Arab food security monitoring framework

Country reviews

Kuwait

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Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

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Contents

Introduction 5

Food security dashboard - Arab region 10

Food security indicators, world vs. Arab region 11

Country background 12

A. Natural resources 12

B. Socioeconomy 13

C. Agriculture and food security 13

Data and trends 14

A. Core indicators 14

B. Availability 14

C. Access 15

D. Utilization 15

E. Stability 15

Food security dashboard 17

Food security indicators, Kuwait 18

Food security snapshot 19

A. Drivers and determinants 19

B. Action areas 19

Impact of COVID-19 20

References 22

Key Messages

The monitoring framework highlights that Kuwait is performing well in terms of food security though it has elevated rates of obesity and is highly dependent on food imports, which could prove a risk in a volatile region. The country profile reviews the impact of COVID-19, early measures against it and their effect on the food situation.

OBESITY

Introduction

The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and its partners developed the Arab Food Security Monitoring Framework that helps countries assess their food security situation despite its complex and multidimensional nature.[1] The Monitoring Framework is an outcome of the project entitled "Promoting Food and Water Security through Cooperation and Capacity Development in the Arab Region", implemented in collaboration and partnership with Arab countries, the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development (AOAD), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), academia and other experts, and with the support of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida).

The framework builds on the globally agreed upon definition of food security as existing "when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life",[2] which, as defined, comprises four dimensions, namely availability, access, utilization, and stability, can be evaluated at individual, household, national, regional, or global levels and can be seasonal, transitory or chronic. The framework was developed over a period of three years and involved consultations with more than 200 Arab and international experts. It involved a wide-ranging literature review to account for the latest thinking and experiences in assessing and monitoring food security at national, regional and global levels as well as a mapping of past and present policies, strategies and action plans.

The encompassing review led to the development of a comprehensive monitoring framework that tracks food security at different spatial levels, considers its four dimensions and accounts for both individual and household food security while facilitating a follow-up of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The end result was the Monitoring Framework that expresses food security and nutrition as a function of a multitude of indicators spread in its four dimensions, though approximately five to six indicators under each dimension account for most of the variations and thus are more consequential than the rest. Most of the selected indicators are already widely used globally to monitor aspects of the food system, and the SDGs and other plans of actions are used by major global institutions as development, economic, social, health, or environmental indicators. It was also ensured that the indicators are measurable, relevant to the Arab context and available for at least 50 per cent of Arab countries or the regional population, or both.

1 Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), 2019. Tracking Food Security in the Arab Region (E/ESCWA/SDPD/2019/4). Beirut. Available at https://www.unescwa.org/publications/tracking-food-security-arab-region.

2 Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), 2009. Report of the Committee on World Food Security: Final version. Agenda item III, Thirty-fifth Session of the Committee on World Food Security, 14, 15 and 17 October 2009, CFS:2009/2 Rev.2. Rome.

The 24 indicators that were selected are split into a core pillar with three ex post or outcome indicators — prevalence of undernourishment, moderate or severe food insecurity and obesity, while the remaining 21 ex ante or causal indicators were further split into the four food security dimensions as shown below. All the indicators are global in nature while catering to regional specificities and are grouped as follows:

- **The Core Pillar** comprises three outcome indicators that provide a picture of the prevailing food security and nutrition situation resulting from policies and programmes being implemented as reflected in the form of malnutrition – undernutrition (low caloric intake), overnutrition (excess caloric intake) or nutrient deficiency (low nutrient intake);

1 Core Indicators (CO)

Code	Indicator description	Short name	SDG linkage
CO1	Prevalence of undernourishment Ⓡ %	Undernourishment	2.1.1
CO2	Prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity measured using FIES Ⓡ %	Food insecurity	2.1.2
CO3	Prevalence of obesity in the adult population (18 years and older) Ⓡ %	Obesity	

Ⓡ : Reversed During Normalization

- **The Availability** dimension comprises six indicators reflecting the supply side of food, namely, physical food inflow and outflow at macro and micro levels through production, trade, distribution, and others;

2 Food Availability Indicators (AV)

Code	Indicator description	Short name	SDG linkage
AV1	Primary wheat yield as a percentage of potential achievable yield - %	Yields	2.3.1
AV2	Agriculture Orientation index for government expenditures - Index	Agriculture expenditure	2.a.1
AV3	Food losses (% total food available) Ⓡ %	Food loss	12.3
AV4	Average dietary energy supply adequacy - %	Dietary energy supply	
AV5	Wheat import dependency ratio Ⓡ %	Import dependency	
AV6	Share of water resources used in agriculture out of total renewable water resources Ⓡ %	Agriculture water	6.4.2

