

1. FOOD SECURITY AND ESSENTIAL NEEDS

5

5. Livelihood Coping Strategies for Essential Needs (LCS-EN) [REVISED]



VERSION	V2.0 – 2024.03
INDICATOR CODE	5
INDICATOR TYPE	<p>Type: Outcome corporate indicator (CRF under S.O.1)</p> <p>Reported in ACR & APR</p> <p>1. Food Security and Essential Needs</p>
INCLUDED IN CSP LOGFRAMES	Yes
APPLICABILITY	<p>Mandatory:</p> <p>Under all outcomes for interventions where multipurpose cash transfers are being implemented, and the value of the assistance provided covers several essential needs that are broader than the food needs (modality of assistance is cash transfers).</p>
TECHNICAL OWNER	Research, Assessment and Monitoring – Needs Assessment & Targeting (RAM-N)
ACTIVITY TAGS	<p>*General Distribution (GD)</p> <p>*Home-grown school feeding (HGSF)</p> <p>Note: LCS-EN and ECMEN are recommended for HGSF to monitoring smallholder households' capacity to meet essential needs</p> <p>More activity tags can be chosen from Annex 5 of the Masterlist (e.g. HIV/TB mitigation and Safety Nets) but it is mandatory to select at least one of the above tags to ensure proper corporate reporting.</p>
UNIT OF MEASUREMENT & ANALYSIS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of households not applying coping strategies due to lack of food Percentage of households applying stress coping strategies due to lack of food Percentage of households applying crisis coping strategies due to lack of food Percentage of households applying emergency strategies due to lack of food
DEFINITION	<p>The livelihood coping strategies for essential needs (LCS-EN) is derived from a series of questions related to households' experiences with livelihood stress and asset depletion due to lack of resources (food, cash, else) to meet essential needs (shelter, education, health, food) during the 30 days prior to the survey. This involves longer-term alteration of income earning or food production patterns, and one-off responses such as asset sales to meet essential needs.</p> <p>The formulation of an LCS-EN module requires the selection of four stress strategies, three crisis strategies and three emergency strategies from the standardised available master list, while taking into consideration the local context. The list of strategies can be found on this VAM resource centre page along with the recommended severity already assigned to each strategy.</p>

However, the severity of some strategies can also be slightly adjusted based on local cultures and customs. Additional new strategies should be consulted with the responsible technical unit in HQ.

The module collects additional information about households who did not rely on a particular livelihood coping strategy.

RATIONALE

The LCS-EN helps in assessing longer-term household coping capacity and productive capacities, as well as the future impact on their ability to meet their essential needs. For instance, the sale of productive assets or reduction of expenditure on health and education are likely to impact the sustainability of a household's livelihoods. Hence, could translate into reduced physical and/or economic access to essential needs in the medium- to long-term. That said, responses are used to understand mechanisms used by households to cope with internal and external shocks.

Households relying on livelihood coping strategies to meet their essential needs are classified based on the severity associated to the strategies applied - the higher the category, the more severe and longer-term are the negative consequences for households.

Stress indicate a reduced ability to deal with future shocks due to a current reduction in resources or increase in debts.	Crisis directly reduce future productivity, including human capital formation.	Emergency affect future productivity but are more difficult to reverse or more dramatic in nature.
--	--	--

DATA SOURCE

Representative household surveys conducted either face-to-face, or remotely by phone calls. Examples of household level surveys include Post Distribution Monitoring (PDMs), Food Security Outcome Monitoring (FSOM), and Essential Needs Assessment (ENA).

DATA COLLECTION TOOL

You can also select through the list of possible livelihood coping strategies in the [WFP Survey Designer](#) by selecting the sub-module *Livelihood Coping Strategies (LCS-EN)* or *Livelihood Coping Strategies (LCS-EN Rural)* in the module *Coping Strategies*. Please see examples of LCS-EN modules in word file version and additional information on the VAM resource centre [page](#).

IMPORTANT: Please do not include the exact coping strategies provided as an example in the module below. Please refer to the full [list of strategies](#) to explore the livelihood coping strategies for essential needs, along with their explanations and relevance for different contexts (i.e., urban and rural) and populations (i.e. residents, refugees, etc.). It is also important to also keep alignment between assessment and CATI/mVAM questionnaires to allow for comparisons.

