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Evaluation of the
Integrated Food Security
Phase Classification (IPC)
Global Strategic
Programme (GSP)
2019–2022



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

2019–2022

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Abstract

This final evaluation of the second phase of the IPC GSP reviews the strategic direction and performance of the GSP from 2019 to 2022. It informs and makes recommendations for the future strategic direction of the GSP in the next phase from 2023. It explores use and utility of the IPC; governance of the IPC; adaptive capacity within the GSP; and how equity and gender are addressed in IPC analyses. Overall, performance within the GSP has been strong during the 2019 to 2022 phase. The influence and profile of the IPC has continued to grow: it is the principal source of information informing high level and strategic decisions on acute food insecurity at country, regional and global levels, for the geographical areas it covers. There are some important strategic choices to be made in terms of how the IPC can remain relevant to decision-makers in a fast-moving world with the prospect of rising food insecurity. The evaluation concludes that the governance structure of the IPC is not fit for purpose given the increased influence of the IPC, the political nature of food security information and the sensitive environments in which it is implemented. The global governance structure is also out of step with commitments in the humanitarian sector to localization and decolonization. Adaptive capacity within the GSP has been high with a number of successful adaptations to changes in the external context. The pace of strategic change within the GSP should now be stepped up. While there has been progress in the geographic disaggregation of IPC analyses, progress has been limited in integrating gender and other intersectional determinants of vulnerability. This should also be addressed in the next phase of the GSP.

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Abbreviations and acronyms

AFI	Acute Food Insecurity
AMN	Acute Malnutrition
CFI	Chronic Food Insecurity
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
FEWS NET	Famine Early Warning Systems Network
FRC	Famine Review Committee
GSC	Global Steering Committee
GSP	Global Strategic Programme
GSU	Global Support Unit
HRP	Humanitarian Response Plan
HNO	Humanitarian Needs Overview
IPC	Integrated Food Security Phase Classification
TWG	Technical Working Group
WFP	World Food Programme

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The evaluation was led by Margie Buchanan-Smith (Team Leader), and was carried out by Jane Cocking and Veronique Barbelet (Team Members). It was managed by Federica Coccia (OED) and supervised by Amélie Solal-Céligny (OED Evaluation Officer), with Martin Corredoira's overall administrative support.

Executive summary

Objectives and methods of the evaluation

1. The objectives of this final evaluation of the second phase of the Global Strategic Programme (GSP) are: i) to review the strategic direction and performance of the GSP in the most recent phase, 2019–22; and ii) to inform and make recommendations for the future strategic direction of the GSP in the next phase, beginning in 2023. This is a learning-oriented strategic evaluation addressing four lines of inquiry: use and utility of the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC); governance of the IPC; adaptive capacity within the GSP; and how equity and gender are addressed in IPC analyses.

Use and utility of the IPC acute scales: Acute Food Insecurity and Acute Malnutrition

2. The IPC is the principal source of information informing high-level and strategic decisions on acute food insecurity at country, regional and global levels, for the geographical areas it covers. International actors, in particular donor agencies, continue to be the main users of the IPC, to guide top-line allocations of humanitarian resources to address acute food insecurity; in communication and advocacy, usually to mobilize humanitarian resources; and, to a lesser extent, to inform policymaking. It is the primary source of information on food insecurity for the annual Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) and Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) at country level. Many national governments have limited resources for responding to humanitarian crises; they use the IPC more to inform longer-term food security strategies. These are similar patterns to how the IPC was used in 2018.
3. Changes in the external context in the last three years have resulted in the IPC having even greater prominence and significance with users. Demand for accurate food security information to guide scarce resources has intensified, with some donors expressing a need for more nuanced and disaggregated analysis to guide prioritization and targeting, especially as the impact of the Ukraine crisis on food security intensifies. The IPC is increasingly used for Early Warning purposes, to trigger anticipatory action, and for emergency response financing as the World Bank has become an important user of the IPC. The role of the Acute Food Insecurity (AFI) in drawing attention to humanitarian crises that might otherwise be overlooked has become more important than ever as humanitarian needs outstrip available funding.
4. The IPC continues to be *the* way in which famine is confirmed and declared, endorsed by the G7 Compact on famine prevention and humanitarian crises from 2021. While this is positive evidence of the growing recognition of the IPC at global level, it is indicative of the greater responsibility its Global Support Unit (GSU) and Global Steering Committee (GSC) now bear to alert the world to famine, for example when IPC analyses are suspended in countries where there is a high risk of famine, such as Ethiopia and South Sudan in 2021.
5. The central role of the IPC in informing donor agency decision-making raises two particular challenges: first, for countries where there is no IPC, undermining the perception of the IPC as a 'global process'; and second, as an incentive to international agencies to use IPC terminology (for example of phases for different geographical areas) even when there is no IPC analysis underpinning such claims.
6. There has been considerable effort to roll out the IPC Acute Malnutrition (AMN) scale in a growing number of countries, although its full potential is yet to be realized. International non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are currently the main users of the AMN.

7. The IPC continues to be valued for its convergence of evidence and consensus basis. The extent to which it meets decision-makers' needs varies among countries according to its perceived accuracy and therefore credibility, in turn dependent on the quality of data and perceptions of how consensus has been reached. Other critical factors affecting use of the IPC include: the political context and global status of the IPC, an enabling factor where it is seen to be linked to the pledging of humanitarian assistance, or a constraining factor where there is reluctance among some actors to acknowledge the severity of food insecurity, usually where conflict is a driver; and whether there is coherence in how IPC global partners use the results in their global communications. GSU investment in improved communication has positively impacted the accessibility of IPC results, but there are still significant unmet communication needs from key users at global and country levels. For example, donors with less familiarity with the IPC had unanswered questions about it, and have limited if any contact with the GSU; they are seeking more guidance to inform their use of the IPC.
8. In terms of better meeting the needs of IPC users in the future, there is demand for greater agility and responsiveness in IPC analyses, for example through strengthened real-time monitoring to capture the fast-moving context and dynamic trends in food insecurity; improved Early Warning through IPC projections to inform anticipatory action; more contextualized IPC analysis to better reflect conditions in different countries; more intersectoral analysis between IPC food security analyses and sectors such as water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and health; greater disaggregation of IPC results; and strengthened understanding of the relationship between chronic and acute food insecurity. Demand for the Chronic Food Insecurity (CFI) scale was articulated most strongly by national government officers, as well as by some donors.

Governance

9. There has been some progress in institutionalization of the IPC into national systems, with clearer articulation of the five dimensions of institutionalization, but with considerable variation among countries. The feasibility of institutionalization depends on the underlying strength and transparency of government, and whether there is ongoing armed conflict. This is a reminder that there is no 'one size fits all' solution to institutionalization, as concluded in the 2018 GSP evaluation. As a complex objective it needs a context-specific approach. It is not feasible in all environments, especially those affected by armed conflict. Clear priorities need to be set in such contexts between the delivery of the IPC as a global standard and its institutionalization.
10. There is mixed progress in how Global IPC Partners have institutionalized the IPC by embedding it into their own policies, practices and responsibilities. Some UN partners have taken strong ownership and can give the impression they have a leadership role rather than being part of a wider partnership; other partners play a strong role at global level but do not participate actively at country level. Stronger and more consistent ownership across global partners is essential if the IPC is to be maintained and developed in a sustainable manner.
11. IPC governance at national level varies among countries. Technical Working Groups (TWGs), the heart of country-level IPC structures, are generally well-established and work effectively, with some exceptions where they are dominated by one or two key players. NGO IPC partners are often less engaged and participation of national NGOs is patchy, negatively affecting diversity within TWGs and the input of local knowledge. Separation and clear delineation of roles and responsibilities within TWGs (chairing meetings, facilitating analysis, and quality assurance) is essential to their performance as they deal with increasingly complex issues.
12. In the last three years there have been some major challenges to TWG conclusions, from host governments and from international agencies, reflecting the intensely political nature of food

security information, particularly in countries affected by conflict. These are a fundamental challenge to the twin objectives of the IPC to be the international global gold standard and to be institutionalized in national structures. Where national steering committees comprising senior government and IPC partners' representatives have been established, as in Afghanistan and now South Sudan, they have helped reduce the pressure on technically-driven TWGs and have provided the necessary strategic support at senior leadership level to resolve complex issues.

13. There are little or no formal IPC governance structures at regional level. Stronger regional capacity could provide additional guidance and intervention, particularly in the event of lack of consensus at national level.
14. Overall, the GSC has performed well in its core business of reviewing and steering the IPC at global level and ensuring its relevance to humanitarian actors. During this phase of the GSP it has faced some critical decisions with wide ranging implications, including publication of the South Sudan report in 2020 and the update covering Tigray and neighbouring zones of Afar and Amhara in Ethiopia in 2021, both in the face of opposition from the host government and without engagement of the respective regional authority. In both cases, the GSC took the view it was more important to uphold internationally recognized results than negotiate with host governments on the outcome. This met with mixed reactions, with a clear division between global and country-based actors. A means of discussing and unifying these different views while recognizing legitimately different opinions needs to be found.
15. The GSU has performed well, delivering a significant programme of capacity building and quality measurement and assurance. There is a view in some countries that too many issues need to be referred to the global level, either to the GSU or the GSC, and that there are a limited number of GSU staff who are able to deal with complex political issues.
16. The IPC's governance and leadership structure is not fit for purpose for the future GSP. It is centralized in the global north, at odds with sector trends to ensure greater country leadership and increased devolution of decision-making. The limited engagement of regional bodies in the GSC undermines the presence of the global south in IPC global governance. Although the Famine Review Committee (FRC) works well and is respected, there is a problematic lack of diversity in its membership. The governance structure of the IPC has served it reasonably well in the past, but is not commensurate with the increased profile of the IPC nor adequate to manage the political nature of food security information. Although apparent for some time (having been raised in previous evaluations), this has not been addressed. The need to upgrade IPC governance is even more essential now.

Adaptive capacity

17. Adaptive capacity within the GSP has been high and is located mainly within the GSU. This was demonstrated in the GSU's rapid adaptations to the COVID-19 pandemic, developing technical guidance to switch to remote ways of carrying out the IPC analysis at country level, and adapting the IPC analysis to recognize the pandemic as a key factor impacting food insecurity, with an increased focus on urban food insecurity. It was also demonstrated in adaptations to some of the political challenges to the IPC since 2019, for example GSU support to adaptation in IPC structures at national level in Afghanistan after the Taliban takeover, and the GSU and GSC decision to uphold the integrity of the IPC as a global standard over institutionalization of the IPC in terms of government ownership in South Sudan, where an independent review was launched. A number of other planned and unplanned adaptations have been implemented, usually as pilots first, for example on the 'Risk of Famine' and testing technologies to support IPC analysis.

18. Factors enabling adaptive change include leadership that has fostered reflection and openness within the GSU, and a strong learning culture in which frequent lesson-learning exercises are conducted. A limitation has been the GSU's communication capacity to capture key learning in an accessible form that can be widely shared.
19. Adaptation and change in the GSP has tended to be iterative, which has been effective in responding to challenges as they arise. The pace of strategic change has been slower, for example in addressing long-term trends of political interference in IPC analyses at country level, or upgrading GSP governance. In a highly dynamic external context, and to keep pace with the increasingly influential role that the IPC plays in the wider humanitarian sector, bolder and more substantial changes are now required, involving all levels of IPC governance.

Gender and other intersectional determinants of vulnerability

20. Progress to date has focused on geographic disaggregation including lower administrative units of analysis and increase in urban areas analysed. Limited progress has been made in integrating gender and other intersectional determinants of vulnerability, such as age or displacement, despite recommendations made by the 2016 mid-term review and 2018 evaluation. There have been a number of initiatives on gender (including an important pilot in the Central African Republic), refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs), but these have tended to be deprioritized at global level, for example in support provided by the Technical Advisory Group (TAG), with precedence given to thematic issues such as improved estimates of people in need (PiN).
21. The value of the IPC in providing greater disaggregated analysis on who is food insecure is not well articulated by the GSP and not well understood by users. While some users and GSC members highlight a need for more disaggregated and gender-sensitive analysis, a significant number of respondents, including GSC members, questioned the role and added value of the IPC in providing more disaggregated analysis. This latter view is somewhat out-of-step with increasing requirements for more disaggregated data and analysis within the humanitarian sector.
22. Although lack of disaggregated data may be cited as a major impediment to more disaggregated analysis, it does exist and is not being fully exploited in IPC analysis processes. This is usually due to lack of expertise and sensitization of analysts. There are opportunities to address these constraining factors, for example through training, greater use of existing disaggregated data and diversifying TWG membership.

Conclusions

23. Overall, performance within the GSP has been strong during the 2019 to 2022 phase. It is now at a crossroads. As the IPC continues to gain in profile and status, the role international actors expect it to play has expanded. This raises strategic choices for the GSP in terms of how the IPC can remain relevant to decision-makers in a fast-moving world with the prospect of rising food insecurity. The IPC's growing influence also brings with it increased responsibility at all levels of governance and management within the GSP. But fundamental governance issues have not yet been adequately addressed at global, regional and country levels. The IPC global governance structure is out of step with commitments in the humanitarian sector to localization and decolonization. These issues must now be prioritized to ensure the next phase of the GSP is truly 'fit for purpose', able to respond appropriately to future challenges in a fast-moving world, at both the strategic and practical levels.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1. Adaptations to the IPC AFI scales are required in order to meet and keep pace with evolving demands of users of the IPC in a highly dynamic and unpredictable global context, including:

- i. Continuing to strengthen the Early Warning role of IPC analyses
- ii. Promoting greater predictability and frequency of IPC analyses
- iii. Deepening trend analysis from time-series data from the IPC AFI scales
- iv. Discouraging use of IPC terminology when it is not based on an IPC analysis.

Recommendation 2. Capacity within the GSP to expand the geographical coverage of the IPC should be developed, particularly to carry out one-off IPC analyses in countries where there is a food and nutrition crisis but the IPC is not yet institutionalized, and in countries where the IPC has been introduced but there are political sensitivities in acknowledging high levels of acute food insecurity. This will require commitment and resources from all key stakeholders of the GSP.

Recommendation 3. The next phase of the GSP should be designed to ensure enhanced capacity and skills for much greater external engagement with decision-makers and IPC users, by the GSU and IPC global partners, requiring a clear strategy and increased investment.

Recommendation 4. When there is tension between institutionalization of the IPC and the desire to deliver a global standard, the decision as to which objective to prioritize should be made based on humanitarian criteria while safeguarding as far as possible the future of the IPC in any country affected by the decision. The institutionalization objective of the IPC in a given country needs much greater attention and investment if it is to be achieved.

24. A number of recommendations on governance are made, to ensure it is fit for purpose, and follows certain principles.

Recommendation 5. The role of global governance should be to set global strategy and ways of working as well as clarify the trigger for support and intervention. This requires amendment of the global governance structure including:

- i. Establishing an Executive Committee of senior representatives of IPC global partners, Resource Partners and independent experts to provide strategic direction for the IPC and advice on decisions which have a global impact.
- ii. Investing in regional and country governance structures to enable a less 'top down' approach to governance and freeing up GSU capacity to enable staff to spend less time on country issues and more on global ones.

Recommendation 6. Regional governance should offer additional support and guidance relevant to context.

Recommendation 7. IPC governance needs to be strengthened at country level. This will require investment in new and stronger context-specific governance structures.

Recommendation 8. In a highly dynamic external context, the pace of strategic change within the GSP has to be stepped up.

Recommendation 9. The next phase of the GSP needs to provide greater disaggregation in IPC analyses, ensuring that these better reflect how individual characteristics and social status affect people's vulnerability to food security and malnutrition.

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 2019 to 2022, the second phase of the IPC GSP. The key purpose of this evaluation is to learn from the implementation of the programme in order to inform the strategic direction and orientation of the next phase of the GSP, which will start in 2023. The evaluation also has an important accountability purpose to its three principal Resource Partners - the European Commission, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) – as well as to the IPC Global Steering Committee (GSC) that oversees the implementation of the GSP.
2. The evaluation had two main objectives:
 - i. to review the strategic direction and performance of the GSP in the most recent phase, 2019–22;
 - ii. to inform and make recommendations for the future strategic direction of the GSP in the next phase, beginning in 2023.
3. The evaluation focuses on global level and was designed to take account of the wide range of country and regional contexts in which the IPC is implemented, and the role of the GSP in upholding the IPC as a global standard. Given the strategic nature of the evaluation, the analysis did not attempt to engage in detailed monitoring or reporting against the GSP logframe but has rather sought to address issues that are critical to the overall purpose of the programme and to the future of the IPC, including issues that have emerged as key challenges in the most recent phase. The evaluation also reviewed progress made in implementing the recommendations of the 2016 mid-term review (MTR) and the 2018 final evaluation of the IPC GSP 2014–2018 (Appendix 1). As an evaluation of the overall GSP programme between 2019 and 2022, the findings and results are not broken down by funding source (see Annex 1 for the evaluation terms of reference).

1.2 Evaluation approach and methods

1.2.1 Evaluation questions

4. The evaluation was structured around four main lines of inquiry, with evaluation questions and sub-questions developed under each of these. 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 found in Annex 2.

Box 1. Evaluation questions

Key issue 1. Use and utility of the IPC

EQ 1.1. To what extent is the IPC meeting decision-makers' needs for evidence for improved decision-making, including through current levels of disaggregation?

- 1.1.1 Has the use of the IPC in decision-making increased during the current phase of the GSP? If so, what have been the enabling and constraining factors and what could be done to increase its use even further?
- 1.1.2 If decision-makers are using the IPC, how and for what purpose, with examples? What difference does it make to have the IPC?

EQ 1.2. 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?

- 1.2.1 How has the role of the GSU evolved compared to the GSP 2014–2018 and to what extent did this lead to an improvement at both country and global level?

Key issue 2. Governance

EQ 2. How effective and appropriate are the current governance arrangements for the IPC in view of the higher profile and increasing influence of the IPC?

- 2.1.1. How should the GSP address current governance tensions within the IPC model, in particular the tension between the objective of "ownership" at country level, with the government playing a critical role, and the need to protect the independence and integrity of the IPC analysis as a global standard upheld by the GSP?
- 2.1.2 What progress has been made in integrating IPC into existing structures and systems at regional and country level? How has this impacted effectiveness, ownership and sustainability?

Key issue 3. Adaptive capacity

EQ 3. To what extent has the IPC GSP reflected learning from implementation, from internal and external reviews, and from the changing external context and how far has it adapted its programme activities accordingly, with the overall objective of informing and influencing decision-making?

- 3.1.1 To what extent did formal and informal accountability and learning mechanisms (e.g. monitoring and evaluation systems, case studies, quality reviews) enable the programme to be adapted and improved?
- 3.1.2 Has the programme been using the most effective approach to quality assurance? What changes were introduced in the current phase and what impact did this have?
- 3.1.3 To what extent has the GSP been adapted appropriately to key changes in the external context?

Key issue 4. Equity and gender

EQ 4. To what extent has gender and other intersectional determinants of vulnerability been taken into account in the different IPC scales?

- 4.1.1 How has the GSP promoted disaggregation of different vulnerable groups (e.g. urban and displaced/refugees; gender and generation) in the IPC analysis?

1.2.2 Evaluation methods and constraints

5. The evaluation has used a mixed methods approach, based on the following data collection methods:
 - i. **Documentation review.** A wide range of IPC and GSP documents were reviewed as well as key publications where the IPC has been a major source of information. The GSP's monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework was reviewed, as well as progress and performance reports against the M&E framework and other project documents.
 - ii. **Online survey of IPC users.** The evaluation team contributed to the design of the third annual survey of IPC stakeholders with the aim of maintaining consistency with the previous versions of the surveys in order to identify patterns and changes in responses over the last four years, while also expanding on some questions to provide more qualitative feedback and to enable more nuanced disaggregation of respondents and therefore of analysis.

- iii. **Key informant interviews** (KIIs) with different IPC stakeholder groups formed the backbone of the evaluation. A total of over 120 key informant interviews¹ were held with the stakeholder groups identified in the inception phase (see Annex 3), at global, regional and country levels, with a focus on:
 - those involved in carrying out the IPC analysis, e.g. members of Technical Working Groups (TWGs), and those involved in developing the technical aspects of the IPC, including quality review and assurance;
 - principal users of the IPC analysis, at all levels;
 - those involved in the governance of the IPC at global, regional and national levels.
 - iv. **Country case studies.** The evaluation relied on eight country case studies to review the experience of the IPC at national level. The case studies focused on the four key strategic issues covered by the evaluation, and their implications for the GSP. The countries were selected in consultation with the primary intended users of the evaluation (the GSU, the GSC and Resource Partners) according to three criteria, to ensure a broad spectrum of contexts and IPC experience:
 - context of food insecurity
 - governance context
 - technical coverage and issues
6. Case studies for Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Sudan and Yemen were conducted remotely, while Madagascar and Haiti were carried out in-person. The South Sudan case study drew heavily on the recent independent review of the IPC in South Sudan, particularly focusing on how the recommendations from the review have been received and acted upon (Buchanan-Smith, Cocking, and Sharp, 2021).
- i. **Constraints.** The main constraints the team faced in carrying out the evaluation were the following:
 - 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 not been used in isolation, but have been useful to triangulate the findings from other sources of information, such as country case studies and interviews at all levels. For a global programme, the number of responses (just under 100) is also low.
 - Lack of responsiveness from some stakeholder groups, particularly from some regional authorities, to requests for interviews.
 - The evaluation was conducted under significant time pressure, in order for the results to be available in time to inform the design of the third phase of the GSP.

1.3 Structure of the report

7. Following this introduction, section 2 begins with a short overview of the changes in the external context in which the IPC operates and the implications of these changes for the GSP. After an overview of the programme in section 3, section 4 is structured around the evaluation's four lines of enquiry. Conclusions and recommendations are found in section 5.

