

## ESWATINI

**HIGH LEVELS OF ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY THROUGH MARCH 2021 DUE TO COVID-19 CONTROL MEASURES, HIGH COMMODITY PRICES AND ERRATIC RAINFALL**

**IPC ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY ANALYSIS**  
**JANUARY - SEPTEMBER 2021**  
Issued in February 2021

CURRENT JANUARY - MARCH 2021		
<b>347,000</b> <b>31% of the population analysed</b> People facing high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above) IN NEED OF URGENT ACTION	Phase 5	0 People in Catastrophe
	Phase 4	60,000 People in Emergency
	Phase 3	288,000 People in Crisis
	Phase 2	433,000 People Stressed
	Phase 1	349,000 People in food security

PROJECTED APRIL - SEPTEMBER 2021		
<b>209,000</b> <b>18% of the population analysed</b> People facing high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above) IN NEED OF URGENT ACTION	Phase 5	0 People in Catastrophe
	Phase 4	50,000 People in Emergency
	Phase 3	159,000 People in Crisis
	Phase 2	472,000 People Stressed
	Phase 1	448,000 People in food security

### Overview

Between January and March 2021, over 347,000 people (31% of the population) will be experiencing high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above) and require urgent humanitarian assistance. Compared with the July projected analysis (October 2020 – March 2021), which had the population in IPC Phase 3 or above estimated at 366,000 (32% of the analysed population), the affected population is slightly lower at 347,000 (31% of the analysed population). This current analysis, however, did not include the urban populations in Lubombo and Shiselweni regions. The number of people facing high levels of acute food insecurity is 288,000 in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) and 60,000 in IPC Phase 4 (Emergency). In the projected period, April – September 2021, it is likely that the number of people facing high acute food insecurity will decrease to 209,000 (around 18% of the population analysed). This will be the post-harvest season where the harvest of crops will be at their peak, thus increasing energy intake for a majority of the households.

### Key Drivers



#### Loss of employment

Loss of employment due to COVID-19 control measures (lockdown) resulted in loss and/or reduction of income, impacting negatively on households' ability to purchase food and farm inputs.



#### High commodity prices

The unusually high commodity prices further restricted food access and exacerbated the already compromised food availability in the poorest households, further heightening their poverty levels.



#### COVID-19

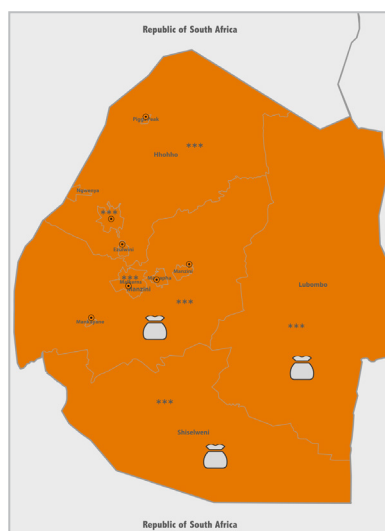
The outbreak of the novel corona virus (COVID-19), with measures to prevent its spread, had a negative impact on people's livelihoods.



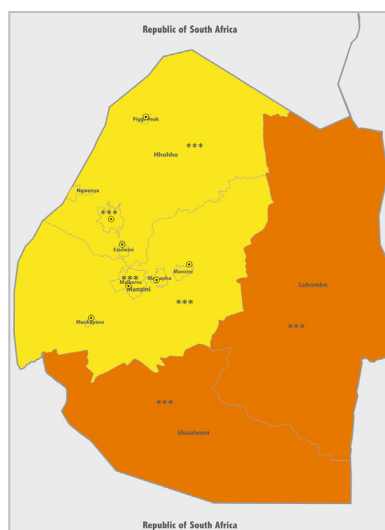
#### Erratic rainfall/dry spells

Erratic rainfall and prolonged dry spells, even though normal to above normal rainfall were predicted.

