



FSIN in Action 2013-2014

Introduction

FSIN's vision as a global community of practice (CoP) to share knowledge and good practices and to support strengthened country and regional information systems for food and nutrition security (ISFNS) was endorsed at the FSIN launch held in Rome (October 2012). Subsequently, this vision was translated into a three-year FSIN work plan focussing on three specific objectives:

1. Establish the Community of Practice;
2. Provide access to harmonized standards, methods and tools; and
3. Facilitate joint or collaborative efforts to strengthen country and regional capacities for food and nutrition security data collection, analysis, communication and dissemination, and decision making.

This document outlines these objectives, the progress achieved in 2013, as well as priorities for 2014.

1 – The Community of Practice (CoP)

Objective - A global community of practice with strong country and regional-level participation is established

To develop and maintain an interactive Community of Practice engaged in strengthening food security information networks and institutions, the 2013 priority activities were to:

- ✓ Develop a landscape of key actors and networks involved in producing and/or sharing knowledge on food security and nutrition information;
- ✓ Develop and launch an FSIN website to serve as a platform for sharing news and information on FNS; and
- ✓ Identify initial services to be provided to the CoP.

Achievements

The FSIN Landscape of Key Actors producing and sharing Information for Food and Nutrition Security relevant to the FSIN at global and regional level was finalized and published on the FSIN website and on Reliefweb. This publication enabled FSIN to identify gaps and its added value in relation to these existing initiatives, and to identify key actors with whom to collaborate in building the CoP.

The ***FSIN website*** was officially launched in September 2013 (www.fsincop.net). The website is regularly updated with relevant resources, events and news, including content proposed by CoP members. Since October, members have received weekly "***FSIN what's new***" e-alerts, which summarize new website content. French and Spanish versions of the website were launched in January 2014. To date (March 2014), the CoP counts over 580 members from 70 countries.

To ensure that the FSIN is demand driven, **14 country and regional level FSIN focal points were identified** in Africa (see <http://www.fsincop.net/community/focal-points/en/>). They are helping to raise awareness about FSIN, establish contact with field practitioners and institutions, and identify new members and relevant activities.

Priorities for 2014*

The CoP will be strengthened by further enhancing communication with country and regional practitioners, who have a shared interest in strengthening information systems on food and nutrition security.

The FSIN website and services will be further improved to serve as a vehicle for strengthening the CoP, based on **a members' survey** to be conducted early in 2014. The CoP will support sharing of best practices in food and nutrition security analysis and relevant distance learning and other training materials.

A strategy to engage and constructively work with selected FSIN country and regional focal points will be developed and implemented in countries/regions with ongoing FSIN support. The strategy will facilitate the regular exchange of information with country and regional focal points in order to strengthen the global, regional and national networks.

2 – Harmonized Methods, Tools and Indicators

Objective - Access to demand-driven harmonized sets of methods and tools for improved food and nutrition security information gathering, analysis and decision-making

One of the challenges identified at the January 2012 International Scientific Symposium on measuring food and nutrition security¹ was the need for greater harmonization and rationalization of food and nutrition security data collection and analysis approaches. This objective seeks to address that challenge through:

- ✓ Compilation of an initial inventory of selected existing methods, tools and best practices; and
- ✓ Pilot harmonization activities to increase comparability, comprehensiveness and interoperability of food security and nutrition information systems, indicators or methods, for example focusing on resilience measurement, market price data, or food consumption in urban settings.

Achievements

As recommended at the FSIN Launch², an initial **inventory of the most relevant indicators** that are available to food security and nutrition practitioners and/or decision makers was developed.

The first pilot activity supported by FSIN concerns the development and harmonization of resilience measurement (RM) approaches, as recommended by the expert consultation on **Resilience Measurement for Food Security** (February 2013). An RM Technical Working Group (TWG) was established to develop guidelines and support field testing, validation and adoption of best practices. Key outcomes of the first official meeting of the TWG that took place in Rome (9-10 October 2013)³ were that the members:

¹ FAO 2013. Proceedings: International Scientific Symposium on Food and Nutrition Security information: from Valid Measurement to Effective Decision Making. <http://www.fao.org/docrep/017/i3244e/i3244e.pdf>

² FSIN 2012. FSIN Launch and Technical Meetings, Meeting Reports. http://www.fsincop.net/fileadmin/user_upload/fsin/docs/FSIN-Launch-Proceedings-Final-Summary.pdf

³ Resilience Measurement - Proceedings of the Technical Working Group Consultative Meeting <http://www.fsincop.net/resource-centre/detail/en/c/213582/#sthash.DFG8kqti.dpuf>

- ✓ Reached a consensus on the definition of resilience and fined-tuned a set of draft principles for Resilience Measurement;
- ✓ Recognized the need for additional research, piloting, validation and “mining” of existing data;
- ✓ Discussed ways to engage at the field level; and
- ✓ Agreed on products to be delivered in 2014: an Analytical Framework paper, thematic Technical Briefs and technical guidelines on resilience measurement.

