

# An Assessment of the Usage and Relevance of the Basic Needs and Nutrition Basket



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## List of Acronyms

BNB	Basic Needs Basket
CBO	Community-based Organisations
CoD	Cost of Diet
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CSO-SUN	Civil Society Scaling Up Nutrition alliance
CST	Catholic Social Teachings
EAR	Estimated Average Requirements
EIU	Economist Intelligence Unit
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organisation
FBO	Faith Based Organisations
FFTU	Federation of Free Trade Unions
GRZ	Government of the Republic of Zambia
JCTR	Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflections
KII	Key Informant Interviewee
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PTA	Parents Teacher Association
RBNNB	Rural Basic Needs and Nutrition Basket
SED	Social and Economic Department
SHS	Satellite Homes Survey
ToR	Terms of Reference
UBNNB	Urban Basic Needs and Nutrition Basket
UPND	United Party for National Development
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VSU	Victim Support Unit
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organisations
ZamStats	Zambia Statistical Agency
ZCTU	Zambia Congress of Trade Unions
ZIPAR	Zambia Institute of Policy and Research
ZP	Zambia Police Service

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# Executive Summary

## Introduction

The Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection has for over 30 years been monitoring the cost of living through its Basic Needs Basket (BNB). The BNNB tracks, on a monthly basis, the cost of food and non-food items in order to assess the cost of living for an average family size of five members. The findings from the survey are used by various stakeholders to achieve their objectives and ultimately to improve the social and economic wellbeing of Zambians, especially the poor, marginalised and vulnerable. The study on the usage and relevance of the BNNB Survey was commissioned by JCTR with the primary aim being to establish, from the perspective of BNNB users, their views on the usefulness and relevance of the monthly study. The study targeted stakeholders from various sectors including civil and humanitarian/development non-governmental organisations, donor community, faith-based organisations, vendors, employers, labour office, workers unions, government ministries and individuals.

## Assessment Methodology

The study was conducted with the principle focus being placed on addressing the six study objectives as follows:

1. Identify the main users of BNNB information and those that would be interested in the information through a mapping exercise
2. Determine the importance of the BNNB data to the end-users
3. Assess how effectively the data is used by the end-users
4. Identify barriers to effective use of the BNNB data
5. Identify ways of addressing the barriers and improving BNNB as an advocacy tool
6. Identify opportunities for collaboration and multi-sectorial integration

Bearing in mind that the BNNB survey is conducted in only 16 districts of the country, the assessment targeted seven (7) of these districts as they represented the core study areas that would offer unique perspectives on the BNNB. In addition, due to time and budgetary constraints, only four (4) of these districts were physically visited for face-to-face interviews by the consultant. The remaining three (3) districts' respondents were contacted on the phone.

The respondents in the assessments were principally Key Informants Interviewees (KIIs) and BNNB survey interviewees (food sellers and food consumers).

## Assessment Findings

### Who are the Users of the BNNB?

The users of the BNNB are varied and cut across different sectors of society. The report though is more popular among CSOs that include labour unions, the media, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), faith-based organisations (FBOs) and community-based organisations (CBOs). Furthermore, socio-economic status of the users was identified as an important determinant of interest in the BNNB reports. For instance, low income men and women traders, exhibited the least interest or knowledge about the BNNB reports. On the other hand, the more educated and financially better off officers in CSOs, academia and government had a better understanding and interest in the results of the BNNB reports. In the same vein, the more informed and affluent householders (interviewed in workplaces as key informants) showed greater interest in the BNNB and had a wider variety of uses.

With regards to physical location, the further a district was from Lusaka, the less interest and knowledge respondents seem to have in the reports. This can be explained by two factors;

Although the BNNB has been in existence for decades, the consultant observed that, JCTR itself has a significant data management gap when it relates to keeping records of the users. Consequently, it is difficult to make an accurate and empirical assessment of who the users have been over a period of time.

