# Annex 7E: Key informant interview checklist: Traders

### Why use the checklist

Obtaining an understanding of IDPs, refugees, and host community members affected by access and use of food and non-food markets due to displacement can be difficult in household interviews. Key informant interviews (KIIs) with traders provide an opportunity to explore a range of issues in more detail and triangulate primary or secondary data.

### The objective of the checklist

The objective of this checklist is to provide user(s) of the UMVAT with a range of market related topics for consideration and inclusion in KIIs with traders.

### How to use this checklist

The following checklist serves as a template for key informant interviews with traders and will require editing based on the key informant profile, context, time available and information needs. The checklist includes a range of topics, questions and sub-questions.

Please keep in mind the following when using this checklist:

* This is not an exhaustive list and should be contextualised prior to use depending on the objective of the interview, type of trader interviewed, context and availability of reliable secondary data and interview time available.
* Aspects relating to gender, protection and youth should be mainstreamed as and where appropriate.
* If there is specific interest in a particular commodity ensure the trader has some knowledge of this commodity and adapt the checklist accordingly. Currently, references are made to essential food and non-food items.
* This checklist assumes the user’s interest in either the wider displaced and host communities or a specific population group(s) living in a specific area that is being assessed. The population is referred to as **‘the population of interest’**, and the area; **‘area of interest’***.*
* The checklist assumes significant contextual change due to an emergency. For this reason, questions are divided between **‘the past/ pre-emergency’ and the ‘present/ post-emergency’**.
* Urban populations have a diverse range of options when it comes to purchasing food and non-food items depending on their location. In some areas, characterised by a **‘food desert’**, there may be few traders selling fresh food items. However, in other areas, there could be local shops, markets, supermarkets and shopping centres – some of which may have local names (*kiosk* and *duka* are used in East Africa for small shops). For this reason, a number of options are included in the checklist. The user’s responsibility is to edit the list ensuring the right terminology is used for the context.

### Getting started

At the start of the interview it is very important to undertake the following actions:

1. Introduce yourselves and outline the purpose of the discussion and double check that they are the right person to speak to.
2. Depending on the context, traders may not be willing to go into long discussions. This is especially so if they are working at the same time of the interview. Try and undertake the interview as quickly as possible (therefore make sure you know what questions you want to ask – and – ask the trader if you can speak at an alternative, more suitable time to continue the conversation.
3. Make sure you inform the key informant of the population/ geographical area/ product you are interested in knowing more about. (You may have to remind the key informant of these aspects during the interview, just to make sure the information remains relevant.)
4. Divide the traders they speak to into: (a) the size of trader (small, medium, large, wholesaler); and (b) commodity type/ service specialisation, if appropriate (fuel trader, shelter material wholesaler etc.). This enables a more detailed discussion.
5. Provide an approximation of interview duration, to double check their availability for the duration of the meeting. Follow-up meetings can be arranged.
6. Explain whether the data will be kept confidential or shared, and obtain their consent for the taking of notes. This is especially important if sensitive topics are discussed.
7. **Make sure you are speaking the same language.** Clarify definitions for terms/ words used in the interview; for example: what is meant by a market, supermarket, shopping centre? Who do we mean by the affected population etc.?

### Tools to use during the discussion

Use a checklist, a notebook, flip-charts, maps, information from preliminary primary and secondary data analysis to support your discussion.

### Checklist thematic content

Thefollowing checklist includes questions and sub-questions in relation to the following themes:

1. General information; where the population of interest purchase essential items
2. Physical access and security
3. Relationships between traders and customers
4. Market performance and supply chains
5. Prices and Seasonality
6. Response options

### Getting started: Key informant details

* Name (including title if necessary).
* Type of trader/ wholesaler, approximate scale/ size of business.
* Contact details (email, mobile and landline numbers).
* Possibility to contact again if further questions arise? And if so what is their availability?
* Knowledge of affected area (personal or professional knowledge).