As a second pilot activity, **a ToR for a review of major market price databases** (e.g. developed by FAO, WFP, FEWSNET, IFPRI and NGOs) was drafted in late 2013 to identify ways to improve coverage, promote interoperability and reduce overlaps where possible.

Priorities for 2014*

A second TWG on **Measuring Food Security** will be established to identify and harmonize food security and nutrition indicators for monitoring and analysis. The TWG will provide scientific guidance on the mapping exercise of FNS indicators that started in 2013, while providing a structure and process for reaching agreement on a core set of FNS indicators.

The FSIN Secretariat will launch the **study on the prevailing globally-managed price and market information systems** to assess complementarities and overlaps. The results will be discussed with stakeholders to enable the harmonization of existing market price databases at the country level, while ensuring greater coverage and sharing of data.

The Resilience Measurement TWG will deliver three primary outputs:

- 1) A paper on resilience measurement design principles and a definition of resilience;
- 2) A common analytical framework for resilience measurement; and
- 3) Technical guidelines for resilience measurement

These outputs will be instrumental in applying resilience measurement at country level and in identifying areas where joint efforts can be undertaken, such as case studies and further testing of the existing approaches in various contexts. In addition, FSIN will reach out to the broader CoP through a facilitated **on-line discussion**. The TWG will participate in international science and policy conferences to foster a larger debate and scientific exchange (including the [Resilience Montpellier 2014 Conference](#) organized by the Resilience Alliance Network and [IFPRI's 2020 Addis International Conference in May 2014](#)).

A detailed stocktaking exercise of food security related agencies will be conducted in two countries, along with an inventory of available indicators and data collection methods and tools, to identify gaps and possible harmonization activities in the long term.

3 - Capacity Development

Objective 3 - Country and regional level capacities for food and nutrition security information gathering, analysis and decision-making are strengthened

The overarching goal of the FSIN is to support country- and region-led food and nutrition security (FNS) information systems. This should build on demands expressed by the CoP, as well as on work related to Component 2. The main activity areas for 2013 were:

- ✓ Mapping of existing food and nutrition security information infrastructures at the country and regional level to determine capacities and gaps. This included development and piloting of a capacity assessment mapping method; and

- ✓ Facilitating capacity development efforts at country/regional level, including the identification of best practices, methods and relevant training opportunities in order to address problems of conflicting analyses that can delay decision-making. At regional level, this included support to CILSS in food security data analysis and reporting.

Achievements

A capacity assessment method was developed and implemented in South Sudan to review existing ISFNS in place, and to assess the capacities of government institutions in using, accessing existing, and generating their own information. This work was instrumental in determining opportunities for collaboration in capacity development, and resulted in agreements brokered by FSIN to:

- ✓ Strengthen joint support (WFP, UNICEF and FAO) to the Food Security Council (FSC);
- ✓ Identify shared objectives and a common vision for FAO, UNICEF and WFP for their joint support to the FSC, based on a draft set of guiding principles for collaboration;
- ✓ Harmonize the World Bank's and WFP-led market price and household monitoring systems while simultaneously building the capacities of the National Bureau of Statistics; and
- ✓ Fine-tune the approach used in South Sudan into a standard methodology to conduct capacity assessment exercises in other countries.

To maximize FSIN's reach with limited funding, **three partnership agreements** were initiated:

- ✓ FSIN will support **CILSS** to roll-out the Cadre Harmonisé and harmonize it with the IPC approach to food security data analysis and reporting. A staff member in CILSS/Agrhymet will be funded over a two year period to support adoption of harmonized CH/IPC data collection and analysis approaches.
- ✓ FAO, UNICEF and WFP jointly developed a proposal to establish a Resilience Analysis Unit (RAU) in Nairobi to meet **IGAD**'s need for "on-the-job" capacity development on measuring and monitoring resilience. A similar initiative is being considered to meet demand from CILSS/ECOWAS for the TWG to assist the Sahel AGIR initiative in developing resilience measurement capacities.
- ✓ FAO and WFP agreed to strengthen collaboration with **USAID/FEWSNET** to conduct joint capacity development activities focused on building sustainable national ISFNS. This will be aligned with FEWSNET's new network development framework. In 2014, joint activities will be developed in priority countries (more details below).

An inventory of key food security and nutrition analysis training courses and materials was produced and posted on the FSIN website. This provides active links to the training materials, to facilitate their use in country-level workshops.

Priorities for 2014*

In 2014, FSIN will develop a **common approach with FEWSNET** to support country- and regional-level capacity development efforts, and will support the **establishment of two units to support resilience analysis** (as noted above).

Agreed 'guiding principles' to implement the **FAO/WFP/FEWSNET partnership** on capacity development work will be applied to two countries (e.g. South Sudan and Yemen) and one region (e.g. CILSS). The aim is for national and regional institutions in the focus countries to adopt best practices in food security and nutrition analysis. Potential synergies will be further explored to strategically assist additional countries in filling identified capacity gaps or to meet requests, such as for supporting the national Vulnerability Assessment Committees (VACs).

* These priorities may be adjusted based on field demand and realities.