### Current Situation January - March 2021



### Projected Situation April - September 2021



### Key for the Map

#### IPC Acute Food Insecurity Phase Classification

1 - Minimal
2 - Stressed
3 - Crisis
4 - Emergency
5 - Famine

#### Map Symbols

Urban settlement classification

#### Evidence Level

\* Acceptable  
\*\* Medium  
\*\*\* High

Area receives significant humanitarian food assistance (accounted for in Phase classification)

> 25% of households meet 25-50% of caloric needs through assistance

> 25% of households meet > 50% of caloric needs through assistance

## CURRENT SITUATION OVERVIEW (JANUARY - MARCH 2021)

### Current Rural Situation Overview

Between January and March 2021, which represents the lean season in Eswatini, around 31% of the population (347,422 people) are facing high acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above). Based on the analysis, all the analysed areas are classified in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) for this period. The overall acute food insecurity situation can be attributed to the seasonal performance influenced by the erratic nature of rainfall, which remains key, especially to rural households. The COVID-19 pandemic, which was declared a national emergency in March last year, also remains a driver of acute food insecurity in the country. The pandemic has influenced the loss of livelihoods, income and employment, which has limited people's ability to meet their nutritional needs. Humanitarian assistance programmes were initiated to provide cash and food relief to ease the COVID-19 induced food challenges. The role of humanitarian support has been observed to have a positive impact on the population, with the improvements in food security as a result of increased support provided to the population.

**Manzini** is classified in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) in the current period. The key drivers observed in the region include erratic weather patterns, even though normal to above normal rainfall were predicted. The region has experienced incidences of prolonged dry spells and erratic rains, which will affect production and livelihood opportunities for those that depend on agricultural labour. The COVID-19 pandemic will continue to have a negative impact on people's livelihoods and income generation opportunities. The Manzini region hosts most of the populated industrial area in the country, thus, in this heavily populated area, loss of employment has had a bigger impact on the people's livelihoods. There has been a notable increase in the percentage of households employing livelihood coping strategies, especially the use of Emergency coping strategies, which will likely affect the ability of households to cope with other shocks, thus affecting households' recovery in the projected period. With the erratic rains that were received last season, a majority of the households (71%) have already depleted their food stocks, and are therefore dependant on purchases for their food source. The high food prices will therefore have a negative impact on household's ability to access adequate food.

**Hhohho** is classified in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) in the current period. The COVID-19 pandemic has led to the loss of livelihoods for many households, mainly due to the partial lockdown implemented by the Government with the aim to ease the spread of the virus. This loss and reduced employment is expected to worsen other existing underlying challenges faced by households in the regions. The increased cases and deaths due to the COVID-19 pandemic will likely increase vulnerability to other shocks. Livelihood coping has increased significantly in the region, as currently, 40% are engaged in Emergency coping strategies, an increase from the 17% reported in June 2020. The lockdown has impacted alternative livelihoods for the majority of the population, resulting in households engaging in more Emergency strategies. Job losses have been experienced in most parts of the country, where data from the Ministry of Labour indicated that more than 23,000 people have been laid off as a result of the COVID-19 induced lockdown. The presence of humanitarian support has however made a difference in improving the population consumption patterns and is expected to continue playing a key role in the region.

**Shiselweni** has been classified in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) in the current period. Erratic weather patterns have led to delayed planting in most areas, with a greater impact on the eastern part of the region, where chronic drought has been experienced over the years and it is expected to have an impact on acute indicators. A number of households have reported the lack of resources and high farming input prices as two of the deterrents to engage in farming this season. Only 58% of households reported to be engaged in food production this season; this will lead to limited livelihood opportunities for households dependent on agricultural labour. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on household livelihoods and income opportunities have also been felt in this region, with loss of income and employment due to the measures implemented to mitigate the virus. This has further been compounded with high commodity and food prices, which have affected households' ability to access food.