## 1. General information; where the population of interest purchase essential items

#### Past/ pre-emergency:

* Prior to the emergency were there a limit/ restriction on the quantity of food or non-food items that households could have (rationing) – either seasonally or weekly? For example water, fuel, staple foods?
  1. If so, what was the rationale and how was this implanted in practice?
  2. What population groups and areas were most affected?
  3. What impact did the restrictions/ limits of these products have on the population living in the area of interest?
* Where did the population living in this area of interest purchase essential food and non-food items?
  1. Which of these were for food and/or non-food items? (Highlight if any are specialist markets (such as construction materials), ascertain if there are types of food/ non-food sold – for example vegetable market that does not sell dried foods)
  2. Are these daily, weekly, seasonal markets/ shops?
* Of these shopping areas, markets, large supermarkets and shopping centres, which ones tended to be used more frequently?
  1. Why were these locations more frequently used (explore transport, ease, access, prices, cleanliness, etc.)?
  2. Were these formal and / or informal businesses?
  3. What was the size of these locations (consider large, medium, small businesses)?
  4. Where are/ were they located (use a map)?
  5. What were the opening times for these places?
* Was there a relationship between the types of people living in the area and where they went to purchase their food and non-food items? For example, do people of different ethnic or socioeconomic background living in this area shop differently?

* Who was responsible for the regulation of these markets, supermarkets and shopping centres?
  1. What aspects were regulated?
  2. Were regulations adhered to, generally speaking?
* Had there ever been any disputes between traders or between traders and the managing authorities in any of these locations?

#### Present/ post-emergency:

* What changes have taken place since the emergency? Consider the following:
  1. Limits/ restrictions in quantities of certain food and non-food commodities (rationing). What areas and population groups are affected? What are the items that were restricted/ limited (rationed)? What is the impact of this?
  2. Shopping patterns and preferences of the population living in the area of interest and the population of interest. Are they purchasing essential food and non-food items from the same locations? If any changes have taken place, what are the reasons for these changes?
  3. Opening hours, number of traders (formal and informal), disputes, implementation of market regulations,
* What factors are influencing the people of interest’s shopping patterns and preferences?
  1. Of these factors, which are the most significant?
  2. What is likely to happen to these trends in the immediate future?

## 2. Physical access and security

Considering the locations used by the population of interest to purchase essential food and non-food items:

* What is the approximate distance from population of interest to the areas where they purchase essential food and non-food items?

1. How do most people arrive at the market, supermarkets and shopping centres?
2. How do most people leave the market, supermarkets and shopping centres with their goods?
3. What transportation is available near/ outside these areas?
4. How much would it cost to travel from our area of interest to these locations?
5. Are the locations accessible to the disabled or elderly?

* Are all people, regardless of gender, ethnicities and religion, able to access these locations?
  1. Have there been any incidents of conflict (verbal and physical)?
  2. Do women shop alone or accompanied?
* Is access to these locations conditional on anything?
  1. Do you need to pass any checkpoints, therefore requiring ID of any kind?
* In the past and recently, have there been any security concerns in the areas where households purchase their food and non-food items?
  1. If so, what has happened?
  2. Have these concerns and incidents changed the way that households access markets? If so, how?
  3. What has been done to reduce the risk of security incidents?
* Are there any violent groups/ gangs active in or around the areas where households purchase their food and non-food items?
  1. If so, who are they and what has taken place?
  2. Are they targeting specific groups? If so, who, why and how? How is the local population, government and police responding to this?
* In conclusion, how is the household of interest’s access to markets affecting its ability to meet its food and non-food needs?

## 3. Market performance and supply chains

#### Past/ pre-emergency

* Before the emergency, thinking about the products that people rely on for daily living (such as staple food and some shelter materials), what were the biggest problems relating to the supply chains for these items?
  1. Were supply chains working at full capacity? What limited/ enabled full capacity?
  2. Was there sufficient supporting infrastructure; such as roads and warehousing?
  3. Which products had the most secure and dependable supply chain?
  4. Which products had the least secure and dependable supply chain?
  5. What were the causal factors for these supply chain challenges?
  6. Were there any seasonal variations to these problems?
  7. What was the impact of the supply chain problems on the population (consider lack of availability of items, price inflation, availability etc.)?
  8. What was the response of the population to these problems (consider alternative products etc.)?
  9. Generally speaking, for how long did these problems last?
  10. Were any solutions to these problems found?
* In general, did the population have any choice as to where they could purchase their essential food and non-food items? How much competition was there between traders for specific essential food and non-food items within the area of interest?

1. Were there any products/ geographical areas that lacked competition? If so, where and what?
2. What is governing/ influencing this level of competition between traders?
3. What impact does it have on the consumer?
4. Can anything be done to improve people’s access to competitive markets/ supplies?
5. Were prices for key commodities such as staple foods openly publicised?