- **The Access** dimension comprises five indicators reflecting the ability of the population to acquire needed food through financial means and/or socioeconomic strengths with determinants including income/revenues, prices and supply-chain infrastructure;

3 Food Access Indicators (AC)

Code	Indicator description	Short name	SDG linkage
AC1	Poverty headcount ratio (R) %	Poverty	1.1.1/1.2.1/1.2.2
AC2	Share of food consumption expenditure in total household consumption expenditure (R) %	Food consumption	
AC3	Unemployment rate (R) %	Unemployment	8.5.2
AC4	Logistics performance - index	Logistics	
AC5	Inflation, consumer prices (R) %	Inflation	

- **The Utilization** dimension comprises five indicators touching on nutrition impact or factors affecting it such as availability of basic water and sanitation infrastructure and critical health parameters showing the impact of food unavailability or nutrient deficiency, namely, stunting, wasting and anaemia;

4 Food Utilization Indicators (UT)

Code	Indicator description	Short name	SDG linkage
UT1	The population using at least basic drinking water services - %	Drinking water access	1.4.1/6.1.1
UT2	The population using at least basic sanitation services - %	Sanitation access	1.4.1/6.2.1
UT3	Children under 5 years of age affected by stunting (R) %	Child stunting	2.2.1
UT4	Children under 5 years of age affected by wasting (R) %	Child wasting	2.2.2
UT5	Anaemia among women of reproductive age (15-49 years) (R) %	Women anaemia	

- **The Stability** dimension comprises five indicators highlighting the variability in food production or supply factors that might affect these such as climate change, weather events, price shocks and sociopolitical conditions, all of which might impact the other food security dimensions and the core pillar as well;

5 Stability Indicators (ST)

Code	Indicator description	Short name	SDG linkage
ST1	Climate change vulnerability index (R)	Climate change	
ST2	Food price anomalies standard deviation (R)	Price anomalies	2.c.1
ST3	Political stability and absence of violence - ranking	Political stability	
ST4	Per capita food production variability - $1,000/capita (R)	Production variability	
ST5	Per capita food supply variability - kcal/capita/day (R)	Supply variability	

Data are collected and computed using a dedicated Excel template. The results are presented in the form of a dashboard with two overlapping doughnut charts whose ten rings represent the data normalized to score between 0 (worst performance) and 10 (best performance), as depicted in the graph below. The inner doughnut displays the results of the core indicators while the outer doughnut shows those of the four food security dimension indicators. During the normalization process, indicators with a low value indicating good performance were reversed and are represented with an (R). The doughnut chart is always accompanied by a table presenting the raw indicator data together with the year of data collection and the overall trend between two time periods.

By design, the framework is mechanistic for two reasons: (i) indicators are set and distributed across the food security core pillar and four dimensions; and (ii) the interpretation of results follows a determined path consisting, first, in evaluating results of the three core indicators to identify food security and/or nutritional outcome, and second, in examining the 21 dimension indicators to identify hotspot areas that need immediate action. Stakeholders only need to enter data into the provided Excel template to generate the doughnut graph and related table containing raw data and trends. The data can be sourced at the regional, national and, if available, sub-national levels and disaggregated along gender lines or others noting, however, that a great majority of indicators cannot be disaggregated below the national level.

A complete description of the framework, which was endorsed by the Executive Council of AOAD in March 2019, was published and is available at ESCWA official publication website[3] under the title "Tracking Food Security in the Arab Region".[4] In addition to providing a full background on the framework, the publication presents the key results of tracking food security at the Arab regional level and the trend over the considered years and reviews selected policies and actions that might be considered under each of the indicators to remedy arising concerns. The publication is accompanied by a technical document entitled "Manual for Monitoring Food Security in the Arab Region", which provides a more detailed description for each of the 24 indicators comprising the monitoring framework including, when applicable, computation methodology, justification for selection, linkage to SDGs, potential data sources, and normalization process. It also overviews the use of the accompanying Excel template. Since the completion of the Food Security Monitoring Framework, numerous national agricultural and statistics experts from Arab countries have received in-depth training that took place in Tunis[5] and Beirut[6] and which focused on how to utilize the framework and interpret results for maximum impact for policy and programme design and development.

This report provides a series of food security overviews for the 22 Arab countries, which build on the above-described Arab Food Security Monitoring Framework. Its aim is to further highlight how to use the framework as well as to build capacity on its use with a focus on the national level. As such, it supports Arab countries in their endeavours to utilize the framework in the implementation of food security programmes, to assess the prevailing situation and

3 See https://www.unescwa.org/sites/www.unescwa.org/files/publications/files/tracking-food-security-arab-region-english_1.pdf.