**Lubombo** has been classified in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) in the current period. Erratic rainfall in the region was received in the 2019/2020 season. The prolonged dry spells and erratic rains have led to a reduction in food production in the region. Drought is a chronic phenomenon in the area and has an impact on the acute outcomes during this analysis period. Given that the region has poor agricultural production, 94% of households have already depleted their food stocks and thus, are dependent on purchases for accessing food. The COVID-19 pandemic with its impacts on livelihoods and income has led to a drastic increase in the use of Emergency coping strategies, which increased from 13.8% in June 2020 to 33.2% in the current period. Loss of employment and income opportunities, especially from the informal sector, will result in many households failing to access food during this period. Humanitarian support is currently high in this region and has been observed to contribute to the improved consumption patterns in the region.

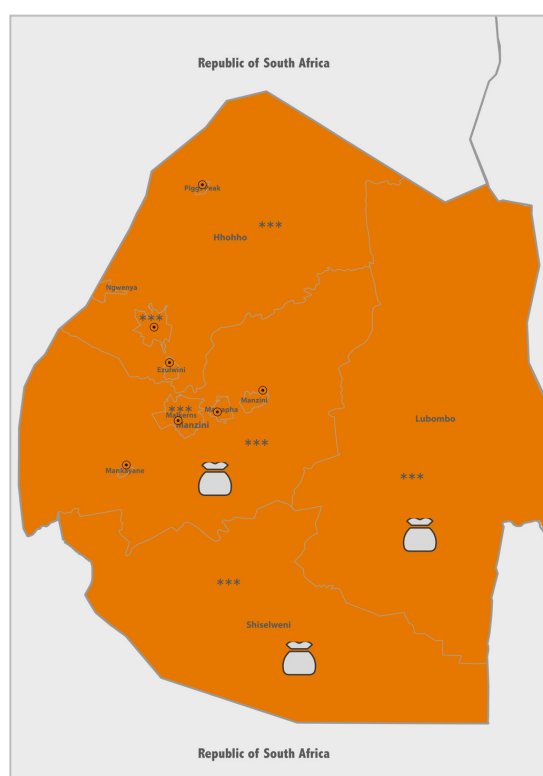
### Current Urban Situation overview

**Manzini Urban** is classified in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis), with an estimated 26,336 people (20%) estimated to be facing high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above). The Manzini urban area mainly consists of people dependent on employment, therefore, the impact of COVID-19 on households in this region has had a great impact on sources of income and livelihoods.

The experienced closure of a number of industries as a result of lockdown measures to try and curb the spread of the virus resulted in job losses in the region. The region hosts the majority of industrial area in the country, and loss of employment has had a bigger impact on the people's livelihoods. High food prices and an increase in other basic commodities have put a strain on households with lost or reduced employment, pushing more into vulnerability to acute food insecurity. Observed spikes in cases and deaths will impact more households, especially with the deaths of breadwinners and spending on health during this period.

**Hhohho Urban** is classified in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis), with an estimated 22,000 people (25%) estimated to be facing high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above). The use of Emergency coping livelihood strategies has increased from 18% in June 2020 to 26%. The impact of the COVID-19 control measures has led to changes in livelihoods for households, mainly due to reduced employment opportunities and loss of income from informal sectors, resulting in households engaging in destructive coping measures. This situation is expected to persist throughout the current period, as the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic becomes more evident and the increased cases and fatalities due to the pandemic will degrade household's fluidity further. The COVID-19 pandemic, with its impact on household's income and livelihood opportunities, will likely lead to a collapse of livelihoods, given the closure of businesses and loss of employment for a number of people in the urban areas. An estimated 23,000 people have been reported to have lost employment during the COVID-19 pandemic, with over 115,000 people affected. The presence of humanitarian support, especially in the populated areas in the urban area, has made a great impact on people's livelihoods, as consumption patterns have improved as a result.

