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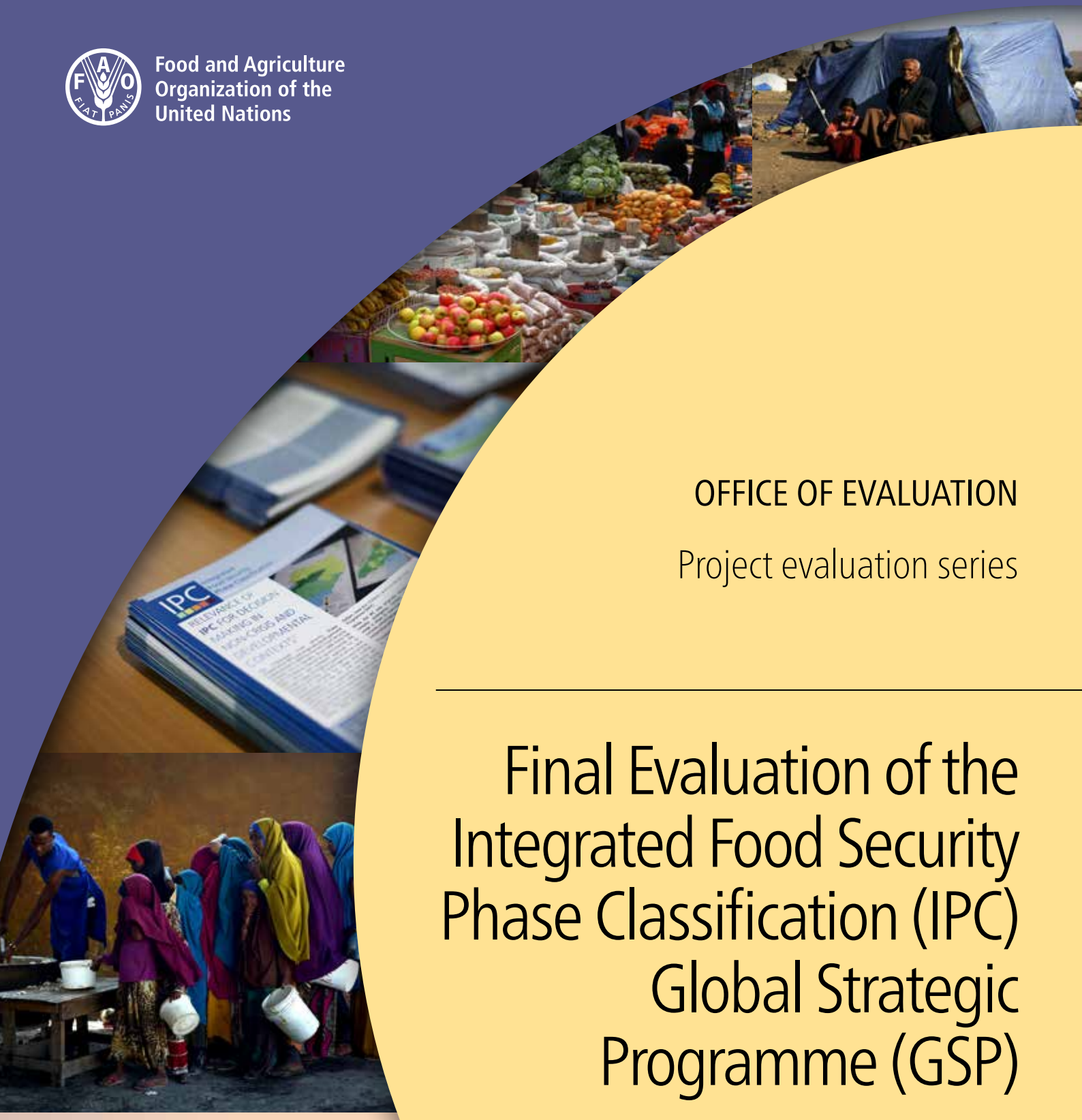

OFFICE OF EVALUATION

Project evaluation series

Final Evaluation of the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) Global Strategic Programme (GSP)

2014-2018

March 2019

PROJECT EVALUATION SERIES

Final Evaluation of the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) Global Strategic Programme (GSP) 2014-2018

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
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Acronyms and abbreviations

AFI	Acute food insecurity scale
AMN	Acute malnutrition scale
CFI	Chronic food insecurity
CH	Cadre Harmonisé
CILSS	Comité Permanent Inter-Etat de Lutte Contre La Sécheresse dans le Sahel
DFID	UK's Department for International Development
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FEWS NET	Famine Early Warning Systems Network
GRFC	Global Report on Food Crises
GSP	Global Strategic Programme
HNO	Humanitarian Needs Overview
HRP	Humanitarian Response Plan
IGAD	Inter-Governmental Authority on Development
IPC	Integrated Food Security Phase Classification
MTR	Mid-Term Review
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SICA	Sistema de la Integrazion Centroamericana
TWG	Technical Working Group
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WFP	World Food Programme

Executive Summary

1. This is the final evaluation of the first phase of the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) Global Strategic Programme (GSP), from 2014 to 2018. Focused at a strategic level, the evaluation has a strong learning purpose; it makes recommendations for the next phase of the GSP. It also fulfils an accountability purpose to the GSP's three donor agencies. The overall strategic objective of the GSP is that '*decision makers at the global, regional and country level use the IPC for decision-making and this is providing the evidence and standards for better decisions that improve emergency and development policy and programming*'. This evaluation places use of the IPC centre-stage. The findings are based upon key informant interviews, especially with IPC users at global, regional and country levels; visits to four countries; remote interviews covering a further three countries; an online survey targeting IPC users; and documentation review.

2. The **external environment** in which the GSP was first designed has changed significantly, in terms of food security trends and the institutional context in which they are addressed, for example the increasing humanitarian caseload and the attention now given to the humanitarian-development nexus. The profile and influence of the IPC and Cadre Harmonisé (CH) have increased substantially at global level, and also as a key source of information and analysis in four famine-affected countries in the last couple of years: Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and Yemen..

3. **The GSP** has expanded substantially over its first phase, more than doubling its annual budget between 2012 and 2017 and doubling the staff complement in the GSU. It has provided direct support to 36 countries applying one, two, or all three IPC scales.

Use of the IPC CFI scale

4. The principal users of the IPC Acute Food Insecurity (AFI) scale are donor agencies at country, regional and global levels. It has become the 'global standard', and donors' main source of information on food security. Those closest to the IPC (e.g. funding it) understand it best and are most aware of both its strengths and weaknesses. Donors with less proximity to IPC processes are less aware of its limitations. It is used principally for decisions about humanitarian funding – globally and within countries, and for targeting, especially for countries experiencing recurrent or protracted crises where the IPC has become well-established, for example in Afghanistan and South Sudan. In countries with less frequency of humanitarian crises, such as Honduras or Pakistan, the AFI is used more as background contextual information unless the analysis shows Phase 3 classification or above.

5. The United Nations uses the AFI results to inform the annual Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) and Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) in many countries, for example in calculating the anticipated number in need of humanitarian assistance in the coming year. In countries with recurrent and protracted humanitarian crises it is a key source of information to the Food Security and Livelihoods (FSL) cluster. The Food

and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and World Food Programme (WFP) are major users of the AFI for high-level resources allocation decisions, but are more likely to use their own survey and assessment data for more nuanced programming and targeting decisions. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) use the AFI for high-level planning decisions and for lobbying and fundraising with donors. Although the AFI must usually be endorsed by the respective national government before it is released, government officers are less significant users. The AFI is more likely to inform government decision-making if they have an annual humanitarian response planning system in place.

6. The AFI originated in Africa and is used by more countries in Africa than in other continents. The online survey results showed higher satisfaction levels with the AFI in Sub-Saharan Africa than in Asia and Latin America.

7. The IPC AFI has, de facto, become the mechanism for declaring famine, whether it is threatened, likely, or actually happening in countries implementing the IPC. This is a powerful trigger for a scaled-up response, although it is also evidence of a failure of early action in response to early warning on the part of the international humanitarian aid community and governments.

8. The collective and consensus-based nature of the AFI is regarded by users as its greatest added value. This, combined with the systematic structured IPC analysis process, gives it both authority and credibility. As a global international standard it can be used to make comparisons over space and time. Quality is the main factor affecting use of the AFI, positively when it is seen as reliable, and negatively where there are concerns about the quality of data feeding into the analysis and/or the IPC analysis process. Other factors affecting use include timeliness, in relation to the timing of key decisions, and dependent upon the prompt release of the IPC findings. The more frequently the AFI is carried out, the more likely it is to be used and to meet decision makers' needs, for example in countries with protracted crises where the AFI is carried out more than once a year.

9. Where users do not have adequate knowledge and understanding of the IPC and of associated food security concepts, this hinders their ability to use it in decision-making. Eighty percent of respondents to the online survey 'fully agreed' or 'mostly agreed' that the AFI met their needs. Where it did not, this was due to factors such as inadequate disaggregation in terms of the territorial level of analysis, and users wanting more information on who is in need of assistance (disaggregation by population group), what they need, and the drivers and causes of food insecurity.

10. The acute malnutrition scale (AMN) is used by some agencies at a technical level for programming decisions in-country, and has importantly drawn attention to nutrition issues at the global level. But it was infrequently cited as a source of information for decision-making and is not currently informing policy. It has substantial potential, to complement the AFI and encourage a more holistic analysis of food security, but it is not yet fulfilling that potential.

11. In the next phase the GSU plans to step up its investment in communications and dissemination. To date this has been poorly resourced. Apart from engagement with global initiatives using the IPC, such as the Global Report on Food Crises, the GSP has provided limited support for utilization of the IPC. At country level the evaluation found that technical working group (TWG) members rarely had a strong understanding of, or engagement with decision makers. As the AFI becomes higher profile, GSP partners must adopt a more coherent and unified approach on communications.

12. Views differ amongst GSP stakeholders about whether the IPC should be playing an early warning role or not, although this is clearly stated in Manual V3.0. What is apparent is that the AFI is not currently fulfilling an early warning function well compared with its ability to capture the current status of food insecurity. IPC projections – the main source of early warning – have never been tested retrospectively.

Use of the IPC CFI scale

13. The findings of the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) funded case studies in 2017 and of this evaluation reveal little evidence of use of the chronic food insecurity (CFI) results by decision makers in the countries in which it has been rolled-out. Government officers, UN agencies and NGOs see the CFI's potential in informing national and subnational policies, programming and investment plans, using the collective consensus building approach. But this potential has not yet been realized. Factors negatively affecting its usefulness include: the geographic unit of analysis being too large and therefore insufficient granularity of analysis; limited availability of data and poor quality data; political sensitivity of the results; and the challenge of translating the results into recommendations.

14. While the GSP has supported roll-out of the CFI at country level, this has not been preceded by a sufficiently thorough feasibility study, nor adequate engagement with potential users and decision makers. Much more follow-up support at country level is needed. All of this is beyond the current capacity of the GSU.

Quality

15. The quality of IPC analyses can only be as good as the data on which they are based. The growing influence of the AFI has encouraged investment in data collection in some countries, e.g. South Sudan. Data availability is a constraint particularly in countries experiencing occasional pockets of acute food insecurity. Data gaps that affect the quality of IPC AFI analyses include: data on mortality, nutrition and displacement, as well as data from 'hard to reach' areas.

16. The current trend in data collection is towards large quantitative surveys although there are concerns in some countries about the quality of data they produce. Despite many decision makers' bias towards quantitative data, it is important that the IPC AFI analyses draw on many different sources and types of data to fulfil the IPC's 'value added' of convergence of evidence. Robust and insightful qualitative data have an

important role to play in enriching the analysis, for example for areas hard to access where quantitative surveys are difficult to implement. AFI users are calling for greater transparency over data sources feeding into the IPC analysis and of participants in the analysis workshop.

17. Consensus building is one of the most valued yet challenging dimensions of the IPC analysis. There are concerns in some countries that political compromise affects the results, and that those involved in the analysis process are not sufficiently senior to manage such pressure. The AFI's population estimates for different phases are some of the most influential data informing resource allocation and targeting decisions, and also some of the most questioned data in terms of how they are calculated and their accuracy.

18. The IPC's current role in warning of, and declaring famine brings with it a great deal of responsibility. The GSP's Famine Guidance Note has been under constant review and undergone a number of iterations. The IPC's methods for analysing and declaring famine have come under scrutiny from researchers concerned about its inability to capture magnitude and longevity of severe acute food insecurity.

19. The GSU has adapted its approach to quality assurance in recent years, based on experience, now giving greater emphasis to real-time technical support and less to formal quality reviews (real time or retroactive). It is trying to strike a delicate balance between playing a constructive role of technical support during the analysis process, respecting country-level ownership, and the role of guardian of the IPC as a global standard and thus ensuring, even enforcing quality standards.

Institutionalization

20. Institutionalization of the IPC at country level has been a core aim of the GSP with the objective of embedding IPC processes within government institutions. The inappropriateness of this 'one-size fits all' approach to institutionalization is generally accepted within the GSP, and has become increasingly problematic in countries where government may be party to the conflict that is a major cause of acute food insecurity. But in the absence of a clearly articulated strategy or approach to institutionalization there is a lack of clarity within the GSP about what it means, and pragmatism prevails. Achieving the objective of national governments budgeting and paying for the whole IPC analysis is a long way off. In many countries it would not continue without external donor funding.

21. Progress in institutionalizing the IPC at regional level varies widely between regional authorities. The challenge in some regions is to move beyond time-bound, externally-funded projects that support the IPC, to embedding it within more enduring institutional frameworks, learning from the experience of the CH and the Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (*Commit permanent inter-État de lutte contre la sécheresse au Sahel,* CILSS) in West Africa.

22. Capacity development by the GSP has been key to institutionalization, and has generated positive feedback from stakeholders at country level. This has been a large part of the GSU's work, but as demand for capacity development grows exponentially, a more sustainable strategy for meeting this demand must be found. The focus for capacity development so far has been technical. This should expand to support IPC users and decision makers to better understand IPC results and how to use them in policymaking as well as programming.

23. The IPC-CH relationship has gradually strengthened over the years. Intrinsically linked to each other, any loss of credibility in one will affect the other. Both face similar challenges in producing quality analyses where there are data quality and availability issues, and in communicating their findings. Closer harmonization and collaboration are essential to the effectiveness of each.

Adaptive capacity

24. The GSP, and GSU in particular, has developed a culture of reflection and learning. It demonstrates high adaptive capacity, for example in the participative process of drafting Manual v3.0. The adaptive capacity amongst technical working groups (TWGs) at country level is more variable. The GSU is now encouraging more lesson-learning exercises at national level, important to foster a reflective and learning culture. Adaptation of the GSP in response to systematic feedback on IPC use by decision makers has been weaker compared with adaptive capacity technically.

Global partnership, governance and management of the GSP

25. There are now 15 partners in the GSP representing different types of organizations including UN agencies, NGOs and regional organizations. While some partner agencies have actively engaged in the GSP and IPC at global, regional and national levels, others have struggled to institutionalize the IPC within their own agencies, particularly the international NGOs, partly due to lack of resources and technical expertise. Yet their full participation in the GSP is important to the legitimacy of the IPC as a global effort, and to ensure the GSP reflects different perspectives.

26. The GSU has maintained its independence at global level, but in some countries the IPC is overly identified with FAO with implications for its perceived neutrality. The GSU has skilfully managed the many and varied demands on it. Nevertheless, it continues to be overstretched, exacerbated by uncertainty about future funding which hinders the GSU's capacity to expand and meet the additional demands and requirements of the GSP as the IPC becomes more influential.

Equity/gender

27. A number of IPC users interviewed for this evaluation raised concerns about the lack of disaggregation in the IPC AFI analysis. The greatest demand is for disaggregation to smaller geographical units, followed by disaggregation by different population groups. Addressing the latter is planned in the next phase of the GSP.

28. **The key message** from this evaluation is that with the greater influence of the IPC AFI comes greater responsibility, and this responsibility lies with the GSP as the guardian and promoter of the AFI. While the GSP can be credited with a number of major achievements in the last phase, it will need to prioritize strategically in the next phase to meet the growing demands of the IPC. Realizing the full potential of the global partnership will be key to achieving this.

Recommendation 1. The proposed strategic direction for the GSP should be adjusted as follows:

i. Giving the ***AFI's early warning role*** greater emphasis, and clarifying what kind of early warning role the AFI can and should play, alongside other systems for early warning
ii. Pausing roll-out of the CFI while exploring options for how it should be taken forward, and whether and how another organization would be better placed than the GSP to take over development and roll-out

Recommendation 2. More attention should be paid to monitoring use of the IPC AFI and AMN scales at country, regional and global levels.

Recommendation 3. The GSP should focus on strengthening the quality and transparency of the IPC analysis process for the acute scales, as these are key factors affecting the utility and credibility of the IPC.

29. The evaluation recommends a number of ways of doing this, ranging from data sources to consensus building, with implications for who participates in the IPC analysis process.

Recommendation 4. A research funding facility for the GSP/GSU should be established, to build an evidence base to inform future technical development of the IPC acute scales.

30. Such a facility will enable the GSP to commission independent research studies that deepen analysis and understanding of acute food insecurity, for example to strengthen the IPC in analysis and prediction of famine, and retrospectively to assess the accuracy of its early warning projections.

Recommendation 5. The GSP should develop and clarify its strategy on institutionalization, at country and regional levels.

Recommendation 6. The growing influence, use and exposure of the IPC has implications for GSP global partners.

31. This ranges from greater participation in capacity development at country and regional levels, contributing to the GSP according to their respective comparative advantage, stepping up their engagement beyond the technical domain, and stepping up institutionalization of the IPC within their own agencies.

Recommendation 7. The GSP should continue to develop the IPC for better disaggregation.

32. This includes by gender, displacement, supporting countries to disaggregate the analysis to smaller geographic units, and exploring how the IPC analysis can be adapted for urban contexts.

Recommendation 8. Key issues beyond the scope of this evaluation should be explored in the mid-term review (MTR) for the next phase of the GSP.

33. These include the GSP's approach to quality assurance, and the effectiveness and appropriateness of the GSP's governance arrangements

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose and scope of the evaluation

1. This is the final evaluation of the Global Strategic Programme (GSP) of the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) for the period 2014 to 2018, the first phase of the IPC GSP.

2. The evaluation has an accountability purpose, to the GSP's three donor agencies: the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID),[1] the European Union through the INFORMED programme,[2] and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).[3] It also has a strong learning purpose and is as forward-looking as possible. Taking account of changes in the external environment (see section 2 below), the progress, experience and learning from the 2014 to 2018 phase of the GSP, it captures the learnings and implications for the next phase of the GSP. It presents these with reference to the proposal for the next phase, which has been endorsed by the Steering Committee in October 2018.

3. The evaluation focuses at a strategic level as requested by many stakeholders interviewed during the inception phase.[4] Building upon the findings and recommendations made in the mid-term review (MTR) that was completed in January 2017, it makes a number of strategic recommendations for the next phase of the GSP. It also reviews progress made in implementing the MTR's recommendations, highlighted in blue text throughout the report.

4. As an evaluation of the overall GSP programme between 2014 and 2018, the findings and results are not broken down by funding source.[5] See Annex 1 for the evaluation Terms of Reference (TOR).

5. The overall strategic objective of the GSP is that '*decision makers at the global, regional and country level use the IPC for decision-making and this is providing the evidence and standards for better decisions that improve emergency and development policy and programming*'. This evaluation places use of the IPC centre-stage. Since the GSP was launched, it is the first systematic attempt to reach as many users as possible, through interviews and an online survey. It sets out to answer the following question about the impact of the IPC: *To what extent do decision makers at the global, regional and country level use the IPC for decision-making, and what factors influence this (positively and negatively)?*

[1] GCP/GLO/416/UK.
[2] GCP/INT/245/EC.
[3] GCP/GLO/691/USA.
[4] Thus, instead of focusing on the detail of results in the logframes for the last phase of the GSP, the evaluation will focus on the strategic direction and orientation of the GSP in the next phase.
[5] They will, however, feed into the final evaluation of FAO's European Union-funded INFORMED programme (to be carried out in 2019), of which the GSP is a component.

Box 1: Definitions

The **IPC Global Strategic Programme** (GSP) is the programme that is being evaluated and is further described in the evaluation TORs. See also section 3.

The **Integrated Food Security Phase Classification** *(IPC)* is *a set of analytical tools and consensus-based process for classifying food insecurity* that is being promoted through the GSP.

The **Global Strategic Unit** (GSU) is the unit composed of staff responsible for the implementation of the GSP. It is hosted by FAO.

The **IPC Global Steering Committee** is the *governing body of the IPC, tasked with strategically guiding and positioning the IPC globally and linking with relevant initiatives*.

The **Cadre Harmonisé** (CH) is the *analytical consensus-based process for classifying food insecurity and acute malnutrition* developed *in West Africa as a multi-partner initiative under CILSS's umbrella and harmonized with the IPC.*[6]

6. The other key strategic issues the evaluation addresses are the following (see Box 2 below):

   i. on institutionalization of the IPC, and the effectiveness and appropriateness of the strategy and approach to institutionalization at global, regional and country levels;
   ii. on facilitating factors, specifically the adaptive capacity of the GSP, and governance of the GSP;
   iii. on equity and gender and the extent to which the GSP has addressed differential vulnerability in the technical development of the IPC;[7]
   iv. as requested by the IPC Steering Committee, the evaluation also reviews aspects of the IPC-CH relationship.

7. The evaluation questions were reordered and amended during the inception phase, according to feedback from a range of GSP stakeholders including funders, the global partners and members of the GSU. The evaluation matrix can be seen in Annex 2.

[6] Promoting and ensuring the use of the CH falls outside the mandate and the scope of the GSP.

[7] These were raised as strategic issues in the MTR. Addressing equity and gender are also a requirement of the FAO Office of Evaluation (OED) that commissioned the evaluation.

Box 2: Evaluation questions

1. Utilization and utility of the IPC

1.1 To what extent do decision makers at the global, regional and country levels use the IPC for decision-making, and what factors influence this (positively and negatively)?

