World Food Programme

Key Issues in Emergency Needs Assessment

Volume I: Report of the Technical Meeting

28–30 October, 2003
Rome, Italy

Organized by:
Emergency Needs Assessment Unit (OEN)

Supported by:
Vulnerability Analysis & Mapping Unit (VAM)
Strategy, Policy & Programme Support Division (PSP)

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28–30 October, 2003, in Rome, Italy

The Technical Meeting was organised by Emergency Needs Assessment Unit (OEN) and was supported by the Vulnerability Analysis & Mapping Unit (VAM) and the Strategy, Policy & Programme Support Division (PSP). Lead facilitator was Peter Walker, director of the Feinstein International Famine Center, Tufts University, MA.

United Nations World Food Programme
Headquarters: Via C.G.Viola 68, Parco dé Medici, 00148, Rome, Italy

OEN Emergency Needs Assessment Unit
Chief: Wolfgang Herbinger
Programme Officer: Charisse Tillman
Technical Meeting Consultant: JohannaMaria (Marieke) Feitsma, Greg Collins
Tel: ++39-06-6513-3123/2969/2231
Email: ena_info@wfp.org
Editing, layout: hutak.com

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Acknowledgements

On behalf of the World Food Programme's Emergency Needs Assessment Unit (OEN), I wish to extend our sincere thanks to the participants of the three-day Technical Meeting on "Key Issues in Emergency Needs Assessment" held in October, 2003 in Rome Italy.

Over 50 representatives from governments, multilateral agencies, NGOs, regional bodies, research institutes, consultancy firms and WFP came together to attend the meeting. Drawing on their wealth of experience and technical knowledge, the meeting was able to achieve greater consensus on contentious areas in the assessment of emergency food security needs and also provide valuable guidance for the production of strengthened needs assessment guidelines for WFP and its partners.

I would like to add thanks and acknowledge the vital contribution of the meeting's lead facilitator Peter Walker; and the thematic and working group facilitators: Richard Caldwell, Annalisa Conte, Henri Josserand, Erik Kenefick, Ron Ockwell, Jeremy Shoham and Sonali Wickrema. In addition to navigating participants through challenging topics they served as the primary authors for various sections of this report.

Special thanks are also due to the writers of the technical background papers: Paul Dorosh, Tim Frankenberger, Richard Caldwell, Chris Leather, John Seaman and Ben Watkins. Their contribution was crucial to opening up the discussions and to providing an overview of the basic concepts and issues.

Less visible but equally important was the work of Greg Collins and Marieke Feitsma who assumed responsibility for the substantive and organizational preparations for the meeting: from the initial planning phase to the production of this report. Thank you Greg, Marieke and indeed to all colleagues in WFP who supported the meeting.

Finally, I wish to thank the members of WFP's Executive Board and senior management whose participation on the third day of the workshop sent a clear signal that improving the quality of Emergency Needs Assessment is a priority within our organization as well as across the broader humanitarian community.

Wolfgang Herbinger

Chief, Emergency Needs Assessment Unit (OEN)

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Executive Summary

i. Background

In March, 2003 an inter-agency meeting, the *WFP-Partner Consultation on Emergency Needs Assessment (ENA),* was held in Castel Gandolfo, Italy.[1] The meeting explored current issues in the assessment of food security in emergencies and formulated a number of tentative conclusions and recommendations. One of the next steps identified by the Partner Consultation participants was to hold technical meetings to address key outstanding issues in ENA.

The subsequent *Technical Meeting: Key Issues in Emergency Needs Assessment* (ENA) was organised by WFP's Emergency Needs Assessment Unit (OEN). It brought together over 50 experts from within WFP, its partner organisations and the academy. Individuals were invited to participate based on their recognized expertise in one of the thematic areas under discussion, listed under objective 1 below. The first two days were spent working in the four thematic sub-groups. Plenary sessions were held to allow for cross-fertilization of ideas. Background papers were prepared for each thematic area and distributed to participants prior to the meeting.[2] On the morning of the third day, participants were split into two working groups focused on the two cross-cutting issues listed below under objective 2. All participants acted in their capacity as individuals.

ii. Meeting Objectives

The meeting aimed to achieve the following objectives:

1. Review outstanding issues and reach consensus on general principles in four problematic and contentious ENA technical areas: Non-food responses to food insecurity, Chronic versus transitory food insecurity, Markets, Sampling.

2. Further refine the minimum information needs for EFSA reporting developed during the previous consultation and identification of critical pre-disaster (baseline) information needs.

[1] *Report on the Proceedings of the WFP-Partner Consultation on Emergency Needs Assessment (ENA): Food.*
[2] The background papers are provided as an annex to this report.

In addition to these primary objectives, the workshop aimed to identify persons from outside WFP who would be willing to review and comment on a draft of the WFP ENA guidelines currently under development and to take part in an ENA e-forum suggested in the previous workshop.

The breadth and depth of the thematic group and working group discussions, including key concepts, issues, recommendations, and remaining areas of contention, are presented in detail in the relevant chapters of this report. Each of the thematic and working group chapters was prepared by the group's assigned facilitator and represents a consensus of the discussions held. A brief overview and key recommendations from each group is provided below. This report has been written and organized with the knowledge that one of its prime users will be the WFP staff and external advisors charged with drafting the new Emergency Needs Assessment Guidelines.

NOTE: For the purpose of this meeting and within WFP the term *Emergency Needs Assessment* (ENA) refers to the assessment of food needs in emergency situations. However, during the meeting and in some of the technical papers the term *Emergency Food Security Assessment* (EFSA) was also used. This is in line with the understanding of participants and WFP that an appropriate assessment of food needs requires a wider analysis of the food security situation in emergencies.

iii. Non-food Responses to Food Insecurity

In considering the relationship between non-food responses and food insecurity, the thematic group identified the following key points, noting that they should be reflected in ENA guidelines:

- ENAs should assess food insecurity and not focus narrowly on food aid requirements.
- ENAs should have as an objective to assist affected populations to meet their essential food and non-food requirements and to protect their livelihoods, health and well-being.
- Livelihood objectives need to be stated with a clear rationale.
- Pre-crisis (baseline) information is critically important for assessments aiming at livelihood protection.
- ENA guidelines need to clarify the meaning of key terms such as: "essential food requirements", "essential non-food requirements", and "without damaging livelihoods".

Although there is limited experience with non-food aid responses to food insecurity in emergencies, the group identified the following context specific 'rules of thumb':

- Increasing household income by stabilizing prices of commodities sold is problematic on a large scale due to management difficulties. This is likely to preclude implementing such programs in rapid onset and complex emergencies.
- Cash distributions are problematic in areas of insecurity unless implemented as a one off program or on a local scale. Where food supply is restricted, inflation may result.
- Improving physical access and reducing household expenditures is probably not appropriate for refugee/IDP situations especially where these are short term crises
- Price support of staple food and policy interventions are practical at large scale and can be introduced at relatively short notice – rapid onset and slow onset. However, such programs need adequate infrastructure as well as political will and autonomy.

There were a number of points of contention or areas of perceived ignorance highlighted during the group's deliberations:

- There is a lack of empirical experience of non-food aid interventions and how to acquire information to inform decisions about most appropriate response.

- While there was agreement over the need to assess the impact of water and health factors on food security there was less agreement over the need to look at food utilization issues, e.g. lack of absorption of nutrients as a result of illness.
- Should technical assessors look at issues like organizational capacity when considering different response options? There was agreement that this was probably not possible at national level but could be achieved at local level.
- There was lack of consensus over whether knowledge about type of donor resource availability, e.g. food or cash, should influence ENA findings. It was agreed that at the very least the report should have a section on historical experience/what has been done in the past and, if necessary advocacy for most appropriate type of intervention

iv. Chronic and Transitory Food Insecurity

A thorough analysis and understanding of the nature, causes, severity and duration of food insecurity among different groups within a population under stress or in crisis is needed to determine whether an 'emergency' intervention is necessary or whether the situation is 'chronic' and requires longer-term measures. In situations of gradual deterioration, the possibility of identifying triggers for preventive action aimed at productive asset protection should also be explored. The concepts of chronic and transitory food insecurity were distinguished as follows: Households who are persistently unable to meet their food intake needs over time *vs.*households who, following a shock, are temporarily unable to meet their food intake needs without sacrificing productive assets or undermining their human capital.

The group identified the following general recommendations:

- A food access analysis, and not only food supply/balance calculations, should be used as the basis for planning food security interventions.
- Livelihood models are essential. Different livelihood models can be used provided that they incorporate the range of factors that influence food access and utilization. The model(s) used should be explicit in the assessment and analysis process.
- A combination of data collection methods is needed in any situation, including use of available secondary data. Initial assessments will need to rely on qualitative, non-probability sampling methods; detailed assessments should apply probability samping to the extent possible.
- A *Coping Strategies Index* (CSI) can provide a valuable tool for monitoring the dependence of households on exceptional coping strategies and risks to their future food security. There may be issues relating to the weight assigned to various coping strategies in the index.

Key issues raised in the discussion that remain unresolved and/or contentious include:

- Appropriate food energy (calorie) benchmark: 2100 kcal or local standards
- Exit strategies from livelihood support interventions
- Targeting households experiencing different degrees/types of food insecurity
- Trigger level for intervention to protect productive assets
- Availability of resources for protecting livelihoods
- Risks of raising false expectations through fielding emergency needs assessments
- Identification of triggers for emergency response in slow on-set situations with high chronic food insecurity

v. Markets

Nearly all households are linked to markets: labour markets, food markets, commodity markets, etc. How these markets function determines household access to food. Data on prices and market flows form a key part of market analysis. In addition, information on trader perceptions, government policies and capacity to import, and household livelihoods gives a clearer picture of how markets are likely to respond to a crisis and which households are likely to lose market access to food.

Incorporating an analysis of food markets in an ENA allows us to collect the following information:

- Estimation of the extent private food market flows can offset a national or local food shortfall.
- Estimation of the extent to which an increase in food supply, through a food aid programme, for example, could take place without introducing market distortions.
- Guidance on the extent food markets can be used as an instrument to solve a household food gap.
- Where food aid is proposed, response to stakeholder concerns regarding the likely effect of food aid on market supplies, prices, and producers' incentives and incomes.
- Assessment of possibility for local food purchase to facilitate food flows from surplus to deficit areas.
- In case of a food aid intervention, continued market monitoring and re-assessment helps avoid food aid causing disincentives to food producers and traders, and it also informs programming decisions on targeting and appropriate responses to food needs.

Options for food-market interventions in a crisis fall into two groups: *through markets* (policy interventions, open market sales, balance of payment support) and *complementary markets* (targeted food and non-food interventions for vulnerable households for whom even a competitive price is too high to buy the food they need.

The group identified the following market issues that must be kept in mind during ENAs:

- The basis of market analysis in an emergency setting is to see whether traders respond well to price signals and to what extent this response allows households to continue to meet food needs.
- Any intervention to increase food consumption should avoid distortions that could inhibit markets by crowding out the private sector or creating disincentives for producers, traders, transporters.
- Markets can improve food availability in all places at all times, but targeted interventions may be needed to address household food access problems.
- Market analysis can also point to areas where local food procurement may be a means of facilitating the flow of food from surplus to deficit areas.
- Given the difficulty of forecasting market responses, needs assessments must be followed by regular monitoring and analysis of market indicators.

vi. Sampling

One of the most important factors in how an ENA is treated by the donor community and internally among emergency agencies is the perceived quality of the information. Information that is collected using acceptable sampling methods will facilitate comparability over time and space with other data collected both during and after the emergency, from WFP and other agencies. The sampling regime largely determines how representative the information is, and how precisely indicators can be estimated.

Key sampling issues and concepts that must be understood and applied when conducting ENAs include:

- *Probability/non-probability sampling:* A clear choice must be made when deciding whether or not to use probability or non-probability sampling techniques.
- *Representative-ness:* It must be made explicit that every sample is representative of a population and is used to estimate population parameters.
- *Sampling Accuracy and Precision:* It should be clear that accuracy is achieved when data from the sample are close to the true values and that precision refers to the level of measurement and exactness and may not be related to data quality.
- *Stratification:* All surveys can *potentially* benefit from stratification, or systematically grouping survey units into homogeneous groups before conducting the survey.
- *Sample size:* Sample size is directly related to precision, and the measurement objectives for which the ENA is conducted.
- *Design effect:* ENA surveys will rarely have the opportunity to select a household by simple random selection. More complex designs that use clustering, stratification, or multi-stages are required.
- *Assuring comparability over time/space, and consistency with multiple users/agencies/sectors*:
  How to improve the chances that data will be comparable over time and space is only partly technical in nature. It implies a strategy to advocate for proper sampling methods and a system that ensures that data quality and rigor are incorporated into each assessment.
- *Supporting measurement objectives and potential targeting (geographic, social, temporal):*
  Perhaps the most significant and immediate improvement in ENA with respect to sampling can come from linking measurement and targeting objectives with the sample design.
- *Documentation of sampling procedures, including limitations to the assessment:*
  Transparency is a key issue in sampling, and assessment reports need to clearly state how the sample was designed and how the primary sampling units (usually households or individuals) were selected.
- *Understanding and documentation of limitations:* Documenting the limitations of assessments would allow assessment users to make their own judgments on the limits of interpretation.

Some issues around sampling remain contentious. There needs to be clear distinction among sampling approaches, methodologies and data types (probability and non-probability vs. qualitative and quantitative). There is always a lingering debate on when and how to use qualitative methods versus quantitative methods, but this is not a sampling issue. The same sampling methods can be used for both qualitative and quantitative methods.

vii. Pre-crisis Information (Baseline)

In many cases it is valuable to know the food security situation before the crisis occurs so the emergency needs assessment information 'post-crisis' can be compared to a benchmark of a so-called 'normal' year.

Knowing the minimum pre-disaster baseline/benchmark data in terms of food security and risk for the various emergency contexts can allow for better estimation of the impact of the emergency on food and non-food needs. It is important to fully understand the dimensions of food security that should be included in a pre-emergency assessment: food availability, food access and food utilization – at national, community, household and individual levels. By only assessing national food availability or only individual utilization (anthropometry), a complete understanding of the impact of an emergency on the affected population is impossible. Several options exist, each with pros and cons, for collecting and analysing pre-crisis information in order to create a baseline profile for countries prone to food security emergencies.

- *Secondary data analysis*: very useful when the appropriate breadth and aggregation of data already exist. Not a good stand-alone method when there has been a significant change in the country (politically, economically, population movements).
- *Risk analysis*: Requires a high level of expertise and can be time consuming.
- *Primary data collection*: community level – Good for getting a broader coverage within a country and to understand processes. Does not allow for precise quantification.
- *Primary data collection*: household level – Provides a snapshot of the current food security and risk situation for a defined population. Time, financial, and human resource intensive, especially where coverage desired is country wide.
- *Primary data collection*: individual level – This information is most often found as secondary information from DHS or MICSII surveys. However, for pre-disaster baselines, it's important to have maternal and child health and nutritional information at a much more disaggregated level than those surveys usually provide. Therefore appropriately designed and sampled surveys are important to use and are best when linked directly to surveys measuring household food security. These are often expensive and require large sample sizes.

It should be noted that primary data collection and analysis require significant technical skills. People cannot be trained in a few days or weeks to do much of the technical work required for primary data collection and analysis. These skills are learnt over time and thus appropriate talent should be identified, either from within or from well-recognized individuals or agencies from outside the organization.

viii. Critical data and information for inclusion in an ENA report

The group reviewed and revised the draft list of minimum information to be reported in ENAs presented in Appendix C to the report of the WFP-Partners Consultation in March 2003, beginning with a discussion of the appropriateness of establishing such a standard list and the appropriate level of detail. Some of the additional guidance on this topic that came out of the discussion includes:

- It would be useful to establish minimum reporting requirements for ENAs (although it should not become a straight-jacket) as a contribution to improving quality/standards and enabling comparisons to be made.
- The minimum reporting requirements would be for *programme decision-making* (relating to food and non-food food security interventions) and *communications* (advocacy/resource mobilization) purposes. This must not be confused with a check-list for data gathering in the

field, which would normally be more detailed and tailored to the needs of the particular situation.

- The minimum reporting requirements should be *independent of any particular methodology* but provide a framework for the process of defining a common/ coordinated assessment approach at country level.[3]
- When any of the listed data are *not available*, the assessment report should state this and explain why, whether and when the data may become available, and what is being done (or needs to be done) to obtain them.
- The same list/minimum information set should be used for *all assessment reports*, in all contexts (slow-onset, sudden, etc.). When specific data are not yet available (e.g. in the early stages of a sudden-onset crisis), this should be stated explicitly. If certain information is considered to be irrelevant in a particular situation, this should be explained.
- In all cases it is essential that the ENA report:
  - ► specifies the hypotheses, methodologies, and data sources used
  - ► provides details of households' access to food, and of food availability
  - ► clearly indicates when information on the minimum list is unavailable
  - ► specifies uncertainties and give ranges rather than absolute figures, when appropriate
  - ► specifies any limitations of data
  - ► distinguishes facts from judgments
  - ► focuses on changes and trends, rather than static portrayals
  - ► highlights risks and the possible consequences of specific actions (or inaction)

The following main topics were agreed upon to be included in emergency needs assessment reports:

- Methodology and sources of data
- The food-security / livelihood / economic situation of household
- The economic environment, natural resources and food availability
- Health and nutrition facts relevant to food security
- Context
- Policies, plans and the means / capacity to implement food security assistance
- Additional considerations in case of refugees / IDPs and other specific target groups
- Conclusions – response options and risks.

[3] It would be useful to have guidelines for the process of establishing country level consensus on the approach and method(s) to be used in each assessment (which was recommended in March 03).

ix. Facilitators' Overview

Six key themes emerged during the course of the meeting. These themes are reflected upon in the final chapter on change implications for WFP. A brief overview of each theme is provided below.

