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Humanitarian Aid



# Basic Needs Assessment Guidance and Toolbox

## Part I: Background and Concepts

Final version (unedited)



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## Acknowledgments

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The field test in Borno State (North-East Nigeria) has been conducted in collaboration with WFP and Plan International. Data has been collected by enumerators from WFP, Plan International, and a local survey firm, ICAS. The field test in the Somali region of Ethiopia has been run by Save the Children with the survey firm DAB.

The project has been managed by Francesca Battistin, ERC-MPG Consortium lead, with the support of Hannah Hames, ERC-MPG Consortium Coordinator, and has been made possible thanks to funding from the ECHO ERC budget and Save the Children UK.

## Preface

### The genesis of the BNA

This document together with Part 2, constitute the final draft of the Basic Needs Assessment (BNA) Guidance and Toolbox, commissioned by Save the Children within the broader framework of the Consortium for the uptake of quality, collaborative multipurpose grants (MPGs).<sup>1</sup> The Consortium was operative from May 2016 until April 2018; it was led by Save the Children and formed of the Cash Learning Partnership (CaLP), the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), Mercy Corps, and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

The BNA Guidance and Toolbox has been developed by Okular-Analytics, with the technical support and supervision from Save the Children, through a highly consultative process involving many experts

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<sup>1</sup> Hereinafter, it will be referred to as the ERC Consortium, because funded by European Commission Humanitarian Aid (ECHO) through its Enhanced Response Capacity (ERC) budget line.

from a wide range of agencies and groups, at the global and the country level. The variety of actors that were brought into the process was intended to ensure that the Guidance and Toolbox would be cross-sectoral, that it would not duplicate previous efforts, and that it would draw from the wealth of experience and knowledge of experts from different disciplines, including cash transfer programming.

The Guidance and Toolbox is the result of a multi-staged development process involving: the write-up of a “product specification document” in consultation with an inter-agency Peer Review Group, which described the scope and main features of the Guidance and Toolbox ; two pre-pilot drafts, which were revised by the Peer Review Group; one field test in Borno State (North-East Nigeria), carried out in May-June 2017; a subsequent review of the Guidance and Toolbox based on Peer Review Group’s comments in light of the outputs of the first test; a second pilot in Fafan zone (Somali Region of Ethiopia) between November 2017 and January 2018; and a final revision, based on learning from the second pilot and recommendations gathered at the final ERC Consortium’s symposium held in Addis Ababa in April 2018.<sup>2</sup>

The final revision has been carried out by Save the Children and included the expansion of section two, within the second chapter, drafted with the independent consultant, Sophie Martin-Simpson.

The Guidance and its Toolbox can be downloaded from <http://pqtoolbox.cashlearning.org/> and [http://www.cashlearning.org/resources/library/1128-guidance-and-toolbox-for-the-basic-needs-analysis?keywords=&region=all&country=all&year=all&organisation=all&sector=all&modality=all&language=all&payment\\_method=all&document\\_type=all&searched=1](http://www.cashlearning.org/resources/library/1128-guidance-and-toolbox-for-the-basic-needs-analysis?keywords=&region=all&country=all&year=all&organisation=all&sector=all&modality=all&language=all&payment_method=all&document_type=all&searched=1).

### A note on the BNA uptake and ownership<sup>3</sup>

There is a need for strong continuous ownership of the BNA as it may take years to develop a community of practice around it. There is a need for both strategic and technical uptake across sectors within the humanitarian response architecture, and so ownership may be split for these different functions dependant on expertise and interests of specific organisations. For example, strategic uptake – which includes the mobilisation of resources – would need to be owned and championed by the Inter-Cluster Coordination Group (ICCG) and relevant clusters at both national and global levels, while technical ownership – which includes the technical expertise - could be held by assessment experts such as REACH.

Whilst ownership should be held by a few key organisations it is important that the results of any BNA conducted are both validated by and shared with the humanitarian community more widely, and especially by the Cluster / Sector experts at local / national level. This includes relevant government stakeholders to build better links between humanitarian programmes and national public assistance and social security transfers.

As part of their joint leadership of the Grand Bargain workstream on improved joint inter-sector assessments (i.e. the JIAG), OCHA and ECHO have already used the BNA to inform wider discussions on needs analysis. Where the context is appropriate, OCHA can also raise awareness of the usefulness of the tool and approach, for potential use by the ICCG. ECHO and other donors could also support this effort by incentivising agencies to conduct quality needs assessments across sectors and holding them to account when they don’t do them well.

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<sup>2</sup> Source: ERC Consortium for the Uptake of MPG (2018) *Learning and Way Forward from the Final Symposium*. Available at: <http://www.cashlearning.org/downloads/mpg-toolkit-pdfs/symposiumreport20180601.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

More concretely, at the ERC Consortium’s symposium, ECHO committed to use the BNA (and the ROAP) to support discussions that are taking place within its Basic Needs Working Group around how cash and MPGs can be used and promoted and how quality will be ensured, and relevant expertise involved.

Dissemination and uptake will also be supported by including the BNA in CaLP’s Programme Quality Toolbox (PQT), as well as in CaLP’s Response Analysis training course (already included).

## Acronyms

BNA	Basic Needs Assessment
CaLP	Cash Learning Partnership
CBI	Cash Based Interventions
CGD	Community Group Discussion
CTP	Cash Transfer Programming
DRC	Danish Refugee Council
ECHO	European Commission’s Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
ENA	Essential Needs Assessment
ERC	Enhanced Response Capacity
ES/NFI	Emergency Shelter / Non-food Items
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FSP	Financial Service Provider
GCCG	Global Cluster Coordination Group
HCT	Humanitarian Country Team
HEA	Household Economy Approach
HHI	Household Interview
HNO	Humanitarian Needs Overview
HPC	Humanitarian Programme Cycle
HRP	Humanitarian Response Plan
ICWG	Inter-cluster Working Group
ISWG	Inter-sector Working Group
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MPI	Multi-dimensional Poverty Index
MPG	Multipurpose Grant
MSMA	Multi-sector Market Assessment
ODK	Open Data Kit
PDM	Post-Distribution Monitoring
ROAP	Response Options Analysis and Planning
SDA	Secondary Data Analysis
UN OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

VAM	(WFP) Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping Unit
WFP	World Food Programme

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE GUIDANCE

### 1.1 What is the BNA

The Basic Needs Assessment (BNA) is a multi-sector needs assessment approach that can be applied in both sudden onset and protracted emergencies, but that – in the present edition – has been piloted only in two protracted crises, namely in Borno State (North-East Nigeria) and in Fafan zone (Somali region of Ethiopia). The approach took inspiration from [ECHO's Basic Needs Framework for Integrated Response](#).

The BNA produces a ranking of priorities for assistance as perceived by the population. It provides information on the access, availability, and quality constraints people face in securing what they need

from local service providers and markets, and the perceived severity of related humanitarian consequences.

The BNA quantifies what basic needs means for a community, why – according to members of that community and its affected households – these needs are unmet, and how they would like to be assisted. This holistic, people-centred approach spans the sectors, bringing them together to consider households’ needs in a shared vision.

The BNA can inform response programmes in all humanitarian sectors; however, its findings are best complemented through local experts’ knowledge of the context and in-depth assessments that sectors may require. While the BNA may contribute to addressing existing analysis gaps it is not, nor was it ever intended to be, a silver bullet but rather a complementary tool.

The BNA uses both secondary and primary data; the latter is collected in the field using two main data collection techniques, Community Group Discussions (CGDs) and Household interviews (HHIs), which are both contained in the Toolbox alongside with tip sheets on how to use them. When rolled out in sudden-onset emergencies, primary data collection would be streamlined and the use of the CGD tool would be prioritised over the HHI, as explained in the section **Error! Reference source not found..**



Although complementary to the [Operational Guidance and Toolkit for Multipurpose Cash Grants](#) released in 2015, the **BNA is not cash specific**

and its application is wider than Multipurpose Grant (MPG) programmes. In fact, it guides through lines of inquiry that would help discerning among different modalities, including in-kind, direct service provision, or cash, based on affected people’s experiences in meeting their basic needs. In doing so, the BNA gives way to the selection of a broader range of response modalities than only the cash-based ones.

This Guidance presents the conceptual BNA framework and related processes, and a Toolbox, which includes tools, templates, training materials, and examples drawn from its two pilots.

The BNA is conceived to go hand in hand with the Facilitator’s Guide for the Response Options Analysis and Planning (ROAP; a separate document), as it is part of a broader situation analysis and response planning process (see 2.1 Key concepts and definitions). It shall be carried out with other assessments on the operational environment and would not add any value if undertaken in isolation.

## 1.2 Why the BNA and its Guidance and Toolbox

At the heart of the BNA approach there are three of the Grand Bargain goalsthat have been agreed by the sector’s biggest donors and aid providers.<sup>4</sup> These key goals are to:

- create a participation revolution that includes people receiving aid in making the decisions that affect their lives (goal 6).
- improve joint and impartial needs assessments (goal 5)
- increase the use and collaboration of cash-based programming (goal 3)

People-centred response plans shall be primarily informed by people’s priorities and the reasons why their needs remain unmet, as well as by their assistance preferences. Generally, humanitarian needs assessments do not investigate those aspects and, as a result, the choice of assistance modality (in-

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<sup>4</sup> The Grand Bargain. Available at: <http://www.agendaforhumanity.org/initiatives/3861>

kind, direct service delivery, cash-based intervention) is driven by the experience and mandate of the cluster/sector globally and in country. In addition, cluster/sector ability varies significantly in terms of considering cash-based interventions among the possible response options.

The lack of coherent, collective and comprehensive (basic) needs analysis in many contexts is a well-recognised problem and one that the Joint Inter-sector Analysis Group (JIAG), which has been formed within the Grand Bargain, is currently trying to address through a review of existing needs assessments and the development of an inter-sector analytical framework, which includes the BNA.

In its trial phase, the BNA is viewed by many as a game changer because, differently from other assessments, it genuinely tries to “put people in the centre”. Its focus on beneficiaries’ preferences and perspectives on priorities for assistance is necessary because affected people are not passive recipients of aid. They are actors that make decisions, rank their needs based on a variety of considerations, and routinely interact with markets or (public/semi-public) service providers.

While the market (available goods and services including financial service providers) plays a key function in people’s ability to meet their basic needs an overreliance on sector specific market data when designing response programmes can lead to responses that do not optimally meet the needs of beneficiaries across the full spectrum of needs. A basic understanding of affected households’ perspectives on these matters allows for triangulation and validation of information, resulting in selection of assistance modalities that genuinely “put people in the centre”.

