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| **TOOL SUMMARY: NEEDS ASSESSMENT PLANNING** |
| Purpose | The purpose of this tool is to help the needs assessment team plan for the assessment so that the most relevant data is collected in the most efficient manner.  |
| Information Sources | **Information that the assessment team should have before planning for the assessment:*** Geographical scope of the target population
* Information on the demographic make-up of the population, including any marginalized groups
* Core program area models
* Relevant technical frameworks or approaches (resilience, food security, etc.)
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| Who | One person from the project design team should lead the planning process. Once planning is completed and tools and methodologies have been developed, individuals familiar with the use of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) and Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) methods should be assigned to gather the necessary data.  |
| When | The **needs assessment** is normally the first step in the project design process. * Information gathered is used primarily to help conduct the problem analysis.
* It can also be used in other areas of the project proposal, such as the project background and information on partner or local institution capacity.

A well thought out plan for conducting the needs assessment should be completed before any data collection begins. This will help ensure that only essential data is collected.  |
| Requirements | **Requirements*** The plan must outline the resources and time necessary to collect all the data needed to triangulate the answers to the assessment questions.
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| **Recommendations*** Filling out the tables in this tool is NOT required, but it is recommended.
* The plan should consider all relevant subgroups of a target population and should also examine the relationships between these groups.
	+ These groups include, but are not limited to, men, women, girls, boys, different socioeconomic groups, different ethnic groups and marginalized groups such as the elderly or disabled.
* If a sampling frame is required, do an estimate of the sample size using a sample size calculator (<http://goo.gl/atqmr1>). This will help you better budget the number of numerators and days required to collect all necessary data.
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| Tips | * Use the CRS Guidance on Participatory Assessments and Learning for Gender Integration Manual (forthcoming) to help plan for needs assessments for development projects.
	+ For assessment in emergency contexts, please contact the LWR Emergency Operations unit for guidance.
	+ Visit <http://www.needsassessment.org/> for additional resources on needs assessment.
* The Needs Assessments, Problem Analysis and gender constraints analysis can overlap.
	+ Your data collected in the first round can be used to complete a first draft of the problem analysis. When conducting the problem analysis some causes may be unclear, in which case you may need to collect more information.
* There are two main reasons for conducting separate interviews, group interviews and focus group discussions with men and women:
	+ When you want to be able to compare the different responses from men and women. If you want to understand the different constraints men and women face in participating in training, it is helpful to interview men and women separately and then compare their responses.
	+ When social norms restrict men and women from being in the same room or expressing themselves in front of each other.
* It may be necessary to consider further disaggregation of groups based on other characteristics, like age or ethnicity.
* It is not necessary to use every tool with men and women in separate groups. For example, general information about the composition of communities or the composition of producer groups can be gathered from mixed groups or official records.
* Do not confuse information about women-headed households with information about individual women.

\*From CRS NA Guide, pg.6 |
| How to Address Gender Issues  | * Consult secondary data sources on gender issues in the targeted area and/or sector including but not limited to:
	+ National statistics
	+ Existing gender analyses from other projects, donors, etc.
	+ Other development literature on the social context
* Conduct primary data collection in the target area from men, women, girls and boys
* Organize and triangulate primary and secondary data from men, women, girls and boys
* The needs assessment should provide evidence of:
	+ Women’s and men’s roles at different levels including the household, the community and other groups or associations (i.e. what do people do)
	+ Women’s and men’s decision-making roles in households and communities
	+ Women’s and men’s access to resources and services
	+ Women’s and men’s needs and interests
	+ Beliefs and norms about men and women
	+ How laws, policies and institutions establish (or not) an equitable environment for men and women
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| **NEEDS ASSESSMENT PLANNING TABLE – INSTRUCTIONS***This table is used to outline why you are conducting the needs assessment, what questions you want to answer, how you will answer them and what is the scope of data collection for each question.*  |
| Name of needs assessment lead person: |
| Budget for assessment:  |
| Time available/required for assessment:  |
| Logistical support required:  |
| **Step 1: Why?** **Why are we conducting the assessment? What are our objectives?** |
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| **Step 2: What?** **What are the questions that need to be answered?**  | **Step 3: How?** **What methods or sources will be used to gather answers to the assessment questions? Who will we talk to?**  | **Step 4: Scope****What number and characteristics of perspectives are needed for either triangulation or purposeful sampling?** |
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| **ASSESSMENT METHOD/SOURCE OUTLINE – INSTRUCTIONS***This table is used to operationalize your assessment objectives. It rearranges the information from the Needs Assessment Planning table in a way that helps clarify which evaluation questions will be covered by which method. This will facilitate the development of data collection instruments and ensure each instrument collects all the data necessary to answer each needs assessment question.* * *For example, after filling out the Needs Assessment Planning table, you find that there are several questions under various objectives that will be answered in focus group discussions. You will list “focus group discussion” in this table and then list all the needs assessment questions that must be answered during the focus group. The data collection team will then develop a focus group discussion guide that covers all the related needs assessment questions. The project team will be confident that after using the focus group guide to conduct the focus group discussion, they will have all the necessary data to answer the related needs assessment questions.*
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| **Name of method and information source**  | **Questions Covered:** Assessment questions to be covered in the tool  | **Who:** Who will the respondent(s) be for the tool  | **Additional considerations:** Are there any unique considerations associated with collecting the answers to the assessment questions?Are there any adjustments that need to be made to the methods relating to stakeholder participation, ethical considerations, data quality, etc.? |
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