1. *Clarity of presentation* – At present, WFP like many agencies, often subsumes its needs assessment data and analysis into emergency appeal documents.The meeting was unanimous that WFP must aim to produce a clear, separate, rational needs assessment document which describes the problem being addressed, the model for analysis being used, the nature and validity of the assessment data being presented and hence the quantification of the "food gap" and food insecurity in the region in question.
2. *Evolving models* – Together with analysing markets, the proven validity of the food entitlement theory and its elaboration in household food economy, livelihood models and household food security analysis frameworks should form the basis of WFP's detailed analysis of emergency situations.
3. *Pre-crisis knowledge is critical* – Understanding of the state of people's lives before the crisis is essential for correctly judging the dynamics of livelihoods and markets in emergency needs assessments.
4. *Quality of primary data collection* - The reader of an emergency needs assessment must feel confidence in the validity, representivness and consistency of the data presented.
5. *Bottom line is lives and livelihoods* - Needs assessments in food insecurity emergencies must provide analyses across a range of severities and urgencies from life threatening, to malnutrition, to destabilized livelihoods.
6. *Monitoring and iteration* – Because assessments at the outset of a crisis are inherently approximations, follow up needs assessment surveys some months into the crisis are essential. A more dynamic and analytical approach to emergency needs assessment requires a monitoring which, in addition to observing process and impact indicators, provides an opportunity for refining and updating assessment results.

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1. Objectives and Expectations of the Technical Meeting

The *Technical Meeting: Key Issues in Emergency Needs Assessment,* held in Rome in October 2003, was the third in a series of consultations aimed at improving the quality and ensuring a minimum standard for Emergency needs assessment both within WFP and within the larger humanitarian community.

The object of this technical meeting was to engage key players in the humanitarian community in a technical discussion aimed at moving forward consensus on four key areas identified at the previous meeting as being problematic: non-food responses to food insecurity, chronic versus transitory food insecurity, markets and sampling.

The objectives for the meeting, as stated in the background material prepared by WFP, included:

1. **Review outstanding issues and reach consensus on general principles in four problematic and contentious ENA technical areas**:[4]

   Non-food responses to food insecurity

   - Assessing the potential role of non-food responses to food insecurity (availability, access, utilization) in emergencies.
   - Determining the comparative advantage of food and non-food responses in various emergency and local contexts.

   Chronic versus transitory food insecurity

   - Distinguishing (and gauging the magnitude of) transitory food insecurity and assistance requirements resulting from an emergency from chronic food insecurity and assistance requirements.
   - Targeting implications for chronically food insecure households and households experiencing transitory food insecurity due to an emergency.

   Markets

   - Assessing market performance and functioning (failure to function) in emergencies and the probable market effects resulting from food interventions.
   - Gauging the potential for use of markets as an instrument for intervention.

   Sampling

   - Optimal versus practical sampling approaches, including compromises and their impact on validity.
   - Technical and resource related parameters to be considered.
   - Matching sampling approaches to information needs and context/setting limitations.

[4] To inform and provide points of departure for discussion during the technical meeting, a background paper on each technical area had been commissioned. Each paper focused on the core best practices, critical areas of uncertainty, and critical issues that need to be addressed in order to improve a specific area of emergency needs assessment in situations of possible food insecurity. Papers were shared with participants prior to the meeting.

2. **Further refine the pre-crisis information needs and minimal information list for inclusion in ENA reports, as developed during the previous consultation.** [5]

3. **In addition to these primary objectives, participants will be approached to take part in an ENA e-forum suggested in the previous WFP partner consultation.**

During the meeting, each of the thematic and working groups was asked to organize its work around the following questions:

- What are the concepts that need to be in the new Emergency Needs Assessment Guidelines?
- What are the topic areas that need to be covered?
- What is the specific information that needs to be collected?
- What methodologies are recommended?
- What specific knowledge / skills are required?
- What documented examples of good practice can we use to illustrate the manual?
- Where is there disagreement or more research needed?

Participants in the meeting were split into four thematic groups, working in parallel, aimed at addressing the four areas identified in objective one. On the morning of the third day, participants were divided into two larger parallel working groups to reflect upon the issues of pre-crisis information and minimal information for inclusion in ENA reports (objective two). Plenary sessions were used throughout the meeting to facilitate cross-fertilization of ideas. On the afternoon of the third day the meeting concluded with a report back to, and discussion with, selected senior WFP executive staff and board members. The main body of this report consists of sub-reports from the proceedings of the four thematic and two working groups. All groups used the same template to report back on the discussions in the groups, structuring the outcomes around the following headings:

Scope: Scope of the discussions, and subject area covered.

Value added: Added value of the theme to the quality of an Emergency Needs Assessment.

Key concepts: Key concepts that the groups felt were important to their thematic area and which should be considered as vital information to be included in Emergency Needs Assessments.

Pre Crisis information / Background data: The background information relevant to the subject area that a team should ideally have access to as it starts its emergency needs assessment.

Current information needs: The key processes and parameters upon which the assessment team should be gathering data.

Methodology: The group's advice on the various methodologies available for realistically collecting this information.

Examples: Real life examples where a thorough grounding in the theme has allowed for better/innovative programming.

Skills/qualifications: The skills and qualifications that are needed to acquire and analyse information in line with the identified approaches.

Question marks: Highlighted areas of contention and perceived ignorance in the subject matter.

[5] Outlined in *Report on the Proceedings of the WFP-Partner Consultation on Emergency Needs Assessment (ENA): Food*.

2. Non-Food Responses to Food Insecurity

The Thematic Group (TG) was asked to provide a summary of key issues in the subject area and to develop a 'working consensus' on how to address the more operational issues raised in the group including specifying appropriate approaches for different assessment timeframes and emergency contexts. In particular they were asked to focus on:

- Assessing potential role of non-food responses to food insecurity (availability, access, utilization) in emergencies
- Determining the comparative advantage of food and non-food responses in various emergency and local contexts

2.1 Scope

The main purpose of the Thematic Group was to 'determine how to identify the most appropriate intervention through emergency needs assessments'. The scope of the discussions was as follows:

- A presentation of the background paper by **John Seamen** (Save the Children UK) and **Chris Leather** (Oxfam). The paper mainly focused on key objectives and concepts of Emergency needs assessments (ENA) in relation to non-food aid responses to food insecurity and minimum information needs for such assessments
- Clarification of key objectives and concepts in relation to these ENA
- Minimum information needs for determining most appropriate type of response to food insecurity
- Definition of key terms, (e.g. 'essential food', 'essential non-food items', 'without damaging livelihoods' and 'dignity')
- Methodologies for obtaining/analyzing information that meets key objectives of ENA
- Experiences of conducting ENA's aimed at establishing most appropriate response to food insecurity and whether methodologies are more appropriate for some contexts than others (e.g. slow/rapid onset, conflict, refugee/IDP, large magnitude/dispersed population, urban population)
- Which types of interventions are likely to be workable/appropriate or not appropriate/workable in different emergency contexts and case examples?

2.2 Value Added

At a previous partner consultation on emergency needs assessment there was widespread concern among donors that food aid needs are sometimes over-estimated while the potential for other (non-food aid) interventions to address food insecurity problems are not adequately examined. There was general consensus that assessments should address food (in) security and not focus too narrowly on food aid requirements. It was recommended that a separate technical workshop should be organized to examine options for non-food aid responses to food insecurity and the implications for assessment and analysis

There are currently no agreed methodologies for assessing the need for the wide range of potential options for addressing food insecurity in emergencies. Methodologies for assessing the need for food aid as a response to crisis have been developed over the past 20 years. There has also been some

methodological development in assessing the need for seeds and tools as a response to crisis.[6] However, there is a lack of guidance material on the range of other responses including:

- reducing or stabilizing prices
- increasing household income by stabilizing prices of commodities sold
- increasing household income through provision of cash, food vouchers, or other commodities either free or in return for work
- assisting physical access to markets
- reducing household expenditure through policy interventions

While certain agencies[7] are beginning to address this, the lack of advice for field staff is probably one of several factors which militate against examining and proposing non-food aid responses to food insecurity during crises. This lack of guidance material is potentially significant as it may be that in many situations alternative/non-food aid responses are more appropriate than the traditional and often 'knee-jerk' food aid response.

2.3 Key Concepts

The thematic group felt that the following key concepts should be reflected in ENA guidelines:

- ENAs should address food insecurity and not focus narrowly on food aid requirements
- ENAs should have as an objective to 'assist affected populations to meet their essential food and non-food requirements and to protect their livelihoods, health and well-being'
- Livelihood objectives need to be clearly stated in conjunction with a rationale for these objectives
- In order to achieve these objectives pre-crisis baseline information is critically important
- Guidelines for ENA need to clarify the exact meaning of the following key terms

Essential food requirements: This should comprise the adjusted equivalent of 2100 kcals/per capita/day of a balanced food basket if food is the only input to the affected population. The figure can be adapted if other inputs are available (food or non-food, existing resources and aid programmes).[8]

Essential non-food requirements (EFNR): Can be sub-divided and defined as:

- ENFR to save lives - basic requirements (shelter, water, sanitation, health)
- ENFR to maintain livelihoods - productive assets (tools, labour, land and livestock), education, security, legal and political rights

Without damaging livelihoods: This should be understood as preventing:

- any activity that would lead to the liquidation of primary productive assets

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[6] Longley. C (2002). Do farmers need relief seed? A methodology for assessing seed systems. Disasters, 2002, 26 (4); pp 343-355

[7] Oxfam UK are developing guidance material for determining the need and appropriateness of implementing cash transfer programmes in emergencies

[8] The TG acknowledged that discussion around this failed to address certain complexities, e.g. phase out if the population has a lower requirement than 2100 kcals, what to do about populations who normally consume far lower amounts

- emergency induced social phenomena which adversely impact livelihoods, e.g. displacement, breakdown of kinship networks

Information needed to determine whether livelihoods are being damaged includes:

- estimate of primary asset liquidation (comparison against baseline if available)
- changes in productive capacity (human capital)
- population movement (political or economic)
- changes in market conditions induced (commercial and wages)

ENAs need to adopt a transparent analytical framework(s), e.g. entitlement/livelihood model and ensure coherence in how the framework is used, e.g. recommendations for collection of information flow directly from the framework. In order to determine appropriateness and feasibility of a range of potential responses understanding of various macro-level factors are required. ENAs should separate out need and options. Options should include an analysis of feasibility and potential impact

While guidelines for ENA should advocate collection of minimum information to inform decisions about the need for a range of responses it must be recognized that practitioners cannot be charged with collecting a wide array of multi-sectoral information especially if this requires a high degree of technical expertise across sectors. In some cases it may be necessary to 'buy in' expertise, e.g. market analysis. Ideally food aid would only be used where it has a clear comparative advantage; however, the reality is that food aid is often the only available resource for large scale emergencies.

Potential interventions to tackle food insecurity through increasing access to food and/or income include:

- Reduce or stabilize food prices
- Increase household income by stabilizing prices of commodities sold by disaster affected producers
- Increase household income through provision of cash, food vouchers or other commodities either free of charge or in return for work
- Assist physical access to markets (roads/transportation, provision of information on market functioning)
- Reduce household expenditure through policy interventions to reduce or suspend obligatory payments (taxation, school and health fees)

Other potential interventions may also include support to the water, health and livestock sectors where these are directly impacting food security. However, there are question-marks over the speed with which such interventions can be implemented in an acute emergency and therefore impact food security. Furthermore, the ENA should not be required to design programming options in these sectors.

2.4 Pre-crisis Information (Baseline)

The TG identified a set of pre-crisis information as essential for allowing interpretation of ENA information. The list is provided below. These data were considered to be especially critical in situations where it proved impossible for the initial ENA to be followed up with subsequent assessments (monitoring) to determine whether the ENA hypothesis were correct. The TG was unable to rationalize the list for purposes of defining essential baseline information for specifically informing decisions about non-food aid responses (as opposed to food aid responses).

- Demographic profile
- Health and nutrition profile
- Livelihood profile:
    - traditional economic roles/control of resources
    - income sources
    - expenditure patterns
    - social structure
    - Human capital (labour) and cultural norms (gifts)
    - Markets
    - Productive assets (livestock/land)
    - Alternative food/income sources
    - Food stocks
    - Storage
    - Remittances
    - Legal status
    - Intra-household relations
- Market analysis – locations/access/integration/functioning)
- Financial landscape – credit/earnings/access to financial services
- Institutional environment/capacity
- Education – attendance/literacy rates
- Political monitoring
- Previous humanitarian aid/patterns of assistance
- Historical perspective on population movements
- Government disaster mitigation capacity
- Time scale of previous emergencies/trends and national response
- Other emergency response capacities (UNCT, NGOs/civil society/local NGOs/donor presence/interest and flows)
- Early warning systems
- Contingency plans
- Who is doing what/where in terms of development work and what information do they have
- Security information
- Cross border issues (political/economic)
- Government policies/conventions/restrictions
- Political commitment to international conventions
- Coping mechanisms for food security
- Distress coping mechanisms and grades
- Infrastructure – road/rail/logistic capacity
- Access to water, health services, schools
- Mechanisms of decision-making within government (decentralization)
- What level of analysis (zonal/district)
- Is there an information management system/data base already in place

2.5 Current Information (during crisis)

Data needs to be collected on the ability of homogenous groups to meet essential food and non-food needs without damaging their livelihoods, health and well-being. This involves collecting information on the ways in which populations access food and income. Livelihoods groups are then defined on the basis of being exposed to the same risks. These homogenous 'livelihood' groups can be further broken down by wealth categories.

The following general information needs to be collected for the emergency affected area:

- Demographics of population

- Geographical descriptors/agro-ecology

The following types of information need to be collected for each livelihood group at household level:

- Assets (labour, non-labour)
- Sources of food: Crop production, livestock production, gifts, and remittances, purchase, wild foods, fish, labour exchange (% and ranking)
- Sources of income; Trade, employment, sale of food/non food produce, gifts, casual labour, theft.
- Non food needs: clothes, soap, fuel, matches tobacco, education, and health transport

In considering the range of potential responses to food insecurity the TG concluded that the following information is important. These are more likely (although not exclusively) to be collected at key informant, district and government level rather than through household surveys.

- *If* considering food aid it is important to assess the likelihood of food aid: depressing food prices in local markets and affecting livelihoods of local producers and traders, reducing incentive to produce food and create dependency, creating tension between beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries, placing civilians at risk of violence and sustaining conflict
- To determine the appropriateness of free food aid one needs to know about availability of food in area and whether food shortage can be addressed through support to market systems
- To determine the appropriateness of cash based alternatives there is a need to know whether there is/are: food available nationally, trade and markets are thriving, physical access to markets, secure systems for dispersal of cash available, management capacity for interventions, a cash economy. There is also a need to know about gender relations
- To determine the appropriateness of market interventions there is a need to estimate the amount of food to be supplied to any market to maintain predicted prices and estimate the ability of households to meet needs at that price

Market interventions require specific information on:

- Government policies and intentions
- Regional food availability and extent to which any food deficit is likely to be filled by local actors (government or traders)
- Capacity and motivations of private sector
- Market location, accessibility and functioning and prices

In order to assess the practicalities of a range of potential interventions in affected locations there is a need for information on management capacity/infrastructure/historical experience related to emergency interventions.

Feasibility of responses in different emergency contexts: ENAs must make some determination of feasibility of a range of responses to address food insecurity. This will substantially be determined by emergency contexts. Although there is limited experience in non-food aid response measures to address food insecurity in emergencies, the TG identified certain contexts which may affect feasibility and where it may be possible to construct 'rules of thumb'. An ENA may need to make some determination of whether these contexts exist in any given situation in order to determine feasibility of different response options. Rules of thumb for various response options given specific contexts are as follows:

- Increasing household income by stabilizing prices of commodities sold is difficult on a large scale due to management difficulties. This therefore probably precludes implementing such programmes in rapid onset and complex emergencies

- Cash distributions are problematic in areas of insecurity unless implemented as a one off programme or on a local scale. Such programmes should also not be implemented were food supply is restricted as this may lead to inflation
- Improving physical access and reducing household expenditures is probably not appropriate for refugee/IDP situations especially where these are short term crises
- Price support of staple food and policy interventions are practical at large scale and can be introduced at relatively short notice – rapid onset and slow onset. However, such programmes need adequate infrastructure as well as political will and autonomy, e.g. governments need to be able to withstand WB and IMF pressure not to interfere with the market

The thematic group believed that lack of documented experience makes it impossible to currently develop detailed guidance material on how to collect and analyze information necessary to inform decisions about most appropriate response options to food insecurity during an emergency. However, the consensus was that there should be an annex to the ENA guidelines which presents documented examples of relevant experiences.

2.6 Methodology

A sub-group of the TG were asked to consider the most appropriate methodology to meet the objectives of the ENA. Their findings were as follows:

- There was unanimous agreement that it is not a question of methodology but more what are the minimum data required. Questions then become technical questions. How quickly can the data be collected and to what level of quality? How do we handle uncertain data?
- This required information for ENA is best defined as 'livelihood' information. Although various ENA methodologies have evolved and been extensively described in the literature (these are often associated with agencies, e.g. CARE Household Livelihood Security, Oxfam Livelihoods, SCFUK household food economy), these methodologies show more similarities than differences. A key component of all these methodologies is that they are based on entitlement theory and involve collection of information on livelihoods
- The field skills required to collect livelihood information are transferable within a relatively short time-frame even if the emergency is of large magnitude. However, given the time frame for the type of ENA considered at the meeting (2-3 weeks), it was recognized that there may be a considerable degree of uncertainty over the accuracy of the livelihood data and the analysis of these data
- This must be transparently reflected in the ENA
- Based on these data the ENA must develop a reasonable hypothesis about the degree to which the affected population can meet essential food and non-food needs without compromising livelihoods, health and well-being
- This should be based on an analysis of the degree to which the population can expand its coping options
- The analysis should then propose a range of responses setting out the advantages and disadvantages of each and hypothesize as to how each response may impact the affected population in terms of stated objectives
- Given the uncertainty of the livelihoods data in such a short time frame it is then essential that once an option is chosen and implemented that the population are further monitored to determine whether the intended impact has occurred, e.g. there is a need to keep testing the hypothesis
- This type of assessment and re-assessment is not normal practice in humanitarian emergencies and would require a degree of donor and UN programming flexibility that does not usually take place
- Where this is unlikely to happen, baseline information becomes more critical as such data allows more 'informed' assessment and prediction of likely impact of response

The collection of these types of data is far harder in some emergency contexts than others, e.g. urban areas and conflict zones. Quality of data will also be likely to suffer where scale of emergency is large so that the ENA has to cover a large area. Similarly, small agencies with limited human resource capacity may have to compromise data quality in relatively small-scale emergencies.

