

## Annex 4: Examples of questions for household, community and focus group discussions

### I. Community level

As indicated by the generic analysis plan (annex 1), two market-related topics may be addressed in a (closed) community questionnaire.

#### Physical access

It is recommended to include the following six questions in the community questionnaire. Questions 1 & 2 are useful for guiding the trader survey team to the relevant local markets. The third question allows drawing up a village profile, and may alter the recommendations of the assessment team if markets are very far away. Questions 4 & 5 are the most important questions, as this will show the impact of the shock on the physical market access, and it will inform the decision on the possibility of distributing cash/vouchers. Question 6 may indicate possible interventions to improve physical market access.

1	Where do you purchase your essential food items most often? <i>[Please note the name of the market/shop, village and district]</i>	1. Market/shop: [ _____ ] 2. Village: [ _____ ] 3. District: [ _____ ]																																																				
2	a. Do you go to the same location for selling your food and cash crops/products?  b. If no, where do you sell them most often? <i>[Please note the name of the market/shop, village and district]</i>	a. [ ____ ]: yes = 1; no = 2; 99 = no answer  b. 1. Market/shop: [ _____ ] 2. Village: [ _____ ] 3. District: [ _____ ]																																																				
3	How far is the food purchase market from the village? <i>[circle one of the numbers]</i>	1. Less than 15 minutes 2. 15 minutes -1 hour 3. More than 1 hour, but less than 2 hours 4. More than 2 hours, but less than half a day 5. More than half a day 99. no answer																																																				
4	During which months of the year are the purchase and selling markets/locations not accessible? <i>[cross the boxes if not accessible]</i>	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center;"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">Purchase market</th> <th colspan="2">Sales market</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>January</td><td>[ ]</td><td>January</td><td>[ ]</td></tr> <tr><td>February</td><td>[ ]</td><td>February</td><td>[ ]</td></tr> <tr><td>March</td><td>[ ]</td><td>March</td><td>[ ]</td></tr> <tr><td>April</td><td>[ ]</td><td>April</td><td>[ ]</td></tr> <tr><td>May</td><td>[ ]</td><td>May</td><td>[ ]</td></tr> <tr><td>June</td><td>[ ]</td><td>June</td><td>[ ]</td></tr> <tr><td>July</td><td>[ ]</td><td>July</td><td>[ ]</td></tr> <tr><td>August</td><td>[ ]</td><td>August</td><td>[ ]</td></tr> <tr><td>September</td><td>[ ]</td><td>September</td><td>[ ]</td></tr> <tr><td>October</td><td>[ ]</td><td>October</td><td>[ ]</td></tr> <tr><td>November</td><td>[ ]</td><td>November</td><td>[ ]</td></tr> <tr><td>December</td><td>[ ]</td><td>December</td><td>[ ]</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Purchase market		Sales market		January	[ ]	January	[ ]	February	[ ]	February	[ ]	March	[ ]	March	[ ]	April	[ ]	April	[ ]	May	[ ]	May	[ ]	June	[ ]	June	[ ]	July	[ ]	July	[ ]	August	[ ]	August	[ ]	September	[ ]	September	[ ]	October	[ ]	October	[ ]	November	[ ]	November	[ ]	December	[ ]	December	[ ]
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5	Did the physical access to the market deteriorate compared to before the shock or usually in the same period (if no shock)?	[ ____ ]: yes = 1; no = 2; 99 = no answer																																																				
6	What is the main reason for lack of physical access to the markets, if any?	1. Market is not operational during some months 2. Insecurity 3. Long distance 4. Lack of roads/bad road conditions 5. Weather conditions (floods) 6. Other, specify _____ 88. Not applicable 99. No answer																																																				

#### Prices

As indicated in the analysis plan and in chapter 9, section 3 B of the guidance sheet, you may wish to include 'collection prices' in the community questionnaire, mainly to verify the data provided by traders. It is not necessary to include the prices paid by the villagers for essential food items in this questionnaire, as this data will be collected on the local markets, and cross-checked with the existing price series.

Including the 'collection prices' is optional, and may be particularly useful for cases where a large discrepancy is expected between the prices villagers get and the local market prices. However, it may not be easy as the enumerator will have to translate the prices into standard measurement units (e.g. Kilograms, liters...) on the spot, and he/she is probably interviewing a group of people, having sold their products for different prices. Please refer to the guidance sheet for further guidance on the selection of products. An example of the question is presented below:

	What is the current price for which you are selling your products to traders?	What was the price for which you are selling your products to traders before the shock or usually during the same period (if no shock)?
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		Price (local currency per local unit) 88= not sold 99 = no answer	Units	Price in kilogram in local currency (only non-livestock items) 88= not sold 99 = no answer	Price (local currency per local unit) 88= not sold 99 = no answer	Units	Price in kilogram in local currency (only non-livestock items) 88= not sold 99 = no answer
1.01	Local maize, average quality						
1.02	Local maize, low quality						
1.03	Red local sorghum						
1.04	Millet						
1.05	Wheat						
1.06	Onions						
1.07	Local rice						
1.08	Cow peas, low quality						
1.09	Cow peas, average quality						
1.10	Beans /peas						
1.11	Groundnuts						
1.12	Male Goat 2 years old						
1.13	Male Sheep 2 years old						
1.14	Cattle-Bull 2 years old						
1.15	Cattle-Bull 5 years old						
1.16	Wage labour						

## II. Household level

The generic analysis plan aims to answer the question **how future price developments impact food security conditions** in the coming 6 months. This requires that the assessment clarifies – at the minimum – what commodities households buy and sell on the market, while detailed income-expenditure shares and demand elasticities are needed to provide a more comprehensive view.

