

**LIBERIA INSTITUTE OF STATISTICS AND GEO-INFORMATION SERVICES  
HOUSEHOLD INCOME AND EXPENDITURE SURVEY (2014)**

**COMMUNITY QUESTIONNAIRE MANUAL**

**Objective of the Community Questionnaire**

The objective of the Community Questionnaire is to collect price data for use by the Government of Liberia in determining the level of prices for various products in local markets in the country. Price data would also enable analysis of the differences in local market prices in the regions of the country. At the same time market prices will be used as baseline for future Consumer Price Indices (CPI) that might be developed for each region of the country. Presently the CPI is being maintained for Greater Monrovia only and its base is 1964 which is outdated and not sufficient. The CPI is an important indicator in economic analysis because it allows for the measure of inflation. It is our hope that data to be obtained from the Household Income and Expenditure Survey will be used for rebasing the CPI and serve as a deflator for national accounts. In this regard, price data become very critical and should be collected and updated from time to time.

**Selection of Markets**

The main HIES survey will be carried out on a sample of 8,360 randomly selected households located in 836 enumeration areas selected using two stage sampling methodology. The EA's have been selected from each county across Liberia. You will collect information from markets in or near 836 EAs in total. Even if the same market is accessed by two EAs, you will be collecting information from that market again since it is being collected on a different day of the year and this helps us account for seasonality effects.

A team of two Interviewers and their Supervisor will be visiting each one of these EA's to complete the Community Questionnaire. The team will be organized to collect market price information at a market located in the EA or a market nearest to the EA. The idea is that the team should visit one market in each or near each EA and collect information on products listed in the Market Price Questionnaire. If there are more than one market, the team could still collect prices from the two markets. Therefore in visiting the Chief of the village for the purpose of completing the questionnaires, it is important to find out information about the existence of a local market in the EA or nearest to the EA where most people in the community visit. Also it is important to find out the designated market days for that market, since the common practice is that each local market has designated market days during the week.

The collection of market prices will be organized to be undertaken one day during the time the team will be in the EAs, if possible one the first day. The Supervisors are being trained to enable them lead the team to collect this information. The ideal situation is that the collection of market prices should be undertaken on the designated market day for that market. This is because that is the day most products are sold at the market.

**Visiting a Local Market**

When a team visits a market, it is always important to obtain permission from the appropriate authorities (Market President) to undertake this data collection. Be prepared to explain the purpose of the survey and show IDs. This is important because the Market President is in-

charge/Boss of the market. If for some reason the pricing team run into problems in the market, the Market President who has already given permission to the team to conduct the price collection will defend the team. It is also a mark of respect to the Market President by seeking permission from hi/her. Make sure you carry your questionnaires and the scale for weighing the products listed in the questionnaire.

The methodology for collecting prices is not to go by the list sequentially but to move from one end of the market to another pricing products as you find them. That means flipping the questionnaire from time to time to locate the particular product(s) for pricing. You must capture as many items available in the market. There should be no item that is listed as purchased in Section K of the Household Questionnaire for all households in an EA and not captured in the Community Questionnaire. Clearly more items will be available in the market and as much information as possible must be captured.

### **Team Work**

Price data collection is a good example of team work. Although it is possible for an individual to collect prices alone, it is always easier to work as a team of two or three. More people could help to speed up the work if need be. Remember that some of your team will be involved in the mapping activities for listing all the households in the enumeration area, but the remainder should head to the market to assist the supervisor with this activity.

In the case of two data collectors for the community questionnaire, the identification of products could be done by one person including the filling of the questionnaire while the other person is weighing the products. The handling of the weighing scale is also an important aspect in that all attempts should be made to ensure that it is not damaged. This may require one more person to have the duty of handling the scale, hence requiring the three persons for the task.

You should share the results of the price and unit information you collect from the market questionnaire with your team so that they are aware of the prices in the market and can use such information to verify/counter-check and politely probe a household if vastly different prices are captured in the household questionnaire. Remember however that small variations are possible, because a household might know the vendor personally so might get a more discounted price than what an unknown customer might receive.

### **Weighing of Products**

Before weighing the product, it is important to ensure that the scale is calibrated to zero, otherwise the scale will be reading the weight of the plate put on top of the scale, if any, and the product. If the product is put in a container it may be necessary to calibrate the scale with the container first before putting the product in the container to obtain the weight. Some of the products will be measured in liters. You can use your Aqualife 500 ml and 1.5 L bottles to estimate the quantity in this situation.

