8 What are the products of HEA and how can they be used?

As described in Chapter 3, HEA has been used over the past decade in a number of ways to inform decision-making, ranging from early warning of food security and emergency and post-emergency needs assessments through to poverty analysis, the identification of poverty reduction strategies and the determination of safety net levels.

Different uses and users clearly require different outputs, and HEA investigations have led to a range of products that attempt to respond to decision-makers' specific needs in each case. In addition, the steps involved in creating an HEA baseline have generated products that have themselves been found to have uses beyond HEA investigations. The products arising from both HEA baselines and outcome analysis are shown in Table 13 (opposite). This section gives a brief outline of some of these products.

8.1 Products from an outcome analysis

Decision-maker briefs

A decision-maker brief is a one- or two-page briefing paper designed to convey an important message to people with limited time. Its key features are that it is short, concise and delivers only necessary information. In contrast to academic papers, it starts with the conclusion and then provides the relevant supporting evidence.

FEWS NET Alerts are good examples of such briefing papers. When a food crisis begins to emerge, FEWS NET issues alerts to decision-makers that provide specific information on causes and effects of the developing crisis, incorporating HEA analysis where it is available. This helps decision-makers and planners prepare for and respond to these crises. Similarly, FEWS NET's Executive Overview Briefs provide executive decision-makers with an overview

Table 13: Products of HEA

Framework step	Products
Baseline	• livelihood zone map library • wealth breakdowns provide basis for population estimates (combined with livelihood zoning) used in needs estimates • wealth breakdowns can be used to develop targeting criteria for identifying poor households requiring, eg, safety net support • livelihood profiles • thematic reports on particular subjects • seasonal calendars • full baseline reports • poverty analysis
Outcome analysis	• annual projections (eg, for Consolidated Appeals Process) • decision-maker briefs • assessment reports • presentations • monitoring framework

of the food security situation in Africa, based on FEWS NET's regular monitoring and reporting. They help decision-makers prioritise areas where action is needed most urgently.[38]

Reviews of vulnerability assessment practice in southern Africa have highlighted the importance of communicating VAC assessment results in a more accessible way, through "executive format bulletins, highly graphical in format that present bottom line answers or clearly articulated scenarios for decision-makers".[39]

Thematic briefs and reports

Briefs on particular subjects and customised for specific audiences tend to be slightly longer. Good examples of this kind of product are the Limpopo Development Brief or the Limpopo Food Aid Brief, both of which drew on information obtained during a baseline assessment in Mozambique's Limpopo Basin in 2001. Unlike the baseline report which was written to provide

a repository of information about households in the livelihood zone, the briefs were written to address the concerns of specific target audiences. Table 14 shows just how different the sets of conclusions were for different audiences.

Table 14: Limpopo Basin, Mozambique: Targeted conclusions from thematic briefs

Food Aid Brief Conclusions	Development Brief Conclusions
1. **Non-emergency food aid is not likely to be an appropriate resource.** Risk-minimising agricultural practices and fertile soils along the river guarantee sufficient food for households from their own crops every year. Significant involvement in mining employment in South Africa ensures access to cash even in years of lower crop production. 2. **Food for work may not be an appropriate distribution mechanism** because labour, not land, is the biggest constraint to production in this area. With at least two cropping seasons, labour crunch times occur throughout the year. 3. **Food aid after a flood should be carefully targeted.** Only the 20% of households living along the river basin should be targeted, and only while markets are being restored. Once food is available in markets, households should be able to purchase food with remittance money from South Africa.	1. Development planners need to take into account that **this is a high risk, high return area**. Efforts of planners to maximise returns without considering households' risk-minimising strategies may increase vulnerability to floods. 2. Sales of cassava and tomatoes are the most important sources of cash for households with more than half a hectare. **Improved marketing of these cash crops** would increase incomes for rural households. 3. Animal traction fills an important labour gap. Continued **efforts at restocking and improved animal health** are well-placed. 4. Cashew trees were once an important source of cash income. **Replanting and maintenance of this resource** could bring additional income.

