



Step 4: Prioritize Food Security Solutions

In this final, consensus-driven step, use the information from step 3 to rank or prioritize the suggested solutions.

4.1 Prioritization

The **Prioritization Worksheet** compiles the values from step 3 for all the suggested solutions. Sort accordingly, so the panel can explore which suggested solutions have the highest or lowest estimated costs, contributions, impact scores and uncertainty scores. However, while this process will rank suggested solutions, there is no algorithm or formula for determining the very best solutions. In fact, there may be more than one best answer.

**Highly ranked solutions offer the
BEST EXPECTED IMPACT for the resources
required, considering the risk of
uncertainty in the projected outcomes.**

Highly ranked solutions should offer the best projected impact for the resources required while considering the uncertainty in the estimates. Advisory panel members should be asked to propose and defend rankings for the suggested solutions. It is unlikely that there will be perfect agreement among the panel on how the solutions should rank. It can be more helpful to ask, "Can anyone not live with the suggested solution being ranked as such? Why?"

During the ranking deliberations, consider these basic guidelines:

- For solutions with comparable costs (as identified in the financial estimates) and uncertainty scores, the solution with a higher estimated impact would rank above the one with a lower estimated impact.

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In this work, some people talk about money, numbers and impact while others want to change the world and you never see eye-to-eye. Bringing everyone together for this systematic process worked to bridge the gap.
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- Significantly higher costs should be associated with a significantly higher estimated impact in a roughly proportional manner.
- Be open to innovative and promising new or modified solutions. The uncertainty score may be higher due to the novel approach, but consider how it is offset by the estimated impact and/or if the costs are acceptable.

After determining a draft of the final ranking of the solutions, any advisory panel member or community member with critical buy-in should have the opportunity to appeal a specific ranking based on the introduction of new evidence, not based on opinion, preference or historical decision-making processes. For example, estimates may need to be adjusted if data used in the process was interpreted incorrectly or if new data is available.

At the end of the prioritization process, highly ranked solutions will be the ones that best suit the needs of the community at the current time, as determined by community stakeholders. The systematic, transparent process inherently builds consensus, engagement and support for the identified solution(s) — positioning the community for action to execute the solutions and improve food security.

Next Steps

A community's food security situation is always shifting. The tools used during the FSS Prioritization Process are living, dynamic documents that can be continually edited and updated to:

- Keep data current and monitor trends over time
- Raise awareness and garner additional support
- Inventory programs as they come online
- Record and rank suggested solutions to consider in the future
- Allocate new resources
- Inform strategic planning.

Making the FSS Prioritization Process part of your ongoing resource management and strategy will help identify the best food security solutions for your community.

The Prioritization Worksheet organizes the following information for all of the suggested solutions being considered:

- Title and descriptions
- Financial estimates and contributions
- A numerical score of the potential impact
- A numerical score of the uncertainty associated with the financial estimates and the impact score

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There was discussion about using the process for non-food issues and other prioritizations. I think it can be used in any industry.

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