4 See https://www.unescwa.org/sites/www.unescwa.org/files/publications/files/manual-monitoring-food-security-arab-region-english_1.pdf.

5 See https://www.unescwa.org/events/training1-food-security-monitoring-framework-arab.

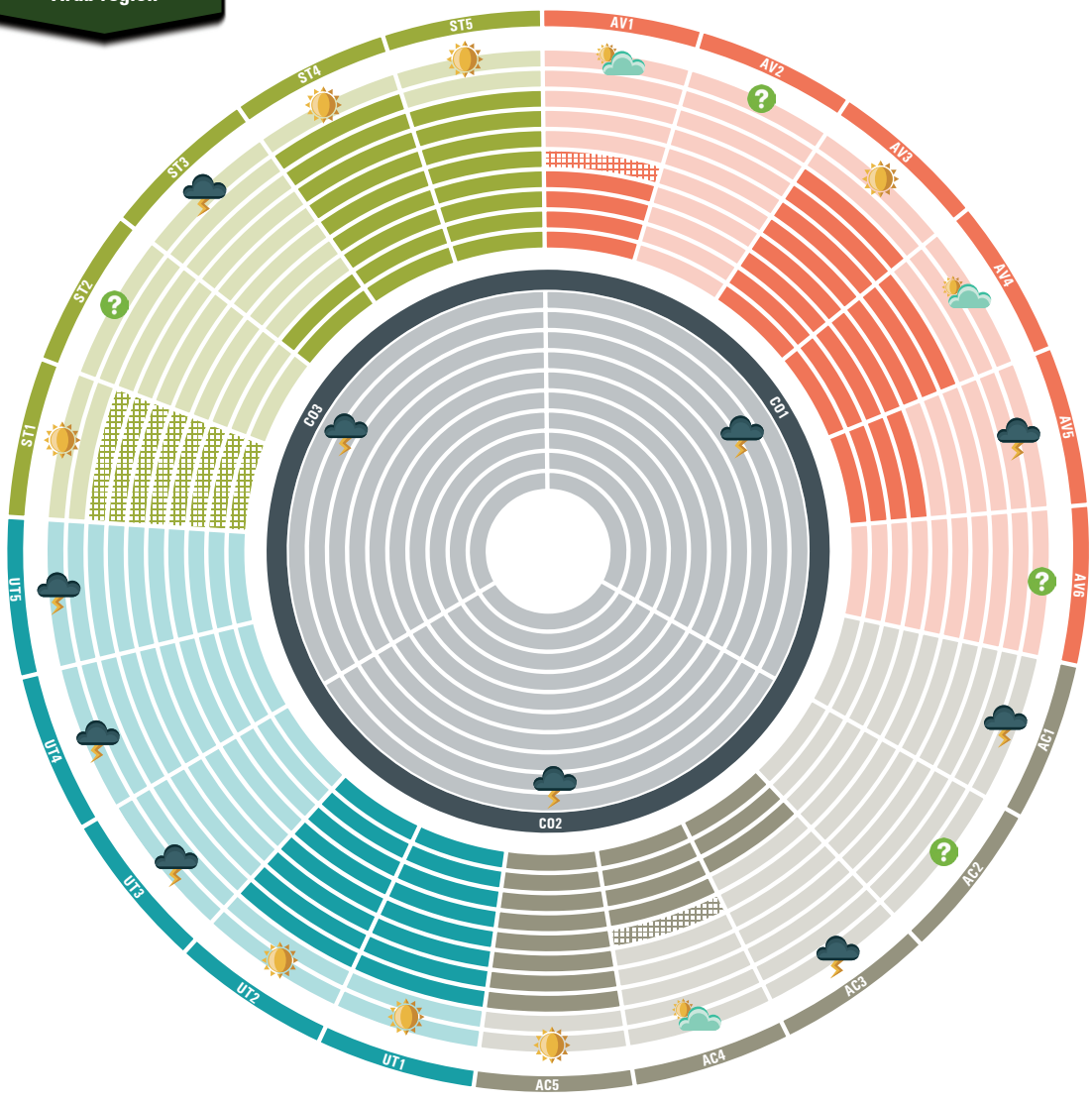
6 See https://www.unescwa.org/events/training2-food-security-monitoring-framework-arab.

to follow up on progress achieved towards the implementation of selected SDGs. It should further enhance capacity at country level and support efforts of national experts to collect focused data, analyse them using a dedicated framework and interpret meaningfully the results to provide policymakers with an overall view of their respective country's food security situation while also outlining alternative paths to address the situation.

