The Food Systems Dashboard

A source of national and subnational data: Africa regional focus

What is the tool and why is it needed?

In the wake of the UN Food Systems Summit and the lead up to the second stocktake, leaders worldwide are increasingly focused on food systems, and how they influence nutrition and health, livelihoods, the environment, and resilience. African leaders are at the forefront of this shift from a sectoral focus on agriculture and nutrition towards a more holistic view of food systems.

The Food Systems Dashboard

The global Food Systems Dashboard brings together food systems data for 300 indicators, spanning agricultural production, food availability and affordability, diets and nutrition, livelihoods, climate, environment, resilience, and governance; as well as external drivers influencing these factors. The indicators come from over 40 sources, covering all countries with up to 60 years of historical data. The Dashboard also houses the Food Systems Countdown Initiative indicators.

Country Dashboards

Recognizing that national-level data alone is insufficient to diagnose challenges and target effective interventions, country dashboards featuring subnational data are being developed in close partnership with governments, civil society, and academia to ensure alignment with local priorities and decision-making needs. In Africa, dashboards with subnational data are currently available in **Kenya**, **Mozambique**, and **Nigeria**, covering over 300 million people, and are in development in **Ethiopia** and **Rwanda**, increasing coverage to over 450 million.

The Dashboard supports food systems transformation through three steps:

- **Describe:** Data visualization with maps, graphs, and tables brings food systems into focus, making complex relationships visible and understandable.
- **Diagnose:** A traffic light system alerts stakeholders to likely, potential, and unlikely food systems challenge areas, categorized through scientifically validated diagnostics.
- **Decide:** Diagnostics are linked to evidence-based policies and actions, enabling decision makers to develop targeted interventions for more equitable, sustainable, and resilient food systems.

USER TIPS

Dashboard data can help policymakers and other food systems stakeholders to:

- Understand their food systems and critical subnational variations.
- Highlight success areas where things are going well.
- Diagnose challenge areas where more attention is needed.

Find the full set of briefs | The Food Systems Countdown to 2030 Initiative | The Food Systems Dashboard | Diet Quality Questionnaire | Diagnosing Food Systems Policy Coherence | Initiative on Climate Action and Nutrition (I-CAN) | The Political Economy Decision Toolkit | Innovative Finance for Food Systems Transformation

1 Co-led by GAIN, the Columbia Climate School, Cornell University's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO)

2 The Food Systems Countdown Initiative is a collaboration uniting over 60 food systems experts from dozens of institutions worldwide to bring together indicators and additional analysis to monitor food systems transformation. For more information see https://www.foodcountdown.org/

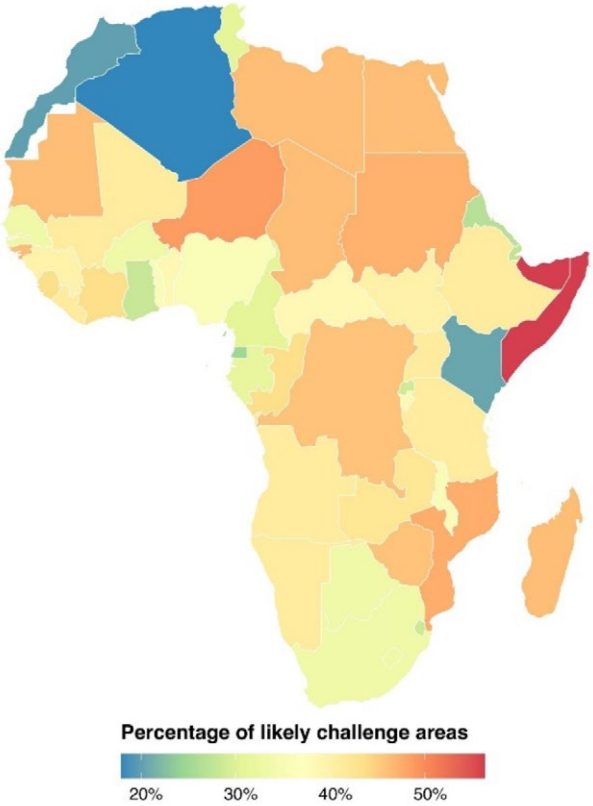
Using the tool to identify successes and challenges

Regional Food Systems Diagnostics

An examination of Dashboard diagnostics across Africa revealed that while large differences were observed across countries and regions, several shared areas of strength were observed, such as low environmental footprints for food consumption, low penetration of ultra-processed foods, and low relative costs of fruits, vegetables, legumes, nuts, and seeds. Shared food systems challenges also exist. These include food affordability, food insecurity, and child stunting. **Figure 1** shows the percent of diagnostic indicators that are likely challenge areas for countries across the continent, which ranges from 18 to 56%.

