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QUICK TIPS

Guide to the Preparation
of a Livelihood Baseline Assessment
(LBA) and Contingency Plan

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of a Livelihood Baseline
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Introduction

Increasingly countries are experiencing more climate change impacts which include storms, hurricanes, flooding and other disasters. It is critical to better prepare for these disasters as climate research shows that these impacts are not likely to decrease in the near future. Collecting livelihood baseline information is key for national Disaster Preparedness. It should be collected in advance, and kept updated, on areas and populations likely to suffer disasters and crisis of various sorts. This will greatly boost recovery efforts. This Quick Tips Guide will help get you started. While this approach is comprehensive it is not being shared as ideal for all countries. It is therefore recommended that countries explore existing templates for LBA Assessments and then add from the Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) approach as needed.



Mrs. Claudia Barrett, Social Officer from the Jamaica Social Investment Fund presenting the overview of findings from the field work at the CDRRF and FAO LBA contingency workshop in Placencia, Belize.

1. What is a Livelihood Assessment Tool Kit?

The Livelihood Assessment Tool-kit (LAT) was developed by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the International Labour Organisation. It is used for analysing and responding to the impact of disasters on people's livelihoods; and their capacity and opportunities for recovery and increased resilience to future events. The LAT consists of three main technical elements:

- **Livelihood Baseline (LB):** Compiled at national level before a disaster, targeting areas prone to natural hazards: provides quantitative and qualitative data on key aspects of livelihood systems (populations, wealth and poverty indicators, occupations etc.).

- **Initial Livelihood Impact Appraisal (ILIA):** which is done within the first three months of the disaster and it is an initial assessment of the impact on livelihoods at “local level”.
- **Detailed Livelihood Assessment (DLA):** Assessment of the impact of the disaster on livelihoods and opportunities and capacities for recovery at household, community, and local economy levels. The results are used to create the response options that include concrete project and programme profiles as well as strategy outlines.



Ms. Juanita Reid, Deputy Executive Director of the Social Development Commission (SDC), Jamaica and Mr. Julio Chub, Community Liaison Officer, Yaoaxche Conservation Trust, Belize reviewing the Livelihood Based Assessment Seasonal calendar for Indian Creek in the Toledo District, Belize.

2. What is a Livelihood Baseline Assessment (LBA)?

The Livelihood Baseline (LB) gives a solid ‘before’ picture of normal livelihood patterns, but is especially important for assessing those areas that are most at risk to natural disasters. It produces detailed quantitative and qualitative data on the

number of persons, resources, and infrastructure that could be damaged. The LBA allows for the preparation of a hazard-map of vulnerable areas and appropriate contingency plans in advance of a potential disaster. It also looks at relevant survival strategies and coping mechanisms that could be replicated and helps to engage local communities in disaster risk mitigation (DRM). Its purpose is to identify – in advance – a menu or typology of possible responses and activities that can make rural livelihoods less vulnerable and more resilient to hazards and risks.



Ms. Parsha Allen, Training Coordinator at the Social Development Commission conducting data collection for the Jeffrey Town Livelihood Baseline Assessment and Contingency plan in St. Mary, Jamaica.

3. Why carry out a Livelihood Baseline Assessment (LBA)?

A Livelihood Baseline Assessment is done:

- To ensure that good baseline data is collected before a disaster occurs.
- To facilitate and ease comparison of the livelihood context, activities and outcomes for families and communities before and after a disaster.
- To generate a potential menu of possible responses and actions (a response typology) that can be planned out, costed, and thought through ahead of time.
- To provide a robust basis for making estimates of the livelihood impact of disasters that can feed into a flash appeal should a disaster occur.
- To give a ‘head start’ to provide a basis for immediate post-disaster assessments including the Initial Livelihood Impact Appraisal.
- To provide a basis for a more in-depth Detailed Livelihood Assessment.



