

STEP 7

Gap analysis



Photo credit: Geoff Sayer/Oxfam

Handing out mosquito nets in Bubulo village, Uganda

Step 7 completes the gap-analysis strand. It should produce a final estimate of the total shortfall or gap which the target population is facing for the critical item or service. This estimate will be needed by the EMMA team in Step 8 to assess whether, and to what extent, the critical market system is able to fill the gap.



Before starting Step 7, you will have...

- o investigated and confirmed the high-priority needs of households in each target group;
- o sketched outlines of household economic profiles and seasonal factors;
- o investigated any constraints on their access to the critical market system;
- o consulted target groups on their ideas and preferences for humanitarian assistance.

7.1 Overview of Step 7

Objectives

- Calculate the magnitude of emergency response required, based on a good-enough estimate of the total gap that the target population is facing.
- Analyse how important the gaps are within the economic profiles of different target groups, and factor in their preferences for the form of assistance offered.
- Draw conclusions about any key factors influencing different target groups' access to the market system.

Activities

Compile data

- Compile all available qualitative information about priority needs, preferences, and access constraints (from background research, emergency needs assessments, interview records, and field notes).
- Sort and compile all quantitative data (from household surveys and interview data sheets).

Analysis and interpretation

- Draw conclusions about target groups' priority needs, access constraints, and preferences.
- Estimate the total gap that the target population faces.

Key outputs

- A simple report table (e.g. Box 7.1) which summarizes the most essential details and characteristics of each of the target groups – their numbers, locations, income profile
- A more detailed matrix (e.g. Box 7.2) which quantifies the priority needs for each target group, and shows the total gap estimated for the target population
- Information about the likely duration of gaps, the access constraints, and the preferences expressed by different target groups about the form of assistance that they need
- Notes to record the assumptions made in estimating these numbers, and highlighting any significant risks (e.g. a delay in expected assistance from another agency)

7.2 Target population: essential details

The first output is a final table summarizing general information about the target population: their numbers, location, and essential characteristics from an EMMA perspective. This table is a final version of Box 1.7, first drafted in Step 1, but with details enriched and confirmed by the household survey / interviews in Step 5.

This table will also answer the fundamental humanitarian questions:

- What is the geographic area in greatest need of assistance?
- Who are those who are most in need of assistance or most at risk?
- How many people are at risk and/or in need of assistance?

If the affected population was divided into target groups in the field work, this table will break down the information accordingly. The final EMMA report may also require a brief explanation of why separate target groups were chosen and defined in this way.

<i>Target groups</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Essential characteristics</i>
1. Rural landless households	42,000	35,000	~ 130 villages in the valleys south of Geld	Typically rely on seasonal work for maize farmers. Facing no income from agricultural work until at least March next year.
2. Rural subsistence small-holders	21,000	15,000		Typically rely on production of food staples (beans, cassava) for 40–60% of food needs. Most lost 90% of own crops and stored food.
3. Extra-vulnerable urban households	12,000	5,000	Geld, Madi and 3 small towns	Typically rely on occasional casual labour, charity, and remittances from relatives. Badly affected by rising food prices.
Total population	75,000	55,000		



7.3 Numerical gap analysis

The second task is to produce a gap analysis (Box 7.3) which sums up EMMA's best estimate of the total 'gaps' facing the target population. This finding will be used in Step 8 especially.

The nature of this 'gap' depends on the reason why the market system was selected as critical. See Box 7.2.

Box 7.2 Reasons why a market system might be critical	
<i>Why system is critical</i>	<i>Nature of gap</i>
It supplies food or items needed for ensuring survival	Shortfall between what households have and what is required to meet minimum standards for protecting life (c.f. Sphere)
It supplies inputs or assets for protecting livelihoods	Shortfall in inputs, assets, or services that households need to protect and sustain livelihood activities (e.g. food production)
It provides income, wages, or access to buyers	Loss of opportunity to sell labour, livestock, surplus produce, etc. which households need in order to earn a minimum essential income

The reasons may vary from one target group to another within the same market system. For example, the beans market system in Haiti (Box 6.1) was critical as a source of food for urban and landless rural households. But it was also critical as a source of income for many women producers on rural small-holdings.

Alongside numerical estimates, the gap-analysis table should include information about the following factors:

- *duration*: how long the specific gap is expected to last;
- *preferences*: target households' wishes about the form that assistance takes;
- *other assistance*: e.g. distributions from other agencies / government, or appeals in the pipeline.