Looking at regional differences, Central Africa faced greater challenges of undernutrition among women and children, whereas countries in Northern Africa struggled more with diet-related noncommunicable diseases. Southern and Central African food systems tended to generate higher greenhouse gas emissions and placed significant pressure on biodiversity. Eastern Africa performed relatively well on adult diabetes and child wasting but showed signs of malnutrition's double burden in other indicators. In Western Africa, although crop species diversity was high and the food supply meets energy needs, affordable, healthy diets remained out of reach for most people.

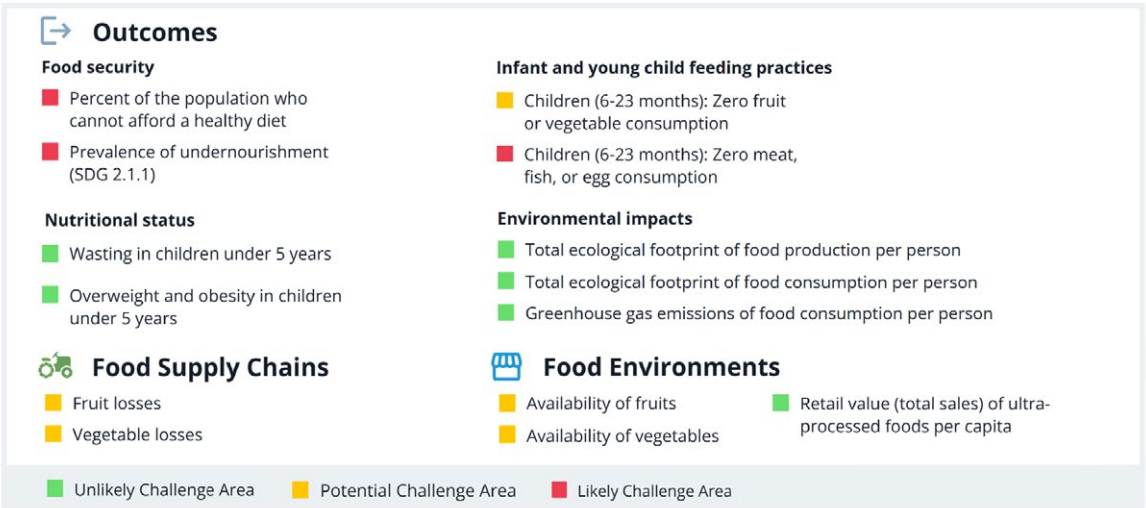
Figure 1. Number of likely challenge areas in each country, as percent of available data



