Technical Note: Formative Research to Inform Social and Behavior Change Programming Design

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Contents

Introduction

This document shares considerations for planning formative research within USAID Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA)-funded Resilience and Food Security Activities (RFSAs) within the Refinement period. Formative research plans in this period typically aim to generate practical and timely findings across multiple studies to fill information gaps and guide the design of social and behavior change (SBC) programming. SBC is the systematic application of iterative, theory-based, and research-driven processes and strategies for promoting change at the individual, community, and society levels. BHA recognizes that high-quality SBC is fundamental to achieving outcomes across all sectors. To support partners in aligning with SBC best practice, BHA has identified seven milestones for SBC during the Refine and Implement (R&I) period. This technical note focuses on "Milestone 3: Develop and submit [statements of work (SOWs)] for formative research or assessments in the early refinement period."

Purpose

The purpose of this technical note is to support partners to design technically sound, actionable formative research to inform SBC program design in line with their activity theory of change (TOC). It complements relevant how-to guidance. This document can also be used by BHA staff when reviewing research protocols or SOWs and deliverables to evaluate the quality and rigor of the activity.

Designing and implementing high-quality SBC programming in any sector is a systematic process. This technical note focuses on the stage of planning formative research and is intended to support partners to design a fit-to-purpose, actionable formative research protocol or SOW. USAID Advancing Nutrition has developed tools to support the use of research in SBC programming at each stage in the process: the SBC Formative Research Decision Tree[1] helps to inform decisions about the most appropriate methodologies or approaches to use in SBC formative research and the Using Research to Design a Social and Behavior Change Strategy for Multi-Sector Nutrition design for tips on how to integrate findings into program design (USAID Advancing Nutrition 2022a; 2022b).

Background

This technical note is grounded in research best practice, BHA guidance especially the BHA Guidance for Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting for Resilience Food Security Activities and the Qualitative Toolkit: Qualitative Methods for Monitoring Food Security Activities Funded by the USAID Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID BHA 2021; Fox, Cook, and Peek 2023), and RFSA program experiences. It is intended to complement the detailed guidance and methods documents with considerations to make formative research plans actionable.

The process to develop this technical note began with a review of research best practices and formative research-related documents (information gaps, research SOW, and formative research reports) of five programs, in addition to interviews with staff of these programs. The five program examples represented a range of geographic regions, implementing partners, and time in the program cycle. Quotes from program staff about their insights and experiences illustrate sections of this document, where relevant.

The note also considers best practice in research for SBC within the parameters of the Refinement period and offers questions and considerations to make this realistic and actionable, recognizing that the aim is usually to generate practical findings for immediate use by the program to design activities.

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[1] Many of the tools referenced in this document are designed for nutrition programming but can be used in other sectors in RFSAs.

Before preparing the research protocol, consider two key questions:

- Is data collection really necessary to design activities and begin implementation?

- Is it realistic to complete the research process within the time and resources of the refinement period?

Formative research takes considerable time and resources. If proposed, it is important to limit the study to key, well-defined questions that are necessary, that do not duplicate other efforts, and that cannot be answered in other ways, such as through community consultations or a desk review.

Tips for Formative Research within the Refinement Period

Below are suggestions from RFSAs for the development of rapid, manageable studies that can generate practical findings for use in designing activities before implementation:

- Avoid reinventing what is known or could be estimated from stakeholders and partners.

> "There is already a good deal of evidence on social and gender norms on health behaviors.…There is a lot known about household decision-making and women's empowerment, but what are the norms and channels of influence for farmers and businesses to make their decisions? The conversation isn't as advanced here." *--RFSA Implementing Partner*

- Focus on a few, specific research questions only.

- Prioritize research questions around activity design rather than broader questions about the context.

> "We chose to keep the scope narrow enough to finish within R&I. This meant tight prioritization to maintain feasible scope. Thinking about the number of behaviors and audience segments across an RFSA—had to prioritize with the team to focus the R&I research." *--RFSA Implementing Partner*

- Keep the sample small. Generally, if it is a topic where there is some existing information, even in other contexts, a quick study with a very small sample would be sufficient.

- Capture only the data necessary. For example, verbatim translations and transcriptions are not needed if the data collection process is managed well. Interviews or focus group discussions conducted in a local language can be translated by notetakers into French or English in real time, instead of recording interviews to later transcribe and translate verbatim.

Principles of Qualitative Research

Formative research typically uses qualitative or mixed methods research approaches to gather in-depth information on 'how' and 'why' key behaviors may or may not be practiced in a local context.

Qualitative research methods are used to obtain a detailed understanding of people's lives, choices, and behaviors and to identify practical new ideas that the researchers may not be expecting. Qualitative research collects data that aims to capture people's perspectives and experiences in their own words. Qualitative research can answer research questions related to understanding people's perceptions, experiences, and context in their own words by answering the "why?" and "how?" questions surrounding human behavior, such as local perspectives and solutions to a challenge.

There are many approaches to qualitative research, with common principles and practices to make it rigorous. Rigorous qualitative research design leads to robust, evidence-based findings that can inform programming decisions; see the Qualitative Toolkit for more information (Fox, Cook, and Peek 2023).

Qualitative research needs to be designed and conducted in a thoughtful, stepwise process. The process takes substantial time in communities, and sharing interpretations and gathering feedback from participants to ensure that results are true from their perspectives. Validity is strengthened by triangulating or comparing and integrating findings from several techniques.
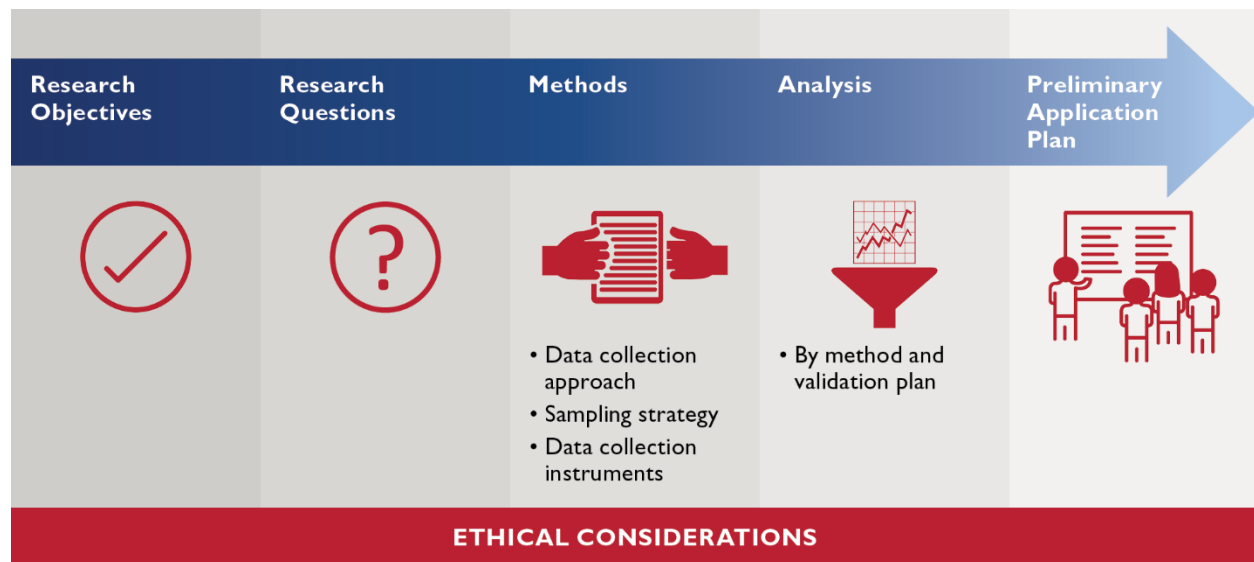
The Formative Research Design Process

