

# FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT Viet Nam



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## Viet Nam Food Security Situation

Viet Nam is one of the highest **food exporting countries in the world** yet **food security remains a problem in selected groups and geographical areas**. Food prices in Viet Nam are **higher** compared to other countries in the region, which has a greater impact on lower-income groups since they tend to spend a greater part of their income on food.

The impact of climate change in Viet Nam is expected to be significant, with a 100 cm rise in sea level by 2100 that would affect around 10% of Viet Nam's population and 10% of GDP. Agricultural productivity is expected to be impacted in the long-term as rising sea levels reduce land available for agriculture. In the short term, increased occurrences of extreme weather events and increasing temperatures can reduce crop yields.

**Availability of food** is reduced with the **growing demand to use land for competing purposes**. This has led to a reduction in land available for agricultural activities. From 2000-2005, there is a yearly loss of 73,000 ha of fertile agricultural land to industrialization, urbanization and infrastructure development.

**Access to food is unreliable and inconsistent especially to vulnerable groups and in various regions**. Poverty rates have fallen over time at the national level but are observed to be higher in rural households and among ethnic minorities. Women and children are at risk since the pressure to increase earnings will have impacts on breastfeeding, child care, child labor, school attendance and out of pocket health expenditures. While Viet Nam's overall poverty rate suggests proper access to food and other necessities, poverty is highly variable among regions.







Rice is more than food, it is life

## PILLARS OF FOOD SECURITY

Food security is "[when] people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food which meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. Household food security is the application of this concept to the family level, with individuals within households as the focus of concern."

Source: Food and Agriculture Organization

 <p><b>AVAILABILITY</b></p> <p>sufficient quantities of food available on a consistent basis</p>	 <p><b>UTILIZATION</b></p> <p>appropriate use based on knowledge of basic nutrition and care, as well as adequate water and sanitation</p>
 <p><b>ACCESS</b></p> <p>having sufficient resources to obtain appropriate food for nutritious diet</p>	 <p><b>STABILITY</b></p> <p>access to adequate food at all times with no risk losing access as a consequence of sudden or cyclical events</p>

Rising food prices in the international market have threatened food security in Viet Nam. Despite being a net exporter of food, less than half of Vietnamese farm households are sellers of food and many net buyers have not seen their incomes increase in the same proportion as food prices. Low-skilled workers, rural landless households, children, elderly people and other vulnerable groups in the population whose incomes have not risen in proportion to domestic food prices are made temporarily worse off.

In terms of **stability, as a result of climate change, the frequency and strength of natural disasters will be more severe**. Rainfall may become abnormally high during the rainy season coupled with insufficient rainfall during the dry season. These may negatively impact crop production, in turn affecting Viet Nam's food security situation.

## Responses to Food Security Situation

The key guiding document for food security is the **Master Plan of Production Development of Agriculture to 2020 and a Vision Toward 2030** which aims to ensure food security, meet the country's domestic and export needs, improve the efficiency of resource use and raise incomes of producers. To address climate change, the government instituted the **National Target Program to Respond to Climate Change** which aims to develop scenarios from 2010 to 2100 to identify specific measures to combat climate change. The government also formulated an action plan to focus on the effects of climate change on the agricultural sector.

## INDICATORS

### Availability

- Number of undernourished people: 11.9 million (2014)
- Prevalence of undernourishment: 12.9% of population (2014)

### Access

- Road density (per 100 sqm of land area): 48.3 (2007)
- Domestic food price index: 1.98 (2010)

### Utilization

- Percentage of children under 5 years of age who are stunted: 23% (2010)
- Percentage of children under 5 years of age who are underweight: 12% (2010)

### Stability

- Value of food imports over total merchandise exports: 7% (2011)
- Percentage of arable land equipped for irrigation: 72% (2012)

## ACTION PLAN FRAMEWORK FOR ADAPTATION AND MITIGATION OF CLIMATE CHANGE OF THE AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT SECTOR, 2008-2020

- stability and safety of residents
- stable agriculture production and food security with the stable area of 3.8 million ha
- safety of dyke and infrastructure systems to meet requirements in disaster prevention and mitigation

Due to the regional nature of the rural and ethnic communities with difficulties accessing food in Viet Nam, **targeted assistance** is needed to be able to reach these communities and vulnerable groups. Households affected by climate change have also been provided with intervention by development partners to help households maintain food security.

### Development Partners Support in Food Security

Major development partners work with government units and other institutions on forming policies, improving food productivity, developing infrastructure and improving access to basic social services. Key themes that cut across the four pillars of food security include:

- improving the **quality, productivity and competitiveness** of agricultural sector while improving the livelihoods of the poorest communities and ethnic minorities in Viet Nam
- assistance in improving **strategies, policies and plans** related to food security
- provision of infrastructure for poor rural communities to improve **access to market, access to drinking water, flood protection, water impoundment and irrigation networks**
- the **reduction of risk and vulnerability** to natural and other disasters through **prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery**

USAID focuses on improving trade and economic competitiveness while also aiming to improve the income of ethnic minorities. In line with this, USAID has provided capacity development support to small farmers in two provinces of the central highlands. Opportunities for ethnic minorities and assistance to drought-affected families especially children are also provided.

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### Gaps Food Security and Interventions Required

Allocating land for industrialization puts pressure on the **availability of food** for consumption and food security. In order to meet the increasing demand for food while allocating a fixed 3.8 million ha of land for agriculture, **productivity must be improved**. Interventions in increasing productivity, such as **improved seeds and technology**, and **managing input costs** are needed to ensure food security.

Although poverty reduction in Viet Nam has been exceptional, the challenge in **food access and utilization** is how to provide support to food insecure households such as ethnic minorities. Part of the difficulty in addressing their concerns lie in the remoteness of their residences. For ethnic minorities **addressing food security must go hand in hand with reducing the incidence of poverty and providing access to basic social services**.

Although ethnic minority groups have access to social services, access to community services such as potable water, electricity, sanitary conditions, internet, housing and garbage collection remain low. These groups are vulnerable to rising food prices since an increase in the cost of food would leave little room for other expenses, reducing their budget for proper nutrition, education, and development of capital. A targeted plan combining increased social security coverage hand in hand with assistance such as cash transfers, public works and social services can help ease their burden and improve food security.

Climate change affects the **stability** of food security in Viet Nam. The government is currently developing knowledge, capacity and technology to deal with the oncoming threat. **Concrete plans and solutions** will be needed in the near future for Viet Nam to manage the challenges brought about by climate change. Mainstreaming **climate smart farming practices and diversification** of various crops can also help improve the food security situation. In rice for example, it can promote **farmer-led and climate-smart agricultural practices** such as the System of Rice Intensification. Support for **research and development, and extension services to produce high quality and climate-resilient rice** can be considered. In terms of diversification, a potential strategy is **greening production** in the agriculture industry based on environmentally friendly structures, technologies and equipment with the long term goal of changing lifestyles and promoting sustainable consumption.

### AGRICULTURE SECTOR STATISTICS

