



# TACTICS TO TRY FOR EMERGENCY FOOD PLANNING: Using a Global System for Monitoring and Multisector Engagement for Addressing Food Insecurity in Yemen

The Tactics to Try series of case studies was created to complement the Emergency Food Planning webinar series presented by Food Cities 2022 Learning Partnership. Tactics to Try highlight proven emergency food responses in a format that offers practitioners the most essential points for trying something similar in their own city.

## Objective

This Tactics to Try examines the role of two comprehensive and standardized tools that are used to monitor food insecurity during humanitarian crises in more than 30 countries, including Yemen, and an approach to multisector engagement that sustainably addresses chronic food insecurity and malnutrition. A country in the midst of a prolonged civil war, Yemen offers interesting insights into strategies for addressing chronic food insecurity.

## Geography

The Republic of Yemen is a Middle Eastern country on the Arabian Peninsula, bordered by Saudi Arabia and Oman, and has a population of approximately [30 million people](#). Yemen is divided into 21 governorates and one municipality. The Hajjah governorate, 123 kilometers from the capital city Sana'a, is located in the northwest of Yemen bordering Saudi Arabia and the Red Sea. Hajjah is divided into 31 administrative districts, and has a population of approximately [2.1 million](#) people. The majority of residents in the Hajjah governorate live in rural areas, with only [10 percent](#) of the population living in urban centers.

## Major Participants

### [Integrated Food Security Phase Classification \(IPC\)](#)

A multi-partner initiative and analytical tool for improving food security and nutrition globally

### [Standardized Monitoring and Assessment of Relief and Transitions \(SMART\)](#)

A multi-agency initiative providing standardized survey methods and resources for host governments and humanitarian organisations

### [Famine Early Warning Systems \(FEWS\) Network](#)

A USAID organisation that provides evidence based analyses to agencies responding to acute food insecurity

## Background

Yemen is currently experiencing one of the [world's largest humanitarian crises](#). Major political changes and civil unrest in 2011 erupted into widespread conflict in 2015, dividing the country, spurring extreme economic instability and rising unemployment, and resulting in an unprecedented food security crisis. According to a 2021 [Humanitarian Needs Overview \(HNO\)](#), 20.7 million people rely on humanitarian assistance, 12.1 million of whom face acute malnutrition. Critical levels of acute malnutrition affected nearly one third of all districts and it is estimated that [56 percent](#) of Yemenis suffer from severe levels of food insecurity (crisis, emergency, and famine levels). Yemenis living in rural and conflict-affected regions are most affected by severe food insecurity and malnutrition.

In addition, the [Yemeni Rial continued to depreciate](#) causing food prices to rise and exacerbating the already dire nutritional situation. Yemen's domestic food production only covers approximately [30 percent](#) of its total food needs, but importing food into Yemen remains logistically and economically difficult. Yemen has been experiencing a [significant fuel shortage](#) and the country is in danger of [losing their import financing mechanism](#), which allows Yemen to access credit to pay for imported goods.

In recent years, with widespread conflict and economic deterioration, Yemen has increasingly relied on international partners, including various U.N. agencies, to help address the food crisis.

### [Scaling Up Nutrition \(SUN\) Yemen](#)

Part of a global movement seeking new ways to collaboratively end malnutrition in Yemen

### [Scaling Up Nutrition \(SUN\) Yemen Business Network](#)

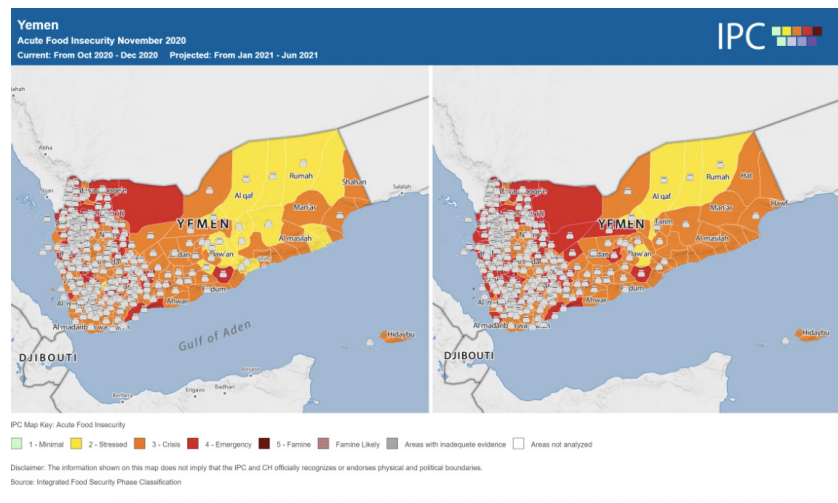
A multi-sector initiative focused on improving nutrition through business partnership

