*World Food Programme*
*Bureau for Western Africa/ODD*


# Liberia Training Needs Analysis & Capacity Building Strategy

*TNA/CBS Mission: July 8-20, 2007*


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*Acronyms*

**List of Acronyms**
ACF Action Contre la Faim
AU African Union
CAAS Comprehensive Assessment of the Agricultural Sector in Liberia
CBS Capacity Building Strategy
CCA Common Country Assessment
CFSAM Crop & Food Supply Assessment Mission
CFSNS Comprehensive Food Security and Nutrition Survey
CFSVA Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Assessment
CRS Catholic Relief Services
DFID UK Department for International Development
ECHO European Commission's Humanitarian Aid department
EU European Union
FAO Food and Agriculture Organisation
FIVIMS Food Insecurity and Vulnerability Information & Mapping System
GoL Government of Liberia
GTZ German Technical Cooperation
HIC Humanitarian Information Centre
HOSO Head of Sub Office (WFP)
ICRC International Committee of the Red Cross and Red Crescent
IPRS Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy
JAM Joint Assessment Mission
LINNK Liberia NGOs Network
LISGIS Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services
LRRRC Linking Repatriation to Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Council
MOA Ministry of Agriculture
MOCI Ministry of Commerce and Industry
MODEL Movement for Democracy in Liberia
MOE Ministry of Education
MOF Ministry of Finance

MOHSW Ministry of Health and Social Welfare
MPEA Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs
MPW Ministry of Public Works
MRD Ministry of Rural Development
NFSNS National Food Security and Nutrition Strategy
NFSNM Unit National Food Security and Nutrition Monitoring Unit
NGOs Non-Governmental Organisations
ODAN WFP Emergency Needs Assessment Branch (Rome)
ODD WFP Bureau for Western Africa (Dakar)
ODC WFP Bureau for Middle East, Central Asia and Eastern Europe
ODK WFP Bureau for Eastern and Central Africa (Kampala)
PRRO Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation
SC UK Save the Children United Kingdom
SENAC Strengthening Emergency Needs Assessment Capacity
SGA Skills Gap Analysis
TOR Terms of Reference
TNA Training Needs Analysis
UN United Nations
UNDP United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHCR United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF United Nations Children's Fund
UNMIL United Nations Mission in Liberia
USAID United States Agency for International Development
VAM Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping
WB World Bank
WFP World Food Programme
WHO World Health Organization
WVL World Vision Liberia

## 1. Introduction

In 2007, the Government of Liberia, supported by WFP and many other partners, developed a National Food Security and Nutrition Strategy (NFSNS). This policy document, soon to be before Cabinet, serves as a foundation for the future institutional framework −that requires sustained capacity building to equip authorities with monitoring and assessment skills to respond to both chronic food insecurity and acute sporadic crises, targeting limited resources to those most vulnerable.

WFP Liberia's two-year PRRO 10454.0 concentrates 71% of its resources on school feeding, 14% on food for work, 14% on vulnerable group feeding and the remaining portion on relief. One of the five Strategic Objectives (SO5) of that official document is "to contribute to capacity building of national institutions".

To implement the National FSN Strategy, and to accompany the development of a parallel (proposed) Food Security and Nutrition Monitoring Unit, WFP/Liberia, in collaboration with ODAN, planned a Training Needs Analysis (TNA) to identify key skills gaps and to produce a Capacity Building Strategy (CBS for government, WFP and partners) in a nation struggling to rebuild after 14 destructive years of war. Although a very broad base is merited, the precarity of peace underscored the priority given to training specifically in the need assessment skills. A consultant was selected to conduct the TNA/CBS in Liberia between July 8 and 20, 2007.

The effort in Liberia is a prelude to the West African/ODD regional assessment by ODAN scheduled for later this year. A similar exercise has already been completed at the larger regional level outside ODD: in ODC (Fries, March 2007) and ODK (Foley, April 2007), although without Skills Gap Analysis components. A sub national "Staff and Partner Capacity Analysis"

was also conducted for Ethiopia Country Office (Loveless, February 2007).

In the WFP context, TNA consists of four components (context, methods, stakeholder and skills gap). Context analysis studies the policy, strategic framework and resources as well as the food security situation and the various shocks to which households are exposed. Methods analysis reviews the current and planned assessments and the methods used for each in Liberia. Stakeholder analysis reviews the institutional framework and the current and potential partners of WFP that share a role in needs assessment. Skills gap analysis goes into detail (sampling of respondents, definition of assessment, skill categories assessed and conclusions) to track the current strengths and gaps of all potential assessors, their profiles, training, experience, and functional/technical skills. Each of these, in turn, is presented below.

Founded on these results, a draft Capacity Building Strategy is then proposed, as a recommendation for how best to help prepare Liberia, its new national Food Security and Nutrition Strategy and the parallel monitoring unit for the next few years of growth and peace.

A three-day field trip was taken by the consultant to assess the situation in two vulnerable counties, Lofa and Nimba. Lofa (one of the most vulnerable to food insecurity according to the CFSCS, 2007) was chosen mainly for the large number of recently returned refugees and Nimba due to high population density and potential for influx of refugees from Cote d'Ivoire. At this time, two WFP Sub Offices were visited and meetings were organized with key partners. During the trip a visit was made to the border post between Liberia and Guinea and to the Cote d'Ivoire Refugee Camp in Saclepea.

## 2. Liberia Training Needs Analysis (TNA)

### 2a. Context Analysis

Fourteen years of lawless tension and violence disrupted food availability, access and utilization in Liberia. All social services, and especially infrastructure and health care systems, were completely destroyed. It comes as little surprise that chronic malnutrition is high and literacy very low. Since 2005, however, peace has come at the cost of a strong and durable dependency on United Nations and bilateral assistance, military presence and foreign investment. As routine conflict ebbs (not cited as important by respondents in the EFSA) and closure is brought to repatriation, WFP and humanitarian partners are freed to concentrate more systematically on other shocks, such as floods, fires, pests, epidemics, economic crises and refugees from neighboring nations.

WFP/Liberia's VAM Office has been instrumental in building the Liberian knowledge base on food security and nutrition since tensions have ebbed. Furthermore, they catalyzed the Government of Liberia's National Food Security and Nutrition Strategy and are working actively to establish the FSN monitoring unit.

Other parallel efforts underway that are key to mainstreaming capacity building include the County Support Team (CST), a $2.3million project to strengthen capacity at the county level steered by UNDP with one of four foci on "Information and Data management" and the Liberia United Nations Join Program for FS/N (Concept Note, 22 June 2007) which aims to join forces to support GoL in implementing the Food Security and Nutrition Strategy, and contribute directly to MDG 1,4,5 and 6 for the period of 2008-2012. The enabling factors laid out in that concept note with responsibility by WFP, among other agencies is to "meet capacity needs" by identifying and prioritizing capacity gaps, building action plans to create both broad and specialized expertise. Within this latter effort, WFP/Liberia has already written a proposal for the seed money for "Capacity building Support for the Establishment of a National Food Security and Nutrition Monitoring System" ($161,945) which covers initial institutional set-up, equipment, core competency training and the development of a methodology and set of monitoring tools, as well as resource mobilization.

Setting aside the indelible impact of the long standing complex emergency in Liberia, according to the Center for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED's) Emergency Database (EM-DAT, University of Louvain), 8 of the nation's top 10 natural disasters (measured by number of causalities) were reported to be epidemics, and only one has been reported since 2004. Lethal landslides were reported in 1982 and floods in 1998. In 1990, extreme temperatures were reported to have affected one million Liberians and in 1995, severe wind storms affected 2000 individuals.