1.2 To what extent are the IPC GSP design and objectives relevant to meet the information needs of decision makers for improved emergency and development programming and policy at global, regional and country levels?

1.3 To what extent is the support provided by the GSU to countries relevant, timely and useful, and how can it be improved, with the overall aim of facilitating utilization?

1.4 To what extent are IPC products of sufficiently high quality to meet the needs of decision makers?

2. Institutionalization

2.1 How effective and appropriate is the strategy and approach to institutionalization at global, regional and country level?

3. Adaptive capacity

3.1 To what extent has the IPC GSP learned from implementation, from internal and external reviews, and from the changing external context and adapted its programme activities accordingly, with the overall objective of informing and influencing decision-making?

4. Equity/gender

4.1 To what extent has the GSP addressed differential vulnerability in the technical development of the IPC, by gender and other factors? To what extent has the GSP been gender sensitive?

1.2 Methods and constraints

8. The evaluation has used a mixed methods approach, based on the following:

Documentation review: these have included:

- key IPC and GSP documents;
- research reports;
- publications where the IPC has been a major source of information;
- IPC Manual V3.0.

Online survey of IPC users (SurveyMonkey):

- available in English, French and Spanish, targeting users of the IPC at global, regional and country levels;
- containing 26 questions, mostly on use of the three IPC scales;
- 135 respondents, from all regions where the IPC has been rolled out, with a 90 percent completion rate.

Key informant interviews with the different categories of IPC stakeholders, focusing on users, including:

- representatives of national governments;
- donor agency officials;
- officials of UN agencies;
- staff of national and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs);
- researchers on food security;
- representatives of regional authorities.

9. See Appendix 1 for a list of interviewees. The evaluation team interviewed well over 200 people.

Visits to four countries and three regional offices: see Table 1 below, including the list of criteria guiding selection.

Interviews carried out remotely for three selected countries: see Table 2 below. Yemen and Somalia were originally on this list, but were subsequently dropped: Yemen because key stakeholders were engaged in a protracted and sensitive IPC analysis process during fieldwork for the evaluation, and Somalia due to lack of time as the list of stakeholders to be interviewed at global level became apparent.

A process of collective analysis: a three-day analysis workshop for all team members was held in Rome in mid-November 2018.

Table 1: Countries and regions visited during the evaluation

NATIONAL LEVEL	IPC scales implemented	Phase of institutionalization	Governance context[8]	Included in the MTR	Included in the baseline
Mozambique	AFI AMN CFI	Introduction stage	Stable	No	No
South Sudan	AFI AMN	Consolidation stage	Fragile and conflict-affected	Yes	No
Pakistan	AFI AMN	Consolidation stage	Stable	Yes (remote interviews)	No
Honduras	AFI CFI	Consolidation stage	Stable	Yes (remote interviews)	Yes
REGIONAL LEVEL		**Country of location**		**Additional information**	
SICA		El Salvador			
CILSS		Niger and Burkina Faso		AGHRYMET & CILSS	
IGAD		Kenya			

Table 2: Countries to be reviewed remotely during the evaluation

Country	IPC scales	Phase of institutionalisation	Governance context	Included in the MTR	Included in the baseline
Afghanistan	AFI AMN	Consolidation stage	Fragile and conflict affected	No	No
Haiti	AFI CFI	Introduction stage	Fragile and political instability	No	Yes
DRC	AFI AMN CFI	Consolidation stage	Fragile and conflict affected	No	No

10. Although this is an evaluation of the IPC GSP, not of the Cadre Harmonisé (CH), at the request of the IPC Steering Committee the evaluation team included visits to two West

[8] World Bank Indicators. Data for Data for fragile and conflict-affected situations.

African countries in the Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (*Comité permanent inter-État de lutte contre la sécheresse au Sahel.* CILSS) region: Niger and Burkina Faso. Findings from these visits are used for comparative purposes throughout this evaluation, and the IPC-CH relationship is evaluated in section 7.3.

11. The main constraints the team faced in carrying out the evaluation were the following:

- Delays in getting visas for the countries selected for the team to visit: as a result the time spent in South Sudan was shortened by a day, and the team leader was unable to travel to Pakistan with one of the team members.
- Targeting decision makers in the online survey: many respondents were not decision makers but were part of the IPC analysis process in a technical capacity. The results have therefore been used with some caution, but have been useful to triangulate the findings from the country and regional visits and from interviews at all levels.
- Lack of access to some key informants, for example those involved in ongoing IPC in Yemen and key stakeholders from CILSS and AGHRYMET.

1.3 Structure of the report

12. Following this introduction, in Chapter 2 the evaluation report begins with a short overview of the external context and how this has changed since the GSP was launched in 2014. Chapter 3 provides an overview of the GSP, its funding sources and its expanding geographical coverage. Chapters 4 and 5 present the evaluation's findings on how the IPC is used by decision makers: for the acute and chronic IPC scales respectively. These two chapters are based entirely on feedback from users. Chapter 6 addresses quality issues related to the IPC AFI scale. Although these were raised by users (and therefore touched upon in Chapter 4), Chapter 6 addresses quality issues in greater depth, drawing on the input and perspective of technical experts and researchers. Chapter 7 presents the evaluation findings on institutionalization of the IPC and Chapter 8 on the GSP's adaptive capacity. Chapter 9 reflects on the global partnership, the governance and management of the GSP. Chapter 10 presents the evaluation's conclusions and recommendations.

2. External context

13. The external environment in which the GSP was first designed has changed significantly, both in terms of food security trends and also the institutional context in which they are addressed. Two years ago the MTR highlighted some of those changes, including:

- the changing nature of humanitarian crises with a doubling of the humanitarian caseload over a decade and increasing vulnerability of urban populations;
- the changing nature of the humanitarian response, the growing gap between requirements and contributions to UN-coordinated appeals, and the call for a more localized approach to humanitarian action in the wake of the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS);
- increasing global attention to reducing all forms of malnutrition and recognition of the linkages between acute and chronic undernutrition;
- the drive towards a stronger relationship between development and humanitarian interventions, now termed the humanitarian-development nexus.

14. Each of these four trends have intensified over the last two years.

15. Since the MTR there have been two additional developments with immediate relevance for the IPC, the GSP and for this evaluation:

- The spectre of famine, threatened or actual, in four countries where the IPC (or in the case of Nigeria, the CH) is a key source of analysis and information: Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and Yemen.
- The role and influence of the IPC and CH in global-level analyses: three particular initiatives at the global level have catapulted the IPC AFI into the spotlight and into an increasingly influential role:
  i. The Food Security Information Network's (FSIN)[9] launch of the annual Global Report on Food Crises (GRFC) in 2016, with the first report produced in 2017, based principally in the IPC and CH.
  ii. The World Bank's Famine Action Mechanism (FAM) project, seeking to strengthen and incentivize the links between early warning, finance and implementation arrangements, for which the IPC will be at the core of the ARTEMIS model.
  iii. The Global Crisis Severity Index (GCSI), a new initiative developed by INFORM under ACAS: this Index for Risk Management, which uses IPC as a proxy for food security, will officially be launched in the first half of 2019.

16. These changes in the external context do not appear to affect the fundamental rationale of the GSP, that: '*Differing approaches to food security analysis lead to different*

[9] FSIN is a global initiative, co-sponsored by FAO, WFP and IFPRI.

understandings of a given food security situation thus undermining efforts at co-ordinating interventions… (and therefore) the need for consistent and comparable analysis of food security situations',[10] nor the overall strategic objective of the GSP that it contributes to better decisions in emergency and development policy and programming.

17. But the role of the IPC in famine-threatened regions, and increasingly in global-level analyses have substantially raised the stakes for the IPC and for the GSP. It is in growing demand as there is an increasing level of interest in food security and in more data-driven approaches, particularly at the global level. In the words of one interviewee: '*decision makers want to have IPC information at their fingertips*'. While this was foreseen in the MTR, it has accelerated in the last two years. Dependence on the IPC as the '*global reference for food insecurity classification*'[11] appears to have increased, and therefore the responsibility and exposure that comes with it.

[10] As stated in the IPC Project Document for DFID, drafted in March 2012.
[11] As stated by the World Bank.

3. Overview of the GSP

3.1 The Integrated Phase Classification (IPC)

18. The IPC is a global, multi-partner initiative to facilitate improved decision-making through consensus-based food security analysis. It is founded on a complementary set of protocols for analysing and classifying the severity and nature of food insecurity and nutrition to inform multi-agency response. The IPC analytical approach draws on a convergence of available evidence to classify the severity and causes of acute food insecurity and malnutrition with the view to enable clear communication for decision-making.

19. The purpose of the IPC is to promote more appropriate and effective policies and responses to food insecurity and malnutrition by providing decision makers with timely, reliable and accessible information about the food security and nutrition situation based upon the consensus of multiple stakeholders. It aims to provide:

- a common technical approach to the analysis of pre-existing food security and nutrition information;
- an institutional process for maximizing consensus between stakeholders about the current and likely food security and nutrition situation and minimizing political bias;
- the basis for response analysis and decision-making about appropriate policies, programmes and resource allocation.

20. The IPC global initiative, the GSP, is led by a Global Partnership of 15: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), World Food Programme (WFP) and the European Commission Joint Research Centre (JRC), along with Action Against Hunger International (ACF), CARE, Oxfam, Save the Children, the Global Food Security Cluster (gFSC), the Global Nutrition Cluster (GNC), Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET) and four Regional Inter-Governmental Authorities: CILSS (West Africa), Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD, East and Central Africa), Central American Integration System (SICA, Central America) and Southern African Development Community (SADC). The Global Nutrition Cluster and SADC joined towards the end of the 2014-2018 phase of the GSP, in November 2018.

3.2 Design and budget of the GSP

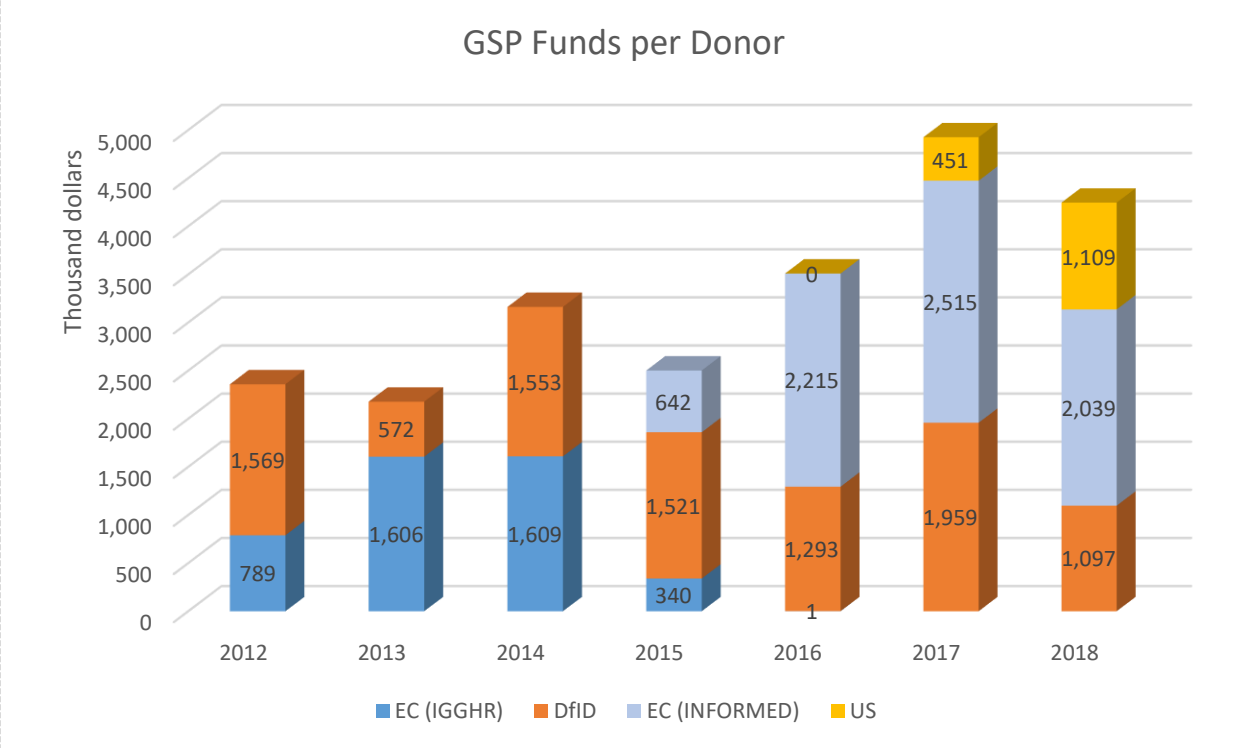
21. The IPC GSP was launched in early 2014, with the intention of supporting the adoption of the IPC as a standard in the food security field. The first phase was planned as a three year programme from 2014 to 2016, subsequently extended for an additional two years to the end of 2018. With the overall aim of informing emergency and development decision-making, as stated above, the GSP is organized around four pillars or outcomes:

i. **Institutionalization of the IPC** within global, regional and national structures, frameworks and strategies, to ensure effective multi-partner and government ownership and use of IPC processes and results (4 percent of GSP spend on activities 2014 to 2018).
ii. **Professionalised IPC** food security analysis training and capacity, decentralized and sustainable at the regional and country levels (52 percent of GSP spend on activities 2014 to 2018).
iii. **High quality IPC** acute and chronic food insecurity products, to strengthen the relevance and rigour of the IPC (23 percent of GSP spend on activities 2014 to 2018).
iv. **Improved access to IPC analysis** for use in emergency and development policy and programming, thus promoting increased demand for and use of the IPC by decision makers at global, regional and country levels (14 percent of GSP spend on activities 2014 to 2018).

22. More than half of the GSP funding has been spent on Outcome 2, on capacity development, including participation of GSU staff in country level TWG events, and the costs of some of those events.

23. The GSP has grown and expanded substantially over the four-year time period. Figure 1 shows how the GSP annual budget more than doubled between 2012 and 2017, falling back slightly in 2018. The GSU has also doubled in size, from around 16 staff in 2013 to around 35 (with a small number of vacant staff positions) by the time of this evaluation in November 2018. But the percentage of the GSP budget spent on staffing has remained fairly stable, rising slightly over this period, from 56 percent in 2014 to 59 percent in 2018. The rest of the budget is spent on country-level activities, ranging from technical support and training to funding IPC analysis workshops.

Figure 1: GSP annual funds, per donor, 2012 to 2018



Source: GSU

3.3 Countries using IPC, and support provided by GSP

24. In 2012 the IPC acute food insecurity (AFI) scale was being used in 25 countries. In 2014-2015 the chronic food insecurity (CFI) scale was rolled out under the GSP; the first manual was approved and published in 2016. The acute malnutrition scale (AMN) was rolled out a little later, in 2015-2016.

25. By 2018, the IPC AFI was being applied (including recently introduced, e.g. in Ethiopia) in 33 countries, the AMN in 13 countries (plus 4 in West Africa), and the CFI in 17 countries.[12] Between 2014 and 2018 the GSP had provided direct support to 36 countries, applying one, two, or all three IPC scales (see table in Appendix 3). Indirectly, through CILSS, the GSP had provided support to the Cadre Harmonisé in 17 countries in West Africa.

26. The strong Africa focus in application of the IPC, and in the allocation of the GSP budget, is evident from Table 3. While this has been driven by the high incidence of acute food insecurity in many countries in Africa, it has also been a constraining factor in the roll-out and credibility of the IPC in some other countries or regions, such as

[12] Fourteen countries had completed the CFI by June 2018. In others the CFI was ongoing, but may not have been validated or released.

Central America, where it was seen as overly associated with Africa and inadequately adapted to other regions.

Table 3: Introduction and application of the IPC geographically

Region	No. of countries applying AFI	No. of countries applying AMN	No. of countries applying CFI	% of GSP regional budget, 2014-2018
Africa	20 (plus 17 applying CH)	10 (plus 4 in West Africa)	8 (plus 2 in West Africa)	70%
Asia	5	3	6	20%
Central America	4	0	3	9%
North Africa and the Near East	4 (2 without direct GSU support)	0	0	1%
TOTAL	**33 (plus 17 applying CH)**	**13**	**17**	**100%**

Source: GSU

27. In response to the MTR *recommendation that the acute food insecurity scale should remain the priority focus of the GSP, and the chronic scale should be the secondary priority*, the Steering Committee agreed to reduce the targets for roll-out of the CFI. Whenever there were competing priorities between the IPC acute and chronic scales, the acute would be prioritized. As a result the GSP exceeded the target number of countries it has supported on the AFI while the CFI target has fallen short (DFID, 2018).

4. Use of the IPC – acute scales

Evaluation Question 1.1: To what extent do decision makers at the global, regional and country levels use the IPC for decision-making, and what factors influence this (positively and negatively)?

28. This section presents the evaluation findings on use of the IPC acute scales according to user feedback. It draws principally on interviews carried out at country, regional and global levels, in-person and remotely, supplemented by the results of the online survey. Most users of the acute scales referred only to the AFI in their responses, especially in interviews. Most of this chapter therefore refers solely to use of the AFI. Section 4.2 presents findings on use of the AFI according to different user groups. The results of the online survey revealed some distinctions in satisfaction with the AFI between different geographical regions: this is summarised in section 4.3. How the AFI is used when there is a declaration of famine is discussed in section 4.4. Section 4.5 presents users' views of the 'value-added' of the AFI, and section 4.6 captures the main factors affecting utilization of the AFI, according to user feedback. Section 4.7 reviews the extent to which the AFI meets their information needs. Only a few users referred to the AMN in interviews, even when prompted. Section 4.8 presents the main findings on use of the AMN. Section 4.9 reviews the role of the GSP in promoting use of the IPC. The chapter concludes with an analysis of the current and future roles of the acute IPC scales, especially in relation to early warning.

4.1 Use of the IPC AFI scale by stakeholder group

Finding 1. A major achievement of the GSP is the extent to which the IPC has become the 'global standard' for analysing acute food insecurity, and its influence, especially at global level. The main users of the IPC AFI scale are donors, at country, regional and global levels. Other international actors in the humanitarian system – UN agencies and NGOs – are also users of the IPC AFI. Government officials appear to use it least.

Finding 2. It is used principally for decisions about humanitarian funding, and the allocation and targeting of resources, based upon estimates of the population living in different IPC phase classifications.

4.1.1 Donor agencies

29. In interviews carried out for this evaluation, officials from the traditional donor agencies such as USAID, DFID, European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), EU-DEVCO, the Governments of Canada, Netherlands and Norway have been amongst the most enthusiastic users of the IPC AFI. Those donors closest to the IPC (e.g. those funding it) understand it best and are most aware of its weaknesses as well as its strengths. Donors with less proximity to IPC processes are much less aware of its limitations.

At country level

30. In countries experiencing recurrent or protracted crises such as Afghanistan and South Sudan, where the IPC has become well-established, the main ways in which donors are using the IPC AFI are the following:

- To make the case to their headquarters for funding and for the allocation of humanitarian resources to their respective country, in some cases also using the IPC retrospectively to justify the allocation of resources.
- To inform the allocation of humanitarian resources within the country, according to the IPC's analysis of the current situation, and its food security projections.
- To target geographically.
- As a reference point to assess and question programming decisions made by their implementing partners.

31. It is a particularly important source of information for the allocation of resources for emergency food security interventions, for example for USAID's Food for Peace planning and budgeting, but also informs the general allocation of humanitarian resources in the absence of a similar analysis for other sectors.

32. In countries where there is less frequency of humanitarian crises, such as Pakistan or Honduras, the IPC AFI is either used more as background contextual information (unless parts of the country are classified as IPC phase 3 or above, in which case it is more likely to be used for response planning), or is not used at all.

At regional and global levels

33. Donors are the biggest users of the IPC AFI at global level, often referring to it as a 'global standard', or the 'gold standard'. The main way they report using it is for resource allocation, globally and by country, particularly for humanitarian resources associated with food security.[13] ECHO, for example, bases the food security part of its annual humanitarian plan on the IPC. And the IPC informs the allocation of resources within the United States Government Food for Peace.

34. The annual Global Report on Food Crises (GRFC, described in section 2 above), in turn based upon the IPC AFI, is a key resource for this purpose, providing a global overview as well as a consolidated analysis country-by-country. Both EU-DEVCO and ECHO use the GRFC to prioritize and target resources between countries. For the European Union-driven Global Network against Food Crises, the IPC AFI is a key source of information. This is all evidence of the profile and influence of the AFI at global level, as noted in section 2 above.

35. The IPC AFI is also used and valued for lobbying purposes, whereby donor officials advocate for funds and resources internally within their organizations and with their

[13] For non-food security related humanitarian assistance, for example for WASH, donor officials rely less on the IPC and more on other sources.

respective Ministries of Finance. Some donor officials reported using the IPC AFI to determine where they operate and also with which partners.

36. While donor officials explained that the IPC AFI was not the only source of information they use to inform such decision-making, it does appear to be the main source. For USAID, alignment between the IPC analysis and FEWS NET's analysis is key: when this happens, the IPC is at its most influential. For countries where there is no IPC AFI analysis, some donors (in addition to USAID) rely on FEWS NET analysis instead.

37. The recent famines and role of the IPC in declaring famine (see below), means that the IPC has a much higher profile at global level than ever before. Some donor agency officials describe how it is now referenced by government ministers and politicians as well as in the UN Security Council.

38. Regional donor offices, for example in East and Southern Africa, also review the IPC results across countries to inform resource allocation and targeting decisions.

Overall

39. In conflict contexts some donor governments use the IPC AFI to inform their political action through diplomatic channels at both national and global levels, for example where famine is likely or declared and the cause is clearly violent conflict and/or lack of access.

40. Thus, as intended, the IPC AFI provides the big picture for budget planning and targeting, and donors rely on their UN and NGO partners for more detailed and nuanced information on food security needs, gaps and causes, for example from needs assessments, for targeting beyond high-level geographic targeting. (It is worth noting, however, that in South Sudan there has been no apparent link between the IPC's analysis of the number of people assessed to be in humanitarian need and funding levels, with funding at its highest in 2014 and levelling out in 2016-17 [Maxwell et al, 2018a]. There may be many reasons for this, some related to the IPC [ibid] and some related to other external factors).