Programs develop a formative research protocol if the partner plans to conduct the formative research. Programs develop a SOW if they are planning to hire a consultant to carry out the research. A SOW is a less-detailed version of a protocol but still contains the same elements. BHA provides a template for partners to use.

This technical note is organized by the general components of a protocol or SOW, with considerations to generate actionable findings for SBC design and implementation for all sectors. The checklist in Annex 2 may be useful to identify the key points within each element of the protocol.

Each component of the protocol or SOW should flow clearly into the next component to stay focused and coherent. A research alignment table (figure 1) is useful to lay out the logical design of the research plan. This flow helps to make sure that the questions are answerable; that the methods align with the questions, are feasible, and are sufficient to answer the questions; that the plan for data analysis is reasonable; and that there is a clear plan for using the findings.

Figure 1. Research Alignment Flow

Research Objectives	Research Questions	Methods	Analysis	Preliminary Application Plan
		• Data collection approach • Sampling strategy • Data collection instruments	• By method and validation plan	

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

"Good research is repeatedly referred to and useful." *–RFSA Implementing Partner*

1. Articulate a problem statement

A strong problem statement for a formative research protocol that can be used for SBC 1) summarizes information gaps related to priority behaviors, 2) identifies change pathways in the TOC, and 3) links expected learning from each information gap to activity design plans.

Before developing a research protocol or SOW, programs should draft a preliminary list of priority behaviors across the purposes of the TOC and begin to identify SBC-related knowledge or information gaps (USAID BHA 2022). To design research, begin with a clear, focused, and concise problem statement to fill these information gaps. Select only the most critical information gap(s) for research because most of the information gaps in the TOC cannot be answered in a short time frame, nor are necessary to answer before activity design. The RFSA model with intensive community engagement enables continual learning and adaptation throughout the life of the award.

Select a conceptual or theoretical framework that supports your programmatic purpose. The framework will help to shape relevant research questions, identify which information gaps are important to investigate, guide the sampling approach, develop data collection instruments, and inform the analysis. Identify a framework early in the research process to guide these decisions and use it to guide discussion at each step to identify important questions or insights that might be missing or overlooked. As no one theory can apply to every behavior or setting, you may consider using frameworks that draw on multiple theories such as the socio-ecological model that positions individual behavior as embedded within multiple and overlapping individual, social, and environmental influences. This model helps programs consider the context in which people live. Another comprehensive framework is COM-B, which identifies three conditions: capability, opportunity, and motivation that are necessary for behavior change. The framework includes a Behavior Change Wheel around which are nine intervention functions aimed at addressing deficits in one or more of these conditions (Michie et al. 2011).

A strong problem statement summarizes the information gaps in relation to priority behaviors and those change pathways in the TOC, informed by a conceptual framework. The problem statement also explains how expected findings relate to and are expected to address each information gap and guide activity design. An example adapted from the Qualitative Toolkit follows.

> "The qualitative study will assess which behaviors that smallholder farmers are willing to try related to climate change adaptation strategies. Adoption of improved behaviors to adapt to climate change is a key outcome in the TOC, with a gap in what behaviors farmers will adopt. Anecdotal evidence provided by staff suggests that while smallholder farmers generally recognize that the weather has changed since their childhood, and are concerned, there is no clarity on which recommendations they would be willing to try or how. The TOC links adoption of improved behaviors to financial and social barriers to change. Using the socio-ecological model, the research will also explore what support, at what level, farmers need to adopt improved behaviors. This understanding will focus the planned training and community mobilization activities to promote improved behaviors to prevent and mitigate climate change events and possible impacts on agricultural production and other potentially affected livelihood strategies" (Fox, Cook, and Peek 2023).

Problem Statement Considerations and Questions

For each identified information gap proposed for the research, ask questions such as—

- What is it about improving that behavior, or the factors that prevent or support action, that we do not understand but need to in order to design the SBC programming?

- What sources of influence do we not understand, but need to, in order to design the SBC programming, considering the socio-ecological model, for example?

- What is it about the activities proposed in the TOC that we do not know how to do?

- If we select only a few of the influencers or activities, which will be the most feasible and acceptable to communities?

2. Prepare a research justification

A clear research justification describes why research is needed by explaining why the information gap(s) must be answered before activity design but cannot be answered through other ways.

Based on the problem statement, explain why filling the information gap(s) related to a priority behavior and its change pathway is necessary before designing the activity. Also describe why no other planned

research or learning activity would fill the gap(s). If it is possible to fill the information gaps through other means, avoid a separate research study. One program shared how they could fill information gaps through other planned learning activities.

> "[We] added some questions to the community consultations…focused on how to build social cohesion and momentum around project activities and vision, to get buy-in from participants, and encourage ownership. The team added questions on nutrition behaviors such as 'who eats first in the household, and who gets the largest share?'" – *RFSA Implementing Partner*

Within the justification, explain where each information gap fits in the change pathway of the priority behavior within TOC. Note the links to the selected conceptual framework, as relevant.

For example, a program prioritized the behavior to improve, *"Women eat a diverse diet through meals and snacks daily"* and found an information gap in the TOC pathway leading to this behavior. Women's financial decision-making was included in the TOC with an arrow to consumption, but the program team recognized that this may not be enough to ensure consumption of diverse foods each day. The team needed to understand what else was needed for financial decisions to impact diet. Using the COM-B framework, the program team asked what opportunities (e.g., adequate financial and food resources; norms that enable women to eat well), capabilities (e.g., ability to prepare diverse foods) and motivations (e.g., valuing the health benefits of a diverse diet for women) could improve consumption.

Research Justification Considerations

- Is a separate study needed, or can the inquiry be part of another planned research and learning activity or explored later in the implementation process?

- What is known from previous projects or individuals with relevant experience who could be consulted?

- How does this information gap limit the ability to design an activity that is likely to be acceptable, feasible, and effective?

3. Determine key research objectives

Focused research objectives, clearly linked to priority behaviors and the TOC change pathways, lead to actionable findings.

