



CHAPTER

2

Managing the implementation of a CFSVA

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The CFSVA process must be carefully managed. It has a number of moving parts that, when they work together, result in high-quality information useful for programming and accountability. Therefore, when adequate time and resources are invested in managing the process, the end result is a product that is useful and of high value.

2.2 INITIAL STEPS FOR SMOOTH IMPLEMENTATION

Adhering to the following sequence of steps encourages the smooth implementation of a CFSVA.

Box 2.1: Steps for implementing a CFSVA

- Country offices, in agreement with their local partners and government agencies (e.g. through an established committee on food security), inform the regional bureau and Headquarters about the necessity of undertaking a CFSVA.
- Headquarters, regional bureaux, and country offices determine the scope of the study and finalize funding and potential sources.
- All partners (including country offices, regional bureaux, and Headquarters) agree on their respective roles during the entire CFSVA process and include this in the study's terms of reference.
- Communication and management lines are established at the country office, regional bureau, and Headquarters.
- The country office requests permission from the national authorities to undertake a country-wide survey.
- The country office, regional bureau, and Headquarters identify and deploy qualified staff/consultants to lead the management and technical aspects of the study.
- Results are shared with local partners/government agencies for discussion.
- The report is finalized.
- The report is officially launched.
- The results are incorporated into country office planning and government food security initiatives.
- The relevance of the CFSVA is periodically reviewed to determine when a new CFSVA is required.

2.3 SCOPE OF A CFSVA

The level of resources required to conduct a CFSVA depends on a number of factors, including:

- the number of partners involved and their total contribution (financial, logistical, and/or human resources);
- the size of the sample for the quantitative survey;
- the amount of qualitative information employed to complement the quantitative survey;
- the amount of external assistance used to manage and conduct the literature review, survey, and analysis of primary and secondary data; and
- the costs associated with the survey logistics.

Costs can vary greatly due to the variable contexts within which CFSVAs are conducted. CFSVAs are not necessarily more expensive than large rapid assessments, but they can be costly if a large household survey is included. Large surveys on the order of 2,000 to 3,000 households can easily cost in the range of US\$75,000–US\$100,000⁹ and consume considerable staff time and effort. CFSVAs with larger samples covering many different locations cost well over US\$200,000.

Beyond the financial cost of conducting a CFSVA is the required level of effort. From initial planning to report writing, an assessment can typically last from four to nine months. It requires day-to-day management from WFP staff or contracted personnel (often an assessment coordinator, for example, a WFP staff member or consultant, is assigned full time to the effort). Some of the skills needed to plan and conduct a CFSVA (such as sampling design and data analysis) may not reside in the WFP country office conducting the CFSVA. When the required skills are not present, then the WFP project officer is more focused on managing the process, ensuring that appropriate procedures are followed and that the quality of the information is high. This role will also include administrative, communication, logistical, and other duties. This may mean that functions such as assessment design, sampling, data analysis, and reporting are contracted out to individuals or firms with the necessary skills for these technical areas.

2.4 MOBILIZING PARTNERS AND FUNDING

CFSVAs require specific skills, including quantitative methods with some grounding in basic statistics and experimental design, food security, livelihood security, qualitative data collection, and data analysis and interpretation. Aspects to be considered may include: production and marketing of food or cash crops; livestock, hunting, fishing, and gathering activities; wage employment; provision of skilled/ professional services; home production of items for sale; access to micro-finance services; access to markets; and power relationships.

Relevant expertise and practical experience must be mobilized to:

- help draw up the terms of reference for the assessment and elaborate the work plan;
- design the sampling strategy;
- design the logistic plan associated with data collection; and
- participate either in the assessment or in the selection of an appropriate entity to be commissioned to undertake it.

Such expertise may be mobilized within the country through:

- the UN country team — especially FAO for agriculture, forestry, livestock, and fisheries aspects; UNICEF for health, nutrition, and education aspects; and on occasion ILO, for employment, micro-finance, skills training, and income-generating aspects;
- national/governmental institutions, universities, specialized NGOs, and donor missions; and
- national and international consultants, accessed through either reputable firms or individuals.
- regional offices or WFP Headquarters may be able to assist in identifying appropriate assistance.

9. Direct costs for a CFSVA do not include the time and cost of core staff at Headquarters, regional bureaux, or country offices.

2.5 INITIAL PLANNING WITH PARTNERS

Once the need for a CFSVA has been identified and relevant national and international institutions have been invited to participate, the analysis is launched with an exploratory meeting. In many countries, the main food security actors have established committees to coordinate their activities, and such committees should be included in initial planning. At this meeting, all relevant partners confer upon managerial, financial, and technical aspects of the study. Meeting participants should:

- Gauge partner interest in participating;
- Determine if major partners are missing;
- Identify topics of particular interest to partners;
- Get an overview of existing reports and data and determine the need for additional data collection;
- Highlight envisioned constraints, particularly the survey timing;
- Discuss proposed methodology;
- Agree on lead responsibility for literature review, secondary data analysis, and the survey modules;
- Propose methods of data collection, e.g. personal digital assistants (PDAs), paper forms;
- Review survey data use and ownership issues; and
- Identify support that partners could provide, including:
 - *Technical staff in their respective competencies;*
 - *Enumerators, field supervisors, team leaders;*
 - *Logistics;*
 - *Administrative; and*
 - *Financial.*

2.5.1 CFSVA planning and preparation

CFSVAs require careful planning and preparation. Following the initial meeting, an action plan with details of the overall approach must be developed. The plan will, at a minimum, include:

- Establishment of a CFSVA or Food Security Committee;
- A review of secondary data or literature as an initial source of information for planning;
- A definition of scope and objectives; and
- The terms of reference:
 - *assessment objectives;*
 - *a timetable for the entire process that specifies when each set of tasks must be started and completed;*
 - *roles, activities, and responsibilities for each participating member; and*
 - *geographic scope of the assessment.*
- Development of a sampling strategy in collaboration with partners;
- A methodological overview of data collection and the analytical approach to data analysis (production of an analysis plan);
- Site selection and rationale;
- Logistical planning;

- An estimate of total resources needed to implement the survey:
 - personnel;
 - survey equipment;
 - logistics; and
 - duration of fieldwork.
- Reporting processes; and
- Use of the information in food security interventions.

2.5.2 Establishing a CFSVA or food security committee

In many countries where WFP is a participant, and at times the lead agency, food security committees already exist. It is in the interest of WFP to use existing structures when possible. If a structure does not exist, it may be useful to establish a committee to:

- agree on the terms of reference and the selection of the CFSVA team (staff and/or consultants);
- create the opportunity for technical discussion within and among sectors;
- secure the collaboration of all parties in the field to facilitate the survey;
- get buy-in and support from various agencies;
- resolve any problems that arise;
- review the report and collaborate in following up on the findings and recommendations; and
- agree on the procedure for validating and disseminating the report.

Such a committee would normally include representatives of the same entities that could be involved in a joint assessment or review of the operation as a whole, namely: WFP (in particular, focal points from VAM, nutrition, and food security), interagency representative(s), one or more representatives from national and local government, one or two representatives of the major donors, and representatives of the major NGOs involved in food security and emergency response.

2.5.3 Defining scope and objectives

The scope of the assessment will vary according to the types of shocks experienced by areas or populations and by their relative impacts on the food security of particular households and communities. For example, sudden-onset disasters (floods, earthquakes, cyclones, etc.) may call for a different approach to assessing vulnerability than a slow-onset crisis such as drought, or a complex emergency involving violent conflict. Each of these scenarios might call for a different approach to CFSVA assessments in order to adequately address the food insecurity and vulnerability experienced by the given population.

Box 2.2: CFSVA objectives

- a) Answer the five key CFSVA questions.
- b) Train and capacity-build to enhance WFP staff and partner capabilities, particularly in-country, to manage and/or conduct such assessments.
- c) Answer additional questions introduced by WFP or key partners.

CFSVAs make use of systematic quantitative methods to estimate the prevalence of food insecurity vulnerability and its determinants, and to collect qualitative information and secondary data related to trends and risks. Triangulation using qualitative and quantitative methods permits identification of food-insecure and particularly vulnerable population groups. It also permits a more detailed understanding of livelihoods, and of the modalities and targeting for food and non-food aid that will best meet the needs of the population. Assumptions that describe causal relationships between two or more variables are developed based on the determined assessment objectives.

2.5.4 Develop the terms of reference

A CFSVA always requires clear terms of reference (TOR).¹⁰ The TOR for a CFSVA mission should include a rationale, the objectives and timing, roles, activities and responsibilities for each participating member, the phases, and the geographic scope of the assessment. The objectives are typically the five VAM questions (see section 1.3). The TOR should provide a timeline with a list of expected outputs. They also specify which partners are responsible for which outputs. For instance, who will analyse the data, and who is responsible for reporting, writing, approving, and disseminating the final document? The WFP country office is responsible for coordinating with local representatives of partner organizations to ensure logistical arrangements and coordinate secondary data reviews in preparation for the CFSVA.

The WFP regional bureau and Headquarters should be involved in the initial consultations between the country office and partners, to determine the timing of the assessment and the wording of the TOR. Deciding whether WFP staff from the regional bureaux and Headquarters, and/or consultants will be part of the team will normally be decided by the country director; in some cases, though, others, such as the regional director, may be consulted.

The team leader is critical to the success of the CFSVA as she/he should have extensive prior experience in CFSVA/assessments and possess training and writing skills. The team leader's role is normally included in the study's overall TOR, but a specialized TOR can also be developed.

2.6 ADMINISTRATIVE DUTIES FOR THE CFSVA

CFSVA administrative duties are numerous and time-consuming. The CFSVA team will have to make sure WFP staff (and especially administrative and finance officers) can dedicate crucial time to the following tasks:

¹⁰. See example of CFSVA TOR in annexes.

- drafting a budget for the CFSVA (after agreement on contribution, sampling, etc. - see section 2.3 and Annex 14 for a sample budget) and managing incoming expenses;
- hiring enumerators, field supervisors, and data entry personnel;
- preparing training for supervisors/enumerators;
- arranging for external assistance (travel, DSA, contract, etc. for consultant, Headquarters, or regional bureau staff);
- logistical planning (see section 2.6.1); and
- organizing any additional meetings (restitution of findings, press conference, etc.).

2.6.1 Logistical planning

Implementing a successful assessment requires logistical planning and preparation. Logistics is a big part of the survey, and in some countries can be a cumbersome exercise, and so should be considered early on in the process. Logistics considerations include selection of field sites and advance notification of sample communities or sites, coordination of transport and communications operations, and distribution and collection of data-collection instruments.

Logistical and administrative steps for survey implementation include, at a minimum, the following:

- Agree on the number of survey teams to be deployed.
- Agree on the number of individuals in each survey team.
- Agree on the number of vehicles per team.
- Ensure that each team has appropriate equipment (radio, satellite phone, PDAs or questionnaires, measurement boards, weighing equipment, money, maps, introduction letters, etc.).
- Ensure that each team has received appropriate training in health, ethics, security, and data collection.
- Ensure that each team has the required documents (ID cards, local travel authorizations, security clearances, insurance, etc.).
- Ensure that communities and key informants are informed of survey dates and requirements. Supply local authorities with a list of villages to be surveyed. They can help in informing communities.

Several challenges that increase logistics requirements need to be considered in advance:

- **Team size and composition:** Large assessment teams, the participation of multiple agencies and United Nations representatives or donors;
- **Administrative issues:** Administrative regulations that are not flexible enough to allow for rapid planning and schedule changes; per diem and expenses for government and NGO officials;
- **Physical environment or emergency context:** Lack of access due to poor or limited infrastructure, natural barriers, rainy season, or security limitations; and
- **Security constraints:** The designated official of the United Nations Security Management Team in all countries establishes limits for safety and security and requires all staff to operate within these limits. Security concerns in conjunction with the conduct of a CFSVA may influence logistics, for example in requiring that data-

collection teams return to their base by a certain hour or proclaiming certain areas as off-limits. Such security matters can add extra planning requirements.

For multi-agency assessments, it is recommended that agencies pool resources for logistics support, drawing on the specific needs of the assessment and relative capacities of the partnering agencies.

2.6.2 Development and use of questionnaires

The probability household survey requires a fairly extensive household questionnaire. It is important, however, not to reinvent the wheel. WFP now has considerable experience in conducting surveys. For the CFSVA, the Programme now recommends a combination of standard core modules and optional modules, elements of which are used by other international survey programmes such as the Demographic and Health Surveys or the Living Standards Measurement Surveys. Formulation of questions is a time-consuming task and should be done only as necessary and as described here. The questionnaire should be the result of a consensus among all partners, technicians, programme specialists, and the government. The CFSVA or food security committee is the best forum for developing and agreeing on questionnaires. The questionnaires should also be shared with relevant specialists at the regional bureau and Headquarters.

Components of a CFSVA questionnaire should address the following data needs:¹¹

- Demographic and life cycle information;
- Education;
- Water and sanitation (WatSan);
- Food and livelihood security (including availability, access, and production; consumption and utilization; stability and creation of assets; coping strategies);
- Household incomes and expenditures; marketing systems; and
- Health (including HIV/AIDS) and nutrition.

The following outline delineates an appropriate path for the development and implementation of questionnaires and enumerator training.¹² Once questionnaires have been shared among partners and agreed upon, the following steps must be taken:

1. Translate questionnaires systematically into the local language when needed, including back-translation. An interviewer who has to translate on the spot with the respondent has a lot of room for interpretation. After the back-translation, the expert has to reconcile any translation problem.
2. Prepare for enumerator training and pilot-testing by printing questionnaires or uploading data needs to hand-held computers (PDAs).
3. Assign and train enumerators, measurers, supervisors, team leaders, and data entry personnel on their respective roles (food security enumerators, nutrition data collectors and measurers, field supervisors, team leaders).
4. Pilot-test (at least 30 interviews) and finalize questionnaires.

¹¹. See Chapter 5 for a complete description of questionnaire design guidelines.

¹². See section 4.2.5.1 for more on enumerator training.

5. Once tested and corrected, paper questionnaires should be printed in sufficient numbers and distributed to supervisors. If PDAs are used, supervisors should make sure that batteries are fully charged and that there are enough PDAs, memory cards, stylus, chargers, and so on.
6. Launch survey:
 - a. Design a complete survey implementation plan for each team:
 - I. Date, day, and location to be surveyed;
 - II. Estimated arrival and departure times;
 - III. Overnight locations; and
 - IV. Tasks to be achieved.
 - b. Ensure that each completed questionnaire is checked by the team leader;
 - c. Ensure that all questionnaires are completed and accounted for before leaving a particular location;
 - d. Ensure that data is downloaded and secured at the end of each day;
 - e. Ensure that the PDAs are charged for the next day; and
 - f. Provide enumerators with sufficient rest days.

2.6.3 Quality control

The manager of the CFSVA should ensure that the highest quality data is collected. Data quality is influenced by many factors, such as whether PDAs or paper questionnaires are used; the experience of enumerators (knowledge of local languages, area surveyed, food security, data collection); the quality of the training; how motivated staff are to collect accurate data (this can be seen during the test); and how well the data-collection process is supervised. If PDAs are used, enumerators should have a basic knowledge of computers.

A daily and random quality control of the collected data is highly recommended, whether paper questionnaires or PDAs are used. Having back up help available to replace enumerators (or supervisors) who get sick, leave for personal reasons, or who are not performing well is essential to the quality of the data. Supervisors might consider performing unannounced spot checks on data-collection teams in order to verify the quality of the work in progress, and make any corrections necessary.

