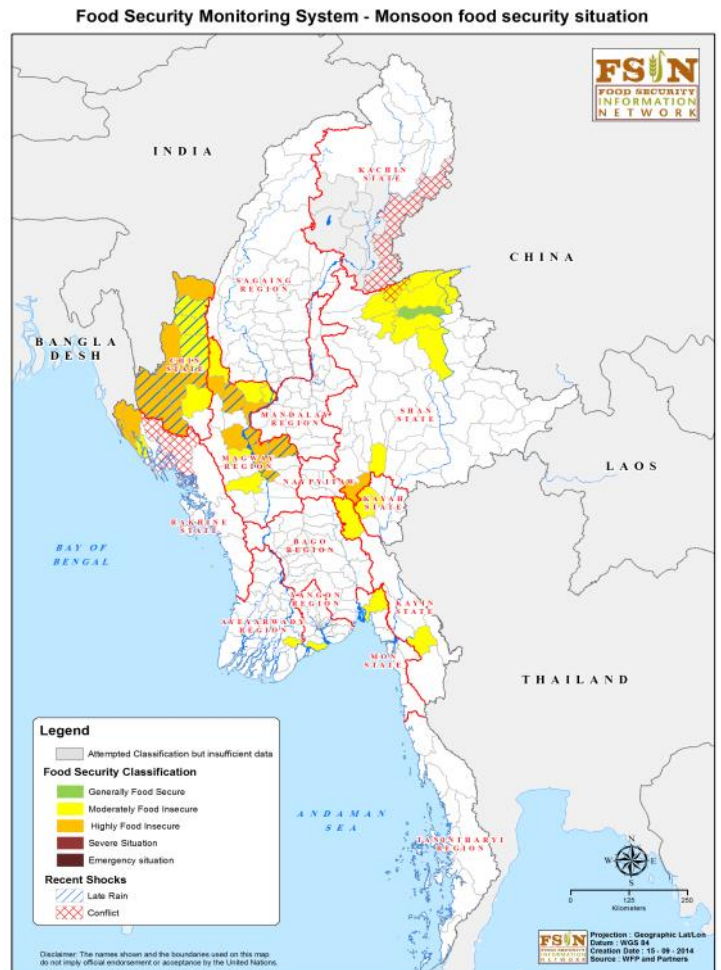




# VAM (Vulnerability Analysis Mapping) WFP Myanmar

**Context:** In many areas of Myanmar, WFP has long been the most reliable and regular source of food security and vulnerability information, backing the programme work of WFP and other stakeholders tackling food insecurity in the country. However, in a country with high diversities between and within the 15 Regions and States, information on food security has remained geographically scattered, with multiple indicators of food insecurity collected with little regard to seasonality. This hinders understanding of fluctuations in seasonal vulnerabilities and impacts the overall usefulness of the information collected for programme design. Notwithstanding its central role as an information provider to partners, WFP values the need, as a service provider, to build on its Vulnerability Analysis Mapping (VAM) capacities and activities in order to better serve stakeholders and beneficiaries in Myanmar. WFP recognizes the need to create a more integrated and comprehensive information system, which will provide the evidence base required to design the most appropriate responses to food insecurity.

**Food Security Monitoring System:** In February 2012, building on its corporate experience in food security analysis, WFP in Myanmar initiated a three-year Livelihoods and Food Security Trust (LIFT) funded project entitled "Improved food security and market price information system in Myanmar". The project aims at building a more effective and useful food security and market price information system by working with partners, the government and other stakeholders to improve and standardise the collection and interpretation of food security and market information. The project, carried out by WFP VAM team, has led to the establishment of the Food Security Information Network (FSIN)\* in Myanmar - a network of technical experts and information managers from food security stakeholders. WFP and other members of FSIN have developed a first of its kind Food Security Monitoring System (FSMS) in Myanmar. Regular monitoring is now conducted in over 50 townships, before and after the monsoon - the main season for agricultural production. FSIN uses a joint approach of reduced quantitative data collection, followed by a rigorous and systematic qualitative review of the food security situation. The quantitative data are sentinel sites based, with FSIN members collecting information in monitored townships using core internationally recognized indicators of food security such as the Food Consumption Score, Household Hunger Scale, and the



Reduced Coping Strategy Index. The data collected at household level in the sentinel sites are analysed using an Integrated Phase Classification (IPC) type analytical framework intended to provide an initial indication of the situation within the monitored townships. The qualitative review utilizes secondary information from surveys, government reporting systems, etc. as well as the knowledge and expertise of field staff and other local actors. After this review, the totality of the evidence is used to classify the food security situation in each of the monitored township. Finally, the periodic monitoring is completed by a monthly monitoring that compiles relevant qualitative information emerging from field work, observations, and community reports. This monthly monitoring intends to strengthen early warning and situation reports systems.