Now the task is to set one or more specific and actionable objective for the research study to address the problem statement. Formative research can have more than one objective; each objective must be a clear statement about what the program wants to learn from the research. Within the justification, explain where each information gap fits in the change pathway of the priority behavior within the TOC. For example, an information gap may be at the factor level, such as what prevents or supports a particular vulnerable group to practice the behavior. Note links to the selected conceptual framework as relevant.

An information gap may be at the activity level and relate to understanding who can best engage a particular group. The socio-ecological model could help to identify influential members of families, communities, and other groups that could be engaged to shift norms and create enabling environments for behavior change.

For the research to be feasible and relevant to activity design, it is important to narrow the research objectives to focus on only essential information. The more specific and focused the objectives are, the easier it will be to complete the next steps, and the formative research itself. Table 1 shows an example of less focused compared to more focused research objectives.

Table 1. Focusing Research Objectives

Less-Focused Research Objectives	More-Focused Research Objectives
Objectives to be achieved in support of the study purpose include: • To document food availability and current infant and young child feeding behaviors in communities in the program regions • To identify barriers to infant and young child feeding behaviors in communities in the program regions • To understand care-seeking practices and barriers to care-seeking for adolescents, women, and children.	Objectives to be achieved in support of the study purpose are as follows: • To identify what the most vulnerable caregivers and families are willing and able to try to add locally available, nutrient-rich foods to their children's meals and snacks, specific to their ages • To test acceptable and feasible approaches to support families to seek care for illness

Indicate how formative research objectives are related to the priority behaviors and the change pathways in the TOC. Use the conceptual framework to guide objectives. Conceptual frameworks are also useful to review the TOC change pathways for each priority behavior. For example, imagine that a program aims to improve children's micronutrient status through a behavior, "*Caregivers feed children 6-23 months a variety of foods through meals and snacks each day.*" Using the framework, a program team would ask if the factors that prevent or support that behavior are addressed through planned activities. COM-B guides considerations on capability, such as whether caregivers have access to a variety of foods each season in a convenient location. The framework then guides questions about opportunity, such as whether caregivers are limited by social norms that mean other people make decisions on what children are fed or gender norms that limit women's time to find a variety of foods each day. The framework then raises considerations about motivation, such as whether caregivers feel positive benefits from this behavior. If these factors are important for change, these should be reflected in the TOC, along with activities that address the factors.

Research Objectives Considerations

• Can the research objective be fully answered in the time and resources of the Refinement period?

For any objective that is not realistic to answer in the Refinement period, consider alternative ways to meet the objectives. An objective to describe how many people practice a behavior is better assessed in the baseline survey, and an objective to describe how a well-documented cultural or religious norm affects diets, for example, may be validated in planned community consultations. Questions on gender roles could be answered through the gender analysis.

4. Develop research questions

An actionable set of research questions based on the key research objectives guides the overall study to generate evidence that can be applied to design SBC within the proposed time frame.

From focused research objectives, develop a few, well thought-out research questions because limiting the questions to only a few helps to ensure that each question will lead to actionable evidence needed to design activities. Research questions are a set of questions to guide the overall study and serve as the basis for developing interview questions, not the actual list of questions for an interview (Fox, Cook, and Peek 2023). For example, if an objective is to identify local solutions to low participation in community activities by a vulnerable group (i.e., isolated, single mothers) the research questions would outline the

scope and parameters to meet this objective. Research questions may include: 1) Among single women who try to participate, what are the motivations and perceived benefits? 2) What barriers do single women experience that limit their participation? 3) What are acceptable ways to increase single mothers' participation in a community activity? See the Qualitative Toolkit for more examples (Fox, Cook, and Peek 2023).

Typically, a qualitative study will have two to three very focused overall questions, and no more than five. There may be sub-questions for each primary research question. Table 2 has examples of less focused research questions compared to more focused questions.

Table 2. Focusing Research Questions

Less-Focused Research Questions	More-Focused Research Questions
• What are the challenges with child nutrition in the program communities? • What are the current child feeding behaviors in program communities? • How can the program build on these existing behaviors and norms to support and promote optimal diets among children 6-23 months? • What behaviors can caregivers of children 6-23 months take to achieve an optimal diet for their child?	• What nutrient-rich foods are available in local markets and households, by season? • Which of the available foods are caregivers and families willing and able to feed children 6-23 months, by age of child? • How can the most vulnerable caregivers be engaged in program activities?

Research Questions Considerations

For each research question, consider—

- Would answering the research question fill the linked information gap?

- How will the answer to this research question inform activity design (as proposed in the TOC)?

- Who can provide the needed information and how can that information be gathered in a timely manner (this informs the next step, below)?

5. Select research methods

Data source /collection method selection

Propose data collection method(s) that include the key stakeholder groups, are appropriate for the context, and can be completed in time to inform activity design.

Select one or more data collection methods to best answer the research questions, based on what data will be gathered and from whom, and what is possible within the time frame and resources available. This formative research decision tree[2] can help to consider which method can collect data needed to address a research question.

- For research questions that aim to understand *why* a specific stakeholder or participant group may or may not practice priority behaviors, and who influences them, the decision tree guides users to look at methods to explore the factors and context.

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[2] Many of the tools referenced in this document are designed for nutrition programming, but can be used in other sectors in RFSAs.

- For research questions that aim to understand *how* a specific stakeholders or participant group could practice improved behaviors in their context or to refine approaches, the decision tree shows options for user-centered methods.

Rigor in the data collection method(s) is needed for the findings to be trusted by the program team and stakeholders. One way to build rigor into focused, rapid studies is to triangulate findings by answering related questions through multiple methods and comparing findings. Triangulation also helps to identify differences in perception among social groups based on gender, socio-economic status, or ethnicity (Fox, Cook, and Peek 2023). For example, similar research questions may be answered through in-depth interviews and key informant interviews.

> **Triangulation**
>
> Triangulation refers to collecting information from a range of people and settings, using a variety of methods (Maxwell 2013). It entails a process of cross-checking information to test data validity, meaning its trustworthiness, authenticity and quality (Flick 2018a). While using different methods to answer the same questions does not automatically lead to valid data, triangulation can help to assess and potentially address biases that result from different methods.
>
> Use a matrix framework for triangulation that assesses the trustworthiness of data from collection to storage, to analysis, and between methods (such as in-depth interviews, key informant interviews, document reviews, etc.).

Select methods that clearly address the questions and engage the right stakeholders and participant groups while minimizing ethical risks. For example, if the research question is to understand trends in attitudes about gender-based violence, group discussions of people with similar characteristics would be sufficient. In-depth interviews of individuals are not appropriate or necessary, and would also raise ethical concerns. Avoid home observations as it can be difficult to meet ethical standards and the benefits rarely outweigh potential risks to participants. Table 3 compares common methods, type of data collected, advantages and key considerations to use.