41. What is less clear is the extent to which non-traditional donors such as the Governments of China, Qatar, Turkey and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) use the IPC to inform their decision-making. This deserves follow-up.

4.1.2 UN agencies

At country level

42. One of the most significant ways in which the UN is using the IPC is in informing the annual Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) and Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) where these exist. This has been the case in Afghanistan, Burundi, Democratic Republic

of the Congo, Haiti, Somalia and South Sudan.[14] There are three ways in which the IPC is commonly used in the HNO and HRP:

- IPC estimates for the population living in areas classified IPC phase 3 and above are used as the numbers of people in need of humanitarian assistance.
- The IPC analysis is compared with the previous year's analysis, to indicate improvement or deterioration in food security.
- IPC projections are used to indicate the anticipated number in need of humanitarian assistance in the coming years. For example, in 2017 in South Sudan, trends in IPC figures over a three year period, 2013-2016, were used to project the number of people expected to be food insecure during the lean season.

43. While the IPC AFI is one of a number of sources the HNO and HRP rely upon, it is clearly an influential one, particularly in terms of providing numbers in need in different geographical areas. In contrast, data from the AMN was only mentioned once in an HNO, in Kenya. In many countries the IPC AFI analysis is specifically scheduled to feed into the HNO and HRP.

44. In a number of countries, especially those with recurrent and protracted humanitarian crises, the AFI is a key source of information to the Food Security and Livelihoods (FSL) cluster, to determine the needs of humanitarian assistance and collectively design the response.

45. WFP and FAO are the two UN agencies using the IPC AFI most at country level. As with the donors, this is particularly the case in countries with recurrent or prolonged humanitarian crises. For example, in Afghanistan, the IPC was credited with flagging up parts of the country facing acute food insecurity due to the drought early on. In South Sudan, WFP uses the IPC analysis to inform the frequency and quantity of its food distribution, and for geographic targeting to county level. For more nuanced targeting and programming decisions WFP uses its own survey data.[15] FAO is using the IPC analysis to target its emergency livelihood programming in countries ranging from South Sudan to Afghanistan to Haiti. UNICEF also uses the IPC for resource mobilization and advocacy as well as for response planning, although to a lesser extent than WFP and FAO. Thus, it is predominantly used for high-level resource allocation rather than as a response analysis tool.

46. As with the donor community, UN agencies are using the IPC AFI more as background contextual information in countries with less frequency of humanitarian crises, such as Pakistan.

[14] According to a review of HNOs and HRPs carried out by the GSU.

[15] In Pakistan, for example, WFP only uses the IPC for a comparison with its own data and other joint assessment findings, rather than as a principal source for decision-making.

At global level

47. UN agencies such as WFP also use the IPC at global level to advocate for funding, quoting IPC figures for populations in need, although they are more likely to use their own assessment data to inform and plan their response.

4.1.3 NGOs

48. NGOs are using the IPC in two main ways:

- For planning purposes at **country level**, to inform emergency response plans, particularly for food security, but possibly also for other sectors such as WASH. One international NGO described the value of the IPC in 'keeping an eye' on areas where the organization was not present, in case the results indicated it should shift or expand its geographic focus
- For lobbying and fundraising, especially with donors, **at both country and global levels**: the IPC analysis is likely to feature as a key part of the rationale in project proposals. It is also used by some international NGOs to mobilize emergency funds internally, from their respective headquarters.

49. There is an element to which this is donor-driven. In the words of one international NGO official, 'the IPC is more believed by the donor'. They expect to see it as part of the project proposal. Some national NGOs similarly described using the IPC results in their proposals to UN agencies.

4.1.4 Government

50. The first and main way in which many governments use the IPC AFI is by endorsing it and thus making a public statement on the severity and geographic incidence of acute food insecurity. This, in turn, is a key source for humanitarian appeals. But as described in section 7.2.1 below, this endorsement of the IPC is not without its challenges. There have been a number of examples of governments reluctant or unwilling to admit the severity of food insecurity in their country and therefore refusing to endorse the IPC AFI.

51. Whether and how line ministries use the AFI in their own programme decision-making depends partly upon the mechanisms and structures they have in place. For example, where there is an annual Response Plan the IPC AFI analysis may directly feed into it, such as the Annual Contingency Plan prepared by the National Institute for Disaster Management in Mozambique. In countries without clear governmental response mechanisms, for example Haiti, the use of IPC information by government to make decisions is limited.

52. In Honduras, where the AFI is used at subnational level, it has been used by government for geographic targeting and for the local coordination of the response.

4.1.5 Regional authorities

53. In the SADC and IGAD regions the IPC results are fed into regional reporting and analysis of food and nutrition security. The relevant IGAD specialized bodies are increasingly making reference to the IPC and its Regional Disaster Resilience and Sustainability Platform (IDDRSI) uses IPC analyses from IGAD member countries. The AFI is used as input in the IDDRSI platform to better understand the prevalence/severity and trends of food and nutrition insecurity.

4.2 Analysis of the online survey results by different geographic regions

Finding 3. In the online survey, results showed a general trend of higher satisfaction and use of the IPC AFI for response planning in Sub-Saharan Africa, compared to Asia and Latin America.

54. 92 percent of respondents to the online survey referred to the AFI. In Sub-Saharan Africa the majority said they use it for emergency response planning in similar ways to those described above,[16] for coordination of the response with other agencies and as background contextual information. Respondents from East Asia and the Pacific and South Asia use the AFI more as general background information, and in Latin America and the Caribbean respondents said they used it for coordination. The majority of respondents from Sub-Saharan Africa fully agreed that the IPC products provide them with actionable information, for example the maps and population tables as well as the summary of causes of food insecurity, but respondents from other regions only partially agreed to this statement.

55. These findings reflect a general trend in the results from the online survey, of higher levels of satisfaction with the AFI in Sub-Saharan Africa than in other regions.

4.3 Famine declaration and famine prevention

Finding 4. The IPC AFI has become the main international mechanism for declaring famine.

Finding 5. This can trigger rapid funding decisions, but by this time it is too late to launch a preventative response.

56. The IPC AFI has, de facto, become the mechanism for declaring famine, whether it is threatened, likely, or actually happening in countries implementing the IPC. As Maxwell (2018) explains: 'In the original IPC, famine was simply the most extreme end of the spectrum of severity. IPC wasn't originally intended to be the final arbiter of assessing or classifying famine. But it quickly supplanted other attempts at classifying famine (of which there were several in the early 2000s)' (Maxwell, 2018: 3).

[16] A specific example was promoting feeding practices in areas in need in Uganda.

57. There has and continues to be much debate about the data requirements and thresholds for the IPC to declare famine, or its likelihood (see section 6.4 below). But in terms of how the IPC is being used, it is now relied upon, by the international humanitarian community at least, to warn of impending famine and to declare when famine conditions exist. In Somalia in 2017 the IPC's warning of the threat of famine is credited with triggering a preventative early response. But in a number of other cases, including the current Yemen crisis, technical analysts have lamented how some decision makers appear to wait for the declaration of famine before escalating their response, making the point that famine declaration is a statement of failure to respond, and that message should be communicated more powerfully. This is a long-standing issue, beyond the scope of the IPC and GSP.[17] One major donor and user of the IPC expressed their frustration about the strict data requirements for famine which cannot always be met because of the lack of data: 'if there is consensus amongst the experts, we would like a declaration of some kind. That would help us to respond. We want a 'no regrets' approach'. This statement confirms the power of the famine declaration in unleashing a major response, rather than earlier warnings, as happened in South Sudan where donor officials described rapid funding decisions being made to scale-up the response. This is an issue for the entire international humanitarian response system. Meanwhile, the GSP has introduced the 'famine likely' classification to address contexts where data may be lacking but there is evidence that famine is likely, endorsed by the Famine Review Committee (FRC). See section 6.3 below.

4.4 How users of the IPC AFI scale perceive its 'value added': what difference does it make to decision-making?

Finding 6. While the collective and consensus-based aspects of the IPC AFI are recognized as the most important value-added (especially by donors, NGOs, and UN agencies), very few stakeholders (from donors, NGOs, UN agencies or governments) mentioned the early warning role of the IPC as a particular strength or value added.

58. The most commonly cited 'value added' of the IPC AFI in interviews and in the online survey is that it is **collective and consensus-based**. This view was shared by users of the IPC such as donors, and by agencies involved in the IPC analysis such as UN agencies and NGOs, but in the online survey was less frequently cited by government officers. The reason why this was an 'added value' varied between the different groups, and included the following:

- The convergence of evidence and consensus basis of the IPC AFI meant that users had a high level of confidence in it. Words and phrases such as 'completeness' and 'one of the most comprehensive analysis tools' were used in interviews to describe the IPC AFI, reflecting the fact that it draws on diverse sources of information. This was echoed in the online survey, that it drew on different methodologies for data collection and brought multi-disciplinary actors around the table

[17] See Buchanan-Smith and Davies (1995), Bailey (2013), and Maxwell and Majid (2016).

- As a collective analysis and statement it has greater authority than single-agency analysis. This was particularly valued by operational agencies in their fundraising with donors: using the IPC, they were less likely to be accused of inflating numbers in need for their organization's vested interests; it was trusted more than data produced by government alone; and some NGOs welcomed the fact that there was less 'back and forth' with donors who accepted the IPC analysis, and that this avoided having to carry out additional needs assessments.
- The collective consensus-based IPC is a welcome replacement to many different reports, often of varying quality and with different results, that can cause confusion amongst decision makers. In the words of one user, it 'simplifies decision-making'. Respondents to the online survey valued the common language the IPC provides, that prevents the dispersion of actors.
- Donor officials working at the global level appreciated that it is a collective effort at the country level, and therefore has greater legitimacy than a higher (i.e. global) level attempt at analysis,
- At country level it provides the basis for a more coordinated response, and if it is timely it speeds up the response as decisions are made rapidly when the AFI has been released.

59. Second, as a global international standard, it can be **used to make comparisons over space and time**, which helps donors in particular to assess the relative severity and magnitude of acute food insecurity. This was also valued by government officers responding to the online survey.

60. Third, and related, **the rigour and systematic structured nature of the IPC analysis** process mean that it is regarded as objective and credible.

61. Fourth, the visual maps mean that it is **accessible and easy to grasp**.

62. This feedback on 'value added' echoes many of the advantages, or value added, of the IPC as listed in the new Version 3.0, both the technical dimension but also, importantly, the more political dimension of a collective approach. There is, however, one exception: effective early warning, mentioned in the list in V3.0 but not mentioned in interviews nor in the online survey as a particular strength or 'value added' of the IPC (see section 4.9 below).

4.5 Factors affecting use, according to user feedback

Finding 7. Quality was the main factor affecting use, particularly by donors, but also NGOs and UN. Positively, many used the AFI because they regard it as reliable and of good quality. Those closer to the IPC were more likely to express concerns, both about the quality of data feeding into the AFI and the quality of the IPC analysis process.

Finding 8. Other factors affecting use are timeliness and frequency of the IPC AFI, as well as knowledge and understanding of the IPC and of food security concepts. Some at government level were more inclined to use food production data for decision-making in the agriculture sector, rather than IPC results.

63. Overall the growing profile and visibility of the IPC AFI as its geographical coverage has expanded, as the number of emergencies has risen, and with the appearance of famine in recent years have all contributed to the IPC being more widely used, and having greater influence and credibility as described above.

64. Feedback from users indicate that the following key factors affect use of the IPC AFI:

Quality

65. In interviews this was cited most frequently as a key factor affecting utilization. On the one hand many users regard the IPC AFI as solid and technically reliable. The online survey results show a relatively high satisfaction rate with quality of the AFI. But on the other hand users, particularly those closer to the IPC and with a more in-depth understanding of it, expressed concern about quality of the IPC. Somewhat contradictorily in the online survey low quality emerged as the main constraint for the acute scales. Interviewees cited a range of different issues, related to both data use for the analysis, and the analysis process. These elements are discussed in greater depth in Chapter 6:

- Poor data feeding into the IPC analysis. In the case of DFID, this prompted them to commission a study on the short-term gaps in data availability and quality in the four famine-affected or threatened countries (MQSUN, 2018). In Mozambique the NGO consortium (COSACA), together with WFP, hired a technical adviser and did some real-time quality checks during the data collection of the national food security survey led by the – Technical Secretariat for Food Security and Nutrition (*Secretariado Tecnico de Seguranca Alimentar e Nutricional*, SETSAN).
- Compromises in the consensus building process of the IPC analysis.
- Controversy over the accuracy of population data (usually census data) fed into the IPC, and concern about how estimates of population numbers in different IPC phases are reached.
- Gaps in the analysis, e.g. failure to take displacement and refugee movements into account, and/or conflict and security factors.

Timeliness

66. Where the timing of the IPC analysis fits with the annual timetable for humanitarian response planning, and when the findings are released without delay, it is likely to have most influence, for example being fed into the HRP. Delays in the release of the IPC analysis were more frequently mentioned by users as hampering utilization, rather than the analysis process being untimely. Delays in the release of the findings are usually because:

- Slow or lack of endorsement by government meant that the IPC AFI results could not officially be used (for example, in Mozambique, Democratic Republic of the Congo before the election, South Sudan in 2016, Pakistan).

- Lack of consensus amongst agencies participating in the IPC analysis delayed the release (for example in Afghanistan in 2018 where FEWS NET was not able to endorse the IPC, eventually withdrawing its logo).

67. At least one key user of the IPC AFI in East Africa commented that they rarely know in advance when the IPC analysis is going to be released for different countries in the region. This inhibits their ability to use it, and implies the need for clearer communication about the calendar of IPC analysis. More than a third of respondents to the online survey disagreed or only partially agreed that IPC analyses were released in a timely way for their use in decision-making, with an interesting regional variation: most respondents in Sub-Saharan Africa fully agreed that the IPC scales are issued in a timely manner while in Asia (East Asia and Pacific and South Asia) most only partially agreed or disagreed.

Frequency of IPC analysis

68. More frequent IPC analyses are generally more useful to decision makers, for example in Somalia the IPC compatible analysis is done for each season; in South Sudan the IPC AFI analysis is carried out (at least in theory) three times per year, with two full analyses and one update; and in many Southern Africa countries the IPC AFI is carried out seasonally. In dynamic crises if there is only one IPC per year, the results may become quickly outdated, although may still be used and relied upon in the absence of other information sources.

Knowledge/understanding of the IPC, and of food security concepts by decision makers

69. In countries where the IPC AFI is well-established, carried out regularly, and where there is a protracted humanitarian crisis with high levels of acute food insecurity, the IPC is most likely to have become embedded in the humanitarian architecture, specifically in the timetable for humanitarian response planning and decision-making, for example in South Sudan and Yemen. But even in these contexts some users do not have adequate knowledge and understanding of the IPC, for example heads of departments in government that are potential users of the AFI. An online user survey run by the FAO IPC team in Juba in early 2018 showed that some users had difficulty interpreting the maps (FAO, 2018). This was borne out in interviews with users: some did not understand the distinction between different phases, for example between phases 2 and 3, or 3 and 4. Where the IPC AFI has been introduced more recently, for example in Haiti, lack of knowledge and understanding of the IPC and of how to use it has been a more significant factor constraining use and take up of the analysis. Poor communication of the IPC results can exacerbate this, for example in Honduras where there is low sensitivity to the IPC as the map rarely shows phase 3 or above; in the words of one user 'the results don't scare anyone'. Sometimes lack of knowledge and understanding of basic food security concepts is also a constraining factor, for example where food security is equated with food supply. This arose in Mozambique and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo where agricultural production data were taken more seriously by government officers than the IPC's acute food security analysis. In some places visited by the evaluation team, the staff of agencies that are global partners in

the GSP had a limited understanding of food security concepts and of the IPC, particularly if there was an absence of food security programming.

4.6 Extent to which IPC AFI meets information users' needs

Evaluation Question 1.4: To what extent are IPC products of sufficiently high quality to meet the needs of decision makers?

Finding 9. In countries with recurrent humanitarian crises, the IPC AFI is more likely to meet the needs of decision makers within the international humanitarian community.

Finding 10. Inadequate level of disaggregation and lack of information on causes of food insecurity are examples of where it is not meeting users' needs.

70. In countries facing protracted or recurrent humanitarian crises, where the IPC AFI is being carried out more than once a year, there is a sense that it is doing reasonably well in meeting the needs of information users, especially those in the international humanitarian system, although there are many who are close to the IPC process who see how it could be strengthened. In the words of one donor official, the IPC is 'good enough'. In the online survey 80 percent of respondents 'fully agreed' or 'mostly agreed' that the AFI met their needs.

71. Where it is not adequately meeting information needs, this is usually due to the following factors:

- **Inadequate disaggregation in terms of level of analysis:** this emerged in Niger, Mozambique and South Sudan; humanitarian actors expressed their need for information and analysis at a lower administrative level for more precise targeting, for example from state to county level in South Sudan, and from '*departement*' to "*commune*" level in Niger. Whether the IPC can provide more disaggregated analysis, however, depends upon the availability of disaggregated data feeding into it.
- **Users wanting more information on who is in need of assistance (disaggregation by population group), what they need, and on the drivers and causes of food insecurity**, beyond the numbers in need, to promote more appropriate and nuanced programming, and use of the IPC beyond targeting. In other words they want the IPC to become more of a response analysis tool although this is beyond what it was designed for.[18]
- **Rapidly changing context and therefore levels of food insecurity, yet insufficient frequency of the IPC,** which means that the analysis can become quickly outdated.
- **Users wanting similar information to the IPC food security analysis for other sectors such as WASH and health**, with some suggesting that the IPC expand its sectoral remit and scope

[18] Donors in South Sudan had also suggested to Maxwell et al. (2018a: 28) that more response analysis in the IPC would help them make decisions about who, where and what.

4.7 Use of the Acute Malnutrition Scale

Finding 11. The AMN is used mainly at a technical level for programming decisions in-country, and has drawn attention to nutrition issues at the global level. Used by a small number of agencies, it is not yet fulfilling its potential in informing programming decisions, nor in informing policy.

72. As mentioned above, the AMN was very rarely mentioned by users of the acute IPC scales. Malnutrition is recorded as an 'outcome' of the AFI scale whereas the AMN scale identifies the different 'drivers' of malnutrition outside food security (WASH, health, care practices, education, behaviour change etc). For those concerned with interventions addressing malnutrition, such as UNICEF, the AMN is seen as an essential complement to the AFI scale. In some cases levels of malnutrition may be much higher than can be explained by the food insecurity categorization, drawing attention to other causes.

73. The AMN scale is used principally at the technical level by project staff in-country to identify where/which nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive interventions are needed. It has also been influential in the development of the 2017 to 2020 strategy of the Global Nutrition Cluster, in particular identifying nutrition-sensitive interventions (prevention) that can run alongside nutrition-specific (treatment). In this respect the AMN has been effective at identifying the drivers at both the basic and underlying levels which need to be addressed through project and programme interventions. A package of nutrition-sensitive interventions have consequently been piloted in Ethiopia and North East Nigeria. There is little evidence as yet of the AMN scale informing or contributing at the policy level. Significantly, however, the AMN scale has drawn attention to nutrition issues in the last two annual reports on Global Food Crises. The Global Report on Food Crises 2018 explains clearly how important it is to assess chronic and acute malnutrition alongside food insecurity and for each of the country reports provides a 'nutrition snapshot' box alongside the narrative on food insecurity. This is an important development at the global policy level.

74. As with the AFI, users have fed back that a key factor affecting utilization of the AMN is the quality of data available at field level and the data gaps, especially in West Africa.

4.8 Role of GSP in supporting use of the IPC acute scales

Evaluation Question 1.3: To what extent is the support provided by the GSU to countries relevant, timely and useful, and how can it be improved, with the overall aim of facilitating utilization?

Finding 12. At country level, GSU support for technical analysis and consensus building process was appreciated, but there has been little support for communications.

Finding 13. The GSU has supported global initiatives using the IPC acute scales, with varied levels of engagement from partner agencies. As the IPC AFI becomes higher profile, there is and will be a greater need for a more coherent and unified approach.

75. The MTR noted that communications had been poorly resourced in the GSP, that it was difficult for external people to access some of the IPC analyses they require at the global level, and that there had been inadequate support to communications and promotion of the IPC with decision makers at regional and national levels. It recommended a rebalancing of the skillset within the GSU, and that *communications and advocacy skills and capacity should be stepped up.*

76. The following was done in the final two years of the 2014-2018 phase of the GSP:

- The IPC website was revamped and upgraded (although this was apparently a slow and cumbersome process having to follow FAO procedures. The website is still not available in Spanish, a complaint raised in the Central America region).
- Manual Version 3.0 pays greater attention to communication, for example encouraging communications planning at country level, and recommending the TWG includes communications experts.

77. In the next phase of the GSP an entire outcome is dedicated to communication and accessibility of IPC information, and the GSU communications team will be strengthened, from two to four full-time professionals. The proposal mentions communication and dissemination strategies to improve the understanding and therefore uptake of IPC results. There have been early discussions about a proposed global communications working group.

78. However, progress in supporting utilization of the IPC in this first phase of the GSP has been limited. At country level GSU support was appreciated in supporting the technical analysis and breaking deadlocks in the consensus building process during IPC analyses, but there has been little support on the communications side, even for countries where drafting skills within the core IPC team are weak, for example Afghanistan. As mentioned above, decision makers' lack of knowledge and understanding of the IPC AFI has emerged as a constraint. Where the GSU has worked directly with users, for example with DFID in London, to explain and promote the IPC, this appears to have made a difference, but so far these are one-off examples. Often at country level the IPC technical specialists and TWG members did not have a strong understanding nor engagement with decision makers who are actual or potential users of the IPC. The GSP has a key role to play in strengthening TWG capacity in this respect.