¹ See Annex 3 for the list of Key Informant Interviews.

2. Context

2.1 Introduction

8. Humanitarian crises are increasing and becoming more complex, and they have serious implications for food insecurity. This has never been more striking than during the recent GSP period from 2019–2022. The COVID-19 pandemic is a global crisis affecting vulnerable populations worldwide and has led many donor governments to focus on their own populations sometimes to the detriment of their commitments to international assistance. Governments in crisis-affected countries are becoming more assertive and less willing to fit in with the direction of their donor counterparts. New crises are emerging and old ones recurring. The crisis in Ukraine has shaken many interdependent aspects of the global economy leading to growing needs and declining resources. Meanwhile drought in the Horn of Africa is causing millions to face severe food insecurity.

2.2 Growing food insecurity

9. According to the 2022 Global Report on Food Crises (GNAFC, 2022), 193 million people in 2021 were acutely food insecure and in need of urgent assistance across 53 countries and territories (GNAFC, 2022). This was an increase of 58 million compared to 2019. In 2022, it is anticipated that this will only get worse due to the impact of the Ukraine crisis on food, energy and fertilizer supplies and prices.
10. Acute food insecurity is concentrated geographically. In 2021, 70 percent of the total number of people in IPC/Cadre Harmonisé (CH) Phase 3 and above or equivalent (World Food Programme [WFP] Consolidated Approach for Reporting Indicators of Food Security [CARI]) lived in ten countries: in order of magnitude they were Democratic Republic of the Congo (27.20 million), Afghanistan (22.80 million), Ethiopia (16.75 million), Yemen (16.15 million), Nigeria (12.9 million), Syrian Arab Republic (12 million), Sudan (9.8 million), South Sudan (7.21 million), Pakistan (4.7 million) and Haiti (4.4. million) (GNAFC, 2022). The same year, 570 000 people faced catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) in four countries: Ethiopia, South Sudan, Yemen and Madagascar (GNAFC, 2022).

2.3 Trends in humanitarian crises

11. Globally, climate change, entrenched conflict and shrinking capacity exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic have led to a larger number of humanitarian crises. Crises go on for longer and for many there is no apparent solution; this is particularly true of situations of long-term displacement. In 2022, the United Nation Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) estimates that 274 million people are in need of assistance (OCHA, 2021) compared with 235 million in 2021 (OCHA, 2020), 168 million in 2020 (OCHA, 2019) and 131.7 million in 2019 (OCHA, 2018).
12. COVID-19 continues to affect the global economy as well as the lives of people in countries already facing humanitarian crises with an estimated 20 million having been pushed into extreme poverty as a result (OCHA, 2021), and economic recovery becoming increasingly uncertain. Climate-related disaster events are more frequent and climate has now joined conflict as a root cause of famine (OCHA, 2021). Major armed and political conflicts continue to affect millions of people in Afghanistan, Ethiopia, South Sudan, Nigeria, Yemen and Democratic Republic of the

Congo. More than 1 percent of the world's population is displaced (OCHA, 2021), with an estimated 89.3 million people forcibly displaced worldwide in 2021 (UNHCR, 2022).

2.4 Key trends in the humanitarian sector

13. The humanitarian sector continues to grapple with the challenges of how best to offer assistance to some of the most vulnerable people in the world. In particular, calls for 'decolonializing' the sector have joined the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit commitments to localize humanitarian action. Both of these agendas demand greater attention to the principle of subsidiarity (making decisions as close as possible to where they are implemented), close consideration of who makes decisions, who has power and who influences humanitarian policies and practice.
14. To date, progress on localization has been limited. The Grand Bargain committed donors and aid organizations to providing 25 percent or more of humanitarian funding to local and national responders as directly as possible by 2020. The impetus behind this target is based on respecting the role and expertise of local and national actors as well as a belief that assistance offered in this way will be more appropriate and cost efficient. To date, only 13 out of 63 signatories to the Grand Bargain have achieved this target and the pressure to do more in support of local and national actors is rightly growing.
15. Attention to local leadership has led to renewed efforts and attention to issues of participation, accountability to affected populations, and inclusion of the most marginalized groups and communities, whose voices are heard. The ability of diverse voices to influence, participate in, and make decisions that affect their lives during crises have become prominent issues relating to the ethics and principles of humanitarian action.
16. A further initiative is 'triple nexus' thinking. This proposes making greater efforts to link humanitarian, development and peace efforts to meet people's needs more effectively, mitigate risks and vulnerabilities as well as move towards sustainable peace. The triple nexus recognizes the need to consider developmental and political root causes of crises, the protracted nature of the majority of humanitarian crises and the necessity of peacebuilding and development as sustainable solutions to humanitarian situations. In practice, it means that humanitarians need to work more closely with their development and peacebuilding colleagues to deliver more effective, longer-term response.
17. At the same time, as needs are growing donor resources are stretched. Exact figures are difficult to tie down but OCHA's Global Humanitarian Overview of May 2022 estimated that needs and requirements have grown to USD 46.06 billion to assist 202 million of the 303 million people in need around the world, of which 193 million are acutely food insecure. By mid-May USD 9.63 billion had been committed, and although this is also a record high, it leaves an almost 80 percent gap.
18. The Ukraine crisis has had an unfortunate multiplier effect, affecting needs and gaps in three ways. First, it increases current needs and requirements. Second, it is diverting attention away from other major crises, in particular the looming catastrophic food security situation in the Horn of Africa. Third, the crisis has a direct impact on the production and supplies of food and fertilizers which coupled with the crisis impact on the price of energy is resulting in fast increasing food prices across the globe, mainly affecting import dependent countries.

2.5 Implications for the IPC

19. This global picture has implications for the IPC in several ways:
- i. Like all humanitarian information initiatives, the IPC is working in an increasingly complex and geopolitically sensitive environment and its processes and communications need to recognize this. Box 2 captures some of the most acute challenges to the IPC and GSP since 2019.
 - ii. As decisions about resourcing become increasingly challenging, IPC users' needs and demands are becoming more specific and nuanced. There may be a closer, direct relationship between IPC phasing and resource allocation than there has been in the past.
 - iii. As with all humanitarian initiatives and action there is an expectation that the IPC will follow the trends and directions of the sector as a whole and match commonly held aspirations.

Box 2. Examples of the most acute challenges to the IPC and GSP, 2019–2022

South Sudan: The October/November 2020 IPC analysis process broke down when the Technical Working Group (TWG) was unable to reach consensus on the severity of food insecurity in six counties. After a real-time quality review (RTQR) and convening of the Famine Review Committee (FRC), there was no further progress in reaching consensus. The publication of both reports on the global IPC website in mid-December was denounced by the Government of South Sudan. Two versions of the IPC analysis were subsequently released, first by the Government on 18 December, and a few days later by the GSU, with the consent of the Global Steering Committee. The latter followed the FRC and RTQR's classifications and population estimates, showing Phase 5 and 'Famine Likely' in some of the contested counties, which did not appear in the government's IPC analysis. This breakdown of the IPC model in South Sudan triggered an Independent Review of the IPC (see Box 4 below). No IPC analysis was carried out in South Sudan during 2021 until the model was redesigned in early 2022. (Buchanan-Smith, Cocking, and Sharp, 2021).

Ethiopia: In March 2021 it was decided to carry out an update of the AFI analysis of Tigray and neighbouring zones of Afar and Amhara which were affected by conflict between the Government of Ethiopia and regional forces in Tigray. Access to data was difficult but the TWG arrived at consensus which was deemed plausible by the FRC. This showed that approximately 400 000 were acutely food insecure in Phase 5. The Government refused to agree the release of the update but the GSC went ahead with publication. The IPC is currently suspended in Ethiopia.

Afghanistan: When the Taliban seized power in Afghanistan in August 2021, this triggered economic sanctions and the freezing or suspension of much international aid. It was no longer feasible for government officers (some of whom had fled the country) to lead IPC management and governance structures within Afghanistan. The IPC governance model therefore had to be revised and adapted (see section 4.2 for further details).

3. Overview of the Global Strategic Programme

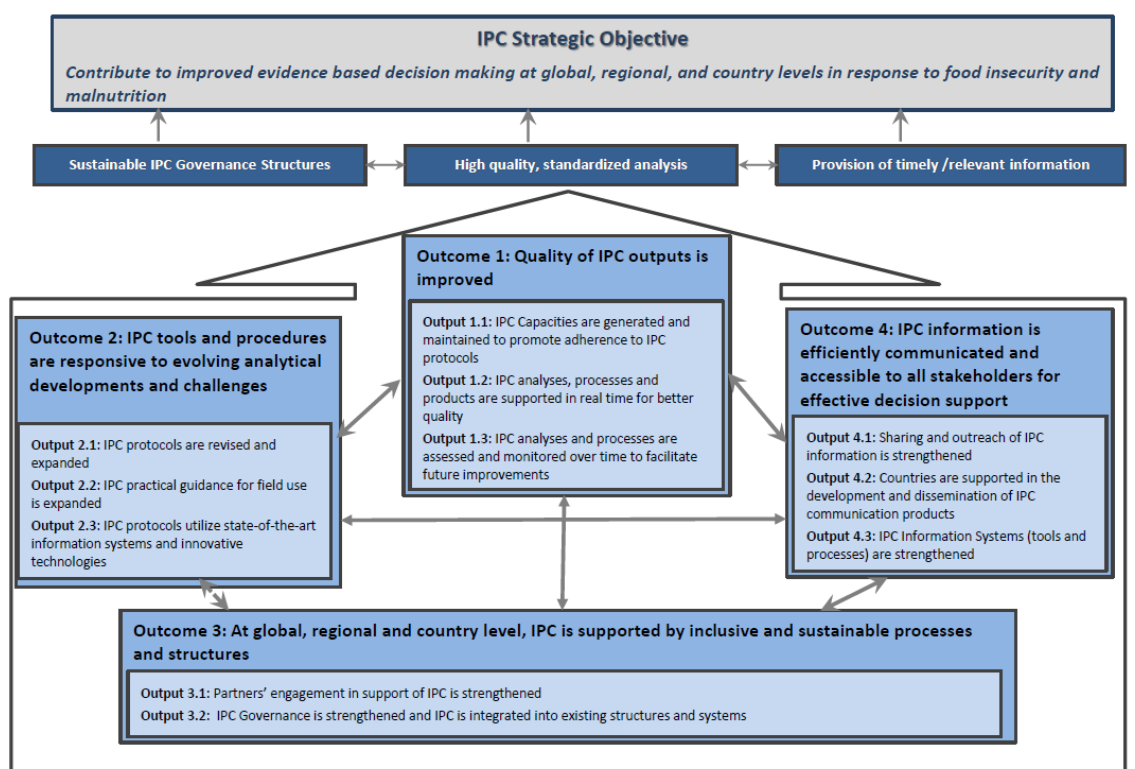
20. The IPC is a global, multipartner initiative to facilitate improved decision-making through consensus-based food security analysis. It is founded on a complementary set of analytical tools and protocols for analysing and classifying the severity and nature of food insecurity and nutrition to inform 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 a view to enabling clear communication for decision-making.
21. 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 on the consensus of multiple stakeholders at national, regional and global levels. It provides:
 - i. a common technical approach to the analysis of pre-existing food security and nutrition information;
 - ii. an institutional process for maximizing consensus between stakeholders about the current and likely food security and nutrition situation;
 - iii. the basis for response analysis and decision-making about appropriate policies, programmes and resource allocation.
22. The IPC global initiative is led by an IPC Global Partnership made up of 15 major global agencies committed to eradicating food insecurity: Action Against Hunger (ACF), CARE, Oxfam, Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS), the European Commission Joint Research Centre (JRC), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET), the Global Food Security Cluster (gFSC), the Global Nutrition Cluster (GNC), Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), Save the Children, Central American Integration System (SICA), Southern African Development Community (SADC), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and World Food Programme (WFP).
23. The IPC is managed by a Global Steering Committee, a governing body tasked with strategically guiding and positioning the IPC globally. The IPC Global Steering Committee, which currently consists of the 15 partner organizations listed above, has the following responsibilities: positioning the IPC in the broader international framework of food security and nutrition initiatives, promoting institutionalization within partner agencies, overseeing the IPC Global Strategic Programme Management, providing strategic guidance, ensuring global coherence and respect of IPC principles, and endorsing the IPC technical approaches, tools and guidelines.
24. The first IPC Global Strategic Programme was launched in early 2014, with the intention of supporting the adoption of the IPC as a global standard for integrated, multisectoral and consensus-based analysis of food insecurity and acute malnutrition. Initially conceived as a three-year programme (2014–2016) the GSP was extended to the end of 2018. The 2014–2018 GSP achieved a significant expansion of the IPC initiative, expanding the number of protocols as well as the number of countries in which IPC was applied while forging important new partnerships. A new 2019–2022 IPC GSP phase was developed following strategic reflections on the experience of the 2014–2018 GSP and taking into account the results of the 2016 mid-term review and the 2018 evaluation of the programme.²

² Results of prior evaluations are discussed in section 3.2.

25. The overall strategic objective of the 2019–2022 GSP has remained unchanged compared to the previous phase of the programme: “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”. Based on findings from the review and evaluation processes mentioned above, recommendations from IPC stakeholders and lessons learned from the application of these lessons at the country level, the 2019–2022 GSP identified four outcomes, listed below and detailed in Figure 1:

- i. Outcome 1: Quality of IPC outputs is improved;
- ii. Outcome 2: IPC tools and procedures are responsive to evolving analytical developments and challenges;
- iii. Outcome 3: At global, regional and country level, IPC is supported by inclusive and sustainable processes and structures;
- iv. Outcome 4: IPC information is efficiently communicated and accessible to all stakeholders for effective decision support.

Figure 1. IPC GSP (2019–2022) logic model



Source: IPC Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework.

26. The key intended elements of the 2019–2022 GSP (IPC, n.d.) are:

- i. Focusing on food crises: Reaffirming the IPC’s importance in food crises, the GSP intended to improve IPC quality in key priority countries, with a special focus on those facing the worst food crises as identified by the Global Report on Food Crises (GRFC). This was to prioritize application of the Acute Food Insecurity (AFI) scale, targeted expansion of the Acute Malnutrition (AMN) scale and the Chronic Food Insecurity (CFI) scale, and the introduction of multiscale analyses. This also implied optimizing the Early Warning function of the IPC by improving the way IPC projections are developed and communicated.

- ii. Needs-based technical development: The focus of technical development over the GSP period was to be the rollout of the IPC Manual version 3.0, developing detailed technical guidance on specific topics (e.g. projection analysis) and refining the analytical tools to identify better food insecure and malnourished populations. Further technical developments were intended to explore introducing IPC analysis for specific vulnerable populations, such as refugees/ internally displaced persons (IDPs) and food insecure urban populations and to explore possible adjustments to CFI protocols to better respond to the needs of decision-makers. The IPC partnership also intended to look into how to make best use of the major advances in advanced information technologies (IT) and artificial intelligence in support of the IPC.
- iii. A commitment to quality: As a stepping stone to quality assurance, capacity development efforts were to be expanded following a continuous and flexible learning approach, to include a wider range of training modalities for global, regional and country IPC practitioners. Furthermore, real-time quality assurance measures were to be prioritized over post hoc quality reviews and to provide technical support as needed, from the planning stages of data collection to the final dissemination of results.
- iv. Partnership, governance and institutionalization: The IPC is collaborative and consensus-driven. This strategy was to encourage IPC partner organizations to replicate their global-level commitments at regional and country levels, calling upon partners to strengthen the overall robustness of the IPC through their sector-specific expertise. Engagement at higher level with IPC Resource Partners was also to be developed to ensure that the IPC is at the forefront of the global agenda on food security and nutrition. Where feasible, the governance of the IPC at regional and country levels was to be strengthened to ensure its improved integration into existing structures and that it has systems for greater effectiveness, ownership and sustainability.
- v. Stronger communication and information management: The quality and utility of IPC analyses is sometimes offset by limited uptake and application of IPC information (that is, information both from and about the IPC). This strategy was to include communication and outreach activities at global, regional and country level aimed at increasing stakeholders' access to IPC information as well as awareness and understanding of the IPC among decision-makers (thereby promoting the uptake of IPC findings). These efforts were to be complemented by the introduction and coordination of a global network of communication specialists from IPC partner agencies as well as improved information management and increased support to countries for enhanced communication activities and dissemination of IPC findings.

3.1 IPC beneficiaries and target countries

27. The primary beneficiaries of the IPC GSP are food security experts and analysts in national government departments and regional institutions with a food security mandate, relevant UN offices, donor agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working on food security and nutrition. These stakeholder groups vary according to the country context and type of IPC scale. Indirect beneficiaries are the food insecure and malnourished people in targeted countries and regions who will benefit from improved decision-making and programmes with better impact on food insecurity.
28. In the 2014–2018 GSP, countries were classified into three categories of IPC implementation (Consolidation stage, Introduction stage, and Potential countries). The 2019–2022 GSP prioritized countries that are facing the largest food crises. Approximately 10 to 15 countries have been identified every year based on the Global Report on Food Crises, among other considerations.

3.2 IPC analyses

29. The three IPC scales have been developed to address different information needs and are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. The three IPC scales

	<u>Acute food insecurity</u>	<u>Chronic food insecurity</u>	<u>Acute malnutrition</u>
IPC definitions of food insecurity and malnutrition	Food insecurity found in a specified area at a specific point in time and of a severity that threatens lives or livelihoods, or both, regardless of the causes, context or duration.	Food insecurity that persists over time mainly due to structural causes, including intra-annual seasonal food insecurity.	Global acute malnutrition as expressed by thinness of individuals.
Guides interventions Focus	Short-term objectives to prevent or decrease severe food insecurity that threatens lives or livelihoods.	Medium- and long-term improvement of the quality and quantity of food consumption for an active and healthy life.	Short- and long-term objectives to prevent or decrease high levels of acute malnutrition.
Analytical focus	Identify areas with large proportion of households with significant food energy gaps or livelihood change strategies that can endanger lives and livelihoods.	Identifying areas with large proportion of households with long-term inability to meet minimum food requirements both in terms of quality and quantity.	Identifying areas with large proportion of children acutely malnourished.
Number of countries using the scale	29	5	17

Source: Elaborated by the IPC Global Support Unit.

3.3 Programme funding

30. The GSP 2014–2018 was launched with a funding request of USD 17.25 million but the funding requirements for the GSP 2019–2022 were set at USD 34 million, an increase of almost 100 percent that illustrates the substantial growth of the programme (see Figure 2). The programme is expected to spend a total of USD 26.2 million by the end of the current phase of the GSP in 2022 (see Table 2), with a gap of USD 8 million compared to the initial cost estimate of the GSP. Moreover, late financing and therefore inadequate financial predictability has been a significant constraint in establishing the appropriate staffing structure to deliver optimally on some of the strategic components of the programme.

Figure 2. Initial IPC planned budget by outcome

		73%	27%	7% of subtotal	
		Staffing	Activities	PSC	TOTAL
Outcome 1	Quality and Capacity	11.7	5.0	1.2	17.9
Outcome 2	Technical Development	4.7	1.3	0.4	6.4
Outcome 3	Institutionalization	2.4	0.9	0.2	3.5
Outcome 4	Use	4.7	1.3	0.4	6.4
		23.5	8.5	2.2	34

Source: IPC Global Strategic Programme (2019–2022): Towards improved evidence based decision making at global, regional, and country levels in response to food insecurity and malnutrition.

Table 2. Final GSP 2019–2022 financing

Donor	Total amount in USD million
USAID (old)	2.85
EC – INFORMED	2.5
EC – GNAFCPP	12
FCDO (1 st)	1.4
FCDO (2 nd)	2.77 (*)
USAID (new)	2.79 (*)
EC (new)	1.4 (*)
CANADA	0.5
Current total	26.21

Notes: (*) values based on estimated delivery by 31 December 2022, with remaining budget available as of 1 January 2023.

Source: Elaborated by the IPC Global Support Unit.

4. Findings

4.1 Use and utility of the IPC acute scales: Acute Food Insecurity and Acute Malnutrition

EQ 1.1. To what extent is the IPC meeting decision-makers' needs for evidence for improved decision-making, including through current levels of disaggregation?

EQ 1.2. 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 1.1. Use and influence of the IPC continues to grow: for the geographical areas it covers, the AFI is the principal source of information on acute food insecurity for most humanitarian agencies and governments at country, regional and global levels. It is particularly valued for its convergence of evidence and consensus basis.

Finding 1.2. International actors, in particular donor agencies, continue to be the main users of the IPC.

Finding 1.3. Patterns of use of the AFI by different groups of stakeholders have remained relatively unchanged over the last four years, with some notable exceptions, in particular increasing use of the IPC for Early Warning purposes, to trigger anticipatory action and emergency response financing.

Finding 1.4. The role of the AFI in drawing attention to humanitarian crises that might otherwise be overlooked has become ever more important as humanitarian needs outstrip available funding, and as international attention has focused on the crisis in Ukraine.

Finding 1.5. The potential of the IPC AMN is yet to be realized, although there are ongoing and important efforts to roll it out, improve nutrition data availability and increase the frequency and reliability of the AMN. International NGOs are currently the main users of the AMN.

Finding 1.6. GSU investment in improved communication of IPC results has positively impacted the accessibility of IPC results, but there are still significant unmet communication needs from key users at global and country levels.

Finding 1.7. Overall, users would like to see greater agility and responsiveness in IPC analyses in the future, better-suited to capturing the fast-moving context and dynamic trends in food insecurity, and improved Early Warning through IPC projections.

