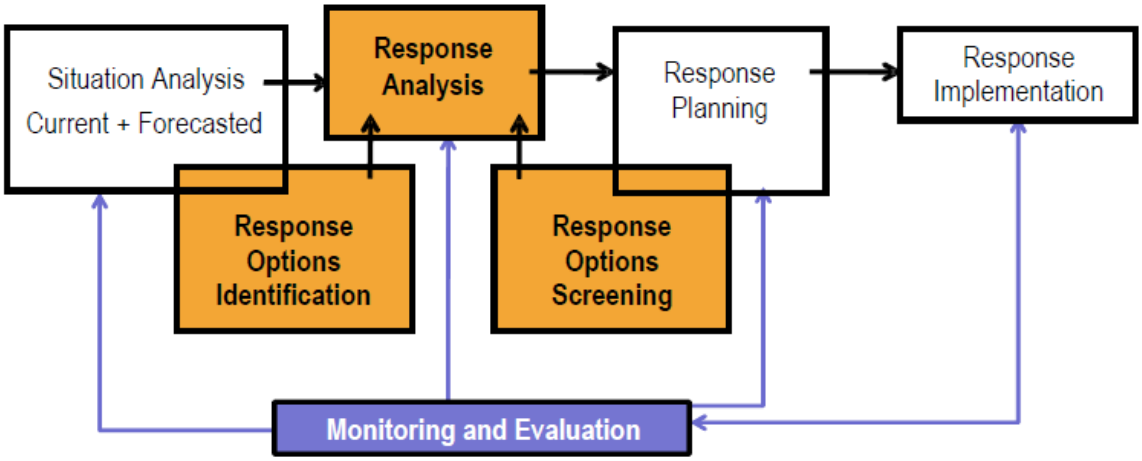
Developing a Response Analysis Framework for Food Security Emergencies

Mapping of On-Going Response Analysis Processes



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1. Introduction

This paper responds to one of the stated activities in the project entitled "Developing a Response Analysis Framework for Food Security Emergencies". The activity was to undertake a mapping of current response analysis tools, frameworks and processes as a precursor to development of the FAO Response Analysis Framework. During the course of the project various response analysis initiatives were reviewed and consulted, however this review was not written up formally. The current paper is such a review. [1]

Current response analysis practices can be divided into three general categories.

1. General approaches / frameworks for response analysis
2. Specific sectoral or process specific tools for response analysis
3. Response analysis tools or approaches which are embedded in established multilateral processes.

The following sections consist of a brief review of specific initiatives under each category. The intention is to sketch out the broad parameters of response analysis and to pick out some key issues.

The paper is timely as it creates a platform for a more thoroughgoing review of response analysis practices which was mandated in the FAO / WFP interagency response analysis workshop which was held at FAO, Rome on February 8th – 9th 2011. The overarching recommendation of this multi-stakeholder technical workshop was the need for a follow-up study to explore 'where we are' in the practice of response analysis, This study would provide the basis for a lessons learned / best practice review to be published in late 2011 / early 2012.

2. General approaches / frameworks for response analysis

There are three general frameworks or approaches to food security response analysis: the WFP Response Analysis Project (RAP); the FAO Response Analysis Framework (RAF) and Oxfam GB's Response Analysis for Emergency Food Security and Livelihoods Programmes.

2.1 The RAP

The "Strengthening Decision Making in Relief and Recovery Improved Response Analysis Capacity Project (RAP)" ran in three phases from September 2008 to March 2011, funded by the Government of Germany since September 2008. The RAP was managed jointly by the food security assessment group (VAM) and the program unit. Its main aim was to make WFP food security analysis products more useful for programmers by strengthening the links

[1] This paper has benefited form the material included in two documents: - the final workshop report of the "Inter-Agency Food Security and Nutrition Response Analysis Workshop" Convened by FAO and WFP 8-9 February 2011, FAO premises Rome and an internal, draft and unpublished consultancy report completed by Daniel Maxwell for the RAF project entitled "RA synthesis report ".

between assessments (EFSAs, CFSVAs, market analysis) and programme design. In order to achieve this the project aimed to: (a) mainstream response analysis by ensuring better alignment between assessment results and project design cycle; (b) strengthen methods and tools so that assessments can identify the most appropriate food assistance responses, and (c) ensure strategic linkage with the FAO RAF project.