79. The increasing demand for, and profile of the IPC AFI at the global level has required the GSP to provide information and to service initiatives like the GRFC as well as donor demands, despite the limited resources for communications in the 2014 to 2018 period. But much of that responsibility has fallen to the GSU, with some inputs from FAO and WFP, for example in discussions and negotiations with the World Bank Famine Action Mechanism (FAM) project. What is less clear is how the global partnership has engaged with the growing demands for the acute IPC scale and the communication implications. As the IPC AFI becomes higher profile, there is and will be a greater need for a coherent and unified approach. Some of the global partners, including the NGOs, have strong communications and advocacy expertise that can be drawn upon. This is mentioned in the 2018 to 2021 proposal, that 'a network of communication specialists

from partner agencies will be established and coordinated at the global level'. There may be valuable learning to be drawn upon for this, from other multi-agency organizations, for example the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) in the United Kingdom.

4.9 Role in early warning

Finding 14. The AFI is not fulfilling an early warning function well compared with its ability to capture the current status of food insecurity.

Finding 15. Within the GSP there are different views about whether it should be playing an early warning role, although this is stated in Manual V3.0 and the majority of GSP stakeholders think it should.

Finding 16. Most users of the IPC rely upon the current situation analysis for their decisions about forthcoming resource allocations, and not the projections. There are technical and communication implications to the AFI stepping up its early warning role.

80. The early warning role of the acute IPC scales is unclear. Even within the IPC Steering Committee and amongst GSU staff there are very different views about whether the IPC is, and should be playing an early warning role. While the majority in the Steering Committee and GSU see this as a core function of the IPC, a minority do not.

81. At the technical level, AFI projections come closest to fulfilling an EW role. But stakeholders, especially technical specialists, have expressed their doubts about how effective and accurate the projections are. Maxwell (2018:2) comments that the 'IPC's… track record for projections is spotty and not nearly as successful as its ability to depict current status'. Reservations about the IPC's technical ability to play an early warning role were expressed by other food security analysts and experts interviewed for the evaluation. The accuracy of the IPC projections have never been tested retrospectively. The AFI is seen by many to be reactive rather than proactive, confirming a situation of acute food insecurity that was already suspected, using data that may be a couple of months old. In the words of one stakeholder, 'the IPC is much too slow to be regarded as an early warning'. For countries where only one or two IPC AFI analyses are carried out per year, it is regarded by some as too infrequent to play an effective early warning role.

82. There is also a communications angle to the IPC's early warning role. Early warning is not currently the principal focus of what is communicated and discussed when the AFI is released. Instead, the focus is analysis of the current situation. If the IPC was to play a more effective early warning role, this would require more pre-emptive communication, by the TWGs at country level as well as by the GSP at global level, to advocate for a timely response when there is early warning of deteriorating acute food insecurity.

83. In terms of how the IPC AFI is actually being used, analysis of the current situation appears to be used more by decision makers than projections. It was the IPC current

status classification that triggered a proportionate response to famine in Somalia in 2011, in Nigeria in 2016 and in South Sudan in 2017, *not* early warning of the likelihood of famine (ibid). Constraints to launching early action in response to early warning have been well-documented, showing there is an inbuilt bias in decision-making towards evidence of what is actually happening rather than what is predicted.[19]

84. The general consensus is that the AFI is not effectively fulfilling an early warning function compared with its ability to capture the current status of food insecurity. In the words of one GSU staff member who believes it should play such a role: "if we hear that IPC is not doing early warning, it means we are not doing it well, because it is at the core of the IPC". Maxwell (2018) goes as far as to say that as the IPC has come to dominate food security analysis, it has done so at the expense of eclipsing early warning.

85. While preserving the important and valued role of the acute scales in providing a snapshot of the current situation, this evaluation concludes that the AFI's early warning role needs to be given much greater emphasis in the coming phase, and especially its ability to project, drawing on the expertise of global partners like FEWS NET. Some analysts question whether the same analytical method and process can both assess the current situation and provide early warning. This should be put to the test in the 2018-2021 phase of the GSP. If it proves unable to fulfil both roles, then it should focus on classification of the current status, and instead build a close and strategic relationship with other early warning providers.

[19] See Buchanan-Smith and Davies (1995), Bailey (2013), and Maxwell and Majid (2016).

5. Use of the IPC – chronic scale

Evaluation Question 1.1: To what extent do decision makers at the global, regional and country level use the IPC for decision-making, and what factors influence this (positively and negatively)?

86. The chronic IPC scale has been carried out in six of the countries visited or covered remotely by this evaluation: the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Honduras, Mozambique, Niger and Pakistan. This section draws on the evaluation findings from those countries. It also draws upon the findings of three DFID-funded case studies, in Bangladesh, the Philippines and Uganda, commissioned to test whether the IPC chronic protocols were providing 'actionable information' for better policy, programming and investment decisions to address the root causes of chronic food insecurity (IPC, 2017), on the GSU's documentation review of use of the CFI and the findings of the online survey. As with Chapter 4, these findings are mostly based on user feedback. Section 5.2 describes use of the chronic IPC scale at country, regional and global levels. How users perceive its potential 'value added' is presented in section 5.3. Section 5.4 captures the factors affecting utilization of CFI, according to user feedback, and section 5.6 explores the role of the GSP in supporting use of the CFI.

5.1 Use of the chronic IPC scale

Finding 17. At country and regional levels there is very limited evidence of use of the CFI results by decision makers, although some stakeholders, including donors, government officers, UN agencies and NGOs, still see the potential.

At country level

87. The key findings of the DFID-funded case studies are the following:

- The IPC chronic scale had been used by government, UN agencies and NGOs in Bangladesh and Philippines at project level, for example to inform proposals and reports, and had been used in research papers, newsletters and needs assessment reports, but there was no evidence that it had informed policies except as background information.
- There was no evidence of any use of the chronic scale in Uganda.
- Users focused most on the population figures generated by the chronic scale rather than the IPC matrix of factors contributing to chronic food insecurity.

88. Stakeholders including government officers, UN agencies and NGOs, did still see significant potential in the CFI informing national and subnational policies, programming and investment plans. But this potential has not yet been realized.

89. The findings from the six additional countries that have carried out the CFI, covered by this evaluation, similarly show very limited use of the chronic scale. See Table 2. Most positively, in Honduras, government considered the CFI to be a useful baseline for new policies, for example for the national policy on food security and nutrition, to help

identify how new policies should be geographically targeted (for example in the Dry Corridor), and to identify critical information gaps.

90. In Haiti, the chronic food insecurity scale was done in 2015 and used by donors, WFP and NGOs to develop a joint programme on social protection, and as background information for the Public Policy on Nutrition and Food Security. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo it has not been used, and in Mozambique, Niger and Pakistan it had not yet been released, and various actors (government, NGO and UN officers) expressed some reservations about the potential usefulness of the CFI and mentioned its political sensitivity. This is further elaborated in section 5.4 below on the factors affecting utilization. In addition, the GSU's review of policy documents show that the CFI has been used to prioritize resilience activities in Burundi in parts of the country in IPC 3 and 4.

Table 4: Roll-out and use of the chronic IPC scale in countries covered by the evaluation

Country	When the chronic scale was carried out	Whether disseminated and when	Evidence of use
Honduras	2017/18 in 10 Departments of the Dry Corridor	2018	As a baseline for policies, and to prioritize areas in the update of the Public Policy and the Nutritional Food Security Strategy To identify information gaps To understand the Dry Corridor crisis To inform new food security projects and proposals
Pakistan	2016-17 in Sindh Province	Not endorsed – reservations about data used in the CFI analysis	None
Mozambique	2017	Not yet – reservations over usefulness	
Haiti	2015	2016	To develop a national programme for social protection (USAID, WFP, CARE, ACF) As background for national food and nutrition security plan, and for prioritization of geographic areas To allocate resources for resilience programming by the EU DEVCO, and for food security and nutrition planning

Democratic Republic of the Congo	2016	2016	The map may be referred to by government officers as background information, but not used in decision-making because level of aggregation (province-level) too high to be useful
Niger	March 2018	Not yet – reservations over usefulness	

At regional and global levels

91. Evidence of use of the chronic scale at regional and global levels is sparse, although through the online survey SICA reported using the CFI to identify the main food and nutrition security problems in El Salvador and Honduras.

5.2 How users of the IPC CFI scale perceive its potential 'value-added'

Finding 18. The (unrealized) potential added value of the CFI includes the collective and consensus-based essence of the IPC, its contribution to monitoring progress against international agreements, as well as deepening the understanding of poverty and complementing the AFI by capturing and explaining trends over time.

92. As there is very limited evidence of how the CFI has yet made a substantial difference to decision-making, this section captures the potential added value of the CFI rather than the actual added value to date.

93. As with the acute IPC scale, the **collective and consensus-based** essence of the IPC CFI was the most frequently cited 'value added': getting technical food security experts around the table to build consensus about the chronically food insecure in terms of where they are located, how many and who they are, and the causes of chronic food insecurity.

94. An additional value added is **the potential to monitor progress on international agreements to reduce hunger**, such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and in particular SDG 2 using the CFI population table, although this is contested.[20] The CFI is expected to orient programming to address key drivers of chronic food insecurity.

95. At country level the potential of the IPC CFI is in **deepening understanding of poverty**, that it is a multi-faceted and complex issue. It shines the spotlight on the chronic food insecurity dimension of poverty.

[20] See IPC (2017), the case studies on use of the CFI which sees the population table as fundamental to monitoring progress towards SDG2. This potential contribution of the CFI was also stressed by DFID. But it is contested by GSU staff who claim the CFI does not have the necessary statistical precision.

96. The CFI is expected to **complement the AFI** by teasing out the dynamics and trends that may persist over time while the AFI provides a snapshot regardless of the underlying and long-term causes and duration.

97. It can also encourage a change in emphasis in food security policies, programming and investment **from sector-based to area-based approaches**, which may enable more effective targeting (IPC, 2017).

5.3 Factors affecting use of the CFI

Finding 19. Limited use of the CFI is due to a number of factors, including an inadequate level of analysis, and political sensitivity if the results show areas of severe chronic food insecurity.

Finding 20. While for the AFI the type of humanitarian response is more straightforward for high phases, the response to CFI high phases is more complex and this affects the use of the results for decision-making.

98. As actual use of the CFI is limited, the following factors affect its *usefulness (i.e. its utility)*, according to feedback from users:

The unit of analysis

99. If this is too high, for example too large an administrative unit, it hampers the usefulness of the CFI. This has been the case in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in Uganda. In Pakistan the CFI was carried out at district level in Sindh Province, a much more useful level of disaggregation as many other surveys and assessments are carried out at a higher geographic level. In Niger the CFI was carried out by classification zones based on a combination of livelihood zones and administrative areas (regions), which is different from the AFI which is carried out by administrative area. This limits the usefulness of the CFI in relation to the AFI.

CFI analysis showing most of the country in the same phase

100. This has happened in Mozambique and also in Niger, where most of the country is painted the same colour on the map. This relates to point (1) above – inadequate disaggregation in the unit of analysis – and has damaged the credibility of the CFI in terms of its utility.

Data quality and availability issues

101. This was an issue in Pakistan, for example, where the CFI analysis only referenced data from one Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) instead of two or three, undermining its credibility with government. Availability of data and poor quality data have been major issues in some countries. For example, this appears to have stalled completion of the CFI in Kenya.

Geographical coverage

102. Where the CFI has been carried out for the whole country, as in the Philippines, it is more likely to be useful to decision makers at national level. Where it only covers part of the country, for example in Bangladesh, its usefulness for national-level policymaking is constrained. The experience in Pakistan, however, indicates how the CFI applied at subnational level, within one province, Sindh province, can be useful to decision makers within that geographic area.

Political sensitivity around the results

103. Whether government endorses the results is a key factor affecting utilization, by government as well as other actors. This, in turn, may be determined by government's willingness to acknowledge the extent of chronic food insecurity in the country, a politically sensitive issue. And this may also delay the release of the CFI: in Zimbabwe, for example, the analysis for the CFI was done in 2016, but it was not released until 2018, partly because of the political sensitivities. This kind of delay hampers the usefulness of the CFI if the results are outdated.

Translating results into recommendations for policymakers

104. This is a challenging step for the technical experts on the TWG involved in the analysis. Related to point 5 above, one stakeholder described how this is political: '*governments don't (necessarily) want data out in the public domain. How can this be addressed in a more politically smart way? How can (decision makers) be incentivized to take decisions*?'

Centralized versus decentralized systems of government

105. The DFID-funded report that consolidates the findings on use of the CFI in Bangladesh, Philippines and Uganda concludes that this is more straightforward in centralized economies where planning and budgeting occur at central level, and may be more challenging in more decentralized economies, although the experience of the CFI in Sindh Province in Pakistan indicates it may still be of use to subnational decision makers where governance is decentralized.

5.4 Extent to which IPC CFI meets information users' needs

Evaluation Question 1.4: To what extent are IPC products of sufficiently high quality to meet the needs of decision makers?

Finding 21. The CFI is not currently meeting the information needs of governments and donors, for example in better understanding the structural causes of food insecurity.

106. Demand for the chronic scale appears to be high as governments in particular, but also other actors including donors and regional organizations (for example in Central America), express their desire to understand the long-term structural causes of food insecurity. But the evidence indicates the CFI is not meeting that demand, for the reasons outlined above, and in some cases because the CFI is simply too difficult to complete.

107. In Kenya, for example, the CFI was being rolled out two years ago when the MTR was carried out. Two years later, in 2018, it has still not been completed, and has therefore not yet met the expectations of government stakeholders who hoped it would inform Kenya's new policy on 'Ending Drought Emergencies' by raising awareness and understanding of chronic food security issues, and that it would draw attention to chronic food insecurity and poverty in some of Kenya's 'high potential' agricultural areas not covered by the AFI (Buchanan-Smith et al, 2017).

108. In Bangladesh, Haiti and the Philippines[21] the CFI has met users' needs in informing project proposals, but in the other countries reviewed it has not provided the depth required for many programming decisions: for example, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Mozambique and Niger, users fed back that it did not provide sufficient in-depth information on chronically food insecure areas and groups.

109. At the global level, DFID has been one of the strongest advocates of the CFI, seeing its potential in addressing humanitarian-development nexus challenges on the ground, its potential to monitor SDG 2, to inform development resource allocation, and to provide collective analysis to inform resilience programming. But it is still far from achieving this

110. The case study synthesis (IPC, 2017) made the following recommendations to improve the IPC CFI and its usefulness:

- generate food security information for lower administrative levels;
- widen food insecurity analysis to cover all districts/provinces (as appropriate) of the country;
- generate more quantifiable information on the root causes of chronic food insecurity;
- generate gender-disaggregated food security information;
- generate food security information specifically for urban households.

5.5 Role of the GSP in supporting use of the CFI

Evaluation Question 1.3: To what extent is the support provided by the GSU to countries relevant, timely and useful, and how can it be improved, with the overall aim of facilitating utilization?

Finding 22. The GSP supported roll-out of the CFI at country level, usually in response to demand from the respective TWG and after a rapid and informal assessment of the appropriateness of the CFI to that country. This was not documented and there was little engagement with potential users and decision makers.

[21] See IPC (2017)

Finding 23. Once the CFI has been completed, there has been limited follow-up to support use and understand the obstacles.

111. The GSU has played an important role in raising awareness of the CFI at country level, and an essential role in supporting roll-out at country level. When a request comes from the TWG at country level, the GSU decides whether it is appropriate for that country. At the moment this assessment is done somewhat informally by a staff member from the GSU at headquarters level and the respective RC, against an unwritten checklist:

- How relevant is the CFI to that country?
- What is the value added compared with existing tools?
- Is it feasible in terms of data availability?
- How does this fit within the GSU's priorities, taking account of their limited capacity?

112. This is principally a technical assessment, it is not a formal feasibility study, there is limited engagement with decision makers as future users of the CFI, and it is not documented.

113. If the decision is made to go ahead with the chronic scale, GSU staff are likely to provide considerable input, for example ensuring analysts are hired (where needed), searching for relevant data and preparing it, providing training in-country, uploading the data into ISS and supporting the analysis process. This can be very demanding on GSU staff member time, as in Mozambique.

114. Follow-up support from the GSU once the CFI has been completed has been more variable. While it was not provided in Mozambique, it was provided in Cambodia by the GSU regional team where government officers were reported to be struggling to apply the CFI: a document that showed how other countries had used the IPC was shared with them.

115. The heavy demands of the CFI on GSU staff time mean that they have, in practice, pulled back from supporting its roll-out in the last couple of years, for example in other countries in Southern Africa. The substantial investment in GSP resources in each CFI, and the poor record so far in utilization implies that a rather different approach is needed, including a thorough and formal feasibility study which should be documented. The feasibility study should consult and involve high-level decision makers to better understand what they need, to assess whether the CFI can meet their needs (or whether an alternative approach is better-suited), and to identify how the timing of the CFI can coordinate with key decision-making opportunities. There needs to be much more support in the follow-up phase, not only to communicate and disseminate the results, but importantly to engage with policymakers to demonstrate their relevance and how they can be used. More fundamentally, it raises the question of whether the GSU has the capacity to continue supporting the CFI as the demands for, and challenges of the AFI increase. And it begs the question about whether more could be done with a time series of acute scales, through trend analysis.

6. Quality

Evaluation Question 1.4: To what extent are IPC products of sufficiently high quality to meet the needs of decision makers?

116. This section relates to the acute IPC scales, and especially to the AFI. It explores in greater depth issues of data quality and the quality of the IPC analysis process. It draws on the country visits, interviews with key informants who are technical specialists (rather than users, whose feedback is presented in Chapter 4 above) and the findings of the recently published Feinstein reports on the constraints and complexities of information and analysis in famine-affected countries. The spectre of famine in the last two years means that both data quality and quality of the IPC analysis process have, appropriately, been subject to much greater scrutiny. The (ongoing) Feinstein analysis plays a key role in that process of scrutinization.

6.1 Data quality

Finding 24. In countries where acute food insecurity persists, there has been greater investment in data collection and a trend towards large quantitative surveys. There are concerns in some countries about the quality of data they produce.

Finding 25. In countries where there may be occasional pockets of acute food insecurity, data availability is an issue due to resource and capacity limitations.

117. As the MTR observed, the quality of IPC analyses can only be as good as the data on which they are based, recognizing the limitations of both data availability and reliability in many contexts. While it is neither the IPC's role, nor the GSP's role to engage in data collection, the MTR did *recommend the GSP carry out a strategic review of data feeding into the IPC analysis at national level, and provide technical advisory support to the respective TWGs to address specific gaps.* Since then GSU staff report getting more involved in data availability issues and paying attention to what is going into the IPC analysis. There are examples of how the IPC may have actually encouraged greater investment in data collection in some countries, usually those with consistently high levels of food insecurity, for example South Sudan. 'Plausibility checks' have been introduced for nutrition data.

118. Nevertheless, data issues persist. This evaluation has revealed how different issues arise for different contexts, specifically:

(1) Countries where acute food insecurity persists and/or there is protracted humanitarian crisis. These are the countries that have attracted greatest attention in the last couple of years.
(2) Countries where there may be occasional pockets of acute food insecurity, but it is not widespread, persistent, nor reaching phase 4 or 5.

119. The first category includes countries such as Afghanistan and South Sudan, as well as Burkina Faso and Niger in West Africa. In these countries there has been considerable

investment in data collection. In South Sudan, for example, around USD 1 million is spent on each round of the Food Security and Nutrition Monitoring System (FSNMS). In the latest round in 2018 it covered over 7 000 households. This is indicative of a trend towards large quantitative surveys that have now become the major source of information for IPC AFI analyses. In countries like Afghanistan and South Sudan these are led by WFP. In West African countries such as Burkina Faso and Niger they are more likely to be led by government, with support and resources from WFP, FAO and CILSS. This is also the case in Southern Africa, for example Mozambique. Quality concerns about these large quantitative surveys include:[22] whether there is adequate training for enumerators, whether the automated process of data collection into tablets is a constraint to probing and cross-checking what is behind an answer, and whether there is sufficient quality control in the process. More fundamentally there are data gaps:

- Geographically for 'hard to reach' areas, that are often the most food insecure.
- By topic, including mortality data, nutrition data, population data (taking account of outflows to neighbouring countries) and data on displacement. The lack of these data can make it difficult to make clear accurate statements about the current status of food insecurity.

120. The second category includes countries such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Honduras and Pakistan. Resources for data collection in these countries are sparse, with the following consequences:

- Data collection is infrequent, with the consequence that out-of-date data is fed into the IPC analysis, for example in Haiti, Honduras and Pakistan.[23]
- There may be major data gaps, for example in Haiti.
- Sample sizes are very small. (This was also an issue for nutrition assessments in Mozambique. In October 2018 the sample size was considered too small for the data to be used in the AMN, apparently a consequence of inadequate resources).
- Data collection and analysis is done at too high a level of aggregation to be useful, as mentioned above in the case of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and also in Honduras.

121. Whether these data quality issues are being recognized and addressed at country level varies widely. (A particular issue arising in the two CILSS countries visited by the evaluation team is that the CH must be prepared according to a common timetable, which means that data collection exercises have to fit with that timetable, but sometimes the data may not be available in time, or there is no time to clean it ready for the CH analysis).

122. For the AMN scale, users would like to see the GSP/GSU play a more significant role in promoting dialogue across the global partnership on improving data quality and advocating to partners to have data information gaps filled.

[22] See Maxwell et al (2018a); Maxwell et al (2018b)/

[23] This is reported to be a widespread problem across many Asian countries implementing the IPC, with the exception of Afghanistan.

6.2 Quality of the IPC analysis process

Finding 26. Where IPC analyses are relying principally on one large quantitative survey, they lose the 'value added' of convergence of evidence from a range of sources, including qualitative.

Finding 27. More information on the data sources used for each IPC analysis, as well as on the participants in the analysis workshop, would improve the transparency of the analysis process, and hence trust by users.

Finding 28. Consensus building is one of the most valued yet challenging dimensions of the IPC analysis. While the definition of consensus has been clarified in the new Manual (3.0), how consensus should be reached has not, amidst concerns about how political compromise may affect the results.

Finding 29. Although population estimates are the most influential data of the IPC, how they are calculated and their accuracy is unclear. They have never been tested retrospectively.

What data counts?