Table 3. Comparison of Formative Research Methods

Methods	Advantages	Considerations
Exploratory methods		
Interviews *Type of data:* in-depth information on personal views and behaviors of primary actors and the people who influence them	• Includes set questions and follows up on new insights • Can integrate participatory tools and techniques, such as vignettes, drawings, and pile sorts	• Consider variation in characteristics expected to result in different perspectives • Time-consuming to include a large enough sample • Requires skills and practice to conduct interviews and record clear notes. • Results may vary if the team includes many interviewers.
Focus group discussions *Type of data:* general perceptions and experiences (not individual feelings, beliefs, or behaviors); new ideas or solutions	• Can integrate participatory tools and techniques, such as vignettes, mapping, and pile sorts, and prioritization exercises	• Consider variation in characteristics expected to result in different perspectives • Not for individual perceptions or behaviors; people may not share their true beliefs or behaviors,

Methods	Advantages	Considerations
	• Able to include more people than in other methods	especially if their opinion is different. Need to consider variation in characteristics expected to result in different perspectives • Requires skills and practice to facilitate focus group discussions and to record clear notes
Observations *Type of data:* physical structures, use, and communication patterns	• Good for learning about community sites, platforms, and services • Can observe unspoken attitudes and power dynamics	• People may change their behaviors when observed; this risk may be reduced by observing for a long time • Potential ethical concerns
Social Norms Exploration Tool (SNET) *Type of data:* social networks and norms that influence a behavior; consequences of going against the norm (IRH 2020)	• Rapid method • Uses participatory techniques within interviews and group discussions	• Requires expertise to design a sound sampling strategy • Consider variation in characteristics expected to result in different perspectives
Barrier analysis *Type of data:* factors (barriers/enablers) that prevent or support a behavior	• Straightforward survey	• Consider variation in characteristics expected to result in different perspectives • There may not be many people already practicing the selected behavior
Participatory rural appraisal *Type of data:* local priorities and experiences, depending upon the techniques selected	• Engages community members in identifying priorities and generating solutions	• Takes time for developing rapport so that community members take leadership in shaping the appraisal
User-centered methods		
Trials of improved practices (TIPs) *Type of data:* feasible behaviors that people are willing and able to do, the factors and influencers of these behaviors (Dickin, Griffiths and Piwoz, 1997)	• Engages program participants in identifying what works for them • Pretests behaviors and solutions before promoting in the program	• Consider variation in characteristics expected to result in different perspectives • Timing depends upon the behavior. Some behaviors may require people to try out for a few days while others require people to try for several weeks

Methods	Advantages	Considerations
Human-centered design *Type of data:* local (users') input into the design of products, services, or materials	• Engages potential users of the product, service, or tool, material • Pretests the product, service, or tool, material • Iterates to find one that people like best	• The process requires multiple contacts with communities, stakeholders and the research team together • Benefits from a focus on a specific challenge to complete in a given time frame

Implementing partners with experience in formative research suggest being realistic in the number of methods and proposed. Each method requires specific training for data collectors. Using each method optimally is key to exploring questions in an appropriate way that minimizes participants' giving what they think is the 'right' answer that they think the data collector wants to hear.
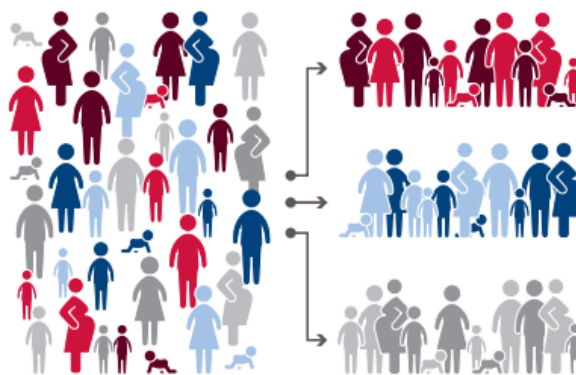
Sampling

Estimate a sample that represents key stakeholder groups, describes inclusion and exclusion criteria, and states the number of each group who will participate.

Once the researchers select one or methods, the task is to prepare a sampling plan that considers who and how many people to include in the research study to answer the research question or questions. The sampling plan describes the sampling approach for each method. To prepare a sampling plan follow these steps—

1. Specify the population to sample. Qualitative research involves the deliberate selection of stakeholders, or purposive sampling. To sample purposively means deliberate selection of research participants to ensure collection of rich, detailed information. BHA's Technical Guidance for Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting for Resilience Food Security Activities has more details (USAID BHA 2021). The sample should represent the varied views of key participant groups such as older and young, different income levels or livelihoods, household structure, ethnicity, religion, class/caste, or other key characteristics as shown in figure 2.

To generate findings useful to SBC, consider the primary actors of the priority behaviors and the people who inspire or guide the actions of the priority behaviors. In most cases, for a person to practice a behavior, many other people need to reduce the barriers and enhance support—such as leaders, service providers, and family members. For each group, consider characteristics such as **location, age, marital status, household structure, religion, ethnicity, caste/class, income, type of employment or livelihood, values, and level of participation in activities**. Even within a community, there are likely to be important differences to consider.

Figure 2. Consider Sampling Characteristics

Some sampling approaches may also include a few key informants who are more knowledgeable about the subject of interest and can help to triangulate the results, to ensure that findings are trustworthy.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS: Ethical approval should be obtained from all applicable institutional and country ethical review boards. Consider the ethics of sampling approaches. For example, any research

with adolescents under 18 years will be sensitive. Think critically whether the data needed can be gathered from less sensitive groups, for example, whether adolescents over 18 years could be sampled rather than those under 18 years.

2. Specify who to sample: Consider who needs to be part of the study sample based on what variation in characteristics that could result in different perspectives. For each group of stakeholders, list inclusion and exclusion criteria to guide the selection of the sample. These criteria are the characteristics important to the research question and data collected that each person in the sample must have (inclusion criteria) and a list of characteristics of people who will not be included because they do not represent the groups that are the focus of the research (exclusion criteria). The exclusion criteria do not devalue the people left out of the research; the goal is to include people most likely to be typical of those who are involved in the program (see table 4 for an example).

Table 4. Example of Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria for a Research Study Sample

Participant Group: Rural Women Farmers, Ages 15-24	
Inclusion criteria for the sample (to be included in the sample, the person must…)	• be a woman • live in a rural area • have been employed formally or informally as a farmer in the past year • be between the ages of 15 and 24 • live in a polygamous household or non-polygamous household
Exclusion criteria for the sample (if the person who meets inclusion criteria who also is…, then they will be excluded from the sample)	• is chronically ill • has migrated in the past month • plans to travel away from home during the period of data collection

3. Describe the sampling approach: Identify the most essential differences between groups of stakeholders to include in a sample. Ask if this difference matters for this research, and how the characteristics would impact responses to the activity or type of data to collect. For example, if a study aims to understand how community leaders can improve natural resource management, it would be important to sample traditional and appointed leaders in communities near different natural resources.