## How it Works

### An objective tool for monitoring food insecurity

- The Yemen government and international partners have relied on the IPC since 2011 to monitor food insecurity conditions within the country and help them make data-informed decisions about interventions.
- IPC produces reports on acute malnutrition and acute food insecurity conditions covering a six-month period with projections for the following six months. It is planned as an annual exercise, but timing varies depending on data limitations due to the ongoing conflict. Conditions are reported at the administrative district level within each governorate and municipality, data permitting.
- The IPC is a standardized, comprehensive monitoring tool that seeks consensus on local conditions from multiple stakeholder perspectives. Governments, U.N. agencies, nongovernmental organisations, the civil sector and other organisations and experts collaborate to determine the severity and magnitude of food insecurity, subscribing to scientific standards to guide their efforts.
- The IPC was developed in 2004 for the FAO's Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit in Somalia. It now comprises a global partnership of 15 organisations and is used in over 30 countries in Latin America, Africa and Asia. This type of tool is critical because it provides a comprehensive, reliable, objective method for monitoring food insecurity in complex, political contexts.
- [In Yemen](#), the IPC Acute Food Insecurity scale is hosted under the Food Security Technical Secretariat with the support of the FAO-FSIS Programme. It is managed by the National Technical Working Group (NTWG), which includes more than 10 organisations (FAO, WFP, OCHA, UNICEF, CARE, Mercy Corps, NRC, Oxfam, SUN, SC, Relief International, and Food Security and Nutrition Clusters).
- According to IPC, the process in Yemen has an average participation of about 70 analysts, including experts in agriculture, livestock, nutrition, food security, statisticians, engineers, economists, markets, water and sanitation and other persons familiar with the local conditions.
- The IPC primarily relies on Standardized Monitoring and Assessment of Relief and Transitions (SMART) surveys. A network of organisations and humanitarian practitioners developed SMART in 2002 to improve and standardize survey methodology for rapid assessments of humanitarian crises. SMART also advocates a multi-partner approach to collecting and analyzing data and establishing shared systems and resources within countries.
- Data limitations are a problem and some systemic data that IPC uses in other countries is either not available in Yemen or difficult to collect. Local government authorities may also [interfere with data collection](#), manipulate data or completely block data collection, which means not all of the data is independent and may not be reliable. The IPC [process also has been criticized](#) for a lack of data sharing and transparency, compiling data from different time periods.

- Although Yemen has implemented SMART surveys for several years, some report [capacity gaps](#) that may constrain the implementation of the SMART surveys. The surveys do require staff with knowledge of the SMART methodology and skills in data collection. A [food security outlook for Yemen in 2020](#) noted that no recent SMART surveys had been conducted at that time, although this was largely due to the pandemic.