123. As large-scale quantitative surveys have become the key source of data on which many IPC AFIs depend, and as many decision makers have a bias towards quantitative data as being more reliable, researchers and key informants have expressed concern about the limited attention paid to qualitative data. As Maxwell et al. (2018a: 25) state in relation to South Sudan:

'*The perception is that the IPC process is inflexible, that it prioritizes quantitative indicators and thresholds, and that it is difficult for the TWG to deal with in-depth reporting on conditions where there are no numbers. However, a rapidly changing context, access constraints, and the limited capacity of agencies to collect core indicators of the quality required by the process often mean that some contexts simply cannot be analysed very well. There is no systematic means of incorporating qualitative/contextual data, even if it could add depth to the analysis*'.

124. The more the IPC depends upon one major quantitative survey, the less it fulfils the 'value added' of convergence of evidence from a range of sources. A challenge for the GSP in the next phase is to explore how more qualitative data can be fed into, and enrich the analysis, especially for the AFI.

125. Manual V3.0 usefully gives much more guidance than V2.0 on screening data to feed into the IPC analysis, based on reliability. Although it does mention qualitative methods, it appears to be more oriented towards quantitative surveys. An important role for the GSU will be ensuring that such screening does not discourage the inclusion of data from sound qualitative methods that may be particularly insightful to the IPC analysis.

Transparency over data sources

126. There are also calls for greater transparency over data sources feeding into the IPC. This has been a particular issue where FEWS NET has questioned the accuracy of the IPC analysis, sometimes causing tension within the TWG and also with the GSU. In South Sudan the FSNMS data feeding into the IPC has been made publicly available for the first time in September 2018. This precedent is important, not only to bolster the credibility of the IPC analysis where the data are robust, but also to stimulate discussion and ideas about how to improve the reliability of the data where it does not stand up to scrutiny. The list of data sources is currently unclear when IPC results are published. Although the manual V3.0 now suggests adding a paragraph on data sources, this is not obligatory. Such information would however contribute to improving the transparency of the analysis process.

Who participates in IPC analysis processes?

127. Inadequate screening of who participates in the IPC analysis process was raised in the MTR. In some countries this appears to have improved. In South Sudan, for example, the coordinator of the Food Security Cluster has informally played a screening role, partly to ensure that those who participate have assessments and information to offer, and also to promote the participation of national NGOs.

128. Nevertheless, there is a perception in some countries that the main participants are members of NGOs and UN agencies most involved the humanitarian response, where there may be vested organizational interests in demonstrating greater severity of food insecurity. In one country visited for the evaluation this was actually cited as a reason why some NGOs avoided the IPC analysis process, so they would not be associated with perceived exaggeration of the results. While it is inevitable that agencies involved in the humanitarian response will also be the source of data and assessments feeding into the IPC analysis, it has been important to involve actors such as REACH, which only collect data, as has happened in the countries where they operate.

129. According to some key informants there are simply too many people involved in the IPC analysis process, another reason for tighter screening. But others, including a key user of the AFI, commented that there are too few agencies participating,[24] and thus some key information may be missed.

130. All of this implies greater attention to who participates in the IPC analysis, and to encourage the engagement of key actors known to have good data and insights. Manual V3.0 moves in this direction. Whereas V2.0 did not provide any guidance on this, V3.0 describes the 'Analysis Team', stresses the importance of an inclusive environment, the need for diversity and a range of sectoral expertise, and for the first time introduces an 'IPC Analysis Team Composition Matrix'. This is an important contribution. There is currently no requirement to publish the list of those who have contributed, with the IPC results, but this would be another important step to increase

[24] This is a particular concern amongst some users of the Somalia IPC.

the transparency of the process, (as long as there are no security risks for the individuals concerned, from doing so).

Consensus building

131. Consensus building is key to the IPC analysis process, and to the sense of collective analysis valued by users, described above. But it can also be one of the most challenging aspects of the IPC analysis, causing concern amongst some users. While it is meant to be a technical consensus based on data and evidence, feedback from those involved at country level indicate that it can end up as haggling and political compromise where powerful participants (usually from government or from UN agencies)[25] are able to influence the analysis according to vested interests. This runs counter to the technical rigour the IPC espouses, regarded by some as its added value.

132. The challenge of consensus building and addressing bias is not new: it was raised by TANGO in 2015 and by the MTR, but it clearly persists.

133. Manual V3.0 clarifies what is meant by consensus, which was absent from Manual V2.0: 'Consensus does not necessarily imply unanimity, as some disagreement or dissent is typical. Nevertheless, consensus should leave all parties in a better position than when they started, thus adding to the trust and credibility of all parties among themselves and in the public'.

134. But it does not give further guidance on reaching consensus, instead saying this is the responsibility of the TWG leadership and facilitators to define the ground rules and to agree how decisions will be made, for example based on full consensus (which implies unanimity), a majority view, and determining how minority views will be documented and communicated.

135. Effective facilitation of the IPC is critical. Key informants have raised two issues regarding facilitation:

- In some countries the facilitator is too junior, and therefore put in a difficult position to facilitate consensus.
- In some cases the facilitator has not been neutral, and has overly influenced the vetting and consensus building process, for example where a government officer has played this role and has closed down discussions of severe food insecurity.

136. Manual V3.0 emphasizes the importance of a qualified facilitator but does not provide criteria or guidance on this.

137. The varied ways in which consensus is currently reached in different countries and by different TWGs implies this should be an area of focus for the GSP in the next phase,

[25] This evaluation is aware of particular cases in different countries where technical government officers involved in the IPC have been subject to pressure from more senior decision makers to revise the severity of food insecurity and/or population numbers in different phases, downwards.

tracking how consensus is built and decisions made, and documenting best (and worst) practice, also of the facilitation.

138. Where the IPC is contentious, in terms of the quality of the process and/or the outcomes it reveals, a number of interviewees have commented on the need for more senior people to be involved from the participating organizations, and the need for more senior leadership, for example in South Sudan. Because the analysis process is a lengthy one, taking two weeks or more, senior staff tend not to attend all of it, or for some, any of it. In the words of one technical officer in South Sudan: 'don't leave it to us'. As the IPC becomes more influential, with an associated increase in responsibility for accuracy and reliability, this is a key message for participating agencies.

Analytical process

139. Maxwell (2018) has commented on the IPC's emphasis on outcomes, which contributes to its strength in assessing current status, but means it is less adept at analysing and presenting drivers and causal factors. In the evaluation this was raised as a concern in both South Sudan and in Afghanistan where conflict is a major causal factor, and may weaken the IPC's role in early warning, and was raised by other technical specialists.

140. Many stakeholders interviewed for this evaluation who participate in the IPC analysis process described how the first few days are spent laboriously entering data into the worksheets, with the consequence that the crucial analysis process can be very rushed. In some countries efforts are now being made to complete the worksheets in advance, but this depends upon data being available before all participants gather.

Population estimates

141. These are some of the most influential data in the IPC, directly informing resource allocation and targeting decisions. Yet they are also some of the most questioned data by users and by close observers of the IPC.

142. Concern about the IPC's '20 percent rule' was voiced in different countries, whereby areas that are sparsely populated may be classified in a higher phase than areas that are densely populated, although in the latter there may be a larger absolute number facing acute food insecurity, but it does not represent 20 percent of the population. This is a fundamental methodological issue.

143. Complaints about lack of clarity in how population estimates are calculated has been taken up in Manual V3.0 which includes a paragraph and table on the method, although it is not straightforward so may only be pursued and understood by technical experts. V3.0 does not mention the availability of reliable census data although this has been an issue in some countries such as Afghanistan.

144. Perhaps more importantly, the classification of different areas and population estimates have not been put to the test retrospectively to assess their accuracy.

Treatment of humanitarian assistance

145. An innovation in Manual V3.0 is to include in the AFI classification consideration of the current impact of humanitarian food assistance. For example, if the classification would be at least one phase worse without humanitarian food assistance, an "!" should be added to the map. This has been promoted by actors keen to show the impact of humanitarian assistance. V2.0 provided guidance on the treatment of humanitarian assistance for projected analyses while V3.0 provides more detailed guidance on this for current status analysis.

146. This, however, has proven to be highly controversial. It was introduced into the South Sudan AFI in 2018 where it caused much confusion. Some donors who are key users of the IPC have expressed their concern about the assumptions on which these modified classifications are based, for example the assumption that humanitarian assistance reaches those in need in conflict contexts where there may be issues of diversion, and that it masks underlying trends.

6.3 Famine classification

Finding 30. The IPC's methods for analysing and declaring famine have come under scrutiny from researchers concerned about its inability to capture magnitude and longevity. The data requirements for famine declaration are also contentious.

Finding 31. Ongoing research, including retrospective analysis, is key to strengthen the IPC's analysis of famine. The GSP should be proactively involved.

147. The current role of the IPC in warning of, and declaring famine (as described in section 4.4 above) brings with it a great deal of responsibility. There has been much discussion and reflection about the data requirements for famine classification as it is usually conflict-related and associated with lack of access and therefore of data. The Famine Guidance Note, prepared by the GSP, has gone through a number of iterations. Manual V3.0 now provides guidance for two situations: 'famine' and 'famine likely'. For 'famine' the criteria remains the same as in Manual 2.0; 'famine likely' relaxes the data reliability criteria and data collection methods. This is particularly important for areas where access is constrained and key data are missing, to avoid the risk of a false negative. This is an important adaptation based on the experience of the IPC AFI in famine-affected countries in the last couple of years.

148. Declaration of 'famine', or 'famine likely' depends upon crossing thresholds for three sets of indicators, for food security, malnutrition and mortality. The latter, mortality, has been a particular challenge, first to ensure the data is available, especially from areas that are hard to reach, and second because of the distinction currently made between mortality due to food insecurity and mortality due to trauma, more directly related to conflict. These issues have been thrown into sharp focus in South Sudan in

the last couple of years,[26] triggering an important debate about how mortality should be treated in IPC analysis and especially for phase 5 (Maxwell, 2018a). This is a critical issue and an important debate for the GSP to engage with in the next phase.[27]

149. Researchers are concerned about the inability of this method to capture magnitude and longevity of famine: thus, famine (phase 5) may be declared for a relatively small population for a short period of time, diverting attention and resources to that population, but the larger numbers of people experiencing phases 3 or 4 over substantial periods of time may mean that the number of people dying from causes associated with food insecurity are actually higher for those geographical areas than for the phase 5-designated area.[28] This is another key issue that the GSP must engage with, in the next phase, to ensure that the IPC continues to evolve and adapt according to the learning and evidence available.

150. The GSP should also be proactive in contributing to the evidence, for example through commissioning and/or facilitating retrospective research to determine what actually happened in phase 5-designated areas, and to better understand the impact of prolonged periods of crisis and emergency food insecurity (phases 3 and 4), and their implications for IPC analysis and recommendations.

6.4 Communicating reliability of IPC analysis to decision makers

Finding 32. Communicating the limitations and therefore reliability of the IPC analysis, as raised in the MTR, requires attention to maintain the credibility of the IPC.

151. To ensure IPC users are better informed about the quality of IPC analysis they are using, the MTR *recommended that the GSP explore how different categories and expectations of IPC quality, according to the context, can best be communicated to users of the IPC, to accompany the IPC analysis (and specifically the maps).* This recommendation was accorded 'medium priority' by the Steering Committee. While there is no evidence that it has been adopted and included in the IPC analysis reports at country level, Manual V3.0 does contain a new provision, that the TWG should 'detail the analysis process, include a list of main data sources used and a statement on evidence reliability', and should 'identify limitations of the analysis, including technical and process challenges, such as evidence gaps, institutional arrangements, and participation'. This is important to maintain the credibility of the IPC, acknowledging data gaps and quality issues rather than have them exposed by researchers and critics external to the IPC. At least one donor interviewed for the evaluation said they would value this information about quality and reliability as a steer to engage partners in improving data collection.

[26] See Checci et al. (2018), on crisis-related mortality in South Sudan between end of 2013 and early 2018, showing that a high proportion of deaths was due to violence.

[27] This should also be informed by current discussions about starvation as a war crime, which may have implications for the role of the IPC as the de facto authority declaring famine (de Waal, 2018).

[28] This issue was raised by a number of key informants interviewed for this evaluation, with knowledge and expertise of famine and the metrics. It has also been raised by de Waal (2018).

152. Supporting and ensuring that TWGs follow this provision in the communication template will be an important role for the GSU.

6.5 GSP and quality assurance

153. The MTR concluded that quality assurance must remain a high priority for the GSP, and *recommended that quality review processes for the IPC acute scales should be adapted to be more persuasive, more comprehensive, more inclusive, more accessible and more transparent.*

154. In the intervening years the GSU has adapted its approach to quality assurance. Quality assurance is now centred around three main components: capacity development (see section 7.2 below), technical support and quality assurance resources and procedures.

155. Much greater emphasis is now given to real-time technical support and less to formal quality reviews (real time or retroactive). The GSU now aims to anticipate issues in advance, and to provide support for the whole IPC AFI process where that is deemed necessary, from preparation of the data through the analysis process to its conclusion.

156. The recent Yemen AFI is an example of this approach in practice. Higher-profile countries, where there is severe food insecurity or famine, are prioritized, and/or countries where the AFI analysis may have gone off-track. For example, some GSU Regional Coordinators prioritize engagement with countries that may otherwise deviate from the IPC protocols. Considering the challenges of the analysis process outlined above, this approach is probably more effective in addressing issues as they come up. GSU staff believe it has contributed to improved quality of the IPC analysis process.

157. Real-time quality reviews (RTQR) are still carried out occasionally (although there seem to have been fewer than in the 2014 to 2016 period), especially when there is a breakdown in technical consensus.[29] These are usually requested by the TWG, and in most cases appear to have been requested specifically by FEWS NET.

158. As an example, an RTQR was requested and carried out in South Sudan of the AFI analysis in September 2017 because FEWS NET and the rest of the TWG could not reach agreement on the projected classification of five counties, between phases 3 and 4. The RTQR usefully contrasted the two analyses, one done by FEWS NET and one collectively led the TWG, identifying the different sets of indicators and assumptions feeding into each. Because these were assumptions about the coming months,[30] the RTQR concluded both were valid and FEWS NET's IPC compatible analysis and projections were published as a minority report alongside the TWG's IPC analysis. The opportunity for learning from this divergence of projections, however, does not appear

[29] In Manual V3.0 this is clarified as a breakdown in technical consensus regarding classification of areas in level 4.

[30] The differences related to the different projected contribution of the harvest, and of conflict, to food security.

to have been grasped. Retrospective analysis of which set of assumptions and projections proved to be more accurate could have been insightful.

159. A few retroactive quality reviews (RQRs) have been carried out, for example of the AFI in Somalia and in Haiti, both in 2018. These are long and intensive processes, in the case of Haiti taking five months and involving five people (the Somalia RQR has taken even longer and has not yet been concluded). These must also be requested by the respective TWG, although in practice the TWG may be encouraged by the GSU to make the request if there appear to be pressing quality issues. The RQR is a more in-depth evaluative process, during which the review team also talks to decision makers about use of the IPC. GSU staff find these exercises particularly insightful, and will follow-up with a tailored training according to the findings of the RQR.

160. The TWG has been encouraged to carry out a self-assessment after completing each IPC analysis. This is given greater weight in Manual V3.0: it has become mandatory, there is more precise guidance on how to do it, and it must be submitted to the GSU once completed. External quality review processes are now regarded as an exception, to be activated as a 'last resort action'.

161. As quality is the main concern of many users of the IPC acute scales, quality assurance must continue to be a high priority for the GSP. The range and type of quality assurance mechanisms have evolved somewhat organically. Although they are well summarized in the table "**Overview of Tools and Procedures for IPC Quality Assurance",** shared by the GSU with the evaluation team, some GSP stakeholders were still unclear about the range of mechanisms available and when they are applied.

162. The GSP is trying to strike a delicate balance between playing a constructive role of technical support during the analysis process, respecting country-level ownership, and playing the role of guardian of the IPC as a global standard and thus ensuring, even enforcing quality standards. The latter requires more of a focus on adherence to protocols than an assessment of the accuracy of results. A thorough analysis/review of the most effective approach to quality assurance was beyond the scope of this evaluation, but should be a topic for the MTR of the next phase of the GSP.

7. Institutionalization

Evaluation Question 2.1: How effective and appropriate is the strategy and approach to institutionalization at global, regional and country level?

7.1 Strategy and approach to institutionalization

Finding 33. While the inappropriateness of a one-size-fits-all approach to institutionalization may be generally accepted within the GSP, there is a continued lack of clarity about what institutionalization means, and the strategy to achieve it in different contexts.

Finding 34. Government is rarely the principal user of the IPC, and in most countries visited interviewees were clear that if external funding stopped, the IPC would not continue.

At country level

163. Institutionalization of the IPC at country level has been a core aim of the GSP with the objective of embedding IPC processes within government institutions (including government chairmanship of the TWG), and national government eventually taking over the costs of IPC analyses.[31] This approach to institutionalization has centred on the AFI. Countries implementing the IPC are classified according to one of three stages: 'consolidation', 'introduction', or 'potential new countries'.

164. The MTR exposed the inappropriateness of this 'one-size-fits-all' approach to institutionalization, and *recommended a revised model and strategy that differentiated between three different contexts:*

1) countries where government is party to the conflict and handing over the IPC to government is neither feasible nor desirable;
2) countries where there is greater stability but weak institutional frameworks for food security, and government should be in the driving seat;
3) *countries where there is greater stability and strong institutional frameworks and political commitment to addressing food security, and government should be in the driving seat.*

165. In response to the MTR the Steering Committee accepted that targets for consolidation and institutionalization should be revised down, but reiterated that 'institutionalization should still be pursued whenever and wherever there is an opportunity… (and that) host governments should still do their best to support IPC from their own resources'.

166. This implies the basic model of institutionalization has not changed. Indeed little progress has been made in revising the strategy on institutionalization. Instead this has been pushed forward into the next phase of the GSP. Outcome 3 of the 2018 to 2021

[31] See 'IPC Global Strategic Programme (2014-2018): Status of Country IPC Institutionalization and Exit Strategy for External Support'.

proposal commits the GSU to 'conduct strategic missions to promote effective governance structures at regional and country level', and suggests that 'complementary bodies' may be introduced in addition to the TWG.[32] A new position has been introduced into the GSU, the 'Country Support Coordinator', to take this agenda forward.

167. On the one hand this opens up 'institutionalization' to a pragmatic country-by-country approach favoured by the GSU, and Manual V3.0 includes some modification to the original vision of institutionalization by saying that IPC processes should be demand-driven by government 'where feasible'. But this also risks a lack of coherence and varying objectives. In the words of one key informant at the global level: 'there are no clear guideposts' on institutionalization; this lack of clarity on what it means and how to achieve it was evident in interviews with regional GSU staff.

168. The consequences of the original approach to institutionalization for countries in category 1) – where government is party to the conflict that is a major cause of acute food insecurity – have become increasingly evident, for example when government is reluctant to admit the severity of food insecurity. As Maxwell et al. (2018a) conclude, evidence is part of the political domain in conflict crises. If government controls the IPC process, in accordance with the original vision of institutionalization, this compromises the technical independence of the IPC. It exposes the incompatibility of the two IPC objectives, of a locally-owned, government-led technical consensus, and of an independent, reliable and objective analysis (ibid).

169. In countries in categories 2) and 3), such as Mozambique and Honduras respectively, responsibility for the IPC is usually well-embedded in government. In Mozambique this is in SETSAN, the government department responsible for food insecurity which has a strong sense of ownership of the IPC. In Honduras this is within UTSAN, the Technical Unit for Food and Nutrition Security.

170. However, as previously noted in the MTR, the objective of government budgeting and paying for the whole IPC analysis is a long way off. The GSU carried out a 'Local Cost Sharing and Contributions' analysis in June 2017[33] for all countries running IPC analyses in which the GSP was engaged/providing support. This showed that governments were covering a maximum of 6 percent of the costs of IPC activities at country level, mostly for roll-out of the IPC CFI. All other costs were covered by donor funding. The GSP covered almost all the costs of IPC analysis in around 60 percent of countries doing IPC. Donor funds sourced in-country made a contribution in around 40 percent of countries doing IPC, mostly for the acute scales.[34] It is worth noting that even in West Africa, where there has been substantial progress in institutionalizing the CH within the

[32] See IPC Global Strategic Programme (2018 to 2021) Proposal.

[33] 'Local Cost Sharing and Contributions Report. Snapshot. June 2017'.

[34] In response, the GSP recommended that a work plan and budget plan should be developed in consultation with each country requesting IPC support at the beginning of the year, and the GSU should continue to monitor the level of contributions received, by setting up a regular co-funding monitoring mechanism.

respective regional organization and at national level in many countries, data collection and analysis is still partly funded by donors.

171. The MTR (2017: 33) noted that: '*As long as… donors have a vested interest in the effective functioning of the IPC, there is a strong case to be made for co-funding of the IPC at national level, between government and international actors*'. The findings of this evaluation, that international agencies and especially donor governments are usually the principal users of the IPC acute scales, reinforce this point. While the current strategy for institutionalization is government ownership and eventually government funding, government is rarely the principal user of the IPC, even in category 2 countries.

172. All of this implies the need to rethink the institutionalization strategy and approach. While the approach may need to be adapted to each country context, it does need to be guided by some broad principles and objectives. Based on the experience and learning to date, this should address the following:

- How can governance of the IPC at country level better reflect partnership and the collective approach that underpins IPC analysis, especially for category 1 countries where the AFI has a key role to play in informing decision-making within the humanitarian sector? How can this promote technically rigorous and objective analysis? What might this mean for co-chairing the TWG?
- How could the increasingly important role of the food security cluster in the IPC process (representing different agencies involved in food security assessments and data collection) be reflected in the IPC governance arrangements at country level?
- How could the approach to cost-sharing better reflect usership of the IPC amongst different groups of stakeholders while still encouraging government to make a financial contribution to the IPC analysis?
- What criteria could be applied to differentiate between country contexts (taking the three categories proposed in the MTR as the starting point), and therefore to guide a differentiated approach to institutionalization?
- GSU staff talk of 'country ownership with accountability' for the IPC. In particular, what does the accountability dimension mean for the GSP and for using the IPC label?