Example of LCS-EN module:

During the past 30 days , did anyone in your household have to engage in any of the following activities due to a lack of resources to access essential needs (e.g., food, shelter, education, health services, etc.) ?	10 = No, because we did not need to 20 = No, because we already sold those assets or have engaged in this activity within the last 12 months and cannot continue to do it 30= Yes	Indicative severity of the strategy (Country office to attribute the relevant severity, the following is just an example)	Variable names
---	---	--	----------------

1. FOOD SECURITY AND ESSENTIAL NEEDS

	9999= Not applicable (don't have access to this strategy)		
1.1 Sold household assets/goods (radio, furniture, television, jewellery, etc.) <i>due to a lack of resources to access essential needs</i>	_	Stress	LcsEN_stress_DomAsset
1.2 Borrow money <i>due to a lack of resources to access essential needs</i>	_	Stress	LcsEN_stress_BorrowCash
1.3 Spent savings <i>due to a lack of resources to access essential needs</i>	_	Stress	LcsEN_stress_Saving
1.4 Sold, shared or exchanged in-kind assistance (e.g. food rations or non-food items) <i>due to a lack of resources to access essential needs</i>	_	Stress	LcsEN_stress_SellRation
1.5 Sold productive assets or means of transport (sewing machine, wheelbarrow, bicycle, car, etc.) <i>due to a lack of resources to access essential needs</i>	_	Crisis	LcsEN_crisis_ProdAssets
1.6 Reduced expenses on essential health (including medicines) <i>due to a lack of resources to access essential needs</i>	_	Crisis	LcsEN_crisis_Health
1.7 Withdrew children from school <i>due to a lack of resources to access essential needs</i>	_	Crisis	LcsEN_crisis_OutSchool
1.8 Mortgaged/sold the house where the household was permanently living or land <i>due to a lack of resources to access essential needs</i>	_	Emergency	LcsEN_em_ResAsset
1.9 Begged (asked strangers for money/food) or scavenged <i>due to a lack of resources to access essential needs</i>	_	Emergency	LcsEN_em_Begged
1.10 Engaged in socially degrading, high-risk, exploitive or life-threatening jobs or income-generating activities (e.g., smuggling, theft, joining armed groups, prostitution) <i>due to a lack of resources to access essential needs</i>	_	Emergency	Lcs_em_IllegalAct
2. What are the main reasons - i.e. to access which essential needs – that you or other members in your household applied these coping strategies? <i>Note to enumerator: do not list the below as options to the respondent. Instead, mark all those that apply based on the answer provided.</i>			LhCSIEnAccess
			1 To buy food 2 To pay for rent 3 To pay school, education costs

	4 To cover health expenses 5 To buy non-food items (clothes, small furniture...) 6 To access water/sanitation facilities 7 To access essential dwelling services (electricity, energy, waste disposal...) 8 To pay for existing debts 999 Other specify
--	--

SAMPLING REQUIREMENTS

Guidance is available [here](#).

Sample size: The recommended sample size is 270 per stratum per each round of data collection, with consideration given to the parameters below.

- Population size (beneficiaries per stratum): at least 20,000
- Desired level of confidence: 90%
- Acceptable margin of error: 5%
- Response distribution: 50%
- Simple random sample (design effect): 1

If cluster sample is used, sample size should increase by at least 50% (at least 405 households).

If the prevalence is lower or higher than 50%, or the beneficiaries per stratum is less than 20,000 then sample size could be lower than 270. Use the sample size tool for calculation.

Sample size tool: [Raosoft sample size calculator](#)

Mandatory stratification:

- Programme activity
- Transfer modality

Optional stratification: Beneficiaries/non-beneficiaries (when relevant)

INDICATOR CALCULATION

Build a dichotomous variable for each coping severity level, representing if a household adopted or exhausted any strategy with that level of severity.