The RAP project has developed tools and processes, and incorporated these into the major WFP assessment/food security analysis handbooks – specifically the CFSVA and EFSA handbooks. The final guidance document is still being prepared. RAP has focused on consultations with information users from design to recommendations, clarifying the outcomes of the food security analysis into response strategies. Progress has been reported in analysis (all new projects must be supported by food security analysis document, all posted on the web); most food security analyses are implemented in partnership; and food security assessments include recommendations for interventions. VAM and program units are integrated at the country level. New projects rationale and quality discussed by the Project Review Committee. WFP supported and participated in the RAF pilot in Somalia, and has piloted the RAP process in Mali.

Acknowledging the various sets of information needed for programming beyond food and nutrition security, the RAP focuses on 'strategic responses', as summarised here below:

a) Issue(s) to be addressed (availability, access, utilization) by group, area, period;
b) Broad strategies of intervention (livelihood protection, asset recovery, disaster preparedness, etc.) by group, area, period;
c) Modalities of intervention (short term transfers, longer term investments, capacity building, etc.) by group, area, period;
d) Transfer modalities (e.g. in kind Vs market-based) by group, area, period;

For the RAP, remaining at this strategic level would allow agencies to then devise the most effective and efficient way to deliver taking into account their own mandate and capacity, the Government policies and the Government/agency coordination frameworks, the existing institutional capacity and best practices in their areas of operation, the opportunities for funding and partnerships, etc. A conceptual framework for the RAP can be found in annex 1.

2.2 The RAF

The RAF defines response analysis as:

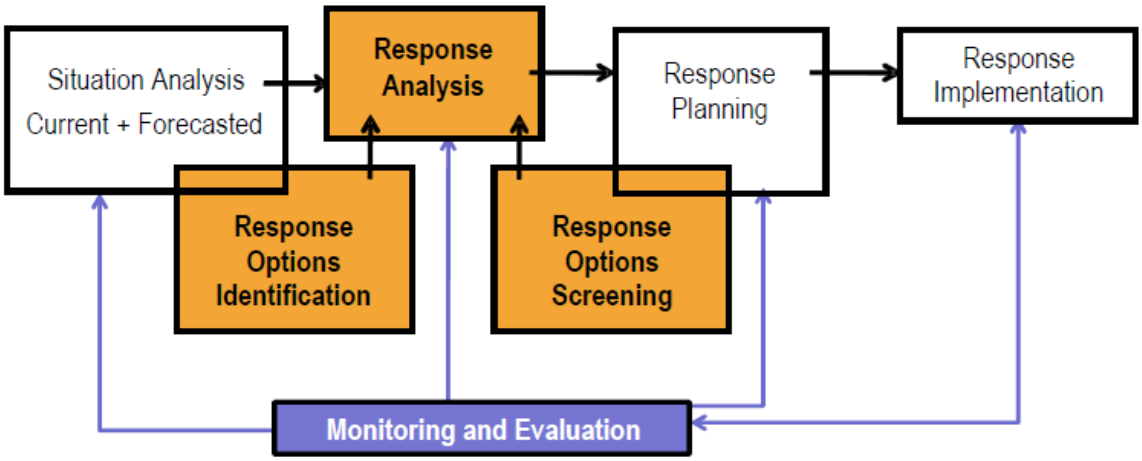
the process by which a range of *appropriate* and *feasible* options to address the existing and/or likely food or nutrition insecurity of target populations is identified.