173. Once this is clear, the immediate task will be adapting the IPC governance structure in category 1 countries to reflect the revised objectives of institutionalization.

At regional level

174. Institutionalizing the IPC at regional level means embedding the IPC within the respective regional authority, and being clear what role they should play. This is where a case-by-case approach is appropriate, according to the regional mandate and institutional framework of each different authority which vary widely. Manual V3.0 briefly outlines the role of regional IPC working groups as: supporting funding, implementation and institutionalization of IPC at country level; and dissemination of IPC results and advocacy at regional level, in close collaboration with the IPC Regional Coordinators and trainers.

175. In the Central America region, the IPC has been promoted by the European Union-funded programme PROGRESAN (Programme of Food Security and Nutrition Information Systems in the SICA region) under the regional organization, SICA, which has also set-up a regional TWG and an IPC regional Steering Committee. However, differences of view about what 'ownership of the IPC' means, between the regional TWG and PROGRESAN has been a source of tension and has weakened the benefits of regional leadership in supporting the IPC at national level. When PROGRESAN funding ends in 2019 it is unlikely that SICA will be able to continue playing much of a regional leadership role. The impact this will have at country level depends upon the progress made in building sustainable capacity at national level.

176. IGAD has the potential to play a more significant role in supporting the IPC and this has long been an objective of the GSP in East Africa. IGAD's chairmanship of the Regional Food Security and Nutrition Working Group (FSNWG) by an experienced IPC practitioner is a positive step. There is an IPC subgroup to the FSNWG which regularly reports on IPC analyses for countries in the region. The FSNWG is currently mainly engaged in communicating IPC results, for example producing a statement on food security and nutrition in the region based on the IPC AFI and AMN, and issuing an alert if the AFI for any country shows alarming levels of acute food insecurity, as has happened in South Sudan. Apart from this, IGAD's role in promoting and supporting the IPC within the region has been quite limited, although it is credited with recently promoting adoption of the IPC by the government of Ethiopia. Potential roles for IGAD to play, identified by stakeholders in the region, include:

- Playing a role as objective participant and arbiter in contentious country-level IPC AFI analysis workshops, encouraging the respective government to respect the technical independence of the IPC analysis and to publish the results.
- Eventually coordinating capacity building and technical support to countries in the region, increasingly taking over this role from the GSU.

177. In Southern Africa, the SADC regional authority has a longer history of working with Vulnerability Assessments and Analysis (VAA), and has now incorporated the IPC into the VAA. IPC results are regularly reported at the regional FSNWG (chaired by the GSU Regional Coordinator) and at the Regional Inter-Agency Standing Committee, chaired by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), to which the GSU's Regional Coordinator presents IPC findings.

178. A major challenge to institutionalization of the IPC within both IGAD and SADC is to move beyond time-bound, externally-funded projects that support the IPC, to embedding it within more enduring institutional frameworks. This point was highlighted by the MTR, at country as well as regional levels. Given the very different involvement and mandate of each regional authority, a tailor-made strategy for supporting institutionalization in each region should be designed in the next phase of the GSP, in consultation and collaboration with the respective regional authority, defining the role they can play and how to achieve it. As much as possible this should be based on providing technical support to a political initiative and commitment or else it will not work.

7.2 Capacity development and institutionalization

Finding 35. Capacity development has been a large part of the GSU's work, especially for the regional teams, generating positive feedback.

Finding 36. As demand for capacity development grows exponentially, a more sustainable strategy for meeting this demand must be found.

Finding 37. The focus for capacity development so far has been technical. There is a growing need to engage with decision makers to ensure they understand the IPC results and how to use them.

179. Capacity development by the GSP has been key to institutionalization and, as mentioned above, is now part of the quality assurance strategy (in the proposal for the next phase of the GSP, capacity development sits within Outcome 1 – improved quality of IPC outputs). Capacity development has been a major activity for GSU staff over the last four years, mostly focused on training IPC analysts as well as providing support to the analysis process itself.

180. Stakeholders at country-level (for example, TWG members) have mostly fed back positively about the GSU's role and responsiveness in this respect. Although large numbers have been trained in all regions, the need and demand for capacity development does not decrease. This is partly because of the high turnover of agency and government staff involved in IPC analysis, partly because of the need for continued refresher training, and also because of the level of knowledge and expertise required to lead IPC analyses. The need for experienced certified Level 2 IPC trainers is high, at regional and country levels, and overall capacity can be badly depleted when just one or two move on.

181. Much of the capacity development work, especially the trainings, fall to the GSU's small regional teams (although supported from GSU headquarters staff), most of which have been under immense pressure during the 2014 to 2018 phase of the GSP to meet the need for capacity development and fulfil other functions. Although there are plans to expand these regional teams in the next phase of the GSP, the question still arises about whether they will be able to meet the continued, indeed growing demand for capacity development. In some regions GSP partner agencies have stepped in to support training. For example FEWS NET has actively supported IPC training in East Africa, as well as more generic training in understanding food security indicators. But the unrelenting requirement for capacity development raises a question about how this need can best be met.

182. Continuing to rely on the regional GSU teams is not sustainable. Efforts are being made to embed IPC training in universities in the regions, for example in Central America and in East Africa (although it was beyond the scope of this evaluation to assess progress made and how effective this has been); this is due to be stepped up in the next phase. The GSU regional team in East Africa planned to create a pool of regional trainers they could draw upon but have not yet succeeded in this aim. The proposal for the next

phase of the GSP appropriately expands the portfolio of capacity development approaches, for example, with a Community of Practitioners and other learning opportunities. The strategy for delivering on this in terms of shared responsibility between the GSU and other global and regional partners, is still to be elaborated. Drawing on the latter and on other regional resources (e.g. other agencies with food security expertise) beyond the GSU regional teams should be explored and expanded further.

183. The focus for capacity development so far has been a technical one. But as evident from section 4, there is also a need to develop the capacity of IPC users and decision makers to better understand the IPC results and how to use them in policymaking as well as in programming. Although there are many reasons why users (donors in particular) may be slow to respond to early warning and evidence of deteriorating food insecurity provided by the IPC AFI (see footnote 16), ensuring they better understand the IPC results may help to encourage a more timely response. Given the current demands on the finite resources of the GSU, capacity development of IPC users may be an important role for GSP partner agencies to take on, for example through the European Union-FAO FIRST programme which provides governments with policy assistance and capacity development support to policy formulation through a network of policy officers and technical experts at country level. So far there has been a surprising lack of engagement between FIRST and the IPC. There is also an important potential role for the Food Security Cluster, as foreseen for the new phase of the GSP. Ways of reaching users could include the provision of webinars and short seminars or trainings on aspects of the IPC analysis, drawing on Manual V3.0.

7.3 IPC and CH relationship

Finding 38. The CH and IPC face similar challenges in producing quality analysis where there are data quality and availability issues, and in communicating their findings. This is an important area for current and future collaboration.

Finding 39. Following through on planned joint activities, as well as closer harmonization between the IPC and CH are key to the future viability of both.

184. Some major donors and users of the CH in West Africa, interviewed for this evaluation, have concerns about the CH that are similar to the issues raised by users of the IPC. These include poor data availability, varied quality of the CH/IPC between countries that is not adequately acknowledged, decision makers finding it difficult to understand and interpret the CH/IPC results, lack of transparency. As the CH and IPC are intrinsically linked to each other, any loss of credibility in one will also affect the other. Weaknesses in one or the other will negatively impact how they can both be used for global level comparisons and analysis.

185. In some areas the GSP appears to be further ahead than CILSS and the CH, for example in quality assurance approaches and in improved communication of the IPC analyses on the GSP website. In the process of institutionalization at country and regional levels,

however, there has been greater progress with the CH. CILSS in West Africa has long been the strongest model of regional governance, overseeing the CH across 17 countries according to a strict timetable, and thus influencing the timing and methods of data collection in each country. The CH informs a regional analysis of acute food insecurity twice a year, is used for regional response planning (including the mobilization of the regional food security stock when needed) and fundraising at regional level, and is the basis for presentations at regional RPCA and PREGEC meetings.[35] There are, thus, important opportunities for cross-learning between the CH and IPC, and also for cross-learning between the respective regional authorities.

186. Overall the relationship between the GSP/IPC and CILSS/CH has gradually strengthened over the years, with GSP and CILSS members sitting on each other's Steering Committees and closer harmonization of the CH and IPC.[36] This has been reinforced by a 'Roadmap' for 2017/18 specifically intended to strengthen CH-IPC collaboration. It indicates where the GSP can support CILSS and CH, for example in developing a certification programme, and exploring how IPC quality review tools can be adapted and used for the CH. It also identifies joint activities, for example the creation of a CH/IPC community of practitioners. Investing resources and following through on the Roadmap and areas of collaboration is important in the next phase of the GSP.

[35] RPCA: Réseau de Prévention des Crises Alimentaires au Sahel et en Afrique de l'Ouest (Food Crises Prevention Network in Sahel and West Africa), PREGEC : Dispositif Régional de Prévention et de Gestion des Crises Alimentaires (Regional Mechanism for Food Crises Prevention and Management).

[36] Staff from CILSS were involved in the Working Group that drafted Manual V3.0, and anticipate using much of that learning and redrafting in the CH manual.

8. Adaptive capacity

Evaluation Question 3.1: To what extent has the IPC GSP learned from implementation, from internal and external reviews, and from the changing external context and adapted its programme activities accordingly, with the overall objective of informing and influencing decision-making?

8.1 Overview of accountability and learning mechanisms

187. The GSP has engaged in a number of learning and review exercises. These fall into three main categories, and include:

Commissioned reviews, mostly carried out at global level

188. Most of these have been commissioned by the GSP and managed by the GSU. They include:

- the strategic Mid-Term Review of the IPC, in 2015/16
- the INFORMED Mid-Term Review in 2017
- a study of the IPC Products and IPC Compatible Products in 2015
- three country case studies of the CFI, accompanied by a consolidated report

Lessons learned workshops/exercises, often at country level

189. These have recently been given greater emphasis by the GSU at country level. Lessons learned exercises at both global and country level include:

- a lessons learned workshop in South Sudan in which the TWG participated in May 2018
- lesson learning exercises after controversial IPC AFI analyses in Afghanistan in 2018 and in Syria
- a lessons learned exercise on IPC learning and certification in 2018
- lesson learning workshop on the integration of the IPC into the vulnerability assessment and analyses of five countries in the Southern African Development Community in 2016
- key Learnings from IPC Quality Reviews and Recommended Actions for the IPC Global Support Unit in 2016
- IPC CFI Analysis Lessons Learned report by the GSU February 2015

Desk-based reviews and surveys, summarizing GSP, and specifically GSU learning, on particular topics:

- Documentation review of use of IPC at country level in 2018
- IPC Analysis Worksheet and Information Support System Review in 2018
- Assessment of the Cross Country Learning Exchange (CCLE) Programme and its added value within the GSP between 2014 and 2018

- Document on lessons learned and metanalysis in Central America and the Carribbean (*Documentación y Sistematización de "Lecciones Aprendidas" y "Metanálisis"*) done in the region with the support of the GSU in 2017

190. In addition, and recently, donor governments have funded independent research studies on information and analysis in famine-affected countries in the last two years in which the IPC features prominently. These have been carried out by the Feinstein International Center in close collaboration with the GSP, and are another valuable and insightful source of reflection, evidence and learning.

8.2 Learning and adaptive capacity

Finding 40. The GSP, and GSU in particular, has developed a culture of reflection and learning, demonstrating high adaptive capacity. The adaptive capacity at country-level is more variable.

Finding 41. Adaptation according to learning and feedback on use of the IPC by decision makers has been weak and deserves much closer attention in the next phase.

191. Earlier sections in this report capture examples of how the GSP has adapted, partly in response to the MTR where many (but not all) recommendations were taken up, and partly in response to feedback and evidence of what is working/not working. These include the change in approach to quality assurance growing out of the experience of quality reviews, revisions on Famine Guidance, and the approach to capacity development which has evolved from one-off training to cross-country exchanges to the proposed development of a 'community of practice' in the next phase.

192. Redrafting the IPC Manual has been a major opportunity to incorporate learning from how the IPC scales have been applied in practice, and to adapt. This was a participative process involving practitioners and academics. Members of the respective regional authorities being part of the Technical Advisory Group has, in turn, encouraged roll-out of the new materials across different regions, from Central America to West Africa. There are many adaptations in V3.0 based on feedback from the field, some of it captured through surveys and from the experience of the Regional Coordinators, as well as input from high-level experts and researchers. Some of the MTR recommendations have also been taken into account. A few of the proposed technical adaptations were tested at field level before finalization in the manual. The 'IPC resources' produced alongside the manual, for example on famine, on the mitigating effects of humanitarian resources, can continue to evolve after publication of the manual as experience and learning unfold.

193. The adaptive capacity at country level is more variable. On the one hand there have been some recent and important lesson learning workshops supported by the GSP, for example the one in South Sudan in May 2018. On the other hand some key informants expressed concern that the IPC has become the 'sacred cow', and is received and used unquestioningly at country level. Lesson learning exercises at national level are now more actively encouraged by the GSU. This is important to foster a reflective and

learning culture. This could be boosted with short accessible publications on good practice in applying the IPC, commissioned and published by the GSP, for example on consensus building as described above. These could promote cross-country learning and be a resource for the Community of Practice to be established in the next phase.

194. In the next phase of the GSP the potential role of artificial intelligence (AI) is being considered (also related to the World Bank FAM project) and other forms of advanced technology for capacity development, to support the proposed community of practice, etc.

195. Where learning has been weakest is on use of the IPC by decision makers. While there are examples of how the GSP has responded to feedback from users, for example in adapting the timing and unit of analysis for the IPC, it has not systematically tracked use of any of the IPC scales over the last four years. This evaluation is the first comprehensive attempt to capture feedback from users and decision makers, complemented by a documentation review completed by the GSU in September 2018. As the AFI becomes more influential, tracking who is using the IPC (and who is not), how, users' feedback and the extent to which it meets their information needs deserves much closer attention in the next phase of the GSP. This may also raise strategic issues and choices for the GSP, where users request that the IPC AFI adapts to play a role beyond what it was originally designed for, e.g. in response analysis. It will be important for the Steering Committee to agree, clarify and publicly articulate the role and limits of what the IPC can do.

8.3 Responsiveness to demand from stakeholders

Finding 42. In general, stakeholders are positive about the GSU's responsiveness to their needs and requests for assistance and support, with the caveat that technical officers in some countries would like the protocols to be adapted to their context. While this would potentially undermine the IPC's role as the 'global standard', it may limit the relevance and uptake of the IPC in some countries.

196. Technical stakeholders at country level, for example TWG members, have mostly fed back positively about the GSU's responsiveness to their needs and requests for assistance and support. This was echoed by the GSU's Regional Coordinators who are closest to the challenges and requirements for support at country level. They appreciated the flexibility of GSU staff and management in reallocating GSP resources globally to respond to the most urgent needs.

197. The exception to this pattern was feedback from TWGs in a few countries that want to adapt the AFI to be more 'appropriate' to their context. This emerged in Honduras and in Pakistan where members of the respective TWGs, especially government officers, felt that the AFI had been developed for the African context and was less suited to their respective context.[37]

[37] In Pakistan an example was given in relation to outcome indicators.

198. The GSP faces a dilemma. Its role as guardian of the IPC is to ensure the AFI is implemented systematically across countries following the IPC protocols so that it can fulfil one of its comparative advantages: comparability across space and time for regional and global analysis and use. Yet stakeholders in some countries, for example government officers, appear to be losing interest in the IPC because of its lack of flexibility which they claim make it less relevant to their context.

9. Global partnership, governance and management of the GSP

Evaluation Question 1.2: To what extent are the IPC GSP design and objectives relevant to meet the information needs of decision makers for improved emergency and development programming and policy at global, regional and country levels?

Evaluation Question 2.1: How effective and appropriate is the strategy and approach to institutionalization at global, regional and country level?

Evaluation Question 3.1: To what extent has the IPC GSP learned from implementation, from internal and external reviews, and from the changing external context and adapted its programme activities accordingly, with the overall objective of informing and influencing decision-making?

9.1 IPC global partnership and Steering Committee

Finding 43. Criteria for becoming a member of the IPC Steering Committee, as well as what is expected from the members, remain unclear.

Finding 44. Progress in 'institutionalizing' the IPC within global partner agencies is mixed. NGO partners have struggled most to institutionalize the IPC, often due to lack of resources and technical expertise which have constrained their ability to engage with the TWG and IPC processes at country level. Yet their full participation is important to the legitimacy of the IPC as a global effort, and to ensure the GSP reflects different perspectives.

Finding 45. Ensuring governance of the GSP remains 'fit for purpose', engaging with strategic decision-making beyond technical discussions, should be kept under review as the role and influence of the IPC grows.

199. In 2012 there were eight agencies in the IPC global partnership: four of which were international NGOs and four of which were UN or donor-linked agencies.[38] The Global Food Security Cluster joined soon after. By 2015 three regional bodies had joined: CILSS, SICA and IGAD. In 2017 UNICEF joined to make it a 13-agency partnership. SADC has recently been invited and will join in 2019, as will the Global Nutrition Cluster. Some other agencies have expressed interest in joining the IPC GSP, for example REACH.

200. Currently criteria/eligibility for membership of the GSP are not clear nor publicly available although there have been a number of discussions on this within the Steering Committee. Recently, and belatedly, guidelines for membership have been drafted but not yet finalized. All global partners are members of the Steering Committee, the governance body for the GSP. The 'IPC Global Partnership Structure and Terms of

[38] ACF, CARE, FAO, FEWS NET, JRC, OXFAM, SAVE THE CHILDREN, and WFP.

Reference' document sets out the TOR for the Steering Committee but does not indicate what is expected of global partners, i.e. their obligations.

201. The MTR *recommended that global partner agencies should be more proactive at regional and national levels, working collaboratively to promote institutionalization of the IPC, for example ensuring their own senior managers at regional and national levels are aware of the Global Partnership and of their agency's corporate commitment to the IPC, identifying other initiatives and networks that can proactively promote institutionalization of the IPC, e.g. the FIRST programme, and should be held to account through obligatory self-reporting on the process of institutionalization within their respective agency*. This recommendation was accepted by the Steering Committee which acknowledged that a substantial issue was limited participation of partners in key IPC moments: some rethinking in terms of level of participation was required. A self-reporting form was drafted but was rejected as not sufficiently user-friendly. Revisions were to be made, but this has never been finalized. Thus, progress in implementing this MTR recommendation is limited.

202. Some partners have been very active at global, regional and national levels. This includes FAO, WFP and FEWS NET. There are a number of examples of joint exercises carried out by these three agencies: for example advocating for the revival of the IPC in Malawi, and a joint mission to South Sudan in October 2018 to explore how the IPC could be improved and political obstacles addressed. The Food Security Cluster at global and country levels has played an increasingly active role, promoting the IPC as the analytical model to be used, engaging in and facilitating access to IPC Level 1 training; the cluster coordinator at country level is usually a member of the respective TWG.

203. The NGOs have struggled to institutionalize the IPC to the same extent. The four NGOs in the global partnership have come together to draft a proposal for funding to enable greater participation, that talks of their 'mutually interdependent partnership'. This has been submitted to the GSU for the next phase of the GSP. But as the GSP itself struggles to raise funds for its activities in the next four years, this is unlikely to be a successful avenue. Other ways of finding resources at regional and country levels may have to be found, for example inserting budget lines into NGO proposals for larger humanitarian programmes, with the active support of other global partner agencies and the funders of the GSP.

204. Nevertheless all global partners are credited with engaging actively in the updating of Manual V3.0, reviewing and endorsing the final version. Indeed, it is at the technical level that most partner agencies engage with the GSP. This may have been appropriate in the first years of the programme, but as the IPC becomes more influential and higher profile the need to engage with the political economy of information provision on acute food insecurity and famine becomes more pressing, for example through higher level engagement with IPC users and decision makers, informed by an understanding of the politics of information around acute food insecurity.

205. The MTR *recommended strengthening and elevating the governance of the GSP, to ensure it is commensurate with the higher profile and increasing influence of the IPC, including establishing a high-level Executive Committee for the GSP, to meet annually, and elevating the TAG to be merged with the existing Steering Committee to become a 'Technical Steering Committee' focused on the IPC acute scales with an additional one to two members who are technical experts independent of the global partners.* The Steering Committee considered establishing a high level Executive Committee (HLEC) and drafted Terms of Reference for it. But in April 2018 they dropped the plan on the grounds that 'the time was not yet ripe for that step and that the same objective could probably be reached in a simpler and more straightforward manner by organizing ad hoc side events to already existing high-level institutional meetings, in which the high-level representatives of SC agencies and of donor organizations regularly participate[39]' (e.g. the Committee on World Food Security and the United Nations General Assembly [UNGA]). They struggled to define the purpose of such a group. In addition, some members of the Steering Committee value the informality and agility of its current ways of working, fearing they would lose that if more senior directors were involved.

206. There is some divergence between the MTR's proposed purpose of the HLEC – for strategic decision-making and prioritization within the GSP, and to reinforce the respective Global Partner's corporate commitment to the GSP and to the IPC at all levels – and the Steering Committee's perspective that the main idea was to increase the profile and visibility of the IPC on the global agenda. The effectiveness of the alternative way forward agreed by the Steering Committee, to hold ad hoc executive consultations as well as an annual meeting with donors, should be a topic for review in the MTR for the next phase of the GSP. This could be part of a wider review of governance that was beyond the scope of this evaluation, to ensure that the GSP's governance arrangements are commensurate with the higher profile and increasing influence of the IPC, and with major strategic choices that will have to be made. In the meantime, individual Steering Committee members have a responsibility to ensure their respective senior managers are well informed of the progress and challenges the IPC faces, so they can advise, challenge and champion as appropriate, within their organizations and externally, especially as the IPC becomes more widely used and influential.

207. The MTR's *recommendation that the governance arrangements for developing and rolling out the chronic IPC scale be rethought, possibly establishing a separate Technical Steering Committee for the CFI*, was not regarded as a priority by the Steering Committee and no action has been taken. Some members of the Steering Committee have reservations about creating a parallel mechanism outside the GSU if it becomes delinked to the AFI.