In the latter case, you would be able to inform the elaboration of the livelihood profiles in a detailed manner, and project the impact of expected market developments on household food security in a quantitative manner<sup>1</sup>. However, the necessary (monthly) household income-expenditure data is not always available, nor do reliable estimates of the elasticities for the target group of people. Yearly income/expenditure data are sometimes available from national income-expenditure surveys, but they generally use a different sample than in food security assessments/analyses. Collecting this level of detailed data through the food security household level survey would be quite burdensome and change the scope of the survey (although nothing is impossible).

Therefore, a **minimalistic approach** would be appropriate to draw-up a picture of the main selling and purchasing commodities of households:

- households could be asked to rank the food items they purchase and the cash crops/products they sell throughout the year;
- households could be asked to indicate if they are deficit/surplus in the overlapping (both sell and purchase) commodities on a yearly basis (in quantity terms);

This would allow indicating if households are dependent on the markets for each of the most important commodities. Graphs could be prepared to show the dependence of the various livelihood groups on these commodities (or commodity groups as was piloted during the CFSVA in Mauritania). However, it would not allow to assess the degree of dependence (does the household purchase a lot of rice, or only a few times a year?). If you wish to gather this kind of information, **the comprehensive approach**, you may include the following in the questionnaire:

- households could be asked to estimate their yearly expenditure on the two or three essential food items; depending on the local circumstances, the most reliable way to get to these estimates is to ask what quantity the household has purchased in January, February, etc. (often this is known pretty well: 'we buy two bags of rice per month), and what the purchase prices have been;
- this data (previous point) could be compared with the detailed expenditure of the last month / six months (standard question in household level surveys) and with data of existing national income-expenditure surveys to see if the data makes sense;

<sup>1</sup> Please refer to the PDPE market tools on elasticities and the large number of assessments conducted to evaluate the impact of the food price hike on household food security, such as the Pakistan Inter-agency Price Rise Impact Assessment, June 2008 ([www.wfp.org](http://www.wfp.org)).

- households could be asked to estimate their yearly earnings on the two or three key cash crops/products, either through adding a new question to the questionnaire similar to the monthly purchases (see above) or through putting much more answer-options in the existing question on income sources (this last option is preferable as households may not be willing to provide precise income data);
- this data (previous point) could be compared with the data of existing national income-expenditure surveys to see if the data makes sense;

This would allow to make a rough estimate of the relevant income and expenditure shares of households, and hence on the degree of dependence on markets for each of the most important commodities. However, collecting this kind of data, and analyzing it, may be a tall order for most surveys. Also, data quality will certainly be an issue. Finally, it will not provide much information on how the market dependence varies during the year, which is believed to be substantial for most livelihood groups (and hence impacts the food security prospects for the coming 6 months). It is advisable to only conduct such an assessment if the quality of enumerator training and supervision can be ensured, for example during a Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Assessment (CFSVA).

As an alternative, or in addition to the above questions, the issue of market dependence may be discussed in a qualitative manner during focus group discussions with the various livelihood groups. The motivations to purchase and sell commodities may then also be discussed, as well as their responses to price changes (elasticities). The drawback of the qualitative approach is that quantitative projections of the number of food insecure people due to market developments cannot be estimated.

**To conclude, the perfect solution for estimating the quantitative impact of price developments on household food security may go beyond most food security assessments, but some very useful and important data collection and analysis can be done: It is recommended to: i) apply the 'minimalistic approach' to market dependency to all household surveys; ii) to include the proposed discussion points (see below) in the focus group questions lists; and iii) pilot the more comprehensive approach to see if it leads to reliable income/expenditure estimates for the various livelihood groups.**

### III. Focus group

Start a discussion around the following questions:

- What food items do you purchase normally most often, per period (harvest, pre-lean season, lean season)?
- Did the shock alter the type of products purchased, and the timing? How? Why?
- How would your purchase behavior change if purchase prices were 25% lower, or higher?
- What commodities (including animals) do you normally sell most, per period (harvest, pre-lean season, lean season)?
- Did the shock alter the type of commodities sold, and the timing? How? Why?
- How would your sales behavior change if sales prices were 25% lower or higher?

**Note:** A separate technical guidance sheet addresses the issue of household market dependence, emphasizing issues regarding net buyer/net seller status.