Essential Needs Analysis
Informing programme excellence for the people we serve

WHAT ARE ESSENTIAL NEEDS?
While there is no rigid list on what constitutes essential needs, there is general consensus that these include requirements—food, water, sanitation, clothing, shelter and life-saving health care—which people need to meet to ensure survival and a minimum level of physical and mental well-being. People facing chronic or shock-related hardship have to prioritize their limited resources across multiple essential needs to survive, at the expense of their well-being and livelihoods.

WHY DO ESSENTIAL NEEDS MATTER TO FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION?
Food security and nutrition objectives can only be tackled if other essential needs are met.
A household’s ability to meet food and nutritional requirements depends on its ability to also meet other essential needs, such as water, hygiene, education and health. This is because these other needs interact with food security—whether by competing for limited resources or by reinforcing a household’s ability to achieve food security and nutrition. A true understanding of food security therefore requires analysts to look beyond households’ basic food consumption and adopt a holistic approach of examining how households’ essential needs interplay with each other.

WFP AND ESSENTIAL NEEDS ANALYSIS
Given that people do not live or behave in silos, there is growing consensus that analyzing and addressing needs coherently across sectors would positively impact household well-being. By taking into account the existing links between different needs, an essential needs analysis helps the international community place the whole range of households’ needs at the centre of programmatic decisions. WFP encourages Country Offices to undertake essential needs analysis where relevant. An essential needs analysis allows us to:

1. **Understand** a wide range of households’ needs, how they affect one another, and where the gaps are.
2. Coordinate with partners to provide a **holistic and harmonized response** which addresses multiple and interconnected needs, thereby making a more significant difference for beneficiaries and advancing progress towards SDG 2 as well as other SDGs.
3. Through an integrated response, contribute to longer-term outcomes by supporting **government and development partners’** poverty reduction efforts, including through social protection.
ESSENTIAL NEEDS ANALYSIS GUIDANCE PACKAGE

WFP has prepared an interim guidance package on how to carry out an essential needs assessment, how to calculate a minimum expenditure basket, and how to undertake a supply assessment of goods and services for essential needs. The essential needs analytical approach has been adopted into assessments in several countries, including the Democratic Republic of Congo, Turkey, Uganda and Bangladesh for the Rohingya response. Minimum expenditure baskets have been developed in a number of countries to facilitate the establishment of evidence-based transfer values and targeting criteria, and are a powerful tool to advocate for multisectoral responses with donors and partners. Trainings and workshops focusing on conducting essential needs analysis and how to use it to inform programming have been conducted with the WFP Regional Bureaux and Country Offices of West Africa, East Africa and Asia.

WHAT HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED SO FAR?

- In **Cox’s Bazar, Bangladesh**, ENA served as a starting point for a Joint Response Plan among partners to address the priority needs identified. WFP worked closely with partners in the cash working group to conduct the multisectoral expenditure analysis.
- In **Turkey**, ENA helped WFP and the Government to empower Syrian refugees to meet their essential needs in the market through the national Emergency Social Safety Net Programme.
- In **DRC**, ENA allowed WFP and partners to understand and cohesively address people’s interlinked needs: food, health and education, ultimately resulting in improved outcomes.
- In **Uganda**, ENA was conducted in close collaboration with multiple agencies (including WFP, UNHCR, REACH, ECHO, DFID, etc.) to inform needs-based targeting in the refugee response.

WHAT COMES NEXT?

As the methodology is rolled out and its applications tested, the interim guidance is being refined and improved and an updated guidance package is expected to be launched in the first half of 2020. Support to Regional Bureaux and Country Offices is continuously provided by VAM and CBT to integrate an essential needs analytical lens in assessments and programme planning and design. Opportunities to leverage essential needs analysis in country strategic planning and in joint work with partners and governments are also being sought where possible. Where needs arise, trainings and workshops will be provided for staff and WFP partners.

“People need more than food. Previous studies have helped us realize that WFP’s assistance has not been used in the most effective way. Food is often sold for cash to buy multiple goods, including less amount of or less quality food, meaning we fail to achieve our food security and nutrition goals.

If we do a food security response, but we don’t get WASH right, we don’t get protection right and we don’t get health right, then we risk not achieving the best food security and nutrition outcomes.”

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