- Livelihood assessments in short term refugee/IDP situations may be inappropriate as such populations may not be involved in any form of livelihood activity
- In some types of situation of chronic conflict and political instability (SCCPI) changes in livelihoods may occur so that these become more homogenous. As a result it may be more appropriate to classify/distinguish population groups in terms of security risk (or some proxy of this) if security has become the key determinant of food security[9]
- In SCCPI coping strategies may increasingly conflict with international ethical and moral standards. Difficult judgments may therefore have to be made about which strategies are 'acceptable'/unacceptable and how these should be accounted for in an analysis of food security/insecurity

2.7 Examples

There are very few examples in the public domain of ENAs which have given rise to non-food aid responses to food insecurity. Those present in the TG were only able to identify a small number of emergency non-food aid responses to food insecurity of which they had knowledge. Most of the identified examples were not in the public domain. Furthermore, most of the published examples of non-food aid responses to food insecurity only contain a description of the programme and an evaluation of its success/failure and lessons learnt.[10] The examples do not explicitly deal with the ENA that led to determination that the adopted response was appropriate. However, the lessons learnt sections of these case-studies do suggest/indicate the type of information that needs to be collected and analyzed to determine appropriateness of response.

These case studies should therefore be reviewed in developing guidance material on the subject.

The case study material (and references) discussed as part of the TG can be classified as follows:

- Livestock off-take [11, 12, 13]
- Cash transfers [14, 15, 16]
- Vouchers/food stamps [17]
- Seeds [18]

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[9] Jaspars.J and Shoham.J (2002): A critical review of approaches to assessing and monitoring livelihoods in situations of chronic conflict and political instability. ODI working paper 191

[10] One notable exception can be found in a paper published by HPN. This is based on three case studies involving food security assessments in emergencies using a livelihoods approach and which have led to a wide range of responses including non-food aid measures. Young.H et al (2001): Food security assessments in emergencies: a livelihoods approach. HPN Network paper, No 36, ODI

[11] Bushell.H and Wakesa.M (2000): *Linking early warning system information to response*. Field Exchange, issue 9, pp 19-20

[12] AkliluY and Wakesa.M (2001): Livestock and livelihoods in emergencies: Lessons learnt from the 1999-2001 emergency response in the pastoral sector in Kenya, OAU IBAR, Feinstein International Famine Centre

[13] CARE (2001): *Impact assessment of CARE Borana Destocking Intervention*. CARE Ethiopia. Fitsum Berhe, March 2001.

[14] Parker.M (2001): *Money for work in East Timor.* Field Exchange, issue 12, pp 23-24

[15] Peppiatt.D et al (2000): *Buying power. The use of Cash Transfer in Emergencies*. British Red Cross, Nov. 2000

[16] McLean, et al (2001): *Oxfam mid-term review of Eastern Kitgum* Emergencies Livelihood Protection Project.

[17] Clay.E et al (1999): *An Evaluation of HMG's Response to the Montserrat Volcanic Emergency*. Evaluation Report Ev 635. December 1999, DfID.

2.8 Skills

The skills required to collect and analyze livelihoods information over a large area are transferable within a relatively short-time frame. The experience of WFP/SC UK in Lokichokio was cited by the TG as an example of where this has occurred. It has also been shown that district level government/line ministry staff can be trained in livelihoods analysis over a relatively short period of time. This was recently done in 19 drought affected districts in Kenya in 2002. However, the types of skill/expertise required to undertake market analysis would not be available to most food security assessment teams unless a market analyst was specifically included on the team. Furthermore, in view of the relatively limited experience of market interventions in emergency situations, it is unlikely that there are many such analysts with practical experience of emergency response currently available.

2.9 Question marks

There were a number of points of contention or areas of ignorance highlighted during the TG deliberations.

- There is a lack of empirical experience of non-food aid interventions and how to acquire information to inform decisions about most appropriate response. Most of the experiences have not been written up and published and therefore remain 'buried' in the 'grey' literature
- To what extent should we integrate health/WATSAN analysis into ENA? While there was agreement over the need to assess the impact of water and health factors on food security there was less agreement over the need to look at food utilization issues, e.g. lack of absorption of nutrients as a result of illness. The discussion centred on what was possible in a 2-3 week assessment
- Should technical assessors look at issues like organizational capacity when considering different response options? There was agreement that this was probably not possible at national level but could be achieved at local level
- There was lack of consensus over whether knowledge about type of donor resource availability, e.g. food or cash, should influence ENA findings. It was agreed that at the very least the report should have a section on historical experience/what has been done in the past and, if necessary advocacy for most appropriate type of intervention
- How do we obtain information on variables like government intentions to respond to market problems?
- In what type of situations (if any) will food aid depress food prices in local markets or act as disincentive to livelihoods.
- How do we decide what is acceptable or negative when considering livelihood coping strategies – especially in conflict situations.
- What type of non-food needs are we prepared to support.

[18] Reilly.A (2002): *CRS Seed vouchers and fiars – an innovative approach to help farm communities recover from disaster.* Field Exchange issue 15, pp 22

3. Chronic and Transitory Food Insecurity

The Thematic Group was asked to provide a summary of key issues in the subject area and to develop a 'working consensus' on how to address the more operational issues raised in the group including specifying appropriate approaches for different assessment timeframes and emergency contexts. In particular they were asked to focus on:

- Distinguishing (and gauging the magnitude of) transitory food insecurity and assistance requirements resulting from an emergency from chronic food insecurity and assistance requirements
- Targeting implications for chronically food insecure households and households experiencing transitory food insecurity due to an emergency

3.1 Scope

The group discussed at some length the concepts of chronic food insecurity and transitory food insecurity, the usefulness of those concepts and the related issue of whether, and how, emergency operations should seek to save not only lives but also livelihoods. The group then moved on to discuss the information required from secondary and primary data sources in slow and sudden onset crises in order to understand the food security situation and needs of different groups. Some of the issues identified could not be resolved. Other issues could not be addressed in the time available. These outstanding issues are presented in the final section.

3.2 Value added

A thorough analysis and understanding of the nature, causes, severity and duration of food insecurity among different groups within a population under stress or in crisis:

- determines whether an 'emergency' intervention is necessary or the situation is 'chronic' and requires longer-term measures
- provides, in a situation of gradual deterioration, the possibility of a trigger for preventive action (where resources can be mobilized)

When an emergency intervention is necessary, understanding the particular food security situations and needs of different groups, the extent to which different groups are experiencing transitory or chronic food insecurity, and the economic, social and political context, should:

- enable the design of appropriate interventions that not only to protect lives (when lives are at risk), but also to protect the livelihoods of people who, following a shock, could otherwise swell the ranks of the chronically food insecure.[19]
- enable the likely effectiveness[20] and consequences (positive and negative) of different possible interventions to be foreseen and compared
- provide a basis for phasing out life-saving relief once the situation had returned to 'normal'

When a shock affects an area or population group that includes people who are chronically food insecure, the initial, life-saving response will be the same for all groups who are unable to meet their immediate food needs without jeopardizing their future food security. However, the response should progressively seek to also protect livelihoods when possible. Life-saving consumption smoothing

[19] The design may or may not include differential targeting of households according to food security criteria.

[20] Ideally, this would include the cost-effectiveness of interventions if relationships are sufficiently understood and necessary data available.

would then be complemented by (self-targeting) capital/asset protection and safety-net measures designed on the basis of a thorough understanding of the food security situation of different groups within the population. Gradually, those measures should be phased down and long-term measures emphasized, or introduced, to strengthen human capital among the chronically food insecure. Importantly the ability to do is contingent on mobilizing appropriate resources.

3.3 Key concepts

Chronic food insecurity: The situation of people/households who are persistently unable to meet their food intake needs over time (e.g. for several months every year or most years, for example 3 out of 5 years). Chronic food insecurity is closely linked with chronic poverty – typified by lack of access to land or other productive assets, high dependency ratios, chronic sickness and/or social barriers. People living in areas highly prone to disasters or conflict may also be chronically food insecure. In a given context, the chronically food insecure may be very heterogeneous, meaning the demographic characteristics and the causal factors that led to their destitution may vary considerably.

Transitory food insecurity: The situation of people/households who, following a shock, are temporarily unable to meet their food intake needs without sacrificing productive assets or undermining their human capital.

When a shock affects an area or population group that includes some people/households who were already chronically food insecure:

- The chronically food insecure will be even worse off and, in many cases, may be at greatest risk of mortality and increased malnutrition in the short-term. They will remain chronically food insecure in the long-term.
- Some people who were not chronically food insecure will suffer at least temporary (transitory) food insecurity:
    - some may be able to recover without assistance;
    - some may recover with assistance that enables them to retain (or recover) sufficient productive assets;
    - some may become chronically food insecure, if they have lost their productive assets or are unable to retain sufficient of them.
- For an initial period, people who were food insecure before the shock and some (perhaps many) of those who were not, may need emergency 'relief' aid to save lives/prevent excess mortality and deterioration in nutritional status.

For planning purposes, the assessment and analysis must distinguish:

- between those who are now food insecure and cannot cope and are in need of assistance, whether they were chronically food insecure before or not, and those who can cope without assistance
- (among those requiring assistance) between those who can be expected to recover with appropriate assistance and those who are now likely to remain food insecure for the foreseeable future even with appropriate assistance

Assistance must be adapted to the specific situation and needs of the latter two groups based on an assessment of what has changed and foreseeable future threats.[21] The exit criterion is a judgement that the people can survive on pre-crisis sources of food.

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21 It was suggested that, in a sudden acute emergency when many lives are at risk, there may not be sufficient time for detailed analyses and the development of finely tuned targeting arrangements before starting distributions. It may then be necessary, initially, to accept the possibility of a high 'inclusion error', while seeking to avoid unnecessary

If *pre-crisis data* distinguishing the chronically food insecure and other populations are available, those data and criteria can be used, together with current assessment data, to distinguish those among the total population in need of assistance who were already chronically food insecure and those who are transitorily food insecure. Targeting criteria can then be designed specifically to include *both* groups, and interventions to help the transitorily food insecure who risk destitution to sustain their livelihoods by retaining (or recovering) essential productive assets. Targeting on the basis of criteria and systems that identify only those who were chronically food insecure before the crisis is *not* appropriate, in most cases. This has the potential to lead to some of the transitorily food insecure becoming chronically food insecure, even destitute (see *Inappropriate targeting* under Examples below).

Displaced people who have not achieved self-reliance are, in principle, transitorily food insecure so long as there is any expectation that they will be able to return to their homes and former means of livelihood, integrate in their present location, or be resettled elsewhere.

In a situation where there is chronic food insecurity an emergency needs assessment may be triggered by information from an established early warning system (including remote sensing, crop areas planted, deterioration in livelihoods, inter-locking vulnerabilities), a catastrophic shock, increasing malnutrition, and/or media attention (the so-called 'CNN factor').

Some related *premises* were agreed as follows:

- Assessment should be an ongoing, transparent process that focuses on measuring change. This entails determining the impact of the shock on different groups/households, their capacities to cope, and who among the population requires assistance and who does not. Groups should be differentiated according to feasible criteria/indicators (e.g. options for targeting).
- There is a need for a strategic focus and accompanying analyses that aims to avoid starvation, addresses risks to lives and survival and, as a second priority, addresses risks to livelihoods (through asset and livelihood protection). When resources allow, relief and asset protection should be pursued simultaneously.
- Transitory food insecurity can be addressed through emergency interventions.
- Emergency interventions do not provide a long-term solution to chronic food insecurity, and interventions should not create dependency.
- Models and assumptions need to be adapted to the very different livelihood systems found in different regions.
- Assessment needs to consider not only the situation and possible needs of people in the area directly affected by a shock (e.g. a flood) but also those of people in nearby areas whose livelihoods may be indirectly affected.

3.4 Pre-crisis Information (Baseline)

Specific information on the pre-crisis situation, if/when available at the start of an emergency assessment, enables the assessment to immediately focus on gathering information on the impact of the crisis, and to anticipate some aspects of the impact which then need only to be verified. This accelerates the process, enables appropriate interventions (including appropriate targeting) to be initiated more quickly, and reduces the likelihood of inappropriate actions and unintended negative consequences.

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disruption of markets. However, analyses of the food security situation of different groups within the population and of market conditions should be undertaken as soon as possible in order to refine the intervention and improve targeting and cost-effectiveness

The following background information can help an assessment team to differentiate sub-populations within an emergency affected population and understand the impact of a shock on different population groups, including their likely capacities to cope:

- Demographic data (distribution, age breakdown, ethnicity)
- Normal livelihood systems/sources of food and income (including links between rural and urban areas)
- Agro-ecological/livelihood zones
- Crop seasons; other seasonal activities/considerations
- Social and political structures and relationships that affect food security, including the identification of distinct population subgroups (disaggregated by livelihood type and, within each, differentiated by wealth group)
- Normal consumption patterns and dietary diversity
- Number of months of self-provisioning in a normal year
- Levels of asset ownership
- Normal levels of debt
- Normal terms of trade between the assets and services people offer and the market price of essential foods
- Gender considerations relevant to food access and use
- Traditional coping strategies
- Usual population mobility (normal migration patterns)
- Existing formal and informal safety nets

The above information would be relevant, and important, as background for assessments in both slow-onset and sudden crises, and in both rural and urban areas.[22] For urban areas, political capital/patronage is particularly important, and food safety represents an additional concern.

The following background information is important for understanding the overall situation, the macro-level impact of a shock, and the practical possibilities for providing assistance:

- Food production, supply and market systems
- Existing food aid and food security programmes
- Normal (seasonal) levels of malnutrition, and disease prevalence
- Water supplies and sanitation provisions
- Mechanisms normally available to target assistance to the most vulnerable/food insecure
- Institutional capacity (of government and other potential partners) to implement food security assistance programmes, especially safety nets
- Experience, and lessons, from previous emergency assistance operations, including the targeting methods used and their effectiveness

3.5 Current Information (During Crisis)

Information that an emergency needs assessment team requires on the current situation will likely include both primary data (gathered, interpreted and analysed by the team itself) and secondary data (obtained from existing, competent sources). If pre-crisis information is not available or is incomplete, some background information on the pre-crisis situation also needs to be compiled.

After considering separately the information required in a slow-onset situation, such as a drought, and in a sudden crisis, such as a flood or population displacement, it was agreed that:

- Even in a slow-onset crisis, a field assessment usually needs to produce specific findings and recommendations within a few (3-4) weeks. This is similar to the time required for a detailed assessment following a major sudden crisis.

[22] While information requirements are similar, actual assistance interventions would probably be different in rural and urban areas.

- The information required to understand the situation of different groups within a given population is broadly similar for 'in-situ' (non-displaced) populations in both slow-onset and sudden crisis. The lists produced for 3-week assessments in slow-onset and sudden crises are consolidated in the list presented below.
- A modified set of information is needed for displaced populations, as presented below.
- At the onset of a sudden-onset crisis, a rapid initial assessment usually has to produce, within 3 days, information to initiate immediate relief operations when needed. Initial indications of the type and scale of assistance that will be required going forward must also be estimated.

3.5.1 Information required to differentiate groups within an 'in-situ' (non-displaced) population

Information should focus on what has changed (e.g. trends) and what is the current situation for households in different livelihood and/or wealth groups. The following types of information are required:

Access to food

- Income/livelihood sources – sources, production, income (including alternative employment opportunities), transfers (of food and/or non-food resources)
- Household expenditure on both food and non-food essentials, including indispensable additional expenses in the current situation
- Markets – availability of supply, level of functioning
- Market dependence and the terms of trade between the assets and services people offer and the market price of essential foods
- Community solidarity (informal safety nets)
- Consumption/food frequency & dietary diversity
- Further risks
- Gender considerations affecting food access

Capacity to cope and recover

- Where we are in the crisis – process to date (especially for slow-onset) and expected evolution
- Social capital & human capital
- Remaining productive assets
- Debt
- Lost crops/assets
- Next harvest – when due and prospects for
- Number of months self-provisioning
- Traditional coping mechanisms – their current effectiveness and the likely impact of aid on them
- People's own perceptions of recovery needs – their priorities

The above information on the current situation would be gathered through primary data collection using qualitative methods (notably key informants and focus group discussions) and/or household surveys depending on the assessment phase and local conditions (including security). This information would be compared with pre-crisis data, when available, to identify and measure changes. In the absence of pre-crisis information, primary data collection should endeavour to determine what has changed as well as the current situation.

3.5.2 Information required to differentiate groups within a displaced population

What is the current situation of households in different livelihood and/or wealth groups among the population in relation to:

- Previous means of livelihood
- Food consumption/frequency and dietary diversity
- Nutritional status
- Assets brought with them
- Access to remaining assets (e.g. land) in their place of origin
- Access to social support
- Local food supply systems
- Employment opportunities in the locality and their access to those opportunities
- Natural resources
- Access to land & agricultural inputs
- The skills of the displaced people and the utility of those skills in their present location
- The situation of, and relationships with, the host population

The situation and needs of people remaining in the areas of origin or internally displaced people (IDPs) may also need to be assessed.