An example of a sample is in table 5 below. This example is for in-depth interviews on child feeding to answer a research question such as, "How can caregivers be supported to add diverse foods to young children's diets?" in one region. The rows and columns of the sample table capture the sampling criteria. To prepare a sample—

- Define the key groups you need to talk to—in this case primary caregivers of children aged 6-23 months. Think about what influences child feeding; in this case, the age of the child was expected to make a difference because children aged 6-11 months did not eat diverse foods. So, the top row of the table includes columns for caregivers of younger and older children. This program will aim to include caregivers within each group representing different family or household structures in the communities, including polygamous households.

- Consider who else might be important to hear from, such as influential family members. It may not be important to include as many family members as primary caregivers. Within this category, the

sampling approach could aim to include some grandmothers and some fathers, but not need to ensure the same number in each. Key informant interviews with community health workers are also proposed.

- The left column describes the sampling approach at the community level. In each type of community (rural or semi-urban) it is important to choose multiple sites, to get a sense of how much responses vary between communities. Choosing more sites might be necessary if communities are likely to vary a lot (for example, those close to and those far from a main road) or if the program covers more than one region.

- Finally, put numbers into the cells. Carefully consider the numbers to come to a sound justification for the proposed sample. It is good to get a point of saturation, where all of the similarities and differences are captured, or that nothing new would be found by sampling more people.

Table 5. Example of a Sampling for a Formative Research Study

Community	Caregivers of children 6-23 months		Family of caregivers of children 6-23 months		Key informants (community health workers)
	6-11 months	12-23 months	6-11 months	12-23 months	
Community 1 with good access to a market					
Community 2 with good access to a market					
Community 1 with poor access to a market					
Community 2 with poor access to a market					
Total					

If the research will use focus group discussions, more individuals can be included. In that case, the sample might include 1-2 focus group discussions with 6-10 caregivers of children in each community or, if necessary, one each for caregivers of younger and older children and one each with fathers and grandmothers (in separate groups) in each site. Alternatively, to expand the number of locations for research, discussions can be held in communities where the research was not conducted to understand if the findings are relevant to other communities.

Consider the key differences and vulnerabilities of stakeholders or participant groups. If an important characteristic cannot fit into the sample, intentionally select people for diversity. For example, you may select mothers of children *across* the age range of 12-23, being sure not to end up including only mothers of children aged 12-16 months in that cell. For characteristics such as ethnicity that may not be possible to fully include within the sample, conduct brief checks after the primary research with a few representative places or people to see if adaptation is needed. For example, an RFSA works with communities that include some nomadic herders. The research team decided to replace one village in the initial sample with herders regardless of where the researchers found them at the time of the study.

4. Determine the sample size: Finally, estimate the number of people to sample. Propose a sample size that enables the research to answer the research question(s).

In the research protocol, be realistic about the time and resources required to collect data from the proposed sample and describe the justification for needing the numbers proposed. Some RFSA implementing partners have noted that finding people to collect data in local languages and translate notes and transcriptions took longer than expected.

> "Be careful not to be too ambitious. The experience of other studies we had was that the large qualitative samples compromised reporting quality." *–RFSA Implementing Partner*

Given the well-recognized time and resource constraints for formative research during the Refinement period, if the sampling approach and sample size necessary to answer the research question(s) cannot be followed, reconsider doing research. Alternatives could be pilots or phasing in implementation in consultation with communities.

Data collection tools

Next, develop the tools to be used based on the selected methods and sample. The Qualitative Toolkit outlines specifics about two broad categories: interviews (which includes focus group discussions) and interactive tools. Interactive tools can be used within interviews and focus group discussions to engage participants in exercises, such as community mapping, card sorts/prioritization exercises, vignettes, and drawings. Participatory exercises can get deeper than the usual or expected answers, and can reduce time for transcription and analysis (Fox, Cook, and Peek 2023).

In the preparation of data collection tools, develop a topical outline from research questions before drafting questions to ask participants. The topical outline is a list of the topics that need to be covered to answer the research question. For example, for the research question: "How can the most vulnerable caregivers be engaged in program activities?" the topical outline may include topics such as—

- perceptions of activities by caregivers and family members

- challenges to participation in activities

- solutions to challenges to participation

- trusted influencers.

For each of these general topics, list the potential questions in the topical outline. Individual questions should be open-ended and designed to stimulate discussion and provide insight into underlying attitudes, beliefs, and opinions Possible techniques are follow-up questioning or probing (Fox, Cook, and Peek 2023). Prioritize questions to avoid long interview guides and be respectful of each participant's time.

Research Methods Considerations

- Is the method right for filling a specific information gap in the TOC by answering a focused research question?

- Is the method appropriate for the context?

- Is the level of detail of the data collection tools appropriate (i.e., adequate and feasible for use but not overwhelming)?

- Does the sample consider key characteristics of participant groups and influencers needed for SBC design?

- Are there plans for triangulating findings with multiple data sources?

- Is there enough time to implement the plans and use the results in activity design?

6. Describe data management and analysis methods

Plan data management and analysis

Identify the data analysis framework, the approach to organize and reduce data, and how the data will be handled and stored with a plan to mitigate risks.

Analysis is an important step that needs time and attention to understand the true meaning of the data.

Data management: Describe how data will be handled and stored at each stage from data collection to analysis to after analysis. Discuss how the program will clean and enter data from each method used.

Consider ways to reduce the time burden without too much sacrifice in the quality of data collection. For example, interviews or focus group discussions conducted in a local language can be translated into French or English in real time as a notetaker captures detailed interview notes, instead of recording interviews to later transcribe and translate verbatim.

Data coding and analysis: Decide on a framework for data analysis. Determine whether the analysis will use structured matrices, expanded notes, or full transcripts; a structured template can be helpful to focus the analysis on the research questions especially as time is a constraint during the Refinement period. Examples of matrices can be found in the Qualitative Toolkit (Fox, Cook, and Peek 2023). Matrices also enable the comparison between different methods as well. This comparison across methods helps to determine whether the information is trustworthy and to draw conclusions based on the research questions.

Then plan how the team will organize and reduce the data. Reducing the data refers to selecting, focusing, and abstracting the findings through analysis to find patterns.

If multiple methods are used (e.g., interviews and key informant interviews) or different sub-groups of participants are engaged to answer similar research questions, triangulate the findings to compare across various sources and methods to develop a comprehensive understanding of findings for each question. See Chapter 3, Section 3.1.5, in the BHA monitoring and evaluation guidance for helpful steps to qualitative data analysis (USAID BHA 2021). Some data analysis can occur concurrently with data collection, and may even provide ideas on how to better realign the questioning approaches to address the research questions.

Consider who will handle the coding and analysis for each study and synthesis across and between research and learning activities. Partners have found it useful to build in extra time for analysis as the previous steps to research inevitably take longer than expected. Without that extra time, the pressure to begin implementation can mean that analysis steps are skipped or the findings are not used. Plan for adjustments and timeline changes with possible contingencies for data analysis.

> "The other [challenge] was the short time for analysis. Because everyone else had started program implementation and said "we need the strategy." –*RFSA Implementing Partner*

It can be useful to have data collection teams do preliminary analysis during data collection through regular debriefs. This helps to reduce time spent later on analysis by using an iterative approach to data collection.

Preliminary results validation plan

Note when and how the data will be validated with communities to interpret together before preparing deliverables.

BHA expects that results from research and learning activities are validated with participants (USAID 2022). Involving communities in the research process ensures that the data reflect their needs,

perspectives, and experiences and that the findings capture the diversity in communities. Another purpose of validation with participants is to triangulate the findings as a way to feel confident in the trustworthiness of the findings. The JIPS Essential Toolkit module on validation offers detailed suggestions (JIPS 2021).

Once study data have been analyzed in a preliminary way, engage participant groups to begin interpreting the findings together. Discussion should be a dialogue where the research questions and findings are shared. Ask community members whether the findings reflect the situation in their community and what the findings means to them. Ensure that the initial data and patterns reflect experiences and realities of the community in which they were collected.

It is optimal to engage communities multiple times during the research process.

- If time permits, begin early in the research process by sharing ideas for the study with communities or a small group of community representatives. Community input helps to shape the protocol, including research questions and methods.

- Once the data are collected and the analysis team has identified initial patterns and trends, it is important to share the preliminary analysis with stakeholders/participant groups to interpret the meaning of these findings together and put the analysis into context with community expertise (JIPS 2021). This can be done through small groups of stakeholders/participant groups in several communities that represent the program area where data were collected and/or in communities not sampled in the study.

  > "With the community, we spread validation over three days including [focus group discussions] and discussion. On the last day, called "restitution," the data were presented to the community. We waited for correction if need be."
  > --RFSA Implementing Partner

  > "We organized a workshop to share the results of the activity with various actors of the state and partners to share the data collection. For each theme such as nutrition of children 6-23 months, we showed the research questions and presented the results. By this we tried to avoid misinterpretation of results because we framed it with the question the research is trying to answer." --RFSA Implementing Partner

- Some programs have also gathered local partners and technical teams to share and validate the preliminary findings and recommendations before SBC strategy development. This ensures that communities identify locally appropriate recommendations in time for design. For example, a study that found that youth faced challenges accessing reproductive health services, and the program planned to propose youth-friendly health services. However, communities preferred more discreet and convenient community-based services.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS: During the interpretation and validation phase, it is important to keep the information shared anonymous so study participants or communities are not identified. When deciding who to invite to the discussion, carefully consider what makes sense in the context and with the data. It may be important to have separate discussions for validation with representatives of the specific participant groups in the study, and with communities, if the findings are of a sensitive nature.

7. Preliminary Results Application Plan

Outline how the program will use the findings to complete or refine the design of SBC programming, and update the TOC and monitoring and evaluation plans as needed.

Describe how the program teams expect to use the findings of the study. Programs are likely to use insights or the answers to the information gaps directly for SBC programming design. This may be to complete activity design or refine planned activities. See Annex 3 and the SBC Handbook for RFSAs for more details.

The findings may also be used to update the TOC and/or monitoring, evaluation, and learning plan based on insights from the study. The updates may provide greater specificity to the priority behavior(s), address changes to factors that prevent or support practice of the behavior and describe who needs to be engaged to address the factors for each type of participant group.

The application of findings from research is a useful time to bring teams and stakeholders together for identifying commonalities and priorities.

> "From an SBC perspective, it was nice to have an articulation from the outset about how we thought change would happen. RFP/RFAs generally have a theory, but there isn't always ongoing communication to flesh out that theory of change and interlinking of the results areas. Technical conversations were very helpful, esp. with coordinating cross-cutting teams and siloed teams. R&I activities bring the teams together." --*RFSA Implementing Partner*

From these elements of the protocol, check the logical flow between each element of a protocol through a research alignment table (see an example in Table 7).

> "The inclusivity of all of the partners as we set out was challenging. And the timing was tough; everyone was trying to complete their study—it was very siloed engagements." --*RFSA Implementing Partner*

Check the Research Alignment

Before moving on in the protocol development, check the logic and feasibility of the planned methods. Each element of the protocol should flow directly from the previous decisions. A research alignment table helps to convey the logic and links in one place, such as the example in Table 6. This is also a good time to assess whether the time estimates proposed are realistic for the full study to be completed in time for activity design, even when time frames change. Revise the protocol based on this check.

Table 6. Research Alignment Table Example

Research Objectives	Research Questions	Methods			Analysis	Application Plan
		Collection Method	**Sample**	**Data Collection Instruments**	**Data Analysis and Validation**	
To identify what locally available nutrient-rich foods vulnerable caregivers and families are willing and able to try to add to their children's meals and snacks, specific to their ages.	• What nutrient-rich foods are available in local markets and households, by season? • Which of the available foods are caregivers and families willing and able to feed children 6-11 months, by age of child? • What challenges do they face? What solutions did they identify? • How can the program implement the local solutions?	• Observations of markets, household gardens, and farms • Trials of improved practices (families are interviewed, offered new practices to try, choose which to try, and are followed up to learn about their experiences and suggestions)	• Three markets (one in each district) • 12 families with children 6-11 months who are and are not getting cash assistance	• Market observation guide • Menu of options to discuss with households • Household experience guide	• Tally of foods observed and those reported to be available in other seasons • Tally of behaviors tried and intend to continue • Initial interpretation discussion with small sample of households in 2 communities • Workshop with communities and stakeholders • Initial interpretation discussion with small sample of households in 2 communities	• Update the behavioral analysis for the child feeding behavior, "Caregivers feed a variety of foods every day" with these findings. Add findings from the gender analysis • Integrate into the SBC strategy • Update the Care Group activity

8. Describe Ethical Considerations

A thoughtful description of ethical considerations demonstrates how the study will minimize risks to participants and communities and adhere to rigorous ethical principles.

Show how ethical considerations to participants and communities have been thought through critically in the protocol. Topics related to human behavior and social norms are often sensitive so it is especially important to minimize ethical risks. Plan accordingly to "do no harm."

Ethical considerations specific to elements of the protocol are highlighted in the relevant sections above. In addition, in the protocol's overall section on ethics, discuss specific ways that the study will minimize risks to participants by adhering to rigorous research ethics. Demonstrate how the research will minimize potential risk of harm to participants. At each contact with participants, it must be clear that participants do not have to respond or participate in the research to receive services or resources from the program. Also consider how to maintain confidentiality of participants. If personal information is collected, then the research is not considered anonymous. However, when only the researcher(s) can identify the responses of individual participants the research is considered confidential. This means no personally identifying information can be included in reports, presentations, or even validation sessions. In many cases, this also means removing identifying community information as there may be only one or two people in certain roles in a community which would identify them to others.

Also be aware of how questions, methods, and data collector characteristics may create uncomfortable or compromising situations and make adjustments to avoid these situations. For example, questions about malnourished children may appear to blame the family or caregiver. Frame the questions or raise them in certain ways to avoid these implications. Group discussions or consultations with a mix of ages or men and women may not be the safest way to raise topics such as gender-based violence. When considering including adolescents in a research study, reduce concerns by selecting participants 18 years or older. Avoid home observations as it is difficult to reduce all potential harm to participants.

9. Team Composition and Roles and Responsibilities

Show how the skills of proposed team members meet the needs of the roles and responsibilities for the study, and describe plans for training and supervising the data collection and analysis.

In the protocol, identify the team, each of the team members' roles and responsibilities, and the skills required for each role. Describe plans for any needed training for those people who will collect data, analyze the data, and manage the data throughout the process. Interactive, hands-on training methods such as practice through role playing and pretesting of tools can be useful to strengthen needed skills and ensure consistency across people who collect and analyze the data. When taking notes and summarizing data collected, for example, valuable information can be lost. Thus, during training for data collectors and data collection, ensure ways to manage the data well, planning for local language translations.

> "The use of local language was challenging. There was translation and back-translation. In the local language it sounded like there was more information than what the translation had. We had to go back to the translators…They would start analyzing the data as they were back-translating, so the detail would get lost a bit… There are so many hidden things and nuances in how someone responds." *–RFSA Implementing Partner*

Also describe the supervision that will be in place for data collection and management.

Partners find it helpful when RFSA staff and local partners are involved in developing the protocol and validating the findings with communities. Their engagement helps to make the findings relevant to the local context and to implementation plans.

> "Local staff were involved in most studies and field work was conducted by them. Local staff collected data and analyzed it themselves, and presented it themselves." --RFSA Implementing Partner.

Be sure to plan carefully for partner, staff, and/or consultant time needed for data collection, analysis, and management; partners and staff help to make the data collection meaningful, but are likely to have numerous priorities and activities at the same time. Given the reality that RFSAs conduct multiple activities during the Refinement period, programs have found that careful alignment of research studies with competing priorities is needed to use partner and staff time as efficiently and effectively as possible.

10. Deliverables

Propose deliverables that can be completed in the proposed time frame of the Refinement period.

Deliverables for the formative research protocol can be non-traditional deliverables such as a presentation or validated materials that can be used in community consultations. Because this formative research is meant to be actionable for use in activity design for SBC, select the best deliverables to show their use.

Annex 1. Glossary

- **Behavioral analysis:** The process of analyzing a behavioral outcome or more specific behavior using a conceptual framework. The framework should entail identifying and selecting the factors (barriers/enablers) that prevent or support people to practice the behavior. It should also include identifying those people who need to be engaged by the program to address the factors (barriers/enablers), the influencers, or supporting actors. It may also include identifying activities to engage the influencers or supporting actors and address the factors to create a linked pathway to the behavioral outcome or specific behavior.

- **Behavioral outcome:** Changes in behaviors performed by a specific person/actor at a specific time or place.

- **Formative research.** Research that aims to guide the "form" of appropriate and effective activity design. Formative research is research done early in program design to "form" or shape program activities. For SBC, the goal of formative research is often to understand what people are willing and able to do in their context, who they need support from to practice the behaviors, and how they can be supported.

- **Information gaps:** What is not known about a step in the TOC.

- **Priority behaviors:** Behaviors prioritized by program planners based on what people need to do to impact nutrition outcomes, what is possible in a particular context, and the fit with the program mandate and government priorities. Focusing resources on priority behaviors helps programs to achieve desired impact and sustainability.

- **Social and behavior change (SBC) process:** The process of first focusing and analyzing priority behaviors, then using those behaviors to design and manage programs, activities, and strategies, and finally tracking and adapting progress on behavioral outcomes.

- **Triangulation:** The use of multiple datasets, methods, theories, and/or investigators to address a research question in a research design. (It does not mean three.) For data analysis, it involves comparing and contrasting data, methods, and informant types from different methods to arrive at the findings. It can help enhance the validity and credibility of findings and reduce biases.

Annex 2. Checklist to Review a Formative Research Protocol or SOW

Problem Statement				
Does the problem statement –	Yes	Partial	No	Notes
Summarize the information gaps in relation to prioritized behaviors?				
Links the gap to program and activity design plans.				
Research and Learning Justification				
Does the justification clearly describe why the research or learning is needed by describing–	Yes	Partial	No	Notes
How the identified information gaps fit into the TOC?				
Why the information gaps– • cannot be answered or estimated through existing information? • cannot be answered through other planned research and learning activities? • need to be answered before activity design?				
Key Research and Learning Objectives				
Are the objectives–	Yes	Partial	No	Notes
Focused on information gaps?				
Linked to SBC needs: Descriptive of how each objective is related to the priority behaviors and the TOC change pathways such as to– • explore what people are willing and able to do in their context which makes behaviors specific? • understand what would help people practice the priority behaviors? • test approaches in the context? • investigate modalities or ways to implement approaches? • understand the ability of a health or food system to deliver improved services and inputs?				

Research Questions				
Are the research and learning questions–	**Yes**	**Partial**	**No**	**Notes**
A summary set of questions that guide the overall inquiry and serve as the basis for developing interview questions?				
Focused: Directly supporting the research objectives?				
Actionable: Able to generate actionable evidence for implementation design?				
Timely: Able to be answered within the proposed time frame?				
Research and Learning Methods				
Are the data source/collection methods–	**Yes**	**Partial**	**No**	**Notes**
Comprehensive: Are all key stakeholder groups included in the data collection and is due consideration given to ways to complement interview/FGD data with contextual data				
Timely: Does the plan include a plausible timeline for completing data collection (inclusive of considerations related to the logistics of training enumerators and reaching different study sites) to allow for sufficient time for analysis				
Appropriate: Are the data collection approaches culturally, contextually, and ethically appropriate?				
Is the sampling strategy-	**Yes**	**Partial**	**No**	**Notes**
Comprehensive: Include all relevant stakeholder/participant groups to answer the research questions?				
Focused: Describe clear inclusion/exclusion criteria with a rationale?				
Clearly state how many individuals are targeted?				
Does the description of the data analysis methods–	**Yes**	**Partial**	**No**	**Notes**
Describe what type of framework will be used to guide the analysis?				
Identify what type of approach will be used to organize and reduce the data (e.g., thematic coding), etc.?				
State how data will be handled and stored at each stage?				

