

Food Security Information for Action

Reporting Food Security Information

Reporting for Results Exercises



This course is funded by the European Union and implemented
by the Food and Agriculture Organization.



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Exercise 1

A useful Food Security Information System (FSIS) should report relevant information to decision makers in a form that can be easily used. Therefore, if you were writing a report, which of the following would you be most likely to **leave out**?

1. A definition of the problem
2. A description of the situation
3. The data you collected
4. Final recommendations

Tick the correct option

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4

Exercise 2

Your recommendations will have more impact if they are presented as **actionable recommendations**. These are recommendations which are **relevant** and **feasible**.

Consider the following examples and complete the statements:

1. Your primary audience are organizations tasked with short-term emergency response. If you recommend longer-term developmental interventions, your report won't be

A. based on lessons learnt

B. consistent with users' goals

2. By reviewing your report, you notice that you are simply recommending actions that have always been done instead of actions that have been shown to work. Your report is not

C. based on a well analyzed problem

3. You recommend food aid as a response to a problem of malnutrition. Further analysis shows that the principal problem is a high disease burden rather than inadequate food intake. Your recommendation was not

Tick the correct option

- 1A, 2B, 3C
- 1B, 2A, 3C
- 3A, 2B, 1C

Exercise 3

When you have sifted through the data, you will have identified key facts to include in support of your message.

How can you present this as useful information?

For example, let's say that the Meteorological Department records show that 300mm of rainfall was received in a certain location last year. Would this data help a decision maker?

1. Yes

2. No

Tick the correct option

- 1
- 2

Exercise 4

We have looked at the early warning report produced by the Food Security Assessment Unit for Somalia. Please, answer the following questions:

- 1) Do you think that the recommendations made in the report are actionable?
- 2) Are they relevant?
- 3) Are they feasible?

*Please look on page 8 of this document, to confront your opinion
with the comment of an expert.*

Exercise 5

We have also looked at the index for a recent report issued by the UN in southern Africa.

Please, answer the following questions:

1. Does it contain all the necessary elements?
2. Is the balance of text describing the situation, analyzing the problem and proposing solutions appropriate?
3. The primary audience for this report consists of donor agencies. Do you think that the length of the report is appropriate?

*Please look on page 9 of this document, to confront your opinion
with the comment of an expert.*

Solutions

Exercise 1

Options	Correct answer	Comment
1		Incorrect. You need to clearly identify the problem in the situation that you have described and make sure that the reader agrees with this.
2		That is not the right answer. A report should start with a clear description of the current situation. The reader needs to understand the context for your proposals.
3	X	Correct. Decision makers need information, not unprocessed data.
4		Incorrect. As we will see, recommendations are the core message that the reader needs to receive.

Exercise 2

Options	Correct answer	Comment
1A, 2B, 3C		Incorrect. The statements are not completed in a relevant way.
1B, 2A, 3C	X	Correct. As you noticed, these recommendations are not relevant.
3A, 2B, 1C		Incorrect. The statements are not completed in a relevant way.

Exercise 3

Options	Correct answer	Comment
1		Probably not correct. We need to know if this is a change from normal. And what is the impact of this on food security?
2	X	Correct. We have no context for understanding the significance of this data.

Exercise 4

Comment

"The early warning bulletin provides a useful set of recommendations, supported by evidence of a declining food security situation.

Recommendations are given for both life-saving and livelihood protection, allowing the audience to determine the relevance. The recommendations are given for specific geographic areas and livelihood groups.

The first three recommendations are rather general – and essentially advocate for the allocation of resources. However, the last two recommendations clearly propose a process and timeframe that will lead to the development of far more specific programmatic recommendations. The recommendations might be improved by more clarity in who the recommendations are addressed to: civil administration, UN, donors or other humanitarian agencies."

Exercise 5

Comment

"The Malawi Flash Appeal provides a good example of communicating a well structured message.

The purpose of the document is to persuade donors to support the emergency humanitarian response. For senior decision makers the length is well chosen, with approximately 10 pages in the main text.

Within this limited space the author manages to summarize the situation, analyze the problem and detail the recommended responses.

Note that the majority of the report is used to discuss the recommendations, not the situation and problem. If necessary the reader will be able to consult other reports which analyze the problem in more depth or provide greater detail on the proposed interventions".