

Action brief

Early warning system for food and nutrition security in Guatemala

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Country: Guatemala

Themes: Information systems

Sub-themes: Interconnected multisectoral databases

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Overview



The Integrated Early Warning System for Food Security and Nutrition is built on three cornerstones

- the Ministry of Health System for Nutrition Surveillance;
- the Crop Monitoring System of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food;
- the Food Security and Nutrition Forecast led by the Department of Food Security and Nutrition.

The monitoring and early warning system is published in the National Food Security and Nutrition Information System, which sets out to generate all the means, processes and capacities to detect – at the right time – the threats or risks of a nutritional crisis or emergency or unwanted situation.



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The integrated system is the only one in Central America relating to food and nutrition security early warning systems.

A coordinated food and nutrition security early warning system is important to ensure forecasting, time predictions and measures in a nutrition crisis or emergency.



Objectives of the action brief

- To showcase one of the good practices of inter-institutional coordination, which is supported by international cooperation to address crisis situations.
- To underline the importance of systematic and efficient monitoring, timely early warning for food assistance, and the prevention of imminent threats or risks.
- To safeguard nutritional achievements and progress in meeting the nutrition agenda in food crisis situations, thanks to constant monitoring and assessment.



Period covered

The food and nutrition security early warning system in Guatemala emerged around 2010 in response to the effects that extreme weather events (droughts and floods) were having on food production.

Work has begun to formalize the food and nutrition security early warning system, culminating in the development of the Plan for Seasonal Hunger Care, monitoring reports and databases published in the National Food Security and Nutrition Information System. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the National Emergency Programme has been developed to face the international crisis.

In the face of the current global food crisis caused by the war in Ukraine, all three systems remain in place.



What action was taken?

This good practice presents the inter-institutionally coordinated panorama of three systems, which are then integrated into the National Food Security and Nutrition Information System. Appropriate coordination is important in crisis situations, so there is a need to activate the food and nutrition security early warning mainly to provide food assistance at regional, municipal and community levels.

The sectors involved are the Ministry of Health System for Nutrition Surveillance the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food and the Department of Food Security and Nutrition, with international cooperation through the coordination of the Support Institutions Group. From the outset, the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) have supported the process, in addition to non-governmental organizations such as Action Against Hunger and the Famine Early Warning Systems Network from the United States Agency for International Development.

The National Food and Nutrition Security Information System provides centralized access to several multisectoral reports, thanks to the collaboration of several entities on a single site, facilitating emergency response.

For example, monitoring and evaluation of the effects of the international crisis due to the conflict between the Russian Federation and Ukraine is currently ongoing:

- 33 situation rooms: epidemiological situation of acute (moderate and severe) malnutrition in children under 5 years of age (Ministry of Health System for Nutrition Surveillance).
- 16 situation rooms: analysis of mortality from acute malnutrition in children under 5 years of age (Ministry of Health System for Nutrition Surveillance). In week 18 of 2022, the Ministry of Health System for Nutrition Surveillance confirmed the first case in the year of mortality from acute malnutrition.
- 8 monthly reports on the Crop Monitoring System (Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food).
- 2 quarterly reports on the Food and Nutrition Security Forecast (Department of Food Security and Nutrition).

The national emergency programmes in response to the conflict include in their design reports produced through the early warning system.

The early warning process is already institutionalized, and the results of its value are clear to the parties, so sustainability is guaranteed as a modus operandi in crisis situations.



What would the country do differently?

- Reflect on the food assistance approach: an approach addressing the social protection and poverty situation of vulnerable populations is needed to prevent crisis situations.
- Receive support from the upper echelons of the Government to ensure support at an institutional level and with technical managers.



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Next steps

- Define how to ensure the continuity of the Integrated Early Warning System for Food and Nutrition Security and how to bolster and promote the National Food and Nutrition Security Information System.
- Analyse the response protocols and food assistance approach in the management of crisis situations. Propose a prevention/mitigation approach and analyse response protocols.
- Promote exchanges, learning and technical cooperation with other countries in the region after the follow-up webinar “How to safeguard achievements and make headway with the nutrition agenda in the midst of the global food crisis”.



Further information

- <https://portal.siinsan.gob.gt/situacion-san/>
- <https://portal.siinsan.gob.gt/>
- [https://reliefweb.int/report/guatemala/guatemala-
implementa-sistema-de-monitoreo-y-alerta-temprana-
de-seguridad](https://reliefweb.int/report/guatemala/guatemala-implementa-sistema-de-monitoreo-y-alerta-temprana-de-seguridad)

Report of the National Emergency Programme on the Russia-Ukraine Conflict:

- [https://drive.google.com/
open?id=14ATfkntnHg8pjgmIYizsF0peCb_
k5fL&authuser=mariafranciscag%40unops.
org&usp=drive_fs](https://drive.google.com/open?id=14ATfkntnHg8pjgmIYizsF0peCb_k5fL&authuser=mariafranciscag%40unops.org&usp=drive_fs)



Adaptation and applicability

- **Improve coordination among institutions and with the Supporting Institutions Group.**
- **Identify the incentives of technical committees and institutions to collaborate in the process.**
- **Adapt the processes according to the institutions through letters of agreement or informally.**
- **Complement the system with other diagnostic processes.**



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