efficiency.** The organizational architecture and mandates of FAO and WFP significantly influence the efficiency of their ISFS support. WFP, with the internally focused VAM approach in support of its food assistance mandate, has developed an efficient single corporate ISFS. FAO, with its much wider mandate and dual function of both providing food security global information and building country/regional ISFS capacities, has provided far more fragmented ISFS support. Among the various ISFS activities, communication remains the greatest challenge, mainly due to lack of a strategic approach and to an inadequate understanding of the decision-making processes that the ISFS should inform.
44. **Effectiveness.** FAO and WFP ISFS products are more timely, analytically sound, accessible and cover more ISFS elements than in the past. Moreover, the systems are increasingly being built on partnerships and consensus. However, there is still some concern regarding important food security dimensions that are not being sufficiently addressed by the ISFS, particularly nutrition, gender and urban issues.
45. **Impact.** The evaluation confirms the conclusions of many previous studies that ISFS information products supported by FAO and WFP are being used extensively in emergency and humanitarian decision-making. It is much harder to draw a causal line from ISFS information products to decisions on development policy or interventions, although various ISFS products are often cited to justify decisions taken for development investment. Overall, an inadequate understanding in most ISFS of stakeholders' decision-making processes means that ISFS products are not being used to their full potential, especially in development work.



46. **Sustainability.** The evaluation did not find national ISFS that continued to function fully following the end of external funding. It concluded that ISFS, when designed to serve both donor and national needs, often have not been a funding priority for the national governments in low-income countries. ISFS sustainability should not be viewed as only an issue of national ownership and national budget. Rather, donors, United Nations agencies and INGOs all have a vested interest in the continuation of a well-functioning national ISFS.
47. **Complementarity and cooperation.** The evaluation concludes that FAO and WFP collaborate on a number of ISFS-related issues, challenging the common perception that FAO and WFP tend to compete rather than cooperate. Nonetheless, potential exists for greatly strengthening complementarity and collaboration in the area of ISFS support.
48. The evaluation supports the conclusions of the recent joint FAO/WFP International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) policy paper “Directions for Collaboration among the Rome-Based Agencies” (WFP/EB.2/2009/11-C) regarding the importance of cooperation for development of food security information and the comparative advantages of the partners. The paper indicates that WFP’s comparative advantage in the support to ISFS is its extensive field presence and its production of VAM information products. FAO instead has a comparative advantage in the collection and dissemination of global information and analysis; technical assistance and tool development; and capacity development. The evaluation also concludes that WFP has a comparative advantage in providing ISFS support for emergency and humanitarian contexts as well as for analysis of national data.

Recommendations

49. The recommendations of the evaluation are addressed to senior management of FAO and WFP and to their Governing Bodies. The implementation of some of these recommendations will have resource implications and will therefore require prioritization by both agencies. Recommendations to be implemented jointly by the two agencies are clearly identified.

⇒ *Strategies*

50. Recommendation 1.1: FAO and WFP should each develop corporate ISFS strategies for the range of their ISFS work at national, regional and global levels based on overall goals defined jointly and including means and plans for implementation.
51. The strategies should clearly differentiate between ISFS support – such as generation of models, methods and tools, capacity development and technical advice – and direct execution of ISFS. The corporate strategies should be based on analysis of comparative advantages of major ISFS stakeholders, for instance other United Nations agencies, development banks, INGOs, donors and inter-governmental organizations, in providing ISFS support at different levels. This analysis should be based on an open and continuous dialogue with the different stakeholders, putting special emphasis on the long-term functionality of the ISFS. Given the global leadership of FAO and WFP in ISFS work, both agencies’ Governing Bodies should take responsibility to ensure that these well-coordinated corporate ISFS strategies and business plans are prepared and implemented.



52. When preparing these strategies:
- FAO should develop its strategy as part of its ongoing reform process to ensure improved coordination of overall FAO support to ISFS, thereby ensuring greater efficiency. Major elements of the strategy should be a restructured FIVIMS Secretariat building on the positive integration of the FIVIMS Secretariat into the Food Security and Agricultural Projects Analysis Service (ESAF) and maximizing collaboration with the new phase of the Food Security Information for Action project. As part of the strategy development, FAO's global ISFS products should undergo a user analysis.
 - WFP should include the maintenance of an effective food security information capacity in all low-income and food-deficit countries, including countries that are not affected by acute emergencies or immediate humanitarian demands. This country-level ISFS should function in close collaboration with FAO and other relevant partners.
53. Recommendation 1.2: FAO and WFP should develop a joint FAO/WFP ISFS strategy based on their identified comparative advantages.
54. The corporate ISFS strategies should be complemented by a joint FAO/WFP ISFS strategy, which should include operational plans for complementary and joint ISFS support. This joint strategy development process should be closely monitored by the two agencies' Governing Bodies whose role as critical ISFS stakeholders should be recognized.
55. The joint FAO/WFP ISFS strategy should include:
- awareness-raising and advocacy activities on the importance of well-functioning ISFS;
 - a strategy for mobilization of much-needed new investments in FAO/WFP joint food security diagnostics to strengthen national as well as global ISFS capacities; and
 - guidelines for integration of FAO and WFP ISFS work and ISFS work in general into coordination and harmonization frameworks such as One UN, the common country assessments, United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks, Poverty Reduction Strategies, donor country strategies, etc.