4.1.1 Introduction

31. Although this section mainly focuses on the use and utility of the two IPC acute scales, the AFI and AMN, in meeting decision-makers' needs, it touches upon the CFI where this has been specifically raised by users, usually as an unmet demand. This section uses the 2018 evaluation of the GSP as the baseline for comparison, for example in terms of how use of the IPC has changed (if at all), and especially how decision-makers' needs may have changed. The principal source of data is from key informant interviews with decision-makers at all levels: global, regional and national, particularly drawing on the country case studies. This is supplemented with the preliminary analysis from the online survey of users of the IPC, carried out by the GSU. As far as possible, use of the IPC by decision-makers has been disaggregated by different stakeholder groups (see Appendix 2), with broad trends emerging across all groups.

4.1.2 Meeting decision-makers' needs

4.1.2.1 Overall analysis of use of the IPC

32. The overall trend is of continuing growth in the use and influence of the IPC AFI at global and national levels. Actors within the international humanitarian community continue to be the main users, especially donor agencies. In almost all country case studies carried out for this evaluation (with the exception of Ethiopia), the IPC is the main source of information informing high-level and strategic decisions on food security. Indeed, one donor official described the IPC as *"more and more a subject of conversation with other donors and stakeholders around the world"*. In a similar vein, a senior manager within the UN described the IPC as *"providing a good place to start big conversations"* on addressing protracted acute food insecurity and more developmental challenges of chronic food insecurity.
33. The main ways in which the AFI is used is to guide top-line allocations of humanitarian resources to address acute food insecurity (although not specifically food aid allocations). It is also used in communication and advocacy, usually to mobilize humanitarian resources and, to a lesser extent, to inform policymaking. This is very similar to how the IPC was used in 2018, but changes in the external context in the last three years have resulted in the IPC having greater prominence and significance with users. This has to do with the global food security crisis triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic, exacerbated by conflict, climate change and prolonged droughts, and the recent impact of the Ukraine crisis. These increased needs are against a backdrop of declining humanitarian aid resources, unable to keep pace with rising needs. As a result, demand for accurate food security information to guide scarce resources is more important than ever. In some countries, such as Afghanistan and South Sudan, the IPC results are being used for advocacy purposes to demonstrate what could happen if adequate humanitarian resources are not forthcoming. This is a consequence of the competition for those scarce resources and the need to make an ever more convincing case.³ In the current context, these trends are likely to increase.
34. Since 2019, the IPC AFI has played a critical role in drawing attention to the severity and scale of food insecurity in countries which might otherwise have been overlooked by the international community, for example:
- i. In Madagascar, in 2020/21 the IPC drew attention to the "catastrophic" food insecurity in the marginalized and drought-stricken south of the country (which might otherwise have been downplayed by government authorities).⁴
 - ii. In Afghanistan, in 2021 after the Taliban take-over, when a combination of economic crisis, drought, and conflict resulted in "a record high of nearly 19 million people experiencing high levels of acute food insecurity", projected to rise to over 22 million by March 2022 (IPC, 2022). Western donors had withdrawn from the country and the IPC was the key source of information.
35. Both of these cases confirm the invaluable role of the IPC in advocacy, and also the importance of a clear communication strategy appropriate for the context. In Afghanistan, for example, senior UN officials targeted the international media in their communication of the IPC results, to ensure the scale of the humanitarian crisis was widely known and understood. In 2022, when international

³ In Madagascar, the IPC analysis was being used to demonstrate the effectiveness of humanitarian assistance, where acute food insecurity had improved in 2022 after a large-scale humanitarian response, but the credibility and attribution of such claims is questionable without more specific data collection and analysis of the contribution of humanitarian resources to improved food insecurity.

⁴ "Without the IPC there would have been a forgotten crisis", in the words of one senior UN official.

media attention focused on Ukraine, senior UN officials directly targeted senior donor officials covering Afghanistan with their communication and advocacy.

36. While the IPC is generally influential and welcomed by users for its role in providing an overall sense of the relative scale and severity of food insecurity, the extent to which it meets decision-makers' needs varies considerably from one country to another. In Yemen, for example, it is perceived as being *absolutely essential*⁵ as the only robust and reasonably uniform system for assessing food insecurity and informing decision-making. But in countries where its accuracy and credibility have been questioned, such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, its influence is less and it is more likely to be used as one of a number of sources of information rather than the foremost source of information.
37. The IPC's role and influence as *the* way in which famine is now confirmed and declared has been amplified by the G7 Compact on famine prevention and humanitarian crises from 2021, which describes it as the "gold standard" for food security data and analysis (FCDO, 2021). While this is positive evidence of the growing recognition of the IPC at global level, it is also indicative of the greater responsibility the GSU and GSC now bear. The fact that no IPC analysis has been carried out in Ethiopia since the contentious May 2021 update which was rejected by the Government of Ethiopia, and that there was no IPC analysis in South Sudan during 2021 when conditions in some counties deteriorated badly⁶ (see Box 2 above), have led some analysts at the global level to question whether the IPC GSP is fulfilling this responsibility to alert the world to famine. This is an important issue for the GSC and GSU to address, in terms of how to provide an IPC analysis when government may not be a willing participant.
38. In all the above, the AFI is the IPC scale which is predominantly used and was referred to most frequently in key informant interviews. Indeed, results of the recent online survey of use of the IPC, conducted by the GSU, showed that 83 percent of respondents fully or mostly agreed that the IPC AFI is helpful in making programme funding and design decisions. The intention within the GSP is that the IPC AMN should play a growing role alongside the AFI in informing decision-making, especially in determination of the people in need (PiN). However, the AMN has not yet been rolled out in all countries, including some of those which were the focus of this evaluation.⁷ This is often due to the lack of updated and eligible nutrition data as well as coverage, although efforts are being made to address this with a multipartner road map for enhancing the IPC AMN.⁸ The integration of the two analyses is sometimes hampered by timing of the AMN analysis which can differ from the AFI, for example in Madagascar.
39. The AMN was rarely brought up by interviewees without prompting, and is not always known by users at the global level. This is confirmed by the online survey which highlights that while 87 percent of respondents use the AFI (or a combination of the AFI with other scales), only 35 percent of respondents use the AMN (including a combination of the AMN with other scales). The AMN is used most by international NGOs, according to key informant interviews, and results of the online survey. The main exception with regards to the AMN use is in Yemen where the AMN was done three times since 2020 and was seen as critical to the ability of key stakeholders to raise the issue of 2 million severely malnourished children, with the media, in funding appeals

⁵ In the words of both a donor and international NGO.

⁶ See, for example, https://www.impact-repository.org/document/reach/7a4c9e26/REACH_SSD_Factsheet_Fangak_shocksverification_Nov2021_.pdf

⁷ Rollout of the AMN in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Central African Republic has just started, and there are plans to introduce the AMN in Afghanistan, Sudan and Haiti.

⁸ The GSU and some global partners such as UNICEF and ACF are paving the way for the rollout of the AMN by emphasizing the importance of nutrition data.

and with donors.⁹ More work is needed to integrate, link and bring complementarity between the AMN and AFI scales.

40. The AMN has been rolled out in the West Africa region (Nigeria, the Niger, Burkina Faso, Mali and Chad) in support to the Cadre Harmonisé (CH). However, as in non-CH countries, the AMN is not widely known or used. Instead, the CH results and UNICEF data tend to be the main source of nutrition analysis in the region for users. The AMN was not seen to have added value to the CH analysis or to have improved the level of nutrition analysis in the CH.
41. Donor agencies continue to be one of the major user groups of the IPC, as found by the 2018 evaluation, relying heavily on its projections to make key top-line decisions at the global level on humanitarian resource allocations for individual countries, and in communication with their higher authorities (for example with Congress in the United States of America) to make the case for the release of humanitarian resources. Some international NGOs also use the IPC analysis at headquarters level to contribute to the categorization of humanitarian crises and guide decision-making about allocation of resources. As the IPC is becoming more widely known, its influence appears to be growing with a wider range of donor governments. This use of the IPC is a major factor explaining the attention and importance given to the IPC by all other actors. For some donors, there is evidence of a more discerning approach to food insecurity data and analysis.¹⁰ This trend is expected to increase as humanitarian needs rise and availability of resources fails to keep pace. Some donor key informants expressed a need for more nuanced and disaggregated analysis to guide prioritization and targeting, especially as the impact of the Ukraine crisis on food security intensifies. Donors with less familiarity with the IPC (in particular donors which are not Resource Partners) had unanswered questions about the IPC. They had limited if any contact with the GSU and were seeking guidance on how to use the IPC – one significant European donor did not even know of the existence of the GSU – indicating a communication gap. As noted in the 2018 evaluation, those donors closest to the IPC (the GSP Resource Partners) have the strongest understanding of the IPC and how to interpret and use the results.
42. The main way in which the UN system uses the IPC, and specifically OCHA and the Food Security Cluster and Nutrition Clusters, is as the primary source of information on food insecurity for the annual Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) and Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) at country level. This use of the IPC was already established at the time of the 2018 GSP evaluation, and appears to have strengthened since.¹¹ A new and emerging trend is of UN agencies using the IPC analysis for anticipatory or early action, in response to Early Warning drawn from IPC projections. Ways in which the IPC could better meet the needs of UN agencies, highlighted in key informant interviews, include:
 - i. making stronger connections in-country to needs analyses by other sectors (for example, health and water, sanitation and hygiene [WASH]). This would help to identify connections and feed into a strengthened overall assessment of needs;

⁹ See, for example: <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/acute-malnutrition-threatens-half-children-under-five-yemen-2021-un>

¹⁰ FCDO, for example, has established a “Help Desk” to bring in external independent expertise to help it interrogate and understand different sources of food security analyses, including a number of country-level IPC analyses (e.g. for Afghanistan where IPC and FEWS NET analyses differed considerably). This year, FCDO has also commissioned research on “Difficult Data” for humanitarian decision-making.

¹¹ This is confirmed in the GSU’s Desk Review in May 2022, of citations of the IPC in food security and nutrition programming and policy documents. This shows that by 2021 the HNO referred to IPC findings in all countries that had carried out an IPC analysis. The IPC was also used to inform Flash Appeals in Madagascar.

- ii. ensuring the timing of IPC analyses consistently fits with the HNO/HRP timetable, which appears to be the case in a growing number of countries.
43. National governments' endorsement of the IPC analysis is key to it being available to international actors to use, in turn dependent on the political context and whether government is prepared to acknowledge the severity of food insecurity of its people. As many national governments in affected countries have limited resources for responding to humanitarian crises, their pattern of use differs from international actors. They use it more to inform longer-term strategies that touch upon food security and for targeting development programming. The demand for the CFI was articulated the strongest by national government officers, as well as by some donors.
44. As the World Bank has become engaged in crisis financing in countries affected by emergencies, it has become an increasingly important user of the IPC. Its greatest interest is in the Early Warning function of the IPC in order to trigger early action. However, the analysis it uses most is the IPC-compatible analysis provided by FEWS NET to trigger its Emergency Response Financing (ERF) when certain thresholds of food insecurity are breached. The reasons for depending more on FEWS NET than the IPC are the frequency and reliability of FEWS NET analyses, and the perceived consistency of their analysis.
45. The pattern of use of the IPC by regional authorities, including use of the Cadre Harmonisé by CILSS in the case of West Africa, appears to have changed little since the 2018 evaluation. The respective authorities use IPC and Cadre Harmonisé results principally for regional reporting and analysis of food security, in most cases providing this information to the highest political authority within the regional authority, for example to the Council of Ministers in the case of SADC.
46. The central role of the IPC in informing donor agency decision-making has raised particular challenges for countries where there is no IPC, for example Myanmar, Syrian Arab Republic, Iraq, and most recently Ukraine. This compromises donors' ability to use the IPC to compare food security needs across countries, and undermines the perception of the IPC as a "global process". It has also encouraged international agencies to use IPC terminology (for example of phases for different geographical areas) even when no IPC analysis has been carried out. This is problematic because it is implying a level of technical accuracy and process of analysis which is not the case. For instance, the language of the IPC has been used to claim that a certain area of a country was at risk of falling into IPC 5, or many hundreds of thousands of people were at risk of falling into IPC 5 in their engagement and advocacy with donors. This raises two issues for the GSP. First, in contexts where conducting a consensus-based IPC with government involvement is judged not to be possible, for example because of government resistance, and/or lack of collaboration between government and the international humanitarian community, what else should donors and other international users rely upon? Second, how can the IPC brand be protected when the use of IPC terminology is seen as particularly influential in leveraging donor resources?

4.1.2.2 Users' feedback on disaggregation of the IPC

47. Users positively commented on progress made in further geographical disaggregation in IPC analyses, including expanded coverage of urban analysis, although they are still calling for disaggregation to lower administrative units. The results of the online survey showed that 61 percent of respondents fully or mostly agreed that the IPC analysis is conducted at an appropriate level of granularity. They were much more divided on their need for more disaggregated analysis by gender and other intersectional determinants of vulnerability, with some wanting to see the IPC providing a more nuanced narrative on who is food insecure and not just where and how many. See section 4.7 for a full discussion on this, including the enabling and constraining factors on disaggregation.

4.1.3 Value-added

48. The value-added of the IPC, as cited by users, has changed very little since 2018. It includes:
- i. A single analysis (or “*version of reality*”, in the words of one user), based on triangulation across data sources, convergence of evidence and consensus among technicians from different agencies, which is owned by different groups of stakeholders.
 - ii. An analysis that is not associated with any one agency and its particular interests.
 - iii. A single conceptual framework and standardized approach that enables comparability among countries and over time within any single country.
 - iv. A place where agencies/technical analysts can share, discuss and debate differences of view and different results.
 - v. National coverage within most countries (in contrast with detailed assessments for particular geographic locations within a country).
 - vi. “A gold standard” for food security analysis, described by one government user as “*an acceptable common currency among actors here in the country, on the state of food insecurity and malnutrition. Before that, everyone was using their own data, confusing both government and donors. Now it is accepted by all.*”

4.1.4 Enabling and constraining factors affecting use of the IPC

49. These, too, have changed little since the 2018 evaluation, with the exception of the political context within which the IPC is carried out, which has become an ever more important factor. Many enabling factors relate to how the IPC is perceived as “adding value”, as described above. In addition, the following factors were highlighted by users, most of which are enabling in some contexts and constraining in others.

4.1.4.1 Political context and global status of the IPC

50. As the IPC has grown in profile and influence, at global and at national levels, the stakes associated with IPC analyses are ever higher. On the one hand this may be an enabling factor where national governments are aware that without a functioning IPC their country may receive less humanitarian funding. This provides an incentive to ensure IPC analyses are carried out regularly and results are widely communicated, for example in the Central African Republic. In the case of South Sudan, where government sees itself as a pioneer of the IPC model, it chose to find a way to keep the IPC going following a breakdown in the process rather than drop out of the IPC community; it values the IPC as an important barometer of food insecurity and malnutrition in the country, that is more “neutral” than assessments and analysis carried out by any one individual agency.
51. On the other hand, the high profile of the IPC can be a constraining factor where national governments have contested the severity of food insecurity as revealed in an IPC analysis, especially where conflict is a driver in which they may be an actor. Where this level of contestation and political sensitivity has delayed release of an IPC analysis, or halted it as in Ethiopia, this is a major constraint to use of the IPC if users feel they cannot rely on the predictability of regular IPC outputs.

4.1.4.2 Endorsement of the IPC

52. Endorsement of the IPC as a valid and credible process can be a powerful factor encouraging its use. Both the Global Food Security Cluster (for the AFI) and the Global Nutrition Cluster (for the AMN) have endorsed the IPC as the main source of food security information informing the HNO, for example. On the flipside, where key actors have contested the IPC results at country level, as

in the Central African Republic in September 2021, this has thrown into question the accuracy and credibility of the IPC with users. This can be particularly problematic where IPC global partners are in public disagreement, leaving users unsure which analysis to trust to inform their decision-making. In some countries this has been a long-running issue, usually between FEWS NET and the rest of the TWG, for example in Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of the Congo and Haiti. It is also an issue in West Africa where there is a pattern in some countries of FEWS NET and the Cadre Harmonisé producing very different analyses, for example in Nigeria.

4.1.4.3 How IPC partner agencies use IPC results, and inappropriate use of IPC terminology

53. Where IPC partner agencies are consistent and coherent in using IPC results, in particular numbers of people in need in different IPC Phases, this reassures users – especially donor agencies – of the reliability of the results, and thus fulfils one of the most significant “value additions” of the IPC. However, a number of users have cited inconsistencies among IPC partner agencies in their estimates of people facing “acute food insecurity”, and in their terminology around food insecurity, which sows confusion among users and undermines the credibility of the IPC, especially for users who are demanding increasing rigour from the IPC. As described above, where individuals and organizations (IPC partners and others) are using the language of the IPC without the backing of IPC analyses, this can create controversy and confusion when the IPC analysis comes to different conclusions. Ultimately, while outside of the control of the GSU, the use of IPC language disconnected from an IPC analysis process can lead to a loss of credibility and trust in the IPC and is a reputational risk.

4.1.4.4 Communication and accessibility of IPC results

54. The IPC outputs of colour-coded maps and people in need are accessible to most users and can be translated relatively easily into planning and funding decisions, and into advocacy messages. This is seen as very helpful and meets the needs of donors and others for making comparisons across countries. Some of the new communication tools introduced by the GSP, for example the population tracking tool which facilitates trend analysis, have also contributed to improved utility of the IPC results. On the other hand, some commentators have expressed concern that there is a large amount of unused information from IPC analyses in the detailed reports that accompany the IPC brief, which are less accessible to busy decision-makers and therefore poorly used. Some donor representatives requested that the IPC briefs be simplified and more accessible to non-technical decision-makers, such as politicians. The GSU has made some progress towards this goal with one-to-two page briefs on the IPC analysis for some of the most food insecure countries; but there appears to be a further unmet demand. Technical analysts steeped in the detail of an IPC analysis are not always best-placed to pull out the key messages to guide humanitarian response planning. There is scope for further improving the communication of IPC results, especially at country level, to better meet the needs of decision-makers.

4.1.4.5 Quality of data and of the IPC analysis

55. This continues to be a critical factor impacting use of the IPC and is, in turn, impacted by a range of sub-factors. First, perceptions of the quality and range of data feeding into the IPC analysis is important. In Yemen, for example, data gaps were raised as a concern by some users (donors and UN). In Afghanistan, high dependence on one agency, WFP, for the majority of data feeding into the IPC analysis is seen to undermine the convergence of evidence dimension of the IPC. Second, the quality requirements in the analysis process is seen to differ between countries, with a lower burden of proof deemed acceptable in some countries compared with others, undermining donor confidence in the IPC in some. This is where the quality review processes initiated by the GSP have an important role to play, and they clearly restore confidence in the IPC results in some, but not

all countries. A concern about perpetuating inaccuracy in the IPC analysis was raised by one commentator with years of experience of the IPC, whereby each IPC analysis uses the last one as its reference point. This was referred to as “sticky numbers”. For example, if it becomes apparent that earlier IPC analyses overestimated people in need in high IPC phases, there is a disincentive to revising these downwards because of the potential impact on humanitarian resource allocations. Third, where users feel that contextual factors and conflict drivers have not been adequately incorporated into the IPC analysis, for example in the Central African Republic, they have less confidence in the IPC results.

4.1.4.6 Perceptions of how consensus has been reached

56. Closely related to the quality issue is user perceptions of how consensus has been reached in the IPC analysis process. Where this is seen to have been transparent, inclusive and following the protocols, there is greater confidence in the IPC results. Where this is seen to have been dominated by one or two actors (usually by government, or by one or two UN agencies), users are more likely to question the results and use the IPC as just one source of information rather than the foremost source.
57. Where political pressure affects the consensus-building process of the IPC analysis to come up with a “politically negotiated outcome to the analysis that is “just right” — that is, all parties can live with it, even if it does not agree with the evidence... and does not serve the affected population”, described by Maxwell and Hailey (2020: 26) as the “goldilocks solution”, this too undermines the credibility of the IPC and the trust users put in it.¹²

4.1.4.7 Timeliness

58. Decision-making within most bureaucracies follows a particular schedule. If an IPC analysis is released in time to fit this timetable, it will be most useful to decision-makers. For example, IPC analyses released towards the end of the calendar year are well-placed to inform the HNO and HRP. But the timing of data collection and IPC analyses is also determined by seasonality, often to capture the lean season and harvest season for rural populations. Substantial efforts have been made by the GSU and TWGs to reduce the mismatch of seasonality and bureaucratic timetables for data collection and IPC analyses, and to promote more frequent updates. However, where seasonality and bureaucratic timetables do not coincide, for example in Ethiopia and Yemen, this can be a constraining factor on use unless a compromise can be found. In the online survey of users, 61 percent of respondents fully or mostly agreed that the IPC is timely in relation to the humanitarian programming cycle and meeting decision-makers’ needs; 30 percent only partially agreed and 7 percent disagreed. Of particular concern is the unpredictability of the timing and release of IPC analyses in some countries, with Yemen as an example, where users cannot depend upon a regular schedule of IPC outputs. This is one of the reasons that some users rely instead on FEWS NET, for example the World Bank to trigger Emergency Response Financing. Although not based on the same consensus-building approach, it does follow a regular schedule and produces more frequent analyses.

