



MERCY FOR
ANIMALS

Farmed Animal Opportunity Index (FAOI)

Use Guide

Considerations and Limitations

While we believe the index is a powerful tool that can provide important insights, the following considerations should be kept in mind.

The FAOI should be used as a starting point for comparative analysis, not as a stand-alone or final tool for decision-making. The FAOI was devised as only the first of four steps our organization takes in determining where we would be most effective for animals in our international expansion. Specifically, we designed the index for use as a preliminary step to help focus in-depth research in a more manageable set of countries.

The rankings the FAOI provides do not completely reflect the level of opportunity for farmed animal advocacy in each country. Several important variables were not included in the FAOI because of the lack of available, quantifiable data. For example, our tractability indicators all represent generic tractability rather than **movement-specific tractability**, which would include variables that are particularly relevant for animal advocacy organizations. Having this data would give us a better sense of not only our likelihood of success in general but which campaigns are most likely to work well in a particular country or region. The following are examples of variables that did not have sufficient available data for our set of analyzed countries:

1. Attitudes toward our specific issue areas: animal welfare, animal-product reduction, and plant-based alternatives
2. Market trends for relevant products
3. Existing animal welfare laws

The FAOI could not capture several important variables that are more qualitative in nature. Many key considerations cannot be adequately quantified and are therefore better analyzed through other methods. Such considerations include the following:

- Cultural norms
- History of animal farming
- Role of religion

- Presence of influencers (e.g., celebrities, politicians)
- Ease and efficiency in making social change
- Government attitudes toward activism, farmed animal welfare, meat reduction, etc.
- Prevalence of plant-based alternatives
- Environmental and health conditions related to our issues
- Impact of COVID-19
- Important legislative and judicial processes and precedents
- Ease of finding and retaining quality staff

After the top three countries, only large differences in rank should be considered significant. Many of the indicators are estimates or composite indices, so we should expect a small margin of error for each. While a robust error analysis of all indicator values for each country is intractable, an analysis with an ad hoc error of 5% added to each indicator showed an error of less than 5% for each country's FAOI score, giving us a high confidence level in our final scores and ranks. For example, the United States, with a score of 55.4, is definitely ahead of Brazil, with a score of 34.2. But scores for the UK and the Netherlands are much closer at 26.2 and 26.0, respectively, so we should consider them effectively the same. After the top three countries, which have greater differences between scores, numbers drop gradually, with an average change of only 3.7% between adjacent scores.

How Your Organization Can Use the Tool

The variety of interventions employed across the movement can be categorized under two main areas: social change through raising awareness and movement building and institutional change through corporate engagement and legislative and public policy initiatives. Mercy For Animals believes that in general institutional change can promote the greatest short- and mid-term impact for animals. We also recognize that targeting institutions provides more tangible

ways to track progress and estimate the potential impact of our work. But the likelihood of success of institutional change will strongly depend on the political tractability in a country. In the case of more authoritarian regimes, the possibility of success for institutional change is unlikely to depend on people power as it does in regions with higher levels of democracy and political tractability. Institutional change is also much less likely to occur in regions with low public awareness about our cause and little people power (as measured in social tractability), because such change almost always requires public sympathy and movement pressure.

While securing institutional change without awareness and people power is not impossible, we believe the more awareness and people power we have in a country, the more likely institutional campaigns will succeed, in terms of both policy commitments and enforcement. This perspective emanates from and is reflected in our theory of change.

Neglectedness ratings can be used with FAOI scores to inform strategy, depending on organizational focus.

When hovering a cursor over countries on the FAOI map, one can see the level of neglectedness for each country (high, medium, or low), which is inversely proportional to the amount of money donated to farmed animal advocacy per Farmed Animal Funders data. An organization with an entrepreneurial focus may want to develop the animal welfare movement in a country that is highly neglected. A country with high economic tractability that is also highly neglected could be a good candidate for starting a new animal welfare nonprofit or plant-based business. On the other hand, some organizations are better suited to working with existing nonprofits in a country or region and would want to focus efforts on countries with low neglectedness ratings.

The FAOI supports various strategies for international expansion. We have created a basic framework that reflects how different levels of tractability, along with other key dimensions, can impact priorities and outcomes. For example, if your organization works toward institutional change, you can focus on countries and regions that have high levels of tractability.

If your organization works on...	Focus on countries or regions that have...	And you might expect...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating institutional change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High global influence • High political tractability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accelerated institutional change with greater likelihood of enforcement and a domino effect in other countries
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising public awareness, building people power, and exploring institutional-change opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderate to high political and social tractability • High scale • High neglectedness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Groundwork laid for accelerated institutional change, possibly influenced by other countries • Some institutional change • Institutional-change enforcement tested
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising public awareness and building people power 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderate social tractability • High scale 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Groundwork laid for accelerated institutional change, possibly influenced by other countries • Institutional-change enforcement tested
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building people power by supporting local groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low to moderate social tractability • Low to mid scale 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Groundwork laid for accelerated institutional change, possibly influenced by other countries
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploring institutional change through government affairs and public policy • Exploring awareness-raising opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low political and social tractability • High scale 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher risk, though institutional change can occur more rapidly than other types of change where the right opportunities exist
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploring business opportunities in an untapped market 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High neglectedness • High economic tractability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher risk due to a lack of successful large-scale ventures but opportunity for growth in an uncrowded space

How Mercy For Animals Uses the Tool

Mercy For Animals takes a step-by-step approach to strategic decision-making around international expansion.

We designed the FAOI so that both countries and regions could be compared. This is in line with our global expansion strategy, in which we consider two kinds of interventions: country and regional (where work in a group of countries is managed through a regional office).

Once a promising country or region is identified through the FAOI, we take the following additional steps to help determine where to work and what type of work to do:

- 1. Evaluate special opportunities.** We explore whether selected countries have talented, reliable people on the ground who are willing to help; important stakeholders that can facilitate our work; and ripe contexts. Although this is a very subjective analysis, experience proves that these factors can make a big difference.
- 2. Evaluate potential cost-effectiveness.** We assess general cost of living for potential staff, likelihood of success according to our tractability evaluations and consultations with local organizations, the movement's track record of success in the country, etc.
- 3. Conduct deeper scoping studies.** We more closely consider quantitative aspects not included in the FAOI, as well as key qualitative elements. In this process, we also communicate with individuals and organizations on the ground to better understand the context and uncover any unique opportunities.
- 4. Conduct audience analyses.** We deploy surveys in each country to better understand movement-specific tractability. One example is a multinational survey of almost 21,000 people across 23 countries. The results help us examine variation in three attitudes regarding animals—speciesism, belief in sentience, and rationalizing consumption—across Eastern and Western cultures; demographic characteristics within cultures; and whether individual predictors vary as a function of culture.¹

¹ Hopwood, C., Olaru, G., Dillard, C., Graça, J., Waldhorn, D. R., & Sanchez-Suarez, W. (2021). *International attitudes about farmed animals*. <https://doi.org/10.17605/OSF.IO/YDQ78>.