\*<http://www.fsinmyanmar.net>



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VAM



**Resource centers:** WFP is committed to strengthening government's technical and analytical capacities related to programmatic coordination on poverty reduction and rural development. In early 2013, WFP opened the first resource center in Hakha. A second one was later opened in Magway, in the premises of the Yezin Agriculture University. The centers, equipped with computers, GPS, and mobile devices, support the effort of increasing survey work capacities and regional coordination on food security. The centers are also used for the organization of regular trainings and workshops.

**Food security and poverty surveys:** Since 2013, in partnerships with Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development, WFP has conducted food security and poverty estimation surveys initially in the Dry Zone (South Sagaing, Magway and Mandalay), and then in Ayeryawady, Bago, Yangon, Chin, Kachin, Shan and north Sagaing. The objective of the surveys is to inform on food security levels and poverty patterns at the regional level. The findings are to be primarily used by the government to support the design of poverty alleviation strategies and programmes. The scope of the surveys, in particular its geographical reach, remains unprecedented. The findings from the first assessment in the Dry Zone were presented to the government in January 2014. The report explored the linkages between poverty, food security and nutrition. In particular, the assessment has found that: i) More than one quarter of all interviewed households in the Dry Zone (26.1 percent) lives below the poverty line, and almost every fifth household (18.5 percent) is food insecure; and ii) Chronic and acute malnutrition is widespread among the assessed children with 12.3 percent of children under 5 acutely malnourished, 27.5 percent chronically malnourished and 27.2 percent underweight. The data collected from assessments in other areas of Myanmar are being currently analysed.

**Partnerships:** WFP VAM activities in the country are carried out through valued partnerships with various actors. Within the FSIN project, WFP works with local and international NGOs on the standardization of food security information and for the conduct of the food security monitoring. The project is made possible through LIFT, funded by the Governments of Australia, the EU, France, Denmark, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Sweden, Switzerland, the UK and the USA. WFP also has actively engaged with the government counterpart Ministry of Border Affairs and Ministry of Livestock, Fishery and Rural Development (MLFRD) for the conduct of food security

surveys across the country as well as capacity building activities for the Government of Myanmar. In August 2014, WFP has signed Letter of Understanding with the Rural Development Department of the MLFRD, formalizing the cooperation. For emergency assessments, on an ad-hoc basis, WFP works with cooperating partners or other organizations active in the affected areas to collect key information on disaster impacts - a key step to decide on allocation of assistance. WFP also technically collaborates with the World Bank led technical group on poverty measurements.

**The Way Forward:** In 2015, WFP is expecting to extend collaboration to new prospective government and other partners. In particular, a pilot project on harmonized market price information system with the Ministry of Commerce is under discussion. The initiative will fill information gaps on food related market prices. WFP is currently assessing the capacities to involve telecom companies for the use of mobile technologies in the pilot. Funds permitting, WFP will continue food security surveys in remaining Rakhine and southeastern Myanmar. Additional seven resource centers - one national in Nay Pyi Taw and six regional in Kyangton, Kyaukse, Lashio, Monywa, Myitkyina, and Sittwe - will be opened. WFP will continue collaboration with the World Bank to have key food security indicators included in up-coming national surveys. The FSIN approach is also paving the way forward for the potential implementation of the IPC in the country.

**Investment case:** Understanding food security related vulnerabilities is a fundamental step for the design and implementation of projects aiming at tackling food insecurity and hunger. By investing in improved food security information systems in Myanmar, WFP believes that food security stakeholders will be in the position to better identify needs and better design and target programmes. WFP specialised VAM team is made of staff experienced in survey work, data analysis and mapping. The VAM team focuses on the transfer of these capacities through the harmonization of food security indicators, stakeholders' field staff training and gradual involvement of relevant ministries in survey work. This is expected to contribute to an increase in the overall quality and coverage of food security survey works. The incremental transfer of ownership to the ministries will also result in a greater sustainability of food security information systems. Finally, WFP Myanmar is also gradually investing in mobile technologies for survey work, expected to make information systems more efficient.