¹² This has been a particular concern in South Sudan where some commentators have suggested that reluctance to assign Phase 5 classification has resulted in an overloading of people in need (PiN) in Phase 4. See Maxwell, D., and Hailey, P., (2020) ‘The Politics of Information and Analysis in Famines and Extreme Emergencies. Synthesis of Findings from Six Case Studies’. Tufts/ FIC. https://fic.tufts.edu/wp-content/uploads/PIA-Synthesis-Report_May-13.pdf

4.1.5 Role of Global Support Unit in facilitating utilization

59. The GSU has facilitated utilization of the IPC results indirectly through its efforts to monitor and improve the quality of IPC analyses, and as custodian of the IPC, protecting the integrity of the IPC brand as a global standard. It has directly promoted utilization of the IPC by prioritizing communication of the IPC results, the focus of this sub-section.
60. In this latest phase of the GSP, an entire outcome was dedicated to improving communication, which has been much better resourced at the global level as a result. For example, the IPC website has been revamped and five enhanced communication tools developed:
- i. the IPC population tracking tool which provides a quick and accessible overview of people in need in different phases for all AFI analyses for more than 30 countries;
 - ii. the IPC interactive mapping tool, covering both the IPC and CH, designed to enable users to customize and download country maps and population data;
 - iii. the IPC-CH dashboard, as a visual display of the total number of people experiencing or facing high levels of acute food insecurity classified in Phase 3 or above;
 - iv. the IPC Application Programming Interface, whereby partners can access IPC AFI over 30 countries;
 - v. the one or two page IPC snapshot for countries with large numbers of people in need/facing high severity of acute food insecurity, to provide a quick and visual overview.
61. A new communication strategy was drafted, very much targeted at international agencies rather than national governments and regional bodies. In short, most progress has been made in improving the accessibility of IPC information and to some extent strengthening outreach at the global level, for example through press releases and press conferences that accompany the release of IPC analyses. Much less progress has been made in supporting communication of IPC results at country or regional levels. While the GSU is in much more regular contact with its Resource Partners, its relationship with other key users, including other donor agencies, is generally weak. As highlighted above, there are unmet communication needs among this group.

4.1.6 How the IPC could better meet the needs of users

62. The following were raised by users as ways in which the IPC could better meet their current and emerging information needs:
- i. Strengthening the IPC's role in providing Early Warning information for anticipatory action: this requires improved projections based on well-informed assumptions, and the development of different scenarios, especially in dynamic and unpredictable contexts, for example conflict contexts, where the scenarios would be based on two or three different trajectories, captured in the assumptions.¹³
 - ii. Strengthened real-time monitoring between IPC analyses, which could trigger IPC updates: for example, if assumptions underpinning projections become outdated, which may require re-classification of some IPC phases.
 - iii. More intersectoral analysis between those involved in IPC food security analyses and other sectors, for example WASH, health: this would require greater dialogue and sharing of analyses between IPC analysts and those in other sectors.

¹³ Since 2018, the GSU has extended the average duration of the projection period from three to six months, for at least 20 countries. See also Table 3.

- iv. Improved communication of IPC results: so they are more accessible and easily understood by non-technical and high-level decision-makers, so that the messaging makes better use of the more nuanced and currently underutilized analysis beyond the IPC maps, and strengthened communication and channels of engagement with donors and other global users that are not Resource Partners.
 - v. More contextualized IPC analysis, reflecting the particular conditions of the country concerned: for example, improved conflict analysis where that is a driver of food insecurity, and greater recognition of production and livelihood potential as well as food deficits.
 - vi. Greater disaggregation of IPC results: throwing more light on how food insecurity is affecting different population groups, prioritizing more gendered analysis.
 - vii. Strengthened understanding of the relationship between chronic and acute food insecurity: in particular, deeper trend analysis of AFI results over time to throw light on this relationship,¹⁴ and in some countries a clear demand for the CFI.
63. Overall, users would like to see greater agility, flexibility and responsiveness in IPC analyses, better suited to capturing the impact of the fast-moving context and dynamic trends in food insecurity in the period between once or twice-yearly IPC analyses. There is also demand for further upgrading of communication in an increasingly digitalized world, and more external engagement with IPC users.

4.2 Governance

EQ 2. How effective and appropriate are the current governance arrangements for the IPC in view of the higher profile and increasing influence of the IPC?

Finding 2.1. There has been progress on the institutionalization of the IPC into national systems. However, this is a complex objective and needs a context-specific approach, planning and long-term investment.

Finding 2.2. Institutionalization within national government is not feasible in all environments, especially those affected by armed conflict. Clear priorities need to be set in such contexts between the delivery of the IPC as a global standard and its institutionalization.

Finding 2.3. The IPC's governance and leadership structure is very centralized in the global north which is at odds with sector trends to ensure greater country leadership and flexibility.

Finding 2.4. The current governance structure of the IPC is not commensurate with the increased profile of the IPC nor adequate to manage the political nature of food security information.

Finding 2.5. IPC governance at country level varies from one country to another. There has been insufficient context-specific support on country-level governance, although there are now examples of good practice to learn from.

Finding 2.6. Regional governance has been largely absent from the IPC which is a missed opportunity.

4.2.1 Introduction

64. The IPC is a global initiative led by a partnership of 15 major global agencies and international bodies committed to eradicating food insecurity. An effective governance structure is key to its effectiveness and credibility.
65. This section examines how effectively the IPC is embedded within national government institutions, owned by host governments and embedded into IPC Global Partners. It then looks at

¹⁴ This ranked second in the online survey in terms of thematic areas for improvement that respondents would like to see.

how well the governance structures of the IPC are working to deliver the whole of the Global Strategic Programme. There are inevitably some overlaps between these two sections.

66. Two key elements of the GSP are:
- i. a commitment to quality and the maintenance and development of the IPC as an international 'gold standard';
 - ii. a desire to improve the integration of the IPC into existing structures and systems for greater effectiveness, ownership and sustainability.
67. Managing these two elements is a central dilemma for the IPC. Finding the balance between them must be context-specific, based on the underlying strength and transparency of government and institutionalization in areas of conflict among other factors.
68. On some occasions there has been tension between these two objectives. This is at the heart of the IPC's purpose and it falls to those involved in the governance structure to manage this tension and balance these sometimes conflicting priorities. How this has been done and the impact it has had is an emerging theme of the evaluation and is examined as the conclusion of this section.

4.2.2 Progress and impact of integration of the IPC into regional and national level institutions

69. Institutionalization of the IPC at country level has been a core aim of the GSP for the past two phases, from 2014 to 2022. The evaluation of the 2014–2018 GSP recognized that there was further work to be done to define institutionalization and identify how it may be encouraged. There was strong recognition that there could not be a "one size fits all" approach but that it needs to be context-driven.
70. In 2018, the GSU developed a definition of institutionalization and a means of scoring how far it is being achieved. This has made the objective much clearer. Institutionalization is now defined as a combination of five dimensions each, indicative of greater ownership of the IPC by national authorities. These are:
- iii. Governance: decisions are taken transparently and independent of political interference. The IPC is embedded into national structures and institutions.
 - iv. Membership and participation: all relevant sectors and institutions take part and gaps in capacity are identified and addressed.
 - v. Integration and synergies: the TWG has developed relationships with relevant food security institutions and processes and works to ensure cooperation and coherence.
 - vi. Funding: the IPC receives funding from national and regional as well as international bodies.
 - vii. Processes: the IPC is conducted with anticipation and timeliness so that analysis is conducted in optimal conditions. Results are released in a timely manner and without political interference.
71. An initial baseline assessment against these criteria was published in January 2020. In each case a numerical score was given for each country for each dimension on the basis of interviews carried out with key stakeholders, and these were then summed together to give a total score. It was recognized that data gathered for this process was potentially subjective and not statistically representative; however, a number of vetting filters were put in place to mitigate such risk of bias.

72. The results of the 2020 update suggest a range of levels of satisfaction with the institutionalization of the IPC from an average of 33 percent for Zimbabwe to 81 percent for South Sudan. There are some interesting anomalies within the range, for example, South Sudan’s high score was shortly before the breakdown in consensus in the TWG led to the publication of two separate analyses by the GSC and the Government of South Sudan. This suggests challenges or bias within the scoring methodology and highlights the difficulty of measuring such a complex concept. The original scoring system was based on the degree to which the TWG was based within the right institution and that they take the lead in country. However, it did not take into account other qualitative factors in the role of the TWG. This suggests that the indicators and scoring system for measuring institutionalization should undergo a rethink
73. A recent online user survey conducted by the GSU to inform the development of the 2023–2026 GSP showed positive levels of satisfaction with the institutionalization of the IPC. For example, 72 percent of respondents fully or mostly agreed that “decisions on IPC analysis are taken transparently” and 66 percent fully or mostly agreed that “relevant sectors and institutions participate in the management of IPC processes through the TWG”. This survey is not broken down by countries and so these results are not necessarily out of line with those of the institutionalization scoring; they represent the mean values.

4.2.2.1 Country case studies

74. The country case studies carried out for this evaluation have painted a more varied picture of levels of institutionalization and effective governance than the scoring and survey described above and vary with the different contexts in which the IPC is being implemented. Table 3 summarizes key points arising from each country case study. They are not comprehensive but intended to illustrate progress made and challenges which remain.

Table 3. Institutionalization and governance in case study countries

Country	Progress and challenges relating to institutionalization and governance
Afghanistan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National governance structure is strong with a National IPC Steering Committee (NISC) extending to advocating with decision-makers on the use of IPC and upholding IPC. • The IPC governance structure has adapted well to continue without formal government structures since August 2021, although it is dominated by two UN agencies. The challenges will be how to adapt again if/when de facto authorities wish to have more input and how to encourage other, smaller TWG members to be active, vocal participants in the IPC process. • Does Afghanistan offer learning for other countries where government cannot/won’t be part of IPC? Questions remain over how long de facto authorities will allow IPC to operate independently of them.
Central African Republic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic governance structure since establishment with TWG chaired by Ministry of Agriculture. • Although there is engagement from multiple levels of government and a clear process for government approval of the IPC results levels of capacity of government staff are low which is reflected in suboptimal take-up of the IPC. • Decreased engagement by NGOs in past two analyses possibly as a result of virtual ways of working.
Democratic Republic of the Congo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sheer scale of Democratic Republic of the Congo leads to complexity with 26 provincial TWGs which form four-five provincial “pools” and contribute to a single national process. • Proposals have been made to support the IPC with either a National Steering Committee or a dedicated “IPC Hub”. These have not been implemented. • Strong GSU engagement welcomed but raises questions on national ownership and capacity.
Ethiopia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Between 2018 and 2021 there was progress towards institutionalization. • Relationship between the IPC GSC and Government of Ethiopia broke down over the Tigray Update in April/May 2021 and subsequent FRC analysis. The Government refused to sign off

Country	Progress and challenges relating to institutionalization and governance
	<p>results and GSC published them with a note that the host government was not in agreement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethiopia is an extreme example of governance and decision-making challenges and decisions on the way forward will be critical for the IPC as a whole.
Haiti	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Functional and collaborative governance structure led by the Coordination Nationale de la Sécurité Alimentaire (CNSA), the Government of Haiti specialist statistical agency who play a strong and competent role. • The need to incorporate the IPC into national institutions other than the CNSA and vice versa was identified in a quality review (QR) in 2018 but there has been little or no progress on this. This is partly a result of COVID-19 challenges but also the overall weakness of government structures as a whole, high turnover of staff, etc. • High level of commitment from global partners to the IPC although also some notable absences from the TWG
Madagascar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPC well integrated into government systems and processes which gives a strong sense of government ownership. • High dependence on the Chair of the TWG, in post since inception, who is playing multiple roles. • Concerns over possible overemphasis on government ownership and institutionalization and how any potential challenges to consensus would be resolved. • Little engagement of national NGOs.
South Sudan (see Boxes 2 and 4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Much to learn from how IPC collapsed at the end of 2020. View of many that the whole system had to fall apart completely in order to be rebuilt, and that the Independent Review played a critical role. • Government's political support has been key to rebuilding the IPC and allowing all voices to be heard. • Engagement of Resource Partners has been key in review and rebuild. • UN senior leadership taking a more unified position has been important to rebuild. Lack of unified UN position and leadership was catalytic in the collapse of the IPC.
Yemen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In common with all humanitarian actions in Yemen, the IPC is dominated by the north/south divisions but despite this the IPC maintains a single governance structure with a separate sub-TWG for the south of the country. • Challenge of working with two parties to a national conflict cannot be underestimated and the impact this has on day-to-day ways of working, timing delays, etc. • Significant engagement and support from the GSU has been recognized as very helpful.

Source: Elaborated by the evaluation team.

75. The case studies demonstrate a wide range of experience and challenges, many of which are context specific although there are common themes. Recurring issues include:

4.2.2.2 The underlying strength and transparency of government

76. If national governments have weak or fragile structures, overall then this makes it very difficult to embed the IPC into national processes. If there is one agency or individual who is engaged, competent and willing to take the lead on the IPC, then this can overcome the overall weakness but leaves the IPC at risk of being dependent on very specific support, vulnerable if this were to be taken away, and open to undue influence of a particular actor, thus undermining the multistakeholder nature of the IPC. Haiti and Madagascar both illustrate this point. In Haiti, the IPC is embedded within the CNSA which is competent and provides good support to the IPC process but is unable to reach other areas of government. In Madagascar, the effective running of the IPC is highly dependent on one experienced individual, with implications for sustainability.

4.2.2.3 Institutionalization in areas of conflict

77. Inevitably working in areas of conflict poses specific challenges to the institutionalization of the IPC and has led to moments of crisis for the IPC in some countries, for example in South Sudan and Ethiopia. In such cases, it may be that institutionalization is simply not feasible as a primary objective in terms of neutrality from governments who are parties to a conflict. In such cases, an alternative balance needs to be found between international and national leadership. This now seems to have been possible in South Sudan which provides a positive example on which to build (see Box 3).

Box 3. Revising the IPC governance structure in South Sudan

Following the Independent Review of the IPC in South Sudan, the governance structure was revised, applying the following guidance:

- i. elevate the governance of the IPC at national level to a higher level of seniority than is currently the case;
- ii. ensure that there is clear definition and separation of the chairing, facilitation and quality assurance roles throughout the IPC process;
- iii. appoint senior independent oversight of the IPC process as a whole;
- iv. ensure a clear distinction between the IPC analysis and the processes for gathering data;
- v. establish a mechanism for participants in the process to register concerns confidentially;
- vi. protect the space for the IPC technical analysis process in South Sudan to be carried out free from political and institutional influence.

4.2.2.4 No “one size fits all”

78. As was concluded in the 2018 evaluation, there is no “one size fits all” solution to the institutionalization of the IPC. If the IPC is to maintain this objective, then it is important that each country assesses how it will work to achieve this and develops and follows through with specific plans. The context-specific planning which was recommended in the 2018 evaluation has not been taken forward sufficiently during this GSP. This was an unfortunate casualty of the delayed release of donor funding for the recent GSP. It is essential that it is done in the next. This needs to include an open discussion on the viability of institutionalization in situations of armed conflict.

4.2.2.5 Institutionalization in IPC Global Partners

79. The sustainability of the IPC is dependent not only on its institutionalization within national governments but also on IPC global partners owning it by embedding it into their own policies, practices and responsibilities. During the latest GSP phase, progress in this area has been mixed. Some large UN global partners have taken strong ownership and have a tendency to give the impression that they have a leadership role when in fact they are part of a peer group of global partners at country level. Others are strong at a global level but do not send a clear message to their country offices that active participation in the IPC is expected of them. In some cases this is a result of their own networked structures which do not allow such a degree of direction. Stronger and more consistent ownership across the global partner group is essential if the IPC is to be maintained and to develop in a sustainable manner.

4.2.3 Effectiveness and appropriateness of governance arrangements

4.2.3.1 Objectives of governance

80. Although overall objectives for the governance structure as a whole were not set out formally during the GSP period 2019–2022, they appear to have been:
- i. to support guardianship of the IPC as a global standard;

- ii. to promote the integration of the IPC into existing structures and systems;
- iii. to play a leading role in thinking and practice within the food security and nutrition information sector;
- iv. to resolve difficult and contentious issues in increasingly complex environments.

4.2.3.2 Country level

81. The core of the IPC at country level is the Technical Working Groups made up of technical experts representing key stakeholder institutions/organizations. They are responsible for leading the country's planning, coordination and implementation of IPC activities. In some cases they are supported by other bodies or senior management structures.
82. To be effective at country level, the IPC requires clear and inclusive leadership from the TWG and especially from the Chair. It is important that there is wide participation from both IPC partners and other key stakeholders. The GSU has put significant effort and energy into supporting the growth of the capacity at country level through several initiatives, including:
- i. Quality scores: gathering reflections from analysis participants after the IPC process through one-on-one interviews and a group learning exercise. This format is designed to allow space to tackle sensitive issues by giving individuals opportunity to express their views privately.
 - ii. Country road maps: GSU strategies for individual countries to identify and address challenges in relation to capacity, quality, relevance and institutionalization.
 - iii. Community of practice: an online network for Level 3 trained staff and candidates to ask for advice and discuss topics of interest.
 - iv. Continued training at all levels for IPC practitioners and users: it is now estimated that 3 000 people have undergone some form of IPC training.
 - v. Self-assessment tool: gathering reflections from analysis participants in a group exercise after the IPC process through open dialogue and reflection on quality of implementation of IPC protocols and processes.
 - vi. Lesson learning exercise: outside of the analysis cycle, TWGs are encouraged to take stock on a number of issues related to quality, relevance and institutionalization. These exercises serve as a basis for short- and medium-term planning.
83. Evidence from both country case studies and documentary sources confirms that analysis processes and TWGs overall are well established and work reasonably well, with a few exceptions.¹⁵ In most countries, between 30 and 50 people and sometimes many more take part in the analysis. Most IPC partners are represented in the TWG and participants believe that decisions are reached in a reasonably participatory manner. The area in which most additional support is requested is in confirming the quality of data which is a recurring issue in many countries. While the IPC does not gather new data, it is important that the analysis take into account the quality of information available and that there is access to data for quality checks to be carried out. This is a very important area for further work.
84. In some cases, it is reported that TWGs are dominated by one or two key players, usually from government or one of the lead UN agencies, especially when they are in the role of Chair or Co-Chair. Conversely, NGO IPC partners are often much less engaged and in one or two country contexts some do not participate at all. Participation of national NGOs in TWGs is very patchy, in

¹⁵ In particular, in South Sudan the TWG did not function well during the first two years of this GSP phase, leading to a crisis which precipitated an independent review and reform of the structure.

some countries a good number take part and in others very few. In either case, they are rarely vocal at a national level which leads to a real or perceived lack of diversity within the TWG, and may compromise the input of local knowledge. The dominance by a small number of influential partners can stifle discussion and debate, undermine the ability of the TWG to reach consensus and lead to allegations of bias. Given that one of the core principles of the IPC is that it is consensus-based, there needs to be a good understanding among all participants of how to build consensus openly and transparently when there are differences of interpretation, how to make concessions and represent mutually agreed conclusions.

85. A recurring theme in some TWGs has been difficulties arising from the same individuals being charged with a number of responsibilities such as chairing the meetings, facilitating the analysis process and acting in a quality assurance role. This is sometimes an issue of perception based on the behaviour of key individuals who attempt to take on multiple roles which they have not been assigned and to dominate the IPC process as a whole. Separation of responsibilities, clear delineation among them and communication to all involved in the IPC analysis of roles and responsibilities is essential as TWGs deal with increasingly complex issues.
86. In case study countries, respondents were asked how the TWG deals with different points of view and interpretation. It would appear that in most cases there is some opportunity for discussion but the Chair ultimately makes a decision which may or may not represent this debate and be supported by the rest of the group. During the 2019–2022 GSP, there have been only two real-time quality review (RTQRs) following the breakdown in consensus in the TWG, whereas in the previous GSP these were regular events. This reduction may represent improvement in the quality of TWG planning and processes but consensus-building as a skill requires more dedicated investment and guidance. Efforts have been made in this area during the current GSP with training sessions on negotiation and facilitation skills offered but further support for TWG Chairs and participants to ensure that there is a balance among different voices and that differences of interpretation are addressed sensitively and inclusively is still required.
87. Over the past three years there have been several instances of challenges to TWG conclusions. These have taken the form of refusal of the host government to agree the brief in South Sudan and Ethiopia, criticism of the IPC phasing from the Regional Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator and/or the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT), or questioning by UN agencies at country level of the assumptions underpinning IPC projections. This has sometimes been the result of early “raw” conclusions being made accessible rather than waiting for the more nuanced outcome of TWG discussions but in several cases it is also the result of expectations held before the IPC process began which arise from the intensely political nature of food security information, particularly in countries affected by conflict where government is a party to that conflict.
88. Stronger communication about the TWG process and earlier discussions with key stakeholders would help to manage or avoid such situation but others are a fundamental challenge to the twin objectives of the IPC as a global gold standard and the institutionalization process. Where this is the case, national steering committees as in Afghanistan or structures such as the one which has been developed in South Sudan can help to reduce the pressure on the technically-driven TWG. Such structures acknowledge the political nature of food security information and provide necessary additional strategic support to resolve complex issues.

4.2.3.3 Regional level

89. There is little or no formal IPC governance structure at regional level. In southern Africa, a small regional TWG meets to discuss the IPC and to liaise with SADC and the UN Regional Interagency Standing Committee (RIASCO). In east and central Africa, a Food Security and Nutrition Working

Group, which includes several IPC partners, meets and provides regular updates to the humanitarian community based on IPC briefs, maps and other products. A similar group also met in Southern Africa and both are supported by the IPC Regional Coordinators. The GSU Regional Coordinators are key members of the IPC structure but their primary purpose is to provide technical support and guidance to countries rather than acting as part of a governance structure. Several regional governmental bodies are partners of the IPC but have limited involvement in the process or the GSC with the exception of SICA who play a more active role in Central America.

90. Stronger regional governance could provide additional guidance and intervention, particularly in the event of lack of consensus at national level. This would have the added value of being geographically and institutionally closer to countries. Options to explore could be regional steering groups with an advisory role and the capacity to offer a senior brokering or oversight role in the event of disagreement.