FAO has developed and tested a Response Analysis Framework to generate interagency consensus around response analysis concepts and process. The RAF was piloted in the Somalia CAP process for 201l, linked to IPC analysis and in Indonesia for food security/nutrition response to a drought. The purpose is to promote appropriate and feasible program responses to food insecurity in emergencies. The core of the RAF process involves multi-stakeholder meeting in which various responses are scored according in

different categories in a "Response Analysis Matrix." Individual item scores are examined, and the cumulative scores are summed up. Any response with an individual score above a certain level is excluded from consideration. The categories for consideration are security, technical appropriateness, timeliness, capacity (technical and logistical), likelihood of adverse impacts, and budget. Any response option scoring higher than a pre-selected cut-off is considered to be unacceptable (the lower the score in all categories, the more "preferred" the option is). There is a separate step for the "do no harm" criterion. And there are some additional categories around the ability to monitor and evaluate responses, the sustainability of responses, and consultation with affected communities.

The Framework proposed under the RAF spans the conceptual, analytical and institutional space between situation analysis and response planning (see figure 1 below) . The roots of the RAF are in situation analysis and the "fruits" in response planning. The RAF has been designed to build on the outputs of the IPC where this is being used.

Figure 1 RAF conceptual framework



Source: Derived from the IPC (Version 1.1)

2.3 OXFAM GB Response Analysis Approach

For Oxfam, response analysis is the process by which a set of appropriate actions is identified in an emergency. "Appropriate", in this case, is defined by two sets of criteria: those related to the needs and livelihoods of the affected population; and those related to the implementing agency's goals, capacity, and the operating environment in which it finds itself. Thus the OXFAM definition is close to the definition used by FAO in the RAF.

Response Analysis is the process by which the range of responses identified in Situation Analysis is narrowed down and the ultimate response(s) is/are selected by identifying answers to two sets of questions:

1. Is the response livelihood-appropriate?
2. Is the response agency-appropriate?

For a response to be appropriate for Oxfam, both questions must be answered 'yes'.

A 'livelihood-appropriate" response is one that fills an assessed gap (survival or livelihood protection) and/or builds resilience. If possible, it builds on and strengthens existing livelihood strategies; at a minimum it does not undermine them. In practice, the market should be used to solve household deficits as long as 1. affected households' effective demand is sufficient; 2. markets are able to supply the necessary commodities or services.

An "agency-appropriate" response is one that makes the best use of the mandate, strengths and capacity of the organisation, and fits within the overall context of the humanitarian operation.

In the Oxfam approach, the following key questions should be addressed in Response Analysis using two types of decision trees: a Livelihood Appropriate Tree and an Agency Appropriate Tree[2].

1. Does the response address an assessed need in a way that supports and does not supplant local livelihoods? (*Livelihood-Appropriate Tree*)
2. Is the response one that the local government or community is unable or unwilling to mount on its own? (*Agency-Appropriate Tree*)
3. Is the response within Oxfam's mandate and regional prioritisation? (*Agency-Appropriate Tree*)
4. Are the opportunity costs of the response greater than the benefits (*Agency-Appropriate Tree*)
5. Does Oxfam have (or is it willing to obtain) the technical skills to mount the response? (*Agency-Appropriate Tree*)
6. Does Oxfam have within its own funding sources the financial means to cover the costs of the response? Or is there a need to carry out external fund-raising? (*Agency-Appropriate Tree*)

3. Specific sectoral or process specific tools for response analysis

There are three more specific response analysis tools currently in use or under development these are (a) the Emergency Market Mapping and Assessment (EMMA) (b) Market Information for Food Insecurity Response Analysis (MIFIRA) and (c) the Livestock Emergency Guidelines and Standards (LEGS).

3.1 Emergency Market Mapping and Assessment (EMMA).

The EMMA toolkit is intended to help agencies responding to emergencies better understand and utilize market systems for improved emergency response. The overall

[2] See Annexes 2(a) and 2(b): Oxfam Decision Trees for further details

objectives of EMMA are to improve the effectiveness of humanitarian responses to emergencies while reducing the risk that these responses cause additional harm to market systems and livelihoods. EMMA process consists of three interconnected analytical steps: gap analysis, market analysis and *response analysis*. The response analysis section offers steps to evaluate the feasibility, possible outcomes, benefits and risks of different response options. The goal of these three 'strands' is to provide a thorough, coherent and integrated analysis that forms the basis for EMMA's final recommendations of response options.