Box 7.3 Summary of gap analysis – example						
<i>Target group</i>	<i>H-h in need</i>	<i>Household shortfall*</i>	<i>Other aid</i>	<i>Total gap</i>	<i>Likely gap duration</i>	<i>Prefs for help</i>
Rural landless households	20,000	10 kg/week	–	200 tonnes per week	Thru to end of August	Mostly In-kind
Rural subsistence farmers	14,000	4 kg/week food needs (+\$10/week lost income)	–	55 tonnes per week	Thru to end of June (next harvest)	Mostly cash
Vulnerable urban households	9,000	5 kg/week (due to high prices)	10 tons per week (Church)	35 tonnes per week	Until prices return to normal	Mostly cash
TOTAL	43,000			290 tonnes per week		

How to do this

- Draw upon existing emergency needs assessments, which may have detailed information on priority needs (especially for food and essential items).
- Collate your findings about household consumption, stocks, and shortfalls from the sample interviews with affected households.
- Use the seasonal calendar (see below) to inform the estimates of likely duration of shortfall (e.g. by considering seasonal patterns in prices and availability).
- Record any assumptions that you make about planned or actual assistance from other agencies.

UN cluster meetings (when well run) can play an important role in gap analysis – especially for high-priority items like food, shelter materials, and WASH items. They will often be the best source of information about the plans of all other agencies.

Minimum standards

For minimum nutritional dietary requirements, see Sphere standards and rations information in the WFP EFSa handbook (WFP 2009). The NutVal site (www.nutval.net) provides a spreadsheet application for planning and monitoring the nutritional content of general food-aid rations.

Estimates of shortfalls may need to take account of household stocks, including standing crops. See Box 7.4.

Box 7.4 Allowing for stocks in estimating gaps

Assume you find that normal household consumption is about 20 kg / week	
And you find household stocks left after shock	= 70 kg
Plus expected harvest from damaged crops	= 200 kg
Total	= 270 kg
Length of time stocks at this time of year are normally expected to last = 30 weeks	
Then SHORTFALL for next 30 weeks = $20 - (270 / 30) = 11$ kg per week	

For other minimum standards for meeting emergency needs, see Sphere standards. For minimum income requirements, the Household Economy Approach definitions are useful; see Box 7.5.

Box 7.5 HEA definitions for essential income requirements

The survival threshold represents the total income required to cover:

- a) 100% of minimum food-energy needs (2,100 kcals per person), plus
- b) costs associated with food preparation and consumption (e.g. salt, soap, kerosene and/or firewood for cooking and basic lighting), plus
- c) any expenditure on water for human consumption.

The livelihoods-protection threshold represents the total income required to sustain local livelihoods. This means total expenditure to:

- a) ensure basic survival (see above), plus
- b) maintain access to basic services (e.g. routine medical and schooling expenses), plus
- c) sustain livelihoods in the medium to longer term (e.g. regular purchases of seeds, fertilizer, veterinary drugs, etc.), plus
- d) achieve a minimum locally acceptable standard of living (e.g. purchase of basic clothing, coffee/tea).

Source: FEG Consulting and Save the Children, 2008

7.4 Qualitative aspects of gap analysis

The numerical gap analysis is usually only part of the picture. It needs to be backed up by careful consideration of any significant qualitative issues and contexts identified during the fieldwork (Step 5), as follows.

Qualitative factors or contexts

- Constraints on women's and men's physical access to the market system
- Transport needs related to market access
- Ethnic, gender-related, or other social barriers to participation or access in the system
- Seasonal factors (other than duration of shortfall)
- Particular impacts that affect different target groups in different ways
- Particular coping strategies that are being used to meet this priority need
- Particular preferences or ideas about the response options
- Specific risks or problems that rule out any of the preliminary response options

These types of finding must be identified and recorded. They will often contribute ideas for response options in Step 9, and must influence the decisions and recommendations made at that point. Remember that diverse groups, especially women and men, experience the impact of emergencies differently. Their needs, preferences, and opportunities cannot be assumed to be the same.

Box 7.6 Preferences for alternative forms of assistance

In 2008, IRC conducted a study of the firewood market system in camps for internally displaced people in Pakistan’s North-West Frontier Province, since obtaining fuel for cooking was a major problem and risk for women and children. An initial analytical issue was whether women would prefer cash or physical distributions of firewood. Women in the camps actually reported a preference for distributions of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) for cooking. Adoption of LPG would save women’s time – when they are already over-burdened with emergency-related responsibilities. It would also reduce local environmental damage and risks for children associated with scavenging for wood.

Qualitative factors are likely to be especially significant and powerful issues in conflict settings, and also in situations where different target groups have very distinct needs or perspectives.