Source: FEWS NET/FEG[40]

Other examples of thematic reports that present the results of a targeted HEA analysis are those commissioned by Save the Children in Singida, Tanzania. One outlined a number of possible social protection measures that HEA analysis had modelled, while the other looked at whether the poor were economically constrained in their access to healthcare.[41]

Annual projection reports

Where the HEA framework is integrated within an early warning monitoring system, projections of food access over the coming six to 12 months are presented in annual or seasonal projection reports. A good example of this is the food security monitoring report for Malawi,[42] produced in May 2004 by the Malawi VAC using data from the monitoring system described in section 3.1. It provided:

- a national overview of projected food security in 2004, giving a national estimate of the missing food entitlement
- details of the expected conditions in each affected livelihood zone
- an appendix detailing the missing food entitlements and income requirements for each zone.

Assessment reports

Reports indicating how access to food and cash will be affected by one or more future hazards, or how an intervention might improve access to food and cash, are also products of one-off assessments commissioned by NGOs.

8.2 Products from an HEA baseline

Livelihood zone map

A livelihood zone map provides a division of the country into reasonably homogeneous zones defined according to patterns of livelihood. It is, thus, a means of dividing the population into groups for a range of analyses, and can provide a livelihoods basis for various types of survey or assessment, including emergency assessments and baseline studies for development planning purposes. Since livelihood zone boundaries are aligned wherever possible with lower-level administrative boundaries, population data tabulated according to these boundaries can be calculated for livelihood zones. These calculations can then be used as the sampling frame for household questionnaire surveys, for rapid assessments, and for livelihood-specific seasonal monitoring activities. They can form a basis for prioritising the needs of different parts of the country and for targeting assistance on a geographical basis.

FEWS NET has developed, for certain countries, a library of maps showing the relationship between livelihood zones and administrative boundaries at different levels. These are available on the FEWS NET website[43] and can be copied into reports or blown up to wall size.

The output from a livelihood zoning exercise is not just a map but a basic description of each zone, including information on:

- geography (topography, climate, soils)
- production systems (agricultural, pastoral)
- markets/trade (trade flows, including employment)
- hazards affecting the zone (drought, flood).

Livelihood zones can also be a useful starting point for livelihood-based project planning and management. The DFID Sustainable Livelihoods framework, for example, focuses on the five capitals (natural, physical, human, social and financial), which together determine the types of livelihood strategy that people are able to pursue. Many aspects of natural and physical capital are determined by geography, as encapsulated within a livelihood zone map.

Livelihood profiles

Livelihood profiles were designed by FEG/FEWS NET as a means of presenting all the relevant information gathered in a baseline assessment in an accessible way and in as little space as possible. The aim was to strike a balance between accessibility and level of detail, and to present sufficient information to allow a rounded and balanced view of livelihoods in different zones. The profiles provide a rapid introduction to 'how people live' in different zones.

A profile of one livelihood zone is usually around five pages long. It includes information on key markets, the seasonal calendar, the wealth breakdown, sources of cash, and the typical hazards and response strategies in this zone.

The profiles pack considerable information and analysis into a few pages of presentation. Therefore, they form a useful briefing for a newcomer who needs to get a quick grasp of food security conditions around the country. The geographical divisions are relatively small – as far as this is consistent with ground realities – so that the reader can take in the general pattern and the basic differences between areas and populations.

Baseline report

Baseline reports are lengthier documents including much more detail, and so are more suited to use for detailed planning or understanding by more technical staff. They represent an extremely rich source of information on livelihoods.

HEA databases

The baseline storage spreadsheet designed by FEG represents a useful storage mechanism for the considerable volume of HEA data that is collected in many countries (see section 4.2). This spreadsheet allows a wealth of data to be stored in an accessible and standard format, ensuring that the baseline data is reusable over several years. While this data is useful for the development of baseline analyses and profiles and, in conjunction with the analysis spreadsheets, for the development of scenarios indicating future access to food and cash, it also represents a very detailed and useful resource on livelihoods for researchers outside of HEA.