

Yemen Food Security and Agriculture Cluster

RAPID NEEDS ASSESSMENT HOUSEHOLD INTERVIEW GUIDANCE NOTE

1. PURPOSE OF THE RAPID NEEDS ASSESSMENT (RNA)

The Rapid Needs Assessment (RNA) household questionnaire is designed to gather critical data on food security and livelihood needs in emergencies. RNA should be conducted within the first two months or within 90 days of the disaster/shock, such as conflict, natural disasters, or economic disruptions. The RNA is also used to identify critical needs that require rapid resource mobilization, thereby prioritizing immediate humanitarian interventions.

1.1. AIM OF THE HOUSEHOLD (HH) QUESTIONNAIRE AND WHEN TO CONDUCT IT

The RNA HH questionnaire provides mandatory key questions to collect quantitative household-level data on vulnerabilities and critical needs of affected populations, it informs various humanitarian actors, including clusters, NGOs and government agencies, ensuring targeted, evidence based, context specific and timely assistance to affected communities.

Key objectives:

Assess the general and specific food security and livelihood conditions of a target area or context.

Identify households facing severe food insecurity or livelihood loss.

Assess food and income sources, market access, and affordability.

Determine barriers to food security and resilience challenges.

Ensure proactive coordination engagement and advocate for the inclusion of agriculture, food security and livelihoods in joint emergency assessments ensuring that most vulnerable and at risk geographical areas and populations are covered.

Obtain accurate data to inform evidence-based emergency response strategies and resource mobilization.

1.2. RAPID NEEDS ASSESSMENT (RNA) VS. NEEDS ASSESSMENT (NA)

Both RNA and comprehensive Needs Assessments (NA) are critical and play vital roles in crisis response, yet they differ in scope and application. These differences can be summarized as follow:

Key Differences

Feature	FS RNA	NA
Objective	Rapid insights into urgent FSL needs crisis impact assessment	Comprehensive analysis of long-term vulnerabilities
Timing	Within two months after the crisis. Whenever there is a need to quickly identify needs and mobilize resources	Pre-stage of Program design. Based on needs and program requirements
Scope	Emergency context to identify Urgent food security and livelihood needs	Protracted crises to identify long/mid-term vulnerabilities
Methodology	Rapid, short survey and observations	in-depth and mixed methods
Outcome	Snapshot of urgent needs to guide emergency response	Detailed recommendations to address root causes

The RNA is crucial for rapid intervention but should be supplemented by a more detailed NA when conditions allow, ensuring a holistic response to food security and livelihood challenges.

2. KEY CONSIDERATIONS

2.1 TIME OF QUESTIONNAIRE:

The Rapid Needs Assessment (RNA) is typically conducted within the first two months following a crisis. Implementation of the RNA HH questionnaire can range from 15 to 20 minutes. The duration of assessment depends mainly on factors and the context including physical access and security limitations, the assessment's purpose and coverage, and the partners allocated time and budget. In all cases, considerations should be given to the daily routines and constraints of the targeted populations to maximize participation.

2.2 TRAINING & CLARITY:

Field staff responsible for data collection must receive brief but focused training on the questionnaire's purpose, objectives, key terms and ethical considerations. It is generally advisable to interview the most knowledgeable or responsible member of the household, often referred to as the household respondent or head of household. Training should emphasize the importance of clarity in communication to ensure clear, simple, and culturally appropriate language and avoid misinterpretation by respondents. Conduct pilot testing to refine questions and improve enumerator confidence before conducting the assessment in the targeted communities.

2.3 COORDINATION & CLEARANCE:

Effective coordination with local authorities, FSAC, humanitarian actors, and community leaders is vital for the smooth execution of the RNA. Securing the necessary permits and clearances is a prerequisite having access to affected areas and that the RNA activities are understood and supported by the community. Partners are encouraged to coordinate with FSAC to avoid duplicative efforts and ensures the RNA aligns with ongoing assessments conducted by other organizations.

2.4 VALIDATION:

Validation of responses during interviews is an important step to ensure accuracy and relevancy of collected data. This involves cross-checking responses and asking follow up questions to confirm consistency and reliability. Where possible, triangulate RNA findings with secondary data sources or insights from FGDs to strengthen the overall reliability of the results.