### Local predictions of famine conditions

- The Famine Early Warning System Network (FEWS NET), developed and funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), is part of the IPC global partnership. FEWS NET provides [additional analysis of famine conditions in Yemen](#).
- FEWS NET [scenario-analysis](#) is used to develop eight-month predictions for different regions within Yemen. The projections are based on a set of assumptions about events, their impact, and expected responses from stakeholders. They also require data on current conditions, including food prices, fuel availability, recent harvest levels, and any existing humanitarian assistance programs.
- FEWS NET analysts gather data from a variety of sources, including U.S. science agencies, national ministries of trade and agriculture, international organisations, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). FEWS also employs people to monitor localized data, such as food prices or rainfall, and will collaborate with partners to develop household surveys and assessments as additional sources of data.
- In the [most recent report](#), the Hajjah Governorate is noted as an area of significant concern. FEWS models predict an increasing severity of food insecurity due to a combination of declining economic conditions, continuing conflict, and flooding.
- Protracted conflict in the Hajjah Governorate has caused loss of livelihoods, created a fuel shortage and restricted access to infrastructure, preventing the movement and sale of agricultural goods. Flooding in Hajjah city in 2020 affected over [5,353 households approximately 30,000 people](#), destroying infrastructure and homes, killing livestock, and disrupting humanitarian aid in the area. While prices of imported cereals have remained relatively stable following a [five percent increase](#) from March to May of 2020, crop production levels remain significantly lower than pre-conflict levels.
- As of September 2020, within the Hajjah region [40 percent of households rated borderline on the Food Consumption Score \(FCS\)](#), and in the most affected district, [25 percent of children were suffering from moderate acute](#)

[malnutrition \(MAM\) and 10 percent were suffering severe acute malnutrition \(SAM\).](#)

- The latest FEWS report indicates that [crisis level \(IPC Phase 3\) food security outcomes are likely to continue](#) in the Hajjah Governorate for the first four months of their October 2020- May 2021 predictions, noting that in the start of the [‘lean season,’](#) or the time of year between planting and harvest when food becomes scarce, there will likely be a decline in food and labor availability. In the latter four months of the October 2020-May 2021 analysis period, there will likely be an [increase in food insecurity](#) to IPC Phase 4 (emergency level), due to reduced humanitarian assistance and the lean season.

### **Multisector engagement to sustainably address food insecurity**

- Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) is a global movement of government leaders and their partner organisations that was established in 2010 to end all forms of malnutrition by promoting a multi-sectoral, country-led approach. The initiative was motivated by the global financial crisis and rapidly rising food prices that exacerbated food insecurity and nutrition crises around the world. Following the 2009 World Summit on Food Security, political leaders came together around a commitment to end hunger and began the collaborative process that coalesced into the SUN movement, generating the publication of the first SUN policy brief: [Scaling Up Nutrition: A Framework for Action](#) in 2010. With over 100 endorsements and engagement from donors, civil society, U.N. agencies, and governments, the SUN movement was formalised through the first [Movement Strategy](#) in 2012, which continues to provide the guiding framework for the SUN movement.
- The SUN model is structured around four separate networks globally, which are then mirrored in the countries it works: (1) the United Nations Network, responsible for achieving U.N. nutrition goals; (2) the Donor Network, which brings donors together around the shared goal of ending malnutrition; (3) the Civil Society Network, which brings national and international aid and humanitarian organisations together in support of ending hunger; and (4) the Business Network, which engages private sector businesses to invest in ending hunger. Globally, SUN is managed by the SUN Secretariat and [Principles of Engagement](#) are used to guide government and partner agencies.
- Yemen joined the global Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) movement in 2012 in response to ongoing critical malnutrition issues in the country . SUN is part of the National Technical Working Group (NTWG) that manages the IPC process. The IPC analysis, supplemented by other factors, helps them target certain geographies.
- SUN partnered with key ministries in the Yemeni government, and provided technical assistance, to finalize the country’s first [Multisectoral Nutrition Action Plan \(MSNAP\)](#) in 2020 (first developed in 2014), as well as an associated costed common results framework, a monitoring and evaluation plan and an advocacy strategy and action plan. The plan is based on the concept that reduction of malnutrition requires coordination and collaboration among multiple sectors and aligning development and humanitarian responses.
- The SUN Secretariat recommends close ties between public and private sectors, especially small- and medium-sized private enterprises that can work to support the promotion of food and nutrition through business and provide input and insights into emergency food plans.
- Establishing the SUN Yemen Business Network began in 2019 to help reduce pressure on an already overextended government. The SUN Yemen

Business Network will engage private sector organisations in a formalized structure to support the MSNAP. The [Federation of Yemen Chambers of Commerce and Industry](#) is closely involved in operationalizing the SUN Yemen Business Network.