3.5.3 Additional information on the current situation required for planning appropriate assistance

The following were identified as being important in all contexts. Most of this information would normally be obtained as *secondary data* from existing sources:

- Nature/severity of shock
- Population mobility/movements
- Numbers of people affected in different groups and areas [may also be from primary data collection]
- Macro-economic effects, including on markets
- Macro-economic policies (political economy)
- Logistic and other infrastructure – impact on and current status/functioning of
- Access to the affected areas
- Institutional capacities to deliver assistance

- Existing and acceptable targeting mechanisms [also from primary data collection]
- Nutritional status (malnutrition data, when available)
- Water and sanitation situation

3.5.4 Information required rapidly following a sudden shock (e.g. within 3 days)

When there is clearly a need for immediate relief, and for assistance to continue for a number of months, a rapid initial assessment must:

- determine the geographic area and general size of the population affected
- determine the general nature and scale of food losses, and whether certain areas are known, believed and/or expected to be more severely affected than others
- make initial, provisional judgements (guesses) concerning the capacity of different groups to cope and meet their food needs in the short-term

If a large area/population is affected, the above will normally be done on the basis of available background data and previous experience with such events, aerial observation and/or imagery, contacts (especially by telephone or radio) with key informants, and some rapid visits to a limited number of sites.

3.6 Methodology

A food access analysis, not food supply/balance calculations, should be used as basis planning food security interventions. It was noted that macro analyses of supply deficits and micro-level level analyses of access deficits usually lead to very different estimates of the food 'gap' and consequent food needs. Both should be reported. Interventions in favour of food insecure people should be designed on the basis of assessed access deficits.

A livelihood model is essential, and the model should be explicit in the assessment and analysis process. Different models can be used provided that they incorporate the range of factors that influence food access and utilization (income, expenditure, assets, debts, transfers, etc.)

A *combination of data collection methods* is needed in any situation. This includes, as appropriate, the use of available secondary data, qualitative (rapid appraisal) methods, and household surveys, depending on the phase of the assessment and local conditions, especially security:

- During phase 1 of assessment: Qualitative methods, using non-probability sampling, will be used primarily. The purpose is to get an in-depth understanding of livelihoods and to be able to make ball-park estimates of the numbers of people affected and needing specific types and levels of food and/or non-food assistance.
- During phase 2 of assessment: more representative (probability) sampling should be used to verify assumptions, refine targeting, and adjust programme interventions.

The Coping Strategies Index (CSI) can provide a valuable tool for monitoring the dependence of households on exceptional coping strategies and risks to their future food security. It should be noted that there may be issues relating to the weight assigned to various coping strategies in the index.

3.7 Examples

Inappropriate targeting of only the poor/chronically food insecure

Indonesia, 2000: In response to the catastrophic economic downturn, food assistance was (initially) targeted to households known to be already chronically poor/food insecure. These people were indeed suffering and in need of assistance but the targeting omitted another group of people who had not previously been categorized as poor/food insecure and who only got by following the shock by selling off assets which, for some, jeopardized their future food insecurity. [See: Tango, 2003. Chronic and Transitory Food Insecurity Background Paper]

Bangladesh, 2000: The targeting of aid to only the poorest people ended up increasing the vulnerability of middle class people. In Bangladesh, these groups had lost the most assets, had few income-earning options and did not receive any relief to help them rebuild their assets, increasing the likelihood that they may become permanently impoverished. [See: Meyer, J. 2001. WFP EMOP 6317: Emergency Food Aid Assistance to Flood-affected People in South-western Bangladesh - Household Livelihood Assessment Report. Prepared for the Department for International Development, London. p.23]

People becoming chronically food insecure as a result of a specific emergency:

Pastoralists in Sudan (Red Sea Hills) and Mauritania who lost their breeding stock or who, encouraged by emergency food distributions, changed their livelihood systems more-or-less definitively, became chronically food insecure. [Dieter Hannusch, personal communication]

3.8 Skills/qualifications

Planning and implementing assessments that differentiate among population groups, as described above, requires:

- A thorough understanding of livelihood models and the range of livelihood systems that may be present in the area concerned
- Awareness of basic research methods and sampling techniques to:
  - determine whether and when to use qualitative and/or quantitative methods
  - determine when to use particular forms of sampling
  - define an appropriate sample size
- Skills in interviewing and conducting focus group discussions
- Skills in designing questionnaires and in data processing, for household surveys

3.9 Question marks

The following issues remained unresolved:

- *Food energy benchmark*: Whether food gaps (and hence needs) should be estimated on the basis of: a) 2100 kcal (adjusted as needed for demographic composition, activity level, temperature and health status), as prescribed in WHO/UNHCR/WFP/UNICEF guidelines and the Sphere standards, or b) normal consumption levels for the country/population concerned,

as in FAO food balance sheet calculations.[23] If the 2100 kcal benchmark is adopted in an area where normal consumption is below that level, it is not obvious what the exit criteria and strategy should be.

- *Exit from livelihood support*: There are no obvious exit strategies from a livelihood support operation. The only pragmatic (but not entirely logical) approach is to phase out all 'emergency' operations, including those protecting livelihoods, once life-saving 'relief' needs have been met – once there is no further immediate threat to lives. Continuing support to livelihoods would depend on the availability of development resources.
- *Targeting food insecure households*: Assessment should be able to determine the characteristics, and estimate the numbers, of subgroups within the population who suffer different degrees of food insecurity, including chronic food insecurity. That can provide a basis for the (geographic) targeting of food aid or other appropriate assistance to various localities. However, targeting and distributing assistance according to different levels of need (food insecurity) within a community remains a problem. It requires either an existing, well-established social security/safety net based on relevant food security criteria (which is rare) or the collaboration of the whole community in implementing a community-based targeting and distribution system. Experience to date with such community-based systems is limited to ad hoc drought relief among relatively well-structured rural communities. It is not clear whether such approaches will be successful in other settings including protracted crises.
- *Trigger level for intervention to protect productive assets*: Most households, other than the very poor, try to build up some stocks/assets in a good year to tide them over a poor year and avoid becoming dependent on charity. It is normal that households other than the very poor draw down on those assets following a shock. Future livelihoods are put in danger when productive assets are disposed of. No practical methods/criteria are known to determine the point at which external assistance should be initiated to pre-empt the disposal of (productive) assets.
- *Availability of resources*: Can/will sufficient resources be made available by donors to protect livelihoods as well as saving lives?
- *Risk of raising false expectations*: The undertaking of an emergency needs assessment in a situation of chronic food insecurity may (perhaps will) raise expectations of assistance among the population and local officials, but few donors are able/willing to commit additional resources for 'preventive' measures in response to early warnings. How to avoid raising false expectations remains a problem.
- *Trigger for emergency response in a chronic situation*: For a slow-onset emergency in a country with high chronic food insecurity, what should be the trigger for an emergency response? When do we decide that the chronic situation is becoming acute? What are the indicators?

[23] It was noted that: a) FAO has prepared/published tables of normal consumption levels for each country; b) that, if consumption level figures were to be used, they should be figures for the population(s) concerned, not country-level averages (which may disguise possibly large variations).

4. Markets

The Thematic Group was asked to provide a summary of key issues in the subject area and to develop a 'working consensus' on how to address the more operational issues raised in the group including specifying appropriate approaches for different assessment timeframes and emergency contexts. In particular they were asked to focus on:

- Assessing market performance and functioning (failure to function) in emergencies and the probable market effects resulting from food interventions
- Gauging the potential for use of markets as an instrument for intervention

4.1 Scope

The Markets Group discussion focused on food market analysis and how it fits within an Emergency Needs Assessment framework. The group focused on the markets for the major staples in a country affected by a food emergency. Food market analysis was taken to mean a microeconomic analysis of these staple food markets: how they function and an estimation of the extent to which the private sector would be able to support household access to staple foods in light of the shock. Thus the discussion moved from national-level considerations of food availability to household-level assessments of food access. The group recognised that to understand the role of markets the analysis should include the macroeconomic and policy context of the country as well as a consideration of household livelihoods. The group did not explicitly consider other markets (e.g. labour, other food or cash crops, livestock, etc.) beyond their possible feedback effects into food market demand or supply.

4.2 Value added

Nearly all households are linked to markets: labour markets, food markets, commodity markets, etc. How these markets function is a determinant of households' access to food. If all markets worked efficiently and competitively the risk of famine would be lesser because price signals would create incentives to move food into deficit areas. Emergency assistance could then focus on those people with no purchasing power to buy food in the market. Unfortunately, in many crisis-affected developing countries markets do not work well. In particular in a food security emergency, understanding how the staple food markets function and how households are linked to markets helps both in assessing needs but also in designing suitable interventions that as far as possible help to work with markets to support food security both in the short and longer term.

Incorporating an analysis of food markets in an emergency needs assessment (ENA) provides the following valuable information:

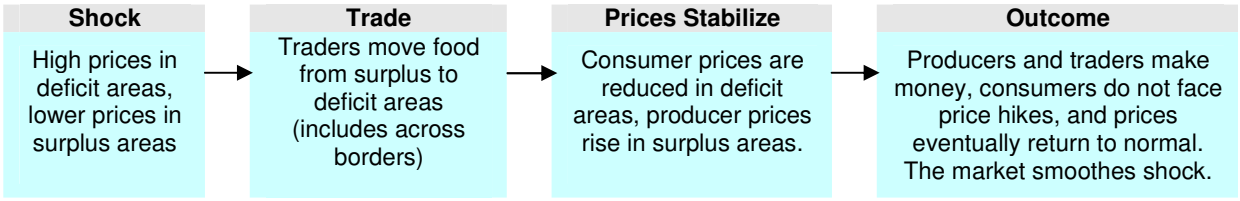
- Estimation on the extent to which private food market flows can offset a national or local food shortfall.
- Estimation of the extent to which an increase in food supply, through a food aid program, for example, could take place without introducing market distortions (e.g. discourage flows from surplus to deficit areas, storage and future price risk taking by wholesalers).
- Guidance on the extent food markets can be used as an instrument to solve a household food gap (through market interventions or targeted transfers that increase household purchasing power).
- Where food aid interventions are proposed, response to stakeholder concerns regarding the likely effect of food aid on market supplies, prices, and thus producers' incentives and incomes.
- Assessment of the possibilities for local food purchases to facilitate food flows from surplus to deficit areas.

- If there is a food aid intervention, continued market monitoring and re-assessment helps avoid food aid causing disincentives to food producers and traders, and it also informs programming decisions on targeting and appropriate responses to food needs.

4.3 Key concepts

Probably the most basic principle to keep in mind is that *well functioning markets can contribute to food security*. Through markets, food is moved from surplus to deficit zones, food is stored over time, and food quality may be improved through processing such as drying and grading. A well-functioning food market performs these functions, providing food in all places at all times to consumers at competitive prices, while ensuring competitive remuneration to producers and traders. A well-functioning market also provides for storage of food for future consumption.

Figure 1: An Ideal Market Response to a Food Supply Shock



Yet, even where markets function well, it is important to keep in mind that *some vulnerable households do not have the purchasing power to meet their basic food needs*. In other words, a competitive market price may still be too high for them to buy the food they need and they will require some form of assistance. Therefore understanding how markets work helps an ENA team determine the best intervention strategy to provide this assistance.

Given the reality that not all food markets function well, the ENA team should also keep the following concepts in mind:

- The basis of market analysis in an emergency setting is to see whether traders are responding well to price signals and to what extent this response allows households to continue to meet their food needs.
- Any intervention to increase food consumption should avoid distortions that could inhibit markets by crowding out private sector traders or creating disincentives for producers, traders, transporters.
- Markets can improve food availability in all places at all times, but targeted interventions may be needed to address household food access problems.
- Market analysis can also point to areas where local food procurement may be a means of facilitating the flow of food from surplus to deficit areas.
- Markets respond to changing circumstances and it is very difficult for the ENA team to accurately forecast how a market will respond. Therefore, needs assessments must be followed by regular monitoring and analysis of market indicators such as prices and flows of basic commodities (including re-assessments).

Points to keep in mind when looking at markets in an emergency needs assessment:

- Market analysis is a process requiring a basic level of knowledge on markets and how they work as well as continued follow-on monitoring efforts. Given the fluidity of food security

and food market conditions, market monitoring provides information to adjust interventions to reach people in need without distorting market signals.

- Particularly in a rapid onset emergency where no baseline data exists or in an area where markets are known to not function well, the imperative of crisis response outweighs, in the first instance, market facilitation considerations. In such situations, the importance of re-assessment and continued monitoring are particularly important to see how markets respond to changes brought on by the crisis and what the implications of these responses are for food access of vulnerable groups, their food needs and intervention design.
- Where baseline information exists and markets are perceived to function reasonably well, market analysis during emergencies can inform the selection of interventions that combine targeted transfers to the most vulnerable with the promotion of private sector trade and market price stabilization that increase access to food for the general population.

Food Market-related Options for Intervention in a Crisis: At the outset of an emergency needs assessment, it is useful to keep in mind the intervention options that the team may recommend given a consideration of market issues. Possible interventions (not mutually exclusive) are listed below:

- No intervention – the crisis is not related to a household food gap
- Policy intervention – changes to taxes, tariff policy, subsidies, access to credit that allow the private sector to increase the level of food imported or moved from surplus to deficit areas
- Open market sales of food – non-targeted food aid (programme food aid) or release of stocks from grain reserves. This can include local purchases in surplus areas for sale in deficit areas, subsidized sales, and a degree of self-targeting by the selection of low-value commodities. Programme food aid should be proportionate: it should keep a fair margin with the import level that would bring market prices down to import parity
- Balance of Payments support (direct transfers or credit facility) to release foreign exchange constraints to import food
- Targeted food intervention – where markets may not function or where there are concerns regarding household access. These include: general distribution targeted to localised crisis areas, food for work, institutional feeding. Local purchases may be used to facilitate the movement of food from surplus to deficit areas if local prices are below import parity
- Targeted non-food interventions – where markets work and purchasing power needs to be increased. These include: cash for work, food stamps/vouchers, other income support related to livelihoods e.g. seeds and tools, culling livestock at a subsidized price, or re-stocking livestock

4.4 Pre-crisis Information (Baseline)

Markets work on the basis of arbitration – that is, there is money to be made from bringing producers and consumers together. The extent of trade depends on the prices on offer and the costs faced by producers, traders and consumers in trading. Costs include storage, transport, credit, time, and any risks faced by producers, traders and consumers in getting to the market place. When prices are too low to cover these costs, producers and traders have disincentives to trade. Similarly, when prices are too high (including the cost of getting to the market), consumers have a disincentive to trade.

Existing market flows provide very good indicators of where the profitability of trading is good and where there may be problems. Thus data on prices and market flows form a key part of market analysis. In addition, information on trader perceptions, government policies and capacity to import, and household livelihoods gives a clearer picture of how markets are likely to respond to a crisis and which households are likely to lose market access to food (e.g. through loss of purchasing power or

reduced trading activity). The data set specified below assumes a detailed analysis of markets is undertaken with appropriate investment of time and resources (the baseline for the ENA). The dataset allows a reasonable understanding of markets and how they function.

In many countries market data is collected by the Central Statistics Office or early warning information systems. Some countries even have established market information systems or research has already been undertaken on market integration and performance by universities or market research projects. WFP's Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping (VAM) Units often know where the following data can be found. Other good sources of information are the World Bank or IMF offices (particularly for exchange rates, trade flows and other macroeconomic information), WFP Procurement Units (to get information on trader perceptions, capacities and trade flows), WFP Logistics Units (information on transport and storage costs and capacities), and bilateral aid offices such as USAID and the EU offices that may have their own food security or market analysis units. Traders, themselves, are good sources of information, but as commercial operators, they need to be approached tactfully and may not provide reliable information unless relations are already established with them pre-crisis.

4.4.1 Data to collect for the major staple food markets

i. Prices

- Wholesale - the price in the main markets of a 50 or 100kg bag or typical quantity traded between districts. Monthly data is preferable for approximately 2-3 years to obtain the trend.
- Import parity (official and parallel) – the price, usually per ton, to import a cereal from the nearest surplus market. This price equals the price of the commodity plus the costs of delivering the food into the main domestic market (usually encompassed as cost, insurance and freight or "c.i.f." in statistics). This should be valued at the official exchange rate and at the parallel (black market) exchange rate. Monthly data for the same time period as wholesale price data.
- Exchange rates (nominal, real, official, parallel) – this is the "price" of foreign currency. The nominal exchange rate is the current market rate on the official and parallel foreign exchange markets. The real exchange rate is the nominal exchange rate adjusted for the relative price levels between countries – this exchange rate is calculated by economists (e.g. the World Bank) to assess a country's purchasing power over time. The parallel or 'street' exchange rate can be obtained at least on a daily basis from traders or money changers.

ii. Flows

- Spatial flows (internal, regional, formal, cross-border) – What is the geographic flow of food around the country (from surplus areas to the main markets and to deficit areas) and across the country's borders? This should take into account formal flows (by private sector traders, officially declared) and informal and cross-border flows (by traders that are undeclared, by people on a direct exchange basis like farmers markets, or unrecorded trade across the border).
- Structure of flows – who is moving food and how? E.g.: formal traders in big trucks, informal traders on small trucks or mules, farmers carrying bags, etc.? An assessment should be made of the quantity of flows and the number of traders (formal and informal) involved in marketing activity.
- Quantity of flows – net import levels (on a monthly basis) and if possible some assessment of the quantity of food moving between main markets internally.

iii. Policy

- market regulation – are there any tariffs, taxes or other restrictions that would act as a hindrance for traders to move food from one place to another (internally or import/export).