4.2.3.4 Global level

91. The role of global governance of the IPC is to provide strategic leadership for the IPC as a global initiative to ensure that it fulfils its objectives, is relevant and useful to humanitarian action and maintains its credibility and reputation.

Global Steering Committee

92. At the global level, the IPC is governed by the IPC Global Steering Committee which is made up of senior representatives of the 15 IPC partner organizations. Some of these representatives are heads of their organization's food and nutrition technical teams while others are humanitarian generalists, usually in middle management roles. The partner agencies have remained the same over the past six years. Several respondents in the evaluation drew attention to the fact that all GSC members have a vested interest in decisions as they are from IPC global partners and suggested that a number of independent members would provide a potentially different perspective.
93. Engagement within the GSC has been strong with some exceptions. Taking attendance at its meetings as an indicator there is consistent engagement from UN agencies, clusters, FEWS NET and most NGOs with one or two exceptions. However, the four regional bodies have less consistent performance, although SICA is a regular attendee and has been Chair of the GSC the others attend very infrequently. The reason for this is unclear as most regional bodies have also been reluctant to engage in the evaluation despite being invited to do so. Their absence undermines the engagement of the global south in IPC global governance.
94. Overall, the GSC has performed well in its core business of reviewing and steering the IPC and ensuring its relevance to humanitarian actors. On a number of occasions it has been faced with critical decisions with wide ranging implications, particularly the publication of the South Sudan report in 2020 and the update covering Tigray and neighbouring zones of Afar and Amhara in Ethiopia in 2021. On both occasions this has been in the face of opposition from the host government, and without engagement of the respective regional authority. Both times the GSC decided to go ahead with publication, taking the view that it was more important to uphold the internationally recognized results than to negotiate with national governments on the outcome, despite the long-term implications this decision may have. Not surprisingly, there were mixed views both within and beyond the GSC on this. Some felt that, particularly in the case of Ethiopia, there had been excessive pressure from some international agencies to publish. Others believed that the evidence was insufficient to allow the publication of the reports and felt that political factors, including a desire to criticize host governments, underpinned the decisions. In the case

of South Sudan there was a higher degree of approval for the GSC decision with many believing this represented the GSC taking a stand based on humanitarian principles in a long-running and difficult environment.

95. Opinions on these GSC decisions are clearly divided between global and country-based actors which is not healthy for the overall reputation and credibility of the IPC and reflects different perceptions, priorities and objective. A means of discussing and unifying these different views while recognizing legitimately different opinions needs to be found.

Famine Review Committee

96. When a country IPC analysis shows a potential or already defined situation of famine, a specific procedure is activated in order to confirm or disprove a famine classification. The Famine Review Committee (FRC) is a team of leading independent international food security and nutrition experts.
97. The FRC is a critical element of the IPC process and its work and conclusions are widely respected by all actors. They are tasked with reviewing and debating evidence available and IPC analysis results and reaching conclusions on whether a famine/famine likely classification is warranted. It is at its best when it has time to consult as many stakeholders as possible in the country under review. There are two critical issues with the FRC: the first is that FRC members believe that the IPC definition of famine requires updating and explanation to country teams if their work is to be as helpful as possible. The second is the lack of diversity within the FRC; this is recognized by the team members themselves, and has been raised by them. The FRC could benefit from being significantly more representative of the countries in which it works, which would help to improve its credibility at national level.

Technical Advisory Group

98. The Technical Advisory Group (TAG) is responsible for advising the GSC on technical matters. It is made up of high-level technical experts from the IPC partner agencies. Over the course of the GSP they have been significantly engaged in the updating of the IPC Manual - Version 3.1 and have also contributed to 14 technical publications on a wide range of subjects. They undoubtedly play a strong role in contributing to the IPC's relevance and influence across the sector. Some contributors to the evaluation believe the TAG should play a more active role in decision-making on contentious issues. However, this risks undermining the role of the GSC and making decisions in technical isolation rather than taking both technical and institutional factors into account.

Global Support Unit

99. The Global Support Unit (GSU) is the operational arm of the GSC. It promotes the use of the IPC by decision-makers at a global level and develops and updates IPC protocols and technical guidance based on inputs from the Technical Advisory Group. It also provides capacity development, technical and communication support to countries as well as quality assurance oversight. The GSU is hosted at FAO.
100. The GSU has performed well over the GSP. It has delivered a significant programme of capacity building and quality measurement and assurance and both Rome and regionally-based staff are respected for their professionalism and support to the IPC process as a whole. There is a view however, in some countries, that too many issues need to be referred to the global level, either to the GSU or the GSC, and that there are a limited number of GSU staff who are able to deal with complex political issues. This is the result of a growing sense of independence of the IPC at national levels and is out of step with trends in the sector which are towards decentralization and

increased devolution of decision-making. The IPC would be more in line with this direction if it developed more capacity at country level and entrusted more decision-making to country-based actors. This would need strategic support from the regional level which is not currently embodied in the role and capacity of the Regional Coordinators. Encouraging deeper engagement and representation of the IPC by IPC Global Partner country and regional representatives would also support this direction of travel. Although this decentralized approach would require additional investment at regional level and possibly in some key countries too, it would enable devolution of decision-making from the centre and free up GSU capacity to focus on global strategic issues.

101. An issue which was not raised by respondents to this evaluation but which has been referenced in the past is the hosting of the GSU by FAO. This is a testament to the GSU staff's ability to maintain a level of independence. However, this is not an easy position to maintain and so the hosting arrangement may require further review in future.

4.2.3.5 Implications for the future governance of the IPC

102. The governance structure of the IPC has served it reasonably well in the past, it has offered leadership at both country and global levels and is underpinned by technical competence. However, for some time it has been apparent that it requires upgrading. This point was made in previous evaluations and is even more essential now. The growing influence of the IPC globally, the complexity of the decisions which need to be made in environments where food security information is politically charged and the trends within the humanitarian sector mean that it requires comprehensive review and updating. Issues which should be addressed to ensure the IPC remains fit for purpose include:

Recognition of context-specific factors

103. As the IPC expands geographically, there needs to be more open recognition that different governance structures are required in specific contexts. Separate structures have emerged over time and different objectives have been prioritized but these customized approaches need to be developed openly so that the right support may be offered and the metrics set to measure progress. For example, a stable country with government capacity will need a different structure compared to a conflict-affected country with a very fragile government. This may seem obvious but it needs to be explicit not least as it implies prioritizing different GSP objectives in different countries, and the GSP has so far failed to address this issue despite it being raised in previous evaluations.

Links between country and global structures

104. Country and global governance structures work very differently in the IPC and the evaluation has heard distinct and sometimes opposing views on key issues at different levels, sometimes from within the same agency, for example, on the degree to which national government views should always be followed. Most country-based informants felt that they should, while global representatives were more open to challenge or even bypassing national governments. While debate is healthy, public divergence of opinion is not. There needs to be more opportunity to explore these different views and the introduction of stronger regional governance may also help to bridge this gap.

Increasing decentralization, localization and agility

105. The IPC governance structure is very centralized compared to many other initiatives and bodies within the humanitarian sector, for example the GSU is often closely involved in decisions at country level. Given current capacity and structures this is both understandable and necessary but

over the course of the coming GSP greater decentralization should be developed; this in turn would allow for faster and more agile decision-making.

106. The implications of this direction of travel are that there should be more consideration given to the development of senior oversight bodies in large, complex countries such as that which has been put in place in Afghanistan. There should also be further strategic capacity at regional level which would complement the current Regional Coordinator's role which is primarily focused on technical issues. This strategic role would be the primary support for TWGs when there are issues which are not specifically technical but which cannot be resolved at country level. This strengthened country and regional structure would enable GSU staff to devote more of their time and energy to global strategic issues than they are currently able to do.

Capacity to make strategic, politically charged decisions

107. The IPC is a very respected and well used source of information and this success has led to attention and pressure on current structures to make decisions which have far reaching implications. This is beyond the scope of the role of the GSC as it was originally envisaged and quite often those on the GSC do not have access to the levels of information and discussion which would be helpful to make globally strategic decisions.
108. A more senior body overseeing particular aspects of the IPC, such as positioning in relation to international and national governance systems, and less involved than the GSC in lower-level decision-making and the development of the IPC would take the pressure off the GSC and allow for broader debate. This senior oversight group would also open the opportunity for greater engagement of Resource Partners and stakeholders who have a role in the humanitarian system but are not IPC partners, for example the World Bank, and would have greater leverage within the wider international humanitarian and development sectors. This idea was first put forward as part of the 2016 mid-term review and it seems that events over the last three years have confirmed that it would be useful and enable the IPC to continue to evolve.

4.3 Adaptive capacity

EQ 3. To what extent has the IPC GSP reflected learning from implementation, from internal and external reviews, and from the changing external context and how far has it adapted its programme activities accordingly, with the overall objective of informing and influencing decision-making?

Finding 3.1. Adaptive capacity within the GSP is high, demonstrated by the rapid and appropriate response to COVID-19 and to political breakdowns in the IPC process in some countries.

Finding 3.2. Adaptations have mostly been led and initiated by the GSU rather than the GSC. Factors that have enabled adaptive change include leadership within the GSU that has fostered reflection and openness, and a strong learning culture.

Finding 3.3. Adaptation and change in the GSP has tended to be iterative, which has been highly effective in responding to challenges as they arise. The pace of strategic change has been slower, for example in addressing long-term trends of political interference in IPC analyses at country level, or upgrading GSP governance

4.3.1 Introduction

109. The importance of adaptive management in humanitarian and development organizations working in dynamic and unpredictable environments has been increasingly recognized and promoted in recent years (Hernandez, Ramalingam, and Wild, 2019). This section evaluates the capacity within the GSP to adapt to key changes in the context affecting demand for,

implementation and use of the IPC at global, regional and country levels during the period 2019 to 2022. It explores agility and flexibility within the GSP to adapt in real-time, identifying enabling and constraining factors. It does not cover in any detail the technical and other developments that were planned for this latest phase of the GSP.

4.3.2 Adaptation to the changing context: 2019 to 2022

110. The inception report for this evaluation identified two significant changes in context during the most recent phase of the GSP, each of which has impacted the conduct and implementation of the IPC: the COVID-19 pandemic; and severe food insecurity/contested famine conditions affecting at least two countries (Ethiopia and South Sudan) where this became a highly contentious issue delaying or thwarting release of the final IPC analysis. Key informants interviewed for the evaluation confirmed these as the two most substantial changes impacting the GSP since 2019. After this evaluation was launched there was a third significant change in the context: invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation, creating a major humanitarian crisis in Europe and impacting food supply and food insecurity for other parts of the world, as described in section 3.

4.3.2.1 Adaptation to the COVID-19 pandemic

111. In the words of one member of the GSU, this was "*the big unanticipated change*" in the last four years, presenting major challenges. The GSU responded fast to the COVID-19 pandemic, in two main ways.

4.3.2.2 Adapting ways of working in carrying out IPC analyses

112. In early April 2020 the GSU developed technical guidance to switch from face-to-face to remote ways of carrying out the IPC analysis at country level, and had supported the first remote analysis in Afghanistan in April 2020, followed by the Central African Republic and Madagascar. A webpage dedicated to "The IPC in the context of COVID-19" was launched in April 2020. This also provided a guidance note on adapting evidence requirements for IPC virtual analyses in recognition of some of the challenges of carrying out data collection during the pandemic. During 2020 the GSU supported a record number of 68 IPC analysis, over 50 of which were virtual or hybrid, covering 28 countries, and a further 63 analyses in 2021.¹⁶ Stepping up the number of IPC analyses was appropriate to identify how food insecurity was affected in the first year of the pandemic. As COVID-19 restrictions were imposed or adapted at national level, with consequences for food security, assumptions underpinning projections had to be revisited and IPC analyses updated. Sometime later, the GSU carried out a "lessons learned" review of the experience of virtual IPC analyses. The pros and cons of conducting IPC analyses remotely, as captured in the lessons learned review and from key informant interviews carried out for this evaluation are presented in Table 4.

¹⁶ This compares with an average of 45 IPC analyses per year pre-pandemic. By mid-2022, 36 IPC analyses had been carried out, again indicating the upwards trend since the beginning of the pandemic.

Table 4. Summary of the pros and cons of carrying out IPC analysis remotely at national level

Issue	Advantages of remote IPC analysis	Disadvantages of remote IPC analysis
Inclusion	Opportunity for participation of regional actors (mostly internationals, e.g. from UN agencies and NGOs) able to join remotely.	Less inclusive of national actors (e.g. national NGOs) with poor internet connectivity, negatively affecting diversity of participation. Drop in numbers participating in some countries, e.g. Democratic Republic of the Congo Concern that may be demotivating in the longer-term if participants feel “disconnected”.
GSU capacity to support IPC analyses	GSU staff able to support more IPC analyses, sometimes simultaneously.	
Chairing and management of IPC analysis process		Challenging for TWG chairs and facilitators unable to read and respond to body language of participants.
Consensus-building process		Debate and discussion sometimes foreshortened, and driven by a smaller number of active participants than is usually the case.
Budget and efficiency	Reduced costs due to lack of travel and daily subsistence allowance (DSA) payments, in some countries (e.g. Democratic Republic of the Congo) enabling an additional IPC analysis to be completed during the year.	Some analyses took longer due to poor connectivity, lengthy vetting sessions and endorsement processes.
Quality	Greater GSU engagement believed to have resulted in improved quality in some countries. Recording of IPC analyses was important for quality control in some countries, e.g. South Sudan.	A decline in the quality of the IPC due to reduced participation the remote analysis process was raised in some countries, e.g. Democratic Republic of the Congo and Central African Republic.
Training and capacity development	Refresher training courses switched to online.	Although short refresher trainings completed in-country pre-IPC analysis, other training programmes on hold.

Sources: Key informant interviews, self-assessment exercises carried out post-IPC analyses at country level, and GSU lessons learned document.

113. The GSU is now considering greater flexibility between in-person, hybrid and remote ways of working for future IPC analyses. Many participants interviewed at country level have expressed a strong preference for face-to-face, although some others who are not always able to join in person (e.g. FEWS NET in Afghanistan), would like to see more hybrid analyses. The GSU now proposes a mixed approach, of face-to-face workshops for the main IPC analysis and hybrid or online for IPC updates. This is an appropriate way forward, taking account of the pros and cons of face-to-face and remote ways of working, as described above.

4.3.2.3 Adapting the IPC analysis to recognize the COVID-19 pandemic as a key factor impacting food insecurity

114. The main adaptation, also introduced rapidly in March 2020, was an increased focus on urban food insecurity as the pandemic and associated lockdowns triggered economic crises at country and global levels, putting particular pressure on the livelihoods of the urban poor.¹⁷ As noted on the IPC webpage on adapting to COVID-19, the challenge has been the issue of limited data on

¹⁷ See, for example, UN Habitat and WFP (2021) ‘Life Amidst a Pandemic: Urban livelihoods, food security and nutrition in Sub-Saharan Africa’, December. https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2022/03/unhabitat_wfp_joint_report_100322-1.pdf

food security for urban populations. Nevertheless, by 2022 more than 15 countries had produced IPC analyses disaggregated for rural and urban areas.¹⁸ This was an important adaptation that can offer longer-term learning and experience for application of the IPC to urban populations. The Cadre Harmonisé made a further adaptation, triggering additional analyses of impact of COVID-19 on food security. The Cadre Harmonisé Technical Committee set up a monitoring system covering 17 countries in the region. The system monitored five main areas with alert thresholds for health and nutrition, the market situation, pastoral situation and household living conditions. As a result, Cadre Harmonisé analyses were updated in Burkina Faso, Nigeria and Togo.

4.3.2.4 Adaptations to political challenges to the IPC

115. Political challenges to the IPC are not new, but two were particularly serious in 2020/21, as described above, raising the stakes for the GSP. There were two significant adaptations. With more clarity than ever before, the GSU and GSC took the decision that an IPC analysis would not be published at any cost to its technical integrity, and upholding the IPC as a global standard took precedence over following the position taken by national government where this was seen to be at odds with the IPC's technical integrity. This was demonstrated in both South Sudan and in Ethiopia when the GSU, with the support of the GSC, released an IPC analysis for each country that met global standards but was different from the respective government's opinion, even if this action could jeopardize the future of the IPC in the country concerned. In the case of South Sudan, the IPC Resource Partners commissioned an Independent Review, as described in Box 4. This has proved to be critical to restarting the IPC in South Sudan, and to designing upgraded governance and management arrangements (as described above).

Box 4. Independent review of the IPC in South Sudan

After the October/November 2020 IPC analysis broke down in South Sudan, the three IPC Resource Partners – USAID, FCDO and the European Union – commissioned an Independent Review, following a request from the Government of South Sudan for such an exercise. The main purpose of the Review was to support the restoration of the effective functioning and credibility of the IPC in South Sudan. It was carried out over a five month period by an independent team from the Humanitarian Policy Group (HPG) at the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), drawing on widespread consultation with over 70 key informants, a review of documentation, and a consultation process with six key stakeholder groups on the preliminary findings and way forward, accompanied by a Reference Group comprising the main IPC stakeholder groups in South Sudan. The Review documented what happened in the IPC analysis process that broke down (providing some historical and contextual background), analysed the reasons for the breakdown in consensus, and set out recommendations for the way forward. It provided an immediate set of recommendations so that an IPC analysis could be completed in 2021, and a set of recommendations for the medium to longer-term, addressing the issues that had caused the IPC process to break down. Some key informants interviewed for the evaluation have proposed that such an independent review process be incorporated into the next phase of the GSP.

Sources: Buchanan-Smith *et al.* (2021); key informants for the evaluation.

116. On the one hand, both situations were handled with speed and agility in 2020/21, with the active engagement of the GSC and leadership from key global partners. The GSU also, appropriately, stepped up its engagement with Resource Partners, to ensure they were aware of the political challenges to the IPC, at global and country levels, and to solicit their support.¹⁹ On the other hand, it has taken some years for these issues to be addressed, certainly in South Sudan, although some key informants were of the opinion that the IPC process had to reach a point of collapse in order to be redesigned. In Ethiopia, no progress has been made a year after the breakdown of the IPC and there is still a wide range of opinions as to what could or should happen to re-

¹⁸ In 2018/19, only Somalia was producing an IPC analysis disaggregated by rural and urban.

¹⁹ This has since been developed into a "Note on enhanced communication with IPC donors".

establish the IPC in a critical country. Adaptive capacity to address more fundamental strategic issues needs to be strengthened.

117. The GSU supported adaptation to a different kind of political challenge in Afghanistan after the Taliban takeover in August 2021. Whereas the former government of Afghanistan had been actively engaged in the governance and implementation of the IPC, chairing both the TWG and Steering Committee, this was no longer feasible when the Taliban became the de facto authority. Realizing that an IPC analysis was urgently needed, to capture the impact on food insecurity of the economic crisis associated with political upheaval and sanctions, UN agencies took over chairing and management of the IPC Steering Committee, namely FAO and WFP, and the Coordinator of the Food Security and Agriculture Cluster (FSAC) is now Chair of the TWG. The GSU was highly engaged and supportive in ensuring an IPC analysis was completed in October 2021. This support was timely and appreciated by stakeholders at national level.

4.3.2.5 Impact of the Ukraine crisis

118. Three months after the beginning of the Ukraine crisis, in May 2022 the GSU prepared guidance for TWGs on how to take account of the potential impact of the crisis on food insecurity in IPC analysis processes. The GSU also posted a webpage summarizing the impact of the crisis on particular countries.²⁰ This is a good example of a rapid and appropriate adaptation to change in the external context. There have been suggestions from some quarters that an IPC analysis be carried out for Ukraine. This has once again (following attempts at an IPC analysis in the Syrian Arab Republic in the last phase of the GSP), shone the spotlight on the need within the GSP for a clear policy and protocol on conducting one-off IPC analyses in sudden-onset crises in countries where the IPC has not yet been introduced.

4.3.2.6 Other adaptations

119. The GSU has carried out a number of planned and unplanned (responding to user demands) adaptations on top of supporting ongoing analyses and adapting to changes in the context. This shows the GSU's investment in continuously improving and adapting the IPC. Such adaptations, when planned, receive the support of the Technical Advisory Group. Learning processes (mostly documented) tend to be follow pilots and inform next steps. Most of the initiatives listed in Table 5 have been piloted so are not yet integrated in guidance, scaled up or widely implemented. As a result, key informants rarely mentioned them, usually in the countries where they are being piloted.

²⁰ See <https://www.ipcinfo.org/ukraine/>, also for the IPC country analyses that looked at the impact of the war in Ukraine on food security and nutrition.