In order to ground truth and complement this information, Heads of WFP/Liberia's Sub Offices (HoSOs) (Central, Harper, Voinjama, Saclepea) were asked to respond as Key Informants to a 2page questionnaire to garner systematic information on notions of local Context, Methods and Stakeholders at a sub national level within the WFP framework. Assessment reports were also consulted. The major points, as portrayed by these four WFP Key Informants (one Sub Office response was not received) are listed below:

- o Food insecurity appears to be most notably a mixed problem of **food availability** (due to incentives in agriculture or storage and most particularly for those returning home within the last 12 months) and **food access** (due to limited purchasing power and poor

road conditions during the rainy season). These findings align with the 2007 CFSNS.

o Risk levels are dictated more by general socio-economic conditions among the inhabitants (vulnerability to food insecurity), for those closer to Monrovia, and by exogenous shock (lingering post-conflict tension) for Voinjama and Saclepea Sub Offices.

o According to WFP HoSOs, the most common shocks since 2005 that have caused some level of food insecurity to at least 30 households include road closures, conflict, floods, strong winds/storms and fires. The Comprehensive Food Security and Nutrition Survey (CFSNS, July 2007) determined the most frequently reported shocks to be loss of harvest due to pests and idiosyncratic shocks such as illness or death in the household.

o Each Sub Office was able to relate one to two assessments conducted at their level since 2005, linked to the shocks mentioned above. Please note that here we refer to smaller localized assessments and not national efforts to assess broad vulnerability to food insecurity. According to the HoSOs, WFP was **not** typically the agency that initiated the assessment effort (most were more generally catalyzed by UNMIL), but each assessment was conducted in collaboration with two to eight different agencies (GoL and NGOs included). The methods applied by these assessments appear to have all drawn on rapid appraisal techniques using interviews and focus group discussions to determine scale and needs.

o All of the Sub Offices claim that their Program Assistants and Field Monitor Assistants have a clear role to play in assessment. When asked which skill sets they need to improve the most, the typical answer was a categorical "all" (conceptual, preparation, implementation, information management, analysis, report writing, presenting and advocacy). When a break down was provided, skill needs surfacing as key included information management, analysis and report writing.

o Major partner stakeholders listed by the Sub Offices include: DDC, LRRRC, Agricultural Offices, Education Offices, UNHCR, FAO and Red Cross & NGOS (ADRA, SARA, LWS/WS, Caritas, Cape Palmas, Tear Fund, CRS, and World Vision). The skills package needed by partners appears also to be a complete package of skills from conceptual to advocacy.

## 2b. Methods Analysis

Larger scale in-depth formal needs assessments conducted since 2004 have been reviewed both to build context for the present report and to evaluate methodologies used. To reconstruct a knowledge base after 14 years of war, the following in-depth assessments / formal surveys have been conducted since 2003:

1A series of County-level VAM Surveys that were completed starting in 2003 as resources became available): → WFP only

2In 2005, an Emergency Food Security Assessment (EFSA, July 2006 by ODAN), → WFP only

3A Crop and Food Security Assessment (Feb. 2006) → FAO/WFP

4A Comprehensive Food Security and Nutrition Survey covering 15 rural/semi-urban counties (March 2006) → GoL supported by WFP and many other stakeholders (see report cover)

5A Monrovia Comprehensive Food Security and Nutrition Survey (March 2007, see above) and

6A Liberian Market Review (March 2007). → MOA, WFP, FAO

The technical skills applied by VAM Unit in these assessments are of unusually high technical quality, but it is **personified predominately in a single agent** and the level of production is such that no time has been available to transfer skills to national internal or partner counterparts in a systematic or structured fashion. It is urgent that these skills be transferred to a larger number of potential assessors, allowing the agent in question to reduce his/her workload so as focus on the task of transferring capacity to national staff. More importantly, transferring skills to the Government of Liberia will result in a greater level of "ownership" of assessment results, than is currently the case.

Other significant food security-related assessments include the Comprehensive Assessment of the Agricultural Sector in Liberia (CAAS-LIB, draft May 2007) and the Republic of Liberia's Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy (IPRS, 2006).

At the WFP field level, one example of efforts to conduct a localized needs assessment in Voinjama concerned a fire outbreak in April 2007. The Head of Sub Office was on leave when this occurred and the Acting Head traveled to the site and wrote a 1 page summary. When the HoSO returned he sent a second team composed of no fewer than 8 agencies out to conduct qualitative assessment and wrote a document entitled, "Rapid Assessment report for Dengadou Town". The assessment succeeded in attracting food and other resources to the emergency.

One element that is missing in WFP/Liberia is a very simple routine reporting form to monitor livelihood and food security conditions, vulnerability and shocks that Sub-Offices can collect and/or compile and submit on a regular basis. Some WFP countries have adapted various simple tools to manage this routine monitoring and include in weekly SitReps. WFP/DRC, for example, has trained field staff to use the Coping Strategy Index among a systematic sample taken from the administrative divisions in their area. In areas of high insecurity, a Conflict Index has often been used to monitor conditions. Until the GoL administration is able to assure regular monitoring information via the proposed Food Security and Nutritional Monitoring Unit (NFSNM Unit), these efforts would fill in gaps between nationwide data collection efforts. The key is to make this simple enough to complete each period (month or every two to three months) managed entirely by the Field Monitors.

### 2c. Stakeholder Analysis

The major future and long term stakeholder for food security related needs assessment in Liberia is the Government of Liberia (GoL). The emphasis here is strongly supported by the country office as the only path to sustainable impact and ownership of the knowledge base and the institutional development underway. WFP's priority government counterpart agencies are the Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs (MPEA), the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA), the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (MOHSW), Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) and LISGIS. The second level of stakeholders is county administration, universities and the field-level LRRRC.

Other partner organizations that are key assessment players in Liberia are UN-sister organizations such as UNMIL, FAO, WHO, UNHCR, UNDP, HIC, and UNICEF, Liberian Red Cross and INGOs such as CRS, GTZ, WVL, ACF, SC and Peace Winds.

For the present mission, 29 WFP Staff and 41 partner staff were consulted in person, the latter representing 13 WFP-**partner** agencies (5 GoL, 4 UN sister agencies and 4 NGO/Other):
- On the government side, the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, LISGIS and Liberia

        Refugee Repatriation Resettlement Commission (LRRRC) have been visited;
- for UN sister agencies: UNHCR, UNDP, FAO and UNICEF;
- for bilateral donors: ECHO, and DFID, and
- for NGOs and others, the Liberian National Red Cross Society and Peace Winds.

Many more organizations submitted and have been included in the Skills Gap analysis via WFP Sub Offices, but time did not allow face to face meetings with each of them. See Annex for exact list.

**Analysis of WFP Terms of Reference for Assessment-Related Staff**

The Terms of Reference (ToRs) for national program staff in WFP/Liberia were obtained and analyzed in order to assess whether these official documents supported or thwarted the implementation of needs assessment. Out of the 11 ToR categories reviewed:

- 5 mentioned some type of "**analysis**" (Int. VAM Officer, National VAM Assistants, Head of Sub Office, Database Manager and Assistant Database Manager)
- 4 specifically mentioned "**assessment**" (Int. VAM Officer, National VAM Assistant, Head of Sub Office and Field Monitor Assistant)
- 8 attributed to the agent a role in more general "**data**" management: all of the above plus Programme Assistants (Operations, ESF and Sub Office)
- 3 specifically refer to data "**compilation**" (all Programme Assistants) while
- 2 refer to data "**collection**" (Heads of Sub Office and VAM Assistant)
- 2 only refer directly to "**surveys**" or their instruments (International VAM Officer and National VAM Assistant).

While the WFP/Liberia Terms of Reference (ToR) refers to Sub Office assessment staff officially as "Field Monitor Assistants", there seems to be great confusion among the field staff as to their titles. In the Training Needs Analysis, one WFP agent called himself a "Field Assistant", another --a "Field Monitor", two others - "Food Aid Monitors", two - "Food Aid Monitor Assistants", three -- "Food Monitor Assistants", and six -- "Field Monitor Assistants". The salient point here is not that titles are important but that the ambiguity in the name of the position may be indicative of confusion in the ultimate roles and responsibilities.

Sub Office Heads (SoHOs) have the responsibility to "in collaboration with other humanitarian agencies, conduct **periodic field assessment** missions in operational areas to **identify**, monitor and evaluate impact of WFP food aid on targeted beneficiaries". What exactly requires "identification" here is uncertain. It is unclear if the term "periodic" is synonymous with regular or routine monitoring. If the goal is to help identify needs, it may be worthwhile to state "**initiate** or conduct Rapid EFSAs on a per need basis" and/or "oversee the routine monitoring food security status by Field Monitors using tools provided". The Program Assistants at the Sub Office Levels have no mention of Assessment in their ToRs.

Two of the nine duties/responsibilities in current Field Monitors ToRs pertain to assessment (in the EFSA/VAM sense). These are:

> *1. Monitor the overall number and status of persons in need of relief assistance and prepare assessments of overall relief requirements in assigned areas; and*
> *8. Report on food security…....*

Although a good generic start, the ToRs could benefit from precision such as "conduct Rapid EFSAs on a per need basis with WFP partners". As stated above (under methods), the "monitoring" in step 1 requires the development of and training in a set of concrete standardized

tools.