- government intervention strategies – does the country have a national food security reserve or any strategic grain reserves? What is government policy towards the use of these reserves? What is the government policy regarding food procurement to stabilise markets? What are trader perceptions on the transparency and predictability of government actions?

iv. Macro information

- What is the macro-economic position of the country and its financial ability to import food? This is reflected through its trade balance, its balance of payments, the extent of foreign exchange reserves, and the terms of trade for food, the availability of supporting financial mechanisms like an IMF draw-down facility.

v. Vulnerability and livelihood analysis

- Who are the most vulnerable groups (female headed households, landless farm workers?) and what is the purchasing power of vulnerable groups? To what extent do they depend on markets for their livelihoods and access to food? What proportion of households normally has weak access to markets? What proportion of household incomes is spent on basic food (this allows for estimates of the impact on purchasing power of a rise in food prices)? What proportion of households have secure access to markets?

vi. Additional points to keep in mind regarding pre-crisis data

- It is important to understand the relationship of affected households to the market in normal times and the change in this relationship (if any) caused by the crisis. Therefore, for countries particularly vulnerable to food security crises, market analysis should be done on a regular basis and form a component of pre-crisis information.
- Ideally market analysis and market information systems would already exist as part of the national food security information systems and early warning systems. Otherwise, agencies providing and procuring food aid should encourage the development of market information systems. Even where market information systems already exist, agencies providing food aid can support these systems through their regular monitoring and procurement activities, sharing information with national authorities, traders and producer groups.
- Understanding the macro-environment helps assess the national capacity to import food and gives an indication of how the private sector might respond, but it does not provide information on whether markets will reach all crisis-affected people or whether the price of food will be too high for households to meet their food needs.
- A key part of understanding a market is information on market demand. Therefore, livelihoods analysis on market dependency and purchasing power is an expected input into market analysis. This analysis, combined with other market information, gives an idea of the size of the vulnerable group for whom targeted interventions will be required.

vii. Main Sources of Pre-crisis Data:

Central Statistics Office, World Bank, IMF, Economist Intelligence Unit, FAO, Ministries of Agriculture, Finance and Commerce, WFP VAM, Procurement and Logistics Officers, USAID FEWS or EU food security units, traders, market research projects, published papers in academic journals, Market Information Systems.

4.5 Current Information (during crisis)

During the relatively short time-frame of an ENA, if no pre-crisis data is available, there is very little reliable analysis that can be done on markets. If this is the case, then follow-up re-assessments will be essential. Nevertheless, there are basic questions an ENA team can ask to gauge how markets are functioning. If baseline data does exist, the role of the ENA team is to assess to what extent there has

been any change in the functioning of markets as a result of the shock. In all cases, continued monitoring of market indicators is required if there is an intervention.

The list of real time information given below is, therefore, based on the baseline data set, but highlights the questions that must be asked. It is ordered in terms of market logic moving from the key components of markets (macro-environment, supply and demand) to the analysis of how markets function. The list ends with the key data needed for on-going monitoring.

The sources of the data listed below are generally the same as for the baseline data. However, collection of market price information and trader perceptions will need to be done by the team through primary/key informant collection methods. Much of the data may be collected concurrently by different team members – particularly household livelihood analysis and food supply information.

4.5.1 Policy and Macro-environment

Questions to ask: What is the private sector capacity to import? What is going to be the price of imported food? What is the capacity to earn foreign exchange to adjust to any change in the food import bill? What are trader perceptions on government food market actions?

- Trade Policy (tariffs, quotas, non-tariff barriers); trader perceptions of government action in food markets
- Exchange Rate (control policies, foreign exchange reserves, movement of nominal and real exchange rates, parallel rates, domestic inflation)
- Balance of Payments constraints (access to capital markets, relative food prices, terms of trade)
- Other macro issues (has their been a national income shock? fiscal policy, regional trade & economies, domestic trade/commodity mix)

4.5.2 Market Supply

Questions to ask: Has there been a production shock? Have there been any regional shocks affecting normal import levels? Is there any shock affecting the amount of production that is marketed?

- Staple food production in surplus & deficit areas
- Structure of farms producing staple foods (commercial, small-holder, subsistence)
- Import levels

4.5.3 Market Demand

Questions to ask: Has there been any household income shock? What does the livelihoods analysis reveal about the Terms of Trade of the crisis-affected group (includes analysis of livestock, other food and cash crop prices)? What proportion of households has too low a purchasing power to meet their basic food needs?

- Purchasing Power changes
- Sources of food and reliance on market supply
- Food preferences
- Labour and other product markets
- Needs versus effective demand

4.5.4 Market Analysis

Questions to ask: Are food markets well-integrated internally, regionally, internationally? What is the geography of food flows internally and across borders? Who does what in the food marketing chain? Does the market perform efficiently?

Staple Food Prices – wholesale (e.g. 100 kg bag) in crisis region and in major markets, import parity price; Price Differentials (internal, regional formal, cross-border, seasonal prices); other prices (farm gate, consumer, export parity)

Flows (geographic, marketing chain) – trader transport capacity and costs into affected area (frequency of trucks arriving, avg. size of trucks, haulage rates), storage capacity in affected area (avg. size of trader stores, proportion of traders in main local market with storage capacity), any barrier to trade inflows (roads/bridges damaged, insecurity, loss of backhauling transport capacity)

Performance factors – Is market information widely available among different types of market operators? What is the level of market concentration (number of large traders, medium traders, etc), degree of social capital/institutions determining where traders do business, transaction costs (including high transport/storage costs), profitability of trading in staple food vs. alternative crops/products, availability of credit and risk insurance?

Risk – potential security risks, trader business risk perceptions (security, transport, profitability) and perceptions of government/agency intervention in markets, particularly market interventions by a grain marketing board, free distribution or subsidized sale of food aid stocks.

On-going monitoring data:

- *Prices* – wholesale and import parity
- *Flows* – spatial, including net import levels
- *Trader perceptions* – the perceptions of the private traders provide an indicator of the opportunities, constraints, or limitations in the market place

4.5.5 Points to keep in mind regarding current information (during crisis):

- If prior market analysis is not done or there is no data availability, in a sudden emergency there is very little in-depth analysis that can be done in the first phase of an ENA.
- The depth of analysis undertaken by the assessment team should reflect the complexity of the crisis. In small, localised shocks, market analysis is less relevant. In wider, more complex situations, more detailed re-assessment and monitoring will be necessary. For example, in emergencies involving crop failure or market supply disruption, understanding markets will be necessary to determining the market's re-supply capacity and changes in household access to food. Alternatively, in refugee/IDP emergencies a detailed market analysis may not be crucial but understanding markets is still useful in helping to select and design appropriate interventions.
- Estimations of the level of private imports that would occur in the absence of interventions provide a guide to how much food aid can be brought into a market without affecting incentives for domestic production or trade. However these estimates do not provide an approximation of the need for targeted food aid.

4.5.6 Main sources of current information (during crisis)

World Bank, IMF, Economist Intelligence Unit, FAO, Ministries of Agriculture, Finance and Commerce, WFP VAM, Procurement and Logistics Officers, USAID FEWS or EU food security units, traders, Market Information Systems, primary data collection in market places.

4.6 Methodology

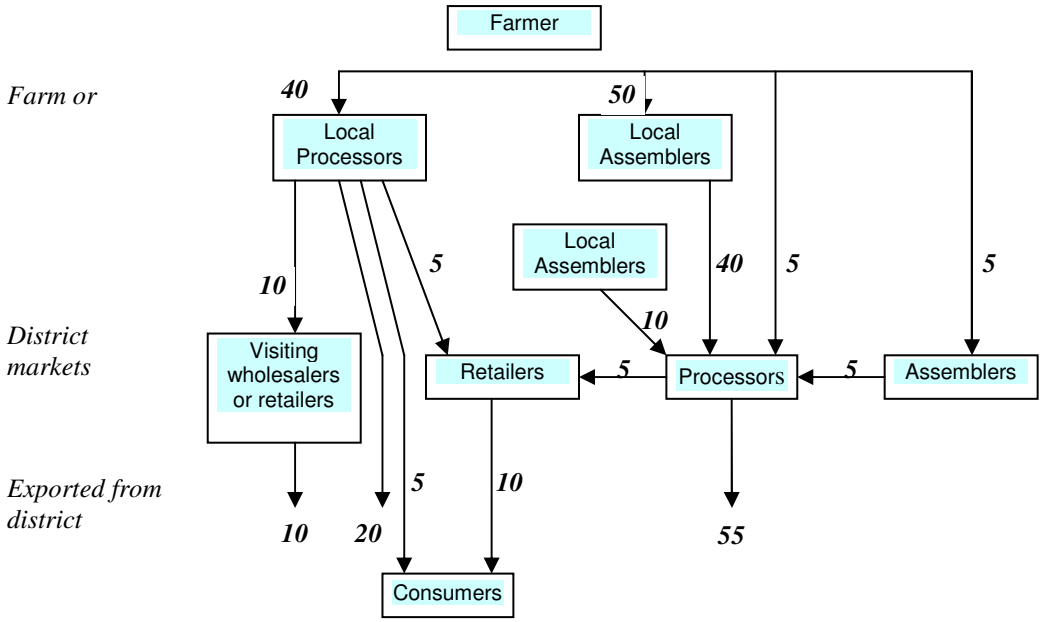
Various methods exist for analysing how markets function and assessing the likely private sector response to a food shock. However, given that during an ENA time and data are not necessarily available for comprehensive, rigorous analysis, this section outlines simple methods that can be used to improve upon the current national food gap calculation. The reader is directed to the two background papers on markets by Paul Dorosh and Ben Watkins for a more detailed discussion of the pros and cons of methods used to analyse markets. Further reference material is also given below. In order to understand how markets functions, what the private sector response is likely to be, and what level of food aid (if appropriate) would be proportionate to the market and avoid disincentives, the ENA team must analyse the following three aspects of markets:

- Structure, Conduct, Performance of trading activity through key informant interviews and trade flow mapping;
- Analysis of price differentials (between internal markets and across borders) over time and space;
- Analysis of supply and demand for the major food staples (to determine food aid needs and potential disincentive effects).

4.6.1 Structure, Conduct, Performance – basic method

This analysis provides information on the competitiveness and depth of the market as well as an indication of areas where the market may perform weakly. If research papers on food markets are available they would probably summarise this information. In addition the ENA team should undertake key informant interviews with traders and market analysts to answer the following questions: what are the major market flows in normal years, how have these changed in the emergency situation (including infrastructure or security problems), the number of traders in major markets (gives an idea of competitiveness), sources of market information, sources of imports, what are traders perceptions of security risk, what are traders perceptions of government intervention in food markets. It is often useful to plot out the marketing chain to identify who does what in the market. If there is time, key informant interviews (or existing research) will point to the approximate proportion of food flowing through different marketing channels. An example is given in the figure below.

Figure 2: Marketing chain for rice, Atebubu District, Ghana: Source: B. Baulch *"Food Marketing"* in Food Security in Sub-Saharan Africa, S. Devereux and S. Maxwell eds, IDS 2001. Note: Numbers indicate the percentage of flows through a particular channel.



4.6.2 Price Differentials between historically related markets – basic method

Plot line graphs of monthly wholesale prices of major food commodities for markets which are known to be related (e.g. primary and urban consumption markets) for 2-3 years to broadly ascertain in which markets price movements are highly correlated and to what extent margins between markets approximate transport, handling and normal marketing costs. Here, it is particularly important to note markets where average prices and price variations (fluctuations in the plotted line graph) are significantly larger than in other markets. (If data and time permit, an economic analysis of market integration could be conducted.) The simple analysis of line graphs, especially where time is limited or data is incomplete, may suggest extraordinarily high marketing costs or market distortions in some regions or a lack of integration of markets. In a well-integrated market the line graphs should move in parallel (the differences being marketing costs) with limited fluctuations (price instability) over the year.

Second, compare monthly import parity prices for 2-3 years of imported food staples brought to major markets with the local wholesale prices (as in 2 above) to show the incentives for private sector imports over time. The import parity price is estimated as the wholesale price in the country of origin plus transport and marketing costs to the border, multiplied by the exchange rate and adjusted for tariffs plus transport and marketing costs to the major domestic market. In many cases, the parallel market exchange rate should be used for converting from foreign to local currency; key informant interviews can shed light on the actual cost of foreign exchange for traders. If monthly data on imports are available they can be graphed together with these prices. The import parity price is assumed to be higher than the domestic wholesale price (for a net food importing country). As the domestic price rises towards the import parity price (during the lean season), private sector imports should increase. That is, as domestic supply dries up and prices rise, there is greater incentive to import food to meet consumer demand – although the poorest households will then be priced out of the market and lower their food intake. Little increase or a continued disparity in prices may point to barriers to trade or low purchasing power.

4.6.3 Supply and Demand and estimates of private sector response – basic method

Currently, many ENAs use the food gap approach to assess food needs. As this is based on historical normal import levels it does not take into account the response of the private sector to changes in market demand following a crisis. Using simple economic ideas, an estimate can be made of potential private imports that may result from a change in per capita market demand of food (this is different from per capita food requirements). The principle of the calculation is to consider how domestic demand changes after a shock and to estimate how the private sector might respond. The calculation is relatively simple but requires assumptions of relative market responsiveness to changes in prices or consumers incomes (known as elasticities) that are best made by an economist (advice can be taken from the World Bank or FAO). The method and calculation is given in detail in Paul Dorosh's paper. By estimating the potential size of private sector imports in the absence of food aid this calculation also gives us the maximum amount of food aid that can be distributed without causing price disincentive effects on domestic production, which should generally be the ceiling for any food aid program. (Adjustments for income effects of food aid transfers to households are discussed in the paper.)

4.6.4 Points to keep in mind regarding current information (during crisis):

- Various guidelines are available for market analysis and methods/econometric models have been developed. Economic skills are required to use and analyse the results of these models, but an ENA team without these skills can still do simple market analysis to get a "feel" of a market situation. However, where food aid is selected as an intervention tool more rigorous analysis should be undertaken.

- One rule of thumb is that a high market price relative to the import parity price (nationally or for the region) suggests that food aid may be needed as part of the crisis response.
- For countries and regions with one or two major staples and recurring slow-onset food emergencies, food aid agencies should invest in more substantive and rigorous market analysis on an on-going basis.
- The depth of market analysis required depends on the type, magnitude and complexity of emergency.

4.6.5 Sources of Guidance on Methods:

- C. Peter Timmer, Walter P. Falcon and Scott R. Pearson. 1983. Food Policy Analysis. Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Background papers by Paul Dorosh and Ben Watkins.
- Guidelines: FAO Guidelines for Crop and Food Supply Assessment Missions, USAID Famine Early Warning Service Guidelines on Market Price Analysis

4.7 Skill/qualifications

Minimum skills in economics & food markets are required for a reasonable market analysis. Economic skills are required to use food market models to test market integration and performance or to derive supply and demand price or income elasticity.

4.8 Question marks

During an ENA a great deal of "forecasting" of market behaviour is required – these will typically be made with errors. Particularly as markets change quickly monitoring and frequent re-assessment will be needed.

5. Sampling

The Thematic Group was asked to provide a summary of key issues in the subject area and to develop a 'working consensus' on how to address the more operational issues raised in the group including specifying appropriate approaches for different assessment timeframes and emergency contexts. In particular they were asked to focus on:

- Optimal versus practical sampling approaches.
- Technical and resource related parameters.
- Matching sampling approaches to information needs and context/setting limitations.

5.1 Scope

The sampling thematic group was tasked with exploring key issues in sampling as they relate to conducting emergency needs assessments in a variety of emergency contexts. The issues were framed as:

- What are optimal versus practical sampling approaches that should be used in ENAs, including any needed compromises and the impact of these compromises on the validity of findings?
- What are the key technical and resource-related parameters to be considered when developing sampling methodologies?
- How can sampling approaches best be matched to information needs with respect to four common emergency scenarios?

5.2 Value added

WFP carries out or participates in more than one hundred needs assessments each year, and the results of these assessments are shared with a broad range of emergency partners and often used as a basis for programming significant amounts of food and non-food resources.

One of the most important factors in how an emergency needs assessment is treated by the donor community and internally among emergency agencies is the perceived quality of the information. If the information is deemed to be reliable and of high quality it is more likely to be taken seriously by all concerned. Core issues around how data is collected and how sampling units are defined and selected is central to the credibility and accountability of the assessment.

Information that is collected using acceptable sampling methods will facilitate comparability over time and space with other data collected during and after the emergency from WFP and other agencies. The sampling regime largely determines the representativeness of the information and the precision with which indicators can be estimated. Exploring possible mechanisms for coordinating efforts between agencies in reference to data collection would significantly improve inferences that could ultimately be drawn.

Sampling can also facilitate targeting decisions, especially with the proper use of stratification in the sample design and desegregation during the analysis of information. In order to have enough power to disaggregate information an adequate sample size is needed.

Data collected without a sound sampling strategy may not truly represent the population(s) impacted by an emergency.

5.3 Key concepts

Sampling concepts that are applicable to emergency needs assessments are the same concepts applicable to any information collection process. All of the choices made in designing a sample should be informed choices, and if desired sampling procedures can not be followed (due, for example, to the nature of the emergency) then the consequences of compromising the sampling process must be known and documented.

The sampling group discussed key sampling issues in ENA but did not resolve all of these issues. There was general agreement concerning the key technical and non-technical concepts that must be considered in ENA, and included in ENA guideline, including:

5.3.1 Technical Key Concepts

Probability/non-probability sampling

A clear choice must be made when deciding whether or not to use probability or non-probability sampling techniques. In most cases, probability sampling (e.g. sampling that draws upon probability theory as a basis for inferring from a sample to the larger population from which the sample was taken) is preferred because error, precision, and confidence intervals around estimates are quantifiable and data can often be disaggregated and subgroups can be statistically compared. In some cases, depending on the measurement objective, non-probability sampling will be the preferred option. The key, however, is that those who are making the sampling decisions know the trade-offs between the two approaches.

Qualitative/Quantitative Methods and Data

There is a lingering debate on when and how to use qualitative methods versus quantitative methods, but this is not a sampling issue per se. The same sampling methods can be used for both qualitative and quantitative methods. The confusion may arise from the fact that qualitative assessments tend to use non-probability sampling more often than quantitative surveys, which more often employ probability sampling. A clear distinction must be made among sampling approaches, methodologies and data types (probability and non-probability vs. qualitative and quantitative).

Sampling Accuracy and Precision

There remains considerable confusion around the terms accuracy and precision, and their importance in sampling. Accuracy is achieved when data from the sample are close to the true population values. Low accuracy generally means low quality. Precision refers to the level of measurement and exactness and may not be related to accuracy.