3. FSAC RNA HH QUESTIONNAIRE SECTIONS

The HH questionnaire tool consists of 7 Key sections designed to gather primary information about HH related food security and livelihood status and needs. These sections are: Section 1 General, Administrative & Demographic Information

A. Administrative Details

B. Household Demographics

Section 2 HH Food & income status

A. Income & Food Source

B. Food Access

Section 3 Shock & Impact Assessment

Section 4 Food security Indicators

A. FCS

B. rCSI

Section 5 Market Access and Trade

A. Market: Access

B. Market: Commodity Viability, Prices & Supply Chain

Section 6 Priority Needs & Assistance Requirements

Section 7 Humanitarian assistance

3.1 RNA QUESTIONS MANDATORY STATUS AND PURPOSE

Sections	Mandatory */ optional	Purpose/ Aim
Section1	Mandatory	To identity the characteristic and context of the target population, specific sub-groups and areas of higher need within different geographical locations and demographic groups Partners can add questions related to education, detailed age disaggregation, Health impediments ...etc, as appropriate
Section 2	Mandatory	To assess the household's food and income sources, identify food gain methods, and barriers to food access for understanding of vulnerability and identifying opportunities to improve food security of vulnerable HHs. (Depending on the assessment objectives, partners can add questions related to food intake, food stock, average income in cash, Assets details for asset score and wealth ranking, expenditure etc)
Section 3	Mandatory	To identify and assess the impact of recent shocks on households, their effects on FS, livelihoods and community assets that help in designing contextually appropriate intervention. -For comprehensive livelihood assessments, a separate detailed tool is recommended. (Partners can add additional questions such as effects of the crisis, Risks and casualties..etc)
Section 4	Mandatory	A. Food Consumption Score is a critical indicator in food security assessments to measures the dietary diversity and access of food consumption over a specific recall period. It helps identify the current food security status and plays a role in classifying HHs based on their level of food security (Acceptable, borderline, poor) B. The Reduced Coping Strategy Index is a key indicator for assessing the level of hardship HHs endure due to shortage of food. It measures

		frequency and severity of food consumption behavior, evaluating how severely these behaviors were employed in the last 7 days. (FCS and rCSI are fundamental indicators for RNA. Additionally, it remains optional for partners to include other indicators, such as the HHS , and livelihood coping strategies to provide valuable insights that measure food security classification at HH level.)
Section 5	Mandatory except Q3 (optional)	To assess market access, food availability and price and supply chain stability which help in determining the most appropriate modality of assistance. . (This part does not replace the importance of the market assessment that focuses on detailed market analysis, including functionality, pricing, and dynamics, to determine program feasibility and impact.)
Section 6	Mandatory	To identify the prioritized food security and livelihood (on & off farm) needs per HH level
Section 7	Mandatory	To know whether assistance is being provided and understand who does what to facilitate coordination and mobilization of resources.

4. SAMPLING

Sampling is the process of selecting a small number from a whole. The sample must accurately reflect the broader population while minimizing the time and cost involved in data collection. When a sample is representative, the findings can be used to draw meaningful conclusions about the entire population.

4.1. TYPES OF SAMPLING

Sampling approaches fall into two categories: Probability Sampling (Random/ statistically representative) and Non-Probability Sampling (Purposive / targeted or convenience-based). The sampling approach is determined based on the assessment's objectives, logistical constraints, and the time and resources allocated. Given the diverse data needs in Rapid Need assessments as well as operational challenges in crisis settings, a mixed-

method approach combining both probability and non-probability techniques can be employed to ensure a balanced and feasible sample selection.

**4.1.1. NON-PROBABILITY SAMPLING (PURPOSIVE):
IS USED WHEN PARTICULAR GROUPS OF THE
POPULATIONS ARE DETERMINED TO BE
INTERVIEWED. THIS METHOD DOES NOT INCLUDE
RANDOM SELECTION OF THE ASSESSMENT SAMPLE,
THEREFORE, THE FINDINGS CANNOT BE
GENERALIZED TO THE WIDER POPULATION.**

Purposive sampling might be used when:

Reaching all areas or population is difficult and/or there is no available data about the geographical areas or the population numbers.

Limited time that does not allow statistical analysis.