* Did markets/ shops /supermarkets ever stockpile items in anticipation of a price increase?
  1. If so, what happened?
  2. Did the government’s regulatory body intervene?
* Where did traders (smaller-scale traders) access capital for their businesses?

1. What kind of financial services were available to smaller-scale traders to support their businesses? What service providers were most commonly used? If none/ very few services are used, why? What kinds of agreements are generally used?
2. Where else do traders access credit? What interest rates and repayment agreements are commonly used?

* What transportation services did the traders working in the area of interest rely on?

1. Was there a number of transportation services to choose from? Or was there a monopoly (ownership by a few people)?
2. Was the transportation service reliable?
3. Were there any areas that transportation services would not access? If so, why?

#### Present/ post-emergency:

* Since the emergency, consider the following aspects: (a) what has changed; and (b) what has influenced the changes seen:

1. Supply chain capacity for essential food and non-food items: Are the supply chains functioning at the pre-emergency level for all essential food and non-food items? What is likely to happen in the immediate future (within three to six months)?
2. Can supply chains increase capacity? If so, by how much? What is needed to support this increase (financial/ logistics/ warehousing support etc.)?
3. Have supply chain movements/ channels for imports changed post-emergency? Are all businesses using the same wholesalers? To what extent is customs a bottleneck? How long does it take to get key items into the country (lead time)?
4. Warehousing: Has the capacity of the warehousing sector changed? Are there enough storage facilities available and accessible prices?
5. Competition between traders in the area of interest: Has this increased/ decreased/ stayed the same? What is the impact on the population of interest, consuming these products? What is likely to happen in the immediate future (within three to six months)?
6. Access to credit: Are traders still able to access credit? Do they access credit from the same providers? Are financial service providers still operating with all services available? If not, what needs to be done, and what assistance is being provided (planned and actual)? When will financial service providers function at their pre-shock rate? Has the government introduced any policies to alleviate loan repayment?
7. Transportation: Are transportation services still available at the pre-emergency levels (costs and areas they can travel to)? What is likely to happen in the immediate future (three to six months)?

* In conclusion, what has been the impact of the emergency on the ability of the traders to work (the market performance)? Consider the impact on the population of interest that rely on the markets for essential food and non-food items. How will the demand from the domestic market develop in the next month or so, regardless of the increased demand from the refugees/IDPs?

## 4. Relationships between traders and customers

### Past/ pre-emergency:

* Was it common for customers to visit the same traders for many years? If so, why is that?
* What range of information and services did the traders provide to their customers in the area of interest?

1. Were these services and information provided to all customers, or to specific customers? If specific customers, what kind/ type of customer? What did you have to do or have to access such services?
2. Was there a seasonal pattern to the availability of these services and information?

* Was it common for traders working in our area of interest to provide a level of credit (formal and informal) to households for food and non-food items?

1. If so, what types of people/ households sought credit (formal and informal)? In terms of gender, were men or women more engaged in seeking credit (formal and informal)?
2. What were the reasons for seeking credit? Different for men and women?
3. What would this arrangement look like? What kind of terms of re-payment agreement would there be? What were the interest rates?
4. Did this credit arrangement take place throughout the year, or are there times when it is more common?
5. Approximately how much credit (formal/ informal) were households able to access? Did the amount of credit available depend on the type of household or the time of year?
6. What would happen if households were unable to repay the credit?

#### Present/ post-emergency:

* How has the relationship between traders and the population living in the area of interest been affected by the emergency? Consider the following:
  1. Have there been any tension/ disputes? If so, what about? How were these resolved?
  2. Are certain population groups seeking specific traders? If so, why?
  3. Do the population of interest seek services and information? What information and services – and to what extent is this different to the past?
* With regards credit; what has changed following the emergency:

1. Have credit levels and amounts provided changed? To what and why?
2. Numbers and types of people (including men/women) requesting credit changed? To what and why?
3. Have reasons for seeking credit changed? To what and why? Are there different reasons for men and women (generally)?
4. Has the time of year/ or the month for seeking credit changed? To what and why?
5. Have interest rates, repayment schedules and methods changed? If so, what are they?

* Do the households living in the area receive a lot of remittances? What kinds of households receive regular remittances?

1. Types of households that receive remittances on a regular basis.
2. Source, frequency, seasonality and value of remittances.
3. Aspects that influence the sending of remittances.

* What are the most significant changes you have seen in the way that traders and their customers interact since the emergency?