Stratification

All surveys can *potentially* benefit from stratification (also known as blocking in some of the literature), or systematically grouping survey units into homogeneous groups before conducting the survey. It will be beneficial whenever the variation among the sampling units can be anticipated, and the resulting strata are more homogeneous than the original population. It is often the case in emergencies that strata are important[24] but the concept itself is poorly understood in ENA.

Sample size

Sample size is largely independent of population size, and a common mistake is to link the sample size needed with the size of the population in question. This can actually result in measuring too

[24] The case of a rapid onset cyclone emergency was given where different zones of damage were identified prior to the survey, and these zones formed strata that were incorporated into the ENA.

many households or units. Sample size is also directly related to precision, and the measurement objectives for which the ENA is conducted. Other issues related to sample size include:

- the number of strata to use (generally defined by geographic areas, but issues remain on how many to use and when to stratify);
- the number of clusters per strata (30 is usually adequate, less than 10 is not recommended, and little is gained from more than 30);
- number of units (usually households) per cluster (again, a minimum of 10 and maximum of 30 could be recommended for ENAs);
- subgroup comparisons and their impact on sample size (need to plan what will be compared so that sample sizes can be factored in);
- design effect; and
- statistical weights.

Design effect

ENA surveys will rarely have the opportunity to select a household by simple random selection (one exception may be in certain camp settings). More complex designs that use clustering, stratification, or multi-stages are required. Anything besides simple random sampling decreases the efficiency of the design. In order to make it as 'efficient' as simple random sampling a design effect has to be factored into the overall sample size. Knowledge about how to incorporate design effect into ENAs is required.

5.3.2 Non-technical Key Concepts

Assuring comparability over time/space, and consistency with multiple users/agencies/sectors

How to improve the chances that data will be comparable over time and space is only partly technical in nature. It implies a strategy to advocate for proper sampling methods and a system that ensures that data quality and rigor are incorporated into each assessment.

Supporting measurement objectives and potential targeting (geographic, social, temporal)

Perhaps the most significant and immediate improvement in ENA with respect to sampling can come from linking measurement and targeting objectives with the sample design. The issue here is being clear about what information is needed from the assessment, and how the analysis will report on social groups, geographic areas, or other strata. Often an ENA is designed with costs and other practical issues in mind, but decision-makers want the results reported in a completely different way.[25]

Documentation of sampling procedures, including limitations to the assessment

Transparency is a key issue in sampling, and assessment reports need to clearly state how the sample was designed and how the primary sampling units (usually households or individuals) were selected. If sampling methods are poorly documented or not documented at all then the ENA can not be credible.

[25] For example, a survey designed to collect information by ethnic group may not be able to report results by District if this geographic division was not factored into sampling decisions.

Understanding and documentation of limitations

This is somewhat related to the previous issue, but focuses specifically on realizing what the assessment can and can not claim or represent based on the choices that were made with respect to sampling. For example, in ENAs in conflict situations it is not always possible to include all households in the sample frame due to varying security risks that enumerators would have to take. Documenting the limitations of such as assessment would allow assessment users to make their own judgments on the limits of interpretation.

5.4 Pre-Crisis Information (Baseline)

The types and amount of pre-crisis or background data required for proper sampling is not overwhelming, and can usually be accessed if WFP has had presence in the country where the emergency is taking place. For areas where WFP does not have a presence, prior collection of background data is advised. The following categories of data are the minimum information required to design and carry out a sampling strategy in an emergency context.

Recent population data is almost always needed, especially to support random selection of clusters, which could be villages, camps, or administrative areas such as districts. If the population data is somewhat dated then it is helpful to have estimated population growth rates so that current populations can at least be estimated. The ideal would be to have population estimates disaggregated down to the village level, or in urban areas down to the lowest administrative level.

It is also useful to have demographic data such as ethnicity. Where anthropometric data is to be collected it is also useful to have an idea of the average number of children under 5 in the population so that an estimate of the number of households required to select a given number of under 5's can be determined.

Current administrative boundaries and maps are useful for designing a sample. Maps that contain the road network or other pertinent infrastructure are also useful. Maps will allow more informed planning and cluster selection, and may also be useful for designing strata.

Secondary data relevant to the affected area is useful for deciding how to sample and in some cases for calculating sample sizes. Information from secondary data that may be of use includes demographic data on groups of interest, values and variances associated with key outcome indicators such as malnutrition, and background information on risk and vulnerability.

If food economy zones, agro-ecological zones or other geographic-based strata have been delineated and mapped then these often are useful for stratifying the sample. Details on how the zones were delineated, however, are also required so that their relevancy to the assessment can be better judged.

Finally, details on specific villages and household locations are useful for delineating the sampling zone, determining clusters, and planning the logistics of the survey.

5.5 Methodology

In sampling there is a wide choice of methods to employ, and there are often multiple options that will satisfy demands of precision and accuracy. The sampling group felt that the background paper largely covered the description methods and their application in various contexts. The guidelines should

consider an annex that covers the pros and cons of various sampling methods with links, through examples, to various emergency scenarios.

Some methods to include are:

- Simple random sampling
- Stratified random sampling
- Cluster sampling
- Multi-stage sampling
- Purposive sampling
- Convenience sampling
- Snowball sampling
- LQAS (see example 8)

5.6 Examples

5.6.1. Mozambique Floods, 2000

Scenario: Two waves of floods hit Mozambique. The first wave impacted the Limpopo River and the Nkomati River. The Limpopo River floods were fairly manageable, but the Nkomati floods were severe. The second wave of flooding also struck the Limpopo area and resulted in a successive shock on households. Roads were washed away, bridges were destroyed, Mozambique was cut off from its neighbouring countries (especially South Africa, a major trader), western provinces were cut off from supplies to the south, people were isolated to higher ground and cut off from markets, and most villages around Limpopo were under water.

Objectives: WFP conducted a reconnaissance assessment on the same day the first floods hit. The assessment was focused in and around Maputo and to the north. The objectives were to assess the damage, estimate the population affected, and determine the immediate needs. After the second wave of flooding struck another assessment was made, this time to rescue/save lives, assess the areas impacted, estimate the number of people affected and the damage level, and determine alternative courses of action.

Information Required: Pre-crisis information from early warning systems forecasted normal to above-normal rainfall. VAM had already provided detailed food security profiles for each district level, as well as risk maps showing drought- and flood-prone zones. Population information at village levels and rural population by district. Market and market price information. All documented annually plus information on food economy zones.

For the immediate assessments, the key information was the number of people affected, flood locations and severity, numbers impacted, where high ground remained for people, food drops, etc, and how to access areas. Later assessments sought information on mortality and morbidity, food availability, food storage capabilities, water quality, and medicinal supplies.

Constraints: The most significant constraint in conducting the survey was access to flooded areas. Roads were cut off and access to rural areas was extremely difficult. Time was of the essence since lives were at risk. There were also few immediate response resources available.

Methods Used: In the initial surveys, no sampling techniques were used and all of the data collected was qualitative.

After two months another assessment was conducted to determine the nutritional status of children under five and to make referrals to feeding centres. This assessment used a systematic random sample and measured every fifth child. No sampling frame was available, so the representativeness of the data was questionable. The assessment, however, was constrained by the movements of people displaced by the flooding.

Five months later an additional nutritional survey was conducted on flood-affected households in the main-impacted areas and with returnees. This was a cross-sectional survey that used a two-stage cluster design. Thirty clusters (villages) were selected with probability proportional to size and fifteen households selected within each cluster. Only accessible areas were measured, so the survey was not generalizable to the total flood-affected population.

Statistical Implications: Although all of the rights steps were taken to ensure proper sampling techniques, it was still difficult to ensure statistical rigor due to the uncertainty and fluidity of the situation.

5.6.2 Urban IDP Camps in Monrovia, May-June 2003

Scenario: Protracted civil war in Liberia displaced large numbers of urban inhabitants in the capital, many of which ended up in IDP camps.

Objectives: WFP assisted in collecting information on IDP status in a number of camp settings. The objective of the assessment was to determine the food security, nutrition and livelihood security status of urban IDPs and urban poor communities in Monrovia by using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. This also included measuring the nutritional status of children under five and mothers.

Information Required: Basic demographic information was required from household members living in camps and from individual households. Information on pre-emergency livelihoods and current vulnerability was collected.

Constraints: The most significant constraint in conducting the survey was developing the sampling frame (e.g., creating a list of eligible households, including those with children < 5 years, in each community). The survey needed to allow statistical comparisons of outcomes between IDP and poor non-IDP urban communities. Data collection was disrupted for 3 months due to renewed fighting and the ultimate overthrow of the government. Continual conflict resulted in renewed movements of people, which constantly changed the sampling frames.

Methods Used: The survey included key informant interviews in each community using convenience sampling approaches. Also included were men's and women's focus group interviews that used non-probability sampling to determine focus group participants. The household survey used probability sampling to interview 125 households per community.

Statistical Implications: Although all of the rights steps were taken to ensure proper sampling techniques, it was still difficult to ensure statistical rigor due to the uncertainty and fluidity of the situation.

5.6.3 IDPs in Host Families in Ivory Coast, January 2003

Scenario: Civil Conflict in the Ivory Coast

Objectives: To establish a food security and risk monitoring system after the fighting subsided and people were returning to their normal livelihoods. In addition the assessment wanted to understand how newly displaced families were coping with the current situation - were they now or likely in the near future to become food insecure? Food security was here defined and measured on basis of current food availability and access.

Information Required: General information on livelihood status of households as well as their current coping ability.

Constraints: There was only a two-week window open to conduct the survey. Access was a major problem, and enumerators could only remain within safe areas. The security situation changed constantly, so selected villages could become insecure in a matter of hours. In the rebel held areas the survey team had to be composed of government people. The result was not a full assessment but rather an exercise to identify monitoring indicators.

Methods Used: Due to security constraints, and available time in the field (2 weeks), only focus groups were used to collect data. To select villages in each rebel and government held areas (3 in total), transect drives were used, starting at WFP sub-offices. No probability sampling was used.

Statistical Implications: The issue of representativeness was paramount here, as displaced people chose to locate in a variety of situations, including camps. Many housed themselves with relatives or friends, or illegally settled in discreet areas, making it difficult to locate all households. The most vulnerable may have been the most difficult to locate.

5.6.4. Vulnerability Survey in Rohinga Refugee Camps, September 1999

Scenario: Protracted Closed Camp Refugee Situation – Bangladesh

Objectives: The main objectives were to understand changes in malnutrition prevalence in young children born in the camp, to identify vulnerable groups within the camps, to understand use of rations by refugees in closed camp settings, and to understand use of food production and income activities within the camps.

Information Required: Anthropometric data on children under five; livelihood characteristics of households, factors of vulnerability.

Constraints: The constraints included:

- Access – need approval of religious leaders.
- Multiple families per shed – enumerators to systematically select family unit for interview.
- Language- questionnaires in Bangla with questions to be translated orally in Rohinga dialect.
- Thus, possible bias from sampling, interviewers and measurement (use of Salter scales).

Methods Used: The survey was conducted in two camps of approximately 25,000 refugees total. Probability sampling was used to sample approximately 400 households per camp for comparisons. Maps of camps were used for the sampling frame – sheds were numbered and then random numbers were generated by computer to select households.

5.6.5. Calculating Sample Size

Statistical Implications: When the target population is sufficiently large [ie. > 500 individuals], sample size for a survey depends on three factors:

i) *Size of standard error*: the smaller the standard error required, the larger the sample size needed. In order to obtain no error at all, the whole target population must be included. In

practice, however, error is part of sampling. Probability sampling allows for quantifying the level of error in the estimates such that it is known. The standard error relates directly to an estimate's precision. It is usually accepted that the results obtained may be erroneous in 5 percent of cases.

ii) *Precision:* the greater the precision required, the larger the sample size needed. By conducting a survey on a part (sample) of the population, the result is an estimate of that which would be obtained had the whole population been surveyed. If another sample is chosen, as a result of chance, the new sample will differ slightly from the first sample and the results will only be superficially different. The true result is therefore within a margin around the result obtained. This margin, referred to as precision, defines the confidence interval (CI) of a true value.

Example: the prevalence of malnutrition (e.g. the proportion of malnourished individuals) found from the survey is 12% +/- 3%; this means that the precision of the survey is 3%, and the true prevalence of malnutrition has a 95% chance of being between 9 and 15 percent. The confidence interval is therefore 9-15%.

iii) *Expected prevalence in the population:* as the proportion of individuals presenting with malnutrition approaches 50%, the larger the sample size needed to obtain the same precision.

The resources available for the survey are also limiting factors for sample size. How many children can be (realistically) measured within one survey day? How much time is available? How many investigators are available? For the purposes of these guidelines the following sampling sizes are recommended if professionals are not available to advise on sample size:

n = 450, for random and systematic sampling

n = 900, for cluster-randomized surveys

5.6.6. Failure to specify appropriate stratification and need for disaggregated estimates in measurement objectives.

Event: El Nino related, slow onset drought in north-eastern Province, Kenya (1998).

Scenario: A slow onset drought, common in the District, appeared to be creating abnormally high levels of food insecurity, resulting in dangerously high acute malnutrition levels (acute/wasting). The agency was well established in the District having implemented rehabilitation efforts from a previous drought episode and begun to move into development programming efforts. The agency also served as the implementing agency in previous EMOPs.

Objectives: The (stated) objective of the assessment was to quantify the prevalence of food insecure households as well as quantify the prevalence of acute malnutrition in the District.

Methods Used and Data Collection: The sampling method used was a 30 X 30 cluster sampling approach with 30 villages selected from amongst all villages and 30 households selected randomly within each village. Villages were selected with probability proportional to size on the basis of key informant classification (no reliable population data was available) prior to selection during the first stage such that all households had an approximately equal probability of selection. In each household interviewed, all children under five were selected for measurement.

Constraints: Given the random selection methods, some lower administrative aggregates (divisions) had only a small number of villages selected. Due to the small sample size per division, large confidence intervals surrounded the point estimates at the divisional level and meant that differences between divisions were not statistically significant in most cases, despite rather large differences in point estimates. Despite the lack of statistical evidence of differences, between divisions, the agency chose to target the interventions on the basis of point estimates anyway.

Pros/Cons: By focusing on district-level estimates of food security and nutrition, sample size and therefore costs were reduced. Post-assessment use of the results to compare at the divisional level suggest that designing the assessment to yield district-level point estimates was inappropriate. Divisional estimates were not a stated measurement objective of the assessment.

5.6.7. Designing Sampling to Support Measurement Objectives and Potential Targeting

Measurement objectives not only help you plan an assessment, they help to set the stage for analyzing the information and recommending action. The objectives should also reveal something about HOW you want to use the information. They should indicate the units that will be used in sampling.

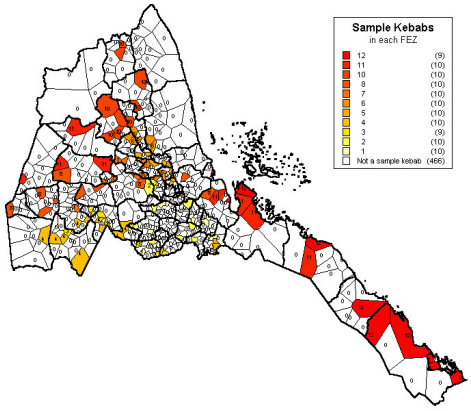
Information Requirements: Knowledge of intended sampling units, clear indication of geographic units of interest such as districts, understanding of social groups such as ethnic groups, and derived groupings such as food economy zone, agro-ecological zone, or sampling zone.

Methods Example: In Eritrea, CARE, WFP and ERREC conducted a joint assessment during a slow onset emergency triggered by drought.

Measurement Objectives:

- Geographic and livelihoods-based information for targeting food aid based on the creation of sampling zones derived from Food Economy Zones
- Identification and description of groups and household types vulnerable to food shortages..
- Improved understanding of the livelihoods of households throughout Eritrea.
- Characterization of vulnerability using the CSI.

Design: A multi-stage area probability sample design. Stage 1 included the stratification of geographic areas based on "sampling zones" derived from food economy zones. Stage 2 was the selection of Kebabs with probability proportional to size and stage 3 was the selection of clusters (villages), also with probability proportional to size. The final stage was the random selection of households using village lists as the sampling frame. The sample size used was 400 households per sampling zone (strata).



5.6.8. Lot Quality Assurance Sampling (LQAS)

Lot quality assurance sampling may be a useful sampling strategy in some emergency settings. Here the approach to describing LQAS will be to compare it with cluster sampling (Table 1). One issue is the primary goal of a cluster survey versus that for LQAS. With cluster sampling the primary goal is to estimate an overall prevalence or coverage for a specific area whereas LQAS is useful for identifying specific area, such as villages, where a problem might exist. Therefore, with a cluster survey, usually the motivation is to visit the fewest sites (e.g., clusters) possible to derive valid and precise estimates, with usually around 30 clusters assessed in a geographic area or strata. With the LQAS approach, generally all towns and villages in a specific area are visited to determine where the problem exists.

As an example, suppose the issue is the proportion of households with access to fresh fruits and vegetables. If the question is 'what proportion of households have access to fresh fruits and vegetables' in a specific geographic area, then the cluster survey method would be most appropriate. If the question is 'which villages have inadequate access to fresh fruits and vegetables' in a specific geographic area, then LQAS may be more appropriate.

	Cluster Survey	Lot Quality Assurance Sampling
Primary Goal	Provide overall prevalence estimates for a specific geographic area	Identify specific areas (frequently towns or villages) where a problem exists
Number of Sites to Visit	Usually about 30 clusters	Usually many more than 30 sites visited
Sample Size per Cluster	Based on overall estimated prevalence, design effect, and desired level of precision	Based on programmatic criteria as to whether a village ("lot") passes or fails

Determining the number of households to sample in each village (e.g., "lot") is based on a goal of the target proportion of households to have access to fresh fruits and vegetables. In order to determine this, one needs to decide on the number of households to test and the number of households (threshold) with inadequate access that would be used to decide if a village passes or fails. **Note that when LQAS is performed in a geographic area it is possible to derive an overall estimate. To derive an overall estimate , in addition to the number of households sampled in each village and the number that "failed," the total number of households would be needed.**

5.7 Skills/qualifications

Incorporating better sampling practices into ENAs will require a well-thought-out strategy. The difficulty is that sampling is heavily grounded in statistical theory, and the each choice made in sampling has an impact on accuracy, representation, and validity. Sampling theory is well documented in textbooks but a good knowledge of general statistics is required for the layperson to understand much of the theory. If field-based personnel are to make decisions in sampling they will have to have knowledge of the theory so that their choices will be well-informed and they can defend any decisions they take.