### The Importance of the BNNB Data to End Users

The relevance of the BNNB was assessed based on the scale ranging from 'very small extent' to 'very large extent' as identified by the end-users. The BNNB report is a source of data for several purposes to the users. Complete, accurate and updated data makes decision-making better informed, more equitable and more likely to protect the disadvantaged in our society including children, women and the poor. The most important uses of the BNNB data in order of importance as ranked by the respondents was as described in the table below;

Use	% Score	Description of uses
Advocacy	92%	Bolsters the cause of the advocacy to public policy makers, private stakeholders and helps garner public support for policy changes
Lobbying	73%	To effectively lobby for the poor and marginalised in society, while advancing evidence-based arguments
Planning	73%	Data keeps the planning process grounded in reality
Salary negotiations	68%	Increasing numbers of workers have received salary increment as a result of their union representatives using the BNNB as a tool since the BNNB is accessible to both employers and employees



Use	% Score	Description of uses
Cost of Living Analysis	67%	The BNNB tracks the evolution of the prices of the goods in this basket of basic food and non-food items, it is a useful tool for analysing the cost of living. It particularly makes it easier for the majority of people in the country to easily understand and relate
Research	65%	The credibility of the BNNB data makes it an important source that is often cited in academic papers to bolster arguments proffered
Political engagements and relevance to government	47%	The Government uses BNNB data to inform its different functions and at various levels and additionally contributes to the national nutrition policy in a number of ways. At operational levels that require discretion of government officers, the BNNB value is used for making a determination on the quantum of support that should be rendered
Activity planning	23%	Some organisations use the BNNB to support their arguments for increased funding for proposals that are meant to benefit the community. Some households plan their activities such as household production and consumption adjustments using the BNNB information
Catholic Social Teachings (CST)	-	The BNNB in highlighting the plight of the poor and raising their concerns is guided by such values as the dignity of human life and the right of all people to food.

### Effectiveness of BNNB Data Usage

Effectiveness of usage is defined in terms of the BNNB being used to make any decision in the preceding six months to the study. The BNNB's effect is measured in terms of being the basis for some decisions. Of the 18 technocrats interviewed, 10 used the BNNB on a monthly basis, 6 as and when they needed to and 2 used it very rarely to make decisions. Asked if they had made any decision based on BNNB in the past 6 months, 13 of them responded in the affirmative compared to 5 who did not. This represents a 72% usage rate which is a fairly high level of effectiveness. Generally, the higher the frequency of use, the greater the chances of making decisions based on the BNNB.

Households make decisions on budgeting including budget adjustments in response to changing prices of basket items. They also make local production decisions based on the BNNB report. For instance, they are able to decide which foodstuffs they will produce in their garden and stop buying in order to save money. For budgeting purposes the BNNB is more likely to influence decisions if used on a monthly basis while for local production purposes even using it as and when they want to make the decision will impact on the decision made.

A number of CSOs find the BNNB very useful in its value in a supporting document in donor proposals and for these purposes the BNNB is able to influence their decision even when their usage is one-off such as when workers' union representatives as well as government bureaucrats use the BNNB to make decisions pertaining to salary negotiations and lobby activities respectively.

## Barriers to Effective Use of Data

Useful as the BNNB is, it still presents a lot of opportunity for improvements if it is to attain its full potential. Specifically, limitations in accessing the BNNB data was the greatest barrier to its effective use. Over three quarters (78% of respondents), cited access to the BNNB as a barrier to its widespread and effective use.

The second most cited barrier to the effective of the BNNB was outdated data which 56% of the 18 key respondents highlighted. This was attributed to the over reliance on physical distribution of the BNNB reports to the many end users. According to 39% of key informants, the lack of capacity to analyse the BNNB data further was a barrier to its effective use since they did not have access to the raw data.

Thirdly, the BNNB report is fairly easy to understand but there are sections of society it was meant to serve who find it difficult to interpret, let alone understand. These include the data providers themselves and those that are English illiterate such as small scale traders in markets who, otherwise, can benefit from the aggregated information found in the BNNB.

Fourthly, the BNNB does not enjoy universal acceptance among all stakeholders. Due to the nature of its focus (cost of living), it has so much appeal among opposition political actors but hardly the party in power. Related to general acceptability of the report, some organisations expressed reservations about the BNNB due to what they perceived as 'weaknesses in the data collection methodology'.