**Ideal Assessment Functions and competencies**

The following ideal assessment functions and competencies are briefly summarized for the pertinent post categories (GoL, VAM, VAM Assistants, Field Monitors, Heads of Sub Offices and Programme Staff). There are likely to be other functions per each post that are not included here. The skill levels pertain to self-reported expertise from 0 (none) to 5 (mastered with automatic reflex). The exact skills assessed are listed below in Textbox 1a and b.

o **Government of Liberia**
  o <u>Functions</u>: 1.) Assess the status of and monitor the body of knowledge on food security and nutrition available in-country in an ongoing manner. 2.) Maintain national and sub-national systems and build capacity to collect missing and needed information. 3.) Assure the link between this information and regular decision making at all levels.
  o <u>Competencies</u>: the GoL will need to build capacity analogous to the VAM Officer (below) in the senior posts of the NFSNM Unit. Competencies such as those described below under VAM Assistant will be needed in various supporting technical ministries. The County/District Administrators and county/district-level technicians should have competencies similar to the Heads of Sub Offices and Field Monitors described below.

o **WFP VAM Officer**
  o <u>Functions</u>: 1.) Assess the status of and maintain the body of knowledge on food security and nutrition available in-country in an ongoing manner. 2.) Lobby to develop national, sub-national and WFP internal systems and build capacity to collect missing and needed information. 3.) Spearhead and serve as technical advisor to these systems as well as to singular (once-off/stop-gap) data collection mechanisms (surveys, etc.).
  o <u>Competencies</u>: this post requires the highest possible caliber of assessment skills (functional and technical), wide interdisciplinary and international applied experience in system/tool development, collection, analysis and reporting of both quantitative and qualitative data as well as visionary charisma and ability to transfer skills. In particular, a VAM Officer should have an expertise level of 3.0 or above for each of the functional and technical skills detailed in the SGA questionnaire.

o **WFP VAM Assistants**
  o <u>Functions</u>: Support the VAM officer in each of the three tasks described under VAM Officer above.
  o <u>Competencies</u>: a team of two to three agents with complementary skills is required with the combined competency to manage and collect, to analyze and report on systems/collection efforts in many sub-fields of food security (agriculture, health/nutrition, etc.) and to organize and lead learning events. Together the assistants should have an expertise level of 2.0 or above for each of the functional and technical skills detailed in the SGA questionnaire. Each VAM Assistant should have a 3.0 skill level in at least one technical sector-specific and one method/instrument skill.

o **WFP Field Monitors**
  o <u>Functions</u>: Apply simplified tools to monitor and report on local food security /

nutrition conditions.

- o Competencies: an appreciation for information, a certain level of both quantitative and qualitative skills to collect useful data and ability to analyze and report on it in a timely manner, an intimate understanding of assessment tools put at their disposal to assess local conditions. An expertise level of 2.0 or better is required in the following skill categories (simplified collection systems or tools only): data collection, qualitative data management, analysis and report writing and a 3.0 in at least one technical sector specific skill and one method/instrument. A Field Monitor is not expected to be able to design assessment instruments, or to manage, analyze and interpret quantitative efforts.

- o **WFP Heads of Sub Offices**
  - o Functions: Promote the importance/need for and use of timely food security / nutrition information. Contribute technically to the collection of this information. Supervise the monitoring and reporting of this information.
  - o Competencies: an appreciation for the role of food security / nutrition information, sufficient charisma to spearhead and technical skills to backstop and advise localized (and especially Field Monitor level) collection efforts, ability to enhance local assessment reports and act on or report in timely manner to central office. An expertise level of 3.0 or better is required in the following skill categories (simplified collection systems or tools only): data collection, qualitative data management, analysis, data interpretation, report writing as well as one technical sector-specific and one method/instrument skill. S/he should also have a 2.0 in monitoring/early warning and management/training of interviewers. A Head of Sub Office is not expected to be able to design assessment instruments, or to manage, analyze and interpret quantitative efforts independently.

- o **WFP Programme Staff (and Assistants in supporting role)**
  - o Functions: Promote the importance/need for and use of timely food security / nutrition information. Support (contribute both vision and oversight to) processes and systems that collect this information.
  - o Competencies: a global appreciation for the role of food security / nutrition information so as to enable managerial environments that will contribute information of rigorous quality; sufficient technical ability to adequately interpret and promote in decision making a wide range of results. An expertise level of 2.0 or better is required in the following skill categories: management and data interpretation.

**2d. Skills Gap Analysis (SGA)**

A Skills Gap questionnaire was developed to assess the training needs of potential assessors at central and local levels, among WFP and all key partner agencies. It was compiled from three files provided by ODAN:

- o the Assessor database available for completion on the internet entitled "Emergency Needs Assessment (ENA), Knowledge, Skills and Experience",
- o a draft ODAN Questionnaire for Selecting Candidates for a training of Trainers (June 2007), and
- o the draft Training Needs Analysis: Learner data (also provided by ODAN to the consultant).

The questionnaire was adapted to the Liberian context and pre-tested by national staff for clarity prior to being disseminated. Sub Offices and four Government of Liberia entities were instructed on how to choose potential candidates to complete the questionnaire and how to

complete it properly. The data were entered in SPSS software by the VAM Team and analyzed by the consultant. The hardcopies will be forwarded to Rome to be included in the global assessor databank.

**Sampling of Respondents**
The Skills Gap questionnaire was provided to roughly 40 WFP Staff, at least 100 Government of Liberia staff and many United Nations sister agencies and NGOs. Although not a representative or random sample, these agencies were purposefully selected because they are primary stakeholders in Liberia's future food security assessment. Each agency was requested to administer the questionnaire to all staff that they deemed to have current or potential roles in conducting needs assessment.

The SGA Questionnaire was completed by a total of 141 individuals -- 40% from UN, 40% from GoL and the remainder representing NGOs, Red Cross and other agencies (i.e. donor). In order to show the range of skill levels, the respondents were broken into the following groups:

- those likely to facilitate future WFP/Liberia training sessions (4 VAM staff, here below referred to as "Facilitators"),
- the WFP Field Monitors (n=15),
- WFP Program Staff and Heads of Sub Offices (n=9),
- WFP Other (n=9),
- Government of Liberia staff (n=57),
- UN respondents excluding WFP (n=9) and
- Other partners (n=27).

**Definition of "Assessment"**
The term "assessment" was found to be defined differently by staff within WFP/Liberia. There is a known point of confusion between "project assessment / monitoring" and food security / conditions assessment. The former is typically captured by the concept of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) and the latter is a valuation or classification of a situation or an event. For the purposes of this report, assessment is considered to be:

*the estimation of the food security / nutritional situation of a population at a given time.*

Assessment can be formal (as in the case of the CFSN Survey) or informal (i.e., anecdotes of conditions noticed during a field trip) but gains benefit when systematic. Most respondents use the term to include monitoring as a component of assessment. For the above reasons (and because it was not designed or sampled for scientific validity), the reader is advised to use the skill gap analysis data described below carefully –only for their relative value.

**Skills assessed**
The skills assessed by the Skill Gap Assessment were broken into Functional and Technical Skills. Functional skills refer to those acquired and applied in the management of assessments from the design through the presentation phases. Technical skills are most often gained through formal training sessions and need to be applied to be mastered, but it is possible to be a good manager of an assessment without being able to perform each skill independently him/herself (especially when able to rely on the sectorial expertise of team members). Technical skills fall into five categories: sector specific, methods/instruments, nutrition, quantitative and software.

See Textbox 1a and b for a list of different skills included.

**Results**

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**Textbox 1a: FUNCTIONAL SKILLS**

Management of Assessment, Qualitative – Design of assessment (Non –probability Sampling plan, Analysis Plan, Data Collection Instrument Design (Topical Outlines, Interview Guides, Semi-structured Questionnaire), Development of protocols for data collection and sampling), Quantitative - Design of assessment (Probability Sampling plan, Analysis Plan, Data Collection Instrument Design (Structured Questionnaire), Development of protocols for data collection and sampling), Management of Interviewers and/or enumerators, Training of Interviewers and/or enumerators, Data Collection, Data Entry, Quantitative Data Management and Processing, Qualitative Data Management and Processing, Quantitative Analysis, Qualitative Analysis, Data Interpretation and Drawing Conclusions, Report Writing, Response Options Analysis, Presentation, Monitoring and Early Warning.

**Textbox 1b: TECHNICAL SKILLS**

A. Sector Specific skills/experience useful in Needs Assessments: Food Security Analysis, Public Health, Livelihood Analysis, HIV/AIDS Analysis, Economic or Market Analysis, Risk (Shock and Vulnerability) Analysis, Agriculture / Agronomy Analysis, Political and Conflict Analysis (or Conflict Resolution), Spatial Analysis (Satellite Imagery, NDVI, Digital Elevation Models), Training skills (curricula development, respond to needs, manage multi-sessions, sustain learning environment), Early Warning and Monitoring, Other.

