Papua New Guinea could not be included in the 2019 Global Hunger Index because of lack of data, but there is cause for significant concern.

As even Papua New Guinea’s National Food Security Policy acknowledges, data on food security in the country are extremely limited, hampering decision making and policy evaluation (GoPNG 2018).

A recent survey conducted in four rural areas of the country found that on average, individuals in poor households in all four areas did not meet minimum calorie requirements and that average protein consumption among individuals in both poor and nonpoor households was insufficient in three out of four areas (Schmidt et al. 2019).

Previous research supports the finding that protein consumption in the country is insufficient (Omot 2012). Climate change and frequent natural disasters—including most recently the El Niño–induced drought in 2015/2016 and an earthquake and volcanic activity in 2018—are also key challenges that jeopardize food security (FAO 2018c).

ABOUT THE GLOBAL HUNGER INDEX

The Global Hunger Index is a peer-reviewed annual report, jointly published by Concern Worldwide and Welthungerhilfe, designed to comprehensively measure and track hunger at the global, regional, and country levels. GHI scores are calculated each year to assess progress and setbacks in combating hunger. The GHI is designed to raise awareness and understanding of the struggle against hunger, provide a way to compare levels of hunger between countries and regions, and call attention to those areas of the world where hunger levels are highest and where the need for additional efforts to eliminate hunger is greatest. This country profile is based on data and information from the Global Hunger Index 2019.

For more information please see the Global Hunger Index 2019 at www.globalhungerindex.org

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The GHI score incorporates four component indicators: undernourishment, child wasting, child stunting, and child mortality. Using this combination of indicators to measure hunger offers several advantages.

The indicators included in the GHI formula reflect caloric deficiencies as well as poor nutrition. The undernourishment indicator captures the nutrition situation of the population as a whole, while the indicators specific to children reflect the nutrition status within a particularly vulnerable subset of the population for whom a lack of dietary energy, protein, and/or micronutrients (essential vitamins and minerals) leads to a high risk of illness, poor physical and cognitive development, and death.

The inclusion of both child wasting and child stunting allows the GHI to document both acute and chronic undernutrition. By combining multiple indicators, the index reduces the effects of random measurement errors.