The country overviews were produced by ESCWA with data delivered by national experts who provided or reviewed the underlying data (see attached list) and from global databases, as appropriate. For some countries, critical data are still missing, which should serve as a call to action to collect and provide the necessary data as the basis of more accurate and focused advice. The data were collected prior to the COVID-19 pandemic; thus, some results might not reflect the current situation. It is hoped that the report will raise the necessary awareness so that countries can make additional efforts to remediate the lack of data.

Food security dashboard

Arab region



2010 Data: Latest Data:

Performance: High: Proceed Action | Average: More Action | Low: Urgent Action | No Data

Food security indicators, world vs. Arab region

Indicators		World		Arab region			
		Latest		2010	Latest		Trend
Code	Description	Value	Year	Value	Value	Year	
CORE INDICATORS							
CO1	Undernourishment (R) %	10.8	2016	11.5	12.1	2016	🟡
CO2	Food insecurity (R) %	9.2	2018	n.a.	12.2	2016	
CO3	Obesity (R) %	13.0	2016	24.6	28.4	2016	🔴
AVAILABILITY INDICATORS							
AV1	Wheat yields - %	n.a.		76.5	82.2	2017	🟢
AV2	Agriculture expenditure - index	n.a.		n.a.	n.a.		
AV3	Food loss (R) %	n.a.		7.3	6.8	2013	🟢
AV4	Dietary energy supply - %	n.a.		131	131	2017	🟡
AV5	Wheat Import dependency (R) %	n.a.		62.5	65.0	2012	🟡
AV6	Agriculture water (R) %	n.a.		n.a.	n.a.		
ACCESS INDICATORS							
AC1	Poverty (R) %	26.2	2015	n.a.	16.6	mult.	
AC2	Food consumption (R) %	n.a.		n.a.	n.a.		
AC3	Unemployment (R) %	5.0	2018	9.6	10.4	mult.	🔴
AC4	Logistics - index	2.8	2016	2.6	2.7	2016	🟢
AC5	Inflation (R) %	2.5	2018	5.7	12.8	mult.	🔴
UTILIZATION INDICATORS							
UT1	Drinking water access - %	88.5	2015	84.3	86.9	2015	🟡
UT2	Sanitation access - %	68.0	2015	78.9	80.8	2015	🟡
UT3	Child stunting (R) %	22.2	2017	n.a.	22.9	mult.	
UT4	Child wasting (R) %	7.5	2017	n.a.	8.7	mult.	
UT5	Women anaemia (R) %	32.8	2016	34.2	35.5	2016	🟡
STABILITY INDICATORS							
ST1	Climate change (R) - index	n.a.		n.a.	0.1	2019	
ST2	Price Anomalies (R) - index	n.a.		n.a.	n.a.		
ST3	Political stability - ranking	n.a.		20	14	2017	🔴
ST4	Production variability (R) - $1,000/capita	n.a.		10.3	10.1	2016	🟡
ST5	Supply variability (R) - kcal/cap/day	n.a.		32.8	29.8	2013	🟢

(R): Reversed During Normalization n.a.= Not Available mult.= Multiple years

🔴 Red: Negative Trend 🟡 Yellow: Neutral Trend 🟢 Green: Positive Trend

Source: Computed by ESCWA.

Country background

A. Natural resources

The largely urban State of Kuwait has an area of nearly 18,000 km^2 including several islands. The country is mostly covered by deserts with a few patches of arable land around Kuwait Bay and in the south-western and coastal areas. The country experiences extremely hot weather from spring to fall, with very limited rainfall, and hence freshwater, making Kuwait one of the thirstiest countries in the world. Water is almost exclusively obtained by desalination, and the limited groundwater has been nearly exhausted due to overpumping.[1]

Box 1. Food security in Kuwait: The need for integrated management

Kuwait is a politically stable State within an unstable region. The short-lived but damaging Iraqi invasion of 1991 and the ensuing wars and occupation in the region constitute a painful reminder of the risks associated with a volatile geopolitical location. It is therefore understandable that the prevalent concerns of decision-makers lie in the country's ability to satisfy its ever-increasing food requirements from external sources. The problem is not one of economic access to food, as the country's import ledgers are well balanced, but one of hindrances to physical access to food caused by a geopolitical crisis.

This has driven the Kuwaiti Government to launch a plan for self-sufficiency by 2040, an endeavour that appears to be overambitious and that could be impeded by the limited land and water endowments. While new technologies may hold some promises, Kuwait should also be looking towards managing its food demand, which would also positively impact diet-related diseases, as well as strengthen its import-based food security through strategic trade alliances with food-producing countries.

Source: Ismail, H., 2015.