208. The balance in the Steering Committee between UN agencies (4), NGOs (4) and regional organizations (soon to be 4) is important in terms of different parts of the humanitarian sector being represented in the GSP. But in practice the UN agencies

[39] From the Minutes of the IPC Global Steering Committee meeting of 18 to 20 April 2018.

(especially FAO and WFP) tend to dominate and have a greater sense of ownership of the IPC. This is keenly felt by the NGO members who struggle to engage to the same extent, largely due to resource constraints as mentioned above.

209. Yet their full participation is important to the legitimacy of the IPC as a global effort, and to ensure the GSP reflects different perspectives. This implies a consciousness about the 'natural' power dynamics within the Steering Committee, and continued efforts to counter those power dynamics, ensuring all voices are heard and that all Steering Committee members are treated equally in terms of communication and decision-making.

9.2 Independence of the GSP

Finding 46. While the GSU has maintained its neutrality, in a few countries the IPC is overly identified with FAO, with implications for the perceived neutrality of the IPC.

210. This evaluation concurs with the findings of the MTR that the GSU at central level has continued to maintain its neutrality and is not overly influenced by particular global partners, but in some countries the IPC is overly identified with FAO.

211. At a practical level, FAO offices usually arrange the logistics and are the channel for GSP or project funding of IPC analysis activities at country level. This works best where there is a funded food security project and dedicated staff within the FAO country office. Where there is not, FAO offices rarely have sufficient capacity and there can be major delays in mobilizing an IPC analysis workshop, exacerbated by slow and laborious FAO procurement procedures. These cases require substantial investment of time and follow-up by Regional Coordinators.

212. Overidentification with FAO has consequences for how the IPC is perceived by users. Some expressed their concern about the risk of compromise when FAO has to maintain its relationship with the host government. Whether or not this is a justified concern, it is the perception. Indeed, in some countries this potential conflict of interest has been exploited by government officers seeking to gain access to FAO resources. In one country overidentification of the IPC with FAO meant that some other UN agencies were less willing to engage with it.

213. This raises a question about whether responsibility for the logistics and management of IPC activities could be shared between different global partners in different countries, and whether the Food Security Cluster could play a more central role.

9.3 The GSU

Finding 47. The current leadership of the GSU is skilfully managing the many and varied demands, however the GSU continues to be overstretched, which leaves little time and space for reflection and to be proactive.

Finding 48. Uncertainty about future funding is a major hindrance to the GSU expanding its capacity to meet the demands and requirements of the GSP as the IPC becomes more influential.

214. The demands on the GSU continue to grow exponentially, partly due to the continued geographic expansion of the IPC AFI, and time-consuming quality and endorsement issues in certain countries, partly related to high profile famine conditions, and also because of the growing demands on, and expectations of the GSP/GSU at global level. The current leadership of the GSU is skilfully managing the many and varied demands, and work planning and prioritization of activities has become more strategic. The GSU team appears to be more cohesive and regional teams have fed back positively about the support they receive from the GSU in Rome. Nevertheless, the GSU continues to be overstretched, as observed during the MTR, with the greatest pressure on some of those regional teams. A number of stakeholders external to the GSU, interviewed for this evaluation, expressed their concern about overload and the need for the GSU to have the time and space to be more reflective and less reactive.

215. Although there are plans to expand the capacity of the GSU, there is every indication that the workload will continue to grow exponentially into the next phase implying the need for clarity about the role of the GSP and more ruthless strategic prioritization of activities for the GSU.

216. Delays in expected contributions from donors and uncertainty about future funding have hampered the GSU's ability to expand its capacity to meet the growing influence of the IPC. For example this has negatively impacted the GSU's ability to invest further in the communications skillset required, and in reviewing and developing the GSP's strategy and approach to institutionalization. For the GSP to deliver on the next phase, according to the current proposal, and to respond to the recommendations made by this evaluation, it must be fully funded from the beginning of the phase.

10. Equity/gender

Evaluation Question 4.1: To what extent has the GSP addressed differential vulnerability in the technical development of the IPC, by gender and other factors? To what extent has the GSP been gender sensitive?

Finding 49. The proposal for the new phase of the GSP to identify potential thematic areas to be incorporated into the IPC tools and procedures is a positive step forward in contributing to better disaggregation by vulnerable groups.

Finding 50. According to user feedback, the greatest demand for disaggregation is currently for smaller territorial areas so that geographic targeting can be more nuanced.

217. The MTR highlighted the IPC's 'blind spots': urban populations; displaced and refugee populations; disaggregation by gender, socio-economic status and other determinants of marginalization. It *recommended the GSP promote disaggregation by gender and socio-economic status in the IPC analysis at national level, and in the next phase of the GSP the AFI be adapted to urban contexts*. The Steering Committee responded that gender disaggregation could not be considered a high priority because of the lack of data to disaggregate; and IPC urban food insecurity should be scoped for the next phase of the GSP, seizing and following developments in urban food insecurity assessments if/as they arise. Not surprisingly, therefore in the years since the MTR there has been little progress on any of these issues. Manual V3.0 makes greater mention of gender disaggregation under 'contributing factors' than V2.0, but all of this is still very limited. The proposal for the next phase of the GSP identifies potential 'thematic areas' to be incorporated into IPC tools and procedures: two will be selected from urban, gender, refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) and five other possible themes.

218. A number of IPC users interviewed for this evaluation continue to raise concerns about the lack of disaggregation. For some agencies they are looking for disaggregation according to their particular target group, for example women and children. The conceptual challenge is that the IPC analysis is done at household level. The practical challenge is that it depends upon the data available and whether that has been disaggregated by gender and population group; increasingly, the data available comes from large quantitative surveys. In regions such as East Africa the lack of progress in capturing the food insecurity conditions of refugees and IDPs, a growing population group, is seen as a major gap. The GSU did commence discussions with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) on the issue but these appear to have stalled.

219. Some agencies use the IPC analysis for broad targeting purposes and then use their own assessments to identify population groups for more nuanced and socio-economic targeting. However, with the growing influence of the IPC, demands for greater disaggregation are bound to intensify. According to users interviewed for this evaluation, the greatest demand for disaggregation is for the IPC to be carried out in smaller administrative unit so that geographic targeting can be more nuanced.

220. There was mixed feedback on the need for the IPC to be adapted to urban contexts. Some interviewees drew attention to the rapidly growing urban population and threat of urban emergencies. Others commented that this may be more of a priority for the CFI than the AFI. As urbanization accelerates in so many countries the need to understand and respond to urban food insecurity will continue to grow. If the IPC is to remain relevant beyond rural populations, and to countries that are already heavily urbanized (like Pakistan) then it must be adapted to urban contexts.

221. The consolidated report on the IPC CFI drew similar conclusions about the gaps in information and evidence-based needs: lack of indicators/evidence on food security at decentralized administrative levels; lack of indicators/information on the linkages between food insecurity and gender; and lack of food security information for urban food insecure households (IPC, 2017).

11. Conclusions and Recommendations

11.1 Conclusions

Conclusion 1 (users). The growing influence of the AFI is primarily within the international humanitarian community. In many ways it has achieved its objective of becoming the international global standard for analysing acute food insecurity, and is highly influential at the global level. Despite the GSP's key objective to institutionalize the IPC within government in the countries where it has been rolled out, national governments are currently the least significant users of the IPC in terms of evidence of how they are using it in decision-making.

222. The prime focus of this final evaluation of the 2014 to 2018 phase of the GSP has been use of the IPC scales. The findings show just how influential the AFI scale has become, especially with donor governments. As a recognized standard for global food security classification, it is unrivalled. The story of the last few years is one of the geographical expansion of implementation of the AFI scale, now to over 30 countries, and of its growing influence, now informing a number of global initiatives such as the Global Report on Food Crises. This is a major achievement, due in part to the hard work of the GSU. The AFI is used most in countries with recurrent or protracted humanitarian crises, whether due to conflict or drought and weather-related factors: countries like South Sudan and Afghanistan, where it has a high profile although it has sometimes taken time to achieve that. In these countries the results of the annual or more frequent IPC AFI analysis are eagerly awaited; some donors will not make decisions about their resource allocations until the AFI is available. It is a rather different picture in countries like Honduras and Pakistan where the AFI has a much lower profile and there is much less evidence of its use and influence.

223. UN agencies (WFP, FAO and OCHA) probably come second to donors in their use of the IPC. The AFI is now a key source of information for the HNO and HRPs, although its influence depends upon the AFI having been completed in advance of these processes which have a fixed timetable.

224. Many NGOs are widely using the results of the AFI, to some extent for their own internal decision-making, but especially for funding proposals, again demonstrating its influence with donors who are amongst the strongest advocates of the IPC AFI.

Conclusion 2 (use). The AFI is used first and foremost for allocating humanitarian resources, globally, regionally and within countries for geographical targeting. In countries with less frequency of humanitarian crises and where it has less influence it is used more as background contextual information for humanitarian programming.

225. The AFI is most suited to high level resource allocation decisions, and this is predominantly how it is being used. Indeed, it was originally designed for 'big picture analysis' rather than as a tool for response analysis. It is a blunt instrument for targeting, or for nuanced decision-making, partly because of its lack of disaggregation by population group, and partly because of its lack of information about the drivers of

acute food security. But as it becomes more influential and widely used, users (including donors and NGOs) are requesting a more granular analysis to inform their programming decisions. How far the IPC is developed in this direction is a strategic decision for the IPC Steering Committee. The AFI is used less frequently for policymaking.

226. Most striking is the significance of the AFI as the process and means for declaring famine, put to the test a number of times in the last two years. Although this is usually a declaration of the failure of early warning/early response, it is an important role in highlighting that failure and in triggering a scaled-up response. It is a role that carries much responsibility, is appropriately subject to scrutiny, amidst much debate about data requirements and thresholds.

227. There is wide consensus that the strength of the IPC AFI is in describing the current territorial status of acute food insecurity. But the main way in which it is being used is for resource mobilization and targeting for the months ahead which means that AFI projections should be the more relevant information. Yet this is where the AFI is weaker. There is work to be done improving the projections so it can play more of an early warning role, drawing on the expertise and comparative advantage of global partners such as FEWS NET, and NGOs such as Save the Children that have relevant expertise (for example in Household Economy Analysis). There is also work to be done testing the ability and accuracy of the AFI to project.

228. The use and influence of the AMN is less obvious. It was only occasionally cited by decision makers. It has an important role to play, not least in shining the spotlight on nutrition issues and drawing attention to causes of malnutrition other than food insecurity, but much work is still to be done to realize the full potential of AMN. As the global nutrition cluster joins the GSP, there is an opportunity to develop this potential with the involvement of other key partners such as UNICEF and the international NGOs.

Conclusion 3 (quality and value added). The perceived quality of the IPC results is one of the key factors affecting if and how they are used. The IPC AFI is valued most for its collective and consensus-based approach. This is both its greatest strength and its greatest weakness.

229. The population figures for those in different IPC phases are one of the most widely used outputs of the AFI analysis, yet also one of the most controversial in terms of questions about their accuracy and how they are reached. Other quality issues include: poor quality data feeding into the IPC analysis that misses key population groups, over-reliance on large quantitative surveys, and lack of transparency of the IPC analysis process.

230. While the consensus-based approach gives users confidence in the results and is itself an achievement in bringing together diverse actors, there are concerns about how consensus is reached, the lack of transparency of the process and the political compromises that may have been made.

231. Nevertheless, stakeholders at country level are generally positive about the GSU's responsiveness to their needs and requests for assistance and support. Despite limited resources, the GSU has flexibly allocated staff resources to respond to the most urgent needs.

Conclusion 4 (chronic food insecurity scale). The role, relevance and usefulness of the CFI is still to be proven: it has been used very little for decision-making and is falling short in meeting decision makers' needs.

232. While the GSP took the initiative to develop a chronic IPC scale, using the same principles as the AFI, much work is still to be done for the CFI to fulfil its potential and to meet decision makers' needs. The rationale for this being taken forward by the GSP, where the focus has, and will continue to be humanitarian crises, and the key stakeholders are mostly humanitarian actors, is not clear. The CFI is more developmental and may be relevant to the SDGs: it should therefore involve a different set of actors (as noted in the MTR). In addition, the GSP is highly unlikely to have the resources and capacity to further develop the CFI. For these reasons another institutional home for the CFI may be more appropriate, while maintaining links to the GSP and AFI.

Conclusion 5 (adaptive capacity). The GSP has demonstrated a high level of adaptive capacity, particularly on many of the technical and process aspects of the IPC, but less in terms of tracking and responding to user feedback.

233. Aspects of the GSP have evolved through the last phase, learning from experience and guided by pragmatism. For example the approach to quality assurance has evolved, although for key stakeholders (such as TWG members and IPC Steering Committee members) there now needs to be greater clarification of the range of quality assurance processes deployed by the GSP and when different mechanisms apply. While a number of the MTR recommendations were taken on board in the second half of the last phase, some are outstanding and still relevant. The new Manual V3.0 has captured learning from the last few years on the technical side of the IPC acute scales, with more attention paid to some process aspects of the IPC analysis. The GSP has made some adaptations in response to user feedback, for example on timing of the IPC analysis. But knowledge about how decision makers use the IPC and the extent to which it meets their needs is weak; there has been no systematic tracking of this. In the next phase the IPC's adaptive capacity must be more closely linked to feedback and the needs of users.

Conclusion 6 (institutionalization). Little progress has been made in revising the strategy on institutionalization of the IPC, despite the inappropriateness of the 'one-size fits all' approach, and the need to adapt the cost-sharing approach to better reflect usership of the IPC.

234. While pragmatic decisions on institutionalization have been taken at the country level, the espoused model of institutionalization driven by the objective of full government ownership has not changed. In some contexts there is a fundamental incompatibility between the two IPC objectives, of a locally-owned, government-led technical consensus, and of an independent, reliable and objective analysis. Modifying the first

objective will help to strengthen the second. As national government is rarely the principal user of the IPC, it is unrealistic to expect it to cover the costs. These should be borne more by international humanitarian actors, the main users of the IPC. The greater success in institutionalizing the CH in West Africa, where it is led by a regional organization, is a valuable learning opportunity for the GSP and the IPC, including exploring how best to address these two incompatible GSP/IPC objectives.

Conclusion 7 (overall). The key message from this evaluation is that with the greater influence of the IPC AFI comes greater responsibility, and this responsibility lies with the GSP as the guardian and promoter of the AFI. Yet the GSU is currently overstretched and the full potential of the global partnership is not yet realized.

235. The GSU has expanded in the last couple of years in response to growing demands for the IPC at all levels, from national to global. More strategic and coherent in its allocation of resources, it should be credited for a wide range of achievements, from supporting controversial IPC AFI analyses at country level, to engaging with global initiatives using the IPC, to revision of the manual. However, it continues to be very overstretched, exacerbated by delays and uncertainty in donor funding.

236. Going forward, the GSU's strategic priority should be, first and foremost, ensuring the quality of the AFI, promoting this on an ongoing basis but also retrospectively assessing the accuracy of the IPC so it continues to evolve and improve. Second, maintaining a close relationship and dialogue with users is essential, so that the AFI evolves to better meet their needs and to maintain their confidence in the AFI. Third, to ensure the AFI continues to be relevant to decision makers' needs, the GSP has a responsibility to explore how it can be applied to particular population groups, and how it can be better disaggregated.

237. As planned in the next phase of the GSP, exploring the role that technical developments, including AI, can play will be key, while ensuring the IPC remains firmly rooted in the realities on the ground.

238. The greater influence of the AFI has implications for the global partnership**.** While it is essential that partners question and debate the role and development of the IPC within the GSP, it is also important they are able to present a coherent and unified approach externally, for example on communications, drawing upon experience from other multi-agency networks. It is also important that donor governments, the biggest users of the IPC, match their commitment to it with regular funding to the GSP.

239. The GSP must be more than the sum of its parts, and draw on the comparative advantage of the different partners. Identifying, developing and managing new strategic partnerships, as a collective, will be another key role in the next phase, for example with the World Bank on the FAM project.

11.2 Recommendations

240. Some of these recommendations reinforce and elaborate upon the proposal for the next phase of the GSP, for example Recommendation 5 on developing the strategy on institutionalization. This, for example, builds upon an earlier recommendation in the MTR. Some are recommendations for adjustments to the next phase of the GSP, for example Recommendation 1, or for new innovations, for example Recommendation 4 for a research facility as part of the GSP.

Recommendation 1. Adjustment to the strategic direction of the GSP.

241. The project document for the next phase of the GSP sets out the proposed direction for the next three years. This evaluation recommends two adjustments as follows:

i. The ***AFI's early warning role*** be given greater emphasis, strengthening the AFI's ability to project drawing on the expertise of global partners and others, and clarifying what kind of early warning role the AFI can and should play, alongside other systems for early warning.

ii. Based on the track record of roll-out and use of the ***CFI***, as well as current and future demands on the GSU, the GSP should pause roll-out of the chronic IPC scale while exploring the following:

   a. Whether another organization would be better placed than the GSP to take over development and roll-out of this scale, e.g. a more developmental or global research institute:
      (i) based on the learning so far, the CFI scale must be reviewed and adapted if it is to better meet the information needs of decision makers (this is beyond the capacity and ability of the GSU, and should be handed over to another organization, as indicated above);
      (ii) ways of maintaining links to the GSP and to the AFI should be explored, whether through formal governance mechanisms or other collaborative arrangements.
   b. How countries currently implementing and committed to the CFI (e.g. in Central America) could best be supported, e.g. by global partners directly rather than by the GSU, including support for decision makers in terms of the relevance of the CFI and how it can be used (as, for example, is being done in Central America through the PROGRESAN project).
   c. Development of key criteria to be included in formal feasibility studies that should precede roll-out of the CFI in new countries, and that should prioritize consultation with high-level decision makers to understand their interest in, and commitment to the CFI.
   d. In the meantime, while the CFI is paused, how more could be done at subnational, national and at global levels with the time series of acute scales, through trend analysis. This is key to informing the humanitarian-development nexus. If done well, this could be a major contribution to understanding the dynamics of chronic food insecurity.

Recommendation 2. Continued focus on monitoring use of the IPC.

242. In the next phase of the GSP much more attention should be paid to monitoring the use of the IPC AFI and AMN scales at country, regional and global levels. This should focus on: if/how decision makers are using the IPC, to what extent the IPC is meeting their information needs, and how it could be strengthened. Monitoring use should be done through a combination of the following:

i. encouraging and supporting TWGs at national level to map current and potential users, and to consult them regularly, through focus groups and/or key informant interviews, supplemented with regular online surveys;
ii. the GSU running regular online surveys of users at regional and global levels, similarly supplemented by key informant interviews with users, carried out by an independent consultant. This could be a part of the MTR for the next phase.

Recommendation 3. Strengthening the quality and transparency of the IPC analysis process for the acute scales.

243. Quality and transparency have emerged as key factors affecting the utility and credibility of the IPC acute scales, with a number of specific issues raised by users. In the next phase, the GSP should:

i. Ensure high quality qualitative data is given equal weight to large-scale quantitative surveys in the IPC analysis (as well as quantitative data from more localized sources),
ii. Require TWGs to publish the list of the main data sources feeding into the respective IPC analyses, where possible encouraging the main data providers to make their data publicly available, learning from recent experience in South Sudan.
iii. Require TWGs to publish the list of agencies and, where possible, names of their staff participating in the IPC analysis.
iv. Track how consensus is built in the IPC analysis in different countries, documenting good (and bad) practice for wider learning.
v. Foster learning and adaptive capacity at national level with a series of short accessible publications on good practice in different aspects of applying the IPC in different countries, commissioned and published by the GSP, for example on consensus building as described above. These could promote cross-country learning and be a resource for the Community of Practice to be established in the next phase.
vi. Promote engagement of senior leadership staff (including senior technical officers) from global partner agencies in the IPC analysis process, especially in contexts where the IPC is highly influential and controversial, for example in protracted and major humanitarian crises.

Recommendation 4. Establish a research facility for the GSP/GSU, to build an evidence base to inform future technical development of the IPC acute scales.

244. In recognition of the responsibility that comes with the growing influence of the IPC, the GSP should establish a research facility, enabling it to commission independent research studies to deepen analysis and understanding of acute food insecurity, often retrospectively after an IPC analysis has been completed, to inform the continued evolution and development of the IPC acute tools. This research facility would be a pot of funding, provided to the GSP by donors, that the GSP could use to commission high-quality research on particular topics. Maintaining the independence of the commissioned research will be key, in terms of how it is commissioned, to whom, and how it is peer-reviewed. Two topics to be considered for research, based on the findings of this evaluation, are:

i. With the aim of strengthening the IPC's analysis and prediction of famine, the GSP should commission and/or facilitate retrospective research to determine what actually happened in phase 5-designated areas after the famine declaration/prediction, and to better understand the impact of prolonged periods of crisis and emergency food insecurity (phases 3 and 4), for example on mortality. This should feed into continuous development of how the AFI analyses and declares famine and the GSP's famine guidance note, drawing also on the research findings of others.
ii. With the aim of strengthening the IPC's early warning role, the GSP should commission research to assess the accuracy of projections made using the AFI scale, and therefore whether the analytical method used for the AFI is appropriate for EW, whether it requires adaptation, and ultimately whether the AFI can fulfil both roles of classifying the current status *and* providing early warning through projections.

Recommendation 5. Developing and clarifying the strategy on institutionalization.

245. This should be a priority for the next phase of the GSP. Global partners must agree upon and set out the objectives of institutionalization for different ***country contexts*** (as defined in the MTR), and the principles that underpin an approach that may be adapted to individual countries. This should address:

i. How governance of the IPC at country level can better reflect partnership and the collective approach that underpins IPC analysis, especially for category 1 countries (where government is party to the conflict that is causing/contributing to humanitarian crisis) where the AFI has a key role to play in informing decision-making within the humanitarian sector. How this can promote technically rigorous and objective analysis, and what it might mean for co-chairing the TWG.
ii. How the increasingly important role of the food security cluster for the AFI, and the nutrition cluster for the AMN, in the IPC process can be reflected in the IPC governance arrangements at country level.
iii. How the approach to cost-sharing can better reflect usership of the IPC amongst different groups of stakeholders while still encouraging government to make a financial contribution to the IPC analysis.

iv. The criteria to be applied to differentiate between country contexts (taking the three categories proposed in the MTR as the starting point), and thus to guide a differentiated approach to institutionalization.
v. How best to strike the balance between accountability for using the IPC logo, in terms of ensuring technically objective and reliable analysis, and country ownership, in different contexts.