	Yes	Partial	No	Notes
A plan for risks and possible contingencies for data collection and data use?				
A plan for how and when data will be validated with communities?				
Preliminary Results Application Plan				
Does the plan describe how findings will be used to–	**Yes**	**Partial**	**No**	**Notes**
Refine the SBC analysis, including the priority behaviors and change pathways				
Update the TOC and MEL plans, as needed				
Prepare the SBC strategy				
Team Composition and Roles and Responsibilities				
Does the team composition section describe–	**Yes**	**Partial**	**No**	**Notes**
Whether the skills of the team members involved in the study are relevant and sufficient to the study roles and responsibilities?				
Training plans for data collectors as well, including practice through role playing and pretesting of guides?				
Deliverables				
Are the proposed deliverables–	**Yes**	**Partial**	**No**	**Notes**
Able to be completed in the proposed time frame of the Refinement period?				
Ethical Considerations				
Does the Protocol or SOW include–	**Yes**	**Partial**	**No**	**Notes**
Discussion on how plans will follow rigorous research ethics?				
Demonstrate how confidentiality will be maintained at all stages?				
Discussion on how the study will minimize potential risks to participants, especially those exploring sensitive topics?				

Annex 3. Additional Resources

Resources to plan formative research—
- How To Conduct Qualitative Formative Research SBC Compass How-To Guide, The Compass for SBC. https://thecompassforsbc.org/how-to-guide/how-conduct-qualitative-formative-research

- Qualitative Toolkit: Qualitative Methods for Monitoring Food Security Activities Funded by the USAID Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance, Fox, Karyn, Hilary Cook, and Nancy Peek 2023. https://www.fsnnetwork.org/sites/default/files/2023-04/IDEAL_Qualitative_Toolkit_1.pdf

Resources on qualitative research methods—
- Designing By Dialogue: A Program Planners' Guide To Consultative Research For Improving Young Child Feeding [Trials of Improved Practices (TIPs)], Dickin, Griffiths, and Piwoz 1997. https://manoffgroup.com/wp-content/uploads/Designing-by-Dialogue.pdf

- Formative Research Guidance for Adolescent Nutrition, USAID Advancing Nutrition 2021. https://www.advancingnutrition.org/resources/adolescent-resource-bank/formative-research-guidance-adolescent-nutrition

- JIPS Essential Toolkit: Community-based-Validation & Pairwise-Ranking, JIPS 2021. https://www.jips.org/uploads/2022/02/JIPS-Community-based-Validation-Pairwise-Ranking-2022-vf.pdf

- Qualitative Research Methods: A Data Collector's Field Guide, FHI360 2005. https://www.fhi360.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/Qualitative%20Research%20Methods%20-%20A%20Data%20Collector's%20Field%20Guide.pdf

- Social Norms Exploration Tool (SNET), IRH 2020. https://www.irh.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Social_Norms_Exploration_Tool_SNET-1.pdf

- Unearthing Collective Wisdom: Strengthening Disaster Preparedness & Early Action with Participatory Learning and Action Tools and Principles, Food for the Hungry as part of the REAL Award 2021. https://www.fsnnetwork.org/resource/unearthing-collective-wisdom-strengthening-disaster-preparedness-early-action

**Resources to apply formative research to SBC design—**
- Nutrition SBC Strategy Checklist, USAID Advancing Nutrition 2022. https://www.advancingnutrition.org/resources/nutrition-sbc-strategy-checklist

- USAID Research Translation Toolkit: Research to Action Plan Section, USAID 2021. https://www.rtachesn.org/resources/research-to-action-r2a-plan-section/

- Using Research to Design a Social and Behavior Change Strategy for Multi-Sectoral Nutrition, USAID Advancing Nutrition 2022. https://www.advancingnutrition.org/resources/using-research-design-social-and-behavior-change-strategy-multi-sectoral-nutrition

Annex 4. Considerations for Applying Findings to Design SBC Programming

The *SBC Handbook for RFSAs in Refine and Implement* offers considerations for applying formative research and learning findings to design SBC programming, to use in conjunction with other resources. A summary of key steps that to design quality SBC using research and learning findings follows.

1. **Complete the analysis for each priority behavior** using findings from each research and learning activity. For example, imagine that a priority behavior is "rural households save earnings with a purpose through financial services." Insights into why households practice this behavior and who needs to take action to address those reasons may come from the desk review, community consultations, or the gender analysis.

   Any framework that compiles findings by priority behavior can be used. An example of a framework that uses the socio-ecological model to organize levels of factors is described in this tool, [Using Research to Design a Strategy for Multi-Sectoral Nutrition](#) (USAID Advancing Nutrition 2022a).
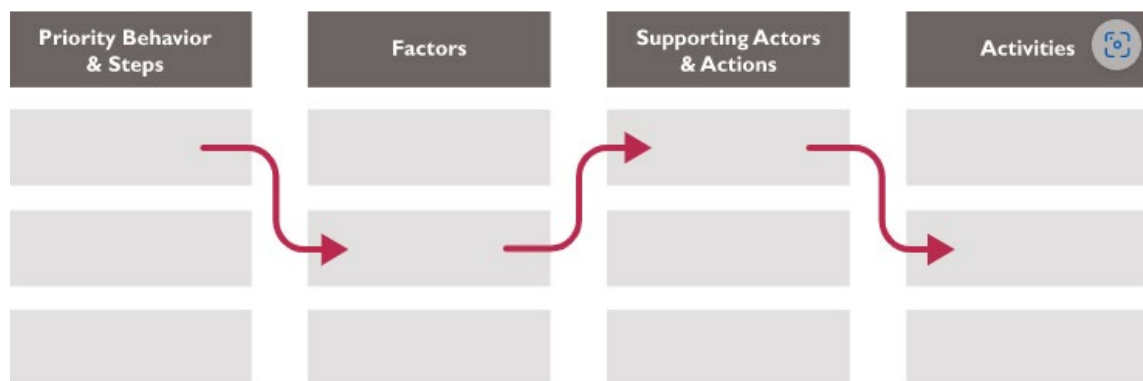
   Review and refine the analysis for each priority behavior with local partners, technical teams and stakeholders before activity design.

2. **Design or refine planned activities using the change pathway.** First, identify the most important factors that prevent or support each sub-group of people to practice that behavior. [Factors](#) are either barriers that prevent or enablers that help people practice a behavior. Second, identify the influencers or people who need to address the factors. These people may reduce the barrier or enhance the enabler and need to be engaged in the activity. Be sure you can "draw" a pathway between each priority behavior and activity linking supporting actors and factors. Use this analysis to update the TOC as needed.

   In the case that an activity is already proposed, this analysis may show how it should be strengthened by homing in on the important sub-groups, key factors, and/or engaging influencers. For example:

   A program had planned a community engagement process to protect natural resources such as forests and watersheds. As the program team completed the analysis for the behavior, "community committees protect forest and water resources," the analysis revealed that youth do not feel included in community

decisions so even if they were to attend meetings, they would not follow what elders decree. To address this factor of a sense of belonging, the team considered their planned activities of training committees and community dialogues. They realized that it would be necessary to intentionally strengthen the sense of belonging, so the program added elder mentors and designated several forest protection sites to be managed by youth within planned activities.

Compile these activities into the cross-cutting SBC strategy.

3. **Reflect any changes in the updated TOC and M&E plan.** Also address refinements to share at the Culmination Workshop and Year 2 PREP. BHA encourages changes to the TOC project design if the formative research findings suggest changes.

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