Table 5. Other adaptations pioneered within the GSP: 2019–2022

Adaptation	Progress and description
Risk of famine	The “risk of famine” pilot aimed to develop standards for assessment and communication of a risk of famine so as to avoid unstandardized use of the term. Draft “risk of famine” guidance and accompanying process will be rolled out. Pilots were conducted in Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar and Somalia, with an actual “Risk of Famine” analysis carried out in Yemen.
People in need	Pilots in Afghanistan, Madagascar and Sudan to improve IPC estimates of the number of food insecure or acutely malnourished people in need of action, known in IPC analyses as “people in need” (PiN)
Accuracy of projections	A research study on this topic has recently been commissioned.
Linkages between scales	The joint AFI-AMN briefs published in 2022 explore interactions/linkages among the AFI and AMN scales, for Yemen, Uganda, Kenya, Cabo Delgado - Mozambique (not yet published).
Extend projections for Early Warning	Increased length of projections from 3.5 months to 6 months between 2018 and 2021, for the top 20 countries with populations facing the most acute food insecurity.
Anticipatory action	Pilots to use IPC to trigger funding for anticipatory action in Somalia and Ethiopia.
Global overviews	In response to growing demand for global overviews of IPC/CH classifications (not planned in GSP), the GSU developed a number of communication tools to support trend analysis and global overviews: the IPC Population Tracking Tool, Joint IPC-CH mapping tools and the IPC-CH dashboard (see section 4.1.5).
Acute malnutrition	In this phase of the GSP, increased attention was paid to nutrition and rolling out of the AMN scale including in the West Africa Region in collaboration with the CILSS, with the construction of an AMN road map to enhance nutrition partners’ engagement and guide more systematic support to countries. While some countries have implemented the AMN recently and only once (Central African Republic and Democratic Republic of the Congo) some countries like Madagascar have had twice-yearly AMN since 2020. There are plans to introduce the AMN in Afghanistan, Haiti and Sudan.
Technology development testing	Pilots were conducted to test technologies that support analysis in particular: support to consensus building, shorter and simpler analytical processes that could help scale up and increase coverage and frequencies, and support to remote/virtual analysis. These were deemed necessary as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the ATARI initiative and exploration, and the need to adapt to current technologies. The outcomes highlighted that the use of these technologies had the potential to increase global coverage and frequency of IPC by simplifying and aiding the analysis process although further testing and prototyping are needed. There were six pilots in five countries (Afghanistan, Haiti, Libya, Malawi, South Africa, Sudan) testing two different technologies (artificial swarm intelligence and mentimeter)
Closer engagement with Resource Partners	In response to Resource Partners’ increased interest and engagement in the IPC, a closer relationship and engagement has been developed based on greater transparency and information sharing, with ad hoc meetings/briefings on specific issues, and on high phases and famine reviews.

Source: Elaborated by the evaluation team.

4.3.3 Quality assurance: progress and adaptation

120. Recognizing the limitations of the retroactive quality reviews, the GSU adapted its approach to provide quality assurance in real-time. This was a planned adaptation as part of Outcome 1 in the current phase of the GSP. It has included support to TWGs throughout the IPC analysis process, starting with data preparation, and a mechanism for triggering and carrying out independent “real-time quality reviews”. RTQRs have only been triggered twice during the last phase of the

GSP, for Afghanistan in September 2020,²¹ and for South Sudan in December 2020.²² These are regarded as high quality, albeit demanding exercises.

121. A new initiative in the most recent phase of the GSP is the introduction of the quality score, based on reflections in one-to-one interviews following the IPC analysis as well as the usual self-assessment and lesson learning exercises. These are particularly valued by the GSU as they allow for more confidential feedback and have facilitated the tackling of more difficult or sensitive issues such as the participation of different actors.
122. As noted above, more virtual analyses have enabled the quality assurance team in the GSU to step up its coverage of country-level IPC analyses.
123. The overall picture is of the GSU continually reflecting upon, and adapting its quality assurance processes.

4.3.4 Enabling and constraining factors affecting adaptive capacity

124. The Monitoring & Evaluation Framework for the GSP is used not only for accountability to donors, but also for the GSU to monitor and track progress against planned activities. It serves this purpose well, but it only tracks activities from the original workplan for the current phase, so is unhelpfully out of line with any adaptations as a result of the changing context and does not give the full picture of the GSU's achievements, nor challenges. While the GSU has a strong track record of capturing lessons and learning, particularly at the global level in short learning briefs, what is lacking is a more comprehensive reporting framework that captures all of the GSU's activities, achievements and challenges, for the GSC and for Resource Partners.
125. The key factor enabling adaptive capacity is the strong learning culture within the GSP, developed and promoted by the GSU. Frequent lesson learning exercises are carried out by each team within the GSU at the end of the year to inform planning for the next year, after each deliberation of the FRC, after each pilot (for example of the "risk of famine" protocol) and during or after one-off adaptations to particular events or issues (for example, carrying out remote analyses during COVID-19). Staff members within the GSU as well as other stakeholders outside the GSU have commented positively on the culture of adaptive learning and the space created to reflect openly and critically. Factors that contribute to this include: leadership that encourages questioning and reflection; and openness to change, improvement and even failure. Despite producing a number of valuable learning documents, the limitation has been the GSU's communication capacity to capture key learning in an accessible form that can be widely shared. Many of these learning exercises, with the exception of the pilots, take place at the global level, and could benefit from greater input from country level.
126. The GSU also encourages learning at country-level with self-assessment processes for all TWG members after each IPC analysis, and periodic (often quite frequent) "lesson-learning" exercises at country level. The evaluation team has noted, however, that such exercises at country level are not resulting in the same adaptation and pace of change. Instead, the same challenges and issues

²¹ An RTQR of the AFI was carried out for Afghanistan, requested by FEWS NET and specifically addressing why FEWS NET's analysis differed from the analysis carried out by the IPC Analysis Team, providing some useful and important insights.

²² The South Sudan RTQR was requested by the Chairperson of the TWG when there was a breakdown in consensus for population estimates in IPC Phase 5 in six counties. The findings of the RTQR analysis confirmed the likelihood of populations in Phase 5, and that some indicators surpassed IPC Phase 5 thresholds, in turn triggering the convening of the FRC.

are often raised again and again, without resolution. There is scope for more input from country level to global learning exercises.

127. So far, much of the change within the GSP has been iterative, whether addressing challenges which have been known for some time, or responding to less predictable and more immediate issues. The trajectory of adaptation has been steady, which characterizes how the GSP has evolved to date. But strategic change has been slower, for example addressing governance issues, as described above. In a highly dynamic external context, and to keep pace with the increasingly influential role that the IPC plays in the wider humanitarian sector, bolder and more substantial changes are now required.

4.4 Gender and other intersectional determinants of vulnerability: disaggregated food security and nutrition analysis

EQ 4. To what extent has gender and other intersectional determinants of vulnerability been taken into account in the different IPC scales?

Finding 4.1. Progress to date has focused on geographic disaggregation including lower administrative units of analysis and increase in urban areas analysed.

Finding 4.2. Limited progress has been made on integrating gender and other intersectional²³ determinants of vulnerability such as age or displacement in spite of a number of initiatives on gender, refugees and internally displaced persons.

Finding 4.3. The value of the IPC offering greater disaggregated analysis on who is food insecure is not well articulated by the GSP and not well understood by users. As a result, it is dividing the GSC and users on the need for further disaggregation.

Finding 4.4. There are opportunities to address existing constraining factors including through training, greater use of existing disaggregated data and diversifying TWG membership.

4.4.1 Introduction

128. Vulnerability to food insecurity can vary greatly depending on an individual's sex, age, ethnicity, language, disability, sexual orientation, religion, livelihood or displacement status (Carter and Kelly, 2021). The mid-term review and the final evaluation of the IPC GSP 2014–2018 called for the IPC to do more to promote disaggregated analysis by gender and other intersectional determinants of vulnerability, including displacement as well as supporting further geographic disaggregation with a focus on urban contexts. Partial progress has been made in response to these recommendations. While opinions are divided, a significant number of key informants for this evaluation highlighted the need to address the gender-blindness of the IPC analysis and to provide more nuanced analysis on who is food insecure (see also section 4.1 on use).
129. Lack of disaggregated data and the focus on household level data are most often highlighted as the constraint for gender and other disaggregated analysis. However, a number of key informants highlighted that disaggregated data is available but underutilized during the analysis process.

²³ The term "intersectional determinants of vulnerability" refers to elements of a person's personal characteristics or social category such as gender, age, ethnicity, displacement which intersect to create a unique set of discrimination which affects this person's vulnerability and capacity to cope with shocks. Intersectionality recognizes that a woman of colour will have a unique experience of gender discrimination compared to a white woman or of racism compared to a black man.

130. This section evaluates progress made on disaggregated analysis including on accounting for gender and other intersectional determinants of vulnerability to food insecurity. It explores issues of geographic disaggregation including urban and rural disaggregation, gender and other intersectional determinants of vulnerability as well as displacement status.

4.4.2 Progress on disaggregated analysis

131. The main progress on disaggregation within this GSP has been on geographic disaggregation either through introducing urban areas in the analysis or using a lower administrative unit of analysis. The GSC made the decision to focus the 2019–2022 GSP on the Risk of Famine and the people in need as well as linkages between scales and lessons learned on the accuracy of the IPC projections. Issues of gender, other intersectional determinants of vulnerability and displacement therefore became secondary.
132. However, the GSU supported a number of initiatives, pilots, guidance and lessons learned on a number of issues relating to disaggregated analysis within this GSP. These included: a pilot and lessons learned report on gender in the Central African Republic, pilots and lessons learned report on refugee populations in Djibouti and Uganda, efforts towards accounting better for internally displaced person populations; and guidance on acute food insecurity in urban areas in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic (see section 4.3 on adaptive capacity). Some of these initiatives involved collaborating with organizations already collecting data to gather additional data or adapt data collection to enable use in the IPC analysis process. Most of these initiatives were added to the workplan and did not benefit from the same depth of support from the Technical Advisory Group due to competing priorities.
133. In spite of these efforts, there has been limited progress on disaggregation by gender and other intersectional determinants of vulnerability as well as displacement. Disaggregated analyses are implemented unsystematically, appearing in some IPC AFI reports in some countries to disappear in the next cycle of analysis (see Box 5). Pilots have provided some useful insights and some next steps on gender have been agreed with a second pilot in El Salvador. A more systematic approach to disaggregation is required.

Box 5. Good practice example on disaggregated analysis

In March 2021, the AFI analysis report for the Democratic Republic of the Congo provided a paragraph on who is food insecure with interesting disaggregation in the analysis.²⁴ However, this disaggregation disappeared in the September 2021 AFI AMN analysis report.²⁵ The example below indicates that with more support and guidance, analysis could bring out some more disaggregation in the narrative on differentiated levels of food insecurity.

"The most affected populations are mainly displaced people, refugees (Central African Republic, Burundi, Rwanda, South Sudan...), returnees, host families and those affected by natural disasters (floods, landslides, fires) as well as households headed by women. Added to this are the poorest populations in urban and peri-urban areas and those living in landlocked areas with low purchasing power and whose access to food takes place at the market level. [...] For example, the November and December 2020 Cellule d'Analyses des Indicateurs de Développement (CAID) survey indicates that 22 percent of female-headed households versus 17 percent of those headed by men use emergency livelihood strategies. In terms of the share of expenditure, 33 percent of women spend more than 75 percent of their income on the purchase of food compared to 26 percent for men. The same survey indicates that 12 percent of refugees consume between 0 and 2 food groups; while 8 percent of refugees, 13 percent of displaced on-site, 17 percent of displaced persons in host families, 17 percent of returnees and 23 percent of host households consume between 3 and 4 food groups. In addition, 68 percent of refugees, 38 percent of displaced people on site, 40 percent of displaced persons in host families, 69 percent of returnees and 38 percent of host households use Crisis (IPC Phase 3) and Emergency (IPC Phase 4) livelihood strategies."

Source: IPC (2021) République démocratique du Congo : Analyse IPC de l'Insécurité Alimentaire Aiguë Février – Décembre 2021, publié en mars 2021 (page 2). Translated from French to English by authors.

4.4.2.1 Geographic disaggregation

134. Geographic disaggregation to lower administrative units of analysis and coverage, including of urban areas, has increased in most countries. Further geographic disaggregation is a regular request by users especially in some countries (for instance Madagascar, Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of the Congo). The call for greater geographic disaggregation reflects concerns over the lack of homogeneity within administrative units in terms of food security situations risking a phase classification that does not apply to the whole area. Additionally, further geographic disaggregation would be helpful where a large percentage of a country's territory is in IPC 3 to help prioritize within these territories (for instance in the Central African Republic), or where the unit of analysis is larger than the unit of planning (for instance in the Democratic Republic of the Congo).
135. However, key informant interviews also highlighted that the IPC needed to balance this wish with the costs and time associated with further geographic disaggregation.²⁶ In most countries, further changes were not necessarily seen as feasible or desirable and could even go too far, for example in Yemen geographic disaggregation was considered to have gone too far in that there are now 333 units of analysis for the country, which is complex and time-consuming.

4.4.2.2 Urban analysis

136. The increase in urban areas covered by the IPC analysis has been welcomed. While urban analyses were done prior to the current GSP (only in Somalia), there was a sharp increase in urban areas covered by IPC analysis partly due to the COVID-19 pandemic (see section 4.3 on adaptive

²⁴ Note that this disaggregation in the analysis was not highlighted by users during interviews and thus it remains unclear whether users found it helpful.

²⁵ It is unclear why the disaggregation disappeared in later analysis. No changes in data collection or survey data used were made.

²⁶ Further geographic disaggregation would not only mean an increase in costs and time for organizations collecting data but also for the IPC analysis process as a higher number of data points would increase the need for analysts and the time allocated to data analysis.

capacity). In this GSP, urban analyses were conducted in 16 countries. In the year 2022, more than 18 analyses covered urban areas.

4.4.2.3 Hard to reach areas

137. The IPC Manual 3.1 provides a special additional protocol to classify areas with no or limited humanitarian access. There have been efforts to expand IPC analyses to these areas. However, commonly this special additional protocol cannot be implemented due to minimum nutrition data requirements not being met. There are a number of initiatives outside the GSP that the GSU could be drawing upon. REACH has developed new methodologies to collect data on hard-to-reach areas. The Cadre Harmonisé is also increasingly using satellite imagery to collect information on hard-to-reach areas. At the time of writing, the FCDO is conducting an evaluation on difficult data which could provide further insights on this issue.

4.4.2.4 Gender and other intersectional determinants of vulnerability

138. There is very little evidence of gender disaggregation as well as disaggregation based on other intersectional determinants of vulnerability. Gender as a thematic issue is on the agenda but is repeatedly deprioritized in the Technical Advisory Group. Gender does not seem to be the priority for some of the more active IPC global partners, such as the large UN agencies. The gendered dimensions of food security are perceived by some as a chronic rather than acute food insecurity issue, although other key informants have made a strong case for greater gender analysis. Demands from users are also divided, with some strong voices calling for more gender and other disaggregated analyses and others failing to see its value added for the IPC.
139. Gender and other socioeconomic inequalities and discrimination are highlighted as factors of vulnerability to food insecurity in the Manual 3.1. However, more detailed guidance on gender-specific analysis has not been developed (except for a short note that serves as a basis for the gender analysis session of the IPC Acute Food Insecurity Level 2 training). A gender pilot was conducted in the Central African Republic as part of the SIDA-funded Oxfam support to the IPC (see Box 6). A gender group formed by Oxfam, CARE, the CILSS and the GSU has been meeting regularly since late 2021. There is a plan to conduct another gender pilot in August 2022. Gender disaggregation is part of the collaboration between the CILSS and the GSU with a perception that Cadre Harmonisé is further along on their gender-disaggregated analysis.

Box 6. Central African Republic gender pilot

The Central African Republic gender pilot is the first gender study conducted for the IPC by Oxfam in collaboration with the GSU, the TWG and other IPC Global Partners. It aimed to contribute to the development and testing of an additional protocol as well as technical advice on gender-sensitive IPC analysis in the Central African Republic and globally. Men and women depending on gender norms can be affected differently by shocks leading to different levels of food insecurity: men can have access to community-based safety nets that women do not have access to; men can have access to additional livelihood opportunities allowing them to switch livelihoods when needed; finally, intra-household dynamics around food may mean that women do not eat the same quantity and diversity of food as men, affecting their nutrition and food security. The results of the pilot confirmed some differences in levels of food insecurity between male-headed households and female-headed households as well as between men and women.

Lessons from the pilot highlighted the need to:

- i. more systematically include qualitative data to be analysed to understand gender as a contributing factor on food insecurity;
- ii. include gender experts within the GSU and within the IPC analysis;
- iii. conduct gender training for key stakeholders including national and international NGOs, Food Security Cluster members, enumerators and the national institutes for statistics in the Central African Republic;
- iv. increase gender sensitization and training within the food security sector.

Source: Interviews and GSU (2022) IPC Gender Pilot in Central African Republic: Results and Lessons Learned (draft/unpublished).

140. The IPC AMN offers greater opportunities for sex and age-disaggregation given it is based on individual data rather than household data. However, a long-running debate within the nutrition sector calls for greater inclusion of other sex and age groups (for example, people living with disabilities, older people) in nutrition data beyond the current focus on women and children.
141. Other intersectional determinants of vulnerability highlighted during interviews as needing more visibility in IPC analyses include: livelihood groups, ethnic minorities and marginalized groups, different age groups, and people with disabilities. Some IPC analyses are already using livelihood zones and groups. Exceptionally, analyses have provided specific information on ethnic minorities and marginalized groups.

4.4.2.5 Internally displaced persons

142. Key informant interviews in Afghanistan and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo mention some progress on accounting for internal displacement in IPC analyses. A document provided by the GSU highlighted that internally displaced person analyses were conducted in the Central African Republic and Somalia in 2022. No further evidence of greater analysis on, or better accounting for internally displaced persons were identified as part of the Central African Republic case study. As per gender and other intersectional determinants of vulnerability, internal displacement has not been a priority for the GSC, the Technical Advisory Group, and the GSU in the current GSP (see section 4.1.2.2 for users' feedback).
143. The number of internally displaced persons tend to be mentioned in IPC analyses as part of the context and are integrated in the analysis as a contributing factor of food insecurity. IPC analysis reports are, however, unclear on how they account for internally displaced person numbers in population tables. Some IPC maps highlight the density of internal displacement. The lack of data specific to internally displaced person populations as well as the sometimes fast-changing nature of internal displacement makes it challenging to integrate in IPC analyses.

4.4.2.6 Refugees

144. The GSU conducted pilot analyses specific to refugees in Djibouti and Uganda in collaboration with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). These pilots were based on available data, addressing a gap in IPC analysis for food insecurity among refugees. The challenge with refugee populations is twofold: their legal status means that their food security is greatly affected by protection challenges (access to markets, access to land, right to work, etc.) while at the same time, refugees tend to depend on food assistance. IPC analysis protocols require testing and tailoring to account for these specificities. The pilot confirmed the difficulty with integrating protection indicators that tend to be collected at the individual level (as opposed to household level for food security indicators). The pilot also highlighted the difficulty with communicating levels of food security (with refugees tending to be in Phase 2 and sometimes in Phase 3 due to the provision of food assistance) versus indicating the need for food assistance. As such, current analytical approaches in the IPC risk underestimate food insecurity and the need for food assistance for refugees.
145. The "lessons learned and ways forward" report on the refugee pilots also raises the question of the value added of an IPC analysis specific to refugees given existing UNHCR WFP Joint Assessment Missions and UNHCR Standardised Expanded Nutrition Survey (SENS) analysis aimed at informing needs for food and nutrition interventions for refugees. The pilots either focused on refugee settlements or incorporated refugees living in the host community without distinction. The value of the IPC could be a disaggregated analysis of refugees living in host communities to

understand if the assumption holds that their food security status mirrors that of the host community.

4.4.3 Enabling and constraining factors affecting disaggregation

4.4.3.1 Users' need and views on role of IPC with regards to disaggregated analysis

146. While some users and GSC members highlight a need for more disaggregated and gender-sensitive analysis, a significant number of respondents including GSC members also questioned the role of the IPC and the added value of more disaggregated analysis. For some respondents, further disaggregated analysis is not the IPC's role and should be done as part of secondary analysis during the design phase of programmes. At the same time, some strong voices highlighted that the IPC cannot continue to be blind to diversity and differentiated food security levels, in particular with regards to gender. Some users of the IPC want to see more analysis on who is food insecure, not just locations and numbers, as well as a more gender-sensitive approach to the IPC. The 2022 online survey confirms that only 39 percent of respondents fully or mostly agree that the IPC is conducted with sufficient disaggregation of different population groups (gender and other diversities) needed for decision-making whenever data are available with 32 percent partially agreeing and 24 percent disagreeing.

4.4.3.2 User priorities versus sector-wide policy and practice

147. Disaggregated analysis including gender-sensitive analysis is deprioritized by some users, GSC members and technical actors. This is often due to other challenges being seen as critical to be addressed first to ensure the basics are right, and not to jeopardize hard-won gains by over-complicating the IPC analysis process. This is confirmed in the 2022 online survey which highlights the issue of the "who is food insecure" ranked 5 as a thematic area of improvement for the IPC with gender-sensitive IPC analysis ranking 7 out of 8 and protocols for IPC analysis among refugees and internally displaced persons ranking last. At the same time, the humanitarian sector is increasing requirements for more disaggregated data and analysis of the determinants of vulnerability based on the commitment made as part of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)s to "leave no one behind". New Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) guidelines such as the guidance on the inclusion of people living with disabilities in humanitarian action require further disaggregation of data and disaggregated analysis of needs. These sector-wide policies and practices are an opportunity for the IPC to demonstrate its role and relevance.

4.4.3.3 Data

148. The lack of disaggregated data (including data on specific groups such as minorities or internally displaced persons) as well as the focus on household level data are seen as major impediments to more disaggregated analysis. However, disaggregated data exists and is increasingly being collected, for example through gender-sensitive Humanitarian Needs Overview (HEA), REACH Multi-Sector Needs Assessments and WFP Research Assessment and Monitoring (RAM). Key informants felt that where data existed, it was not sufficiently exploited during IPC analysis due to a lack of expertise and sensitization of analysts.

4.4.3.4 Guidance and expertise

149. The IPC Manuals 3.0 and 3.1 include references to gender and other socioeconomic inequalities and discrimination as a contributing factor to food insecurity. Gender and conflict analysis are highlighted as relevant expertise to have in TWGs. However, the evaluation did not find evidence of TWGs having specific gender expertise. Instead, TWGs often lack gender and sectoral (e.g. protection) diversity. A perceived lack of expertise on gender and other issues of equity, diversity

and inclusion in the food security sector as well as in the GSU and the TWGs is seen as undermining the IPC's ability to conduct more gender-sensitive analysis.