Finally, some users demonstrated ignorance about the purpose of the UBNNB thereby illustrating limited knowledge of the BNNB's purpose and methodology. This scenario however also exposes the gaps that exist with regards to distribution of the BNNB.

## Addressing Barriers to BNNB Data Usage

The barriers to the use of the BNNB can be broadly classified into those to do with the methodology of the report and those to do with its dissemination. The most significant hindrance to the use of the BNNB is limited access to the report. Dissemination of the BNNB report is therefore, the greatest area requiring improvement. Strategic partnerships are proposed to widen coverage and accelerate access of the BNNB publication both in electronic and hard copy versions.

With regards to methodology, smaller families may not fully appreciate how the BNNB relates to them. It is therefore recommended that emphasis should be placed on a per-capita BNNB. Further, the timeliness and accuracy of the data collected could be improved by implementing electronic data collection. The BNNB can be further improved by increasing the survey districts. Specifically, the sampling of markets should be broadened to cover some

smaller markets to get more representative mean prices of commodities.

A review of the items that the basket is composed of should be done after every five years as there are always changes to diets and food types while essential non-food items equally change.

### **Opportunities for Collaborations and Multi-sectoral Partnerships**

At the highest level, partnerships need to be created with government and institutions that influence policy making in Zambia. Similarly partnerships can be fostered with parties that influence pro-poor policies between government and CSOs.

At a technical level, research institutions can collaborate with JCTR on BNNB especially on the technical aspects of the report; re-designing the questionnaire, sampling, data collection and analysis. Partnerships with grassroots level organisations present a great opportunity for dissemination of the BNNB to the grassroots where the information will reach the lower-income households.

Further, the interest in the BNNB among stakeholders can be sustained by holding stakeholder engagement meetings regularly.

### **Conclusions**

The importance of the BNNB in informing JCTR's advocacy work lies in its ability in advancing the needs of the most vulnerable people in society. This assessment therefore has played a crucial role in enhancing the JCTR's understanding of the relevance and usage of the BNNB across different users. It has shown that there is a large number of people and institutions that access BNNB data for their own needs. It is however essential that the centre develops a structured approach to keeping track of these users to ensure that their needs are adequately addressed. A database of these users would be an important first step while periodic gathering of feedback regarding the value of the reports would help in ensuring that they respond to felt user needs.

The assessment has also shown that the BNNB reports are being used for a wide variety of purposes. This is a very positive development which the centre can build upon. The reports are used by users for budgeting, lobbying and advocacy, research, activity planning, etc. However, issues of timely and widespread access to the reports have restricted usage. The several suggestions made towards rectifying this challenge, if implemented, would further increase the appeal and acceptability of the BNNB reports. One concern that could be raised is the cost of expanding reach and partnership. It is however the view of the assessor that this can be effectively managed by identifying strategic partnerships and gradually increasing reach over time.

The effectiveness of the BNNB justifies its relevance. Clearly, there is still room to expand its effectiveness across the different strata of users and the proposed measures such as packaging the results to suit the user appear to be reasonable options that will enhance effective user application. Similarly, localization of the reports seems appropriate in enhancing ownership.

The assessment has also identifies several barriers to usage of the BNNB but it also provides some tangible solutions which JCTR will do well to consider and apply. Overall, there is a lot of potential inherent in the BNNB as a cross cutting tool for broad based and information based discourse. This report has shown that with some minor modifications, the monthly BNNB reports can be an even bigger force for social change.





# 1.0 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Organizational Background

The Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection (JCTR), is a research, education and advocacy organization that promotes study and action on issues linking Christian Faith and Social Justice since its inception in 1988. The JCTR is a project of the Jesuit Province of Southern Africa of the Society of Jesus and aims at fostering a critical understanding of current social, economic and political issues from a faith-inspired perspective. The organization engages in research on key social issues such as the cost of living, the social implications of public resource management, accessibility of healthcare and education and integrity of local democracy. Research findings from the organization's studies are presented in publications, workshops, conferences and media forums. The JCTR undertakes advocacy campaigns by mobilizing the public through local-based teams called outreach teams around Zambia and by cooperating with other civil society groups.