1 Anthony, J.D. and others, 2020.

B. Socioeconomy

The country's population, estimated slightly above 4.2 million people in 2020, is mostly young and composed of approximately one-third Kuwaitis and two-thirds non-Kuwaitis (mostly male migrant workers), among which 5 per cent are stateless (the "Bidoun"). Kuwait is an oil-producing country with a gross domestic product (GDP) of roughly 140 billion USD or a per capita GDP well in excess of $30,000.[2]

C. Agriculture and food security

Agriculture is very limited, except for a few high-tech livestock and poultry rearing facilities that cover a small fraction of the country's needs. Kuwait has been trying to encourage fruits and vegetables production, but these efforts are hampered by limited water availability in spite of efforts to encourage wastewater reuse. Fish resources from the rich Persian Gulf are plentiful.

Kuwait suffers from overnutrition and associated non-communicable diseases. These are most prevalent in women, a large proportion of whom suffer from excessive weight. The traditional diet of rice, dates and sheep and goat milk, a diet rich in fish and low in red meat, has been replaced by a Western style diet that includes sugary drinks, snacks and fast foods. As a response, and with the assistance of the World Health Organization (WHO), the Kuwaiti Government has enacted, over the past 25 years, a number of policies and programmes aimed at correcting the situation. These include a nutrition surveillance system and a nutrition education programme.

2 Trading Economics, n. d.

Data and trends

A. Core indicators

- **Prevalence of undernourishment (CO1)** is low or non-existent as it stood at 2.5 per cent in both 2010 and 2016, which reflects its high-income status;
- **Prevalence of severe food insecurity (CO2)** was estimated to affect 4.3 per cent of the population in 2016, less than half the Arab regional average of 12.2 per cent;
- **Prevalence of adult obesity (CO3),** however, is a serious problem in Kuwait as its prevalence increased from 34.6 per cent in 2010 to 37.9 per cent in 2016, which is much higher than the Arab regional average (28.4 per cent). Obesity among women is estimated at 45.6 per cent, the highest in the Arab region, compared to a prevalence of 33.3 per cent among men.

B. Availability

- **Wheat yields to potential (AV1)** data are not available for potentially achievable yields. The achieved yield grew from 2.34 tons/ha in 2010 to 3.14 tons/ha in 2017;
- **Agriculture orientation index (AV2)** stood at 0.944 in 2015, indicating a large balance between the Government's expenditure on agriculture, and the sector's value added to the GDP;
- **Food losses to food available (AV3)** decreased from 7.57 per cent in 2010 to 6.73 per cent in 2013. This value is within the higher range of values recorded in the Arab region, and above the Arab regional average of 6.8 per cent;
- **Average dietary energy supply adequacy (AV4)** was at 136 per cent in 2017, indicating an oversupply of food, which could lead to waste. However, the value is lower than the 2010 value of 141 per cent, which was the highest in the region for that year, but still higher than the Arab regional average of 131 per cent;
- **Wheat import dependency (AV5)** fluctuated between 98.3 and 97.3 per cent in 2010 and 2012, respectively. This highly excessive level exposes the country to global market shocks and fluctuations but, given its high purchasing power, the country is not expected to be much affected;
- **Water resources used in agriculture (AV6)** data are not available; it must be noted, however, that the country's total renewable water resources stand at an extremely low rate of 4.834 m^3/capita/year.

C. Access

- **Poverty ratio at $3.2/day (AC1)** data are not available;
- **Food consumption share of expenditures (AC2)** increased slightly between 2010 and 2018 from 18.7 per cent to 19.2 per cent, which is reflective of a high-income country;
- **Unemployment rate (AC3)** is also insignificant in Kuwait, at 2.1 per cent in 2018 and 1.8 per cent in 2010. Female unemployment stood at 4.61 per cent, almost five times more than the rate of male unemployment in 2018 (0.88 per cent). Data on unemployment might suggest that Kuwait is at full employment, which could be detrimental to the economy, but since the country relies extensively on foreign workers, unemployment data is more figurative;
- **Logistics performance (AC4)** was 3.3 in 2010 and dropped to 2.9 in 2018, slightly above the Arab regional average (2.7). However, being a small high-income country, logistics should not be a major challenge;
- **Inflation, consumer prices (AC5)** decreased from 4.5 in 2010 to 2.2 in 2017, indicating less pressure on food prices despite the high dependence on imports.