246. Once the strategy and approach are clear, the immediate task will be to adapt the IPC governance structure in category 1 countries to reflect the revised objectives of institutionalization.

247. At ***regional level*** a tailor-made strategy for supporting institutionalization should be developed for each region where the IPC is applied, in consultation and collaboration with the respective regional authority, according to their particular mandate and involvement in the IPC. This should seek to move beyond time-bound, externally-funded projects that support the IPC, to embedding it within more enduring institutional frameworks, ensuring it is underpinned with adequate political initiative and commitment.

248. For both country and regional levels, the strategy on institutionalization should draw upon, and learn from the more successful experience of institutionalization of the CH in the CILSS region, where it is led by the respective regional authority.

Recommendation 6. Implications for GSP global partners.

249. The growing influence, use and exposure of the IPC has implications for global partner agencies, including:

i. An analysis of the comparative advantage of the respective partners to inform a strategic plan for the contribution each can make in the next phase, for example NGOs supporting communications, FEWS NET on projections (this, in itself, could encourage greater institutionalization of the IPC within some agencies, e.g. NGOs).
ii. Greater participation in capacity development at country and regional levels to relieve the pressure on the GSU and to ensure this is a shared responsibility. The role and contribution of global partner agencies should be clarified in a strategy to deliver the planned expanded portfolio of capacity development activities, against a capacity needs assessment. Such a strategy should identify and draw upon the comparative advantage of different global partner agencies, including the NGO partners, engaging them more in providing IPC training using standard materials and tools. This aspect could continue to be funded through the GSP.
iii. Stepping up their engagement with the GSP beyond the technical domain, for example to engage with the wider political economy and challenges of information analysis and sharing at country level, engaging with decision makers at all levels so they better understand the IPC and how to use it, working towards greater coherence in communications and advocacy, and developing new strategic partnerships to strengthen IPC dissemination.

iv. Exploring where and when global partners, beyond FAO, can share responsibility at country level for the logistics and management of IPC activities, paying particular attention to the potential role of the Food Security and Nutrition clusters.
v. Stepping up institutionalization of the IPC within partner agencies, as recommended in the MTR: ensuring their own senior managers at regional and national levels are aware of the Global Partnership, of their agency's corporate commitment to the IPC, and of the implications for their role, programming and fundraising; identifying other initiatives and networks that can proactively promote institutionalization of the IPC, e.g. the FIRST programme; continuing to self-report on the process of institutionalization. The development of training materials and webinars that target users of the IPC (as mentioned in section 7.2 above) would also be useful for global partners' institutionalization of the IPC.

Recommendation 7. Further disaggregation of IPC analysis.

250. The need and demand for more disaggregated IPC analysis is likely to grow, not least as countries strive to meet the SDGs and require more granular information for different population groups. The GSP should continue to develop the IPC for better disaggregation by gender and by other factors of vulnerability, including displacement, as well as supporting countries to disaggregate the analysis to smaller geographic units. Ways of adapting the IPC analysis for urban contexts should also be explored.

Recommendation 8. Topics for the MTR for the next phase of the GSP.

251. Key issues that have emerged in this evaluation, yet are beyond the scope of the evaluation and should be explored in the MTR for the next phase include:

i. A review of the most effective approach to quality assurance of the IPC acute scales.
ii. Further exploring use of the IPC scales through engagement with current and potential users.
iii. A review of the effectiveness and appropriateness of the governance arrangements for the GSP in view of the higher profile and increasing influence of the IPC, and specifically to review the effectiveness of the proposed ad hoc executive consultations by global partners.

252. The GSP's ability to respond to these recommendations and to continue to deliver a high quality programme requires prompt and full funding from donors from the start of the new phase.

12. Appendices

Appendix 1. List of persons interviewed

National level		
1	Abdul Baeis Rashidi	IPC officer, Afghanistan
2	Abdul Qudus Bayan	EU Delegation, Afghanistan
3	Abdul Rashid Khan	FSC, Afghanistan
4	Paul Howe	WFP, Afghanistan
5	Rajendra Ayal	FAO, Afghanistan
6	Tomio Shichiri	FAO, Afghanistan (formerly)
7	Abdoulkarim Ouedraogo	CONACILSS, Burkina Faso
8	Adeline Belem	CONACILSS, Burkina Faso
9	Bernardin Zoungrana	FEWS NET, Burkina Faso
10	Blaise Kienou	FEWS NET, Burkina Faso
11	Dabre	SAP- Ministère de l'Agriculture, Burkina Faso
12	Dao Abdoulaye	SE-CNSA, Burkina Faso
13	David Bulman	PAM, Burkina Faso
14	Jacques Gigma	SE-CNSA, Burkina Faso
15	Madi Savadogo et Abdoul Ibrahim	FAO, Burkina Faso
16	Martin Loada	ACF, Burkina Faso
17	Nanema Leopold	SE-CNSA, Burkina Faso
18	Siaka Millogo	USAID, Burkina Faso
19	Telesphore Ouedraogo	PAM, Burkina Faso
20	Win Fransen	ECHO, Burkina Faso
21	Alexis Bonte	FAO, DRC
22	Ollo Sib	WFP, DRC
23	Paul Busambo	FAO, DRC
24	Alan González	FAO El Salvador
25	Andrew Stanhope	WFP El Salvador
26	Carlos Martínez	WFP El Salvador
27	Claudia Saiz	WFP El Salvador
28	Daysi de Márquez	CONASAN, El Salvador
29	Guillermo Pérez	CONASAN, El Salvador

30	Kenny	WFP El Salvador
31	Marco Selva	WFP El Salvador
32	Rose Marie Rivas	FAO El Salvador
33	Hamel Cazeau	CNSA, Haiti
34	Jeancarel NORCEIDE	WFP, Haiti
35	Karel LIZEROT	EUD, Haiti
36	Kokou Amouzou	FAO, Haiti
37	Pierre Winshell NORZERON	EUD, Haiti
38	Raymon Saint Val	FEWS NET, Haiti
39	Alessandro Boccoli	EUROSAN, Honduras
40	Andrea Vega	UTSAN, Honduras
41	Clarixa Briseño	Ministry of Development and Social Inclusion, Honduras
42	Dennis Latimer	FAO, Honduras
43	Dimas Delgado	EUROSAN, Honduras
44	Fernando Cáceres	EUD, Honduras
45	Fiama García	Food and Nutritional Security Observatory, Honduras
46	Gaby Padilla	Goal International, Honduras
47	Héctor Aguirre	Mancomunidad Trinacional Fronteriza Río Lempa, Honduras
48	Herbert Yanes	WFP, Honduras
49	Irma Benavidez	Ministry of Health, Honduras
50	José Lino Pacheco	UTSAN, Honduras
51	Margarita Oseguera	Food and Nutritional Security Observatory, Honduras
52	Marjorie Maradiaga	Goal International, Honduras
53	Rene Frenken	Goal International, Honduras
54	Roberto Cáceres	UTSAN, Honduras
55	Wendy Carranza	FAO, Honduras
56	António Mavie	FEWS NET, Mozambique
57	Casemiro Abreu	INGC, Mozambique
58	Catriona Clunas	DFID, Mozambique
59	Claudia Perreira	FAO, Mozambique
60	Claudio Jamal	CHIMO consortium (WV, Red Cross, CRS, Plan, HI, etc.), Mozambique
61	Claudio Julaia	RC office/UNDP, Mozambique

62	Daniel Gonzalez-Levassor	EUD, Mozambique
63	Dino Buene	SETSAN, Mozambique
64	Domingos Reane	WFP, Mozambique
65	Elda Famba	Ministry of Health, Mozambique
66	Ema Batey	COSACA consortium (OXFAM, SVC, Care), Mozambique
67	Felicidad Panguane	FAO, Mozambique
68	Fernanda Simbine	SETSAN, Mozambique
69	James Llatimmer	WFP, Mozambique
70	Javier Rodriguez	UNICEF, Mozambique
71	José Mangue	Save the Children, Mozambique
72	José Matsinhe	FAO, Mozambique
73	Keneth Hasson, Leonor Domingos	USAID, Mozambique
74	Lara Carrilho and Nicolas Babu	WFP, Mozambique
75	Michel Le Pechoux	UNICEF, Mozambique
76	Nercia Chivane	SETSAN, Mozambique
77	Olman Serrano	FAO, Mozambique
78	Sesinando Marcelino	INGC, Mozambique
79	Abdou Karim Keita	CILSS, Niger
80	Aliou Moumouni	DS/MAG/EL, Niger
81	Aweyssou Aboubacar	OXFAM, Niger
82	Dieudonné	OCHA, Niger
83	Fausto Prieto Perez	OCHA, Niger
84	Federico Doehnert	PAM, Niger
85	Hamadou Seybou	CCA, Niger
86	Hassane Harouna	OXFAM, Niger
87	Labo Seyni	Save the Children, Niger
88	Mado Diakite	3N, Niger
89	Mahaman Mansour Sani	ACF, Niger
90	Mahaman Sani ABDOU	3N, Niger
91	Marsha Michel	USAID, Niger
92	Moussa Garba	FAO, Niger
93	Nouhou Lamine	CCA, Niger
94	Omar	SAP, Niger

95	Ousmane Arboncana	CCA, Niger
96	Sandrine Trobert	ECHO, Niger
97	Stephane Degueurce	CCA, Niger
98	Yacouba Hama Abdou	FEWSNET, Niger
99	Dr Aamer Irshad	Min of Planning, Devlpt & Reform, Food & Agriculture Section, Pakistan
100	Aamir Kaleem	OXFAM, Pakistan
101	Aamir Zeb	Human Appeal International, Pakistan
102	Engr. Abdul Fattah Tunio	Government of Sindh, Planning and Development Department, Pakistan
103	Dr Abdul Manan Khokhar	Government of Sindh, Pakistan
104	Abdul Qadir Junejo	Government of Sindh, Pakistan
105	Abid Hussain Qureishi	Crop Reporting Dept - Sindh Province, Pakistan
106	Adnan Ahmed Sheikh	Crop Reporting Dept - Sindh Province, Pakistan
107	Adnan Shams	Government of Pakistan (Federal), Islamabad
108	Aftab Ahmed Memon	Crop Reporting Dept - Sindh Province, Pakistan
109	Aisha Jamshed	Welthungerhilfe, Pakistan
110	Ali Ahmed Channa	Sindh Bureau of Statistics (SBOS), Pakistan
111	Aman ur Rehman Khan	WFP, Pakistan
112	Amanullah Surahiyo	Crop Reporting Dept - Sindh Province, Pakistan
113	Dr Amir Ali Samnani	Health Dept – Sindh Province, Pakistan
114	Aqsa Khan	CARE, Pakistan
115	Dr Arif Rehman	Min of Planning, Devlpt & Reform, Food & Agriculture Section, Pakistan
116	Faisal Saeed Syed	FAO, Pakistan
117	Farrukh Toirov	FAO, Pakistan
118	Ghulam Raza Narejo	Islamic Relief Worldwide, Pakistan
119	Hafiz Malik	Ministry of National Food Security & Research, Pakistan
120	Hamza Abbasi	Concern Worldwide, Pakistan
121	Helen O'Conor	DFID, Pakistan
122	Iftikhar Abbas	WFP, Pakistan
123	Dr Javed Humayun	Ministry of National Food Security & Research, Pakistan
124	Dr M. Azeem Khan	Min of Planning, Devlpt & Reform, Food & Agriculture Section, Pakistan
125	Mazhar Hussain	Government of Pakistan (Federal) Islamabad

126	Mohamed Akram Bhatti	Sindh Bureau of Statistic (SBOS), Pakistan
127	Dr Mohamed Qasim	Ministry of National Food Security & Research, Pakistan
128	Mohammad Aamir	ACF, Pakistan
129	Muhammad Ali Shahikh	Government of Sindh, Provincial Disaster Management Authority, Pakistan
130	Muhammad Amin	Ministry of National Food Security & Research, Pakistan
131	Muhammad Kazim Jafri	Sindh Bureau of Statistics (SBOS), Pakistan
132	Muhammad Nasir	Sindh Bureau of Statistics (SBOS), Pakistan
133	Muhammad Razi	Government of Pakistan (Federal), Islamabad
134	Muhammad Zafar Iqbal	Government of Pakistan (Federal), Islamabad
135	Mustafa Baloch	SDS, Pakistan
136	Nasar Hayat	FAO, Pakistan
137	Nisar Ahmed Soomro	Saharo Human Aid Association (SHAA), Pakistan
138	Dr Noor un-Nisa Mari	Government of Sindh, Pakistan
139	Omar Bangash	Welthungerhilfe, Pakistan
140	PDMA, Sindh Official	Government of Sindh, Pakistan
141	Qurb Ali Shar	Sindh Bureau of Statistics (SBOS), Pakistan
142	Raja Ajmal Jahangeer	FAO, Pakistan
143	Rukhsana Ayyub	Save the Children, Pakistan
144	Saleem Abid	Ministry of National Food Security & Research, Pakistan
145	Sarfaraz	Crop Reporting Dept - Sindh Province, Pakistan
146	Sayed Saeed Qadir	UNICEF, Pakistan
147	Dr Shafiq ur Rehman	UNICEF, Pakistan
148	Shafqat Ullah	Concern Worldwide, Pakistan
149	Shagufta Tasleem	Ministry of National Food Security & Research, Pakistan
150	Dr Shah Murad Brohi	Government of Sindh, Pakistan
151	Shah Nasir Khan	WFP, Pakistan
152	Shahabudin Memon	Government of Sindh, Planning and Development Department, Pakistan
153	Shohreh Naghchbandi	EU Delegation, Pakistan
154	Syed Salman Shah	Government of Sindh, Provincial Disaster Management Authority, Pakistan
155	Dr Umar Khan	UNICEF, Pakistan
156	Viven Rigler	EU Delegation, Pakistan

157	Wali Mohammad Bardar	National Humanitarian Network (Goth Seengar Foundation), Pakistan
158	Wehsah Aghar	Min of Planning, Devlpt & Reform, Food & Agriculture Section, Pakistan
159	Yasir Riaz	UNOCHA, Pakistan
160	AbdulMonium Osman	FAO, South Sudan
161	Alastair Short	Food Security Cluster, South Sudan
162	Alemu Manni	FAO, South Sudan
163	Antazio Drabe	FEWS NET, South Sudan
164	Arshad Malik	Save the Children, South Sudan
165	Esteban Arriga	EU Delegation, South Sudan
166	Esteban Sacco	OCHA, South Sudan
167	James Guma Mark	FEWS NET, South Sudan
168	James Koma Jackson	Embassy of Canada, South Sudan
169	Jannat Noor	Oxfam, South Sudan
170	Jeff Hill	USAID, South Sudan
171	Jesse Wood	WFP, South Sudan
172	John Kinesio	Ministry of Agriculture, South Sudan
173	John Pangech	Ministry of Agriculture, South Sudan
174	Katie Rickard	REACH, South Sudan
175	Kiross	UNICEF, South Sudan
176	Lee Hsiaowei	WFP, South Sudan
177	Lorents Finanger	Embassy of Norway, South Sudan
178	Matt	REACH, South Sudan
179	Nicholas Kerandi	FAO, South Sudan
180	Nicola Murray	DFID, South Sudan
181	Paulo Girlando	EU Delegation, South Sudan
182	Phil Wambui	Titi Foundation, South Sudan
183	Philip Dau	National Bureau of Statistics, South Sudan
184	Pierre Vauthier	FAO, South Sudan
185	Simon Cammelbeeck	WFP, South Sudan
186	Susan Bradley	Food for Peace, USAID, South Sudan
187	Tim Daniel Krap	Embassy of Netherlands, South Sudan
188	Vera Etole	RUCA, South Sudan
189	Yar Deng	Embassy of Netherlands, South Sudan

Global level		
190	Giampiero Muci	DEVCO
191	Chris Porter	DFID
192	Fergus Thomas	DFID
193	Iris Krebber	DFID
194	Laura Mattioli	DFID
195	Liz Kirk	DFID
196	Tiziana Buffagni	ECHO
197	Dominique Burgeon	FAO
198	Chris Hilbrunner	FEWS NET
199	Josephine Ippe	UNICEF Global Nutrition Cluster
200	Shannon Wilson	USAID
201	Arif Husain	WFP
202	Jo Macrae	World Bank
203	Zachary Carmichael	World Bank
Regional level		
204	Nicolas GOVAERT	ECHO West Africa
205	Maria Bernardez Ercilla	EU East and Southern Africa
206	Emily Addonizio	FAO, Eastern Africa
207	Joseph	FEWS NET East Africa
208	Nigist Biru	FEWS NET East Africa
209	Ibrahim Lahouali	FEWS NET West Africa
210	Fatima Eltahir	IGAD
211	Dan Maxwell	Independent consultant, Famine Review Committee
212	Mario Serpas	PROGRESAN/SICA
213	Ricardo Sibrián	PROGRESAN-SICA
214	Emily A. Gish	USAID East and Central Africa
215	Krishna Pahari	WFP East Africa
216	Byron Ponce	WFP Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean
FAO GSU		
217	Ahmed Feroz	FAO, GSU
218	Amadou Diop	FAO, GSU West Africa

219	Feroz Ahmed	FAO, GSU Asia
220	Francesco Slaviero	FAO, GSU
221	Jerry Argüello	FAO, GSU Latin America
222	José Lopez	FAO, GSU
223	Kamau Wanjohi	FAO, GSU
224	Kudzayi Chimbindi	FAO, GSU
225	Leila Oliveira	FAO, GSU
226	Qureishia Merzouk	FAO, GSU Southern Africa
227	Rachele Santini	FAO, GSU
228	Sayed Duaa	FAO, GSU
229	Sophie Chotard	FAO, GSU
230	Stefania Mirra	FAO, GSU
231	Thomas	FAO, GSU
IPC Steering Committee Members		
232	Amador Gomez	ACF
233	Bruno Minjauw	Global Food Security Cluster
234	Davina Jeffrey	Save the Children
235	Diane Holland	UNICEF
236	Emily Farr	Oxfam International,
237	Justus Liku	CARE
238	Laura Glaeser	FEWS NET
239	Luca Russo	FAO
240	Patricia Palma	PROGRESAN/SICA
241	Thierry Negre	JRC
242	Yvonne Forsen	WFP

Appendix 2. List of documents consulted (in addition to the documents related to the GSP shared by the GSU)

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DFID (2018) *'Project Completion Review. Strengthening of food security analysis and decision making through support to the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC)'*. Review date: September 2018

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Maxwell, D., Hailey, P., Kim, J.J., McCloskey, E., and Wrapbel, M. (2018a) *'Constraints and Complexities of Information and Analysis in Humanitarian Emergencies. Evidence from South Sudan'*. A Feinstein International Center Publication. Tufts University. June

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MQSUN (2018) *'Constraints and Complexities of Information and Analysis: Data-Planning in Famine Risk Countries. Findings and recommendations for food security analysis: South Sudan, Somalia, Nigeria and Yemen'*. March

Tango International (2015) *'Study of IPC Products and IPC Compatible Products'*, October

Appendix 3. Countries assisted in IPC GSP Programme

Region	Country	Donor	AFI	CFI	AMN
Asia	Afghanistan	EC	√		√
	Bangladesh	EC	√	√	√
	Cambodia	USAID		√	
	Myanmar	DFID	√		
	Nepal	EC	√	√	
	Pakistan	EC	√	√	√
	Philippines	DFID		√	
	Timor Leste	EC		√	
East & Central Africa	Burundi	EC	√	√	√
	Central African Republic	EC	√		√
	Djibouti	EC	√	√	
	Democratic Republic of the Congo	EC	√	√	√
	Ethiopia	EC	√		
	Kenya	USAID	√		√
	Rwanda	USAID	√	√	
	Somalia	USAID	√		√
	South Sudan	EC	√		√
	Sudan	EC	√		√
	Tanzania	USAID	√	√	
	Uganda	EC	√	√	√
Southern Africa	Angola	UK	√		
	Lesotho	DFID	√		
	Madagascar	EC	√		√
	Malawi	DFID	√		
	Mozambique	EC	√	√	√
	Swaziland	EC	√		
	Zambia	DFID	√		
	Zimbabwe	DFID	√	√	
Central America	El Salvador	DFID	√	√	

	Guatemala	DFID	√		
	Haiti	USAID	√	√	
	Honduras	DFID	√	√	
North Africa & Near East	Kyrgyzstan	EC	w/o GSU support		
	Syria	DFID	√		
	Tajikistan	EC	√		
	Yemen	DFID	w/o GSU support		
West Africa (17 CH Countries)**	Benin	*not specifically assigned*	Support to CH analysis is provided upon CILSS ' demand both to single country analyses and to Analysis Consolidation twice a year		
	Burkina Faso	EC			
	Cape Verde	EC			
	Chad	EC			√
	Côte d'Ivoire	*not specifically assigned*			
	Gambia	EC			
	Ghana	*not specifically assigned*			
	Guinea	*not specifically assigned*			
	Guinea-Bissau	*not specifically assigned*			
	Liberia	EC		√	
	Mali	DFID			√
	Mauritania	EC			
	Niger	EC		√	√
	Nigeria	DFID			
	Senegal	EC			
	Sierra Leone	*not specifically assigned*			
	Togo	EC			

Source: GSU

IPC Stages

Consolidation
Introduction
Potential
Cadre Harmonisé

NB: in some countries the GSP is providing only a part of the funding and support required.

13. List of Annexes

Annexes available at http://www.fao.org/evaluation/en/

Annex 1. Terms of Reference

Annex 2. Evaluation Matrix

OFFICE OF EVALUATION
www.fao.org/evaluation