JCTR aims at promoting a just Zambian society guided by faith, where everyone enjoys fullness of life. And it attempts to do that through a range of its social and economic programs including monitoring the cost of living through the Basic Needs and Nutrition Basket (BNNB).

## 1.2 Brief Explanation of the BNNB

JCTR has for over 30 years been monitoring the cost of living through its Basic Needs Basket (BNB) which eventually was changed to incorporate a nutrition component and renamed the Basic Needs and Nutrition Basket (BNNB). The BNNB tracks, on a monthly basis, the cost of food and non-food items in order to assess the cost of living for an average family size of five members. The BNNB is generated on a monthly basis and is composed of average prices of essential food and non-food items in selected towns. On a monthly basis, the prices of these items are collected, analysed and disseminated to the public. The food items constituted in the basket promote the need for families to consume nutritious food items that are beneficial and cardinal for one to live a good and healthy life. The non-food items are essential products necessary for a family to function (see chapter 3 for additional details about the BNNB).

The findings from the survey are used by various stakeholders to achieve their objectives according to their mission. The overall goal is to improve the social and economic wellbeing of Zambians, especially the poor, marginalised and vulnerable. The BNNB report is therefore an important tool in JCTR's arsenal that brings to

light the socio-economic impact of policies on the poor. In so doing, it stirs local and national debate on the significance of nutritious food on human capital.

### 1.3 Purpose and Scope of the Assessment

The study on the usage and relevance of the BNNB Survey was thus commissioned by JCTR with the primary aim being to establish, from the perspective of BNNB users, their views on the usefulness and relevance of the monthly study. The following specific research objectives were being investigated;

1. Identify the main users of BNNB information and those that would be interested in the information through a mapping exercise
2. Determine the importance of the BNNB data to the end-users
3. Assess how effectively the data is used by the end-users
4. Identify barriers to effective use of the BNNB data
5. Identify ways of addressing the barriers and improving BNNB as an advocacy tool
6. Identify opportunities for collaboration and multi-sectorial integration

The study targeted stakeholders from various sectors including civil and humanitarian/development non-governmental organisations, donor community, faith-based organisations, vendors, employers, labour office, workers unions, government ministries and individuals.



## 2.0 ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Overall Study Approach

The study was conducted with the principle focus being placed on addressing the six study objectives of the assignment as highlighted in section 1.3. The data collection strategies and the desired outputs from the study investigations are summarised in the table below;

**Table 1: Assessment data collection strategy**

Study objective	Data collection strategy
1. Mapping of BNNB users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listing of all the organisations and individuals from the BNNB mailing list of JCTR</li> <li>• Identification of other users not included on the list through interviews with the current users and JCTR staff</li> </ul>
2. Determine the importance of the BNNB data to the end-users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews with current and future BNNB users</li> <li>• Interviews with JCTR staff</li> </ul>
3. Assess how effectively the data is used by the end-users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews with current and future BNNB users</li> <li>• Interviews with JCTR staff</li> </ul>
4. Identify barriers to effective use of the BNNB data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews with current and future BNNB users</li> <li>• Interviews with JCTR staff</li> </ul>
5. Identify ways of addressing the barriers and improving BNNB as an advocacy tool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews with current and future BNNB users</li> <li>• Interviews with JCTR staff</li> <li>• Literature review of similar tools and strategies used to address barriers</li> </ul>
6. Identify opportunities for collaboration and multi-sectorial integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews with current and future BNNB users</li> <li>• Interviews with JCTR staff</li> <li>• Literature review of similar tools and strategies used to address barriers</li> </ul>

It must be borne in mind that for purposes of this study, the Urban BNNB was the one that was being assessed bearing in mind the sample locations and respondents. Any inferences made from this study therefore can only be attributed to the Urban BNNB study and cannot be extended to the other two studies (i.e.; the Satellite Homes Study and the Rural BNNB).

