Livelihoods and Vulnerability Assessment Planning

# The whole Process

Because livelihoods are complicated to assess, with many interdependent relationships between components, the assessment process is divided into two stages:

1. Baselines. These are detailed descriptions with mathematical links between the ways that households make a living and their assets. They are conducted once (updated after a long period, such as ten years).
2. Outcome analysis. This synthesises the impact of a change—often a “shock” or “hazard”—on the livelihoods of households, exploring the outcome for defined scenarios. A forecasting and planning tool, this can assist Government and partners in deciding the best response and interventions for a given set of conditions.

Both stages can be done by two different methods of assessment: random-samples of individual households or carefully performed purposive samples of focus groups.

# Methods of Assessment

Two different types of baseline:

1. Randomly-sampled, using individual household interviews (IHM)
2. Purposively-sampled, using focus group interviews (FGI)

Both methods use a semi-structured interview format that requires rigorous cross-checking of information.

## Pros/Cons

The advantages and disadvantages of each type of interview are listed below

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| Random-sampled IHM | Purposive-sampled FGI |
| Pros:   * Can use the same interviewees and field staff as for the NISIS (essentially adding IHM onto the NISIS) * Relate important social indicators (e.g. demographics) directly to income of household * Links service provision and welfare accessibility directly to income (very useful for design of social protection prgrammes and verification of programme elegibility criteria) * Extremly accurate objective measure of income * Has ability to model outcomes once the initial assessment is done | Pros:   * Cheaper, can be done quickly * The data collection process has in-built cross-checks making much of the analysis very robust * Provides a very good measure of income * Very good for a wide range of modelling * The analysis includes expandability—households’ abilities to increase income by switching expenditure and exploiting different assets, e.g. herd dynamics analysis is incorporated which shows how far households can increase livestock sales in a bad year and how long they need to recover from excessive sales * The data collection allows for more detailed information on ‘hidden’ income sources, such as kinship support and social assets * The method preferred by most VACs in the SADC VA system, so outputs will easily be harmonious with other member states. |
| Cons:   * Expensive, time consuming to implement * Extremely data-heavy, requires specialist software (free) to manage * As a sample-type survey, there is a tendency with interviews to become reductionist, limiting imprtant detail (e.g. in collecting information about social capital and complicated kinship networks) * The data does not seem to look at livelihood components’ expandability, thus analysis of issues such as herd dynamics, etc., are limited * Not used anywhere else in the SADC VA system | Cons:   * Wealth group data is highly aggregated and it is diffcult to link it to welfare programmes and services—i.e. it lacks *detail* * Wealth group data is highly aggregated and it is diffcult to link it to social indocators (e.g. demographics) |

# Elements

Both methods require resources and time to complete; both also require training for the practitioners and participants, as well as “educating” users and managers to whom the outcomes are reported, so that they understand the importance and use of the results.

Both methods aggregate their outputs geographically over livelihood zones; this example presents an idea of the time and human resources (but not cost) required to complete eight livelihood zones. Fewer or more livelihood zones can be scaled from the numbers presented here, although some activities may need the same number of days regardless of the number of zones to be covered, so scaling should be discussed a bit further.