The implementation of EMMA consists of ten steps:
1) ***Essential preparation*** (including background research, consultation with colleagues, establishing a working base for the EMMA team, and identifying target populations);
2) ***Market selection*** (selecting the most important market systems to study and identifying the analytical questions to guide the investigation);
3) ***Preliminary analysis*** (drafting initial household profiles, seasonal calendars, maps of the market system, and identifying key informants);
4) ***Fieldwork preparation*** (establishing the fieldwork agenda, developing questionnaires and formats of interviews);
5) ***Fieldwork activities*** (interviewing and gathering of information)
6) ***Mapping the market*** (producing final versions of baseline and emergency market system maps, seasonal calendars, and household profiles)
7) ***Gap analysis*** (estimating the total gap of needs)
8) ***Market analysis*** (using market maps to analyze the capability of the market system to meet the gap)
9) ***Response analysis*** (making recommendations of different response options based on the gap analysis and market analysis)
10) ***Communicate results*** (communicating EMMA's response recommendations to stakeholders)

EMMA uses four main tools: 1) household income and expenditure profiles that illustrate the main sources of income and expenditure; 2) seasonal calendars that summarize seasonal changes in markets and livelihoods; 3) market maps that provide visual representations of market systems before and after emergencies; and 4) response frameworks that summarize the options and characteristics of emergency responses.

3.2 Market Information for Food Insecurity Response Analysis (MIFIRA).

MIFIRA is a specific tool intended to help program designers think through the relative merits of response options for addressing an acute food access crisis. Its starting point is the assessed need for direct food assistance to improve consumption at the household level – it can guide the choice among in-kind food aid (sourced in various places), cash transfers (or some equivalent, such as food stamps or vouchers), or a combination. In and of itself, it does not directly address indirectly supporting consumption through livelihood programming options.

The MIFIRA tool is based on the "food aid decision tree" (Barrett and Maxwell 2005). It addresses the two core questions of the decision tree, breaking them into subsidiary questions analysts can feasibly answer using data and analytical tools commonly available to them. The questions are as follows:

Question 1. Are local markets functioning well?

a. Are food insecure households well connected to local markets?
b. How will local demand respond to transfers?
c. How much additional food will traders supply at or near current costs?
d. Do local food traders behave competitively?
e. Do food insecure households have a preference over the form/mix of aid they receive?

Question 2. Is there sufficient food available nearby to fill the gap?

a. Where are viable prospective source markets?
b. Will agency purchases drive up food prices excessively in source markets?
c. Will local or regional purchases affect producer prices differently than transoceanic shipments?

MIFIRA is thus heavily concerned with the market information and potential side effects of food or cash, but is focused only on those two response options. It one of the few tools that helps programmers definitively determine a preferred response. Pilot testing and field application indicate that much of the market analysis needs to be incorporated into contingency planning and preparedness (Lentz 2010).

3.3 Livestock Emergency Guidelines and Standards (LEGS).

Specific to livelihoods responses in crises affecting pastoral populations or other groups that are heavily dependent on food and income from livestock, LEGS is intended to help agencies identify the most appropriate livestock-related responses while ensuring these responses adhere to minimum standards. Building on the processes of the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (the Sphere Project), LEGS applies a livelihoods approach to livestock-based disaster relief, focusing on three livelihoods-based objectives: 1) to provide rapid assistance to crisis-affected populations through livestock-based interventions; 2) to protect critical livestock-related assets of crisis-affected populations; and 3) to rebuild livestock-affected assets among crisis-affected populations. LEGS can be applied to all types of emergency, including slow-onset, rapid-onset and chronic emergencies. The LEGS assessment process is composed of three main components:

1) ***The role of livestock in livelihoods***: to identify the role of livestock in the livelihoods of affected populations in order to determine the appropriateness of a livestock-related intervention.
2) ***The nature and impact of the emergency***: to assess the impact of the crisis on affected populations and determine the need for an emergency response.
3) ***Situation analysis***: to understand the operating environment, logistical constraints, and possible overlap with other stakeholders.