## CURRENT SITUATION MAP AND POPULATION TABLE (JANUARY - MARCH 2021)



### Key for the Map IPC Acute Food Insecurity Phase Classification

(mapped Phase represents highest severity affecting at least 20% of the population)

- 1 - Minimal
- 2 - Stressed
- 3 - Crisis
- 4 - Emergency
- 5 - Famine

#### Map Symbols

- Urban settlement classification

#### Area receives significant humanitarian food assistance (accounted for in Phase classification)

- > 25% of households meet 25-50% of caloric needs through assistance
- > 25% of households meet > 50% of caloric needs through assistance

#### Evidence Level

- \* Acceptable
- \*\* Medium
- \*\*\* High

Region	Total population analysed	Phase 1		Phase 2		Phase 3		Phase 4		Phase 5		Area Phase	Phase 3+	
		#people	%	#people	%	#people	%	#people	%	#people	%		#people	%
Hhohho	253,814	101,526	40	76,144	30	63,454	25	12,691	5	0	0	3	76,145	30
Hhohho urban	88,361	30,926	35	35,344	40	17,672	20	4,418	5	0	0	3	22,090	25
Lubombo	195,260	39,052	20	78,104	40	58,578	30	19,526	10	0	0	3	78,104	40
Manzini	261,790	78,537	30	117,806	45	52,358	20	13,090	5	0	0	3	65,448	25
Manzini urban	131,679	59,256	45	46,088	35	26,336	20	0	0	0	0	3	26,336	20
Shiselweni	198,251	39,650	20	79,300	40	69,388	35	9,913	5	0	0	3	79,301	40
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1,129,155</b>	<b>348,947</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>432,786</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>287,785</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>59,637</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>		<b>347,422</b>	<b>31</b>

Note: A population in Phase 3+ does not necessarily reflect the full population in need of urgent action. This is because some households may be in Phase 2 or even 1 but only because of receipt of assistance, and thus, they may be in need of continued action.

## PROJECTED SITUATION OVERVIEW (April - September 2021)

### Projected Rural Situation Overview

In the projection period (April - September 2021), the number of people experiencing high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above) is expected to fall significantly, to an estimated 209,000 people (18% of the analysed population). The expected improvement is attributed to a number of factors, among them, the harvest, which will increase households' availability of food from their own production, and the easing of COVID-19 movement restrictions, which is also expected to improve employment levels, leading to greater purchasing power for households.

Manzini has been classified in IPC Phase 2 (Stressed) in the projection period (April - September 2021). Food access is expected to marginally improve at household level from own production, given that harvesting will be the main activity in most households. However, given that purchases/markets still are a key source of food for households, shocks that affect household income and livelihoods will have a negative impact on the ability of households to access food through purchases. The COVID-19 pandemic will continue to be a key limiting factor in the region, and given the observed increases in cases and deaths, more restrictions will likely worsen the situation.

Hhohho has been classified in IPC Phase 2 (Stressed) in the projection period from April - September 2021. An estimated 15% of households are projected to face high acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above). There will be increased food availability from own production, which will likely improve food consumption at household level. With 58% of households having indicated to be involved in farming this season, livelihood opportunities will likely improve for households dependent on agricultural labour. The COVID-19 pandemic will remain a key driver in the region, as it might limit households' ability to invest in productive livelihood activities during the projected period. Erratic rainfall, prolonged dry spells and high commodity prices are some of the limiting factors to be monitored in the projection period. Staple food prices will remain stable with no significant changes, however, as reported, the price levels are expected to be above average over this period, with the poorest affected and expected to continue to engage in food coping strategies and Crisis or Emergency livelihood coping strategies.