D. Utilization

- **Population using basic drinking water services (UT1)** reached the entire population;
- **Population using basic sanitation services (UT2)** are accessible to the entire population;
- **Stunting in children under 5 years (UT3)** was 4.1 per cent in 2010 and 4.9 per cent in 2015, well below the Arab average (22.9 per cent); however, it is slightly elevated for a high-income country, and additional efforts are needed to bring it under the 2.5 per cent threshold;
- **Wasting in children under 5 years (UT4)** stood at 2.4 per cent in 2010 and increased to 3.1 per cent in 2015. The values are below the Arab average but still on the upper side for a high-income country, suggesting that additional efforts are needed to bring it under control;
- **Prevalence of anaemia among women (UT5)** stood at 20.6 per cent in 2010 and 23.8 per cent in 2016, well below the Arab regional average of 35.5 per cent, yet still above the target set by the World Health Assembly (WHA) for 2030 of 15.2 per cent, suggesting that additional efforts should be exerted to address the problem.

E. Stability

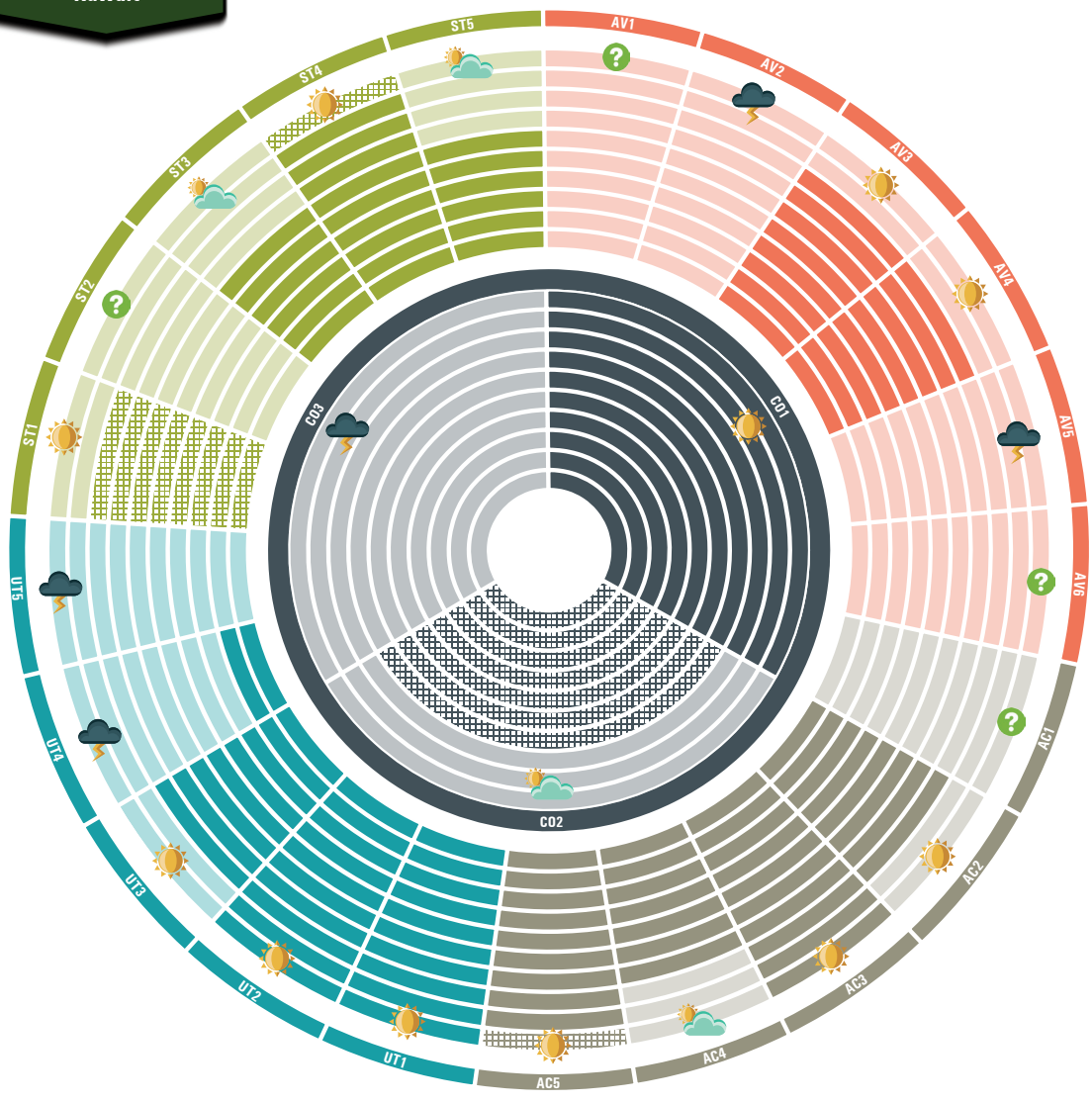
- **Climate change vulnerability (ST1)** suggests a low vulnerability to the impact of weather-related disasters, sea-level rise and loss of agricultural productivity. However, other potential negative impacts could come into play, such as reduced water availability and higher temperatures;

