

Food Security Information for Action

Reporting Food Security Information **Understanding the User's Information Needs Exercises**



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Exercise 1

Consider a recently established National Food Security Unit (FSU) which is responsible for monitoring and analyzing food security conditions and trends.

Rainfall in the last season has been poor and consequently food insecurity is increasing in the northern areas of the country. One team member says: *"While we have been issuing regular reports on the agro-climatic conditions in the area, the Government and humanitarian partners have not yet mounted an emergency response"*.

Which of these two options do you most closely agree with?

1. They need to provide more detail on the current situation. They should organize another survey.
2. They need to improve their communication with the key decision makers. They should review the reports that they produce.

Tick the correct option

- 1
- 2

Exercise 2

Defining the purpose of your report is extremely important. Let's consider again the National Food Security Unit (FSU), and read what two team members are saying about their purpose. Which one do you think has a better understanding of a suitable objective for the FSU reports?

1) *"We want a timely response to limit hunger as a result of any natural or economic disasters that strike this country".*

2) *" We need to provide regular data on a range of food security indicators."*

Tick the correct option

- 1
- 2

Exercise 3

It is important to categorise your readers into the **primary and secondary audience**.

In your opinion, which of the following statements best defines the primary audience for a report?

1. Your line manager
2. Decision makers in other departments and institutions
3. The affected population
4. Whoever reads the report in detail

Tick the correct option

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4

Exercise 4

It is important to conduct **periodic evaluations** to assess the effectiveness of your reports. The survey of recipients should include both primary and secondary audiences.

Which of these two options would you choose in order to proceed with the survey?

1. Organizing an email questionnaire to all users.
2. Interviewing only the three main users.

Confront your opinion with our comments in the Solutions

Solutions

Exercise 1

Options	Correct answer	Comment
1		While evidence is important, simply increasing the volume of information available to decision makers may not be valuable. Effective communication of the available information is critical.
2	X	Food security analysts need to support action by decision makers. Without effective communication the data and analysis are unlikely to be used.

Exercise 2

Options	Correct answer	Comment
1	X	This is a practical and feasible objective, linked to a specific action. Reports tend to be most persuasive when there is a clear central message.
2		Analysts need to provide processed data – as information – rather than raw data. Information is targeted towards specific decision making processes.

Exercise 3

Options	Correct answer	Comment
1		This is probably not the correct answer. The producers of food security information are usually organizationally separate from the users.
2	x	Correct. Reports should be targeted towards the needs of decision makers, even if they are not necessarily within your own department or institution.
3		Incorrect. A report is usually written because the affected population require external assistance.
4		Incorrect. While your report may be of interest to many people, readers include both the primary and secondary audience.

Exercise 4

Options	Correct answer	Comment
1	In this case there is not a correct/incorrect answer.	Where there is a large readership this is likely to be the most effective strategy to sample the wider readership. Remember that experience shows that only a small percentage of the readers will respond to unsolicited questionnaires. But most importantly you are unlikely to get sufficient detailed feedback from your primary audience.
2	In this case there is not a correct/incorrect answer.	This will give you more detailed feedback from the primary audience. Remember that is also important to satisfy the secondary audience. Why not consider using both approaches simultaneously?