B. Methods and instruments for data collection and analysis: Household Economy Approach, Analysis of dietary diversity and food frequency data, Facilitation of Focus Group discussion and other qualitative approaches, Household sample surveys, Rapid Appraisal / Participatory Appraisal data collection techniques, Triangulation Matrix and Qualitative Data Analysis, GEO referencing / GPS, Forecasting / Response Analysis, Food Balance Sheet (FAO method), Other.

C. Nutritional assessment: Design/sampling for nutrition assessment, Taking anthropometric measurements, Analysis of anthropometric data (calculation of prevalence rates), Interpretation of nutritional data, Other.

D. Quantitative Data Management & Statistics: Sampling frame design, Dataset management (opening dataset, adding cases/variables, merging files), Data manipulation (recoding, computing, filtering, selecting cases, aggregation), Data checking, missing values option, Describing categorical data (frequencies, bar/pie charts, multiple response analysis), Comparing Groups: categorical data (2-way tables, Chi-Square, cross tabs), Interval/scale analysis: histograms, central tendency, variability, confidence bands, shape of distribution, Mean differences between groups (ANOVA), Data exploration: bivariate scatterplots and correlation analysis, Multi Linear Models or Regression Analysis, Factor Analysis, PCA or Cluster Analysis, Other.

E. Software for Data Entry, Processing & Analysis: Epi-info, MS Applications (Excel), SPSS, Other Statistical Applications (SAS, S-Plus, CSPRO, IMPS, ADDATI, STATISTICA, CART), Access, Mapping / GIS Applications (MapInfo, ArcView, etc.), Qualitative Applications (Nudist, Atlas-TI, Ethnographer, other), Other.

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Although UN respondents were routinely more exposed to assessments than Government of Liberia and other partners, roughly one third of all respondents have never attended an assessment-related training (see Table 1a). Those professing to have acquired absolutely no assessment skills vary from 68% (Government of Liberia in Nutrition) to 4% (Other respondents in sectorial skills). Table 1a. shows the percentage of respondents who have received absolutely no training or have acquired absolutely no assessment related experience. One VAM "facilitator" has attended no formal training but all four have gained assessment experience.

Although at least half of all respondents have attended some training and participated in assessments, most respondents have never lead assessments of any kind. Table 1b. lists the mean number of trainings attended and assessments led (among those who have received training or acquired assistance). The Government of Liberia has attended the lowest number of

training sessions. WFP Field Monitors claim to have led an average of one localized assessment each.

| Table 1 : TRAINING & EXPERIENCE  a. % of respondants claiming to have (received / acquired) absolutely NO assessment related… | TRAINING | LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE |
|---|---|---|
| WFP VAM "Facilitators" (n=4) | 25% | 0% |
| WFP Field Monitors (n=15) | 20% | 60% |
| WFP Program Staff and HoSOs (n=16) | 25% | 81% |
| WFP Other (n=11) | 45% | 100% |
| Government of Liberia (n=59) | 32% | 95% |
| UN (excluding WFP, n=9) | 44% | 89% |
| Other Partners  (n=27) | 37% | 100% |
| **Total** (n=141) | **33%** | **88%** |
| **b. For those who claim to have had some training or assessment experience:** | **Mean No. Trainings Attended** | **Mean No. Assessments Led** |
| WFP VAM "Training Facilitators" (n=4) | 5.7 | 4.0 |
| WFP Field Monitors (n=14) | 3.6 | 1.0 |
| WFP Program Staff and HoSOs (n=14) | 3.4 | 3.1 |
| WFP Other (n=6) | 2.5 | 0.0 |
| Government of Liberia (n=41) | 2.1 | 0.8 |
| UN (excluding WFP, n=5) | 2.6 | 0.5 |
| Other Partners  (n=17) | 2.9 | 0.0 |
| **Total** (n=101) | **2.7** | **1.4** |

In terms of Functional and Technical Skills, the greatest deficiencies lie in Nutrition and Quantitative skills (Table 2a) with 62% of the respondents having none, second to Quantitative skills (52% have none). In addition to these, most of the GoL (51%) and almost one third of both the WFP Program Staff and Field Monitors (31 and 27% respectively) have not acquired software skills.

As expected, VAM "facilitators", have the highest scores of both functional and technical skills across the board (Table 2b). The Field Monitors appear to have gained fewer functional skills than the GoL counterparts but systematically more technical skills.  WFP Program Staff have fewer functional skills and hands-on experience but higher specialized technical skills than the other groups. The Government of Liberia has the second highest Functional Skill level, but scores among the lowest in all other categories (excluding other UN and partners).

| Table 2: FUNCTIONAL and TECHNICAL SKILLS a. % of respondents claiming to have absolutely NO assessment related… | FUNCTIONAL SKILLS | TECHNICAL SKILLS | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Sectors | Methods | Nutrition | Quantitative | Software | Total |
| WFP VAM "Facilitators" (n=4) | **0%** | **0%** | **0%** | **0%** | **0%** | **0%** | **0%** |
| WFP Field Monitors (n=15) | **13%** | **7%** | **7%** | **53%** | **33%** | **27%** | **7%** |
| WFP Program Staff and HoSOs (n=16) | **31%** | **31%** | **25%** | **44%** | **50%** | **31%** | **6%** |
| WFP Other (n=11) | **45%** | **45%** | **45%** | **91%** | **27%** | **27%** | **9%** |
| Government of Liberia (n=59) | **25%** | **27%** | **15%** | **66%** | **53%** | **51%** | **8%** |
| UN (excluding WFP, n=9) | **0%** | **22%** | **22%** | **44%** | **67%** | **22%** | **11%** |
| Other Partners  (n=27) | **26%** | **4%** | **26%** | **74%** | **74%** | **52%** | **4%** |
| **Total** (n=141) | **24%** | **21%** | **20%** | **62%** | **52%** | **41%** | **7%** |
| **b.  For those who claim to have had some training or assessment experience:** | Mean self-announced score per skill  (out of 5 = highest skill level) | | | | | | |
| WFP VAM "Training Facilitators" (n=4) | 3.13 | 2.53 | 3.14 | 3.44 | 2.92 | 2.75 | 2.91 |
| WFP Field Monitors (n=14) | 1.32 | 1.85 | 1.96 | 2.00 | 1.62 | 2.06 | 1.87 |
| WFP Program Staff and HoSOs (n=14) | 1.19 | 2.09 | 2.16 | 1.83 | 1.78 | 1.98 | 1.95 |
| WFP Other (n=6) | 1.62 | 1.96 | 1.84 | 1.50 | 1.86 | 2.63 | 2.03 |
| Government of Liberia (n=41) | 2.46 | 2.34 | 2.32 | 2.23 | 2.18 | 2.01 | 2.22 |
| UN (excluding WFP, n=5) | 1.27 | 2.20 | 2.14 | 1.70 | 1.83 | 1.62 | 1.95 |
| Other Partners  (n=17) | 1.29 | 2.22 | 2.19 | 1.76 | 1.71 | 2.03 | 2.14 |
| **Total** (n=101) | **1.86** | **2.21** | **2.21** | **1.98** | **1.96** | **2.04** | **2.12** |

More detailed results are summarized below:
- **Gender**: 74% of respondents are male and 26% female
- **Nationality**: 92% of the respondents are nationals. An additional 5% (n=7) are international

staff.

- **Age**: the mean age of the respondents is 42.39.
- **Education**: 15% of the group has attained Masters Level and Economics Accounting and Sociology are the most common disciplines represented.
- **Languages**: all respondents claim a self-declared English language fluency of 3 or above (where 0=none and 5=native speaker). A command of French language at or above level 3 is claimed by only 3.5% and less for all the other languages.
- **Regions**: only 10% of the respondents had gained their assessment experience outside the ODD/West Africa region. The second most common WFP region for gained experiences is ODK/East & Central Africa.
- **Operational Settings**: 68% of the respondents claim to have gained most assessment experience in political emergencies, while 47% have gained it in the development sector and only 14% in natural hazards (sudden or slow onset).
- **Trainings attended**:
    o 33% claim to have participated in a Monitoring & Evaluation training (attended, led or co-facilitated),
    o 22% claim to have participated in a statistics/survey design training
    o 21.8% in a Gender Mainstreaming training
    o 20% of the respondents claim to have been involved in an EFSA or VAM Training
    o 20% also have participated in a Contingency Planning training session
    o slightly fewer (19.7%) in a JAM training
    o 18% in School feeding baseline training,
    o 12.5% have participated in a basic nutrition training
    o approximately 8% in an Emergency Response Training, and only
    o 2% in advanced nutrition training.

