

DevInfo in Action

Nepal: Using DevInfo to Bolster Food Security

The Government of Nepal sees food sovereignty as a basic human right and is giving issues of food security high priority in its public programmes. This policy emphasis arose when the food security situation started deteriorating in parts of the country. For example, Nepal has recently experienced the impacts of rising food prices as well as recurrent episodes of droughts (2006-2009).¹



Image courtesy of WFP

In this context, the UN World Food Programme (WFP) in collaboration with other national institutions established the [NeKSAP](#) (*Nepal Khadhya Surakshya Anugaman Pranali*), the most comprehensive food security monitoring system in the country. The primary objective of the NeKSAP is to collect, consolidate and analyze food security data and then effectively communicate the results to decision makers, in order to achieve coordinated, appropriate and timely action to prevent human suffering due to food insecurity. At the core of the NeKSAP are the country's 72 District Food Security Networks², which meet on a quarterly basis to monitor and analyze the food security situation at the district level.³



नेपाल खाद्य सुरक्षा अनुगमन प्रणाली
Nepal Khadhya Surakshya Anugaman Pranali (NeKSAP)
Nepal Food Security Monitoring System

DevInfo: creating a composite picture of national food security

Since 2011, the [DevInfo](#) database software has been used by WFP to collect information generated by the District Food Security Networks (DFSNs), in order to create a consolidated, composite picture of food security across the country. WFP has customized DevInfo and created a NeKSAPInfo database which truly allows for comprehensive and detailed analysis of quarterly data obtained from the DFSNs at the Village Development Committee (VDC) level (there are approximately 4,000 VDCs in Nepal).

The indicator of primary interest in NeKSAPInfo is the food security phase classification, which consists of a value ranging from 1 to 5 (1 = Normal, 5 = Humanitarian emergency) describing the food security

¹ NeKSAP Framework Document, prepared by the Government of Nepal, WFP and FAO joint mission, January 2010, p. 1, accessed at <http://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/ena/wfp224722.pdf> on 10 March 2012.

² The District Food Security Networks (DFSNs) are a joint initiative of the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, Government of Nepal and the WFP, established in 72 out of Nepal's 75 districts. Membership is open to all stakeholders in the district, including representatives from NGOs, UN agencies, Government institutions and civil society.

³ NeKSAP Framework Document, p.2.

situation in any given VDC. Other indicators in the database include crop situation, acute malnutrition situation, prevalence of natural disasters, market price situation of rice, etc.

The NeKSAPInfo database plays an important role in providing data to generate food security maps for the NeKSAP-produced [Food Security Bulletins](#). Published on a quarterly basis, the bulletins contain up-to-date information on the food security situation in Nepal and are disseminated to the Nepal government and throughout the wider donor and development community. Because the primary field-level data contained in these bulletins represent an unparalleled source of factual information, they exert a powerful influence in shaping national and global perception of the food security situation in Nepal.⁴

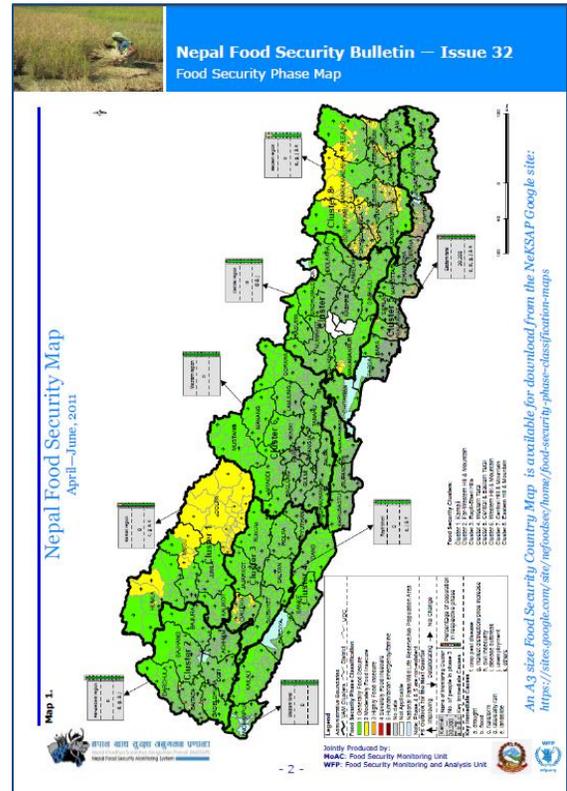
NeKSAPInfo: preventing human suffering

Has the investment in NeKSAPInfo been worthwhile? Absolutely, according to Mariko Kawabata, Head of Food Security Monitoring and Analysis Unit (FSMAU), WFP. “Although NeKSAPInfo has only been operational for a short while, this system is expected to contribute to achieving coordinated, appropriate and timely action against hunger by various stakeholders at all levels: central, regional and district levels across Nepal.”

Continues Mariko, “Specifically, NeKSAPInfo is expected to support evidence-based decision making through providing systematic, consistent and complete information in a timely manner. The data generated by NeKSAPInfo has already been utilized by district stakeholders such as government and NGOs as well as UN agencies to identify target programme areas.”

This sentiment is also echoed by Vijoy Kumar Mallick, Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives (MoAC), who explains, “Since most of our programmes are targeted to address the problems of food insecurity, the NeKSAP information has provided crucial input to our programme design processes.”

Adds Hemraj Regmi, Senior Statistical Officer, MoAC, “We started tracking the food security situation in Nepal 30 years ago by calculating food balance sheets. However, in recent years, we realized that this does not cover all aspects of food security. That is why we have found the information generated by NeKSAP to be quite comprehensive and are really looking forward to participating in the process of



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⁴ Nepal Food Security Monitoring System website, accessed at <https://www.sites.google.com/site/nefoodsec/> on 10 March 2012.

institutionalizing NeKSAP into the government structure.”

While the NeKSAPInfo information system is currently being used at the central level by WFP, plans are underway to hand it over to the Government of Nepal as well as to introduce it at the district level, so each DFSN can use it to monitor food security within its own district. According to Mariko, “This will further empower districts to be able to analyze their own information and make informed decisions. We are grateful to the European Union for supporting the entire institutionalization process.”

With DevInfo technology in place, Nepal can certainly look forward to better food security monitoring, translating into reduced malnutrition rates for its most vulnerable citizens.

Data making a difference.

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