- The private sector businesses engaged in the Business Network thus far include food companies, corporations, banks, trade associations and agricultural and fishery unions. They have also reached out to women-owned small businesses (SMEs) because of their predominance in the food industry and support from UNDP.
- Organisations that support SMEs in Yemen found gaps in food safety and nutrition knowledge, especially in start-ups targeting food for children. MSNAP includes a pledge from businesses to comply with food quality and safety standards, as well as a commitment to promote the International Code of Marketing for Breast Milk Substitutes for improving infant and young child feeding (IYCF) practices.
- The SUN Business Network global guidelines were used as a model for Yemen. The SUN network did not consider setting up a Business Network in a conflict area like Yemen feasible at first, but now they realize its importance and feasibility. SUN Business Network-Yemen was not formally launched due to the pandemic and fund limitations from declining global aid. Since then, SUN and the U.N. World Food Programme-Yemen are discussing the most efficient approach to establishing the Business Network in Yemen. They are planning to target local businesses all over the country through a decentralized model.

## Results

- IPC and FEWS NET are independent and objective sources of information that allow the Yemen government and national and international partners to more accurately monitor the food crisis in the country in a timely manner and plan accordingly. This type of information allows for data-informed decisions by the government and more efficient interventions by national and international food aid partners.
- Yemen's partnership with SUN has led to the formation of new government structures dedicated to addressing the food security crisis, increased government engagement with multiple stakeholders to address food insecurity, increased analyses and mapping of the situation, the creation of a common results framework, and development of a cost analysis of planned interventions. Of particular importance is the country's first Multisectoral Nutrition Action Plan (MSNAP), which was finalized in 2020.
- Yemen has shown the SUN network the feasibility and importance of creating a Business Network in a conflict area. During the war, food businesses flourished. There are more local food businesses post-conflict because (1) it is difficult for people to travel beyond their neighborhood to access food; (2) food businesses are a relatively easy business to establish, (3) there is a high rate of unemployment among youth and women; and (4) there is still local demand—people still need to eat, even during conflict. It may be one of the few strong sectors that can be leveraged by the government.
- New partnerships between the private food sector and the government are being established to jointly address food insecurity and malnutrition.

## Additional Information

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## Implications for Emergency Food Planning

Monitoring and adaptive planning is critical when managing emergency food in a chronic food insecurity context. When chronic food insecurity is part of a national humanitarian crisis, the national government and international aid organisations will be the major players driving the response. However, planning and response demands engagement from local government authorities as well. The following elements should be included in your country and municipality's emergency food planning:

1. Objective and reliable data, collected at local levels, is needed to accurately monitor the location, severity and scale of food insecurity and malnutrition. For some countries, especially those overwhelmed by natural disasters, economic collapse or conflict, they may need the additional capacity and technical expertise of international organisations. Planning should include how best to support and engage in networks such as IPC of FEWS NET. These connections are especially important during disasters or conflict when countries may need to rely on external sources of data because of barriers to data collection. The volatile conditions in Yemen have constrained regular data collection and IPC has had to rely on partners at the global level for their data.
2. Multi-sector approaches are necessary to address chronic food insecurity, emergency food provisions and malnutrition. Governments do not have the capacity to address these issues in isolation; they need to partner with international organisations, the civil sector and private businesses to efficiently provide food, social services and education on nutrition. Public-private partnerships can leverage assets to invest more and create outcomes with greater impact.
3. National emergencies, disasters and conflicts still require local actions for local interventions to address chronic food insecurity, malnutrition and the need for emergency food. National governments are generally overwhelmed and lack the capacity and resources to effectively engage at the local level. Local authorities and organisations also have the best knowledge of the situation and relationships for implementing interventions. Planning for emergency food needs to happen at the local level and should be supported by and coordinated with national government planning.
4. In addition to investing in farms and fisheries, investing in food start-ups and women-owned food businesses can be important long-term investments that address both chronic food shortages, malnutrition and unemployment/low income levels (an underlying cause of food security). The food sector is often one of the most resilient because it provides a basic human need. During a conflict, it may be one of the few strong sectors that can be leveraged by the government.



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