## Data collection and Analysis

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| Random-sampled IHM | Purposive-sampled FGI |
| Baselines  Multiple stages, and to different groups:   1. Collection of contextual information—this involves information on the livelihood zone, prices, local units of measurement, main crops, livestock, wage rates, types of employment, wild foods and development of village maps with the specific location of the households etc. This will take three days to a week for each livelihood zone and involves five supervisors, the coordinator and the technical advisor. 2. A skilled data collector (note: they are not enumerators) can interview three households in a day—less skilled operators may take a day for their first interviews. Thus the 430,740 households interviewed in the NISIS would require approximately 143,600 person-days of interviews but it is unlikely IHM teams will revisit all these households as it will strain the NISIS participants’ patience. Rather, a sample will be drawn for the IHM. Assuming that a sample of 900 interviews per livelihood zone is representative (it will depend on the population of the zone, among other things), the team will need to conduct 7,200 interviews to cover eight livelihood zones, requiring 2,400 person-days of field interviews. This means that an entire team of 50 data collectors could undertake the whole process of gathering the interviews in 48 working days (or ten weeks), each zone then requiring 12 days with 25 data collectors. Because many variables that are normally collected in these surveys have already been collected under the NISIS, this process could possibly be sped up, if the households interviewed for IHM can be correlated to those in the NISIS. 3. The analysis and cleaning will also take time—about five days per zone over eight zones, or a further eight weeks. After a delayed start (in order to obtain the first data sets from the field), this work could happen concurrently with the data collection. The teams of 25 data collectors will each need five supervisors and an overall coordinator or manager. Technical Support (two technical advisors) will be required to ensure quality control as well. 4. Hence the requirement is fifty data collectors plus ten supervisors plus two coordinators plus two technical advisors—a total of 64 staff. They will take twelve weeks or approximately two and a half months to cover eight livelihood zones. This is dependent and proportional to the minimum sample size. | Baselines  Two stages (using the FEG spreadsheets):   1. Baselines data research. A single livelihood zone requires a minimum of nine interviews per wealth group and village focus groups normally define four wealth groups for a zone. A team of four pairs of people can obtain a set of four wealth groups plus a wealth breakdown in one village in a day. Hence, nine sets of interviews will take a team of eight people nine working days. However, allowing for bad interviews and lost time with remote villages or missing interviewees, this is more likely to need an additional three working days. This will include baseline storage sheet data entry. Therefore, in order to cover a reasonable number of zones, say four rural zones plus four urban zones (eight livelihood zones in total), would require a total of 768 person-days, or 96 working days for a team of eight people. This can be reduced to 24 days (roughly a month) for 32 people. 2. Baselines data analysis. This process typically takes a week for each livelihood zone but will require Technical Support (a technical advisor), to ensure quality control. Hence the nine zones outlined above would take an additional two weeks for 32 people. 3. Hence the total personnel requirement is four teams of eight people plus a technical advisor—a total of 33 people. They will cover eight zones in 34 working days or roughly five weeks. |

## Training

Regardless of the method, training will be required. For sustainability, the best way to do this is to set it up under a university or a number of universities. This in turn will require a commitment of funding over a long period (at least fve years) to get the universities’ interest.

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| Random-sampled IHM | Purposive-sampled FGI |
| Baselines  Multiple stages, and to different groups:   1. Field data collection for data collectors. Data collectors also enter their data into a device (probably a tablet) using special software, for which they need training. Each of the 50 data collectors needs to be trained intensively for one week on the process, which includes field trials. 2. The ten field supervisors should be chosen from the core group of data collectors and in addition to the data collectors’ training they must be trained in the collection of contextual information—this involves information on the livelihood zone, prices, local units of measurement, main crops, livestock, wage rates, types of employment, wild foods and development of village maps with the specific location of the households etc. This training takes and extra three days for twelve people. 3. The supervisors will also assist by running analyses on the collected data to check that it makes sense, to collect key background variables (e.g. such as local measures, markets, etc.) and to conduct on-site supervision of data collectors from time to time. Supervisors also need to spot outliers and as far as possible get the data collector to revisit the household, cleaning up the anomaly. Interviews will grouped and averaged by livelihood zone. This training will require and extra seven days. 4. Management team of two. They need to check on the huge volume of data and analysis that will result from the process, looking for anomalies, comparing livelihood zones and ensuring the final stage of quality control. The management team will need to compile all the zone analyses together and also combine data with the NISIS, to make sense of the two data sets. Since all of this has not been done before (IHM studies have only been done in single areas and not in a large-scale, coordinated fashion) the management team will have to attend the supervisors’ and data collectors’ training as well as learning as they go along, with some key trainings taking place along the way. 5. Hence, 50 data collectors will require a week’s training and twelve coordinators and field supervisors will require an additional two weeks’ training. 6. Seminar for educating users and sharing the data – 2 days | Baselines  Three stages (using the FEG spreadsheets):   1. Baselines data research. The training lasts for two weeks, although three weeks is better. This should be split into two groups of 16 people in each training. This would have to take place in each concerned province, although if a zone that straddles provinces is chosen, then the two province teams can be trained together. 2. Baselines data management. This is for a more select advanced group that will enter the field data into the Baseline Storage Spreadsheets as well as taking part in the entry of the data analysis. The leading staff from three to five provinces can participate together (maximum ten people). It takes one week. 3. Data management by the core SAVAC team. This training will take place for two weeks after a all eight baselines are complete. 4. Seminar for educating users and sharing the results – 2 days |