Shiselweni has been classified in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) in the projection period, with 25% (49,653 people) of the population expected to face high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above). Over 67% of the population will continue to live below the poverty line, which is higher than the national average. Around 47% of the households in the region continue to host a member living with HIV, which increases households' vulnerability to food insecurity. The poor and the very poor households will be greatly affected as a result of loss or reduced employment due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Though some households in this region will not have an adequate ability to cover their food requirements, there are prospects of improved food availability from own production, which will likely improve consumption at household level. This will result in less households engaging in Emergency coping strategies.

Lubombo will remain in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) in the projection period, however, the number of people in worse phases will likely decrease during the period, given the projected increase in food availability from own production. The population in IPC Phase 2 (Stressed) and IPC Phase 1 (No Acute Food Insecurity) is expected to increase, as consumption patterns are expected to improve in the process. Due to the region having experienced increased incidents of drought, prolonged dry spells and erratic rainfall, this has led to a poor performance of the agricultural season, which has affected food production. Availability from own production is expected to continually be limited in the region. There will be reduced livelihood opportunities in the agricultural sector, due to limited activities in the sector; even though above normal rains have been projected, households engaged in production still remains low. The high cost of agricultural inputs, poor access to draft power and drought has also discouraged households from engaging in agricultural production. The COVID-19 pandemic, with its impact on income and employment, will remain key factors to monitor in the region. The increased number of cases and death will lead to increased pressure on households, increasing spending on health.

### Projected Urban Situation Overview

All analysed urban areas are expected to have improved acute food insecurity levels as harvests come in and prices reduce. It is expected, that those facing high acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above) will make up 30% (33,006 people) of the analysed population. It is expected that although movement restrictions may cause delays in cross-border movement of food, there will be minimal disruptions to the food flow. As such, food will be available within markets for purchasing. Given the heightened impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, loss of purchasing power is expected, given the loss of livelihood opportunities, and as a result of reduced income and reduced employment opportunities both in the formal and informal sector. Given the relatively high and uncontrolled

### Key Assumptions for the projected period

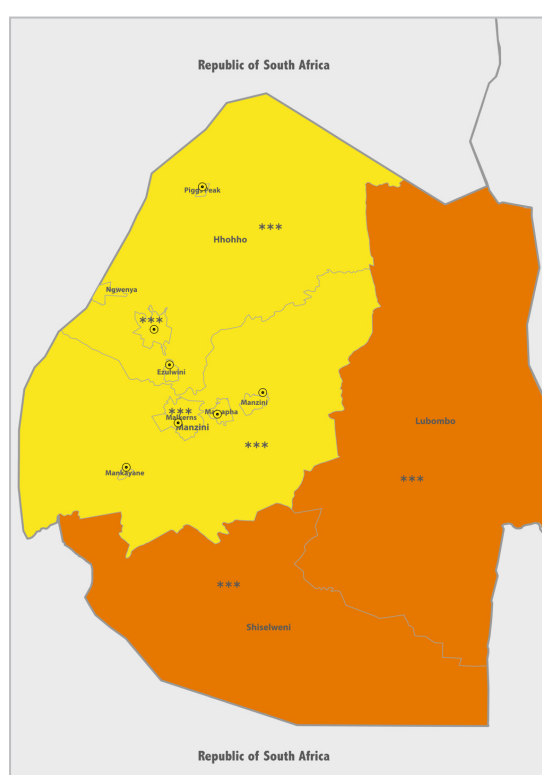
- According to the SARCOF rainfall forecast, normal to above normal rainfall has been forecasted for the projected period.
- Food prices are expected to remain stable over this period, however, they are expected to remain high above average.
- Purchasing power will be reduced, owing to income losses. These effects will be felt throughout the country.
- Food supply chains will remain functional, with South African borders remaining open for importing staple foods. However, movement restrictions will cause a delay in cross border food transfers.
- South Africa will continue to produce enough food without imposing access restrictions.
- Within the country, food supply lines will remain open to facilitate local food transfers and food sharing, without the imposition of movement restrictions
- Markets are expected to remain accessible and sufficiently stocked and functional. Food availability is expected to improve from own production, given that harvesting would be done during this period.
- Small and medium enterprises will be positively affected by the easing of the COVID-19 restrictions imposed, and this is most likely to reinstate lost jobs, improve purchasing power and access to food, especially in the Hhohho and Manzini regions.

number of COVID-19 cases, food access is likely to be affected by the impacts of restrictions and the prevalence of illness. Availability of labour, productivity under social distancing and absenteeism due to death and funerals are likely to make the acute food insecurity situation worse in terms of employment, reduced income, increase prices and lost skills.