- **Food price anomalies (ST2)** data are not available;
- **Political stability (ST3)** ranking decreased from 61 in 2010 to 52 in 2018, yet still well above the regional average of 14. The decrease might be a reflection of the rising tensions in the Arabian Gulf;
- **Food production variability (ST4),** already low in 2010, at $5,400 per capita,[3] decreased further in 2016 to reach $3,600 per capita. Although Kuwait is a quasi-net importer of food, this decrease is noted as a positive trend;
- **Food supply variability (ST5),** however, doubled between 2010 and 2013 to reach 92 Kcal/capita/day. Despite Kuwait's high average dietary energy supply adequacy (ADESA) and its purchasing power, this high variability exposes the population to a food accessibility risk.

3 Constant 2004-2006 International USD.

Food security dashboard

Kuwait



2010 Data: Latest Data:

Performance: High: Proceed Action | Average: More Action | Low: Urgent Action | No Data

Food security indicators, Kuwait

Indicators		Arab		Kuwait			
		Latest		2010	Latest		Trend
Code	Description	Value	Year	Value	Value	Year	
CORE INDICATORS							
CO1	Undernourishment (R) %	12.1	2016	2.5	2.5	2016	
CO2	Food insecurity (R) %	12.2	2016	n.a.	4.3	2016	
CO3	Obesity (R) %	28.4	2016	34.6	37.9	2016	
AVAILABILITY INDICATORS							
AV1	Wheat yields - %	82.2	2017	n.a.	n.a.		
AV2	Agriculture expenditure - index	n.a.		n.a.	0.94	2015	
AV3	Food loss (R) %	6.8	2013	7.6	6.7	2013	
AV4	Dietary energy supply - %	131	2017	141	136	2017	
AV5	Wheat Import dependency (R) %	65.0	2012	98.3	97.3	2012	
AV6	Agriculture water (R) %	n.a.		n.a.	n.a.		
ACCESS INDICATORS							
AC1	Poverty (R) %	16.6	mult.	n.a.	n.a.		
AC2	Food consumption (R) %	n.a.		18.7	19.2	2018	
AC3	Unemployment (R) %	10.4	mult.	1.8	2.1	2018	
AC4	Logistics - index	2.7	2016	3.3	2.9	2018	
AC5	Inflation (R) %	12.8	mult.	4.5	2.2	2017	
UTILIZATION INDICATORS							
UT1	Drinking water access - %	86.9	2015	100.0	100.0	2017	
UT2	Sanitation access - %	80.8	2015	100.0	100.0	2017	
UT3	Child stunting (R) %	22.9	mult.	4.1	4.9	2015	
UT4	Child wasting (R) %	8.7	mult.	2.4	3.1	2015	
UT5	Women anaemia (R) %	35.5	2016	20.6	23.8	2016	
STABILITY INDICATORS							
ST1	Climate change (R) - index	0.1	2019	n.a.	0.09	2019	
ST2	Price Anomalies (R) - index	n.a.		n.a.	n.a.		
ST3	Political stability - ranking	14	2017	61	52	2018	
ST4	Production variability (R) - $1,000/capita	10.1	2016	5.4	3.6	2016	
ST5	Supply variability (R) - kcal/cap/day	29.8	2013	46.0	92.0	2013	

(R) : Reversed During Normalization n.a.= Not Available mult.= Multiple years

Red: Negative Trend Yellow: Neutral Trend Green: Positive Trend

Note: Unless otherwise indicated, all data figuring in this table and framework have been sourced from international databases including, but not limited to, FAOSTAT, ILOSTAT, World Bank and AQUASTAT, according to each indicator's accredited data source.

Food security snapshot

A. Drivers and determinants

With the exception of adult obesity (CO3), the food security situation in Kuwait seems to be exemplary as it has low undernourishment (CO1) and food insecurity experience (CO2).

The few hotspots that exist include the following:

- **Availability:** agriculture orientation (AV2) and food import dependency (AV5);
- **Utilization:** wasting among children (UT4) and anaemia among women (UT5).

The country is outperforming the regional average on many indicators of the framework. Even though Kuwait is highly dependent on food imports, its high purchasing power balances its needs. However, the high adult obesity rates along with the slightly increasing prevalence of anaemia in women raise the issue of a possible nutrient insecurity in the country.