There is currently no agreed-upon methodology that allows humanitarian actors from different sectors to jointly assess humanitarian needs, in a way to understand their underlying causes and allow affected populations to express their perspective around priorities and assistance modalities. The MIRA is a multi-sector needs assessment tool, but it does not collect the necessary information to establish if cash-based interventions are a suitable response option, alone or in combination with other modalities. This is a major impediment to designing CTP that are integrated into broader responses.

The ambition of the BNA Guidance and Toolbox is to address these gaps.

### 1.3 Who should use it

In line with the Grand Bargain’s goal 5, the BNA should be best initiated or commissioned by groups of agencies in a coordinated and collaborative effort across sectors, as opposed to be the initiative of a single agency.

Hence, the primary intended users of the Guidance and Toolbox are groups of humanitarian organisations within affected countries who engage into multi-sectoral coordinated assessments (joint or harmonized) and seek to make their basic needs and response analysis more transparent, people-centred, and inclusive of multiple modalities and/or combinations of them.

More specifically, there would be two categories of users, each mostly concerned with one of the two parts of the Guidance and Toolbox:

*Part I:* The Humanitarian Country Team (HCT), at the inter-agency level, or the decision makers within a single humanitarian organisation, in charge of triggering a multi-sector needs assessment. This would be carried out in-house, in collaboration with other organisations, or commissioned to a third party (e.g. a specialised assessment organisation). These users would be mostly interested in the second chapter of Part I of the Guidance, which describes the approach, the process, the roles and responsibilities, and the analytical framework.



**Part 2:** Needs assessment specialists within humanitarian organisations and specialised assessment agencies. They will have to be familiar with Part 2 and able to use the Toolbox. They will most likely take the role of assessment coordinators and be in charge of designing and leading the assessment and training others on how to effectively participate in it.

*Lesson learned 1: Use the BNA in a joint, inter-agency effort<sup>5</sup>*



Save the Children led the BNA in both pilots with data collection support from WFP and Plan International in Nigeria. The results were validated, and the tool reviewed by a group of interested sector representatives in Nigeria and this formed an important part for the process, particularly when led by external staff. The complexity of running a pilot within a very short timeframe, while still developing the guidance and tools, and in a coordinated assessment effort, induced the project team to refrain from adopting the same approach in Ethiopia. There, a deliberate decision was made to have the assessment run by Save the Children without the involvement of other agencies during the data collection and analysis phase although sectors were involved in the validation and interpretation of findings.

In future, it would be useful to pilot the BNA more collaboratively to assess if wider engagement across organisations could improve efficiency or deliver better results.

So that relevant actors are familiar with, understand the benefits of, and feel comfortable using the BNA, the tool needs to be widely disseminated and trainings provided to key users. Training should be provided via the Inter-Cluster / Sector Coordination Group (or similar bodies) to interested parties at the national and sub-national levels. Alternatively, a dedicated surge capacity could be developed (e.g. amongst CashCAP deployees or similar rosters of experts) with specific expertise on multi-sectoral needs assessments including the BNA – the advantages and limitations of the two approaches needs to be weighed.

REACH (an IMPACT and ACTED initiative), a potential future owner and expert in the BNA, believe that it is possible to roll-out joint inter-sectoral needs assessments across an entire humanitarian context and that the BNA should now be tested at this scale.

## 1.4 For what it is to be used

The BNA Guidance and Toolbox provide inter-sector processes, tools and templates to design and lead secondary and primary data analysis of affected groups' needs in the aftermath of a sudden shock or protracted crisis.<sup>6</sup>

In conjunction with other needs, vulnerabilities, and operational environment assessments, the BNA findings will contribute to informing programmatic decisions and plans, including objectives settings, targeting, programme selection, delivery methods, etc. within a specific geographic area where different population groups are affected in different ways by a given hazard.

The BNA is expected to inform the following key programmatic decisions:

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<sup>5</sup> Source: ERC Consortium for the Uptake of MPG (2018) *Learning and Way Forward from the Final Symposium*. Available at: <http://www.cashlearning.org/downloads/mpg-toolkit-pdfs/symposiumreport20180601.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> In the present edition, the BNA has been piloted only in two protracted crises, namely in Borno state (North-East Nigeria) and in Fafan zone (Somali region of Ethiopia).

Figure 1: Types of decisions to be informed by the BNA, in conjunction with complementary assessments

Which population groups are the most in need of assistance and where are they located?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Geographical areas the most severely hit by the emergency</li> <li>• Population groups that are the most deprived of basic goods and services as a result of the shock</li> </ul>
What is the composition of the minimum basket of assistance which needs to be addressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By household composition</li> <li>• By type of impact suffered</li> <li>• By the household's situation in the emergency</li> </ul>
What and where are the critical essential services and markets? What is people's experience with them (access, availability, quality)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Main commodity markets</li> <li>• Service systems (public and private)</li> <li>• Labour markets</li> <li>• House stocks</li> </ul>
Which of the needs can be best addressed through which (mix of) assistance modality(ies)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In-kind</li> <li>• Direct service provision</li> <li>• Cash transfers</li> <li>• Vouchers</li> <li>• A mix of the above</li> </ul>
If cash transfers or vouchers, what should they cover?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By household size</li> <li>• By cost of basket</li> </ul>

The BNA builds on an analytical framework that guides the systematic collection, organization, and analysis of secondary and primary data. It allows the identification of unmet basic needs, key priorities and consequently the selection of the most appropriate and proportionate response options.

Box 1: Scope of the BNA: what is covered and what is not

**! What the BNA can deliver:**

- The identification of the most severe and pressing unmet basic needs, affected areas, and groups, based on current and forecasted humanitarian outcomes, as perceived by the affected population (severity of deprivation)
- An understanding of the issues experienced by the affected population, due to which they cannot meet their basic needs; they will be referred to as “barriers”
- An understanding of how households tend to cope with the unmet needs
- An overview of the current primary sources of basic goods and services, and related access, availability, and quality issues (see point above)
- Basic information on the demand for basic goods and services, to inform market assessments
- Assistance preferences
- Information to guide and support the design and planning of subsequent more in-depth assessments and analysis which are often more detailed, operational and sector specific.

**What the BNA does not cover:**

- A full-fledged assessment of the demand side of markets and service systems
- A selection of most appropriate and proportionate response options and delivery mechanisms
- Information to directly inform the design of specific and localized humanitarian interventions

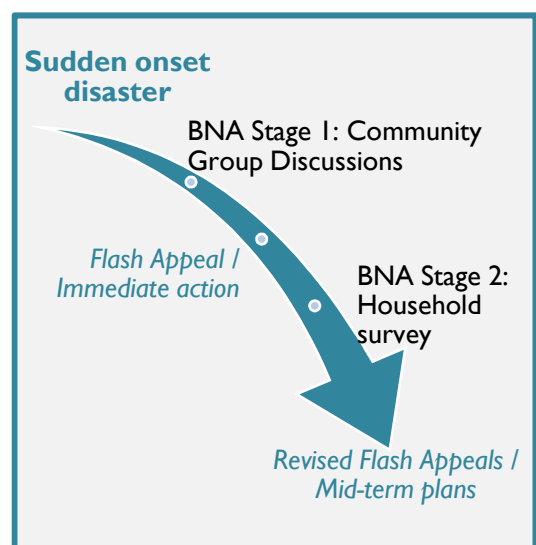
- A substitute for detailed or in-depth sectoral assessment.

## 1.5 Where and when it is appropriate to use, and how

The BNA can be adapted for use in both sudden onset and protracted crises.

In protracted crises, the approach can be used to inform key documents, e.g. annual plan, Humanitarian Needs Overview, or at regular intervals to monitor any changes in the situation, identify trends over time and trigger in-depth and/or sector specific assessments, e.g. essential services assessments, market assessments, cash feasibility assessments. For example, the BNA could be carried out during a prolonged ceasefire or in preparation for a change in conditions (such as dry season) when an opportunity for a sustained response will be available.

In sudden onset disasters, the approach and tools can be adapted to reflect the situation prior to the shock and after, provide insights on the impact and outcomes of the disaster, and inform subsequent Cluster/Sector assessments. In these contexts, where time is of the essence, the BNA would be rolled out in multiple stages, starting with the CGD questionnaire, to rapidly generate information and produce basic analysis for immediate decision making and action. The household survey (based on the HHI questionnaire) would follow in due time and would be used to refine and devise mid-term action. With adequate design and planning, the process can be initiated in the very first weeks of the crisis and then, one-two months onward, inform the second phase of the emergency response by feeding into a revised Flash Appeal.



Similarly, to other needs assessment approaches, the BNA is best applied when a few key conditions are in place. The BNA is most appropriate when a specific event triggers an emergency that is new or sudden and significant in nature and generates a confirmed or potential humanitarian impact, followed by a period of relative stability and allowing humanitarian actors to carry out response activities and more detailed assessments. Box 2 below details the criteria organisations or other relevant stakeholders should consider in determining whether a BNA is the appropriate tool for a context.

### Box 2: Criteria for a successful BNA

#### Stability:

- No significant and sudden deterioration of conditions is expected in the program implementation period (3-6 month at least)
- No significant additional population movements anticipated
- Safe and sustainable access to the majority of the affected population

#### Gaps in information:

- Need for new information to support strategic joint planning, e.g. HCT, consortia, etc.
- No or limited detailed cluster/sector or agency assessments available
- No cross-sector analysis available

### Joint or harmonized:

- Humanitarian organisations willing to engage in joint analysis and planning process
- Humanitarian organisations willing to share information for joint secondary data analysis
- Humanitarian organisations willing to contribute resources for joint primary data collection



**Keep it simple and short!** The data collection and analysis methodologies are meant to be adapted to the context according to the available resources and time. Whenever possible, simplify the approach. The BNA methodology has been designed to be modular, which will help the assessment team in that direction, but – in general – they will have to use their common sense, aim for good-enough results, collect data that is necessary and not just nice to have. The choice of modules is a responsibility of the project team, who should base it on the information gaps and the decisions that the information is expected to support, i.e. “what we do not know yet that we absolutely need to know, in order to make decisions around [...]” .

This Guidance is not meant to be applied slavishly, but some of the modules are designated as “core BNA modules”, because they are not found in any other assessment methodology existing so far; as such they should always be included in the plan. The other modules are “optional” and may not be necessary if another assessment has been conducted fairly recently with the intent of generating similar information.

## 1.6 What is the structure of this guidance

The BNA Guidance and Toolbox is structured in two parts chapters. Part 1 contains the Introduction to the Guidance (this chapter); and the Overview of the BNA Approach (Chapter 2). Part 2 contains the step-by-step guidance on how to carry out a BNA.