- **Experience**:
  The assessment tools in which all (and particularly WFP and GoL) respondents have gained the most experience are:
    o JAM: for a total of 30 respondents (19 WFP and 6 GoL)
    o Contingency Planning. 24 respondents (15 WFP and 4 GoL)
    o CFSAM: 20 respondents (10 WFP and 2 GoL)
    o Rapid EFSA, 17 respondents (12 WFP and 3 GoL)
    o CFSVAs: 16 respondents (12 WFP and 3 GoL)
    o Nutrition Surveys 10 respondents (13 WFP and 1 GoL).

- **Functional skills:** based on an auto-assessment of expertise (0-5, 5 being mastery excluding those not having benefited from either training or direct assessment experience) covering 17 functional skills, WFP agents had higher skill levels (mean level all skills combined: 2.68/5) than the Government of Liberia counterparts (2.17/5).

  The WFP skills that ranked highest were data collection (mean score of 3.4/5) and management of enumerators / interviews (3.3/5) and training of enumerators (3.2/5) while the lowest ranking WFP skills were quantitative protocols (1.97/5) and quantitative sampling (2.21/5). The VAM "facilitators" highest scores were in management and nutritional technical skills (3.13/5) and their only weaknesses lie in sampling (2.5/5), early warning and response options (each 2.67/5).

  GoL agents rated themselves highest in writing (3.14/5), training (3.04/5) and in the management and training of enumerators (2.92/5 for each) and lowest in quantitative

data management (2.33/5), qualitative data management (2.38/5) and data entry (2.39/5).

- **Technical skills**: using self assessment from 0-5 again, the combined set of WFP respondents (n=49) and the GoL respondents (n=56) had roughly the same level of self-assessed technical skills (mean level all skills combined: 2.19 and 2.22/5, respectively). VAM team respondents averaged 2.91 for technical skills. Software was the least highly ranked technical skill category for both WFP and GoL respondents --lower even than quantitative/statistical skills. The two subgroups ranked themselves as follows:

Sector specific skills (VAM: 2.53/5; WFP: 2.11/5; GoL: 2.34/5): WFP agent's strongest sectorial skills lie in early warning (2.57/5 mean for the subgroup) and food security or political analysis (2.51/5) while their weakest skills sets include spatial analysis (1.56/5) and agriculture/agronomy (1.93/5). The GoL's strongest skills are found in political analysis (2.83/5) and HIV/AIDS (2.75/5); their weakest in food security (2.1/5) and early warning (2.21/5). VAM respondents' weakest skill is in spatial analysis (2.00/5).

Methods and Instruments for data collection/analysis (VAM: 3.14/5; WFP: 2.27/5; GoL: 2.32/5): WFP respondents' strongest method skill lies in focus group facilitation (2.77/5) and the weakest in diet diversity analysis (1.81/5). For the GoL, the highest ranking skill was in facilitation (2.74/5) and the lowest in spatial analysis (2.06/5). VAM respondents' weakest skill is in response options analysis (2.33/5).

Nutrition Assessment (VAM: 3.44/5; WFP: 2.19/5; GoL: 2.23/5): the weakest links among WFP and GoL respondents are in nutritional analysis. For VAM respondents, the weakest of the four elements lies in design / sampling of nutritional assessments.

Quantitative Data Management/Statistics (VAM: 2.92/5; WFP: 2.05/5; GoL: 2.18/5): the weakest skill among WFP respondents is in statistical analysis (1.60/5 each and 2.0/5 for VAM) and for the GoL, data management (2.29/5). This demonstrates more the lack of ease with software than with statistics on the part of the government.

Software (VAM: 2.75/5; WFP: 2.35/5; GoL: 2.01/5): the least familiar software for total WFP respondents include Qualitative packages and GIS and for VAM, ACCESS and GIS. For GoL respondents the least familiar are qualitative packages and EPI-INFO (1.3 and 1.8/2, respectively) and the best (at 2.25/5) includes Excel.


**Skills Gap Conclusions**
**WFP VAM Unit:** The capacity level of WFP VAM in Liberia is one of the highest the consultant has seen. If the International Officer's high scores are removed, however, the VAM assistants would need to be trained in the following to get their scores over 2.0/5: quantitative sampling, early warning, HIV/AIDS, food balance sheets, statistics (regression/PCS) and to refine a sector specialty. It may also be fitting to consider enabling the International VAM Officer to now focus more on the role of setting up sustainable systems and training than in the actual production and maintenance of the knowledge base. This may entail delegating very clear tasks to her team and/or identifying and handing over to an eventual National VAM Officer (should the goal be nationalization of the post).

**WFP Field Monitors:** High staff turnover has not enabled the development of strong in-house skills at this level. Although Field Monitors do not need to become independent assessors of formal surveys, they need to be equipped with simplified concrete initial (or rapid) assessment

tools and the know how to employ them rigorously on a post shock, periodic or per-need basis. To this end, they lack experience and general information skills in data collection, management, analysis, interpretation and report writing. It may be useful to develop and train them in a simplified monitoring or food security reporting template to assist them in their daily jobs.

**WFP Heads of Sub Offices:** HoSOs are generally among the non-VAM WFP staff most exposed to assessment with strong international experience, but high staff turnover discourages their inclusion in training. It is important that they are able to advise and supervise Field Monitors initial (or rapid) assessments. For these reasons, those without recent assessment training and/or experience should be included in future trainings alongside the Field Monitors. Particular skill gaps that manifested themselves here include the ability to triangulate information.

**WFP Program Staff:** Vision and knowledge on the part of program staff are key to successful assessments. Although they do not need to be technical experts, they should be able to articulate national information needs and to interpret information from many sources. The SGA underlines the need to expose them more thoroughly to concepts of agriculture, nutrition, spatial analysis and the theoretical concepts of risk (hazard and vulnerability) and triangulation. They should gain a fuller vision from a 2-day refresher on assessment fundamentals.

**Government of Liberia:** As the Food Security and Nutrition Monitoring Unit is created, it is crucial to develop the organigramme and determine the roles that will need to be filled, to profiles of each role and to recruit a team that pulls together many interdisciplinary skills. Although quite strong in management and statistics, in a very general sense the GoL merits a strong effort to build capacity in fundamental frameworks and concepts and in software based quantitative information management.

Overall, few respondents in Liberia have a command of qualitative information management and this element would add favorably to future learning events. Due to its contribution to initial assessments, qualitative assessment has a strong role to play at least until formal assessment mechanisms are established in a sustainable manner throughout the nation.

## 3. Proposed Capacity Building Strategy

*The recommendations found in this section are in no way reflective of the opinions of WFP/Liberia or WFP/Rome, but result from the author's logic driven directly from the analysis described here above.*

The recommended strategy below to build sector capacity in Liberia is applicable to both the Government of Liberia and to WFP (recommendations below will be separated out for these two groups). The strategy is consistent with the WFP Operations Department Directive on quality and consistency, ensuring that (VAM and EFSA) activities or products support WFP programming decisions and strengthen the design and implementation of emergency, recovery, and development interventions[1].

The Liberia Capacity Building strategy anticipates potential natural hazards (e.g., floods, storms) increasing with climate change, technological hazards (e.g., fires), economic shocks, continued political instability and chronic food insecurity over the next few years. It concentrates

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[1] WFP Operations Department Directive (OD2005/004, 13 October 2005), *Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping: Ensuring Quality.*

assessment skill development in particular to fortify skills as the nation rebuilds. Emphasis at all levels is on achievable measures to capitalize on the foundation for emergency preparedness of the Government of Liberia strongly reinforced by WFP/Liberia Country Office.  The aim is to initiate assessment components, ultimately increasing Government, WFP and partner staff capacity to plan, manage, analyze, and present credible assessments.

The strategy synthesizes insight and experience of WFP staff from throughout the country and headquarters, and attempts to make more effective use of existing resources. Focus is on more strategic workshop timing and structure related to planned assessment activities, preference for Liberia-specific training over regional forums, more stringent participant selection criteria, modules based on assessment phases and thematic areas, qualitative and quantitative analytical skills, inclusion of partners, and greater mobilisation of the current and emerging Liberia Country Office capacity.

### a. Strategic Goals and Objectives
To meet the ultimate goal of sustainable regular and good quality assessment practice in Liberia, the objectives of the WFP Capacity Building Strategy should be:
1. To assure the autonomous management of the proposed National Food Security and Nutrition Monitoring Unit by the Government of Liberia within three to five years, in line with Liberia's National Strategy for Food Security and Nutrition (FSNS).
2. To have one International (or National) WFP VAM Team and one trained WFP Assessment Focal Point at each Sub Office capable of conducting Initial EFSA independently.

The International (or eventually National under a phase out scenario) VAM Officer should be able to carry out initial, rapid and in-depth EFSAs independently as well as other VAM related activities (baselines, secondary data analysis, food security monitoring, etc.)  VAM Assistants should be able to support Sub Offices and carry out initial and rapid assessments independently. Key agents within the Government of Liberia must be trained in a parallel fashion in order to achieve and maintain the functional national monitoring system.

### b. Assumptions
The Liberia Capacity Building strategy is based on the following set of assumptions:
o   Adequate policy, institutional frameworks, human resources and equipment are in place to build and maintain the required assessment units.

o   Trainees do not always apply workshop content in actual assessments, because either they are not involved or too much time lapses between training and practical application.

o   Not all staff members are required to participate in all training modules of a 'full' EFSA course, as this can dilute the content and reduce the likelihood of application.

o   There is typically a complete lack of follow-up training and an inability to track trainees or speak with demonstrable confidence on the effectiveness or application of training.

o   ODAN tools and initiatives (especially EFSA distance learning materials, the Facilitator's Toolkit, and the Assessor Database) can play a central role in supporting regional capacity building initiatives, spanning from design to implementation to evaluation, and can be refined in the process of widespread application and subsequent feedback.

**c. Approaches**
Like the other WFP African Capacity Building Strategies, this strategy concentrates on practical approaches to increase government, WFP and partner staff capacity to plan, manage, analyse, and present credible assessments. These practical approaches include:
o   Preference for country (or cluster) specific training over regional forums
o   Strategic workshop timing synchronised with planned assessment activities
o   Tailored course content guided by Liberian priorities and collaborative stakeholder analysis
o   Participant selection criteria based on experience levels, clear stipulated anticipated assessment roles, and routine responsibilities
o   Including partners to the greatest extent possible
o   Tracking individual participants and creating onward opportunities for skill application and development.

Within the Government of Liberia, a poor foundation disrupted by 14 years of civil strife makes the prioritization of training needs a huge challenge. Despite at times a relatively good theoretical basis, there is a large technology gap for older individuals. The need for skills in analysis and writing is also expressed more often than skills in data collection. Given the large variety in skill levels (see Skills Gaps Analysis presented in detail above), a Beginner and Basic EFSA Training Event is required as a starting point.  The following sequence of Training Events is proposed:

**d. Learning Events to be Organized**
The following learning events are proposed to meet the skill gaps determined above in order to fulfill the food security and information needs in Liberia.

1.   **Training Workshops:**
     a.   NUTRITION: Basic Nutrition Training Event planned for October 2007
          Selection Criteria: candidates should include decision makers, GoL (especially MoH, MoA and LISGIS) and WFP/partner technicians and journalists.

     b.   EFSA: Beginners and Basic: January 2008
          i.   Adding a focus on Natural / Technological Hazards
          ii.  Market constraints and political conflict
          Selection Criteria: a 2day introduction should cater to a wider audience including GoL decision makers and WFP Programme staff the remaining 3-4 days are for those with specific responsibilities in assessment, especially field staff.

     c.   EFSA: Sampling and Data Analysis (for Basic and Intermediate): 2008
          Selection Criteria: this workshop is for those that have completed the Beginner/ Basic EFSA workshop and are required to have a more thorough understanding of quantitative methodology. Particular targets would include VAM Assistants and newly identified GoL FSNM Unit staff.

     d.   EFSA: Response Options: 2008
          Selection Criteria: this workshop is for those that have completed at least one of the two previous workshops. It will mainly enhance the work of WFP VAM, HoSO and Programme staff as well as GoL staff that have the mandate to translate information into programmatic decisions.

2. **Individual Training for VAM Assistants** (and when possible, key GoL actors in NFSNM system). This training can be contracted from private sector local or on-line training suppliers.
    a. Software (XLS, SPSS)
    b. Statistics / Quantitative skills.

3. **On-the-Job**: National VAM Officer starting a minimum of 6 months prior to an eventual phase out of International VAM Office (if and when decided upon as a viable option).

4. Regional or overseas training and distance learning events do not appear as worthwhile components of the Capacity Building Strategy at this point.

**Timeline for the Learning Events**

| Event Year/Quarter: | 2007 Q4 | 2008 Q1 | 2008 Q2 | 2008 Q3 | 2008 Q4 | 2009 Q1 | 2009 Q2 | 2009 Q3 | 2009 Q4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Workshop 1: Nutrition | ■ | | | | | | | | |
| Workshop 2: EFSA Basics | | ■ | | | | | | | |
| Workshop 3: EFSA Quantitative | | | ■ | | | | | | |
| Workshop 4: EFSA Response Options | | | | ■ | | | | | |
| Individual training for VAM Assistants | | | | | ■ | ■ | ■ | | |
| On-the-Job training (optional) | | | | | | | | ■ | ■ |

## 4. Recommendations

To meet the aforementioned strategic goals and objectives, the following specific recommendations are made, divided between Government of Liberia and WFP.

4a. Government of Liberia
- o **Prepare full Project Proposal** to equip the Liberian FS/N Monitoring Unit with an institutional identity, human resources, functional systems, equipment --the foundation upon which a good portion of the present training strategy will be implemented.
- o **Develop a simple standardized monitoring tool** that can be completed by existing government field staff on a monthly basis to assess food security status and livelihood needs at sub national level.

4b. WFP Internal
- o **Continue to lend assistance to the Government of Liberia:**
    - o **in the preparation of a Project Proposal** to equip the FS/N Monitoring Unit with an institutional identity, human resources, functional systems, equipment --the foundation upon which a good portion of the present training strategy will be implemented.
    - o **in the develop a simple standardized monitoring tool** adapted to the Liberian context that can be completed by existing government field staff on a monthly basis to assess food security status and livelihood needs at sub national level.

- o **Enhance the skill sets of the current national VAM staff** (n=3 including Ministry of

Agriculture secondee) to alleviate some of the current tasks of the International VAM Officer and free her up to identify and provide on the on-the-job training to National VAM Officer.

   o The skills most urgently missing among this set of staff include: analysis and report-writing skills.

o **Revise the current Terms of Reference for key assessment WFP staff** so that their specific roles in assessment are more clearly stated and understood by each staff and their immediate superiors.

o **WFP Field Monitors** have a vital role to play in nationwide assessments and multiple sources above have confirmed that they are currently ill-prepared to conduct assessments. Given the high turnover of WFP field staff (Head of Sub Office and Field Monitors):

   o Give particular care to the **choice of candidate trainees** for all future Training Events. If the professional future (i.e. planned stay in a given sub office for next two to three years) of a candidate is in any way uncertain, more than one candidate should be trained from that Sub Office.

   o Revive the effort to produce and finalize a **Field Monitor Manual** (draft components exist already in-country). This manual may be linked directly to the EFSA training session handouts and needs to be a guide to exactly how to conduct the tasks stipulated in the Terms of Reference (see above).

o **Prepare the training workshops specified in the Capacity Building Strategy above**. For more details on the scheduled January 2008 Training Event, please see below.

o **If the International VAM post were to be phased out, identify a Liberian candidate for National VAM Officer and provide him/her with a minimum of 6 months on-the-job in-country training** alongside International VAM officer. Please note that no decision has been made to phase out the position of International VAM Officer.

## 4c. Recommendations specific to the Training Event in January 2008

o The EFSA Introduction workshop originally scheduled for November must be organized to satisfy **two very different groups of trainees**. Those involved only in the management and/ or use of assessments will attend the first two days for a conceptual overview. Those likely to be involved regularly in field components of assessment should be present for the full period. For this reason, the place of training may change between Days 1-2 and Days 3-6. It is suggested that the break between sessions be minimal.

o The training language will be in English and the number of participants (facilitators and trainees of all levels) should not exceed 30.

o Using the new Skill Gap database (described above) for candidate prerequisites, prepare a concrete list of potential workshop candidates (UN, Government of Liberia and other). The GoL candidates should be those expected to be directly involved in the FS/N monitoring unit. Although a draft of this list was started in Monrovia with the VAM team, staff flow, availability and protocols made it impossible to complete at that time.

o The workshop needs to be married directly to a **concrete and useful assessment opportunity**, *without which it must be rescheduled.* Organization of this hands-on component must be given immediate attention to retain a training event for 2007.

### *Ivoirian Refugee Camp*
o In the PRRO10454.0, 1100 Ivoirian refugees are scheduled to receive general food distributions and, in collaboration with UNHCR, plans are made to undertake a rapid assessment of the Food Security and Nutrition situation in the last remaining camp (there is a second camp in Maryland). It is planned that the practicum of the November EFSA training will be able to produce this analysis and eventually a final EFSA report. The positive evolution of the situation in Cote d'Ivoire, however, may make this practicum impossible and needs to be clarified. *If it is retained*:

o two to three Ivoirian candidates (carefully selected to have functional skills in English, French and the most prominent Ivoirian language) must be trained alongside other trainees.

o The training site of the last part of the training should be close to the refugee camp to allow repeated access for at least two consecutive days.

## 5. Conclusions

To ensure ongoing skill development beyond the workshop environment, trained staff members need to be tracked from different levels (country and regional). Using tools developed by ODAN, they should be supported with long-distance and on-the-job learning opportunities enabling them to apply, reinforce, and share their skills more regularly. Country Office and SENAC4 funds may be available and accessed to support this. If this is achieved, a greater number of staff will be able to move from basic, to intermediate, and finally to advanced assessor capacity in a structured and mentored approach. WFP partners, especially the Government of Liberia, will be featured in this process to the maximum extent possible.

By strengthening WFP and partner staff capacity to plan, manage, analyse, and present credible assessments in Liberia, WFP hopes ultimately to construct a rigorous and wide foundation for designing and targeting prevention, relief and recovery operations throughout the region.

**Annexes**

**Annex A:**

## Terms of Reference
## Learning Event Lead Facilitator

## Word Food Programme Liberia, VAM-unit

**Context**

The elections of a new government for the Republic of Liberia in January 2006 marked a qualitative break with the legacy of violence, divisiveness, human rights abuses, economic mismanagement, and government misrule that characterized the nation since the outbreak of civil war in 1989. Although recent trends are encouraging, the risks of conflict and a breakdown in effective government will remain continuing priority concerns for the nation.

Many sources of vulnerability to loss of availability of food or access to food can be identified, including higher levels of pest infestation and damage in farmers' fields or in their stored produce, increased incidence of disease, or localized droughts and floods. However, the two principal sources of vulnerability linked to food security are conflict and market-related shocks. Both require close monitoring.

The central source of vulnerability in Liberia over the past two decades lies in **political instability and conflict** in Liberia and neighboring countries. Through the displacement of households and the breakdown in markets and in the provision of social services it causes, not only does conflict restrict availability of and access to food, it also affects access to the complementary goods and services needed to properly utilize any food consumed – health services, education, water and sanitation, and so on. Moreover, food insecurity itself is arguably an underlying source of conflict within the country, motivating conflict over access to the resources needed to ensure access to sufficient food.

Secondly, **market related shocks** are of concern for the food security of Liberian households. Global changes in prices for the commodities that Liberia produces – rubber, iron ore, cocoa, palm oil, coffee, and so on – are likely to have a direct effect on the income levels and, hence, access to food of households that are dependent for their income upon their production. Similarly, changes in the prices of global commodities that Liberia consumes – rice and petroleum, most notably – will have equally severe consequences. The supply chain for imported rice to Liberia is relatively thin and concentrated, since most imported rice comes from overseas, with virtually none from the region. With only a handful of rice importers historically supplying the country with rice, this supply chain has been subject to manipulation in the past. Liberia's history demonstrates the considerable political and economic risks associated with any sharp rises in the price of rice.

Since early 2006, WFP Liberia (VAM and Nutrition unit) has supported the Government of Liberia with the development of a **knowledge base on food security and nutrition** in cooperation with other development partners including FAO, UNICEF and WHO. In this context the following assessments, reviews and surveys were conducted: A Joint FAO/WFP Crop and Food Security Assessment, two Comprehensive Food Security and Nutrition Surveys (rural/semi-urban CFSNS, Monrovia CFSNS), and the Liberia Market Review.

As the next step, the Ministry of Agriculture supported by WFP and FAO has initiated the development of a **National Food Security and Nutrition Strategy (NSFSN)** to set-up an institutional framework which will increase the capacity level of the Government to respond to monitor and respond to food crisis and to target effectively limited resources available to address root causes of acute and chronic food insecurity and malnutrition in the medium and long-term.

The NFSNS identified **limited human capacity** in the country as one of the major challenges to overcome these challenges. One of the legacies of the long civil war in Liberia was that many experienced and highly trained Liberians left the country to build lives elsewhere. Areas related to food security assessment and monitoring in which there are key gaps in the numbers of trained nationals available include (1) knowledge on conceptual frameworks, early warning and preparedness; (2) preparation and implementation of assessments (planning, sampling, tools); and (3) most importantly, processing of data, reporting and presentation techniques for dissemination and advocacy.

**Objectives/Purpose and Target Audience**

The lead facilitator is responsible for managing and directing all tasks related to delivery of the learning event, in close cooperation with the WFP VAM Officer and Nutrition Consultant.

A Training Needs Analysis (TNA) – including skills gap analysis – will be conducted to determine immediate and medium term priorities (for the learning event as such as well as longer terms capacity building requirements for the implementation of the NFSNS and the establishment of the National Food Security and Monitoring Unit). The TNA report should provide recommendations for training needs at the national as well as sub-national level.

Based on the outcome of the TNA, an agenda will be developed to determine selection criteria for participants for the EFSA learning event, adaptation of modules and preparation of the field exercise. The lead facilitator will animate the training sessions along with co-facilitators and evaluate how the learnt skills can be used by trainees in future assessments.

Potential candidates for the training event will be WFP field monitors with basic experience in assessments and data processing, WFP national Programme staff, technical staff of cooperating partner agencies, as well as UN and government counterparts from the Ministries of Planning and Economic Affairs, Health and Social Welfare, and Agriculture.

**Expected Outputs**

- Training needs analysis: stakeholder analysis, methods review and skills gap analysis, participants' skill and experience profile, participant selection criteria.
- Learning event materials: slides, participant workbooks and other learning tools.
- Facilitation of the learning event.
- Evaluation tools and learning event report.
- Longer-term capacity building strategy.

**Approach**
- Adapting sessions: The standard modules and sessions included in the Facilitator's Tool Kit will need to be adapted to the Liberia context and participants' profile – experience, skills and abilities.
- Target audience and learner profiles: Learner profiles can be used to define learning paths for the technical skills required in assessment and VAM activities. Identification of participants' skill, knowledge and experience profile should be based on the assessor's database, and EFSA and VAM skill and experience profiles. Learning event preparation also includes training needs analysis, stakeholder analysis and methods review. Outputs of these activities should guide the adaptation of learning objectives and content that is appropriate to the participants' profile and country/regional context.

- Coherence among learning objectives, content, exercises and KATs: The Facilitator's Tool Kit and the VAM/ODAN thematic learning path summaries provide draft learning objectives for various topics. The Facilitator's Tool Kit also provides guidance on developing and adapting learning objectives for specific learning events.

- Balance between presentations and exercises: An optimal balance between presentations and exercises should be maintained throughout. The instructional approach should be appropriate to the topic and participants' profile, and should emphasize practical application. Sessions should explain how new skills and knowledge can be applied in real-life situations.

**Training Needs Analysis**

ODAN has established three EFSA learner profiles for basic learning events: beginners, basic and intermediate.

Learner skills, experiences and ability profiles can be used to define the learning paths and learning objectives of specific events.[2] EFSA profiles provide: (i) participants' functions/roles in EFSAs and related activities, (ii) capacity requirements for these functions, (iii) suggested learning paths, and (iv) skill and knowledge targets.

WFP collects self-assessments of skills and experience through the ENA questionnaire,[3] and gathers this information in a central database. Analysis of ENA questionnaires and EFSA learner profiles are essential for training needs analysis. The Facilitator's Tool Kit includes guidance on conducting training needs analysis.

Training needs analysis should have the following outputs: (i) participants' skill, experience and ability profile, including roles and functions in assessment activities, (ii) current performance levels, (iii) skill gaps (iv) necessary modifications of participant selection criteria, (iv) the capacity building priorities of country office and/or regional bureau senior staff, and (v) the assessment methods currently used by training participants.