Three dichotomous variables need to be created:

- stress_coping
- crisis_coping
- emergency_coping

Then, a categorical variable is built, representing the severity level of the most severe strategy that a household adopted or exhausted. The categorical variable ranges from 1 to 4 and reflect one of four groups in which households are allocated:

- no use of stress, crisis, or emergency strategies
- use of stress strategies
- use of crisis strategies

1. FOOD SECURITY AND ESSENTIAL NEEDS

- use of emergency strategies

Scripts in [R, STATA and SPSS](#) and [sample data](#) are available on GitHub for calculating the LCS-EN indicator.

DATA ENTRY IN COMET	Yes
DISSAGGREGATION FOR DATA ENTRY IN COMET (MANDATORY)	<p>Mandatory disaggregation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Programme activity <p>Optional disaggregation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sex of the head of household - Transfer modality - Rural/urban - Admin and livelihood zone - Displacement status
FREQUENCY OF DATA COLLECTION/ DATA ENTRY IN COMET (MANDATORY)	<p>Minimum: twice / year</p> <p>For multi-annual projects, it is extremely important to collect data in the same seasons and periods to avoid seasonal biases limiting the scope for comparative analyses over time.</p> <p>It is strongly recommended that data collection for follow-ups happen in the same period as the baseline. In addition, all follow-ups are to be conducted within the same period/number of days after food distributions (i.e., two weeks after food distributions).</p> <p>For years when a baseline is conducted, only one follow is required.</p>
BASELINE ESTABLISHMENT	<p>In line with the business rules, baseline values should be established within three (3) months before and no later than three (3) months from the start date of activity implementation. However, it is strongly recommended to collect LCS-EN baseline values within one (1) month before the start of the activity implementation.</p> <p>The baseline could also be determined from a relevant WFP assessment conducted within the three months prior to the start of programme activity.</p>
TARGET SETTING	<p>Annual target:</p> <p>Reduced proportion of households applying crisis and emergency strategies compared to pre-assistance baseline value or previous yearly follow-up in case of multiannual projects.</p> <p><u>AND</u></p> <p>Reduced proportion of households applying emergency strategies compared to the pre-assistance baseline value, or previous yearly follow-up in case of multiannual projects.</p> <p>End of CSP target:</p> <p>Reduced proportion of households applying crisis and emergency strategies compared to the pre-assistance baseline value, or previous yearly follow-up in case of multiannual projects.</p> <p><u>AND</u></p> <p>Reduced proportion of households applying emergency strategies compared to the pre-assistance baseline value, or previous yearly follow-up in case of multiannual projects.</p>

**RESPONSIBLE FOR
DATA COLLECTION**

M&E Officer

**INDICATORS
COLLECTED &
ANALYSED AT THE
SAME TIME**

Household level indicators:

1. [Food Consumption Score](#) (FCS)
2. [Food Consumption Score Nutritional Quality Analysis](#) (FCS-N)
3. [reduced Coping Strategies Index](#) (rCSI)
6. [Economic Capacity to Meet Essential Needs](#) (ECMEN)

**COMPLEMENTARY
QUALITATIVE
RESEARCH**

Focus group discussions can be conducted to inform the design of the LCS-EN questionnaire module by selecting appropriate strategies and gaining a better understanding of their relevance to the local population. The choice of the strategies also depends on the context and should be informed by qualitative information.

Qualitative tools (focus group discussions, key informant interviews, community-based discussions and direct observation) help identify the livelihood coping strategies for essential needs relevant for a given community in each context and highlight the sociodemographic and economic characteristics of the most vulnerable households.

Questions that can be asked during a focus group discussion:

1. How do households in your community cope with this specific shock (e.g., flood, drought, economic crisis, etc.)?
2. How do households in your community cope to meet their essential needs (e.g., food, education, health, shelter, etc.)?
3. How do households cope to reduce the demand for essential needs (e.g., food, education, health, shelter, etc.)?
4. How do households cope to distribute resources within their households?

For more information, including the Technical Guidance Note and Qualitative Tool for the LCS, please see the [VAM Resource Centre](#).