The response analysis step of LEGS uses a Participatory Response Identification Matrix (PRIM), a tool designed to facilitate discussions with local stakeholders in order to identify appropriate livestock-based responses. LEGS has eight common minimum standards for livestock-related interventions. These include:

1. ***Participation*** (to ensure affected populations participate in the assessment process);
2. ***Initial assessment*** (to understand the role of livestock in livelihoods, the nature and impact of the emergency and situation analysis);
3. ***Response and coordination*** (to ensure that livestock-based responses are complementary to and do not interfere with other interventions);
4. ***Targeting*** (to guarantee that livestock support is fair and impartial);
5. ***Monitoring and evaluation and livelihoods impact*** (to assess effectiveness);
6. ***Technical support and agency competencies*** (to ensure livestock aid workers are appropriately qualified to implement livestock-based support programs);
7. ***Contingency planning, preparedness and early response*** (based on disaster risk reduction principles); and
8. ***Advocacy and policy*** (to identify and address policy obstacles to implementation).

LEGS provides guidance notes on minimum standards for specific types of livestock-related interventions: destocking; veterinary services; ensuring supplies of feed resources; water; livestock shelter and settlement; and post-disaster restocking.

4. Response analysis in established multilateral processes.

In theory, Response Analysis is incorporated into all program design choices. In fact, there is limited evidence about actual practices on the ground. Even in agencies that have developed their own tools, it is unclear exactly how widely they are used – and more to the point, what the process is when specific tools or approaches are not explicitly used. Several major inter-agency processes are now designed to incorporate some element of RA. These are briefly outlined below.

4.1 Multi-agency post –disaster assessment processes

Multi-agency post-disaster assessment processes can be subdivided into rapid / pre-Post Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) and the PDNA itself.

4.1.1 The rapid / pre PDNA processes are led by the multi-agency Needs Assessment Task Force (NATF) which is chaired by OCHA. The NATF has established a four phase assessment process to be activated in the event of a sudden onset natural disaster, together with a pre-emergency assessment preparedness phase. Phase four of this process overlaps with the PDNA, in that one of the outputs of this phase is an initial PDNA recovery framework. The phases are as follows:

Phase	Assessment Type	Timing	Feeds into...
0	Assessment preparedness	Before the emergency	

1	Initial Rapid Assessment	First 72 hours	Initial flash appeal
2	Multi-cluster / sector rapid assessment	Week 1 – 2	Revised flash appeal
3	Single cluster / sector coordinated in-depth assessments	Week 3+	National Recovery and Rehabilitation Plan
4	Single cluster / sector coordinated in-depth assessments with (early) recovery elements	Second month +	National Recovery and Rehabilitation Plan; CAP; inputs for PDNA.

There is no explicit technical response analysis process factored into these phases. There are some challenges in this regard as follows:

- For phases 1 and 2 there is very little time to do a response options analysis. This places increased onus on response analysis as part of contingency planning exercises, and also on the development of rapid RA processes that can slot into very tight timeframes.
- For phases 3 and 4, time is also a constraint, in addition to questions of political will / interest on the part of agencies and governments to engage in a transparent response analysis process.
- Overall, it is not clear that response analysis is explicitly incorporated into rapid needs assessment processes –particularly those associated with flash appeals. Time limitations may be an important consideration. But this does raise a question: do the program choices or response options following from a rapid assessment tend to lock programming responses into a certain mode which is very difficult to get out of later on when time constraints on analysis are less acute? Experience from recent major crises should be reviewed to answer this question in greater detail, but at first glance, there does seem to be some evidence that initial responses tend to become the longer-term norm.