⇒ *Leadership*

56. Recommendation 2: FAO and WFP should jointly maintain and strengthen their leadership in ISFS.
57. FAO and WFP should jointly invest in maintaining and strengthening – and in the case of FAO, to a great extent reclaiming – their leadership in ISFS development and implementation, based on the analysis of comparative advantages and policy decisions made during the development of the ISFS strategies.
58. In order to maintain and strengthen ISFS leadership the following should be prioritized:
- As early as possible, FAO and WFP should jointly organize an informal, multi-stakeholder group including United Nations agencies, INGOs, donor governments, national and regional ISFS, research institutions, the international media and other important ISFS stakeholders. The multi-stakeholder groups should focus on future ISFS institution-building. This should be along the lines of the original FIVIMS, but under a joint FAO/WFP leadership, and redesigned and renamed to learn from and avoid failures of the past. It will be particularly important to ensure that the multi-stakeholder group set realistic goals and work according to a rolling five-year business plan updated every year. The group should consider how best to establish a



global ISFS network with a focus on national ISFS, supported by sub-regional, regional and global ISFS. The ultimate goal of the ISFS multi-stakeholder group would be to identify how to sustain collaboration for more effective and continuous ISFS institution-building. In this context, WFP should ensure that the positive experience from the expert groups established under SENAIP is used to establish similar working groups to support this informal group, with FAO closely involved.

- WFP's leadership role in supporting ISFS should be widened beyond being just a means for corporate effectiveness and should be designed to equally serve decision-making by partners not directly involved in decisions related to WFP's food assistance. WFP's ISFS support should thus be defined in part as a public good similar to that of FAO.

⇒ *Technical support*

59. Recommendation 3: FAO and WFP should promote ISFS which respond to identified needs.
60. FAO and WFP must each ensure that ISFS at all levels have the technical capacities to provide the types of information and analysis needed by decision-makers for today's and tomorrow's food security challenges.
61. In order to provide the most useful and appropriate technical support FAO and WFP should:
 - regularly undertake strategic analyses of food security information needs of intended, actual and potential decision-makers. This work should preferably be undertaken jointly and should give special attention to potential future threats to food security.
 - jointly advocate for an agreement on a core set of indicators for integrated measurement of food security, including nutrition, building on already established initiatives such as the Standing Committee on Nutrition's Task Force on Assessment, Monitoring and Evaluation, which is co-chaired by FAO and WFP.

⇒ *Sustainability*

62. Recommendation 4: ISFS support should promote long-lasting national multi-stakeholder ISFS partnerships.
63. In seeking to achieve "sustainability" of national ISFS, FAO and WFP should each discuss with funding partners to reconsider the usual working definition of sustainability, which presumes continuation of benefits under exclusively national funding and management. In the case of ISFS, donors and other partners are users as well as supporters, and "sustainability" should be redefined to mean "continuation of benefits under long-term multi-stakeholder funding and partnership".
64. To promote long-lasting national ISFS, FAO and WFP should each:
 - continue to support the development of national ISFS based on multi-stakeholder partnerships and networks, focusing on the production of consensus-based information. Whenever possible, FAO and WFP should privilege joint ISFS work between the two agencies.
 - base their capacity development work on systematic capacity needs assessments, including the policy, institutional/organizational and individual levels; and
 - consider the joint development of a set of guidelines for ISFS capacity needs assessments.



⇒ *Communication and decision-making*

65. Recommendation 5.1: FAO and WFP should strengthen application of ISFS communication strategies based on a genuine understanding of food security decision-making processes.
66. FAO and WFP must each ensure that all of their ISFS activities maintain the focus on informing decision-making. In order to do this effectively, supported ISFS must incorporate explicit communication strategies targeted to different stakeholder groups. The communication strategies should be based on clear identification of the different targeted stakeholder groups' resources, interests, priorities and capacity to use different ISFS products, as well as an understanding of the different decision-making processes involved. Moreover, systematic feedback mechanisms should be included.
67. In order to improve the use of ISFS communication strategies FAO and WFP should each:
 - build their own communication capacities for their work in support of ISFS development, including specific focus on understanding food security-related decision-making processes; and
 - to the extent possible, ensure that development of ISFS includes the support of communication specialists to supplement information experts.
68. Recommendation 5.2: FAO and WFP should work together to develop a joint ISFS communication and advocacy strategy.
69. Advocacy work should strive to improve awareness of the usefulness of complementary ISFS that provide comprehensive food security information required for food security analysis according to the definition of food security from the 1996 World Food Summit. This would include nutrition, urban areas and gender aspects, among others. Special efforts should be made to advocate for the usefulness of ISFS for development purposes.

ACRONYMS USED IN THE DOCUMENT

CFSAM	crop and food supply assessment mission
CFSVA	comprehensive food security and vulnerability analysis
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FIVIMS	Food Insecurity and Vulnerability Information and Mapping Systems
GIEWS	Global Information and Early Warning System
INGO	international non-governmental organization
IPC	Integrated Food Security Phase Classification
ISFS	information systems for food security
NGO	non-governmental organization
SENAIP	Strengthening Emergency Needs Assessment Implementation Plan
SOFI	State of Food Insecurity in the World
VAM	vulnerability analysis and mapping