

# mVAM In-House Call Centre

## Standard Operating Procedures

### Introduction

These standard operating procedures (SOPs) serve as a guide and checklist for everyone involved in the implementation of mobile Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping (mVAM) phone surveys. These SOPs were drafted for WFP Malawi but can be applied to other countries and contexts.

### Roles and responsibilities

#### **VAM officer/focal point**

- ✓ Supervise operators
- ✓ Draw up detailed weekly/monthly plans for the calls and give clear instructions to the operators
- ✓ Analyse and submit data for clearance by the country office, with HQ assistance when needed
- ✓ Provide technical assistance to operators, e.g. for Excel

#### **Call centre operators**

- ✓ Maintain a register of survey respondents, identified by phone number
- ✓ Place XXX number of phone calls each month, administering VAM/nutrition surveys under instructions from the supervisor (exact number of calls to be finalized by the country office)
- ✓ Carry out data entry under the supervision of the VAM focal point
- ✓ Submit data to the VAM focal point, using the database provided
- ✓ Report any technical problems immediately to the supervisor and HQ for on-the-spot troubleshooting

#### **ICT**

- ✓ Ensure that live calls can be placed
- ✓ Provide technical assistance to operators/call centre

### Things to do before live call surveys

#### **Call planning (VAM focal point together with the operators)**

- Have a detailed call schedule plan for each operator for the first month(s). Decide how the work will be divided (e.g. by districts or numbers). For example, in the beginning try setting 300 calls between two operators over a week. As the operators gain experience and speed they will probably be able to carry out 300 calls in a shorter period of time.
- When calculating call volumes, allow time to call back some respondents — they may not have been available during the initial call or perhaps it was not possible to complete the survey (phone battery died, respondent got interrupted, etc.)
- Also allow time for operators to organize the phonebook and data entry tools



Guidance on call volumes as at December 2015:

	hour	day	week	month
<b>1 Operator</b>	5	35	157.5	630
<b>2 Operators</b>	10	70	315	1260

The market price survey and the health facility new admission survey both take around 5-6 minutes to complete.

- Discuss and agree call volumes with VAM and Nutrition as necessary.
- Design and update the survey questionnaire according to analytical needs with HQ assistance. HQ will also help adjust the data entry tools.
- The VAM focal point should clearly instruct the operators on the call requirements every round, covering questions such as:
  - o How many calls should we make?
  - o Which districts should we cover?
  - o What is the time frame of each round?

#### **Maintaining the list of respondents' telephone numbers (Operators)**

- After the calls have been planned, operators will start preparing to call by identifying the phone numbers to ring in the phonebook.
- The phonebook should be updated continuously as new numbers become available and old numbers become obsolete.
- Operators are responsible for managing the phonebook under the supervision of the VAM focal point.
- The phonebook file should be placed and managed in a shared folder to avoid confusion as it is updated. Operators must always have access to the most recent phonebook during working hours.
- **Confidentiality:** Phone numbers should be treated with the same confidentiality as beneficiaries' names and other personal information.
- Storing numbers: Each phone number should be logged in a password-protected phonebook that is only accessible to relevant VAM and Nutrition staff and the operators
- Detailed guidance on how to manage and update phonebooks is included in a separate SOP for operators (*Malawi operators SOP.doc*).

#### **When collecting phone numbers**

- Explain the purpose of the survey: it is important to state clearly who you are and what the objective(s) of the project is to potential respondents. Be clear and take the time to answer any questions they might have.
- Demonstrate a sample call: Where appropriate, show respondents how their numbers will be used by modelling a sample call.
- Ask permission: Before collecting each phone number, obtain consent from the respondent. Note that respondents should also be asked to opt into each phone survey before it begins.



- Do not push respondents: If potential respondents are hesitant to provide their phone numbers, thank them for their time and move on. Do not try to convince people to participate.

## Things to do during live call surveys

### Managing the data entry tool (Operators)

- The data entry tools are comprised of survey scripts and data entry fields. Using the data entry tool, operators have direct access to the scripts while conducting the phone surveys so that they will not forget what questions to ask nor leave out important messages. After each section of the survey script, there are data entry fields, so that operators can input the respondents' answers in real time. When each survey is finished, the data is stored automatically in an Excel spreadsheet ready to be analysed.
- Operators should have headsets to keep their hands free for data entry during the calls.
- Data entry should be carried out by the operators under the supervision of the VAM focal point.
- Operators should make sure they save the data after each call and the VAM focal point should regularly check that back-up copies have been created.
- The data entry tool should have drop down lists for district or market names that are repeated over time. This will limit data entry errors.
- Similarly, for prices it is helpful to include validation rules. When the answers do not fit in the validation ranges, operators should cross check the answers with the respondents.
- Detailed guidance on how to use the data entry tool is included in the Malawi operators SOP.doc

## Things to do after live call surveys

### Setting up a database for live calls data entry (VAM focal point with the operators)

- When the operators finish their calls, a separate database file should be created that combines data entry from all operators.
- Data should be exported from the database in a consistent way, with the number of columns and the column names remaining the same throughout.
- Important: Phone numbers are sensitive information that can be abused by third parties and they must not be shared outside the country office. That is why the database contains a column called "Unique ID." The Unique ID is an identifier that assigns random codes to each phone number so that the numbers will not be revealed when the data is shared. The Unique ID generator always assigns same code to same phone number so panel tracking is possible.
- **Important:** Before sharing the database with HQ or any other organizations, be sure to erase the column called "Phone number" and replace it with the "Unique ID" column.
- Exporting data: When exporting data to be shared, do not include the encrypted columns to ensure that the data remains confidential.
- For more details on how to conduct VAM and nutrition phone surveys, create and assign unique IDs to phone numbers, please see *the Malawi operators SOP.doc*

### Cleaning and analysing data (VAM focal point and HQ)

- The database will be cleaned by the VAM focal point every round.

- The VAM focal point analyses the live call data`. The HQ mVAM team can provide support as necessary. As the project will compare the time and cost of traditional face-to-face surveys and phone surveys, it is important to analyse the data as quickly as possible and submit it for country office clearance.
- Here are some analysis suggestions for VAM market price call surveys:
  - o Trend analysis: weekly and monthly price data collected over time is be suitable for trend analysis. Each market/hotspot area could be monitored throughout the rounds focusing on i) price differences compared to the previous round, ii) price differences compared to the long term average (e.g. five year), iii) price spreads between markets. Markets with abnormal price spikes can be flagged using visualizations.
  - o Contextual information gathered by the live calls or other sources (e.g. availability, market accessibility and food shortages, exchange rates) can be used to explain price changes, in addition to well-known patterns like seasonality.
  - o Triangulation with household surveys: market price data collected by live calls will be included in the regular mVAM bulletins. The triangulation of staple food price trends and household coping levels would be an option. As household surveys collect manual labour wage rates, you could also calculate purchasing power such as terms of trade between livestock or labour wage rates and staple food prices.

#### **Clearing and publishing each survey round (VAM focal point and VAM HQ)**

- The Country Office, Regional Bureau and VAM HQ provide feedback on the analysis of the results. The Country Office grants final clearance before each survey round is published.
- **Note that the datasets shared with other units or VAM HQ will only contain the respondent's unique ID — there will be no phone numbers, names or other identifiable data.**