Workshop participants from Humana People to People Belize, Department for Rural Development and Caribbean Research and Development Institute engaged in group activity at the CDRRF and FAO LBA and Contingency Planning Workshop in Placencia, Belize.

Additionally, the LBA can also be done in order:

- To prepare farming households and increase public awareness about disaster preparedness and the various good practices that can be put in place ahead of time (as ministries responsible for agriculture across the Caribbean are doing through the production of various good practices brochures).
- To explore coping and survival strategies that can be strengthened and to discourage those that may be harmful or which would jeopardize agricultural livelihoods.
- To identify and map out the location of high risk and hazard prone households and communities as they relate to available hydro-meteorological and GIS hazard data.

4. How should the LBA Guidelines be used?

These guidelines are meant to be used by teams of people from the United Nations (UN), non-governmental organisations (NGO) and governments who are charged with the task of creating a livelihood baseline (LB) as part of a broader Disaster

Preparedness and Disaster Risk Management effort. Such teams should include at least one statistician who is familiar with national census data and socio-economic surveys. They should also include persons who are familiar with key Participatory Rapid Assessment (PRA) techniques and are able to use these in the field with different groups of key informants.

In order for the baseline to be an operational document, how it is done is as important as what is in it. The 'how' of the baseline is very important as it will determine the degree of 'buy-in' and ownership of the product by government and other key stakeholders. For this reason, it will be important to involve the key stakeholders at every step of the baseline process as key informants, as part of fieldwork teams and as reviewers, so that they can give their stamp of authority on the finished baseline product.

5. Information Needed for the LBA

The LBA uses both Quantitative and Qualitative tools. The four (4) main sources of information used during the LBA are:

- (a) **Published statistics** covering areas such as demography, employment, land sizes, cropping patterns and livestock numbers.
- (b) **Maps** showing the geographical areas at risk with delineation of administrative boundaries (agro-ecological zoning and resource and asset maps).



Focus group discussions with residents during a data collection exercise for the LBA and Contingency Plan for Peckham and surrounding districts in Clarendon, Jamaica.

- (c) **Reports and studies** relating to livelihoods and hazards in the areas at risk (can be project documents, government reports, NGO documents, university studies, etc.)
- (d) **Qualitative information** that engages local communities in the participatory rural appraisal (PRA) collection of information: community mapping, historical timelines, livelihood zoning, wealth ranking and seasonal calendars.



Let's talk about livelihoods. Members of the CDRRF team speak to farmers about the impact of climate change and disasters on how they make a living.

6. Community Participation

It is critical that the process is driven from the community level and must encourage ownership and buy-in from the partners and stakeholders as well as the local people and key informants. To this extent, doing a LBA involves community outreach and communication, as much as it involves 'fact collecting'. So, it is essential the data collected through the LBA should be done through community participation.

7. Sources of baseline data

The most important sources for baseline data are:

- **Key informants** at district, sub-district and household levels.
- **Qualitative livelihood (or similar) studies** on specific areas, including ethnographic studies, analysis of farming systems, community surveys.
- **Household surveys** including:
 - (a) labour force and employment surveys,
 - (b) health and nutrition surveys,
 - (c) household income and expenditure surveys,
 - (d) food consumption/food security surveys, etc.;
- **Statistics on health services**, nutrition services, social protection programs, and other relevant activities in the area at risk;
- **Maps, geographic information systems**, satellite imagery watershed maps, agro-ecological zoning.
- **Crop assessments**, agricultural production estimates for the area at risk; population censuses; agricultural censuses;
- **Institutional data and listings** (existence and membership of institutions or organizations in area at risk, list of organisations in the area.)

8. Key partnerships should be made with the following institutions:





Mr. Ernest Banner, Coordinator of the Department of Rural Development engaging with participants at a focus group discussion in Golden Stream during CDRRF and FAO LBA and Contingency Planning Workshop in Placencia, Belize.

