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Center for
Development Research
University of Bonn

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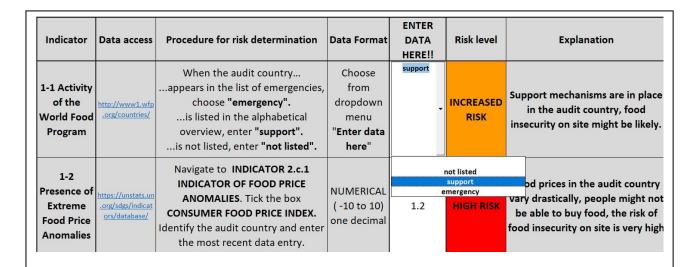
New FSS tool: the National Food Security Assessment

The Food Security Standard (FSS) provides a set of practicable and measurable criteria to incorporate the Human Right to Adequate Food into sustainability standards for any kind of agricultural commodities. It also includes different hands-on tools to assess the compliance with the FSS criteria within regular audits for sustainability certification. Prior to an audit, auditors are expected to gain a broad understanding of the food security context in the country. For this purpose, the National Food Security Assessment tool (NaFSA tool) has been developed. Auditors have confirmed, that the 27 national food security indicators included in the tool provide crucial information to understand the overall food security context and help to prepare for the audit.

The Right to Food aims to ensure that every human being has physical and economic access to adequate food at all times. The FSS integrates the Right to Food into sustainability certification schemes by translating it into a set of criteria that can be verified during a sustainability audit. The criteria encompass all four dimensions of food security and include further aspects of relevance such as the respect of national strategies regarding food security and the respect of human rights or disasters preparedness. Prior to an audit, the auditor is expected to gain a good understanding of the food security context and the related overall framework conditions in the audit country.

To assist the auditor in this task, the National Food Security Assessment tool (NaFSA tool) has been developed within the context of the FSS Project. The tool aims to support the auditor to

I. get a good understanding of the national food security context,

II. become aware of potentially problematic issues threatening food security and the realization of the Right to Food at country level, and

III. identify sensitive topics that might affect food security.

Indicator	Data access	Procedure for risk determination	Data Format	ENTER DATA HERE!!	Risk level	Explanation
1-1 Activity of the World Food Program	http://www1.wfp.org/countries/	When the audit country… …appears in the list of emergencies, choose **"emergency"**. …is listed in the alphabetical overview, enter **"support"**. …is not listed, enter **"not listed"**.	Choose from dropdown menu **"Enter data here"**	support	**INCREASED RISK**	**Support mechanisms are in place in the audit country, food insecurity on site might be likely.**
1-2 Presence of Extreme Food Price Anomalies	https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/database/	Navigate to **INDICATOR 2.c.1 INDICATOR OF FOOD PRICE ANOMALIES**. Tick the box **CONSUMER FOOD PRICE INDEX.** Identify the audit country and enter the most recent data entry.	NUMERICAL (-10 to 10) one decimal	not listed / support / emergency — 1.2	**HIGH RISK**	**Food prices in the audit country vary drastically, people might not be able to buy food, the risk of food insecurity on site is very high**

Figure 1: Structure of the Excel based NaFSA-tool exemplified by indicators of the category "Level of food insecurity". Information where and how to find the respective data is given in the column "Procedure for risk determination", Data are entered according to "instructions for data entry" into the column "ENTER DATA HERE". The "Risk level" is determined automatically and the column "Explanation" describes the meaning of the data and how to interpret the result.

The NaFSA tool contains eight categories that provide a comprehensive picture of the national food security context:

1 Level of Food Insecurity
2 Access to Water
3 Level of Human Development
4 Occurrence of Disasters
5 National Development Strategies
6 Functioning Governments
7 Human Rights
8 Labour Rights

A total of 27 indicators has been allocated to these categories. The NaFSA tool is designed in a way that it contains all the information needed to locate the required data through the provision of internet links and a description. The NaFSA tool uses publicly available information from international agencies and other relevant institutions. Therefore, it is crucial to have internet access when using the tool. It takes less than one hour to complete the NaFSA tool. The user enters the data and the tool automatically determines the risk level. There are three risk levels:

"MODERATE RISK" means that there is no increased but still a likelihood of threats to food security and the Right to Food.

"INCREASED RISK" means that there is an enhanced likelihood of threats to food security and the Right to Food.

"HIGH RISK" means that at national level there is a substantial threat to national food security and the Right to Food.

Figure 1 illustrates how the NaFSA tool is structured, filled and possible results are returned in a shortened version. The tool provides an explanation on how to interpret the results of each indicator as well. An overall risk level is calculated for each of the eight categories, indicating whether a broader topic, such as labour rights, is of concern or alarming at national level. Categories with increased and high risk levels require special attention to the identified issues at the audit. The average national context may be less serious than at

the audited production site; especially issues like undernourishment and hunger, poverty, water availability or disaster risks could be locally alarming but do not appear nationally as a major concern. To help the auditor to cross-check the situation at the production site and area of influence, the NaFSA tool provides a list of potential questions to be asked and discussed with different stakeholders.

With this information at hand, the auditor can identify relevant topics for the audit and select stakeholders that have specific knowledge about local food security. Though such an assessment would ideally be conducted for the area where the audit takes place, the NaFSA tool can only address the national level. Local data often are not available, not accessible or out of date. The local food security situation and context, in the audit region, however, might differ from NaFSA results that refer to the national level.

The NaFSA tool has been successfully tested in five field audits in Guatemala, Bolivia, Zambia, Kenya and Indonesia. The FSS audits were done together with different sustainability standards, applied to different crops and in smallholder and plantation settings. In all contexts, the auditors confirmed that the NaFSA tool helped them to get a better understanding about the national food security context, to explore new information sources and was a very helpful background information for the audit. Additional details on the background and further instructions regarding the NaFSA tool are provided in the respective section of the FSS Handbook for auditors, which will be available soon.