## Part 1: Background and Concepts

- Chapter 1, the “Introduction to the Guidance”, introduces the user to the document, in general terms. It provides an overview of the rationale that led to its development. It defines its purpose and scope; it indicates where, when and by whom it should be used; and in conjunction with what other methodologies.
- Chapter 2, the “Overview of the BNA Approach”, allows the readers to situate the BNA in the broader Humanitarian Programme Cycle and, more specifically, within the Response Analysis and Planning Process. It clarifies that the BNA would not add much value if conducted in isolation and points out at what other assessments should be undertaken to feed into the response analysis process. This chapter introduces the key concepts and terminology that will be used across the document. It explains how the process unfolds, describing the roles and responsibilities along its steps, as well as the types of competencies that need to be mobilised for a successful assessment.

## Part 2: How-to Guide & Tools

- Step-by-step guidance on how to: design and plan the BNA and analyse secondary data ahead of primary data collection; collect primary BNA data; analyse the findings; and communicate and disseminate them for a successful uptake
- The Toolbox, on the other hand, contains data collection tools, templates, training materials, and examples drawn from its two pilots, in Borno State (North-East Nigeria) and in Fafan zone (Somali region, Ethiopia). The Toolbox is available at the CaLP's PQT link as well as <http://pqtoolbox.cashlearning.org/> and [http://www.cashlearning.org/resources/library/1128-guidance-and-toolbox-for-the-basic-needs-analysis?keywords=&region=all&country=all&year=all&organisation=all&sector=all&modality=all&language=all&payment\\_method=all&document\\_type=all&searched=1](http://www.cashlearning.org/resources/library/1128-guidance-and-toolbox-for-the-basic-needs-analysis?keywords=&region=all&country=all&year=all&organisation=all&sector=all&modality=all&language=all&payment_method=all&document_type=all&searched=1)

### 1.7 How to read the icons

Icon	Description
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**Output:** when you see this icon, you are reading about the deliverable or product resulting from a specific step or activity.



**Attention!** Text tagged with this icon conveys particularly important messages or ideas, that readers are encouraged to pay attention to.



**Reading materials:** in boxes tagged with this icon, you will find references to relevant reading materials. URL are provided wherever the reading material is available on internet, which is in most if not all the cases.



**Lessons learned:** in boxes tagged with this icon, you will read about lessons and recommendations stemming from the pilot in Borno State (North-East Nigeria) and in Fafan zone (Somali region, Ethiopia).



**Keep it simple and short:** in boxes tagged with this icon, you will be reminded and/or given tips to keep the approach as simple as necessary, for a good-enough result and being mindful of the typical shortage of time and resources with which we are faced in humanitarian responses.

## CHAPTER 2: OVERVIEW OF THE BNA APPROACH

### 2.1 Key concepts and definitions

The concept of **basic needs** refers to *the essential goods, utilities, services or resources required on a regular, seasonal, or exceptional basis by households for ensuring survival and minimum living standards, without resorting to negative coping mechanisms or compromising their health, dignity and essential livelihood assets.*

The above definition takes inspiration from the Basic Needs Approach of the International Labour Organization (ILO, 1976), one of the most significant approaches to the measurement of absolute poverty. It attempts to define the absolute minimum resources necessary for long-term physical well-being, usually in terms of consumption goods. In this approach, the poverty line is defined as the amount of income required to satisfy those needs. The Basic Needs Approach views poverty as “deprivation of consumption” (inadequate food, nutrition, clean water, education, health, etc.) and was often opposed to the capability approach (CA) in which poverty is seen as “deprivation of opportunities” related to lifestyles and people values. When it is used as an input (consumption) based approach, the Basic Needs Approach fails to connect deprivation with people’s values, aspirations and the result (well-being). The Capability Approach, on the other hand, focuses on capacity development of people rather than how much they consume. The BNA and the accompanying tools consider all aspects of wellbeing: health/survival, dignity and development capacities.

According to the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), being able to satisfy one’s basic needs is everyone’s right. It is undeniable that this should be the case also in times of crisis. The article 25 of the Declaration states that ‘*everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services*’.

The **Basic Needs Basket** is the list of basic commodities, services, and facilities that households should consume/utilise to attain minimum living standards and live in health and dignity, without resorting to negative coping mechanisms. Since there is no universal agreement around minimum standards, the list of basic needs will vary from one context to the other and should be adapted to each crisis, through community/focus group discussions or workshops with key stakeholders.

In humanitarian responses, Clusters/Sectors translate the concept of basic basket into “kits”, which are standard packages of food and non-food items normally distributed to affected populations in kind.

In the BNA methodology, these needs have been organised in fifteen categories (see Table 1). They were selected based on a meta-review of existing Minimum Expenditure Baskets and Living Standards. In the HHI and CGD questionnaires, the category “other” allows to include other items to the list that respondents consider important for their survival and minimum living standards.

*Table 1: List of basic needs according to a right-based approach*

The right of every child to learning and personal development	School supplies (uniforms, shoes, stationary, books, etc.)
	Education services (transport to school, fees, teachers, canteen, etc.)
The right to decent living conditions and to a safe, clean and healthy space	Energy commodities and utilities for heating, cooking, lightning, and charging (not fuel for vehicles, which is classified under transport services)
	Shelter commodities (furniture, household appliances, etc.)
	Shelter and housing (rent, land rent, purchase, building materials, construction services, permissions, etc.)
	Household items (utensils, mats, blankets, mosquito nets, cooking sets, etc.)
	Sanitation facilities and services (toilets, shower, bath, sewage system, repair and construction services, etc.)
The right to the highest attainable standards of physical and mental health	Food (staple, fresh vegetables and fruits, meat, etc.)
	Health commodities (drugs, devices, etc.)
	Healthcare services (doctors, nurses, health centres, vaccination campaigns, laboratory test, emergency services, surgeries, hospitalisation, etc.)
	Potable water (treatment, water points, etc.)
	Hygiene items (clothing, cleaning products, soap, toothbrush, pads, diapers, etc.)
The right to work and to have a productive and socially engaged life	Productive assets and inputs for agricultural and/or non-agricultural activities (seeds, fertilisers, livestock, fodder, vehicles, machines, devices, stock for a shop, etc.)
	Transport services (for all purposes except going to school, i.e. to work, health centre, markets, etc.; it includes fuel)
	Communication commodities and services (phone devices, phone credit/bills, internet, service providers, towers, network, repair services etc.)

*Table 2: Example of basic needs basket from Borno State (North-East Nigeria)*

Sector	Category	Frequency	Type of expenditure faced by a household
CCCM / Shelter / NFI	Communication	One off	Phone, etc.
		Recurrent	Phone credit, internet bill
	Energy	One off	Stove, heater
		Recurrent	Cooking, lighting, charging, heating. Includes kerosene, electricity, firewood, charcoal, etc.
	Household items	One off	The improved NFI kit for north-east Nigeria:
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Synthetic Mat</li> <li>• Blanket</li> <li>• Mosquito net</li> <li>• Foldable mattress</li> <li>• stainless plates</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• stainless cups</li> <li>• table spoons</li> <li>• kitchen knife</li> <li>• serving spoon</li> <li>• Solar lamp</li> <li>• cooking pots (7"5" litres)</li> </ul>
		Recurrent	
	Housing and shelter commodities	One off	Rent (quarterly or every six months, or every year), furniture, construction materials, permissions, repair, etc.
		Recurrent	
	Transport	One off	Vehicle purchase
		Recurrent	Any other not related directly to other basic needs (fuel and fees)
Education	Education	One off	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School fee</li> <li>• Canteen fee</li> <li>• Notebook</li> <li>• Ruler</li> <li>• Scissors</li> <li>• Maps</li> <li>• Pencils</li> <li>• Rubber</li> <li>• Geometric set</li> <li>• Mats</li> <li>• Sandals</li> <li>• School uniform</li> <li>• School Bag</li> <li>• Text Book(s)</li> </ul>
		Recurrent	Transport
Food security	Food	One off	Land, agricultural inputs
		Recurrent	Staple, vegetable, meat, milk, condiments, oil, sugar, salt
Health	Healthcare	One off	Baby kit, critical event, delivery, immunisation
		Recurrent	Medicine, healthcare fees, transportation
Early Recovery	Productive assets	One off	Land, workspace, agricultural inputs, non-farming assets/inputs, livestock, livestock vaccination
		Recurrent	Veterinary fees, livestock feed
WASH	Potable water	One off	Jerry can, 25 l, non-collapsible Jerry can, 10 l, non-collapsible
		Recurrent	90 l/day for HH of six= 2700 litres a month treatment, transport
	Sanitation / household hygiene	One off	<p>Clothing, sanitation construction / repair</p> <p>Initial hygiene kit (for three months distributed annually):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bucket with lid, HDPE, 20 L</li> <li>• Kettle with lid, plastic, sanitary cleansing, 2 L</li> <li>• Torch light, rechargeable</li> <li>• Child potty with lid</li> <li>• Bathing soap, 250 grams</li> <li>• Laundry soap, 200 grams</li> <li>• Rope</li> <li>• Clothes pins</li> <li>• Female undergarments, medium size</li> </ul>



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reusable sanitary pad set (2 holders, 3 winged pads, 2 straight pads)</li> </ul>
	Recurrent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bathing soap, 250 grams</li> <li>• Laundry soap, 200 grams</li> <li>• Toothbrush</li> <li>• Toothpaste, large, 140 g</li> <li>• Diaper, disposable</li> </ul>

The **average expenditure basket** is the average expenditure of an average household, reported by categories of commodities and services. Average expenditures are estimated for a given month, with the figure varying month by month, as a result of some types of purchases/spending occurring either on a seasonal or on an exceptional basis (see definition below).

**Expenditures reference period:** The reference period refers to the frequency of expenditures, which in turn reflects the interval at which the commodity or service must be repurchased. Consumption and utilization of basic goods and services can vary from one month to the other and may be more or less frequent. Some goods or services, once they have been utilised, must be repurchased; some others can be reutilised multiple times or have a specific window/timeframe for utilisation. The reference period for expenditures refers to the frequency of expenditures, which reflects the interval at which the commodity or service has to be repurchased. The BNA captured three types of variation from normal monthly expenses:

- **Recurrent expenditures:** these expenditures are repeated over time, as the commodity or service is consumed and must be repurchased on a regular basis (e.g. daily, weekly). As a convention in the BNA, the maximum reference period for an expenditure to be defined as “recurrent” would be the quarter. The most common recurrent expenditures within a household are those for food, rent (especially in urban contexts), water, and hygiene items. In practical terms, when the response is cash-based, the recurrent costs can be covered by an MPG that is transferred on a regular basis.
- **One-off expenditures:** these are non-frequent expenditures; they relate to commodities or services that are purchased on a seasonal or an exceptional basis.

The seasonal expenditures occur on a regular but non-frequent basis, at specific times of the year, at intervals that are longer than a quarter (as a convention in the BNA). Examples of seasonal expenditures are school fees and school supplies ahead of the school year start, or the purchase of agricultural inputs ahead of the sowing/planting season.

Exceptional expenditures are of a varied nature and may also arise from the emergency itself. Examples include: the deposit for accommodation rental; the costs to repair a house or purchase furniture; the medical costs to treat an injury; the fees to register a business. In practical terms, when the response is cash-based, one-off costs can be covered by sectoral top-ups to an MPG, in the form of cash transfers or vouchers.

The **Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB)** is the minimum amount of money required for a household to buy the appropriate quantity of goods and services which will help them meet (some of) their basic needs, on a regular or seasonal basis. In other words, it is the monetary value of the (monetizable portion) of the basic needs basket. It is based on the average cost of all items composing the basic basket and which can be bought (i.e. are monetizable). In fact, as explained in Box 3, the MEB is not necessarily the same as the basic needs basket. MEBs, which can be calculated for various sizes of households, allow users to estimate an expenditure gap as well as the impact suffered by various

household groups. The expenditure gap is the difference between MEB and average households' expenditures.

Box 3: Basic needs basket vs. MEB and average households' expenditures vs. consumption



### Basic needs basket $\neq$ Minimum Expenditure Basket

It is important to note that, although being a good-enough approximation, the MEB does not necessarily coincide with the monetary value of the basic needs basket. In fact, some needs are not *monetizable*; the value of the commodities, services, and facilities that would have to be consumed

Basket of basic needs (health, food, shelter, education, etc.)

The gap between the basket of basic needs and the MEB is what people **cannot buy with money**.

These needs are not monetizable; if they are not met, the problem cannot be resolved by giving cash to vulnerable households.

This is because some of the goods and services that are important to meeting households' basic needs do not always have competitive markets (e.g. sanitation, education, health & nut)

Minimum expenditure basket

or utilised by a household as a basic requirement, cannot be expressed in currency, for a number of reasons. For instance, there may not be a competitive market for the related goods, services, or facilities; or (part of them) is offered free of costs or at subsidised price. A typical case is that of therapeutic food: it is not available in local markets and is provided free of cost by specialised entities to patients that are diagnosed with malnutrition. Therapeutic food is a basic need for these families, but not expressed in their MEB.

In addition to the above, we have to bear in mind that...

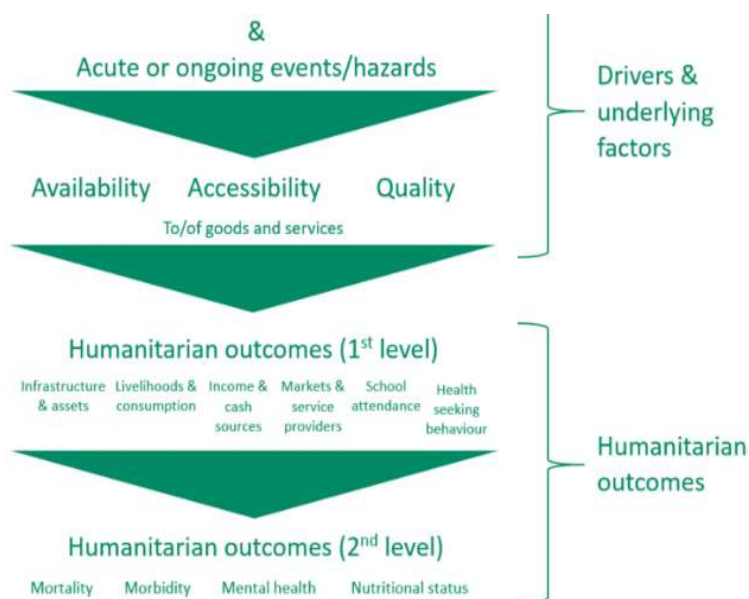
### Consumption $\neq$ Average household's expenditures

In fact, although being a good approximation of consumption, average household's expenditures do not coincide with the monetary value of the commodities and services actually consumed and utilised by the household (if the value of those food items was hypothetically monetised). In fact, some of the goods consumed by a household may be produced by the household itself. This is the typical case of food items when they are produced through farming activities. When this happens, food expenditures do not actually reflect actual consumption.

The Household Economy Approach (HEA) offers a well-thought through methodology to that purpose.

Useful insights can also be found in WFP's Consolidated Approach for Reporting Food Security Indicators (CARI), which contains standard survey questions and provides guidelines to estimate the average food basket and household expenditures, as well as to capture food consumption of non-purchased food (see "Modules 3a - Food Basket Module", and "Module 4 – Household Expenditures" of the [CARI Guidelines](#)).

Figure 2: Barriers to basic needs and humanitarian outcomes



In the BNA methodology, **barriers** refer to the set of factors deficiencies or mechanisms related to access to, availability, and quality of essential goods or services, which contribute directly or indirectly to unmet needs and consequent **humanitarian outcomes**.

When a shock/hazard occurs, we generally observe disruption affecting the access, quality, availability, awareness, or utilisation of critical goods and services (see Box 4 for a more detailed description of these issues). In other words, affected people's consumption of necessary goods

and services is constrained by one or a combination of these issues.

As a result, the satisfaction or degree of fulfilment of basic needs decreases and the affected population experiences; hence, *unmet basic needs* are the actual difference between a preferred state or condition, and the actual one. This discrepancy might in turn create further negative, harmful or undesirable outcomes, such as fear, physical and/or mental health issues. Humanitarian outcomes refer to effects or consequences that challenge long term survival or minimum living standards of the affected population of forces them to rely on negative coping mechanisms or compromise their health, dignity and essential livelihood assets.

For instance, increased food insecurity can be the result of lack of food within markets or insufficient income to purchase food, or a combination of those. Identifying the *barriers* to meeting basic needs is essential to design programmes that are relevant and address the causes of identified humanitarian issues.<sup>7</sup>

Figure 2 above shows the cause-effect chain leading to different levels of humanitarian outcomes. Pre-existing conditions and problems may also concur to exacerbate the humanitarian outcomes. In fact, there may be different levels of problems or underlying factors. The BNA methodology only identifies those that the population experiences as the most immediately related to the unmet need, i.e. the **barriers**. Humanitarian aid providers should deepen the causal analysis further than that and should also explore awareness and utilization-related issues, with a view to have a more comprehensive view of the web of factors and to identify interventions that would tackle existing problems at their root. The ROAP Facilitator's Guide provide guidance on how to conduct the causal analysis, both within single sectors and at the inter-sector level.

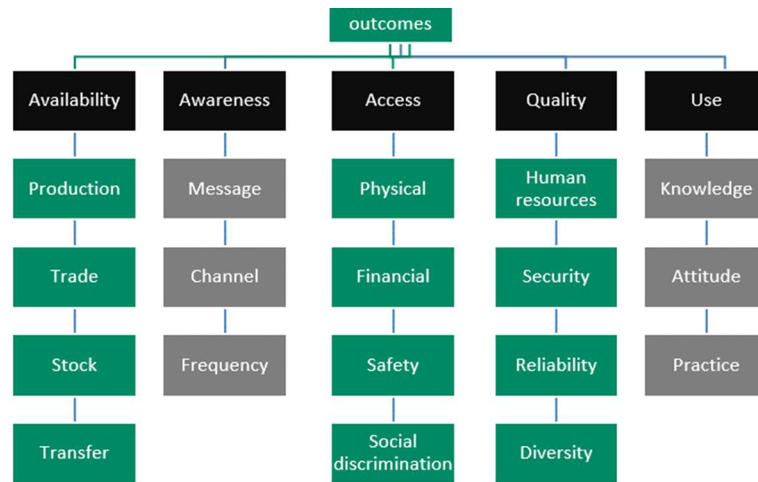
A specific set of questions within the HHI and CGD questionnaires is aimed at identifying and understanding the most immediate access, availability, and quality-related drivers that contribute the most to unmet needs, according to affected people's perspective.

<sup>7</sup> An example of a non-pertinent response would be offering cash assistance to achieve food security when the underlying factor is not related to insufficient income to buy food, but to the actual unavailability of food in local markets.

Box 4: Categories and subcategories of barriers

Figure 3 shows the five categories of issues that can typically cause humanitarian outcomes, as well as their respective sub-categories. For instance, access constraints can be due to a physical problem (e.g. the bridge leading to the market is broken or the roads are flooded), an economic problem (e.g. loss of income or price inflation make difficult for households to access health services regularly), or safety issues,

Figure 3: Categories of barriers



such as checkpoints or attacks on the way to school. This categorisation can be adapted at the country level, with subsequent changes to the BNA questionnaires.

The BNA captures data only for three of the five categories of underlying factors, namely accessibility, availability, and quality of goods and services, and exclusively from the perspective of the population. Awareness and utilization are not considered because they require ad hoc data collection instruments (i.e. KAP and communication with affected population surveys).

**Availability** refers to the actual presence of goods, services, facilities, and infrastructures in the location of concern through all forms of domestic production (e.g. farming), trade (e.g. commercial imports), stock (e.g. food reserve, contingency stocks, etc.), and transfer (aid or subsidies or free services) by a third party (the national government, local authorities or humanitarian actors).

**Accessibility** refers to people’s ability to obtain and benefit from goods and services, including those offered by humanitarian agencies. It often concerns the physical location of services (distance, road access, bridges, etc.), but can also be influenced by purchasing power, social discrimination, special vulnerabilities, or security issues that constrain movements.

**Quality** refers to the degree of excellence, benefits or satisfaction that one can enjoy when consuming a good or a service. Quality may depend on the number of people with the required skills and knowledge to perform a given service or produce a good but is also influenced by the reliability (consistency of quality over time), diversity and safety of the provided service or good (i.e. water quality, sterilization of medical tools, pharmaceuticals, etc.). It is important to stress that affected populations may have a different perception of quality compared to humanitarian agencies

**Humanitarian outcomes** refer to negative consequences experienced by a group of people that have been affected by a crisis. They result from barriers related to access, availability or quality of goods or services. Poor awareness and utilisation of critical goods and services are generally structural issues, related to societal and cultural values, and level of education; in the BNA methodology they are not considered as specifically related to the crisis. Two levels of outcomes can be distinguished, the first focusing on changes in key aspects of life, such as consumption, livelihoods, income, health seeking behaviour, learning, etc. The second and ultimate level of humanitarian outcome refers to

physical and mental consequences, such as excess morbidity or mortality, mental health, nutritional status, etc.

Not all problems of access, availability or quality of goods and services lead to humanitarian outcomes. Therefore, it is insufficient (and sometimes misleading) to measure issues only at this level, and important to associate or correlate existing deficiencies to confirmed or potential humanitarian outcomes. Understanding cause-effect relationships is central to the BNA and has several advantages:

- Identify the set of deficiencies or mechanisms that contribute directly or indirectly to humanitarian outcomes.
- Understand the causal mechanisms that contribute the most to unmet needs. For instance, increased food insecurity can be the result of lack of food on the markets and/or lack or insufficient income to purchase it.
- Separate causes and effects to allow the design of programs that are relevant and address the root cause(s) of the issue.
- When information is not available for one level, then inferences based on information available at a lower level can be used to draw assumptions or hypotheses.

**Criticality of needs.** There is no universal list of basic needs, and basic needs will vary based on context (see point above). Similarly, and depending on the situation, not all basic needs have the same importance or contribute the same way to living standards. For instance, shelter and clothes will be considered as critical in contexts of low temperatures, energy less important in areas of warm temperatures, and so on. To understand the criticality of basic items from the point of view of the population, CGD participants and interviewed household heads or spouses were asked to establish the importance of each basic need, based on their contribution to three main dimensions: health, survival, dignity and personal development of family members, or a combination of those.

## 2.2 The BNA within the Humanitarian Programme Cycle

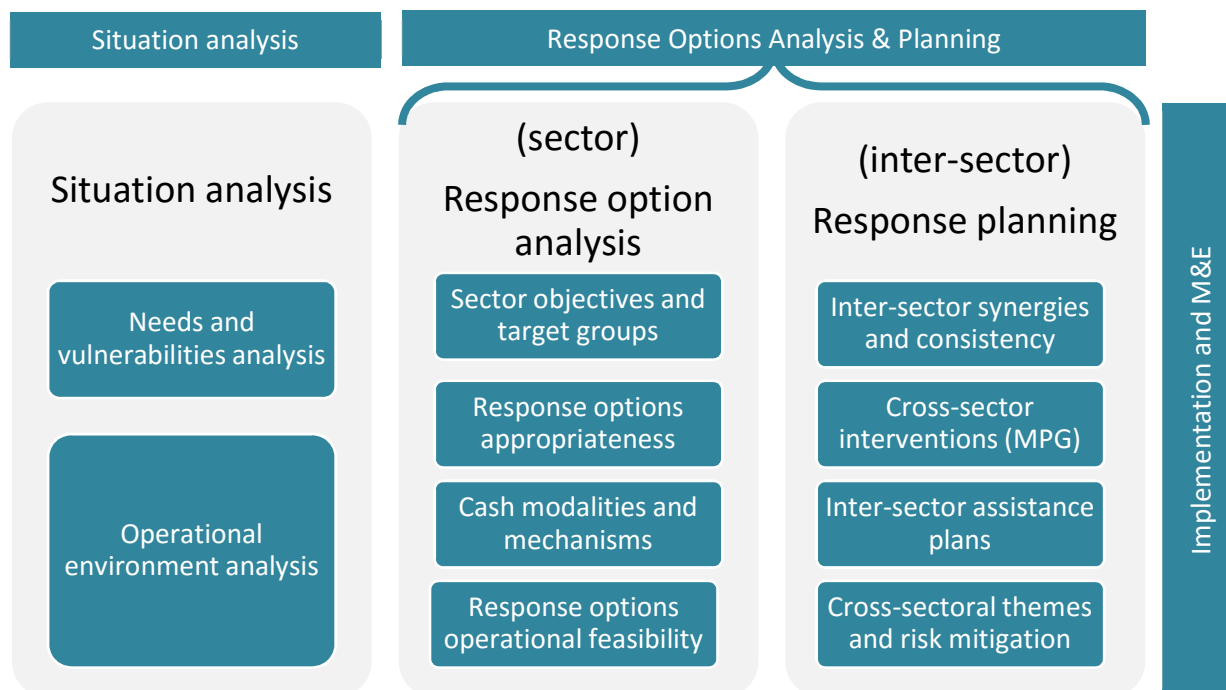
Within the Humanitarian Programme Cycle (HPC), the BNA is intended to be part of the situation analysis and, more specifically, to inform the Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO). It feeds into the Humanitarian Response Plan, mostly from a programmatic angle and with a specific geographic scope. The angle and geographic scope of the assessment can be widened by making suitable sampling and primary data collection choices.

It is important to bear in mind that the BNA is not in itself sufficient to inform the HNO, and most certainly not enough to produce a comprehensive picture of the humanitarian situation. It must be conducted together with other, complementary assessments focusing on the operational environment where the response is being planned. While those assessments provide information that is used to establish the operational feasibility of different response options, the BNA generates information around the priority groups and needs that the response should address, as well as around the most suitable types of interventions considering the underlying causes of unmet needs and the objectives to be attained. Suitability to the objectives and operational feasibility are two complementary dimensions against which response options will be compared.

The BNA is one of the building blocks of the humanitarian situation analysis. It is part of the group of assessments that produce information on the affected population's needs and their vulnerabilities (see Figure 4).

The success of the exercise will depend on the speed at which it can be rolled out and on having appropriately contextualized and adapted the primary data collection tools. In contexts of recurrent, predictable shocks and protracted crises, it is possible to appropriately plan for the BNA and adjust the tools.

Figure 4: Situation analysis, response option analysis and response planning



### 2.3 Interoperability between the BNA and Cash Feasibility Assessment Tools

The section clarifies how the BNA relates to other assessment methodologies, in order to help users gain a better understanding of the BNA’s scope and how best to roll it out, bearing in mind that response analysis must be informed by a wider range of information than is generated through the BNA alone.

In more specific detail, the chapter will explore the relationship between the BNA and the cash feasibility assessment tools piloted by the ERC-funded Consortium for the uptake of MPG, namely UNHCR’s Multi-Sector Market Assessment Toolkit (MSMA), the Cash Partner Capacity Assessment, and the Payment Mechanisms Assessment focusing on the payments landscape.

Figure 5 shows the relationship between the BNA and a selection of assessment methods and tools designed to assess the feasibility of CTP, which – together with other assessments not represented in this figure – are all brought together to inform the broader response analysis.<sup>8</sup> The latter can be facilitated following the ROAP process. As outlined in Table 3, the BNA has a “demand” focus.

Table 3: BNA information items: a demand focus

Information item from BNA (demand side)	BNA module and questions	To be complemented by (supply side)
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<sup>8</sup> Namely the partner capacity assessment, payment mechanisms assessment, UNHCR’s MSMA and the MPG monitoring toolkit, which were all utilised by the ERC-MPG Consortium.

What goods, commodities and services are demanded and required by affected populations if they are to meet their immediate humanitarian and/or recovery needs	Module E of household questionnaire: Basic needs and their sourcing; questions E1, E2, E3	Assessment of goods and services supply
Their preferred assistance modality	Module F of household questionnaire: Priority needs and preferred assistance; question F5	Partners' capacity assessment
Their coping mechanisms	Module D of household questionnaire: Coping mechanisms; questions D1, D2, and D3	Utilisation of services and goods, and awareness of their importance (especially for Health, WASH, Education)
Their demand for services to transfer and receive money	Module C of household questionnaire: Money and livelihoods; question C10	Payment mechanisms and financial service providers assessment

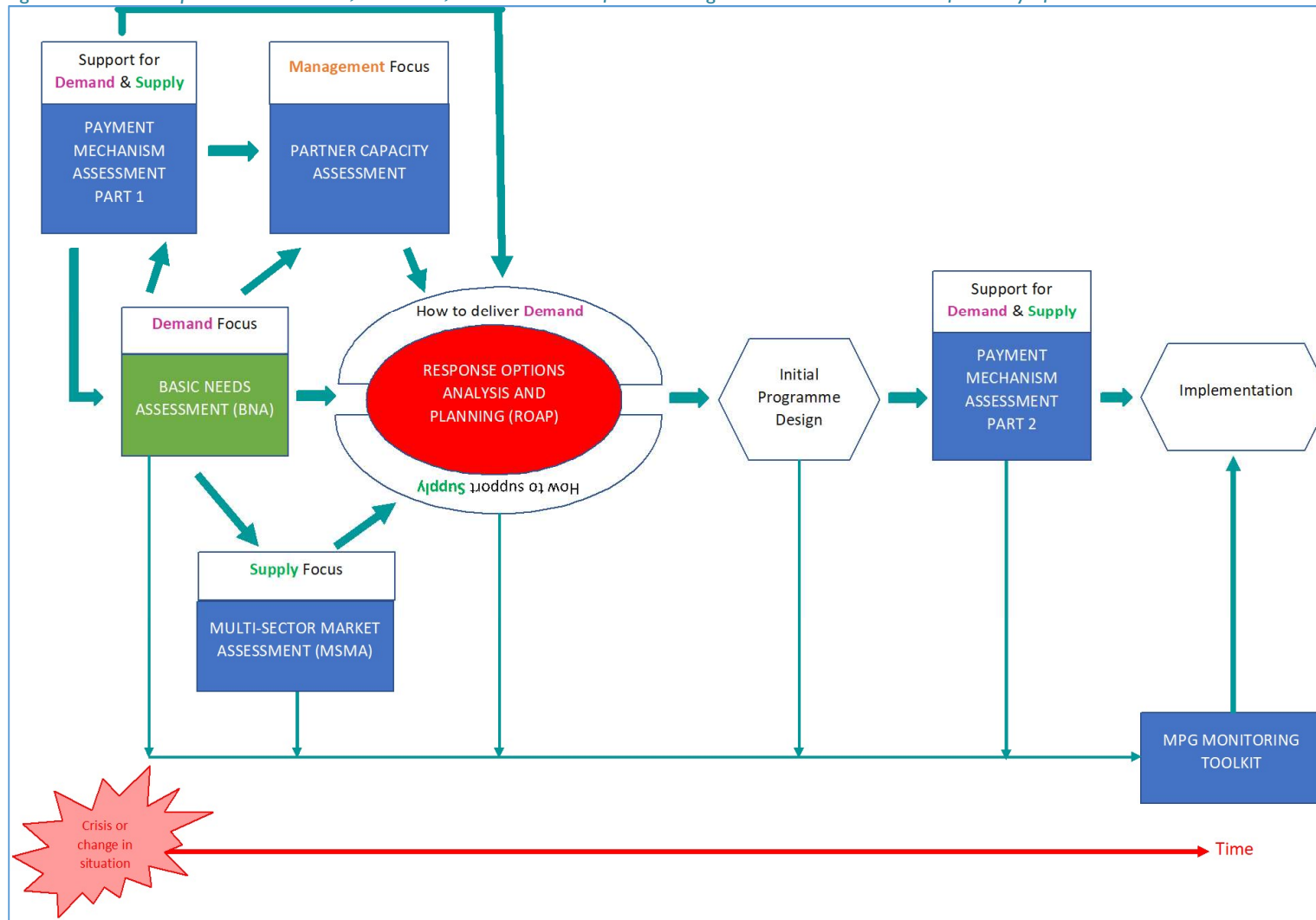
To complement this information the BNA should be followed/accompanied by:

- An assessment of goods and service supply, which can be sourced/offered by private or public-sector actors and entities. The selection of the markets to be assessed will be informed by the BNA's findings about how and where affected groups generally satisfy their needs by purchasing goods and services, when the lack of purchasing power is one of the primary underlying factors. There are many methodologies supporting market assessments including UNHCR's Multi-sector Market Assessment (MSMA) methodology which has been incorporated into Figure 5 because it can be used to assess both goods and service markets.
- The payment mechanism assessment shown in Figure 5 focuses on supply in regard to financial service providers and cash transfer mechanisms that are available locally. It also has a light touch focus on demand for payment / transfer services. If the payment mechanism assessment has been conducted either pre-crisis, as a preparedness activity, or undertaken / updated post crisis, it can inform the BNA.
- The partner capacity assessment shown in Figure 5 also focuses on supply, specifically the capacity of humanitarian agencies to deliver aid through CTP.
- The BNA looks at the spending behaviour and coping strategies, which, taken jointly, are fairly good proxies of utilisation of services and goods, especially when these are typically offered by the private sector. However, the BNA does not investigate in-depth the important underlying factors such as cultural and social factors, as well as the education level of a household, that will affect the way they use services and goods, their spending behaviour, and – more generally – the importance they place on different needs and consequently the coping strategies they use to meet some needs while sacrificing others. Dedicated assessments should be carried out to provide additional information for specific sectors, such as health. Such assessments are not represented in Figure 1 but are explored further in chapter 2 of the ROAP Facilitator's Guide.

Figure 5 also shows that the BNA can additionally provide baseline information for the monitoring of MPGs.



Figure 5: Relationship between the BNA, the ROAP, and a selection of methodologies and tools to assess the feasibility of CTP



KEY	
	CTP Feasibility tools and MPG Monitoring Toolkit utilised by the ERC-MPG Consortium
	BNA Tool
	ROAP Tool
	Programme cycle step
	Major information flow
	Minor information flow



## 2.4 Interoperability between the BNA and the HEA Outcome Analysis<sup>9</sup>

### *Introduction to the Household Economic Approach*

The Household Economy Approach (HEA) is a framework that determines how households access food and income, and whether it is enough for them to survive and prosper. Knowing whether household's have “enough” resources to meet their needs requires establishing quantifiable thresholds against which their access can be compared. HEA defines household access against two thresholds:

- the ‘survival threshold’: access to enough kilocalories to meet their food needs, enough cash to meet their basic survival needs;
- the ‘livelihoods protection threshold’: survival needs, plus the income necessary to cover basic household expenditures, cash required to meet a locally acceptable standard of living.

If households fall below either one or both of these thresholds, it indicates that some kind of intervention is necessary to protect livelihoods and/or save lives.

HEA requires the development of a livelihoods profile or “baseline” for each livelihoods zone in the geographic area of interest. This baseline information is then compared to forecast information based on a likely scenario or shock (for example, forecasted displacement or rain failure) to project and quantify how the predicted shock may affect a given population. This is called the Outcome Analysis. It can be used within contexts of slow and rapid onset crises. It identifies:

- whether families are able to meet their food needs (the survival threshold) and protect their livelihoods (the livelihoods protection threshold), and if they are not, when the livelihoods protection and/or survival deficits are likely to occur during the year;
- what types of coping strategies (if any) will poorer and better off households use to mitigate the shock;
- how many people will need assistance to meet their food needs and how much assistance is required (in kg of food and its equivalent cash value);

Because the HEA projects and quantifies the outcome of the shock, it is very useful in triggering the need for early action and timely response. Early action means acting based on forecasts and before the situation can be described as a crisis which is particularly pertinent in for slow-onset crises. Early action is different from a timely response in that it is based on projections and designed to mitigate the impact of a specific forecasted shock, whereas timely response comprises actions implemented in response to a shock, based on actual needs. Early action can enable households to avoid negative coping mechanism during the early stages of a slow onset crisis. If early action is not enough to mitigate an emerging crisis, it can be a vital bridge that supports families and their children during these early signs of deterioration until humanitarian scale-up is possible.

Using these definitions, the HEA outcome analysis can contribute towards early action, and also towards timely response if the early actions are not sufficient to mitigate the crisis.

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<sup>9</sup> This section has been informed by Achieving True Early Action (2018) written by Laura Swift for Save the Children.

Although often categorised as an FSL tool for having been developed by FSL experts, the HEA considers households' access to basic needs that are related to multiple programmatic areas and themes (education, health, etc.) thus producing information that could be found useful also outside of FSL programming.<sup>10</sup> More specifically, the HEA findings can be used to understand how the effect on livelihoods and income may eventually impact non-food expenditures.

As such, the BNA and the HEA Outcome Analysis complement each other in many ways. For other aspects, however, they investigate similar aspects of households' situation and needs following a shock or a crisis event.

Table 4: BNA vs. HEA

BNA	HEA
<p>One use: it is carried out after a shock</p>	<p>Several uses, including the following four:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. In a “normal year” as a livelihoods profile: “a baseline” of households’ access to food and income</li> <li>2. Before a forecasted shock to project possible shock impact on food and other needs: scenario development</li> <li>3. After a shock to model the impact of interventions: modelling</li> <li>4. After a shock to quantify the shock’s impact on households’ access to food and non-food needs</li> </ol>
<p>It produces information on the percentage of households in severe and moderate needs vs. those who are able to cope, by type of affected group and geographic area.</p>	<p>It produces information on type (wealth group) and number of households that require assistance, as well as the amount of food (in kcal and cash equivalent) and duration and timing of assistance required.</p>
<p>It informs on the level, type, and causes of unmet basic needs, as well as priorities and preferences for assistance by the affected population as well as most suitable type of intervention based on barrier experienced by the affected population.</p>	<p>It informs on the level of needs based on the most likely scenario and against two thresholds: (1) survival needs (basic food, water, food preparation) (2) livelihoods protection (survival + basic non-food needs, including health care, education, etc)</p>
<p>To inform timely emergency response</p>	<p>To inform early action and response</p>
<p>It does not require a baseline</p>	<p>It requires a baseline, which can be carried out after the shock</p>
<p>It informs multi-sectoral assistance</p>	<p>It informs food and livelihoods assistance</p>
<p>The geographic unit is an administrative area</p>	<p>The geographic unit is the livelihoods zone</p>
<p>It is based on quantitative primary data collection and analysis techniques</p>	<p>It is based on qualitative primary data collection and analysis techniques (i.e. FGD)</p>

<sup>10</sup> With the development of a multi sectoral expenditure basket and subsequent HEA threshold, the HEA can also inform cash-based responses in multiple sectors. For further information, please refer to the report “[Sector Minimum Expenditure Baskets, HEA Resilience Study](#)”.

## Maximising complementarity and minimising duplication between the BNA and HEA Outcome Analysis

Where early action has been taken, but has not been sufficient to mitigate a crisis,, both BNA and HEA can be used – although producing different deliverables – to inform a timely response.

When the conditions below apply, primary data collection for the BNA should be planned and designed in a way to optimise the complementarities between the BNA and HEA Outcome Analysis and minimise areas of duplication and inefficiencies.

For instance, if an outcome analysis has already been carried out, it should be included in the review of secondary data that informs the BNA design, planning, and analysis. In this way, if early actions were carried out based on the outcome analysis results, they can be taken into consideration by the BNA. Moreover, the outcome analysis results can be used to triangulate BNA information in terms of the type and number of households that require assistance, as well as the amount and duration of food and livelihoods assistance that is required.

### Box 5: Conditions under which BNA questions can be dropped in presence of an HEA Outcome Analysis



As shown in **Error! Reference source not found.** and **Error! Reference source not found.**, some of the questions contained in the BNA questionnaires are also explored through the HEA methodology, although not through household survey, or structured interviews with communities, but through Focus Group Discussions.

As advised in the section “**Error! Reference source not found.**”, the questionnaires would have to be adapted following a review of secondary data and the identification gaps.

Below are the conditions under which it is possible to consider dropping BNA questions that may be covered in the HEA Outcome Analysis (all must apply):

- The HEA baseline or Outcome Analysis has been carried out after the shock/crisis event that triggered the BNA;
- The HEA Outcome Analysis covers the same groups of interest and locations as in BNA plan;
- BNA questions (see **Error! Reference source not found.** and **Error! Reference source not found.** for a summary) were asked in the HEA Outcome Analysis to the same groups and in the same locations.

The following modules of the BNA, however, should be considered as core and should not be removed:

- From the HII (**Error! Reference source not found.**): module E (except questions E5 and E6 which may be covered in HEA Baseline and HEA Outcome Analysis); module F; module G.
- From the CDG (**Error! Reference source not found.**): module B, C, D (except question D3 which may be covered in HEA Outcome Analysis).

The following points should be considered when designing the BNA:

*Contexts with displaced populations.* The BNA can collect information relating to three overarching groups: displaced populations; host communities; and communities affected by a sudden crisis or change in the humanitarian situation who are neither displaced nor hosting displaced people i.e. they are experiencing the crisis / change in situation in their otherwise normal place of dwelling. The HEA does not systematically provide information on displaced populations, hence the BNA would likely have to be used to collect information about/from them. For the sake of findings comparability across groups, it may be necessary to conduct a BNA even when the HEA Outcome Analysis for the non-displaced groups exists.

*Levels of vulnerability within the affected population.* The HEA breaks down the affected population into wealth groups (groups of households within the same community who share similar capacities to exploit the different food and income options within a particular livelihood zone<sup>11</sup>) and so can provide disaggregated data on the ability of these different wealth groups to meet the survival and livelihoods protection thresholds. This can assist in identification and subsequent targeting of the most vulnerable households. Therefore, where an HEA outcome analysis exists, the geographic scope and the groups for the BNA sampling can be decided based on the HEA livelihoods zoning findings and the wealth groups.

#### *Data on income sources:*

- Both the BNA and HEA collect data regarding income sources. The HEA collects more detailed data on income sources in order to be able to more accurately quantify income (for example: number of casual labour days worked per month, and daily rate earned). During BNA design it should be considered if this HEA Outcome Analysis data is sufficient (provided that the conditions in the box above apply) or if the BNA can collect a complimentary data set on income sources;
- The HEA complements information/data on income (sources and quantities) with information/data on food (sources and quantities). This is quantified in terms of cash and kcal and is important to understand because households often have several different food sources (not just purchases or self-production). This could complement the income source data collected by the BNA or in some contexts may mean that the BNA does not need to collect data on income sources if robust HEA Outcome Analysis already exists and provided that the conditions in the box above apply.

#### *Ability to access essential goods and services:*

- The BNA explores some of the non-financial barriers to a household's ability to access essential goods and services which the HEA Outcome Analysis does not. In addition, the latter does not directly ask why needs are not met, but – by exploring expenditures levels and structures before and after the crisis – it points at possible limitations in households' purchasing power.
- Many of the non-food items/services that are inquired about in the BNA are part of the HEA's livelihoods protection basket e.g. health care, education, household commodities, and some non-food items/services would even fall into the survival basket e.g. productive assets, transport, shelter, etc. Therefore, the HEA protection basket results should be used to identify what non-food items/services data the BNA needs to collect.

Compared to when they are carried out individually, when taken together these two data sets could provide a more complete picture to understand current and projected financial access to critical goods and services – and subsequently calculating appropriate transfer values and selecting relevant interventions. Obviously, the decision will have to consider availability of time and human and financial resources.

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<sup>11</sup> The Practitioners Guide to the HEA, Tanya Boudreau, FEG and Save the Children

## 2.5 Interoperability between BNA and Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping unit of the World Food Programme (WFP VAM)

### Introduction to WFP VAM

Prior to the design of operations in any country, WFP's [Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping \(VAM\)](#) function undertakes analyses of the food security situation of the whole population - or specific subset of it – living in the countries where WFP operates. VAM collect and elaborates this information to inform programme design by WFP, local institutions and other partners to best meet the needs of the population.

WFP VAM adapts the approach to meet specific information gaps in all types of contexts, from sudden-onset emergencies to protracted and chronic crises. Tools used range from FGDs, KIIs, direct observation, and community-based discussions, to more quantitative approaches typically conducted through household surveys with a representative (or purposive) sample.

Whilst the main focus of WFP VAM unit remains analysing food security, the information collected through these routine assessments typically goes beyond the dimensions directly associated with food security and can be used as secondary data to inform a BNA and/or other (sectoral) assessments.

Understanding what data points are collected by VAM will help defining the scope of the BNA and vice-versa, depending on the sequence with which they are carried out. The ultimate intention is to avoid duplication and maximise complementarity of scope. The following section provides an overview of the types of data that are often collected by VAM and will help in the above.

It is important to bear in mind that the dataset collected by VAM varies in contents and frequency across countries. However, the fact that VAM collects data in the majority of the over 80 countries where WFO operates is in itself a major advantage for the BNA, offering a range of useful data for secondary data analysis. Oftentimes, in addition to food security-related modules, VAM surveys include modules on:

- family composition
- livelihoods and income
- WASH and shelter conditions
- specific challenges faced by communities and households (including shocks, health, education etc).

Box 6 contains a list of possible assessment methodologies used by VAM.

#### Box 6: Assessment methodologies used by WFP VAM

Depending on the situation, VAM may conduct one of the several types of assessments, of which the most common ones include:

- Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis (**CFSVAs**<sup>12</sup>)
- Emergency Food Security Assessments (**EFSAs**<sup>13</sup>)

<sup>12</sup> [WFP, CFSVA guidelines 2009](#)

<sup>13</sup> [WFP, EFSAs handbook, 2009](#)

- Food Security Monitoring System surveys (**FSMS**<sup>14</sup>, often conducted through mobile Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping tools (**mVAM**<sup>15</sup>))
- Crop and Food Security Assessment Mission (**CFSAM**<sup>16</sup>), undertaken jointly with Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
- Joint Assessment Mission (**JAM**<sup>17</sup>), conducted in collaboration with UNHCR since 1994 to understand the situation, profiles and needs of refugees, internally displaced people (IDPs) and host populations, particularly with regards to **food security** and **nutrition**.
- **Food markets** analyses, profiling and assessments<sup>18</sup>

The assessments can also take on specific approaches, including:

- Preventive repositories of data for immediate response (72-hours guidance);<sup>19</sup>
- In-depth joint assessments on food insecurity and nutrition status to identify the direct and indirect determinants of malnutrition (JANFSA<sup>20</sup>);
- Urban vulnerability assessment;
- Essential needs assessment (ENA).

WFP is also an active partner of the Integrated food security Phase Classification platforms (IPC).

### Overview of the Essential Needs Assessment (ENA) set of assessments

The ENA, which is mentioned in Box 6, is a set of three types of assessments (needs, expenditures, markets for essential goods and services) on which WFP is currently working, and that is based on WFP's traditional approaches to vulnerability analysis and mapping as well as reference papers.<sup>21</sup> Their main intended users are WFP officers. Below is a brief overview of what the ENA is, whilst the next section provides some reflections around the interoperability between BNA and ENA.

Food is a central component of households' consumption and is often the need to which they allocate most of their resources and budget. Nonetheless, other needs interact with food security, be it in competition for household resources, or rather enabling it in the short, medium or longer-term. Therefore, to truly understand food security, analysts must adopt a holistic approach that explores the interactions between food security and other goods, assets, opportunities and services required by a household to meet essential needs.

To do so, since 2017, WFP VAM and Cash Based Transfer units are collaborating to assess the ability of population and beneficiaries to meet essential needs.<sup>22</sup> In July 2018, WFP has produced a draft Essential Needs Assessment (ENA) guidance to profile populations who are unable to meet their essential needs and to monitor outcomes of programme response (see link in footnote).

<sup>14</sup> [WFP FSMS guidelines, 2012](#)

<sup>15</sup> [WFP mVAM Field book, 2017](#)

<sup>16</sup> [FAO/WFP CFSAM guidelines, 2009](#)

<sup>17</sup> [WFP/UNHCR JAM guidelines, 2008](#)

<sup>18</sup> [WFP Market Analysis guidelines, 2017](#)

<sup>19</sup> [WFP 72 hours guidelines, 2018](#)

<sup>20</sup> [WFP/UNICEF JANFSA guidelines, 2017](#)

<sup>21</sup> These guidelines can be downloaded from the link [https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000074197/download/?\\_ga=2.239110979.1347722520.1536231552-1089472996.1536231552](https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000074197/download/?_ga=2.239110979.1347722520.1536231552-1089472996.1536231552)

<sup>22</sup> WFP applies the same definition of needs from ILO as the one in used in this report.



Like with the BNA, the intention of the ENA is to inform multi-sectorial programme response by the agency and partners. They are both based on a same definition of basic needs.

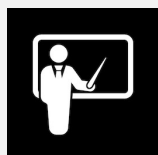
As mentioned above, the ENA guidance comprises three elements, each comparable in intent to other existing assessment methodologies and guidance mentioned in Table 5 below.

Table 5: ENA vs. other assessments

ENA element	Other methodologies on the topic
<p><b>1</b> The Essential Needs Assessment (ENA) It is aimed at profiling and monitoring populations unable to meet their needs. This allows to understand what people's essential needs in a specific context are.</p>	<p>BNA HEA (especially for food)</p>
<p><b>2</b> The Minimum Expenditure Basket guidelines They explain the basic steps to construct an MEB, and which can be used to identify households in a target population who are below it, and who are assumed not to have sufficient purchasing power to meet their essential needs. This piece of information tells what portion of the basket remains uncovered.</p>	<p>Section in Response Options Analysis and Planning (ROAP) on how to calculate the MEB HEA resilience study on building sector minimum expenditure baskets (6-step process)</p>
<p><b>3</b> The Supply Assessment (SA) of goods and services available and accessible to cover essential needs, which intends to define if and to what extent markets are able to satisfy essential needs of the population of interest. This tells which of the essential needs can be covered through the market.</p>	<p>UNHCR's Multi-sector Market Assessment (MSMA) Other market assessment methodologies</p>

## Maximising complementarity and minimising duplication between the BNA and VAM Standard Assessments

Lesson learned 2: Modular approach to facilitate interoperability with other assessment methodologies



The importance of adopting a modular approach in designing the data collection and the data analysis guidance that goes with them, is one of the main recommendations made at the ERC Consortium final symposium, held in Addis Ababa on 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> April.

The BNA clearly fills some critical information gaps, i.e. data points may not be covered by any other (needs) assessments currently in use. Other components of the BNA, instead, are somehow also covered by other assessments, albeit in different ways. This relationship of complementarity or overlap should be addressed on a case-by-case basis by determining the interoperability of these tools and being selective about the use of the tools' components.

For instance, in scenarios where the VAM is planning to conduct assessments, specific elements/modules/questions from the BNA could be added to the VAM questionnaires, according to what information is required. The same applies to the HEA. This is possible thanks to the modular approach adopted in the BNA data collection and analysis tools and guidance. The modules can be picked from the questionnaires on a need basis.

Based on the above, when initiating the BNA, the assessment team should get in touch with WFP Country Office and take stock of the information generated by the VAM unit on ad-hoc or regular basis, for the geographic areas and population groups of interest. Ideally, the BNA should be designed



and conducted in coordination with VAM staff, regardless of the context (refugee/IDP camps, urban settings, rural areas, post-disaster or chronic crisis).

In addition, data from existing baselines conducted by WFP could be considered to assess sectorial information gaps and for monitoring trends, if the population of interest for the BNA team is the same as that analysed by WFP. Likewise, if the BNA is carried out before the ENA, and in the same geographic areas, WFP VAM can refer to the BNA to avoid duplication. The findings from one assessment, and especially the indicators that are specific to each of them, can corroborate the findings from the other. Below is a comparison of the BNA versus the ENA, similar to the one illustrating similarities and complementarities between the BNA and the HEA in Table 4.