How to do this

- Review interviews with key informants who are most knowledgeable about the emergency context.
- Review field notes from household interviews.
- Analyse a seasonal calendar for the different household target groups (see Box 7.7).
- Analyse changes in household economic profile (see Box 7.8) (income markets especially).

7.5 Household seasonal calendar

If seasonal factors are likely to be particularly important – for example in forming people’s preferences or determining the duration of gaps – then a household-level calendar can be useful as a way of collating and summarizing information from household interviews. See Box 7.7.

Box 7.7 Household seasonal calendar – example												
<i>Target group</i>	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A
<i>Women's roles</i>												
Income levels			Low					High				
Loan repayments					\$		\$				\$	
Holiday / festivities					\$					\$		
School terms		Term A							Term B			
Shelter activities			Brick making						Thatch			
<i>Men's roles</i>												
Fodder availability									Low			
Livestock moves		Low ground					High ground					
Casual employment		\$					\$					

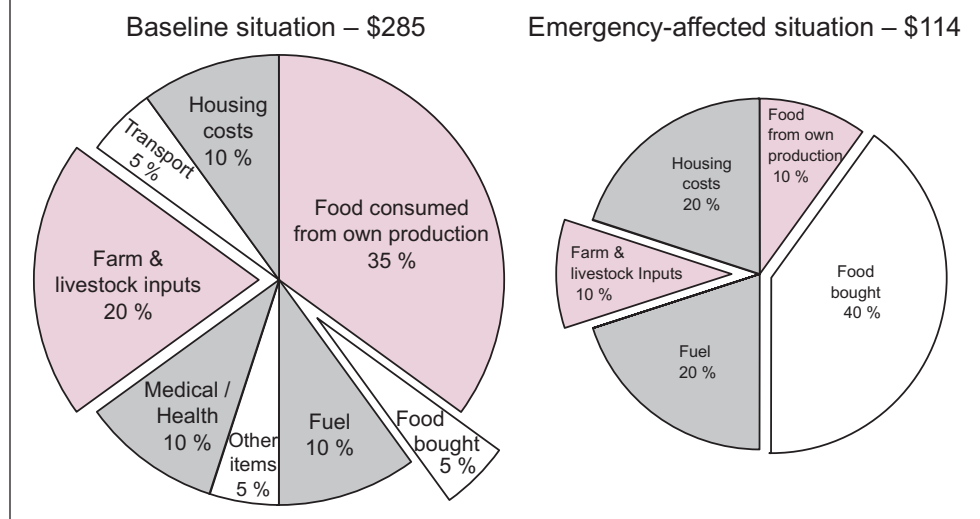
Remember to think about the different roles and responsibilities that are assumed by women and men within households. It may be valuable to separate these clearly in the seasonal calendar, so that differences in impacts and needs are clearly recognized.

7.6 Household income and expenditure profiles

The introductory chapter gives an overview of this tool in section 0.9. The main value of these profiles for EMMA comes from examination of changes in people's income or expenditure patterns as a result of the crisis. For further information, see FEG Consulting and Save the Children, 2008.

Detailed profiles of household income and expenditure (e.g. Boxes 0.16 and 0.17) may be especially valuable for EMMA exercises where medium-term or long-term (e.g. one-year or two-year) programmes towards economic recovery are envisaged. This is more likely in EMMA studies of income market systems. Do not wait until the emergency phase is over before starting this

If you have very little time, your priority should be to find out how the income or expenditure associated with the critical market system has changed. How have changes in income been accommodated by households in their consumption patterns? See Box 7.8.

Box 7.8 Changes to expenditure profile – example**Box 7.9 Simple analysis of changes in household income and expenditure**

	<i>Baseline</i>		<i>Emergency</i>	
Total income (including self-consumed produce)	\$30		\$20	
Monthly income – agricultural labour	\$20	65%	\$5	25%
Monthly expenditure – beans	\$10	30%	\$15	75%

How to analyse income and expenditure profiles

- Remember to distinguish between income sources and financial responsibilities of women and men within households wherever possible.
- Look for trends and changes in relative proportions – in expenses, in incomes, in benefits.
- Look for basic capacity to meet needs (e.g. food basket).
- Look especially at the role of remittances and loans.
- Relate findings to the other qualitative results described above.
- Highlight long-term negative coping strategies (e.g. failure to feed or treat livestock, reduced agricultural inputs, withdrawing children from school).
- Look at unusual and striking findings (e.g. a high proportion of expenditure on particular items such as soap, sugar).

Checklist for Step 7

- o Essential details about target population
- o Summary of gap analysis (numerical data)
- o Qualitative issues and preferences of target groups
- o Seasonal calendar
- o Changes to households' income and expenditure profiles