Manzini Urban is classified in IPC Phase 2 (Stressed), with 15% (13,254 people) of the population facing high acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above). The outbreak of COVID-19, which has led to reduced income and livelihood activities, remains a key driver for the urban areas. Loss of employment has been rife in the industries located in the urban area and due to the pandemic, more people are expected to be laid off during the projection period. Current government interventions are unable to meet the demand from the population. Although food is available in the market at present, access is likely to be constrained by the high food prices (maize meal, rice and beans) and the poor purchasing power, as a result of the loss of employment and reduced income.

Hhohho Urban is classified in IPC Phase 2 (Stressed), with 15% (19,752 people) of the population facing high acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above). The COVID-19 pandemic will remain a key driver in the urban area, with its impact on people's livelihoods, income opportunities and employment. Given the reported increases in cases and deaths, more restrictions are expected to be put in place, which will likely lead to a deterioration of livelihoods. The easing of the current restrictions will likely improve the situation, opening up livelihood opportunities for households. Relaxed restrictions will likely improve households' access to livelihood opportunities.

## PROJECTED SITUATION MAP AND POPULATION TABLE (April - September 2021)



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#### Map Symbols

- Urban settlement classification

#### Evidence Level

- \* Acceptable
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Hhohho	253,814	114,216	45	101,526	40	25,381	10	12,691	5	0	0	2	38,072	15
Hhohho urban	88,361	35,344	40	39,762	45	8,836	10	4,418	5	0	0	2	13,254	15
Lubombo	195,260	58,578	30	87,867	45	39,052	20	9,763	5	0	0	3	48,815	25
Manzini	261,790	104,716	40	117,806	45	26,179	10	13,090	5	0	0	2	39,269	15
Manzini urban	131,679	65,840	50	46,088	35	19,752	15	0	0	0	0	2	19,752	15
Shiselweni	198,251	69,388	35	79,300	40	39,650	20	9,913	5	0	0	3	49,563	25
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1,129,155</b>	<b>448,082</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>472,349</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>158,851</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>49,874</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>		<b>208,724</b>	<b>18</b>

Note: A population in Phase 3+ does not necessarily reflect the full population in need of urgent action. This is because some households may be in Phase 2 or even 1 but only because of receipt of assistance, and thus, they may be in need of continued action.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

### Response Priorities

- Urgent action is required to save lives and livelihoods of populations in IPC Phase 4 (Emergency) and IPC Phase 3 (Crisis).
- Strengthen the ongoing humanitarian intervention, integrating recovery activities to build the needed resilience for affected households.
- Promote the delivery of livelihood programmes, targeting populations in IPC Phase 3 or above, to protect or restore productive assets among affected households.
- Develop a comprehensive food security and social protection response framework, to ensure needs of vulnerable populations are resourced, and support activities implemented in a coordinated manner.
- Promote the implementation of good nutritional practices at household level, taking advantage of available food sources.
- Strengthen early warning and food security monitoring systems, to mitigate the negative impact of shocks.

### Situation Monitoring

- Access challenges - given the high COVID-19 cases;
- Price shocks;
- Loss of employment;
- Impacts of the COVID-19 global pandemic and the restriction measures that have been put in place;
- Crop pests and animal diseases;
- Rainfall performance.