Table 6: The BNA vs. the ENA

BNA	ENA
<p>Multi-stakeholder, quantitative approach to primary data collection and analysis through both HH surveys and structured community interviews, complemented by secondary data review and experts' opinions</p>	<p>Multi-stakeholders approach, in which the qualitative approach is used as preliminary data collection tool ahead of in-depth HH surveys. In rapid ENAs, the qualitative tool is used as main if not the only tool. FGSs should be run before as well as after HH surveys.</p>
<p>Step-by-step guidelines for all steps of the assessment, from planning to data collection, analysis, and reporting. Response analysis is contained in the ROAP</p>	<p>In-depth description of the process of analysis</p>
<p>Establishes portion of households in need and households' capacity to meet basic needs based on: current expenditures versus minimum quantities of goods and services to be consumed; a <i>severity index</i> based on 'sufficiency' (current capacity to access); 'humanitarian outcome' (concerns for disruption in the next months)</p>	<p>Establishes portion of households in need and households' capacity to meet basic needs based on: current expenditures against the MEB, and the Multi-dimensional poverty Index (MPI). The latter helps detecting sectorial gaps in the following dimensions: health, education, living conditions, access to food, income opportunities</p>
<p>Uses perception indicators, as well as coping strategy indicators, savings, income, and debt, that explain what households "sacrifice" in order to meet certain needs and – as a result – why certain needs are met and others are not</p> <p>MEB not calculated based on expenditures but based on minimum quantities to be consumed according to households' views. It allows an analysis by household size and it is people centred</p>	<p>Uses households' perceptions to corroborate indicators (e.g. coping strategy indicators and debt) to gain an understanding of why certain needs are met as opposed to others</p> <p>MEB calculated based on expenditures, or a rights-based approach, or a blend of the two. This depends mainly on the type of emergency, availability of data, objective of the survey</p>
<p>The BNA collects current expenditures data through the household interviews, and seasonality of expenditures through the structured communities' interviews</p>	<p>The ENA collects households' current expenditures data that can be used to corroborate the seasonal calendar of expenditures collected through the BNA</p>
<p>Fit for post-disaster assessments, including rapid-type ones</p>	<p>Fit for post-disaster assessments, including rapid-type ones</p>
<p>The BNA is an assessment of the needs only (as suggested by its name); it focuses on demand side of markets, not the supply</p>	<p>The package contains three assessments, including: the ENA, which assesses the demand side; and the SA, which assesses the supply side</p>
<p>The BNA offers guidance for all steps of the assessment, and does not require specific training</p>	<p>ENA guidance focuses more on the analytical use of various approaches, tools and combinations of indicators for an audience</p>



## 2.6 Interoperability between BNA and ROAP

The BNA analytical framework links to the ROAP in a way to approach situational and response analysis logically, systematically and provides a clear driving force behind lines of inquiries. Using the framework ensures that situational and response analysis are conducted comprehensively and focus on key information needs, and that key concerns are not overlooked. In addition, the framework:

- Underpins, support and guides the collection, collation, and analysis of secondary and primary data by providing with key analytical outputs and how they intersect analytically
- Provides a way to organize what data to collect and how to analyse it, including how information intersect analytically
- Supports a common analysis of where unmet needs have the most severe humanitarian outcomes, which geographical areas and population groups are a priority for intervention
- Serves as a communication tool between stakeholders and should be considered as a reference throughout the needs assessment process.

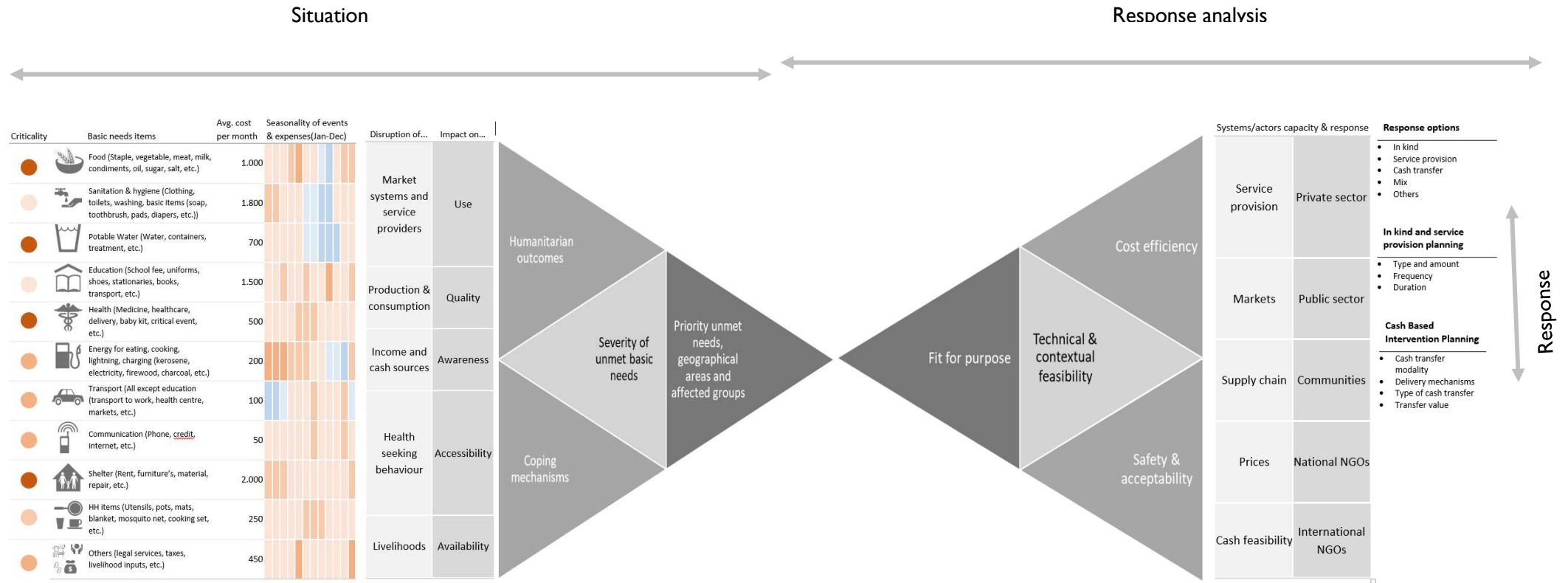
The framework (Figure 6 below) groups analytical outputs under two pivotal areas, situation and response analysis. The diagram below describes the themes and analytical outputs.

- The situation analysis is concerned with the identification of unmet basic needs, priority humanitarian outcomes, underlying factors as well as coping mechanisms. The main analytical output of the situation analysis is the identification of the severity of unmet needs, based on degree of deprivation and humanitarian outcomes and finally establish key priorities (basic unmet needs across sectors, affected groups, geographical areas).
- The Response analysis is concerned with the identification of appropriate and relevant response options to the problems identified and allow to strategically plan and design the humanitarian response.

### *Box 7: Characteristics of the BNA analytical framework*

- The BNA is forward looking and requires understanding current AND forecasted humanitarian outcomes, to ensure analysis covers the period during which programmes will take place.
- There is no universal list of basic needs and they will often vary based on context. Similarly, not all basic needs have the same importance and contribute the same way to living standards. In each context, it will be important to adapt the list of basic needs and define their criticality regarding health/survival, dignity and personal development, using participatory approaches.
- The framework helps to identify unmet basic needs with the most significant humanitarian outcomes. Understanding the severity of humanitarian outcomes (degree of harm or undesirable effect) allows the determination of priorities. Priorities are established across basic needs, geographical areas and population groups.
- The framework requires an understanding of the monthly household expenditures related to each basic service and good, and the evolution of consumption over time (seasonal, one off or exceptional costs) in the specific context in order to allow for the design of cash-based interventions in cases where they are relevant and feasible.

Figure 6: The BNA analytical framework



By default, BNA analyses data for each basic need and includes a forecasting of humanitarian outcomes. The analysis should also highlight the spread and magnitude of impacts, conditions, and experiences across different categories of interest (i.e. impact of the crisis on people in coastal areas vs. people in mountainous areas, etc.).

The analytical focus and the categories of analysis should be decided upfront so the secondary and primary data collection allow for the relevant disaggregation, and provide sufficient usable information to allow meaningful comparison between categories. Two main groups of categories of analysis are frequently used for humanitarian analysis, one related to spatial characteristics and the other based on population groups.

Spatial characteristics	Population groups
<p><b>Administrative area</b>, i.e. province/district A vs. province/district B. Comparative analysis between different administrative divisions is used to answer question such as: Which province/district has been the most severely affected by the typhoon?</p>	<p><b>Affected groups</b>, i.e. IDPS/affected residents. Comparative analysis between affected groups is used to answer question such as: are certain groups more affected /exposed to more risks than others? How do different groups cope with the emergency situation?</p>
<p><b>Setting</b>, i.e. urban/rural, coastal/inland, etc. Comparative analysis between different settings is used to answer questions such as: is the population affected differently according to the setting they are in?</p>	<p><b>Vulnerable groups</b>, i.e. elderly people, people living with disabilities, socially marginalized groups, LGBTI, etc. Comparative analysis between vulnerable groups is used to answer the question: how are sub-groups of the population--such as Households with persons with disabilities or from ethnic/religious minorities--affected differently, and to what extent are existing vulnerabilities exacerbated by the crisis?</p>
<p><b>Distance</b>, i.e. distance to storm track, the conflict zone or the earthquake epicentre, etc. Comparative analysis between different locations is used to answer questions such as: Are humanitarian needs greater when nearer to the eye of the storm than in other places? Are people in high-conflict-intensity areas more affected than others?</p>	<p><b>Socio-economic groups</b>, i.e. farmers/pastoralists, religion, ethnic group. Comparative analysis between socio-economic groups is used to answer questions such as: are fishermen more affected by the tsunami than farmers? Are certain wealth groups more affected due to their source of income?</p>
<p><b>Composite</b>, i.e. geographical areas with high density of population within 50 km of the epicentre of the earthquake vs. other geographical areas. Comparative analysis between different composite variables is used to answer questions such as: is the humanitarian impact in coastal areas affected by tidal surge greater than in inland areas affected by extreme winds?</p>	<p><b>Sex and age</b>, i.e. male/female, age intervals covering children, adults and older people. Comparative analysis between male and female or age intervals is used to answer questions such as: are female and male populations from various age groups (young children, adolescents, adults, and older people) affected differently? How do existing gender inequalities contribute to the social and economic vulnerability of the population? Does the crisis exacerbate existing gender- and age-based discrimination? Are different priority needs expressed by the male and female population?</p>

The choice of categories of analysis will affect the sampling strategy and the size of the sample; in practical terms, the higher the number of categories of analysis (or strata), the larger the number of interviews to be conducted. Hence, the number of categories of analysis will have to fit with existing resources, logistical constraints, as well as data collection and analytical capacities. In most situations, it is recommended to limit the number of categories of analysis and comparisons to two or three as a maximum, in order not to delay the final conclusions and results. Subsequent assessments will allow to answer more specific questions or go deeper into certain categories, if necessary.