150. With some progress on geographic disaggregation and urban analysis, the IPC remains focused on identifying where and how many people are food insecure with little attention to understanding *who* is most severely affected by food insecurity. Further disaggregation and analysis on the latter would better inform decision-makers' prioritization, for instance highlighting if a specific livelihood or minority group might be more acutely affected. More disaggregated analysis on gender and other social determinants of vulnerability to food insecurity is also necessary to uphold the principle of impartiality in decision-making.²⁷ It makes visible those populations that are too often left behind, discriminated against or not heard or seen in spite of their often-heightened vulnerability to shocks. For instance, during the drought in 2017 in Ethiopia, older women were more at risk of food insecurity due to their lack of access to community-based safety nets compared to older men (Barbelet and Samuels, with Plank, 2018). Decision-makers can use such analysis to advocate for specific interventions targeting such populations. The IPC remaining blind to these social determinants of food insecurity ultimately affects its relevance and usefulness.
151. Going forward, the GSP should consider how it can better exploit existing data on specific groups as well as disaggregated data to offer a more nuanced narrative on food insecurity and malnutrition. While existing data may not allow full scale disaggregation by gender or other social determinants of food insecurity in population tables and maps, the analysis narrative can indicate and identify specific populations more at risk of food insecurity and malnutrition. In some cases, understanding which populations are less able to cope with shocks may end up changing the IPC classification of geographic areas. As the humanitarian sector moves towards more disaggregation and a more nuanced understanding of needs, the IPC could make some quick wins, for example through increasing awareness and capacity for disaggregated analysis (e.g. through training); encouraging greater use of existing data and the use of qualitative data in the IPC narrative; and promoting gender, inclusion and protection expertise in TWGs. The next GSP could also consider working in collaboration and partnership with key stakeholders on inclusion and on food security, as well as commissioning research for the food security sector on gender and other intersectional determinants of vulnerability to food insecurity to identify relevant indicators. Finally, the GSP could more strategically engage with the IPC Global Partners to identify how disaggregated data could be more systematically collected.

²⁷ For more on this see Barbelet, V., Lough, O., Njeri S. (2022) Towards more inclusive, effective and impartial humanitarian action. HPG Brief. London: ODI (<https://odi.org/en/publications/towards-more-inclusive-effective-and-impartial-humanitarian-action/>)

5. Conclusions and recommendations

5.1 Conclusions

152. Overall, performance within the GSP has been strong during the 2019 to 2022 phase, with significant scale-up of IPC analyses. During this period, global food insecurity has deteriorated significantly, highlighting the critical role the IPC plays at global, regional and country levels as the key source of consensus-based analysis on which a wide range of decision-makers depend, particularly within the international humanitarian community. The influence and profile of the IPC has continued to grow, and the needs and demands of some users have become more nuanced and specific.
153. The GSU has adapted well to unexpected changes in the context, in particular the COVID-19 pandemic, and has provided high levels of support to IPC processes at country level. However, this has also been a period of significant challenge to the IPC, particularly within certain countries, related to the highly political nature of food security information. Some of these challenges have been handled well, for example in South Sudan where the GSP Resource Partners played a key role in the process of redesigning and revamping the IPC. Other challenges remain unresolved, for example the lack of a clear, funded strategy for progressing institutionalization and strong engagement with paradigmatic shifts within the humanitarian sector. In addition, there are some outstanding country-specific issues such as the IPC process being effectively on hold in Ethiopia. There are reasons for some of this lack of progress, for example, COVID-19, challenges with accessing funding from Resource Partners but they require urgent attention in the next GSP.
154. At the end of this second phase, the GSP is at a crossroads. While progress and adaptation have been continuous and have constructively addressed many challenges as they have arisen, fundamental governance issues have not been adequately addressed at global, regional and country levels. These must now be prioritized to ensure the next phase of the GSP is truly 'fit for purpose', able to respond appropriately to future challenges in a fast-moving world, at both the strategic and practical levels.
155. The evaluation draws the following conclusions for the four thematic areas of exploration:

Use

Conclusion 1. As the IPC continues to gain in profile and status, the role international actors expect it to play has expanded. This raises strategic choices for the GSP, in terms of how the IPC can remain relevant to decision-makers in a fast-moving world with the prospect of rising food insecurity. The IPC's growing influence brings with it increased responsibility at all levels of governance and management within the GSP.

156. While patterns of use of the IPC, especially the AFI, have changed little in the last four years, users' demands and expectations of the IPC are rising. In some ways the IPC has become a victim of its own success. Because of its high profile there is an expectation that it should be truly 'global'. There are two key dimensions to this: first, its expected role in identifying and declaring famine, and the implications when the IPC is suspended or no analysis is carried out; and second, expectations/demands for greater geographic coverage to countries where there is severe food insecurity but no institutionalized IPC presence. The absence of the IPC from some countries is now seen as an anomaly. There is growing demand from users for the Early Warning function of the IPC to be strengthened, and for greater agility and responsiveness in IPC processes and from the GSP, appropriate to highly dynamic trends in food insecurity.

Conclusion 2. The political context in which the IPC is carried out has become an increasingly important factor affecting its use, including endorsement (or not) by the respective national government and other stakeholders at country level, and perceived accuracy of the results, in turn dependent on perceptions of whether there has been political compromise in the analysis process.

157. Food security information can be highly political, with implications for the technical IPC analysis process. This emphasizes the critical role of the GSP in quality assurance, in IPC consensus building processes, as well as monitoring data feeding into it. It also has implications for how IPC results are communicated to non-technical decision-makers at all levels, and for governance of the IPC at all levels.

Governance

Conclusion 3. There has been some progress towards institutionalizing the IPC within national structures. However, many factors including armed conflict and weak government capacity have stood in the way of further progress. Proposed plans tailored to specific country needs have not been followed up.

158. Building the IPC into national systems and structures has been a challenging objective which has been on the IPC agenda for the past two phases of the GSP. To be effective it requires strong, transparent government which is not the case in many of the countries where the IPC is implemented. Flexibility and investment are required to fulfil this objective and without this the IPC risks being seen as an internationally driven and owned initiative.

Conclusion 4. The governance structure of the IPC is not fit for purpose given the increased influence it has and the sensitive environments in which it is implemented.

159. At country level, there are good examples of creative solutions to governance issues and these need to be shared and replicated, for example the formation of national steering committees made up of senior in-country staff from IPC Global Partners. In many countries there has been inadequate senior oversight of the IPC process, distinctions around roles and responsibilities have not been sufficiently clear, and engagement among IPC participants has been inequitable.

160. At a global level there are strategic challenges when positioning the IPC. Balancing the competing demands of providing neutral, high quality food security information and respecting the views of national governments poses difficult dilemmas. These challenges need more dedicated senior, global strategic oversight than has been the case to date.

Conclusion 5. The IPC global governance structure is out of step with commitments in the humanitarian sector to localization and decolonization.

161. The humanitarian sector is committed to devolving power and resources to national and local actors who are most in tune with the context and needs on the ground. The IPC is unusual in not having built this commitment into its plans, and its ways of working are often very top-down. There are opportunities to address this gap through closer ways of working between global, regional and country structures, investment in capacity at regional level, and the devolution of decision-making to regional and country levels. In conflict-affected and highly-politicized environments this will involve greater engagement by senior country staff from IPC Global Partners and sometimes government to ensure appropriate oversight of potentially contentious issues.

Adaptive capacity

Conclusion 6. Adaptive capacity within the GSP is high, facilitated by an open learning culture. Much adaptation has been iterative, responding to challenges and changes in context as they arise. Bolder strategic change has lagged behind.

162. Adaptation and change within the GSP have tended to be iterative so far, often triggered by particular challenges and issues. This pace and style of change was appropriate for technical development and progress, but is ill-suited to address fundamental issues of governance facing the IPC at global, regional and country levels, and partly explains why the GSP governance structures have not evolved in the last six years. Bolder and more strategic changes are required within the GSP if it is to continue to fulfil its function as guardian of the IPC as a global standard, continue to support the coverage and implementation of quality IPC analyses at country level, and keep pace with paradigmatic changes within the international humanitarian sector, with credibility.

Equity and gender

Conclusion 7. While geographic coverage and disaggregation has increased during this phase of the GSP, there has been limited progress in implementation of the mid-term and the 2018 evaluation recommendations regarding non-geographic disaggregation. Non-geographic disaggregation was not a thematic focus of this current GSP and was deprioritized by the GSC and the Technical Advisory Group. The perception that the lack of disaggregated data means that limited action can be taken as part of the GSP may have contributed to the lack of progress.

163. With a few exceptions, the IPC analysis continues to be blind to gender and other intersectional determinants of vulnerability including displacement. This is in spite of initiatives and pilots led by the GSU and supported by some of the IPC Global Partners which need to be capitalized upon and scaled-up. Some users have made strong calls for more disaggregated and gender-sensitive analyses. At the same time, the value of the IPC in offering greater disaggregated analysis to show who is food insecure is not well articulated within the GSP and not well understood by most users. Renewed efforts are needed to ensure more disaggregated data is collected. Beyond this, there are opportunities to more fully exploit existing disaggregated data as well as scale up existing practices in data collection, such as the REACH dual household approach or gender-sensitive Humanitarian Needs Overview. Without greater disaggregated analysis by gender, age and other intersectional determinants of vulnerability, the IPC ignores key factors contributing to food insecurity and fails to provide the critical analysis needed to inform impartial decision-making. Existing data may not allow full scale disaggregation by gender or other social determinants of food insecurity in population tables and maps, but the analysis narrative can indicate and identify specific populations more at risk of food insecurity and malnutrition.

5.2 Recommendations

Recommendations to strengthen use of the IPC to better inform decision-making

Recommendation 1. Adaptations to the IPC AFI scales are required in order to meet and keep pace with evolving demands of users of the IPC in a highly dynamic and unpredictable global context.

Recommendation 1.1. Continue to strengthen the Early Warning role of IPC analyses to meet users' information needs to launch anticipatory action:

- i. further develop technical guidance and strengthen capacity at country level to improve projections and the analysis underpinning assumptions, based on a range of scenarios, learning from the findings of commissioned research;

- ii. strengthen consultation, collaboration and communication with actors engaged in anticipatory action so the IPC can better meet their needs and trigger funding and implementation of anticipatory actions.

Recommendation 1.2. Promote greater predictability and frequency of IPC analyses, specifically:

- i. develop mechanisms whereby IPC updates can be triggered by significant changes in assumptions underpinning projections, amending phase classifications as appropriate, learning from the COVID-19 pandemic;
- ii. support TWGs in countries where food insecurity is particularly acute and the context highly dynamic to carry out IPC analyses according to a regular, and in some cases more frequent, schedule.

Recommendation 1.3. Deepen trend analysis from time-series data from the IPC AFI scales, with the aim of better understanding the relationship between acute and chronic food insecurity, linking with the CFI scale where this is being implemented/planned.

Recommendation 1.4. Discourage use of IPC terminology when it is not based on an IPC analysis, with key IPC stakeholders acting as guardians of IPC terminology in order to uphold the role and reputation of the IPC as a global gold standard:

- i. members of the GSC to be vigilant in ensuring their colleagues within IPC partner agencies do not use IPC language where it is not based on an IPC analysis;
- ii. IPC Resource Partners to challenge actors using IPC terminology where it is clearly not based on an IPC analysis;
- iii. GSU to promote understanding of the IPC and the relationship between IPC terminology and IPC analysis.

Recommendation 2. Capacity within the GSP to expand the geographical coverage of the IPC should be developed, particularly to carry out one-off IPC analyses in countries where there is a food and nutrition crisis but the IPC is not yet institutionalized, and in countries where the IPC has been introduced but there are political sensitivities in acknowledging high levels of acute food insecurity. This will require commitment and resources from all key stakeholders of the GSP.

Recommendation 2.1. In countries where there is a food and nutrition crisis but no IPC present, the GSU and IPC global partners should carry out a feasibility study to determine if and how a rapid IPC analysis could be carried out, and if it is appropriate to rapidly establish IPC structures and capacity at national level to carry out regular IPC analyses.

Recommendation 2.2. In countries where there is a food and nutrition crisis and IPC structures are present but a TWG-led IPC analysis process is not possible or is blocked, as a last resort ways of carrying out a non-TWG IPC analysis should be explored, in close consultation with country-level representatives of IPC global partners. It is essential that this is developed in a consultative manner involving global and country-based participants to avoid exacerbating global–country divisions.

Recommendation 2.3. This will also require the political support of Resource Partners, commitment and engagement from global partners, and in particular from the UN system, and additional financial resources.

Recommendation 3. The next phase of the GSP should be designed to ensure enhanced capacity and skills for much greater external engagement with decision-makers and IPC users, by the GSU and IPC global partners, requiring a clear strategy and increased investment.

Recommendation 3.1. Engage in communication that goes beyond the technical results of the IPC analysis, to better inform users about the IPC scales and how they can/should be used (e.g. for humanitarian response planning) as well as what they are not designed for (e.g. detailed project design).

Recommendation 3.2. Invest in additional senior expertise within the GSU, at global and regional levels, to strengthen external engagement with users on an ongoing basis, including donor governments beyond the Resource Partners.

Recommendation 3.3. IPC global partners provide dedicated capacity to support external engagement of the IPC at global, regional and country levels.

5.2.1 Recommendations to strengthen governance

Institutionalization

Recommendation 4. When there is tension between institutionalization of the IPC and the desire to deliver a global standard, the decision as to which objective to prioritize should be made based on humanitarian criteria while safeguarding as far as possible the future of the IPC in any country affected by the decision. The institutionalization objective of the IPC in a given country needs much greater attention and investment if it is to be achieved.

Recommendation 4.1. Develop individual country plans for institutionalization to reflect the contexts in which they will be implemented. As far as is possible, this will require the transparent engagement of government, IPC Global Partners, the GSU and, where appropriate, Resource Partners.

Recommendation 4.2. Be prepared to suspend the institutionalization objective and develop alternative governance structures for the IPC where there is active armed conflict involving government, which is seen to preclude government’s engagement in the IPC in a neutral and impartial process.

Governance: overarching

164. The governance structure of the IPC is no longer fit for purpose given the increased profile of the IPC, the sensitive political environments in which it is implemented, and trends and practices in the humanitarian sector as a whole. The principles in Box 7 should guide governance. Box 8 shows how the proposed bodies fit together into the overall structure.

Box 7. Proposed guiding principles for IPC governance

Subsidiarity

Decisions are made as close to the country level as possible. Country-based participants are consulted, empowered and have the capacity to lead IPC analyses in line with the environment in which they are working.

Diversity

All bodies are as diverse as possible. They reflect both the diversity of organizations involved in the IPC and a wide range of personal backgrounds.

Participation

There is time and space for everyone to participate and large, established agencies should not dominate.

Global level

Recommendation 5. The role of global governance should be to set global strategy and ways of working as well as clarify the trigger for support and intervention.

Recommendation 5.1. Identify triggers for GSU intervention when country capacity is exceeded or when decisions at country level have global implications.

Recommendation 5.2. Update the terms of reference of the various global governance bodies to reflect the principles in Box 7, clarifying the governance functions as set out in Box 8. Participants in each body should be involved in the development of their terms of reference

Recommendation 5.3. Ensure that all relevant IPC participants are aware of and understand the new terms of reference.

Recommendation 5.4. Establish an Executive Committee to provide coherent, strategic direction for the IPC and to make decisions which have far reaching implications for the IPC globally, for example the publication of IPC analyses which do not have consensus or government agreement or the conduct of a non-TWG-led analysis. This group should be made up of senior leaders from Global Partners at Director level, representatives of Resource Partners and a number of independent members who are senior thought leaders in the humanitarian sector with at least some being from the global south. They will meet once a year to review IPC experience and strategy and as necessary for decision-making purposes.

Box 8. Proposed purpose of IPC global governance bodies

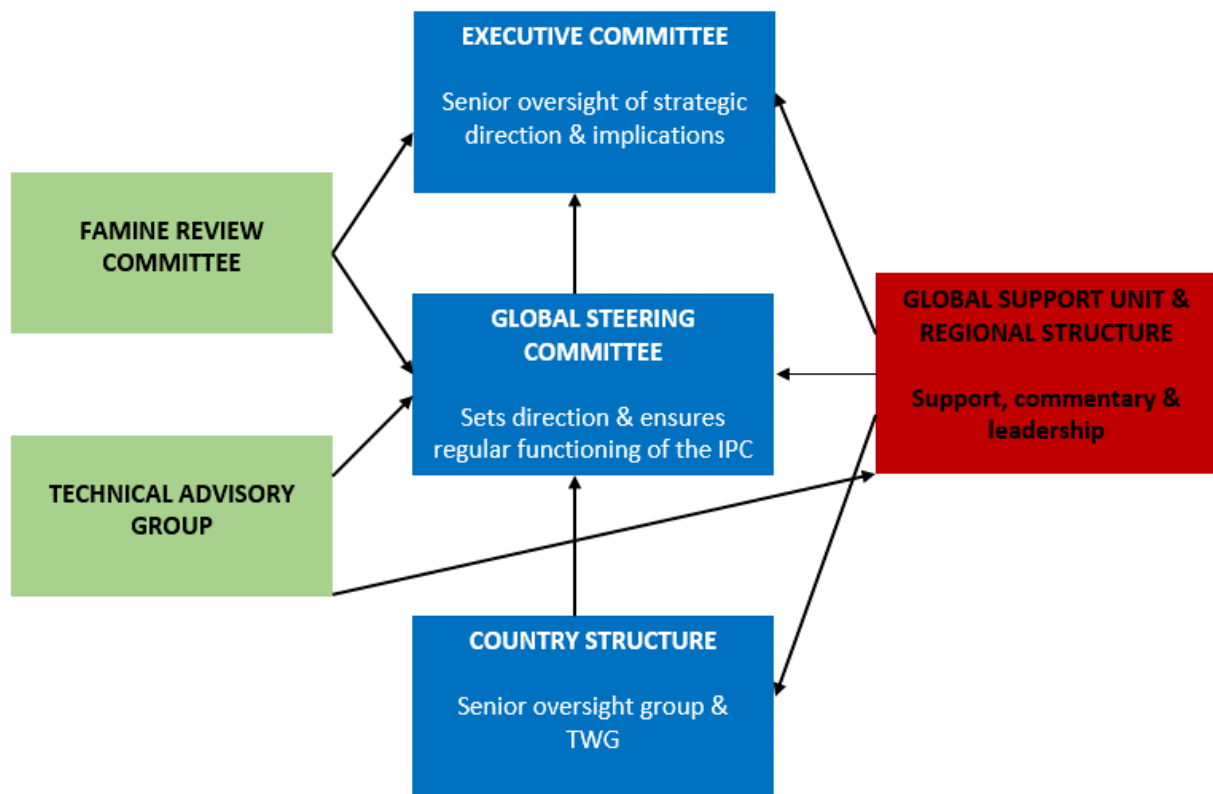
The proposed Executive Committee should provide overall strategic direction and oversight for the IPC, addressing issues and taking decisions which have far reaching implications for the IPC globally.

The Global Steering Committee (GSC) holds responsibility for setting the general direction of the IPC and for ensuring its regular functioning.

The Technical Advisory Group (TAG) is responsible for technical leadership of the IPC through the GSC.

The Famine Review Committee confirms or disproves Famine classifications and may be invited to advise the proposed Executive Committee. This group in particular would benefit from more diverse membership to ensure it incorporates wider perspectives and generates even more confidence in its decision.

The Global Support Unit (GSU) offers support on global level issues but has less day to day engagement with country processes than it has in the past. In relation to countries, the GSU role should be to provide support necessary in line with global priorities and to provide a synthesis of experience from country experience for global discussions. This approach should free up GSU time for more global strategic responsibilities.



Regional level

Recommendation 6. Regional governance should offer additional support and guidance relevant to context.

Recommendation 6.1. Carry out a dedicated, light touch review to understand why regional intergovernmental bodies are not engaging with the IPC and to develop ways of deepening their continued involvement in the governance structure, as appropriate.

Recommendation 6.2. Establish light touch governance structures at regional level to support country TWGs and to reduce the number of issues which require referral to global structures. This will include one additional GSU role in each region, focused on providing strategic rather than technical support. The regional structure could also take the form of a Regional Forum comprising the regional intergovernmental body, the IPC Regional Coordinator and the additional strategic post as well as representatives of regional offices of Global Partners.

Country level

Recommendation 7. IPC governance needs to be strengthened at country level. This will require investment in new and stronger context-specific governance structures.

Recommendation 7.1. The GSU and a small group of independent advisers will support TWGs to conduct a light touch, participatory review of their structures and update these to fit with the environment in which they work. The review will be signed off by the GSC on a one off basis. Each country will include the elements listed in Box 9.

Recommendation 7.2. In countries which are affected by armed conflict, the Executive Committee referred to above should review and approve the revised governance structure to ensure its capacity to be neutral and enable the IPC analysis to be conducted without political interference.

Recommendation 7.3. To promote cross-country learning of a non-technical nature, the GSU should establish a forum, similar to that which already exists for Level 3 analysts, for non-technical participants in the IPC, for example, Country Directors of IPC Global Partners.

Box 9. Recommended elements of country governance structures

Senior engagement from government and IPC Global Partners in the structure who will provide oversight of the IPC process as a whole.

Clear definition and separation of the chairing, facilitation and quality assurance roles throughout the IPC process.

Clearly established 'red lines' for the conduct of the IPC analysis. These are standards which, if breached, would prompt the engagement of more senior government and Global Partner Representatives.

Engagement and support of national civil society bodies, e.g. national NGOs, in the IPC process.

A mechanism for participants in the process to register concerns confidentially.

An investment plan to ensure adequate capacity to deliver the revised governance structure.

Recommendation to further develop adaptive capacity

Recommendation 8. In a highly dynamic external context, the pace of strategic change within the GSP has to be stepped up.

Recommendation 8.1. Strengthen ongoing analysis of key changes in the external context, by the GSU and IPC global partners, supported by an advisory team of expert resource persons, to inform adaptive management.

Recommendation 8.2. Ensure greater space and time for reflection, review and adaptive decision-making within the GSP, at all levels: within the GSU, GSC and the Executive Committee.

Recommendation 8.3. Clarify which types of proposed adaptation should be taken to different governance levels within the GSP for approval, e.g. bolder, more strategic change and adaptation to be taken to the Executive Committee.

Recommendation to further disaggregate IPC analysis

Recommendation 9. The next phase of the GSP needs to provide greater disaggregation in IPC analyses, ensuring that these better reflect how individual characteristics and social status affect people's vulnerability to food security and malnutrition.

Recommendation 9.1. Articulate the value added of disaggregation by gender and other intersectional determinants of vulnerability in IPC analysis, highlighting its role in informing impartial decision-making and upholding the principle of impartiality as well as in identifying populations that may be left behind in line with commitments made through the SDGs.

- i. Ensure that efforts on non-geographic disaggregation include a diversity of determinants not only limited to gender (age, ethnicity, displacement, etc.).

Recommendation 9.2. Adopt a phased approach ensuring that 'good enough' approaches and short-term wins are implemented while also investing in more rigorous and holistic approaches to disaggregation identifying short-, medium- and longer-term actions required to harness existing opportunities and address constraining factors:

- i. increase awareness of, and sensitize analysts at all levels through context-specific training sessions, on intersectional determinants of vulnerability to food insecurity, including how qualitative data could support a more nuanced narrative in IPC Briefs;
- ii. identify existing practices and encourage their scale up in order to ensure greater availability of disaggregated data, such as the REACH dual household approach, or the use of gender-sensitive Household Economy Analysis data.

Recommendation 9.3. Increase expertise and capacity within the GSU on non-geographic disaggregation:

- i. identify secondment opportunities to the GSU from IPC Global Partners such as Oxfam or CARE to support work on non-geographic disaggregation of IPC analysis, and include in funding proposals for the next phase of the GSP;
- ii. collaborate with inclusion-specialized organizations such as Help Age, Humanity and Inclusion or CBM Global;
- iii. continue technical collaboration and learning exchange between the GSU and CILSS on efforts towards greater granularity and disaggregated analysis.

Recommendation 9.4. Commission research to help identify appropriate indicators to support more disaggregated analysis including non-food security indicators that could inform analysis of the differentiated impact of shocks on the food security of diverse individuals.

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Appendix 1. Evaluation team assessment of implementation of recommendations from mid-term review and from 2018 evaluation

Recommendation	Extent to which the recommendation was implemented
2018 evaluation of the first phase of the GSP	
<p>1) The proposed strategic direction for the Global Strategic Programme (GSP) should be adjusted as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Giving the Acute Food Insecurity (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 Chronic Food Insecurity (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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Good progress, e.g. improvement of projections and communication of projections to strengthen Early Warning function. Additional recommendations now made. ii. Partially implemented: roll-out of CFI paused with consultancy input to advise on next steps.
<p>2) More attention should be paid to monitoring use of the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) Acute Food Insecurity and Acute Malnutrition (AMN) scale at country, regional and global levels.</p>	<p>Good progress: Global Support Unit (GSU) now carries out regular online surveys of users, has improved its web analytics and has closer engagement with IPC Resource Partners.</p>
<p>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. 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.</p>	<p>Good progress: GSU has supported a large number of Technical Working Group (TWG) analysis processes, especially remotely during the pandemic. Challenges still remain, especially in countries where food security information is politically sensitive.</p>
<p>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. 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.</p>	<p>Recommendation to establish a research funding facility was rejected, but research to assess accuracy of Early Warning projections has been commissioned under the GSP, albeit late due to delayed receipt of donor funding for the current phase.</p>
<p>5) The GSP should develop and clarify its strategy on institutionalization, at country and regional levels.</p>	<p>Good progress. The GSU's work on Road Maps has given a clear idea of the strategy on institutionalization although implementation has been challenging.</p>
<p>6) The growing influence, use and exposure of the IPC has implications for GSP global partners. 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.</p>	<p>Partial progress. GSP global partners have concentrated efforts on the delivery of the IPC as a global standard. Through their participation in the GSC, Global Partners have steered and developed the IPC through difficult choices. To a large extent the IPC is still seen as technical exercise in global partner organizations as indicated by the positions of those who attend the GSC.</p>

Recommendation	Extent to which the recommendation was implemented
7) The GSP should continue to develop the IPC for better disaggregation. 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.	Partial progress. Progress to date has focused on geographic disaggregation including lower administrative units of analysis and increase in urban areas analysed. Limited progress has been made on integrating gender and other intersectional determinants of vulnerability such as age or displacement in spite of a number of initiatives on gender, refugees and internally displaced persons.
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. These include the GSP's approach to quality assurance, and the effectiveness and appropriateness of the GSP's governance arrangements.	The mid-term review explored these issues but pressure of time and resources delayed significant follow through. These are addressed in the current evaluation.
2016 mid-term review of the first phase of the GSP	
<p>1. The Acute Food Insecurity scale should remain the priority focus of the GSP, with the GSU continuing to provide technical support and capacity development on the acute scales, running quality review processes, continuing to roll out the Acute Malnutrition scale alongside the AFI scale, and taking action to increase the relevance of the acute food security tool. The MTR specifically recommends the following:</p> <p><i>In the current phase of the GSP</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Urgently addressing how Phase 5 and famine guidance can be adapted so that it is possible to provide famine alerts when the convergence of evidence and judgement of the ERC experts indicate the likelihood of famine conditions. ii. Continuing to develop Version 3.0 of the IPC manual, addressing how technical standards can be adapted to be less rigorous for contexts with limited access and data availability. iii. Scoping how the IPC can begin to analyse the food security of urban populations. iv. Monitoring the application and use of the Acute Malnutrition scale, and developing guidance on the contexts in which it should be used, based on evolving experience. v. At national level, promoting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • disaggregation of the IPC analysis by gender and socioeconomic status, encouraging data collection methods to make this possible; • trend analysis of IPC results to provide a more dynamic analysis of food security beyond the static snapshots <p><i>In the next phase of the GSP</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Adapting the IPC AFI scale to urban contexts 	<p>Good progress made, and the AFI scale have remained the focus of the GSP. Progress made with introduction of “famine likely” classification, and “risk of famine” pilot in 2018–22 phase of the GSP.</p> <p>Generally good progress made, although some activities have taken time to implement, e.g. scoping and expanding how the IPC can better analyse food security of urban populations (see below).</p> <p>Progress made in current phase of GSP in application and use of AMN scale, with AMN road map.</p> <p>Limited progress. Limited progress has been made on integrating gender and other intersectional determinants of vulnerability such as age or displacement in spite of a number of initiatives on gender, refugees and internally displaced persons (IPDs).</p> <p>Progress in promoting trend analysis for top ten food crisis countries. Scope to do more.</p> <p>Good progress. The increase in urban areas covered by the IPC analysis has been very welcomed. While urban analyses were done prior to the current phase of the GSP (only in Somalia), there was a sharp increase in urban areas covered by IPC analysis in part due to the COVID-19 pandemic (see section 4.3 on adaptive capacity). In this GSP, urban analyses were conducted in 16 countries. In the year 2022, more than 18 analyses covered urban areas.</p>
<p>2. The chronic scale should be a secondary priority for the GSU, consolidating work already underway, specifically:</p> <p><i>In the current phase of the GSP, and into the next phase</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Monitoring the development and use of the chronic scale at national level. 	<p>Good progress made in second half of last phase of the GSP when target for rolling out the CFI was reduced, and studies into use of the CFI were commissioned, and the CFI approach has been reviewed in the current phase (2018–22).</p>

Recommendation	Extent to which the recommendation was implemented
<p>ii. Thus clarifying the actual and potential uses of the chronic scale.</p> <p>iii. Encouraging TWGs and other stakeholders of the chronic scale at national level to plan strategically and inclusively for institutionalization and ownership of the chronic scale, bringing partners from the development sector into the development and roll-out of the chronic scale.</p> <p>Extending the geographical coverage of the chronic scale to new countries (and regions within countries) should be slowed down until the next phase of the GSP when the revised global governance system is put in place for the chronic scale (see Recommendation 9 below).</p>	
<p>3. Quality assurance must remain a high priority for the GSP, and there is likely to be growing demand for quality review processes as application of the IPC AFI scale expands geographically. Quality review processes for the IPC acute scales should be adapted to be more persuasive, more comprehensive, more inclusive, more accessible and more transparent.</p> <p><i>In the next phase of the GSP:</i></p> <p>i. The GSP should decentralizes as much of the quality review (QR) function as possible to regional level with more face-to-face contact, backed up at the global level.</p> <p>ii. To support this decentralization of QR, Global Partners should be more involved in QR processes, e.g. the GSU should develop a roster of staff with the capacity to participate in QR processes (from a technical and from an institutional perspective), per region, linked to IPC certification.</p> <p>iii. QR processes should be extended to review aspects of the IPC analysis process beyond the worksheets, e.g. the inclusivity of the analysis, consensus-building processes, etc.</p> <p>iv. There should be in-built and obligatory feedback and follow-up mechanisms after a QR process has been completed, actively supported by Global Partners at national level.</p>	<p>Reasonable progress. The GSU has engaged significantly with in-country participants in the IPC analysis and has developed a series of processes to support the development of high quality analyses, with greater emphasis on quality support in-country and in-country lesson learning exercises. There is scope to engage further with in-country participants.</p> <p>The support of the Regional Coordinators has been much appreciated.</p> <p>Quality review processes have been superseded by real-time quality assurance processes.</p> <p>The QR function has been amended to focus less on real-time quality reviews (RTQRs) and more on real-time measures to improve the quality of analysis. These measure include lessons learned exercises, self-assessment tools and so on, all of which are designed to ensure more collective reflection and learning on the part of IPC participants which is a positive move forward.</p> <p>On the rare occasions when RTQRs have taken place there has been wide ranging participation by IPC global partners.</p>
<p>4. As the quality of IPC analyses can only be as good as the data on which they are based, where QR processes show persistent evidence of poor data quality over time, the GSP should have adequate resources (e.g. to provide expert consultants) to:</p> <p><i>In the next phase of the GSP</i></p> <p>i. Carry out a strategic review of data feeding into the IPC analysis at national level, making recommendations to IPC stakeholders in-country about how data quality can be improved;</p> <p>ii. Provide technical advisory support to the TWG in-country to address specific data gaps and challenges.</p>	<p>In response, GSU staff did get more involved in reviewing data availability and what is fed into the IPC analysis. But challenges in terms of data availability still persist.</p>
<p>5. The GSP should 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 will ensure IPC users are better informed about the quality of the analysis they are using. For example, differentiating the quality of IPC analyses between:</p>	<p>Quality scores have been introduced in the current phase of the GSP, but are mainly used internally rather than communicated to users.</p> <p>Other means of assessing the quality of IPC analysis processes have also been undertaken, for example the self-assessment tool.</p>

Recommendation	Extent to which the recommendation was implemented
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Contexts of conflict/reduced access where data availability and quality are known to be weak, thus affecting the reliability of the IPC analysis. ii. Stable contexts where access is not constrained, but there are data gaps and the quality is known to be problematic. iii. Stable contexts with good quality data feeding into a strong IPC analysis. 	<p>The limitation of IPC analyses are now also explained in reports and updates.</p>
<p>6. The GSP must review and revise its model and strategy for “institutionalization” at national level:</p> <p>a) Differentiating between different contexts and thus having differentiated strategies and timescales for institutionalization:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. for countries where government is party to the conflict and handing over the IPC to government is neither feasible nor desirable; ii. for countries where there is greater stability but weak institutional frameworks for food security, and government should be in the driving seat; iii. for 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. 	<p>Partial progress at country level but limited by delay in being able to access resources and challenges arising from working in complex political environments where government institutions are weak and lack transparency. The response to specific country situations described in the recommendations has not been followed through.</p>
<p>7. The Global Partnership of the GSP should be more proactive at regional and national levels, working collaboratively to promote institutionalization of the IPC in terms of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. 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 and programming, e.g. reflected in job descriptions and in work plans. ii. Global Partners should be held to account through obligatory self-reporting on the process of institutionalization within their respective agency. iii. Collectively promoting the IPC at both the technical and decision-making levels in-country, and regionally. iv. Identifying other initiatives and networks that can proactively promote institutionalization of the IPC, e.g. the Food and nutrition security impact, resilience, sustainability and transformation (FIRST) programme which is an opportunity for collaborative promotion of the IPC between FAO, European Union and the respective national government. 	<p>Limited progress.</p>
<p>8. Management of the GSU should be strengthened through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. A clearer distinction between functions required at global level, e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • developing a strategy for institutionalization • technical development • oversight of quality assurance • strategic planning and prioritization for capacity development • communications and advocacy for global level analysis using the IPC 	<p>The GSU has developed significantly during this GSP and good progress has been made on a number of areas, e.g. oversight of quality assurance, support for TWGs and so on. However, there has been little progress on decentralization of the roles of the GSU which means that the IPC is perceived as out of step with trends in the humanitarian sector.</p> <p>The capacity of the GSU has expanded significantly and a strong sense of collective purpose and team working has been developed within the Unit.</p>

Recommendation	Extent to which the recommendation was implemented
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • and functions that can be decentralized, e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ implementing quality assurance processes ▪ carrying out capacity development ▪ technical support and support for roll-out of tools ▪ supporting communications and advocacy at regional and national levels <p>There should be a review of skillsets required at both levels against these functions. <i>This should commence in the current phase of the GSP, to inform the next phase</i></p> <p>ii. Expanding the capacity of the GSU (in the current phase of the GSP) by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urgently recruiting for the position of manager of the GSU, and filling all other vacant positions, supported by Global Partners providing staff secondments. Where there are delays in recruitment, interim solutions should be sought, e.g. through short-term secondments (an increase in total staff numbers is not required). • Ensuring contracts for senior staff are appropriate to, and provide adequate incentives for staff to stay with the GSU. • Ensuring communications and advocacy skills and capacity are stepped up. • Rebalancing the current dominance of technical skills and expertise in the GSU with the need for strong strategic management and “political”/institutional skills. 	
<p>9. Funding for the GSP should be simplified and streamlined, as far as possible with donors funding the overall programme rather than earmarked slices, with coordinated reporting requirements and the synchronized timing of grants.</p>	<p>Synchronized timing of grants has not been achieved and has been a constraint in GSP implementation. An umbrella programme has been established, which enables streamlining and increases the efficiency in processing grants.</p>
<p>10. Strengthening and elevating the governance of the GSP, to ensure it is commensurate with the higher profile and increasing influence of the IPC, specifically:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. establishing a high-level Executive Committee for the GSP, to meet annually; ii. for strategic decision-making and prioritization within the GSP; iii. to reinforce the respective Global Partner’s corporate commitment to the GSP and to the IPC at all levels, ensuring senior managers are aware of what this means, and of their role at global, regional and national levels; iv. that includes donor agencies; v. that will recommend an appropriate governance structure for the chronic IPC scale, for the next phase of the GSP; vi. elevating the Technical Advisory Group (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; 	<p>Limited progress. Discussions have been held on the development of a high-level Executive Committee and draft terms of reference developed but no progress has been made on its establishment.</p> <p>Global Partners’ corporate commitment varies with some partners developing their role in and use of the IPC while others have relatively low levels of engagement.</p>

Recommendation	Extent to which the recommendation was implemented
vii. rethinking the governance arrangements for developing and rolling out the chronic scale, considering the establishment of a separate Technical Steering Committee for the IPC chronic scale.	

Appendix 2. Use of IPC by stakeholder group

Donor agencies

Donor agencies use the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) principally for resource allocation decisions (supported by the Global Report on Food Crises), and to make the case for the release of humanitarian resources within their respective national capitals. Donor officials at country level use the IPC results to advocate for funds from headquarters level, as well as to inform broad geographical targeting of resources within countries. At both global and national levels they use it to cross-reference plans received from implementing partners. Some donors described the IPC as the primary tool for designing their portfolios of humanitarian response: what to support and where.

In terms of geographical coverage, a rather different type of need has emerged for the Pacific region. Officials in the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) see a strong need for the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) Acute Food Insecurity (AFI) for islands and countries that are vulnerable to natural disasters, closely linked to the Chronic Food Insecurity (CFI).

United Nations agencies

The significance of the IPC in informing the Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) and Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) was evident in all country case studies. In Yemen, for example, in 2021 the HRP was delayed until the IPC people in need (PiN) was available. Interestingly, in South Sudan while the governance and management of the IPC was being revised which meant the full IPC analysis would not be completed in time to feed into the HNO and HRP, the Food Security and Livelihood (FSL) Cluster carried out its own "IPC-lite" compatible analysis, without government participation although with their tacit agreement, but without engaging the Global Support Unit (GSU). The IPC is a key source of information for allocating and targeting the Humanitarian Fund, managed by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), in countries such as Yemen and Afghanistan.

The IPC is widely used in United Nations (UN) agency (especially FAO and WFP) proposals to donors, and for advocacy for funding. It is also used in advocacy with the respective national government, especially where there may be resistance to acknowledging the severity of food insecurity. In Madagascar, for example, the sense among international actors is that, "*without the IPC analysis there would not have been a Flash Appeal*", which required government's approval. But as discussed in section 4.2, this may not be successful and can derail the entire IPC process. In a few countries, senior management within the UN has used evidence of improvement in IPC results as proof that humanitarian assistance has made a difference, although this correlation is likely to be a hypothesis rather than proven.

Examples of UN agencies using the IPC analysis for anticipatory or early action, in response to Early Warning drawn from its projections, emerged in Ethiopia where OCHA used the IPC for "focus-based financing",²⁸ and by FAO in Madagascar to release funds as a "crisis modifier".

Non-governmental organizations

Senior managers within a number of prominent international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) use the IPC in similar ways to donors at headquarters level, to categorize and rank the severity of humanitarian crises in terms of food insecurity, and sometimes to guide decision-making about the allocation of their own crisis funds. They also use the IPC for advocacy purposes, at global and country levels, to lobby for funding, and in proposals submitted to donors. International NGOs' use of IPC analysis for targeting varies: a few use it for detailed programme planning and targeting while most appear to use the IPC analyses alongside their own assessment data and information gathered at community level; a

²⁸ An OCHA process to identify key areas and sectors where additional funding will have a significant impact

few depend entirely on their own assessment data for programme planning and targeting, only using the IPC for advocacy purposes. In at least one country, Madagascar, the IPC is a key source of information for the Cash Working Group: for example to decide on the numbers to assist, in parts of the south which are classified as IPC Phases 4 and 5.

As the evaluation team reached a small number of national NGOs in the evaluation, it is not possible to generalize their patterns of use of the IPC. Those interviewed were mostly participants in the IPC analysis process and/or members of the TWG with a strong understanding of the IPC. They used it in a similar way to international NGOs. More detailed investigation would be needed at country level to understand if and how the majority of national NGOs working on food security, which are not part of the IPC analysis process, are currently using the IPC analysis and the extent to which it meets their needs.

Government

National government's use of the IPC is to some extent dependent on the depth of institutionalization of the IPC at country level. In West Africa, for example, where the Cadre Harmonisé (CH) is strongly institutionalized and "owned" by government at country level, there appears to be greater reference to the IPC by national governments, for example in informing national response plans.²⁹ Another major factor affecting national government's use of the IPC is the political context and whether government is prepared to acknowledge the severity of food insecurity, especially if conflict is a major driver.

Overall, national governments do not appear to be major users of the IPC in terms of allocating humanitarian resources, which are usually in short supply. Instead, it was more often referred to as informing strategic planning and the geographical targeting of development projects.

International financing institution The World Bank has become an increasingly important user of the IPC, depending most on Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET) analysis. World Bank officials do, however, monitor IPC analyses on an ongoing basis, as well as other sources of food security data and analysis.

Their key concerns are the geographical coverage of the IPC and FEWS NET which cover fewer than half of all International Development Association (IDA) countries; the confusion caused by different global authorities on food insecurity releasing different figures on global levels of acute food insecurity, for example the World Food Programme (WFP) and the Global Report on Food Crises (GRFC), where the latter is based on the IPC; and the extent to which IPC analyses meet the Bank's increasing requirement for rigour in data and analysis, which in turn implies a need for greater transparency of the IPC analysis process. There has been an unmet demand for greater analysis of food insecurity trends over time, although the new population tracking tool developed by the GSU may go some way to meeting this demand.

Regional authorities

There is limited evidence of how the IPC and Cadre Harmonisé (CH) analyses have triggered action by the regional authorities, even within the Regional System for Food Crisis Prevention and Management (PREGEC) within the Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS). Instead, regional authorities' use of the IPC/CH appears too oriented to making comparisons across countries, drawing attention to those countries where food insecurity is most acute to trigger release of humanitarian funding from international donors at regional level. Within the Central American Integration System (SICA) in the Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) region, a Presidential Declaration on COVID-

²⁹ Some interviewees questioned the extent to which national governments in West Africa used the CH, drawing a distinction between the Cadre Harmonisé (CH) results being quoted and referenced by government, and actually used as a basis for decision making. This deserves further investigation.

19 cited the IPC as a key source of information, and IPC results are reported to have informed targeting of the “food stamp system”.

Annexes

Annex 1. Terms of reference

<https://www.fao.org/3/cc1521en/cc1521en.pdf>

Annex 2. Evaluation matrix

<https://www.fao.org/3/cc1522en/cc1522en.pdf>

Annex 3. List of key informant interviews

<https://www.fao.org/3/cc1523en/cc1523en.pdf>

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