### 2.2 Study Respondents

The respondents in the assessments were principally Key Informants Interviewees (KIIs) and BNNB survey interviewees (food sellers and food consumers). The KIs represent the demand side of the BNNB survey equation. They were purposefully identified and selected based on their engagement with the BNNB data or reports as consumers of the information generated at some point during the recent history of the BNNB surveys for their own individual or organisational requirements. On



the other hand, the food sellers and food consumers represent the data supply side of the equation. Besides these primary data providers, the assessment study also targeted JCTR staff at both national and district level. The staff are an important information source that has an in-depth understanding of both the supply and demand sides of the BNNB equation.

## 2.3 Sampled Respondents

In order to select study locations, the consultant recognised that though the BNNB survey is a national product, it is nonetheless only conducted in 16 districts of the country. Consequently, in consultation with JCTR, seven (7) of these districts were selected as core study areas that would offer unique perspectives on the BNNB. In addition, bearing in mind the time and budgetary constraints, only four (4) of these districts (which also are the traditional areas that JCTR has been collecting data for a long time) were physically visited for face-to-face interviews by the consultant. The remaining three (3) districts' respondents were contacted on the phone.



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<sup>1</sup> A list of the sampled organisations and institutions is provided in the annex



The interviewees are grouped into three broad categories as shown in the table below;

**Table 2: Assessment sampling framework**

User Category	Identified Respondents <sup>1</sup>	No. of Respondents	Location	Type of investigation
National stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CSOs,</li> <li>• Embassies</li> <li>• Trade Unions</li> <li>• GRZ Ministries and Agencies</li> <li>• Parliamentary budget office</li> <li>• ZIPAR</li> <li>• ZamStats, Universities</li> </ul>	4 3 2 2 2 1 2	Lusaka	Key Informants
Districts – Physical face to face interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local government</li> <li>• Local CBOs</li> <li>• JCTR district staff</li> </ul>	1 respondent 2 respondents 1 respondent	Kitwe Lusaka Kasama Livingstone	Key Informants
Districts – Phone interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local government</li> <li>• Local CBOs</li> <li>• JCTR district staff</li> </ul>	1 respondent 2 respondents 1 respondent	Monze Solwezi Mongu	Key Informants
Traders (Food and basic products)	Local traders in markets and street vendors	10 males and 10 females in each district	Kitwe Lusaka Kasama Livingstone	
Household Members	Household members buying from markets and street vendors	10 males and 10 females in each district	Kitwe Lusaka Kasama Livingstone	

The list of actual respondents that participated in the survey is at annex 1 to the report.

## 2.4 Data collection tools and administration

In order to have a structured data collection process, the consultant developed sets of data collection tools targeted at the various categories of respondents. The tools also were all aligned towards responding to the 7 objectives of the study as earlier presented. In the case of KIIs, the respondents were individuals who were perceived to be key informants due to their past use of BNNB data while the individual traders and householders were randomly selected bearing in mind that there is a high level of homogeneity of this category of respondents. The data collection tools are annexed to this report (see Annex 4).

Two consultants and two study assistants conducted the interviews across all the study districts. The lead consultant was responsible for conducting interviews in

Lusaka and Livingstone (face-to-face) as well as Monze and Mongu (phone based). The associate consultant conducted interviews in Kitwe and Kasama (face-to-face) and Solwezi (on phone).

## 2.5 Data Analysis

Due to the nature of the data collected, qualitative data analysis techniques underpinned the data analysis process. The transcripts/summary sheets of interviews formed the basis for the analysis. Summary sheets of each KII were produced at the end of each interview. Based on these summaries, logical relationships/patterns or thematic areas emerging from the discussions were derived and necessary attributions made to the specific objective area of investigation outlined in the ToRs.

Quantitative information on the other hand was arrived at using Microsoft Excel programme to develop charts and tables that are presented in the report.



## 3.0 THE BNNB IN CONTEXT

This entire section of the report is a synthesized version of JCTR's 'An Introduction to the Basic Needs and Nutrition Basket' document which was compiled by the Social and Economic (SED) Programme of the JCTR. It has been included in the assessment report for purposes of providing the much needed BNNB context for the reader. The information provided here should be able to foster a deeper and better understanding of the rationale and motivations for conducting the BNNB study.