Dashboard Diagnostics and Countdown Country Profiles

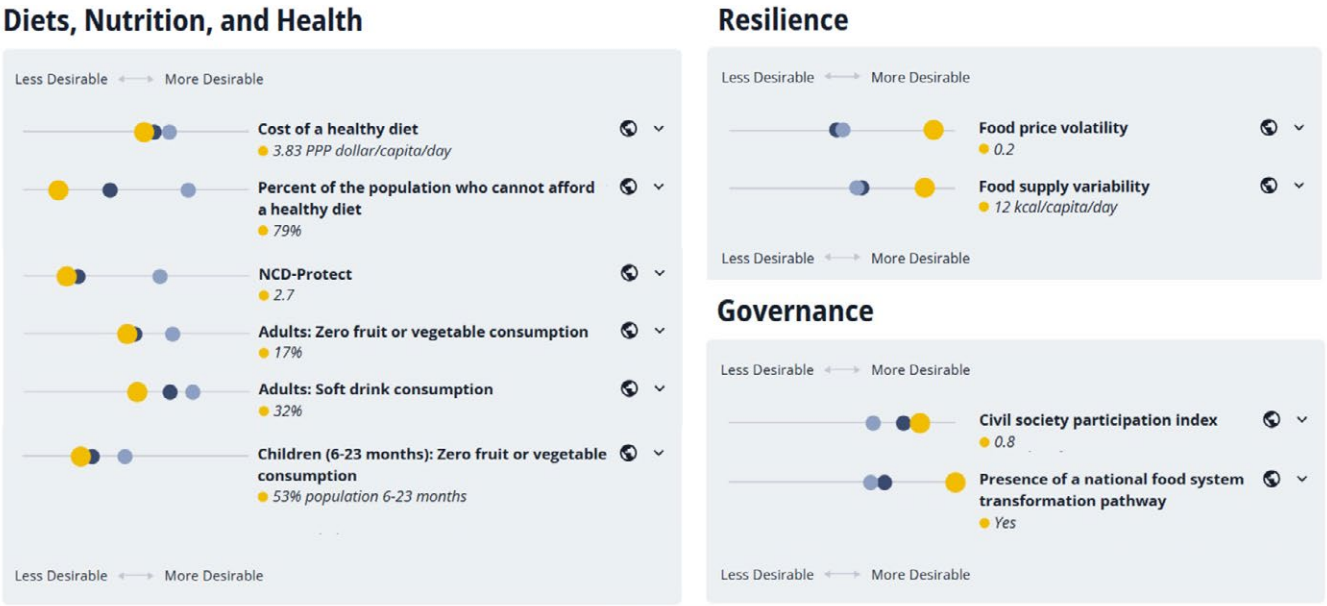
The Food Systems Dashboard diagnostics use a red, yellow, and green traffic light system to show country performance at a glance across 39 indicators. Spread across five domains – food supply chains, food environments, food security, nutrition, and environmental impacts – these indicators help to pinpoint key potential successes and challenges. The latest diagnostics for Kenya, for example, show successes in areas including low sales of ultra-processed foods; low wasting, overweight, and obesity in children under five; and sustainable food production. Challenges on the other hand include low dietary energy in the food supply, a high proportion of people unable to afford a healthy diet and who are undernourished, and a high proportion of children consuming no animal-source foods (**Figure 2**). Using this information from the diagnostics, policymakers in Kenya can focus efforts on reducing food losses, diversifying both production and consumption, promoting traditional foods, and reducing poverty.

Figure 2. Examples of successes and challenges from Nigeria's Countdown profile



Similar to the Dashboard diagnostics, **Food Systems Countdown Initiative country profiles** help to identify where countries are doing well and where they are facing challenges compared to regional and income-group means. The Countdown country profile for Nigeria, for example, uses 59 indicators across five themes[3] to show Nigeria's performance compared to Western Africa as a whole, and the world. Examples of areas where Nigeria is doing well include measures of resilience such as low food price volatility and food supply variability, and measures of governance including the presence of a national food systems transformation pathway and high civil society participation. Examples of challenges Nigeria is facing include food affordability (high cost of healthy diets and high proportion of people unable to afford them) and diet quality (low NCD-Protect score, high proportion of children and adults consuming zero fruits and vegetables, high consumption of soft drinks) (**Figure 3**).

Figure 3. Examples of successes and challenges from Nigeria's Countdown profile



Country Dashboards

To understand crucial detail at the subnational-level, country dashboards are essential. In Kenya, Mozambique, and Nigeria (and in development in Ethiopia and Rwanda), country dashboards can now be used to diagnose subnational challenges and make key policy-decisions about how resources should be allocated.

In Mozambique – Share of women among owners or rights-bearers of agricultural land, which is tracked by both the Countdown and SDGs (5.a.1) – is a success area. Nationally, 68% of landowners are female compared to 56% in East Africa and only 31% globally.