4.1.2 PDNA: The guidance on the PDNA Response Option Analysis process lays out a number of steps:

1. For each option, order options per sector in relation to the sequence and timeline;
2. Describe the Response Option (RO) and identify how it contributes to achieving the sector outcome/objective. Provide a preliminary cost projection. Review how crosscutting issues are affected (or not) by RO.
3. Describe how it fits in the timeline, indicate pre-conditions for initiating this RO. Indicate how completion of the RO facilitates further recovery progress in the sector. Identify the government unit responsible. Identify how this RO impacts a demonstrated need. Describe the implementation structure for the sector.
4. Describe, as appropriate, the inter-relationships and dependencies with other sectors and linkages established and required for well-coordinated delivery of recovery outputs and interventions.
5. Describe explicitly how this RO addresses the needs of the most vulnerable, especially women, children, people with handicaps, and persons with low incomes. Indicate how the RO reduces risk. If the option applies only to one geographical area affected by the disaster or is differentially applied across the affected area, describe these differences.
6. Indicate the projected total cost of all ROs, identify possible donors and partners.

Whilst the guidance is clear enough, in practice there are a number of constraints with RA in the PDNA context. This includes:

- The difficulty to finding consensus is a challenge inherent to any multi-stakeholder process with many actors and sectors (humanitarian and development; host government and international agencies; etc.).
- The process has to be quick, even in a PDNA context, but has to provide good quality recommendations, this tension results in compromises in terms of quality.
- Analytical frameworks are available or adaptable to the PDNA context, but they are currently not in use. No particular tools are specified.
- Priority-setting in the PDNA context is extremely political, and expectations have to be managed. As a consequence, some donors are advocating greater rigor in response and analysis. This raises questions about who conducts the analysis, and the issue of the diffusion of sovereign authority.
- Whist in theory RA is a participatory process involving several actors, in practice in the Haiti earthquake for example, the key analysis was performed by a small group of white male technicians.
- A further issue is that there is no explicit step to identify or mitigate harmful unintended consequences of response.

4.2 Consolidated Appeals Processes (CAPs) or annual needs assessment processes.

Although still in crisis situations, there are predictable processes of program selection that could incorporate much more RA than is currently practiced. The CAP process is an example of this.

CAPs are currently being implemented in 15 countries which are either in recovery from large scale disasters (e.g. Haiti) or in protracted crisis (e.g. Somalia, Afghanistan, Zimbabwe). In 2005, OCHA introduced the Needs Analysis Framework tool as an attempt to improve the process of identifying multi-sectoral humanitarian needs in the CAP context and creating a clear and logical platform for development of linked responses. Unfortunately, the NAF was not very successful due to the fact that it was never properly incorporated into the CAP calendar – it was not a mandatory requirement for the development of response plans - and was not consistently monitored or led by OCHA at country level. Consequently, most agencies saw it as an unnecessary burden in an already crowded calendar of CAP preparations in the July – September period.

In 2010, the RAF pilot in Somalia was a further attempt to improve the link between assessment and response in the CAP context, building on the IPC. The experience with both the RAF pilot in Somalia and with CAPs generally is that a key challenge is in prioritization among response options. Another issue is the strong connections which exist between rapid needs assessment, CAP processes and cluster mechanism. This is good from the point of view of intra-cluster coordination, but it runs the risk of amplifying the “silo” effect between clusters, limiting the possibility of inter-sectoral or multi-cluster programming options entering into response analysis processes (with potential implications - particularly response options that address malnutrition in emergencies). One way of mitigating this risk is to ensure that inter –cluster planning processes are done on the basis of shared conceptual

frameworks and integrated into assessment – appeal processes.