### 3.1 The Two Types of BNNBs

JCTR produces two types of food and nutrition baskets. These are the urban centred BNNB and the rural centred BNNB. This is in light of the different contexts and needs of the inhabitants of the two geographical locations. These two BNNBs, while working towards a common goal of advocating for improved livelihoods and social conditions of the poor and marginalised vary in composition and target different stakeholders in this quest. The BNNB (formally Basic Needs Basket) was developed in 2019 based on a number of assumptions and parameters for each section of the basket.

The BNNB is an estimation of the minimum diet that provides a household's recommended nutrient intake taking into account local food habits and the principles of a healthy diet. The BNNB is calculated based on an average family size of 5 people.<sup>2</sup> The family members and their daily calorie intakes comprise the following:

- i. An adult man, aged 30-59 years, weighing 60 kg and moderately active (2,750 kcal/d)
- ii. An adult woman, aged 30-59 years, weighing 55 kg, moderately active (2,300 kcal/d) and lactating (460 kcal/d)
- iii. A child (either sex) aged 11-12 years (2,245 kcal/d)
- iv. A child (either sex) aged 9-10 years (1,191 kcal/d)
- v. A child (either sex) aged 12-23 months (906 kcal/d)

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<sup>2</sup> This is according to the established average family size reported by the Zambian Demographic and Health Survey (ZDHS) which places it at 5.1 persons (see CSO, et al., 2014).

## 3.2 Distinction between the Urban BNNB and Rural BNNB

The Urban BNNB (UBNNB) is a monthly survey of prices at selected markets in 16 districts in Zambia. These districts are; Lusaka, Kabwe, Ndola, Chipata, Chinsali, Choma, Monze, Mongu, Mazabuka, Livingstone, Solwezi, Luanshya, Mansa, Mpika, Kasama and Kitwe. The cost of living is calculated at the end of every month by tracking the prices of selected food items and non-food items which help people to live a healthy life in urban areas. To accurately record the actual prices of goods and services, traders and consumers are asked how much a certain product or service costs every month.

On the other hand, the Rural BNNB (RBNNB) is a tool JCTR uses to measure the living conditions, in relation to food intake and access to basic services, of the Zambian people in the rural areas. The RBNNB is motivated by the poor financing to rural development that has resulted in high poverty levels, poor connectivity in terms of roads and bridges, telephones and internet, poor health services and facilities, long distances to schools and poor infrastructure development in Zambia's rural areas. The current districts in which the RBNNB is conducted are only Kabwe and Mazabuka. The RBNNB survey only resumed in 2021 after its discontinuation in 2017. Given the limited period of implementation, an assessment of its relevance would be difficult to establish.

Given this limited scope of the RBNNB and the other constraints of making the assessment described earlier, the focus of this assessment has been on the UBNNB

## 3.3 Main Elements of the BNNB

### 3.3.1 Items Comprising the BNNB

The Urban BNNB Report comprises four sections; A-food items, B-essential non-food items, C-additional items and D-comparison of costs across BNNB towns. The Food items section tracks the prices of mealie meal (roller) rice, cassava flour, (sweet) potatoes, pounded groundnut, soya pieces, beef, chicken, Kapenta, eggs, milk, a mixture of (fresh) vegetables, onion, tomatoes banana and other fruits (oranges, apples, mango or guavas). Specifically for other fruits, whichever is cheapest in a particular month is the one whose price reflects. The non-food but essential items section comprises items such as charcoal, bathing soap, washing soap (a specific brand), Vaseline jelly, Electricity units, water and sanitation, Housing sanitary towel, toilet paper and lotion. The additional costs category reflects other additional costs that a family can incur, but the costs of these items is not added to the total cost



of the basket. These include

- Education cost: such as school fees, Parent teacher Association (PTA) costs (and for some towns, the cost of the school uniforms and school shoes is included).
- Health cost: these include the cost of a malaria test, consultation fee, CD4 count, registration fee, and fast track.
- Transport fees: to and fro the business centre or town, and fuel and/or pump prices

The last section provides a comparison of Costs in Kwacha across the sixteen BNNB Zambia towns. Below is a sample of the BNNB report for October 2021 in Lusaka district.