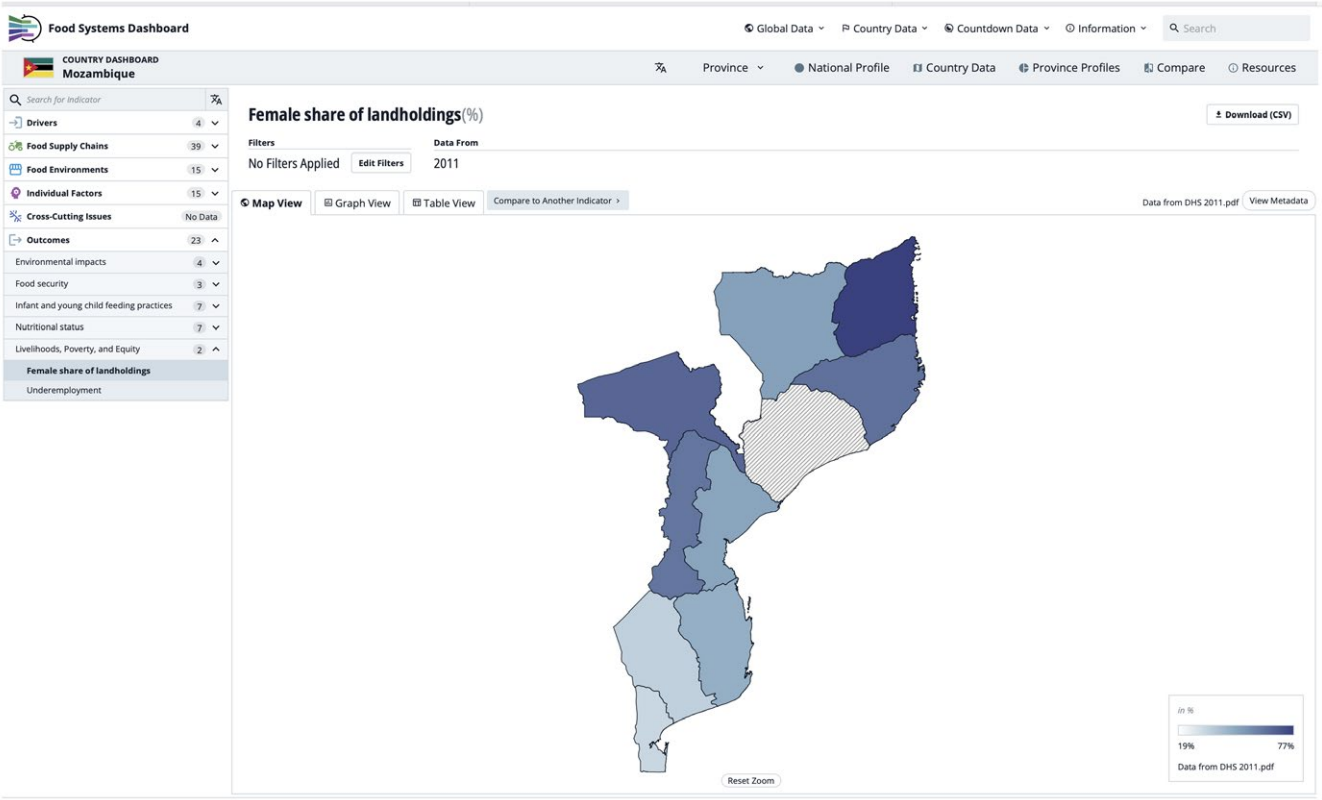
The Mozambique Dashboard (**Figure 4**) shows subnational variation in Female share of landholdings at the province level, which is wide. While it is very high in some provinces (77% in Cabo Delgado), it is far lower in others (32% in Maputo and 34% in Gaza), showing a possible need for more attention in these areas.

A key strength of the country dashboards is the pathway to full government ownership. This is being realized in Kenya, where the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development is incorporating the Kenya Dashboard into their KilimoSTAT database. Government ownership is also underway in Mozambique and Nigeria.

The country dashboards are already driving policy change. In Nigeria, civil society organizations used the data for Cost and Affordability of a healthy diet as shown on the Nigeria Food Systems Dashboard to advocate for increased wages, achieving a 134% increase in the minimum wage in 2024.

3 Diets, nutrition and health; 2) Livelihoods, poverty, and equity; 3) Environment, natural resources and production; 4) Governance; and 5) Resilience.

Figure 4. The Mozambique Dashboard



Summary

The Food Systems Dashboard allows investigating regional trends across Africa as well as unique country contexts. The Dashboard offers diagnostics and Countdown country profiles for all countries in Africa that highlight each country's successes while also pointing to potential challenge areas that may need more attention and resources. Where country dashboards are available, subnational data can provide additional details on variation across the country and where challenges may be felt most intensely.

The country dashboards – launched in Kenya, Mozambique, and Nigeria and in development in Ethiopia and Rwanda – cover over 450 million people across East and West Africa. They have been created in close partnership with governments to ensure alignment with local priorities and decision-making needs. Governments are already in the process of taking full ownership of these dashboards and they are being used by policymakers and civil society.

The Food Systems Dashboard resources make food systems data more accessible to support evidence-based policymaking and more effective food systems transformation.

References

The Food Systems Dashboard. The Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN), The Columbia Climate School, Cornell University, and The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. 2025. Geneva, Switzerland. https://www.foodsystemsdashboard.org DOI: https://doi.org/10.36072/db

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