Particular groups are determined for the assessment

4.1.2: PROBABILITY SAMPLING (RANDOM): IN THIS METHOD EVERY INDIVIDUAL IN THE POPULATION HAS A MEASURABLE PROBABILITY OF BEING CHOSEN. THIS PROBABILITY-BASED APPROACH FOLLOWS STATISTICAL PRINCIPLES, ENABLING PRECISE ESTIMATES WHILE REDUCING BIAS. THE FINDINGS CAN BE GENERALIZED TO THE WHOLE POPULATION, WITH THE PRECISION LEVEL DETERMINED BY HOW MANY PEOPLE ARE SAMPLED

For detailed guidance on sampling techniques, refer to the Annex 1 in the Key References section.

4.2. SAMPLE SIZE:

FSAC partners must carefully determine an appropriate sample size to yield a representative, reliable and valid results. The sample size for the rapid needs assessment should be sufficient to provide statistically representative data while considering operational constraints (time, resources, access). FSAC partners can calculate the sample size using an Online Sample Calculator to determine a representative sample of the assessed community. It is recommended for most statistical that the sample size calculation meets the following determents

Confidence Level	95%	The degree of certainty that the sample accurately reflects the population it's drawn from. It's expressed as a percentage, commonly set at 90%, 95%, or 99%. A higher confidence level indicates a greater level of certainty that the sample results will match the true population parameter.
Margin of error	5%	A percentage that shows how accurately survey results reflect the opinions of the whole population. The lower the margin of

	error, the more accurate the answer is at a given confidence level.
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For example, in a population of 1000 people, a sample size of 278 would be required for the real value to be within $\pm 5\%$ of the measured value.

However, based on experience from many HH food security surveys, it is generally recommended to sample between 150 and 250 households in each reporting area, with a preference for larger samples to ensure reliable results. It's important to note that this sample size should apply to distinct groups, like displaced persons and local residents, and each group needs its own sample. For example, if both IDPs and host community groups are assessed, each group should have its own sample of 150 to 250 HHs. If comparing different districts, do the same for each district.

5. REPORTING STRUCTURE & INFORMATION SHARING

RAPID NEED ASSESSMENT REPORT STRUCTURE

Title Page

Title of the Assessment

Date of the Report

Organization Logo

Executive Summary

Brief overview of key findings and recommendations

Introduction

Background: context of the need assessment (why the assessment was conducted)

Objectives of the assessment

Scope: focus area, target population

Limitations of the assessment

Methodology

Approach Sample size, sampling

Data collection methods

Key Findings

Analysis of food availability, access, utilization

Effects on livelihoods and coping strategies

Vulnerable Groups: Impact on women, children, elderly, and other at-risk populations

Categorized list of gaps/needs

Conclusions

Summary of the assessment findings.

Recommendations

Actionable steps to address needs

Prioritization of interventions

Appendices

Questionnaire template

Additional supporting documents and references

Reporting information sharing

Report and share the findings of the RNA with relevant stakeholders, including FSAC, local authorities, NGOs, INGOs, and other humanitarian organizations to ensure coordinated and effective responses. This includes sharing the findings with local authorities, NGOs, and other humanitarian organizations to ensure a coordinated and effective response. Ensure context-specific methods are adopted for protecting and sharing data. Remember, lack of information sharing can lead to inefficient and poorly-planned programming, the possible duplication of assessments, and, subsequently, assessment fatigue among the affected population

6. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REPORTING

Be Transparent: Clearly state the limitations of your analysis, methods used, and confidence levels in findings.

Public Access: Make assessment tools and documentation publicly available, explaining their use.

Clarify Assumptions: Define assumptions versus verified information, distinguishing between facts and interpretations.

Define Key Terms: Use accepted terminology to avoid misunderstandings and reduce jargon.

Gender and Age Impact: Ensure reports reflect the effects on different genders and age groups.

Methodology for Estimates: Explain how population estimates were derived and verify figures with source metadata.

Visual Aids: Include maps and data visualizations to enhance understanding.

Simplicity: Keep information clear and concise, avoiding repetition while ensuring completeness.

Articulate Results: Use accessible language in conclusions and summarize key findings in an executive summary.

Iterative Dissemination: Regularly update and share findings online for stakeholder access.

Community Engagement: Share results with affected communities and authorities for accountability.

Highlight Needs: Emphasize distinct needs in briefings to inform evidence-based responses.

Identify Gaps: Clearly state information gaps and needs for further assessments.

Acknowledge Contributions: Give credit to participating stakeholders.

7. KEY REFERENCES

Sampling Methods: Types, Techniques, and Examples

Livelihood Assessment Toolkit: Overview and Guidance Brochure