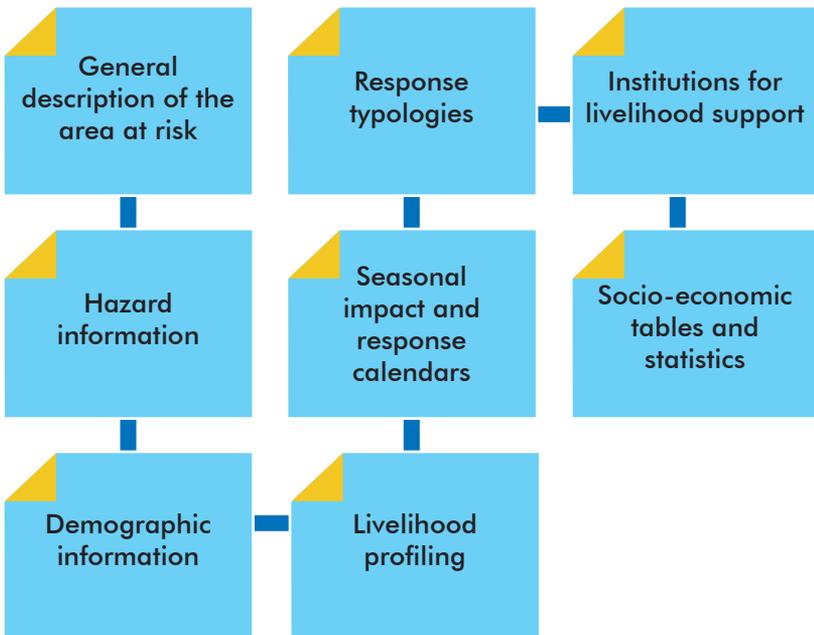
9. Steps in the Livelihood Baseline Assessment (LBA) Process

Generally, the LBA process involves the following key steps or phases:

- A. **Preparation** which includes review of secondary literature, identification and training of community assessors, identification of sample sizes and sites, and notification of communities that the LBA will be taking place.
- B. **Planning** which involves development of an action plan and work schedule for each agricultural extension area, determining team roles and responsibilities, and a possible budget for field work. Specific tools (both quantitative and qualitative) are also determined in this phase.
- C. **Field Work** which includes all data collection activities for each Extension Area.

- D. **Analysis** which involves reviewing the data that is collected to ensure quality control.
- E. **Parish Level Reporting** which involves consolidating all the data from each Extension Area and submitting the information to the Parish or District Manager for further consolidation in an overall report that is submitted to the national level agency.
- F. **Generation of Potential Response Typologies** which should be done at the Parish or District Level and with input of the Disaster response entity at the Parish or National level to confirm costs and budgetary components.
- G. **Sharing of LBA Reports** with the Parish or District disaster committee and with community groups once completed.

Structure of the Livelihood Baseline and Contingency Plan



10. Qualitative and Participatory Tools

Qualitative and participatory tools aim to extract more detailed information from community members and give them the opportunity to be more involved in the research process. Several qualitative and participatory tools can also be used to round out the use of quantitative checklists and verify and triangulate findings. These qualitative tools include:

- A. Key informant interviews
- B. Oral history documentation
- C. Wealth ranking exercises
- D. Community mapping
- E. Transect walks
- F. Digital photography documentation
- G. Seasonal calendars
- H. Historical calendars
- I. Hazard maps
- J. Asset inventories
- K. Coping inventories

Of these, the most important are seasonal calendars, hazard maps, asset inventories and coping inventories.

The FAO Toolkit at page 65 provides information on the format for the LBA and the preparation of the Contingency Plan.

11. Conclusion

This guide has provided a brief introduction to the FAO LAT. It is meant to be used closely with the Toolkit in order to ensure maximum impact. The toolkit is accessible at

<http://www.fao.org/emergencies/resources/documents/resources-detail/en/c/171069/>.

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