**DECISIONS DATA CAN
INFORM**

The provision of assistance to targeted households may result in positive effects over time, without the presence of external shocks. The reduction of relying on livelihood coping strategies may be observed when comparing the results of LCS-EN with the baseline or previous rounds. These effects may not be immediate, as not all livelihood strategies can be easily reversed by households. If no change is observed over time, some consideration may be needed to adjust the design of an intervention. For example, results can be used to inform beneficiary targeting and prioritization, the selection of transfer modalities. The recommendations can be applied in a wide array of responses and can be in particular helpful in multi-partner interventions.

INTERPRETATION

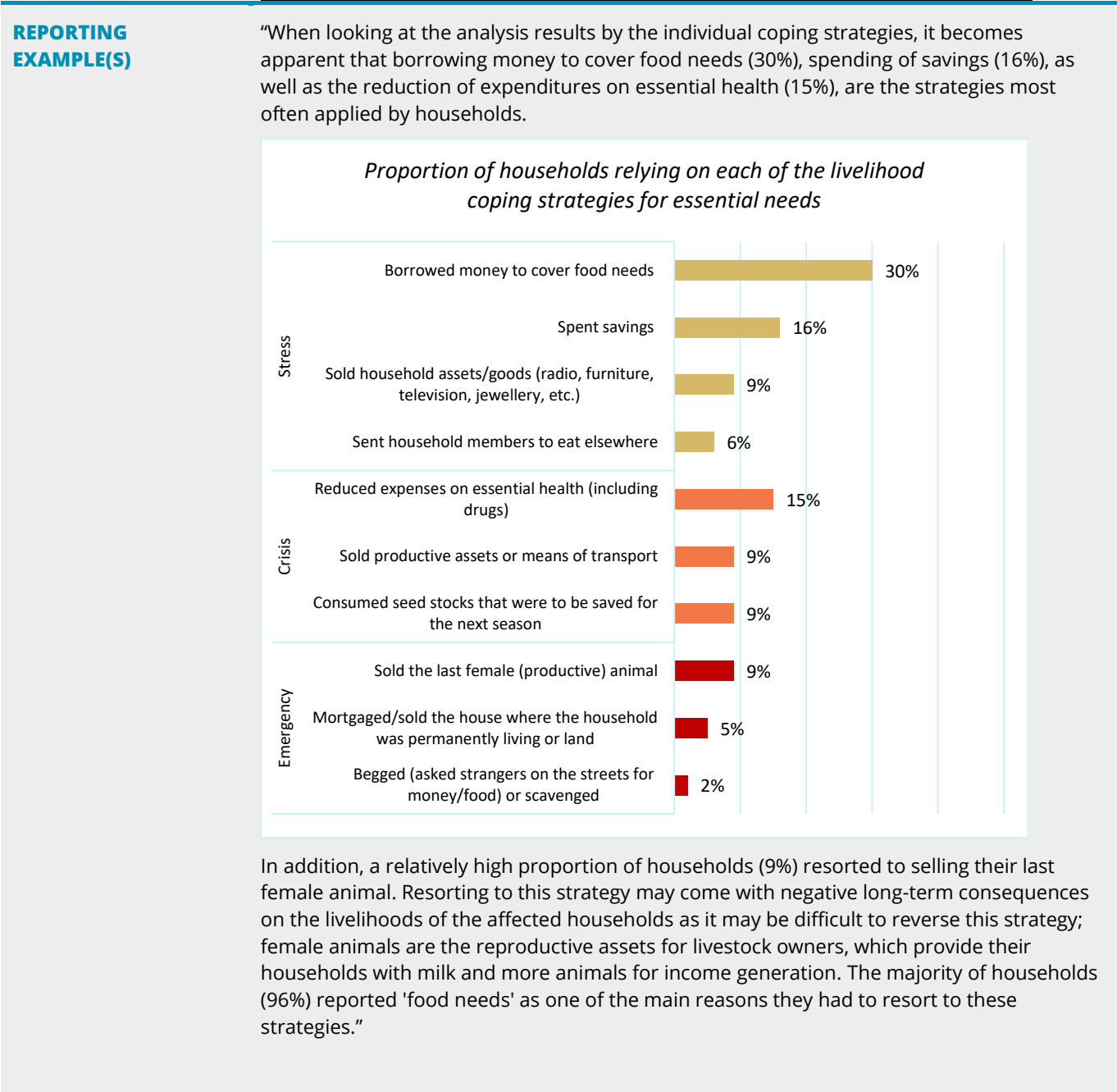
Report the proportion of households within each coping strategy category. The higher the severity level of strategies, the longer the recovery process would be for affected households. Further, some of the crisis and emergency strategies can even be irreversible.

The objective of WFP's multi-purpose cash assistance programme activities is to reduce the need of affected households to apply livelihood coping strategies and, if possible, to prevent the need to apply any crisis and/or emergency coping strategies.

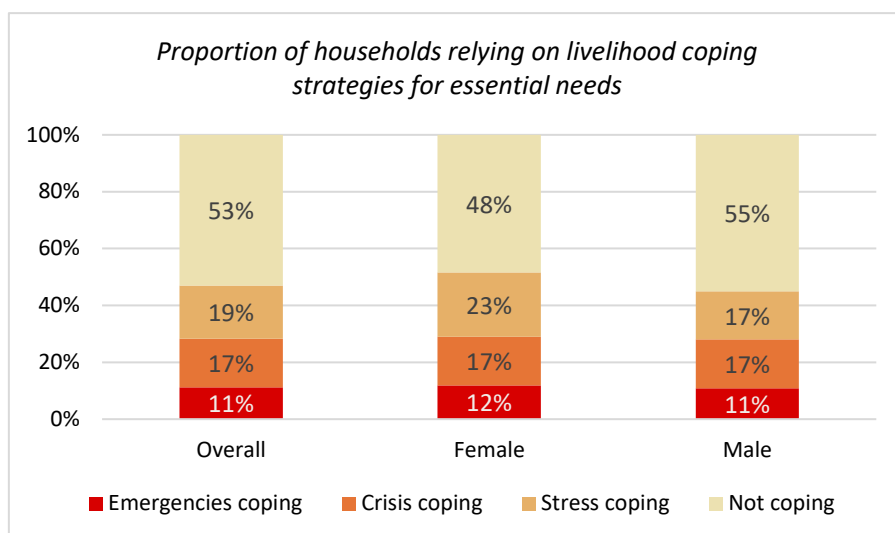
% Households applying no livelihood coping strategies
% Households applying stress coping strategies
% Households applying crisis coping strategies

1. FOOD SECURITY AND ESSENTIAL NEEDS

% Households applying emergency coping strategies



VISUALIZATION



Severity	Livelihood Coping Strategies for Essential Needs			
Stress	Borrowed money to cover food needs	34%	28%	30%
	Sent household members to eat elsewhere	7%	5%	6%
	Sold household assets/goods (radio, furniture, television, jewellery, etc.)	12%	7%	9%
	Spent savings	21%	14%	16%
Crisis	Consumed seed stocks that were to be saved for the next season	10%	9%	9%
	Reduced expenses on essential health (including drugs)	16%	15%	15%
	Sold productive assets or means of transport	10%	8%	9%
Emergency	Begged (asked strangers on the streets for money/food) or scavenged	3%	2%	2%
	Mortgaged/sold the house where the household was permanently living or land	6%	4%	5%
	Sold the last female (productive) animal	10%	9%	9%
		Female	Male	Overall

LIMITATIONS

Although the LCS-EN can be used as a proxy of household ability to meet essential needs, it cannot detect the extent to which households are able to meet their needs. The indicator is better suited to clarifying findings from other outcome indicators regarding the sustainability of households' ability to meet essential needs. When analysed in conjunction with the ECMEN or the MDDI, the LCS-EN can provide insightful information on why certain needs are being met or not.

In addition, the type of strategies is largely context and livelihood-dependent, therefore comparisons between regions and countries can be limited. Furthermore, the ability to draw the line and different between households applying strategies to meet their essential needs and local customs and traditions can be challenging.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For more information, please refer to the [LCS-EN page](#) on the VAM resource centre or contact the Needs Assessments and Targeting Unit in HQ RAM-N at global.assessmentandtargeting@wfp.org.