# JCTR BASIC NEEDS AND NUTRITION BASKET

Lusaka

October 2021

## (A) COST OF BASIC FOOD ITEMS FOR A FAMILY OF FIVE

Commodity	Price (ZMW) / Unit	Quantity / Month	Total (ZMW)
Mealie Meal (Roller)	96.57 25 kg bag	2 x 25Kg	193.14
Rice	112.78 5kg	4kg	90.23
Cassava Flour	16.28 1kg	6kg	97.71
(Sweet) Potatoes	8.66 1 Kg	4 Kg	34.66
Beans	41.88 1kg	3kg	125.65
Pounded Groundnut	34.97 1kg	1kg	34.97
Soya Pieces	56.84 1 kg	2kg	113.68
Beef	73.28 1kg	2kg	146.57
Chicken	116.28 2kg	5kg	290.71
Kapenta	290.63 1kg	1kg	290.63
Eggs	15.38 1 unit (10 eggs)	3 Trays (90 eggs)	138.42
Milk (Fresh)	12.21 500 ml	10 liters	244.26
Vegetables	438.62 40 Kg	40kg	438.62
Onion	12.51 1 Kg	4 Kg	50.06
Tomatoes	9.93 1 kg	6 kg	59.59
Banana	11.78 1 Kg	16 Kg	188.47
Other Fruits	22.47 1 kg	14 Kg	314.65
Cooking oil (2.5lts)	103.57 2.5lt	3.6lt	149.14
Salt	9.67 1 Kg	1 Kg	9.67
Tea	58.57 250g	250g	58.57
<b>SubTotal</b>			<b>ZMW 3,069.38</b>

## (B) COST OF ESSENTIAL NON-FOOD ITEMS

Commodity	Price(ZMW) / Unit	Quantity / Month	Total (ZMW)
Charcoal	360.00 90kg bag(s)	2 90kg bag(s)	720.00
Soap (Lifebuoy/Champion)	13.86 Tablet(s)	3 Tablet(s)	41.57
Wash soap (BOOM)	16.14 400g	4 400g	64.57
Jelly (Vaseline)	38.57 500ml	1 500ml	38.57
Electricity (medium density)	537.50 Month(s)	1 Month(s)	537.50
Water & Sanitation (med - fixed)	187.50 Month(s)	1 Month(s)	187.50
Housing (3 bedroom)	3,490.00 Month(s)	1 Month(s)	3,490.00
Sanitary towels	24.14 Pack of 10	2 Pack of 10	48.28
Toilet Paper (2ply)	7.08 Tissue(s)	6 Tissue(s)	42.50
Lotion (Dawn)	28.86 400ml	1 400ml	28.86
<b>Subtotal</b>			<b>ZMW 5,199.34</b>

## Total for Basic Needs and Nutrition Basket

ZMW 8,268.72

## (C) SOME OTHER ADDITIONAL COSTS

Education		Transport (bus fare round)	
Item	Amount (ZMW)	Item	Amount (ZMW)
Grades 8-9 (User + PTA/year)	600.00	Chilenje - Town	24.00
Grades 10-12 (User + PTA/year)	600.00	Chelston - town	23.00
School Uniform (Grades 8-12)	200.00	Matero - Town	20.00
Health		Fuel (cost at the pump)	
item	Amount (ZMW)	Item	Amount (ZMW)
Registration (book)	5.00	Petrol (per litre)	17.62
		Diesel (per litre)	15.59
		Paraffin (per litre)	15.39

## (D) A COMPARISON OF COSTS (IN KWACHA) OF BASIC NEEDS ACROSS ZAMBIA

Lusaka	Kasama	Mansa	Mongu	Ndola	Solwezi	Monze	Chipata	Mpika	Luanshya	Kitwe	Kabwe	Livingstone	Choma	Chinsali	Maz a
8,268.72	4,304.31	4,951.37	4,729.38	6,514.69	5,910.24	5,177.39	5,733.44	5,532.51	6,013.29	6,721.78	6,802.68	5,741.79	5,535.56	5,496.14	6,24

## Compositions of vegetables and fruits

Computation of vegetables consists of: Pumpkin leaves (9.8kg), Bondwe (2.8kg), Cabbage (18.5kg) and Rape (8.9kg).