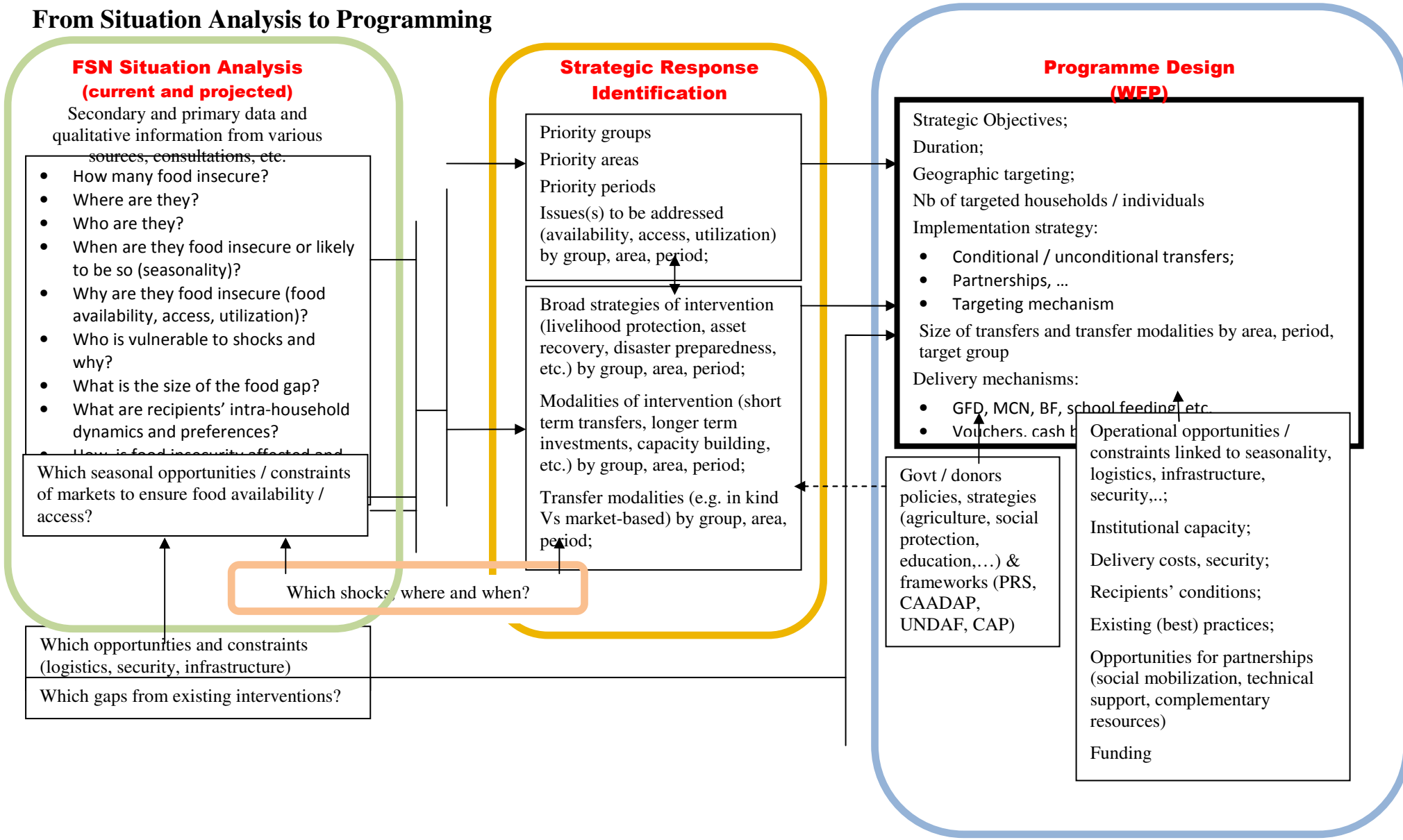
4.3 FAO / WFP Crop and Food Security Assessment Missions (CFSAM).

The Crop and Food Security Assessment Mission's (CFSAM) primary purpose is to provide timely and credible information on imminent food security problems in a country or a region so that appropriate actions can be taken by governments, the international community and others to minimize the impact of man-made or natural disasters on the affected populations. Typically, a number of areas are considered:

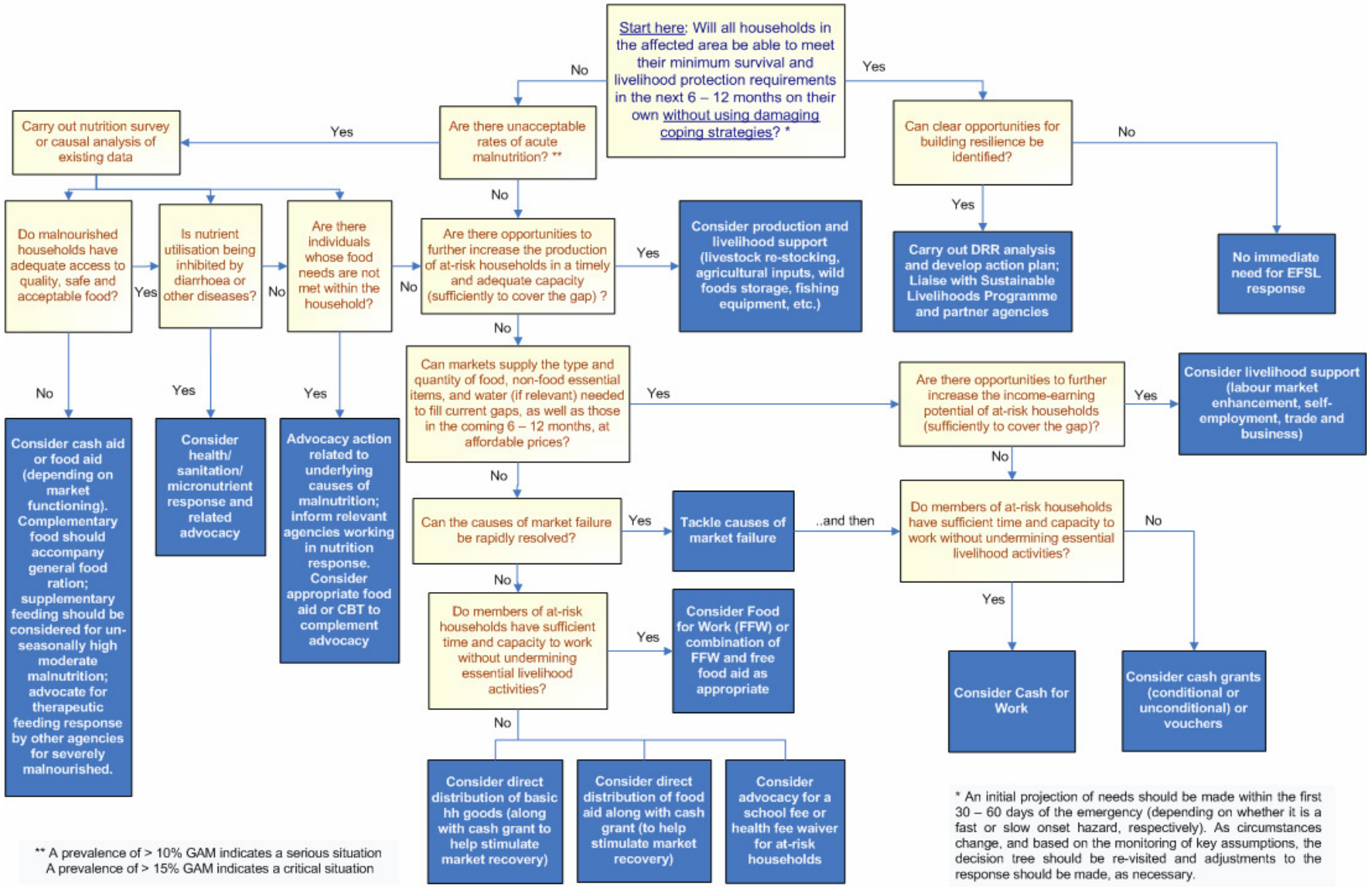
- Socio-economic context
- Agricultural production
- Market conditions and prices
- Food supply/demand and balance
- Household food security and nutrition situation and tentative outlook in the forthcoming year

A key challenge with the CFSAM process relates to response analysis. Currently the process results in recommending short-term responses mainly based on food supply. Response monitoring (food balance sheet analysis) is narrowly focused on crops (mainly cereals). One important issue to consider is the scope for greater emphasis on response options analysis going beyond food assistance, and which would include factoring in the consequences of interventions.

Annex 1: WFP RAP Conceptual Framework



ANNEX 2(a). Oxfam GB Response Analysis: Livelihood-Appropriate Decision Tree



ANNEX 2(b). Oxfam GB Response Analysis: Agency-Appropriate Decision Tree