1. Are these changes for the better or worse?
2. What is likely to happen in the immediate future (three to six months)?

## 5. Prices and seasonality

### Past/ pre-emergency:

Considering the prices of the essential food and non-food products that people rely on for daily living (such as staple food and some shelter materials) what can be said about the following:

* Looking back at the last five years, what are the inflation patterns for fuel and staple foods? What is influencing these inflation trends?
* Is anyone/ government body responsible for setting the prices of key commodities?

1. If so, who and for what commodities?
2. Was this adhered to by all actors involved in the supply chain?
3. Were there any essential commodities whose prices were poorly regulated or enforced?

* Were the prices of these items publically available? For traders, producers and consumers?
  1. If so, how and where were they published (consider radio, newspapers, internet etc.)?
  2. Would the traders working in the area of interest have access to price information?
  3. Would the households purchasing essential items be aware of the prices?
* Seasonal price changes: were there months in the year when prices were lower or higher?
  1. What influenced these price fluctuations?
  2. What were the implications on traders and households and their market behaviour?
* Price variations across geographical areas: Would the prices of essential food and non-food items sold in shops be the same within the area of interest and in other parts of the urban area or other cities in the country?

1. If not, were there significant differences that did not allow for costs relating to transportation etc.? If so, why?
2. What essential food and non-food items showed greatest variations in prices across the same city and with other cites?
3. Did these price changes have an impact on how households living in the area of interest purchase their items?

* Approximately, how much did it cost to feed a typical household for a week (considering the cost of fuel for cooking etc.)?

#### Present/ post-emergency:

* Since the emergency, considering the following aspects: (a) what has changed and (b) what has influenced the changes seen:

1. Inflation rates of fuel and staple foods? What is influencing these inflation trends? What tends to happen following an emergency (look at past emergencies) and how long will it take to stabilise?
2. Regulatory framework for setting prices: Is this still functioning for essential food and non-food items?
3. Communication of prices: Is valid price information available within the area of interest – to traders and households?
4. Price variations across urban areas: Are there any price variations within the area of interest and other parts of the city and other urban areas? If so, what are the reasons for these variations?
5. Seasonal price variations: Are seasonal price variations evident? Were these trends present prior to the emergency? If so, are they the same trends? If not, what is influencing these new trends?

* Have there been any evidence/ complaints of higher or lower prices being offered to specific population groups?

1. If so, which groups and locations?
2. What has happened as a result of this – have there been any disputes or complaints made?

* Have there been any NGO/ government interventions in the area that are influencing markets, market activity and prices?

1. If so, who and which commodities and type of traders are most affected?
2. If so, what has been the impact of these activities?
3. Has any feedback been provided to these NGOs/ government departments? What has been the outcome?

* In conclusion, what has been the impact of the emergency on the prices, the availability of essential food and non-food items and the ability the population of interest to meet their essential food and non-food needs?

## 6. Response options

* In your opinion, what kind of role should NGOs play in responding to this crisis (explore, probe the different types of assistance – NFI distributions, subsidies, advocacy, cash programming - vouchers etc.)?
* Have you every participated or heard of cash based responses? What is the capacity of the sector to handle e-vouchers or cash cards?
* Affected household needs:

1. What are the most critical needs? What should NGOs/ government focus on?
2. Approximately how much does it cost to feed a typical household for a week (considering the cost of fuel for cooking etc.)? If this has changed since before the emergency, what items have influenced this change?

If speaking to a trader that has knowledge of a wide variety of commodities, collect the following price data with regards food and non-food items.

Market/ location:

Date:

Specific remarks/ comments related to location/ trader:

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Commodity**  (food, non-food items – including construction/ shelter/ hygiene items) | **Unit / measure**  **(g/ kg/litre)** | **Price now** | **Price this time last year** | **Price trend / forecast for next three months** | **Comment** |
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## Closing questions and remarks

* Is there anything we have not asked you or discussed that you think may be relevant to us?
* Lessons from the past: Are there any lessons we can learn from the past?

1. What the lessons are and their relevance to this shock.
2. Where to source additional information (documents/ key informant contact details).

* Now that you know what we are interested in knowing:

1. Is there anyone else you think we should speak to?
2. Is there anything we have not asked you, that you think we should know?

**Concluding the discussion:**

* Highlight aspects that have been most interesting or useful to you, so the key informant can see that they have helped you.
* Remind the key informant of any documents/ contacts that they suggested sharing with you.
* Thank the key informant and organise a future meeting if needed.