### Plan for next analysis

In view of the envisaged developments in the economic impacts of the COVID-19 plan and prospects of the new harvest, it will be necessary to carry out the annual IPC Acute Food Insecurity analysis in the coming months. Expected in June 2021, the next analysis will feed into the SADC RVAA Synthesis report and covers the next consumption period from April 2021 to March 2022.



## PROCESS AND METHODOLOGY

A range of multi-sectoral consultative technical meetings were held through the overall management and coordination provided by the Deputy Prime Minister's Office, the Disaster Management Department. The IPC process started in 2020 by preparing a detailed implementation plan and establishing timelines for activities, including inventory of available information, identification of data gaps and needs for new data required for the analysis. Training of enumerators preceded the actual collection of data (both primary and secondary data). The IPC analysis covered all the four (4) regions of the country: Hhohho, Manzini, Lubombo and Shiselweni regions.

### Sources

The Eswatini VAC data included direct evidence for food consumption (Food Consumption Score, Household Dietary Diversity Score, Household Hunger Score, FIES and food related Coping Strategies) as well as the Livelihood Coping Strategies. The Eswatini VAC assessments were designed according to the global standards, using WFP's/FAO's corporate level technical protocols, taking special considerations of data requirements for the IPC analysis. Market related data was also provided by WFP. Other reports from various sectors such as WASH and existing knowledge/expertise from the analysis team contributed to the IPC analysis and classification of the various regions using the IPC Acute Food Insecurity Protocols Version 3.0.

### What is the IPC and IPC Acute Food Insecurity?

The IPC is a set of tools and procedures to classify the severity and characteristics of acute food and nutrition crises as well as chronic food insecurity based on international standards. The IPC consists of four mutually reinforcing functions, each with a set of specific protocols (tools and procedures). The core IPC parameters include consensus building, convergence of evidence, accountability, transparency and comparability. The IPC analysis aims at informing emergency response as well as medium and long-term food security policy and programming.

For the IPC, Acute Food Insecurity is defined as any manifestation of food insecurity found in a specified area at a specific point in time of a severity that threatens lives or livelihoods, or both, regardless of the causes, context or duration. It is highly susceptible to change and can occur and manifest in a population within a short amount of time, as a result of sudden changes or shocks that negatively impact on the determinants of food insecurity.

### Acute Food Insecurity Phase name and description

Phase 1 None/Minimal	Phase 2 Stressed	Phase 3 Crisis	Phase 4 Emergency	Phase 5 Catastrophe/ Famine
Households are able to meet essential food and non-food needs without engaging in atypical and unsustainable strategies to access food and income.	Households have minimally adequate food consumption but are unable to afford some essential non-food expenditures without engaging in stress-coping strategies.	Households either: • have food consumption gaps that are reflected by high or above-usual acute malnutrition; <b>or</b> • are marginally able to meet minimum food needs but only by depleting essential livelihood assets or through crisis-coping strategies.	Households either: • have large food consumption gaps that are reflected in very high acute malnutrition and excess mortality; <b>or</b> • are able to mitigate large food consumption gaps but only by employing emergency livelihood strategies and asset liquidation	Households have an extreme lack of food and/or other basic needs even after full employment of coping strategies. Starvation, death, destitution and extremely critical acute malnutrition levels are evident.  For famine classification, area needs to have extreme critical levels of acute malnutrition and mortality.)

### Contact for further Information

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IPC Global Support Unit  
[www.ipcinfo.org](http://www.ipcinfo.org)

This analysis has been conducted under the patronage of the Disaster Management Unit in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

Classification of food insecurity and malnutrition was conducted using the IPC protocols, which are developed and implemented worldwide by the IPC Global Partnership - Action Against Hunger, CARE, CILSS, EC-JRC, FAO, FEWSNET, Global Food Security Cluster, Global Nutrition Cluster, IGAD, Oxfam, PROGRESAN-SICA, SADC, Save the Children, UNICEF and WFP.

### IPC Analysis Partners:

