

4 How is HEA done?

Since its inception, HEA has been strongly associated with rapid appraisal methods, particularly the use of semi-structured interviews with key informants and focus groups. In all the contexts in which HEA has been applied over the past decade, this has been the way in which the information has been collected, for reasons discussed in Chapter 5. The present chapter outlines how and at what level (national, district or village) these methods are used for different steps in the framework. While assessments vary to some extent according to the staff and time available, and according to factors such as security and access, there are certain principles and practices which have emerged from the field experience of the past 15 years that can help guide an HEA enquiry and ensure a minimum level of quality control. These practices and procedures are described in more detail in *The Practitioners' Guide to HEA*, Chapter 3, 'Baseline assessment'.

It should be noted, however, that HEA is an analytical framework that can use data gathered by any method or combination of methods to allow the construction of a logical and consistent picture of livelihoods among different groups and in different areas, within the required timescale and with the resources available. It can, thus, use data from household sample surveys just as it can use data gathered through rapid appraisal, provided, in both cases, quality control measures can be put in place. The HEA framework is clear and specific about the questions that need to be asked; the way in which the answers are obtained is, in contrast, a matter of resources, practicalities and the relative merits of different methods in each context.

The strong association of HEA with rapid appraisal has sometimes led to

HEA is an analytical framework that requires both qualitative and quantitative data in order to produce a practical output useful for decision-making.

This data is usually collected through what in social science parlance are called qualitative research techniques.

confusion over whether HEA is a qualitative or a quantitative method. In social science there is a distinction made between quantitative and qualitative methods: “Qualitative research is a set of research techniques in marketing and social sciences in which data are obtained from a relatively small group of respondents and not analyzed with statistical techniques. This differentiates it from quantitative research in which a large group of respondents provide data that are statistically analyzed.”²⁶ Thus, HEA information – which includes both qualitative and quantitative data – tends to be collected using qualitative rather than quantitative research techniques.

4.1 How is HEA information collected?

As described in Chapter 2, there are six steps in the HEA framework. The table opposite indicates how information is gathered or put together for each of these steps.

An HEA investigation tends to work step by step from the wider level down to the village and household level. It starts from the ‘big picture’ at national or provincial level (what is the general pattern of livelihoods in different areas?) and then at district level (how do people get by in general terms in this area?). It then works through an analysis of access to resources and definitions of poverty at village or community level (how does access to land and livestock affect livelihood strategies? What does it mean to be poor in this area?), to a detailed inquiry among household representatives into exactly how people at different levels of wealth get by.

How is a livelihood zoning done?

It is generally not possible to delineate livelihood zones on the basis of secondary data alone, because livelihood zones are not based on what the land is used for (as shown on a land use map) or on what people grow (as shown on an agro-ecological map), but on what people do.

The steps in a livelihood zoning are usually:

1. A review of available rainfall, agro-ecological, soil, vegetation and agro-economic maps.
2. An initial workshop at either national or regional level to obtain a preliminary map and zone descriptions. Participants usually include technical staff from relevant line ministries (eg, agriculture, livestock, meteorology, natural resources, fishing), NGOs and international organisations.

Table 8: How information is gathered for each step in HEA

Steps in HEA	What is it?	Where does the information come from?
Livelihood zoning	Defining areas within which people share broadly the same patterns of livelihood	Review of secondary data, national or provincial workshops and meetings, and district-level key informant interviews
Wealth breakdown	Grouping people together using local definitions of wealth and quantifying their assets	Semi-structured interviews with district key informants and community leaders
Analysis of livelihood strategies	Quantifying people's sources of food and income and their expenditure patterns	Semi-structured interviews with representatives from households within each wealth group
Analysis of hazard	Translating a hazard or other shocks into economic consequences at household level	Information on hazards is gained from (1) routinely collected monitoring data collected through, for example, agriculture- and price-monitoring systems; (2) seasonal assessments and targeted field inquiry; and (3) other sources such as remote sensing.
Analysis of household coping capacity	Analysing the ability of households to respond to the hazard	Information on the 'expandability' of particular sources of food and cash comes from community key informants and interviews with wealth groups
→ Projected outcome: predicted access to food and cash for different groups and different areas, for a defined future period, relative to different thresholds		Outcome analysis is carried out by the assessment team.

3. Consultations with key informants at a lower level (either regional or district), and possibly some village visits, to confirm the map and clarify any outstanding issues.
4. A return to the first level to agree any changes with partners and to get a consensus on the ‘final’ map – although a livelihood zone map is always open to change as a result of more detailed field work.

Once livelihood zones have been defined, a baseline assessment of each zone can be carried out.

How is a baseline assessment carried out?

The phrase ‘HEA field work’ can usually be understood to encompass the process of baseline assessment, by which information is gathered that provides a wealth breakdown and a baseline analysis of livelihood strategies and expenditure patterns for each of the wealth groups within a livelihood zone. The most important principle of an HEA baseline assessment – and one that does not apply to assessments conducted without relation to an analytical framework – is that the practitioner is guided by a continual focus on what they need to know. It is easy, in discussions on livelihoods, to be led down tangential paths, or to spend an unbalanced amount of time on one area. An HEA assessment is an iterative learning path, with each stop along the way allowing for increased knowledge, detail and precision. Every piece of information collected in HEA field work is collected for a reason, and the fundamental simplicity of the HEA rubric allows the practitioner to understand where each piece of information fits in relation to the whole. In other words, it helps the people doing the hard graft in the field to understand the point of what they are doing at each level of inquiry.

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In the field there are typically three levels at which inquiry takes place. Most HEA baseline assessments include district-level interviews. All include interviews at the community or village level, and then a further set of interviews at the household level.

1. **Interviews with district-level key informants** are necessary in order to:

- develop or refine livelihood zones
- choose villages considered to be typical of the livelihood zone where interviews will be conducted
- inform them of the work and obtain agreement and clearances for working at the village level

and, where available, to obtain information on:

- market networks, and past events and hazards that will help construct a timeline of events for the zone, including any unusual hazard events, good production years, and conflict events
- production and prices, which is important for building up the reference information for designing a good problem specification, and for developing a monitoring system.

Usually, visits to the district administrative offices take around half a day.

2. **Interviews of community leaders** at the community or village level are necessary in order to:

- gather background information on the village, including details of recent hazards and household-level responses
- prepare a seasonal calendar of activities
- conduct a wealth breakdown. The objectives of this are to determine:
 - the criteria by which local people define wealth groups – usually according to the ownership of land, livestock or equipment
 - the assets owned and/or accessed by different wealth groups
 - the percentage of people falling into each wealth group – commonly done using proportional piling
 - the typical household size and dynamics of each wealth group
 - other economic or social activities/characteristics typical of each group – for example, the poor may work for the wealthy and/or receive gifts from them.

In other words, the inquiry at this level can begin to focus on how the local economy functions and how households fit into this context. Information on the crops grown and livestock raised can be put in the context of the role crops and livestock play in determining wealth, status and power; information on the natural resources available in the area is set against the questions of who takes advantage of these resources, how, and to what end.

These interviews are also important for preparing for the next stage of the inquiry at which the household-level data is obtained. Typical households from each wealth group are identified by the community key informants, who are asked to arrange interviews with representatives of these households. These community-level interviews tend to take a couple of hours, or half a day once travel and set-up time is taken into account.

3. **Focus group interviews of representatives of typical households** within each wealth group are necessary in order to gain information on:
- access to food and cash income
 - the expandability of different sources of food and cash after a shock.

These interviews are the source of most of the information on household-level food and cash income and expenditure for the reference year. It is at this stage that the concept of the threshold is used and the adding up begins. The relative importance of each food source is calculated by converting each into calorific equivalents and expressing these as a proportion of the minimum calorific needs of the household, taken to be an average of 2,100 kcals per person per day. The cash income obtained from different sources, and patterns of expenditure, is assessed and quantified. Cross-checking is an important feature of these interviews, both during the interview and after interviews between different teams; an outline of the cross-checks made is provided in section 5.4.

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The expandability of different sources of food and cash is estimated by going through each source of food and income and quantifying the possible changes in quantity and price that the interviewees might expect in 'bad years'. Interviewees are also asked about new strategies for obtaining food or cash income that households in that wealth group may pursue. This information is supplemented and cross-checked with historical secondary data and also with simple logic. For example, if everyone tries to cope by doing more casual labouring, but there are limited employment

opportunities, the wage rate will decline and there is unlikely to be any real increase in income from that activity.

Each interview is normally done with between three and five village members, each representing households of a particular wealth group. Interviews are conducted with at least three wealth groups in each village: poor, middle and better off. Given sufficient staff and time, separate interviews are conducted with groups of men and women in each wealth group. It is usually possible for one interviewer (or a two-person interviewing team) to conduct two or three interviews per day.

How is a reference year chosen?

A household economy baseline is essentially a set of reference information on what and how much people produced, bought, earned and sold and on the decisions they made regarding their livelihood strategies in a particular year. We need to know which year this is, firstly so that we know whether the baseline data is on the high side (if the reference year was a ‘good’ year) or on the low side (if the reference year was a ‘bad’ year). But we particularly need to know in order to be able to make projections into the future using monitoring data, such as production data or prices, which in HEA is defined in relation to the reference year. For example, actual or predicted crop production data for a particular year can be compared with that in the reference or baseline year and translated into a problem specification – such as ‘maize production is 80% of production in the reference year’.

Identifying a ‘reference year’ is necessary so that monitoring data in subsequent years can be compared with that in the reference or baseline year.

In most cases, the reference year chosen will be a recent year, to make recall as easy as possible, and commonly the 12 months just passed, unless an unusually large amount of food aid was distributed and unless it was a very good year. Using a bad (but not very bad) year as the reference year has certain advantages in that it already highlights the types of coping strategies people employ, and provides a good indication of just how expandable different options are. However, this is not the case if a large amount of food aid or other outside support was provided and, thus, prevented people from having to use their

own coping mechanisms. Using a very good year as the reference year is usually avoided, because typical patterns of livelihood may be lost or misunderstood in a year of surplus.

Analysis of the baseline field information

One of the strengths of rapid assessment procedures is that data collected in the field can be analysed and reviewed on the spot. This is important because it allows findings to be shared between team members every day. In this way gaps in the information can be identified and followed up, new leads can be shared and appropriate avenues of further enquiry developed and pursued. It is also important that team members share their experiences with the field methodology; this helps to identify which particular approaches work best in any given setting and helps to ensure that all team members follow similar and effective procedures in the field.

There are basically three stages to the analysis:

Preliminary analysis: This includes the rapid calculations and cross-checks carried out during and immediately after each interview. These calculations are carried out by the interviewers themselves and then cross-checked by the team leader, who provides daily feedback to team members.

Interim analysis: This is carried out by the whole team together, roughly half-way through the field work. Interim analysis requires about a day and involves compiling and quickly running through the results obtained so far. The main purpose of the interim analysis is to identify key questions and issues for follow-up in the field. For example, if the first wealth breakdowns indicate an unusually high percentage of poor households in the livelihood zone, is this a fair reflection of the situation in the zone, or is it a reflection of the way the teams are posing the wealth breakdown questions? Similarly, if the amount of cash income obtained from one source (eg, firewood) is relatively high, is there an explanation for this (eg, strong demand from a neighbouring urban market), or does it require additional follow-up in the field?

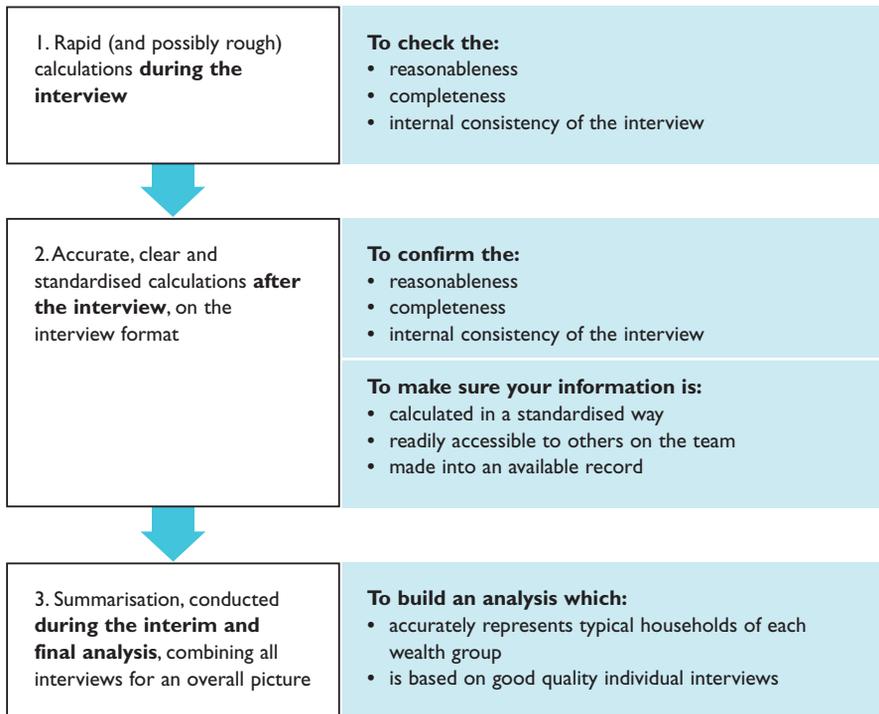
Final analysis: This is carried out by the whole team together once all the interviews have been completed. It involves compiling the findings from the various interviews (district, market, community and wealth group), summarising the results and completing a series of cross-checks. The most time-consuming parts of the analysis are the compilation of the wealth

breakdown and the analysis of food, income and expenditure for each of the wealth groups. Other tasks for the final analysis include finalisation of the seasonal calendar (see Figure 6).

The interim and final analyses can be carried out in one of two ways. Either the results from the various interviews can be listed and summarised on flipcharts, or the analysis can be done using the baseline storage spreadsheet (see section 4.2). This has the advantages that it requires less time and it generates a permanent record of the analysis that can be referred to in the future.

Calculations are carried out at all stages of the analysis. Figure 22 indicates when and why these calculations are done. Some of the cross-checks that are carried out during HEA data collection and analysis are shown in Table 12 in section 5.4.

Figure 22: When and why calculations are done in a baseline



Rapid rural appraisal tools

The technique most commonly used to obtain baseline HEA information is the semi-structured interview. This is an interview in which the interviewer knows exactly what questions ultimately need to be answered, but does not obtain the information through a pre-defined list of questions. Rather, they have the flexibility to pose questions in the way and order that they think will be most effective in getting that information, using simply a checklist as an aid. For example, the interviewer knows that they need details of the interviewee's income, but may not know all of the ways by which the interviewee earns money. Interviewers are also encouraged to cross-check their information and challenge the interviewee when different pieces of information contradict each other. Although they are more demanding in terms of time, training and the calibre of the interviewer, such interviews have a number of benefits over a questionnaire approach as described in Chapter 5.

A number of rapid rural appraisal techniques are commonly used in conjunction with semi-structured interviews. For example:

- **Proportional piling** can be used for wealth breakdowns (for indicating the proportion of people within each wealth group) and for gaining a broad picture of the relative importance of different food and cash sources.
- **Mapping** on the ground, using different objects to represent different activities, can help to understand the locations of key markets and the flows of goods and services in and out of the area.
- **Seasonal calendars** serve not only as a means of understanding peaks and troughs of activities, but to prompt recall and to identify gaps in information.
- **Beans** can be used to construct a historical timeline, to show good and bad years in the past by scoring them.

4.2 Storing information: HEA spreadsheets

Two types of spreadsheet have been developed by FEG to facilitate the storage, cross-checking and analysis of baseline data: the **baseline storage spreadsheet** and the **analysis spreadsheet**.

The baseline storage sheet

This is used to document and cross-check data from each interview and to facilitate post-field work analysis. It is a simple Excel spreadsheet that enables

Table 9: Advantages of the baseline storage sheet

- Encourages active checking and cross-checking of data by the field teams themselves.
- Facilitates rapid on-the-spot analysis, so that any inconsistencies or questions can be resolved by the field teams before they leave the survey area.
- Minimises data entry errors, while at the same time speeding up the processing of basic field data.
- Provides a permanent record of individual interview results and the analyses completed by the field teams, so that these can be checked by a supervisor at a later date.

field teams to enter, check and analyse individual interview data in the field. It is also the basic tool that field teams use to analyse and summarise field data during the interim and final data analysis sessions.

The spreadsheet performs a number of calculations that form the basis of key household economy cross-checks:

- **Calculation of total food access:** If this is very much below 100% of minimum food energy needs, and people clearly did not starve in the reference year, then more questions need to be asked and clarification obtained.
- **Calculation and comparison of total cash income and expenditure:** If these are very different, then further follow-up is required to resolve the apparent inconsistency.
- **Calculation of rates of off-take for each type of livestock** (ie, the percentage of the herd sold and slaughtered in the reference year): This can be compared with a set of reference values; again, any major deviation signals the need for further follow-up in the field.
- **A cross-check on labour payments:** This determines whether the amount of money reportedly earned by poorer wealth groups roughly balances with the amount that the better off report paying for labour.
- **A cross-check on agricultural productivity:** This compares the production per unit area obtained by different wealth groups, to check that trends are consistent across wealth groups (and are consistent with reported rates of input use, etc).

The analysis spreadsheets

The analysis spreadsheets are used for the outcome analysis, to determine how baseline access to food and income will be affected by particular hazards. There are two types of analysis spreadsheet:

- the **single zone spreadsheet**, used to prepare scenarios for a single livelihood zone
- the **integrated spreadsheet**, used for the analysis of larger geographical areas of up to 12 livelihood zones.

All the analysis spreadsheets are linked to the baseline storage sheets, and read the baseline data from these sheets.

The analysis spreadsheets make the process of outcome analysis a great deal quicker and easier than when done with pen and paper. Hazard information, translated into a percentage change of each source of food and cash income in the baseline, is entered into the analysis spreadsheet in a standard format. The spreadsheet then combines this information with household economy baseline data to project likely future access to food and non-food goods and services at household level.

Where HEA is used within a rural monitoring system, an outcome analysis typically covers a 12-month period, beginning with the main harvest (in an agricultural setting), or the main season rains (in a pastoral setting). An initial analysis will normally be prepared immediately after the harvest or after the rains, projecting access for the next 12 months, with updates prepared at various times during the remainder of the year (eg, after a subsidiary harvest or secondary rainy season). In many cases it will be useful to prepare a preliminary analysis before any assessment field work is undertaken, using whatever information is available to hand, and then to re-run the analysis once the field work has been completed. This type of preliminary analysis can help identify gaps in the available data, which in turn helps with the planning of the field work.

4.3 Is HEA always done in the same way?

The range of circumstances in which HEA has been used has led to methodological adaptations that reflect differences in context, purpose, geographical access and security, and the time, staff and funding available. Two variants of HEA, ‘rapid’ and ‘disaggregated’, are described below.

Rapid variants of HEA

There are times when it will not be possible to do a full HEA assessment, and there is a need for a rapid assessment of the situation to inform interventions. Most commonly, this occurs after a rapid-onset disaster, or where there is limited access to the focus population (for example, in an insecure environment), or where a provisional assessment is needed to determine whether it is worthwhile carrying out a more detailed assessment. Unfortunately, a rapid assessment may also have to be carried out when the response to slow-onset disasters, such as drought, has not been timely and actors scramble to react to the resulting crisis.

HEA has been adapted to these circumstances in a variety of ways. At a global level, rapid HEA assessments have been carried out in recent years, after the 2004 tsunami in Asia, the 2005 earthquake in Kashmir, and the 2006 conflict in Lebanon. Within southern Africa, examples include assessing the effects of the floods in Mozambique in 2000, the impact of the land reform programme in Zimbabwe in 2001/02, and the impact of the 2002 drought in Malawi. The assessments can provide information for emergency responses, and can also be important, from an advocacy perspective, for raising awareness of the nature of problems and giving broad guidance on types of interventions that might be appropriate.

The key challenge in carrying out rapid assessments is to find the optimal trade-off between the need for faster results and the need to maintain the quality and reliability of the information collected. How this balance is achieved varies from context to context and according to the users' needs. This has meant that there is no single 'rapid HEA' model. However, there are some key principles to ensuring quality in rapid assessments:

- **The more rapid the assessment, the more skilled and experienced** the assessment team needs to be. The team needs to be aware of the implications of simplifying the classic HEA assessment, and should be able to bring their experience to bear in quickly interpreting and understanding data collected.
- Some time is saved by **keeping the number of interviews down** to between four and six for each wealth group, and/or focusing only on those groups known to be worst affected. However, more time is often saved by **collecting less detail** within each interview. 'Rapid HEAs' often involve less quantification than full HEA assessments. For example, the level of detail

on expenditure is often reduced, while very minor sources of food and income may not be quantified.

- In rapid assessments, there is an even greater need to be disciplined in **focusing only on the specified research needs**, whether that be determining food aid needs, identifying how to restore lost sources of income, or simply explaining in a narrative form how livelihoods have been changed by a specific event.
- **Scenario-based analyses** can be particularly useful. Knowing that ‘quick and dirty’ assessments will be less comprehensive and/or the situation may simply be more unpredictable, it is often advisable to present alternative scenarios (best case, worst case) and recommendations for each.

The methods used in rapid assessments can vary significantly. Some rely heavily on key informant interviews, some use focus groups but with less detail, some use large numbers of short individual household interviews, and some have used a detailed case-study approach with a small number of households or a small sample of villages. Combinations of these have also been used. In a crisis situation where life-saving interventions are necessary, or where the assessment needs to cover a wide area, less detailed interviews with a relatively large sample are preferable.

Disaggregated variants of HEA

A four-way wealth breakdown (very poor, poor, middle and better off) has been found to give a sufficiently detailed picture of the different livelihood patterns within a population for many purposes, including early warning, assessing emergency and post-emergency needs and for guiding poverty reduction strategies (see Chapter 3). It can also provide useful information in terms of social protection guidance, as illustrated in section 3.5.

But social protection planners also require data that relates to households defined in all sorts of other ways: households with children, pensioner- or female-headed households, or those with orphans or people affected by HIV and AIDS. They need to be able to compare the effectiveness of different social protection instruments in supporting different kinds of households in different ways. Can HEA offer an analysis that is sufficiently disaggregated to be useful for these purposes?

The answer is that the HEA framework can be applied at the level of disaggregation required for the purpose, using the information-collection and sampling tools that are most appropriate. While the four-way wealth breakdown has been found to work for the purposes of many HEA analyses, it is not a division that, on its own, meets every information need. Determining ways of helping the poorest will commonly require paying more attention to particular subgroups within the ‘poor’ category. In Singida, Tanzania, and in Tigray, Ethiopia, poor female-headed households – a highly labour-constrained subset of the ‘poor’ group – have been the subject of separate inquiry and have been investigated using purposive sampling (see section 3.4). Interviews with *individual* households have also been used in conjunction with other methods to gain a deeper understanding of the extremely poor and of the impact on households of chronic illness.²⁷ Such in-depth micro-studies can be very effective in complementing existing national datasets such as household budget surveys, and in highlighting ways of helping the very poor households whom NGOs and governments may see as a priority.

This approach works well for investigating a subset of a wealth group, or any group in which there is relatively little variation in patterns of access. But for some groups of interest, there is often a great deal of variation. The broad category of ‘HIV/AIDS-affected’ can include families with someone who is chronically ill, families who have recently lost an income-earner, or families who have taken in an orphaned child. The constraints and opportunities of households in each of these categories will be very different; and there will also be differences within each category according to differences in wealth. For the analysis of such groups, it becomes necessary to disaggregate further (commonly by wealth) so that the group is sufficiently homogeneous for the analysis to yield meaningful results.

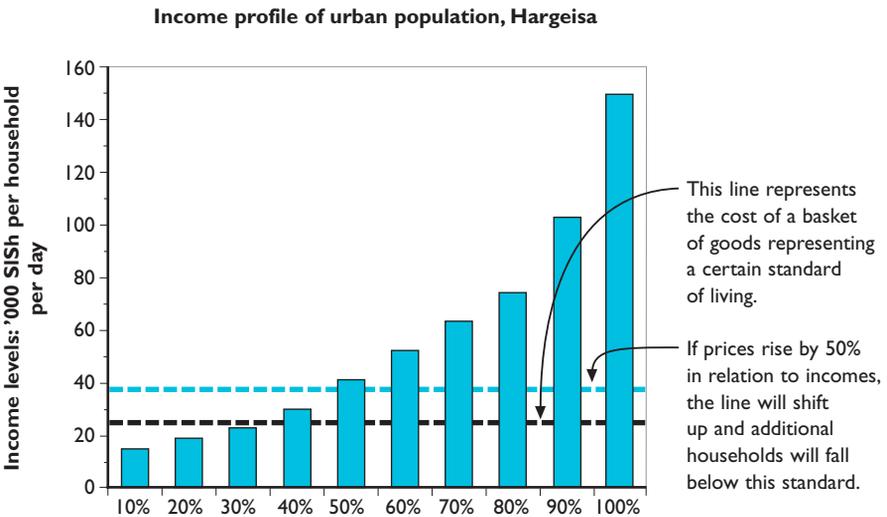
When HEA assessments are done using focus group interviews, it is necessary simply to ensure that these additional groups are purposively sampled. This does require extra time, but the HEA framework itself is not a hindrance in this regard. The problem with such purposive sampling is that such groups have to be predetermined, and the analyst does not have the flexibility to carry out analyses of other groups or of households with other, quite different, characteristics after the inquiry has finished. Randomly sampled household

economy surveys of individual households may be appropriate in cases where analyses need to be conducted according to a very wide range of different household characteristics. However, such disaggregation does require a large sample if it is to be valid.

Finally, HEA wealth group data has been used to generate an income profile across the population (see Figure 23).²⁸ This was done by interpolating differences within wealth groups using the lower and upper points in the range of income data collected for each wealth group – ie, it used the simplifying assumption that income levels were evenly distributed within the range identified for each wealth group. The resulting income distribution can be used for estimating the number of people falling below a certain standard of living threshold, and for monitoring changes in poverty levels as a result of economic shocks such as a price rise (see Figure 23).

Figure 23: Interpolating income differences within wealth groups – Hargeisa, 2003

In an assessment of Hargeisa, Somaliland in 2003, four wealth groups were identified. Using the range of income for each wealth group, income data was converted into deciles to produce the income distribution shown here. This could be used to determine the number of people falling below a certain threshold and how that would be affected by inflation.



Source: King with Mohamed and Addou (2003)

The Individual Household Model (IHM)²⁹

A more formalised disaggregated variant of HEA is the Individual Household Model (IHM). IHM was developed as a tool for looking at poverty and livelihoods issues on the basis that the collection and analysis of data from individual households can offer a finer distinction between different types of household (for example, on the basis of household demographic characteristics) and the opportunity for forms of analysis that cannot be carried out in ‘classic’ HEA. IHM uses the standard HEA analytical framework but its field methods and data set are somewhat different. Information in the field is gathered via semi-structured interviews with individual households, rather than with groups of households representative of a wealth group. The sample either includes all households in the survey site, or is based on statistical sampling techniques, and demographic data tends to be collected during interviews as well as standard household economy data. IHM has, to date, been carried out at a very local level, with survey sites of one or two villages.

Because data is collected on individual households, IHM enables an analysis to be made of the relationships between poverty and particular household characteristics (for example, between poverty and households with orphans or grandparent-headed households). It also enables an analysis of the impact of change within the household – for example, as a result of illness or disability. An IHM study of a community in Swaziland, for example, aimed to identify the main factors affecting income levels for HIV-affected and non-HIV-affected households. By looking at households with orphans and at the mortality in the village, the study enabled an estimate to be made of the decline in relative disposable income as a result of the loss of income due to HIV mortality and as a result of taking in orphans, household by household and collectively as a community. Because IHM studies focus on limited geographical areas, they also have the potential to go into more detail than classic HEA.

Other uses of IHM to date have been to understand the relationship between wealth and children’s nutritional status (Bangladesh), to get a detailed understanding of the poorest and destitute households in a community (Tanzania), to model the impact of changes in coffee prices on the disposable income of communities in Uganda and Ethiopia, and to model the impact of different social protection policies (Zambia). The method continues to be developed.

4.4 What does HEA require in terms of resources?

Human resources

The table opposite outlines the resources required for a livelihood zoning exercise and for conducting a baseline assessment.

The exact time required varies according to factors such as the geographical spread of the area covered, prior knowledge of and existing information about the area, and the extent of organisational support in the field (for example, ongoing projects can provide useful information as well as access to knowledgeable key informants).

What size of sample is used in an HEA baseline assessment?

Although there are no hard and fast rules about sample frame and sample size, there is a body of experience that can provide some guidance. The most important factor to consider is the number of interviews undertaken with each wealth group. Practical experience indicates that for a comprehensive baseline assessment across several livelihood zones – for the purposes of a national early warning or vulnerability analysis system, for example – 8–12 interviews should be completed for each wealth group per livelihood zone. This will normally entail visiting 8–12 villages per zone. It is usually desirable for at least two interviewers to work together (to allow for the minimum of triangulation between different investigators), and experience has shown that a two-person team can do a maximum of two household representative interviews in one village in one day. Thus, with eight villages, it will take four teams approximately six days to complete both the community leader and household representative interviews. Additional time is required for interviews at higher administrative levels (1–2 days), for analysis (2–3 days in the field), and for travel, so it is not unreasonable to expect a comprehensive assessment of one livelihood zone to be completed within 10–14 days, depending upon local circumstances on the ground.

More interviews can be carried out, given sufficient time and resources, and where the geographical area to be covered is smaller. For baselines carried out to inform more **localised project work**, the coverage of a smaller geographical area may be offset by the need to obtain more disaggregated data (for example, on sub-groups of the poor), or to spend more time doing separate interviews with men and women.

Table 10: Human resources required for livelihood zoning and baseline assessment on a regional or national level

Step	Human resources	Time
Livelihood zoning		
1. Review of secondary information and preliminary discussions	1 zoning director 1 local counterpart	2 days
2. Workshop	1 zoning director 1 local counterpart Max. 20 workshop participants 1 facilitator per 10 participants	2–3 days
3. Follow-up at lower administrative levels (region or district)	1 zoning director 1 local counterpart	2–5 days
4. Final consultation	1 zoning director 1 local counterpart	0.5 day
5. Production of final outputs	Depends on availability of digitised mapping data and number of zones	
6. Field check (per zone)	Field teams check zone boundaries during baseline field work	c.1 hour within each district-level interview
Baseline assessment		
1. Secondary literature review	1 survey director 1 local counterpart	1 week
2. Training	Max. 20 participants 2 facilitators per 10 participants	1 week
3. Field work and interim analysis (per zone)	4 x 2-person teams	2 weeks
4. Final analysis (all zones)	All teams together	1 week
5. Report writing	Team leaders	Around 3 days per livelihood zone plus 5 days for the national overview

For the preparation of more **rapid baselines**, usually associated with periodic emergency needs assessments, a smaller number of interviews can be conducted and villages visited; perhaps half the number suggested above. Larger teams can also allow the work to proceed more rapidly. A team of four people could be expected to cover three livelihood zones in a rapid assessment in just over three weeks, including interviews at various administrative levels and the interim and final analyses. If the team members are inexperienced in the approach, however, additional time for training at the start of the assessment and for analysis would have to be added.

What other resources are needed?

Other resources include:

- transport to the region and in the field
- accommodation for international and national consultants
- expenses and per diems for international and national staff
- stationery, paper and printing.

This will vary from country to country.