The other challenge is more practical. Even those who are well-grounded in statistics and know the issues in sampling may find it difficult to make good choices in emergency situations. This is partly because compromises will almost always have to be made, especially in rapid onset emergencies and complex/conflict situations. There is no substitute for experience in these cases, and finding someone with the skills to make informed choices is crucial.

5.8 Question marks

In comparison to the other themes addressed during the meeting, sampling is a technical area that is very well developed, albeit largely outside the context of emergency assessments. The challenge, therefore, is in applying existing knowledge about sampling to this context. However, the technical knowledge needed to apply existing knowledge to varying contexts is often lacking. There is no easy solution to the problems of building country office capacity in sample design. When an assessment is being designed, somebody somewhere has to have a background that will allow them to understand sampling options. There is no shortcut around this issue.

6. Minimum Pre-Crisis Information (Baseline)

The Working Group, drawn from members of all the Thematic Groups, was asked to reflect upon the implications of the preceding two days' discussions for the type of pre-crisis information (baseline)[26] that WFP and its partners should seek to acquire in crisis prone countries.

6.1 Scope

The session focused on reviewing the minimum pre-crisis information needs to assess food security at three levels (availability, access & utilization) as well as risk of food insecurity, in the context of the four main typologies of emergency: slow-onset, rapid onset, complex/conflict and refugee/IDP settings. From there a list of priority countries for minimum pre-crisis baseline data was developed. Topics presented but not covered included the assessment of information gaps for the priority countries and ways forward to meet those information needs.

6.2 Value added

In many cases it is valuable to know the food security situation before the crisis occurs so the emergency needs assessment information 'post-crisis' can be compared to a benchmark of a so-called 'normal' year. Knowing the minimum pre-crisis baseline/benchmark data in terms of food security and risk for the various emergency contexts can allow for better estimation of the impact of the emergency on food and non-food needs. This is also closely related to understanding the differences between chronic and transitory food insecurity. From the discussion, various stakeholders should then meet to identify those countries where this minimum information is absolutely vital in terms of emergency preparedness and planning. From there, the information gaps can be identified and, with appropriate commitment from WFP and partners, these gaps can be filled BEFORE an emergency occurs.

6.3 Key concepts

For this session, it is important to fully understand the dimensions of food security that should be included in a pre-emergency assessment: food availability, food access and food utilization – at national, community, household and individual levels. By only assessing national food availability or only individual utilization (anthropometry), a complete understanding of the impact of an emergency on the affected population is impossible. In addition, the notion of risk and risk management cuts across all dimensions of food security and is important in interpreting responses to a crisis by households and communities.

[26] Related discussions from each thematic group served as a precursor to this discussion and are captured in the subsections entitled Pre-Crisis Information (Baseline) in the relevant chapter for each of the themes.

6.4 Pre-Crisis Information (Baseline)

6.4.1 Availability

	Minimum information	Sources	Limitations
Rapid	Production statistics Population data (disaggregated) Import/Export + regional perspective National food stocks Land use maps/imagery Market locations and volumes	CFSAM reports Ministry of Agriculture National Statistics Offices Ministry of Trade Donors Private companies Mapping Agencies	Technical capacity Government capacity Data availability Data quality
Slow	Production statistics Population data (disaggregated) Import/Export Stocks Macro indicators (policies & regulations) Land use maps/imagery Market locations & volumes Crop calendars	CFSAM reports Ministry of Agriculture National Statistics Offices Ministry of Trade	
Complex	Production statistics Population Import/Export Stocks Macro indicators Land use maps/imagery Market location and volumes	CFSAM reports Ministry of Agriculture National Statistics Offices Ministry of Trade	
Refugee	Population Market location & volumes	UNHCR Ministry of Trade Ministry of Agriculture	

6.4.2 Access

Key questions: For what is the information needed? Are there indicators which reflect what is needed? Can the information be compared over time?

MACRO level indicators:

1. Terms of trade for labour, including unemployment
2. Terms of trade for essential goods – food, agricultural inputs, livestock, productive assets
3. Other non-food costs – education/school fees, healthcare
4. Formal institutional systems (e.g. PDS) and parastatal activities (e.g. changes in subsidies, grain reserves).
5. Informal institutional systems – alms/charity handouts/food aid
6. Mobility and migration trends – political and physical access/movement, Out-migration - remittances
7. Land distribution and use
8. Cross-border trade

MICRO level indicators: Household Access - seasonality/trends. From primary data sources.

6.4.3 Utilization

	Minimum information	Sources	Limitations
Rapid	**Nutritional status**: children < 5 (wasting); Adults, esp. females (BMI) **Morbidity (seasonal)**: diarrhoea fever; ARI; Normal seasonal outbreaks of cholera, yellow fever, dengue **Health services**: Normal access and utilization; immunization coverage **Water and sanitation**	• DHS+ • MICSII • NGO health and nutrition surveys • WHO/CDC • UNICEF • Ministry of Health	• Survey coverage in affected area • Loss of records/information due to flood or earthquake • Comparability of small-scale survey data • Differentiating between normal seasonal patterns and those exacerbated by the emergency.
Slow	**Mortality** CMR, U5MR, IMR, MMR **Nutritional status** children < 5 (wasting & stunting) Adults, esp. females (BMI) micronutrient status (Vit A) **Morbidity (seasonal)** Diarrhoea; fever; ARI; Normal seasonal outbreaks of cholera, yellow fever, dengue HIV/AIDS **Water and sanitation**	• DHS+ • MICSII • NGO health and nutrition surveys • WHO/CDC • UNICEF • Ministry of Health • UNAIDS	• Knowing seasonal trends for mortality and morbidity • Lack of local capacity to measure mortality • Lack of comparability for mortality measures • Survey coverage in affected area • Extrapolation of nationally sampled data to affected areas only • Difficulty in determining HIV prevalence in small areas – reliance on proxy indicators of prevalence and AIDS affected HHs.
Complex	**Mortality** CMR, U5MR, IMR, MMR **Nutritional status** children < 5 (wasting & stunting) Adults, esp. females (BMI) micronutrient status (Vit A) **Morbidity (seasonal)** Diarrhoea; fever; ARI; measles; Normal seasonal outbreaks of cholera, yellow fever, dengue HIV/AIDS, TB **Health services** Normal access and utilization immunization coverage **Water and sanitation**	• DHS+ • MICSII • NGO health and nutrition surveys • WHO/CDC • UNICEF • Ministry of Health • UNAIDS	• Security • Lack of updated information • Changes in population due to conflict • Collapse of health systems • Knowing seasonal trends for mortality and morbidity • Lack of local capacity to measure mortality • Lack of comparability for mortality measures • Survey coverage in affected area • Extrapolation of nationally sampled data to affected areas only. • Difficulty in determining HIV prevalence in small areas – reliance on proxy indicators of prevalence and AIDS affected HHs • Rapid spread of infectious illness due to mass movements of populations.
Refugee	**Mortality** CMR, U5MR, IMR, MMR **Nutritional status** children < 5 (wasting) Adults, esp. females (BMI) micronutrient status (Vit A) **Morbidity (seasonal)** Diarrhoea; fever; ARI; measles; Normal seasonal outbreaks of cholera, yellow fever, dengue HIV/AIDS, TB	• UNHCR • NGO health and nutrition surveys • UNICEF • WFP	• For IDP situations, too much movement of people creates a dynamic situation. • Reliance on UNHCR and NGOs to collect information – usually only in parts due to demands from their agencies. • Difficulty in determining HIV prevalence in small areas – reliance on proxy indicators of prevalence and AIDS affected HHs

6.4.4 Risk

	Risk and minimum information	Response
Rapid	**Cyclone/hurricane** • Probability of event • Vulnerability maps of recurrent events **Flooding** • Probability of event • Vulnerability maps **Earthquake** • Areas/regions prone to event	• Contingency plans • Early warning systems • Cyclone shelters • History of repeated events that erode livelihoods • Differentiate vulnerable populations • HH/Community capacity to manage and mitigate risk • National capacity to manage or mitigate risk
Slow	**Drought** • Time series on rainfall • Growing season over time • Agricultural calendar • Availability of seed • Livestock (pasture conditions) **Economic/political** • Market inflation/hyper inflation • Policy management/risk • Supply/demand/health **HIV/AIDS** • Prevalence rate – sub national • Orphans • Death rates • Economic effects	• Agencies still need to respond quickly if planning horizon is long (timing and scale) • Risk should be determined in relation to size of problem and local capacity to respond. • Baseline information is a priority for planning • Information on most vulnerable population groups desirable. • HH/Community capacity to cope (informal safety nets) • National capacity (employment generation and safety nets) • Civil society (NGO/UN) capacity • Early Warning systems
Complex	• Conflict • Production and markets • Population movements (IDPs and refugees) • Physical access • Trade flows • Refugee legal status (access to work) • Political and military in formatives	• Contingency planning to accommodate movements of people (camp sites with water and land) • Scenario building • Most vulnerable populations • Early warning systems • Alternative livelihood possibilities

6.5 Pre-crisis Information (Baseline) Sources

Minimum pre-crisis baseline information can be collected from several levels and from a variety of sources. Much is from secondary data analysis using data from government ministries (Agriculture, health, finance, rural development, planning, etc.), UN agencies (CFSAM, JAM reports, etc), NGOs, bilaterals (FEWS-Net) and national surveys such as DHS, LSMS, MICSII, Income/Expenditure, etc plus recent census data. Primary data collection should be used to assess community and household food security in countries where there is little updated food security information.

The group identified the following as priority countries for which it would be important to have up-to-date baseline data.

6.5.1 Baseline priority countries

Afghanistan+	Honduras
Angola	Liberia**
Bangladesh+	Malawi+
Burkina Faso*	Mali*
Burundi	Mauritania*
Central African Republic*	Mozambique
Chad	Nicaragua
DRC	Niger
El Salvador	Rwanda*
Eritrea+	Sierra Leone*
Ethiopia+	Sudan
Guatemala	Zambia
Haiti*	Zimbabwe

*Recent or planned Baseline Study by WFP VAM
**Recent Baseline Study by WFP VAM in Urban area only
+Adequate secondary data for appropriate baseline analysis

6.6 Methodology

There are several ways to go about collecting and analysing pre-crisis information to create a baseline profile for a country.

- Secondary data analysis – very useful when there is a plethora of current information available regarding availability, access and utilization of food at national, community, household and individual levels. Not a good stand-alone method when there has been a significant change in the country (politically, economically, population movements). Can be combined with some primary data collection activities.
- Risk analysis – see above table outlining the various components of risk analysis in preparing baseline profiles for a country. Requires a high level of expertise and can be time consuming.
- Primary data collection - community level – Often this activity is done using a mix of semi-structured community interviews along with qualitative focus group discussions. Is a good method to get broader coverage within a country and to understand processes but does not allow for a large amount of quantification of information.
- Primary data collection – household level – Using appropriate techniques, can provide a snapshot of the current food security and risk situation for the population represented in the sample. Requires skilled management and technicians as well as time to get appropriate coverage in the area under investigation – often a countrywide assessment.
- Primary data collection – individual level – This information is most often found as secondary information from DHS or MICSII surveys. However, for pre-crisis baselines, it's important to have maternal and child health and nutritional information at a much more disaggregated level than those surveys usually provide. Therefore appropriately designed and sampled surveys are important to use and are best when linked directly to surveys measuring household food security. These surveys are often expensive and require large sample sizes and a minimum level expertise (also equipment) to conduct.

6.7 Skills/qualifications

Individuals with broad based expertise in acquiring secondary data and knowing how to conduct a comprehensive analysis, taking into account the varying levels of representation within the country (ie. Sampling and data collection methods and limitations). Most often one would look for people with a good mix of qualitative and quantitative skills but there would be a preference for a team of people. For primary data collection activities, there should be people with knowledge of survey design, methods (qualitative and quantitative), sampling, training, logistics, database creation and management, data analysis and interpretation and most importantly, report writing. People cannot be trained in a few days or weeks to do much of the technical work required for primary data collection and analysis. These skills are learnt over time and thus appropriate talent should be identified, either from within or from well-recognized individuals or agencies from without the organization.

6.8 Question marks

- Commitment from WFP and partners
- Cooperation between partner agencies
- Resources
    - Human - Developing a talent pool within WFP and with its partners.
    - Financial – Who will pay for these pre-crisis baselines?
    - Temporal – What is the time frame?
- Appropriate methodologies for data collection and analysis – context specific. One size does not fit all.
- What are the priority countries?
- What is the best way to disseminate this pre-crisis information?

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7. Critical Information for Inclusion in an ENA Report

The Working Group, drawn from members of all the Thematic Groups, was asked to reflect upon the implications of the preceding two days' discussions for the type of minimum information to be included in an emergency needs assessment report

The group reviewed the draft list of minimum information presented in Appendix C to the report of the WFP-Partners Consultation in March 2003[27], beginning with a discussion of the appropriateness of establishing such a standard list and how detailed it should be. It was noted/agreed that:

- It would be useful to establish minimum reporting requirements for emergency needs assessments (although it should not become a straight-jacket) as a contribution to improving quality/standards and enabling comparisons to be made.
- The minimum reporting requirements would be for *programme decision-making* (relating to food and non-food food security interventions) and *communications* (advocacy/resource mobilization) purposes. This must not be confused with a check-list for data gathering in the field, which would normally be more detailed and tailored to the needs of the particular situation.
- The minimum reporting requirements should be *independent of any particular methodology* but provide a framework for the process of defining a common/ coordinated assessment approach at country level.[28]
- When any of the listed data are *not available*, the assessment report should state this and explain why, whether and when the data may become available, and what is being done (or needs to be done) to obtain them.
- The same list/minimum information set should be used for *all assessment reports*, in all contexts (slow-onset, sudden, etc.). When specific data are not yet available (e.g. in the early stages of a sudden-onset crisis), this should be stated explicitly. If certain information is considered to be irrelevant in a particular situation, this should be explained.
- **In all cases, it is essential that the report:**
    - specify the hypothesis and methodology used, and data sources
    - provide details of households' access to food, and of food availability
    - specify uncertainties and give ranges rather than absolute figures, when appropriate
    - specify any limitations, such as data being available for limited areas which may not be representative of the whole population of concern
    - distinguish facts from judgements[29]
    - focus on changes and trends, and give a real sense of what going on
    - highlight risks and the possible consequences of specific actions (or of inaction)

[27] The March 2003 list was in fact a list proposed as a standard for requests addressed to donors. The present discussion focused on establishing a standard for assessment reports.

[28] It would be useful to have guidelines for the process of establishing country level consensus on the approach and method(s) to be used in each assessment (which was recommended in March 03).

[29] The possibility of a code of conduct for assessments was suggested.

7.1 Proposed minimum set of information to be included in an ENA report

The following lists the information expected in a comprehensive emergency needs assessment report. Information on the various topics may be gathered and subjected to initial analysis by separate assessment teams, or team members, before being consolidated into an overall analysis and report.