## Structure of the Questionnaire

The first page is the cover page and the remaining pages are of the same design except for different products being priced on those pages. Note that you are collecting information from three different vendors so that is another distinction in this questionnaire.

The cover page asks for the county, district, clan and EA codes. The names for the county district and clan must also be filled. The EA has no names. It is pertinent that this matches what you are filling in the household questionnaires because the prices provided in the community questionnaire will be matched with the information provided by the households. You should also record the date on which you collect the information on prices in the community questionnaire.

Once you reach the second page, remember that you are getting pricing information from three different vendors for each of the items in the market. The first section covers information from first vendor, the second section covers from the second vendor and the third section covers the third vendor. The vendor does not have to be the same for each of the items, it can be different vendors for the different items. However, for the items that are available in the market, information from three different vendors ought to be collected. If not, the data entry program will spark an error message.

**Question 1.** What is the source of market prices? You are to record the appropriate code if for that specific item, whether the information being collected from a marketplace, or from a shop/store or another source, in which case you need to specify the other source. Remember, that the sources can be different for different objects. You could purchase eddoes from the market place but purchase sugar from a shop.

**Question 2.** Unit and Quantity of Sale. Record the unit and quantity that the vendor is selling for. For example, if the vendor sells rice as cups of three, this translates to 3 cups of rice. Then you record UNIT: 2 and Quantity: 3. Remember that the units can vary from one vendor to another so do not assume. Liquids should be measured in appropriate units as provided.

IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THE UNITS IN WHICH HOUSEHOLD CONSUMPTION INFORMATION IS RECORDED IS SIMILAR TO THAT OF THE COMMUNITY QUESTIONNAIRE AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE. IF A HOUSEHOLD REPORTS RICE PURCHASED IN BAGS BUT YOU COLLECT INFORMATION IN CUPS FROM THE COMMUNITY QUESTIONNAIRE, WE CANNOT DO MUCH ANALYSIS. THE IDEAL SITUATION IS WHERE YOU COVER AS MANY DIFFERENT UNITS AS POSSIBLE IN THE COMMUNITY QUESTIONNAIRE WITH THE THREE DIFFERENT SOURCES THAT YOU ARE COLLECTING INFORMATION FROM.

**Question 3.** Equivalent weights in standardized unit. Record the unit and quantity after you have weighed the item that is being sold in the market in non-standard units by the vendor into standardized units. Standard units are those that are in metric format like grams and liters. If another standardized unit is being used, select other specify and enter the unit. THE KEY FOCUS IS ON STANDARD UNITS. We do not want to see Big Dino and Packs in this column. Even if the vendor sells an item in grams or liters which are standardized units, copy this information to Question 3. Remember to set the weighing scale to 0 after placing the measuring

bag/cup/container so that you do not miscalculate the weight by including that of the bag/cup/container.

**Question 4.** Here you capture the Price that the vendor is selling the specific item for. The price should reflect the quantity that the vendor is selling for in Question 2. You can report in LD or USD based on the value the vendor sells the item at. If the vendor is selling rice in bags and you report the value in cups, then that would be incorrect and severely hamper any analysis.

- **AFTER FINISHING THE FIRST VENDOR, YOU GO TO A SECOND VENDOR AND REPEAT QUESTIONS 1-4 FOR THIS VENDOR FOR A PARTICULAR ITEM.**
- **AFTER FINISHING THE SECOND VENDOR YOU GO TO A THIRD VENDOR AND REPEAT QUESTIONS 1-4 FOR THIS VENDOR FOR A PARTICULAR ITEM.**

REMEMBER THAT THE VENDORS CAN BE DIFFERENT FOR EACH OF THE ITEMS AND THAT YOU NEED TO COLLECT INFORMATION FROM THREE DIFFERENT VENDORS IN AS MANY UNITS AS POSSIBLE SO THAT YOU COVER ALL POSSIBILITIES FOR THAT A HOUSEHOLD CAN REPORT AN ITEM BEING PURCHASED FOR.

The following categories will be used for designating the different items being sold in the market.

1. Cereals and Cereal products
2. Starches (Roots, Tubers, Bananas, Plantain)
3. Sugar and Sweets
4. Pulses, Dry
5. Nuts and Seeds and Oil
6. Vegetables
7. Fruits
8. Meat, meat products, fish
9. Milk and dairy products
10. Spices and other foods
11. Beverages

These groups have been highlighted and you should try to study them and remember, when you see the product in the market, which group it belongs.

### **SOME CONVERSIONS**

1 Kg or kilogram	1000 grams (g)
½ kg	500g
¼ kg	250g
1 Litre	1000 milliliters