Outputs of the Training Needs Analysis include the identification of:

- food security issues in the country, and how they differ from those in other countries;

- stakeholders in food security assessment in the country;

- the approach to FSAs adopted by the country office and its partners;

- medium- and long-term strategic priorities for the WFP country programme as well as Government priorities;

- the concerns and priorities of senior regional and country staff regarding the capacity for and quality of FSAs and VAM;

- learners' technical expertise, education levels and current work responsibilities;

- FSA proficiency levels and appropriate learning path(s);

- skill gaps and training needs;

- necessary modifications to the participant selection criteria.

Tasks in Training Needs Analysis

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[2] Summaries of these EFSA learner profiles are included in section Chapter 2.2 of the Facilitator's Tool Kit.
[3] The ENA questionnaire is included in the Facilitator's Tool Kit and can be provided by the regional bureau and country office.

- Organize and implement a stakeholder analysis and a skills gap analysis, including:

  → participating – via telecommunications or in-country – in interviews with the WFP Country Director, Deputy Country Director, Head of Programme, VAM Officer, National VAM and Nutrition Assistants, *secondee* to the VAM unit from the Ministry of Agriculture, Heads of Sub-Office. Outside WFP, interviews should be conducted with Deputy Ministers of Agriculture, Health and Planning, director of the Liberia Institute for Statistics and Geo-Information Services, county level government representatives, Head of UNDP/NIMAC, and representatives of selected cooperating partners and donors;

  → preparing a skills inventory, analysis of assessment roles and stakeholder analysis questionnaires and delivering it to participants;

  → reviewing planned assessment related activities (including food security monitoring) and preparing a risk analysis;

  → analysing and interpreting the results.

- Review current approaches to assessments, including:

  → country office perceptions of assessments;

  → frequency of assessments;

  → methodologies used by WFP and other agencies in the country;

  → quality of assessment reports.

- Provide recommendations based on the outcomes of the training needs analysis:

  → define the participants' profile (proficiency level) and skills gap

  → gaps that can be addressed through workshops, distance learning, supervised on the job learning and/or additional technical backstopping;

  → criteria for selecting learning event participants;

  → define/update the achievable learning event objectives,

**Preparation of Learning Event Materials**

- Agree on instructional approach(es), prepare the agenda and arrange learning in discrete blocks

- Prepare learning event materials according based on existing FSA Facilitators' Tool kit session guides, materials from the regional bureau and the *EFSA Handbook*.

- Tailor materials to suit the proficiency level of the target audience and according to assessment phases (management, design, fieldwork, data processing and analysis and reporting) and relevant thematic areas such as market, response options, etc).

- Review and provide feedback on the quality of sessions prepared by other facilitators.

**Learning Event Facilitation**

- Guide co-facilitators/trainers.

- Modify/revise the agenda and/or learning event sessions as needed.

- Lead and present sessions.

- Ensure optimal participation throughout all sessions.

- Guide sessions and exercises with clear methods and processes.

- Adapt sessions to changing situations and needs of the group.

**Evaluation and Reporting**

Prepare tools to evaluate reactions to the learning event and the extent to which learning objectives were met:

- Evaluation of reactions: Measures participants' reaction to a learning event through questions: Did participants like the event? Was the material relevant to their work?

- Evaluation of learning: Moves the evaluation beyond participant satisfaction and assesses the extent to which participants achieved the learning objectives. Did this event result in knowledge transfer? This should include administering a knowledge assessment test.

- Analysis and report learner evaluations and the results of knowledge assessment tests

- Prepare a report on the learning event and Training Needs Analysis including a capacity-building strategy for future learning events (sequence, content, selection criteria).

**WFP** will:

- provide the Facilitators' Tool Kit, including draft learning event materials – session guides, exercises, slides, evaluation tools and knowledge assessment tests (KATs);

- contribute to preparation of slides and exercises for the learning event;

- ensure a venue and logistics for the learning event;

- provide a format for the post-learning event report.

**Duration and Time Line**

The first visit is scheduled to take place from 08 to 20 July as outlined below:

| Activity | July 2007 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 08 SO | 09 MO | 10 TU | 11 WE | 12 TH | 13 FR | 14 SA | 15 SO | 16 MO | 17 TU | 18 WE | 19 TU | 20 FR |
| Arrival | ▓ | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Interviews with WFP staff (Monrovia) | | ▓ | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Interviews with counterparts | | | ▓ | ▓ | | | | | | | | | |
| Skills assessments (WFP national staff and counterparts) | | | | ▓ | ▓ | | | | | | | | |
| Write-up draft | | | | | | ▓ | ▓ | | | | | | |
| Field visit to Saclepea | | | | | | | | ▓ | ▓ | | | | |
| Field visit to Lofa | | | | | | | | | | ▓ | ▓ | | |
| Finalize report and debriefing | | | | | | | | | | | | ▓ | ▓ |
| Departure (afternoon) | | | | | | | | | | | | | ▓ |

The second visit will take place in October 2007 and entail a 2 1/2 weeks stay comprised of one week learning event preparation, 1 week learning event workshop and 3 days workshop evaluation and draft of capacity-building strategy for future learning events. A detailed activity plan will be developed during the first stay.

**Annex B: Agencies and Individuals Consulted**
**WFP/LIBERIA**
**Monrovia (18)**
L. Imbleau, Country Director
A. Meygag, Deputy Director
C. Ah Poe, VAM Officer
K. Samba, Nutrition Consultant
T. Loiwou, MoA Secondee to WFP
S. Tamba, VAM Assistant
M. Kolubah, VAM Assistant
A. Sleh, National Pipeline Officer
S. Subah, National Nutritionist
R. Gray Johnson, Gender Focal Point
J. Dean, Human Resources Assistant
H. Gebreselassie, Program Officer
M. Namar, National Program Officer
Kebeh Enders, HSTF Focal Point
A.Ballayan, National Program Officer
E. Jensen, Data Clerk
E. Sarvice, Program Assistant
M. Fahnbulleh, Field Monitor

**WFP Central Sub Office (3)**
R. Morris, Head of Sub Office
T. W. Suwo, Field Monitor
E. Gonlepa, Field Monitor

**WFP Voinjama Sub Office (5)**
M. Ojata, Head of Sub Office
J. Foley-Koiwou, Field Monitor
T. Dixon, Field Monitor
J. Wilson, Field Monitor
A. Warlonfa, SAI

**WFP SaclePea Sub Office (3)**
Francine Mukamuhirwa, Head of Sub Office
Crossman Karley, Field Monitor
Washita Haider, Field Monitor

**GOVERNMENT OF LIBERIA**
**Ministry of Planning and Economic Development (2)**
Minister T. MacIntosh
Deputy Minister Moribah

**Ministry of Agriculture (4)**
P. Korvah, Dep. Ministry / Administration
J. M. Kennedy, Dir. Planning and Policy
R. Fannoh, Coordinator of Bureau Statistics
G. Z. Gaye, Training Director

**Ministry of Health (5)**
S. T. Varpilah, Dep. Min for Planning, Research and Development
N. Bropleh, Asst. Minister for Planning
Dr. M. Pewu, Asst. Minister for Curative Services
J. Ebba-Duncan, Asst. Minister for Preventive Services
V. Hinneh, Nutrition Unit

**Liberia Institute for Statistics and Geo Information Services (7)**
Dr. E. Liberty, Director
J. Samo, J. Q. Kei. F. Wreh, A. Fayiah, K. Adams, D. Koikoi

**Liberia Refugee Repatriation Resettlement Commission (LRRRC)/SaclePea** (1)
J. Miaway

**UN SISTER AGENCIES**
**UNDP (6)**
UNDP/NIMAC, M. Hall and A. Jalloh
UNDP/Monrovia, L. Esquivel, CST Project Coordinator
UNDP/Voinjama. B. Zalzay
UNDP/SaclePea, C. Luonpie

**UNHCR (6)**
UNHCR/Voinjama, P. Najue and W. Kollie
UNHCR/SaclePea, B. Nagga, AIC

**FAO (2)**
FAO/Voinjama, J. Center,
FAO/Liberia, M. Khaled, Emergency Coordinator

**UNICEF (2)**
UNICEF/Liberia, E. Barry
UNICEF/Liberia, H. Haward
UNICEF/Liberia, S. Mwendar

**Donors (2)**
European Commission/ECHO B. Rotival, Field Expert
W. Kawalawu, Program Assistant

**NGOs and Other (4)**
Japan Peace Winds, Voinjama, M. Miura
Red Cross Society (LNRCS)/SaclePea: R. Saya, C. Johnson, P.L. Tokpah