B. Action areas

The following two areas of improvement can be identified, which policy formulation should focus on:

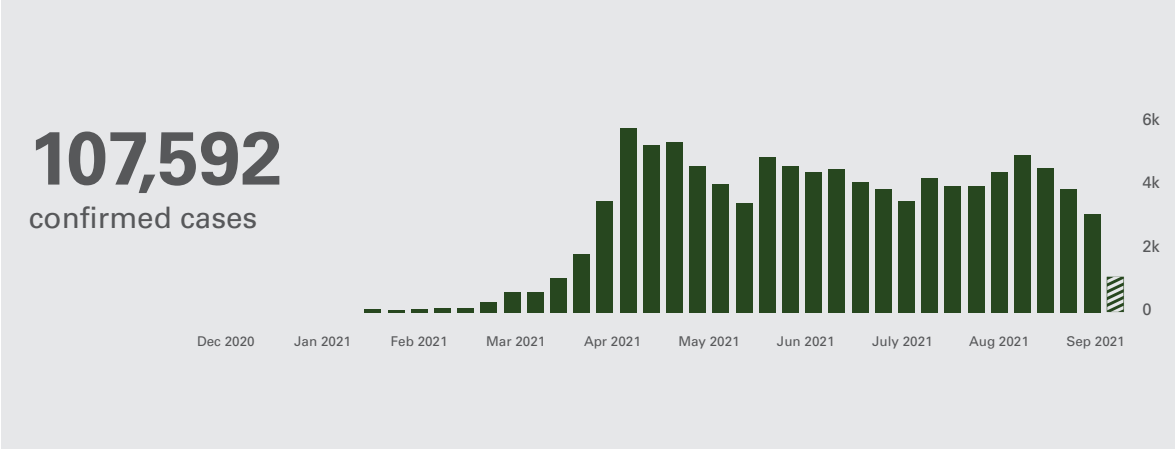
1. Reducing the risks associated with an import-based food economy through an integrated strategy relying on three pillars:
   a. Increasing the local food production using state-of-the-art technologies;
   b. Reducing demand through education on food consumption;
   c. Achieving trade alliances and diversifying food sources and trade routes.
2. Improving the nutrition of the Kuwaiti people through programmes directed at transforming the nutrition transition to serve the aims of food security for all.

In addition, it will be important to better understand the food security status of the non-Kuwaiti residents as they are an integral part of consumers.

Impact of COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic reached Kuwait in late January 2020, and by September, had affected more than 100,000 people with more than 600 recorded deaths. Daily peaks reached more than 1,000 cases.[4]

Weekly cases



Source: World Health Organization (WHO), n.d.

At the beginning of the pandemic, food availability was thought to be affected by lockdown measures[5] that led to trade and supply chain disruptions, combined with panic buying caused by consumers fearing reduced availability notably for essential products, fruits and vegetables, together with an increase in prices.[6] For example, onion imports from India were delayed causing shortages and a price increase in local markets.[7]

4 World Health Organization (WHO), n. d.
5 Suspension of all work and educational services (schools and universities) across the nation, curfew between 17:00 and 4:00, suspension of commercial flights.
6 Fresh Plaza, n. d.
7 Italian Institute for International Political Studies (ISPI), n. d.

To mitigate the impact of the pandemic on various sectors, Kuwait issued an economic stimulus package that, among others, included the following measures:[8]

- Supporting incomes of those affected;
- Ensuring a minimum salary to cover basic living costs;
- Ensuring food stability in local markets;
- Providing unemployment benefits to those affected;[9]
- Providing small and medium enterprises with loans at interest rates of 2.5 per cent or less.[10]

Box 2. Examples of Government-led initiatives

In anticipation of potential disruptions in trade and global supply chains, Kuwait pushed for greater regional and international cooperation and increased investment in agriculture. It proposed a programme across the entire Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) to facilitate the movement of food stuff across borders while also easing food import by adjusting safety requirements. It invested in high-tech greenhouses to enhance local production of fruits and vegetables.[a]

The Government initiated an online database to help with aid distribution to needy families.[b]

In April 2020, Kuwait proposed to set up special measures at border control and customs posts to facilitate the movement of basic food commodities and medical supplies within GCC countries. The proposal was met with agreement by GCC countries.[c]

During the same month, Kuwait eased restrictions placed on the Egyptian imports and permitted imports of beef from Brazil, in addition to increasing investments in local production; and it imported 68 and 300 tons of onions from the Sudan and Yemen, respectively.[d]

a Oxford Business Group, 2020.
b Arab News, 2020.
c Oxford Business Group, 2020.
d Sudan News, 2020; and Hadramout Projects, 2020.

8 Klynveld Peat Marwick Goerdeler (KPMG), 2020.
9 International Monetary Fund (IMF), 2020.
10 Ibid.

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21-00184