7.1.1 Methodology and sources of data

- The hypothesis and methodology use for data collection and analysis
- Description of how primary data were collected, the number and distribution of the sites visited and community groups/households interviewed, and how they were selected
- Identification of secondary data sources used
- Limitations of data and basis for generalizing from the sample to the population
- Uncertainty/confidence in the data and consequent conclusions
- Arrangements (or recommendations) for follow-up assessments, if appropriate

7.1.2 The food-security/livelihood/economic situation of households

An explanation of how the disaster/crisis has affected the food security/ livelihood/ economic situation of people in different areas and/or population subgroups; the underlying causes of their food insecurity; the pre-crisis baseline, the present situation; recent trends and current expectations (the prognosis for the coming months). This should include specific information in relation to:

- Sources of food – households' own production, market purchases, food aid, other safety nets, gifts, hunting, gathering, etc., and the relative importance of each
- Food consumption – dietary diversity/food frequency
- Income and/or assets (including entitlements from social networks/political allegiances)
- Debt burden (distinguishing debts for consumption and for production) and the implications of defaulting on repayments
- Essential non-food requirements/obligations (including rent, energy/fuel, water, shelter, health care, school fees, etc.), highlighting items that are essential for future food security (e.g. keeping livestock alive for pastoralists)
- Household income/expenditure balance
- Trade-offs (at household level) between food and non-food needs and provisions
- Present coping/survival strategies and their sustainability
- Use actually made of available food and other resources
- Opportunities which are, or could become, available to people, and their capacities to exploit those opportunities to enhance their food security
- Seasonal considerations relevant to people's food security and the timing of assistance

7.1.3 The economic environment, natural resources and food availability

- The macro-economic situation and fiscal and other policies affecting food security
- The nature and importance of the informal economy
- Food availability – the availability of food in the locality, the country and (where appropriate) neighbouring countries: the present situation, recent trends and current expectations/prognosis; whether there is a supply problem and, if so, its magnitude; proportion of different foods in the total food basket
- Markets – the impact of events on trade, food marketing and prices; whether market failure is contributing to food insecurity; the potential and capacity of markets to help address food insecurity; the potential impact of food aid on local markets (Depending on the degree of market integration, analysis should be sub-national, national and/or international)
- Natural resources – the potential impact of the current situation on the natural resource base, and actions that may be needed to protect it

7.1.4 Health and nutrition factors relevant to food security

- Significant diseases (as reported by health authorities and/or agencies)
- Malnutrition, if relevant – current malnutrition rates and trends (when valid data are available); comparison with local norms; micronutrient deficiencies; probable causes of malnutrition (triangulation with other data)
- Mortality data – crude and under-5 mortality rates – if/when credible data are available from reliable sources

7.1.5 Context

- Demography and the nature of differentiations within the population (ethnic and/or other)
- Social context within households – resource control at household level; gender considerations relating to food access and utilization
- Political and social structures – social support systems, how they operate, who they do/do not cover; power structures and implications for targeting
- Historical context, as it relates to the shock/present crisis
- Security context
- Experience and lessons-learned from past emergency responses

7.1.6 Policies, plans and the means/ capacity to implement food security assistance

- National policies and disaster management plans, and their implementation; their implications for food-related assistance
- The plans (contingency and other) of assistance agencies (UN, NGO, other)
- Governmental, UN, NGO and private sector institutions, programmes and capacities available to implement food aid and/or non-food activities to address food insecurity

- Formal and informal/traditional safety nets – current functioning, coverage, strengths and weaknesses
- Logistic means (routes and capacities) presently and potentially available; the implications for food aid and other assistance operations

7.1.7 Additional considerations for refugees/IDPs and other specific target groups

- Host government policy towards the refugees, and the degree of enforcement of those policies; constraints on self-reliance (political and other)
- Prospects for return home or other durable solutions for refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs); their access in the meantime to land, agricultural inputs, employment, etc.
- Interactions between refugees/IDPs and host communities
- In areas of conflict and insecurity (or restricted areas): access to populations for assessment, programme delivery and monitoring; risks for recipients and assistance personnel
- Special attention must be given in t*he economic environment* to the role of informal economies in refugee, IDP and conflict situations

7.2 Conclusions – response options and risks

- Groups that are at risk of starvation, serious malnutrition and/or loss of their livelihoods due to inadequate access to food
- Options – food aid and/or non-food interventions – to save a) the lives and b) the livelihoods of these people; the pros, cons and implications of each option; when (how soon and during what period) is the assistance needed; complementarity/synergy/interdependence between proposed interventions (food and non-food)
- Risks – what would happen in the absence of any response or an inadequate response within the specified critical period; further shocks that are possible in the near future; the potential negative effects of current and possible assistance strategies

8. Change Implications For WFP: Facilitators' Reflections

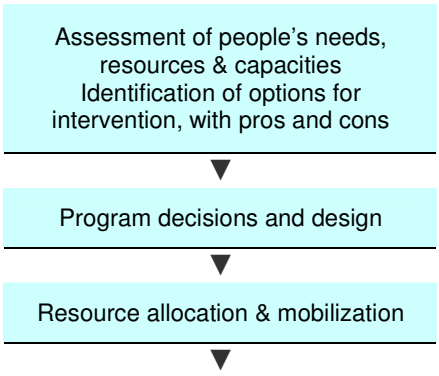
In bringing together over fifty technical and programming experts from within and outside WFP, there was ample opportunity to reflect not just upon the technical issues relevant to each thematic and working group, but also upon some of the more strategic implications of WFP's evolving approach to emergency needs assessment and the expectations of donors and others.

Six key themes emerged from this reflection during the meeting.

8.1 Clarity of presentation

At present, WFP, in common with many organizations, often subsumes is needs assessment data and analysis into program proposals and emergency appeals. For donors in particular it is sometimes difficult to see the link between an identified food crisis, its quantification and the proposed intervention.

The meeting was unanimous that, whenever WFP (or any other organization) undertakes an assessment, it should produce a clear, rational, self-standing needs assessment document (report) which not only describes the problem addressed but also explains the model for analysis used and the nature and reliability of the data that support the conclusions concerning the "food gap" and food insecurity in the region in question. The needs assessment document (report) should then present a range of feasible options to address this food gap and insecurity, and the pros, cons and implications of the various options. The options may include the use of food aid, which WFP can take up and non-food interventions which may be more suitable for other agencies to implement.



It was agreed that, in effect, WFP is expected to take a leadership role in ensuring a comprehensive assessment of food security related emergency needs, together with other organizations, rather than exclusively and narrowly focusing on possible needs for and uses of food aid.

It is hoped that the WFP-led emergency needs assessments will then provide a basis to be used by WFP and others to design the most appropriate package of interventions and to seek funding for these interventions. The schematic flowchart illustrates the distinct steps in the assessment and decision process. Responsibility (and accountability) for each step should be clearly defined.

8.2 Evolving models

It is something of a caricature, but still valid, to say that the driving assumption behind emergency needs assessments has often been to concern for an external intervention that plugs a food gap described in tons. It was recognized that this approach is no longer tenable and needs to evolve.

The interplay between food insecurity, aid interventions and local markets is a reality. Increasingly WFP and others need to be cognizant of this, seeking to explore where market interventions can be used in parallel with (or, exceptionally, instead of) more traditional aid interventions to reduce hunger, and being cognizant of the effects (both helpful and harmful) aid interventions can have upon market prices and flows.

At the household level, a food availability approach is not enough. The proven validity of food entitlement theory and its elaboration in household food economy, food security and livelihood

models should form the basis of WFP's detailed analysis of emergency situations. Such an approach allows for a deeper understanding of the effects of aid interventions, both in terms of saving lives and effecting livelihoods. It allows for a greater range of programming options to be proposed and it suggests ways of monitoring an evolving emergency to better target aid. It is also fully in line with WFP's new strategic objectives, the first two of which are:

- Save lives in crisis situations.
- Protect livelihoods in crisis situations and enhance resilience to shocks.

8.3 Pre-crisis Information is critical

To really understand the dynamics of livelihoods and markets, which is implicit in this deeper and more analytical approach, it is essential that WFP also has an understanding of the state of people's lives before the crisis. The regular in-country collection and analysis of information on food security and insecurity will be an increasing priority for WFP. Whether it is information which describes some pre-crisis acceptable norm, of simply describes a moment in time to provide a solid baseline against which change can be measured, such information allows WFP to better gauge the development of chronic and transitory food insecurity, the impact of its interventions, and the potential longevity of its programs.

8.4 Quality of primary data collection

The reader of an emergency needs assessment report must feel confidence in the validity, representativeness and consistency of the data presented. They must be able to follow the logic of the analysis of the data and clearly see its relation to the model being used for food insecurity.
The methodology for collecting and reporting data must clearly lead to an ability to differentiate within a given population in order to identify relative needs and target programming options. The range of qualitative and qualitative techniques used to gather data must be clear, as must sampling regimes used.

It was the group's feeling that whilst WFP has made much progress in the quality of its needs assessments to date, it has to go further, particularly in terms of the timeliness and representivness of the primary data is gathers in an emergency assessment. This inevitably will have implications for the skills needed within WFP country teams, the skills they need to access and the cost of needs assessment missions. Increasing the quality of data and thoroughness of analysis is not cost free.

8.5 Bottom line is lives and livelihoods

Although it is now explicit in WFP's strategic objectives, it cannot be stated too strongly that needs assessments in food insecurity emergencies will provide analyses not only of lives to be saved and food gaps to be plugged, but also on livelihood processes to be protected, enhanced and sometimes discouraged. As we have already noted WFP is not, and should not, be equipped to take up all proposed options of livelihood interventions. It has however a clear responsibility to lead and facilitate needs assessments which demonstrate the options open for saving livelihoods.

An approach with looks to save both lives and livelihoods has implications for the longevity of programming and for exit strategies. Livelihood programming is far more open ended that live-saving programming. It tends to evolve as the programming itself leads to a greater understanding of livelihoods, and exit strategies tend to be moving goal posts. WFP may therefore find itself more commonly in the role of the promoter of livelihood interventions rather than the programmer.

8.6 Monitoring and iteration

Taking a more dynamic and analytical approach to emergency programming, based on an entitlements and livelihoods model, also has implications for program monitoring. First, the methodology for collecting information on lives and livelihoods in an emergency assessment is rapid and by its very nature approximate. It makes best guesses as to the nature of relationships between the various "assets" important in household livelihoods and the relative impact of external institutions and processes. These assumptions need to be continually tested and refined. Monitoring therefore needs to gather data not just of process and impact indicators but on indicators which can be used to validate and adjust the analysis model and hence the intervention itself.

Secondly, initial needs assessment, often carried out in a period of days rather than weeks, is inherently approximate. The group felt strongly that WFP should be committed to follow up needs assessment surveys some weeks or months into a crisis to validate the assumptions of the initial assessment, to gain a greater depth and accuracy of understanding, and to help adjust any programming already undertaken.

8.7 Reflections on WFP strategy

Following the technical meeting the meeting facilitators found themselves reflecting on the implications of all of the above for WFP's future.

Some four fifths of WFP's global work is driven by programming in emergencies. These programs should be, and we hope in future will always be, driven by quality, transparent food security assessments. Although only some of WFP's 9,000 staff are directly involved in doing emergency assessment, the importance of the process and product to WFP's future would be difficult to over state.

As a group of facilitators, experienced in doing emergency needs assessments, carrying out training for needs assessment and guiding institutional change processes, we believe that in introducing new emergency needs assessment guidelines, WFP has to go beyond the normal approach of training and persuasion to embed this new practice in the organization.

It is only a slight exaggeration to say that the staff who will directly carry out and commission emergency needs assessments, hold much of the future of WFP in their hands. They need to be certain they have the support of their management and governance in doing this, and they need to be given the resources to do the job properly.

The implementation of a new approach to emergency needs assessment may be one out of many change processes WFP is going through at present, but we believe it is one of the most crucial to WFP's future.

Appendix 1 - List of Participants

Technical Meeting, 28-30 October, 2003

'Key Issues in Emergency Needs Assessments'

Non-WFP Participants

Name	Organization	Title	Thematic Subgroup	E-mail address
Yacob Aklilu	Feinstein International Famine Center	Livestock Marketing Consultant	Markets	tufts@africaonline.co.ke
Piero Calvi-Parisetti	GIGNOS Institute	Director	Transitory and Chronic Food Insecurity	calvip@gignos.ch
Paul Dorosh	World Bank	Senior Economist	Markets	pdorosh@worldbank.org
Bridget Fenn	London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine	Research Fellow	Sampling	Bridget.Fenn@lshtm.ac.uk
Tim Frankenberger	TANGO International	President	Transitory and Chronic Food Insecurity	tim@tangointernational.com
Alexandre Ghélew	SDC, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation	Programme Officer, Multilateral Affairs, Humanitarian Aid + SHA	Minimum information requirements (30 October)	alexandre.ghelew@deza.admin.ch
Nick Haan	FSAU / FAO	Chief Technical Advisor	Sampling	nicholas.haan@fsau.or.ke
Dieter Hannusch	Independent Consultant, WFP-Pensioner	Food Security Economist	Transitory and Chronic Food Insecurity	hannusch@tin.it
Julius Holt	Food Economy Group	Consultant	Transitory and Chronic Food Insecurity	julius.holt@lineone.net
Miriam Houtart	UNHCR	Senior Self-Reliance Officer	Non-Food Response to Food Insecurity	HOUTART@unhcr.ch
Festo Kavishe	UNICEF	Country Representative, Zimbabwe	Non-Food Response to Food Insecurity	fkavishe@unicef.org
Chris Leather	OXFAM	Food Security and Nutrition	Non-Food Response to Food Insecurity	CLeather@oxfam.org.uk
Jeremy Loveless	ICRC	Head of Sector, Economic Security Unit	Sampling	jloveless@icrc.org
Douglas Magunda	SADC, Food Agriculture & Natural Resources	Database Manager	Sampling	DMagunda@sadcfanr.org
Raffaello Marsili	Independent Consultant, FAO-Pensioner	Food Security Economist	Markets	raffaellomarsili@tin.it
Alessandro De Matteis	EC, Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO)	Food Aid and Food Security Adviser	Transitory and Chronic Food Insecurity	Alessandro.DEMATTEIS@cec.eu.int
Siméon Moutaftchieff	EC, AIDCO/ Food Security Unit	Task Manager	Non-Food Response to Food Insecurity	Simeon.MOUTAFTCHIEFF@cec.eu.int
Thierry Nègre	EC, Joint Research Centre IPSC - MARS Unit MARS-FOOD	Sector Head	Sampling	thierry.negre@jrc.it

Non-WFP Participants (cont)

Name	Organization	Title	Thematic Subgroup	E-mail address
Lisa Pereira	Department for International Development (DFID)	Senior Programme Officer	Non-Food Response to Food Insecurity	L-Pereira@dfid.gov.uk
Rob Rose	Mud Springs Geographers	Director International Programs	Markets	robrose@mudsprings.com
Thomas Schaef	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH	Technical Advisor	Markets	thomas.schaef@gtz.de
John Seaman	SCF UK, Food Security Unit	Development Director	Non-Food Response to Food Insecurity	J.Seaman@SCFUK.ORG.UK
Frank Van der Staaij	Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Policy Adviser	Markets	frank-vander.staaij@minbuza.nl
Roy Stacy	FEWS NET / Chemonics	Chief of Party	Transitory and Chronic Food Insecurity	rstacy@fews.net
Kevin Sullivan	US Center for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC, and Department of Epidemiology, Emory University	Epidemiologist	Sampling	cdckms@sph.emory.edu
Fiona Watson	NutritionWorks	Partner	Sampling	Fiona.Watson6@btopenworld.com
Will Whelan	USAID	Cognizant Technical Officer FEWS NET	Markets	wwhelan@usaid.gov

WFP Field Staff

Name	Organization	Title	Thematic Subgroup	E-mail address
Getachew Diriba	Country Office Sudan	Programme Officer	Sampling	Getachew.Diriba@wfp.org
Steffenie Fries	WFP Afghanistan / OEN, Emergency Needs Assessment Unit	Consultant	Markets	Steffenie.fries@wfp.org
Joyce Luma	ODJ, Regional Bureau Southern Africa	Regional Programme Officer (VAM)	Transitory and Chronic Food Insecurity	Joyce.luma@wfp.org
Iain McDonald	Country Office Angola	Programme Officer	Non-Food Response to Food Insecurity	Iain.McDonald@wfp.org
John McHarris	ODCO, Regional Bureau Egypt	Regional Programme Officer	Sampling	John.McHarris@wfp.org
Kenro Oshidari	ODB, Regional Bureau Asia	Deputy Regional Manager	Transitory and Chronic Food Insecurity	Kenro.Oshidari@wfp.org
Robin Wheeler	ODK, Regional Bureau East and Central Africa	Regional Programme Advisor	Non-Food Response to Food Insecurity	Robin.Wheeler@wfp.org

WFP HQ Staff

Name	Organization	Title	Thematic Subgroup	E-mail address
Paul Buffard	ODO, Office of Associate Director of Operations	Senior Programme Advisor	Markets	Paul.Buffard@wfp.org
Anne Callanan	OEDP, Office of Performance, Measurement and Reporting	Performance Measurement Analyst	Minimum information requirements (30 October)	anne.callanan@wfp.org
Greg Collins	OEN, Emergency Needs Assessment Unit	Consultant	Sampling	gacollins@ucdavis.edu
Annalisa Conte	VAM, Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping Unit	Chief	Sampling, facilitator for Pre-crisis Information Needs	Annalisa.Conte@wfp.org
Marieke Feitsma	OEN, Emergency Needs Assessment Unit	Consultant	Transitory and Chronic Food Insecurity	mfeitsma@yahoo.com
Wolfgang Herbinger	OEN, Emergency Needs Assessment Unit	Chief	Markets	Wolfgang.herbinger@wfp.org
Alexis Hoskins	PSPP, Food Security, Safety nets and Relief Service	Policy Officer	Transitory and Chronic Food Insecurity	Alexis.Hoskins@wfp.org
Eric Kenefick	VAM, Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping Unit	Emergency VAM Specialist	Sampling, facilitator for Pre-crisis Information Needs	Eric.Kenefick@wfp.org
Marian Read	OEDP, Office of performance measurement and reporting	Senior Monitoring Officer	Sampling	Marian.Read@wfp.org
Andrew Thorne-Lyman	PSPN, Nutrition Service	JPO	Sampling	Andrew.ThorneLyman@wfp.org
Charisse Tillman	OEN, Emergency Needs Assessment Unit	Programme Officer	Non-Food Response to Food Insecurity	Charisse.Tillman@wfp.org
Samir Wanmali	VAM, Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping Unit	Sustainable Livelihoods Adviser	Transitory and Chronic Food Insecurity	Samir.Wanmali@wfp.org
Patrick Webb	PSPN, Nutrition Service	Chief	Non-Food Response to Food Insecurity	Patrick.Webb@wfp.org
Sonali Wickrema	PSPD, Office of the Director, Strategy, Policy and Programme Support Division	Strategy Analyst	Markets	Sonali.Wickrema@wfp.org

Working Group Facilitators

Name	Organization	Title	Thematic Subgroup	E-mail address
Richard Caldwell	TANGO International	Executive Director	Sampling	richard@tangointernational.com
Henri Josserand - supported by: **Sonali Wickrema**	FAO, Global Information and Early Warning Service WFP/PSPD, Strategy, Policy and Programme Support Division	Chief Strategy Analyst	Markets Markets	Henri.Josserand@fao.org Sonali.Wickrema@wfp.org
Ron Ockwell		Independent Consultant	Transitory & Chronic Food Insecurity and Minimum Information Requirements ENAs	ron@wanadoo.fr
Jeremy Shoham	Emergency Nutrition Network	Consultant	Non-Food Response to Food Insecurity	jshoham@easynet.co.uk
Peter Walker	Feinstein International Famine Center	Director		peter.walker@tufts.edu
Annalisa Conte - supported by **Eric Kenefick**	WFP/VAM, Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping Unit WFP/VAM, Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping Unit	Chief Emergency VAM Specialist	Pre-crisis Information Needs (Baseline) Pre-crisis Information Needs (Baseline)	Annalisa.Conte@wfp.org Eric.Kenefick@wfp.org

See also:

Key Issues in Emergency Needs Assessment
Volume II: Background Technical Papers

Supplement to the Report of the Technical Meeting, 28–30 October, 2003, in Rome, Italy