Computation of fruits is from these varieties: Bananas, Mangos, Apples, Guavas and Oranges.

This survey was conducted on 27<sup>th</sup> October, 2021 by the Social and Economic Development Programme of the Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection. Average Prices were calculated on the basis of prices gathered from retail outlets at Northmead, Shoprite (Cairo Road), City Market, Chawama, Chanda, Kabwata, Matero and Schools, clinics/hospitals, and filling stations around Lusaka. The October Basic Needs Basket is approximately US\$480 based upon the exchange rate Of K17.22. Other costs would include personal care, clothing, recreation, etc.

Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection, P.O. Box 37774, 10101 Lusaka, Zambia  
 Tel: 260-211-290-410 Fax: 260-211-290-759 E-mail: jctr.sed@gmail.com Website: www.jctr.org.zm  
 Location: 3813 Martin Mwamba Road, Olympia Park, Lusaka

### 3.3.2 Cost of Diet

A linear programming software, the Cost of Diet (CoD), is used to select the least expensive combination of foods for a diet that meets energy, protein, fat and micronutrients for a family of five over the period of a month. The CoD software contains food composition data extracted from various food composition tables from the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), University of Dhaka and a generic food composition table created by calculating average values for the most common foods listed in the database. Each food was identified in the food database in the CoD software by selecting either the sample that is geographically closest to Zambia or the generic CoD food. Additional food composition data was derived from the Zambian food composition table and literature. A list of commonly consumed, locally available raw and processed foods prepared based on previous CoD analysis in Zambia and key informant interviews (Concern Worldwide, 2017) was used to determine the foods that were included in the JCTR's BNNB.

A realistic amount of food that can be consumed in one meal is allocated using CoD. The software determines portion sizes for each food per meal in order to promote dietary diversity. The nutrient requirements for individuals are the Estimated Average Requirements (EAR) as recommended by the FAO and the World health Organisation (WHO) for individuals based on their age, sex and physical activity.

### 3.3.3 Seasonality of Food Items

The availability of certain foods, including perishable foods depends on the season and results in variance in food and nutrient intake by season (Suga, et al., 2014). The cost of seasonal foods is often cheaper as supply is high and consuming seasonal foods is an element of sustainable diets. In this regard, the BNNB includes generic terms for other fruits and included three green leafy vegetables (rape, amaranthus leaves and pumpkin leaves). The actual food item can be different depending on the season. In analysing the data, JCTR identifies the most available and cheap food item during the data analysis.

### 3.3.4 Affordability of Selected Food Items

The CoD software selects the least expensive combination of local foods that meet the specifications for energy, macronutrients and micronutrients but with constraints on the amounts per meal that are consistent with typical dietary habits. A diet selected by the Cost of Diet software that meets all of the nutrient requirements as described above is considered a 'nutritious' diet. Further adaptations were made to the nutritious diet as described by the CoD software to ensure that the diet reflects all components of the quality diet and is adjusted to local context based on stakeholder consultations.

## 3.4 BNNB Data Collection

BNNB data collection is conducted between the 25th and 27th of every month in selected urban markets. The exercise is usually completed in one to two days by trained BNNB enumerators. After data collection, the raw data from the study towns is then sent to Lusaka via email by the data collectors.

Selected markets where BNNB data is collected, were initially sampled purposively to capture variation in prices of food between low, medium, and high-density neighbourhoods (JCTR, 2011). In each market, a sample of two traders of each food is visited and asked for consent to participate in the survey. Each trader is asked the price of the selected food items and the weight of three of the samples of each food is measured and recorded. The nutritional value for food is usually presented per 100-gram edible portion. This is because, certain foods have inedible parts.

Data is also collected from Schools, Clinics/Hospitals and utility companies to estimate other costs that a household can incur. The monthly estimated cost of water and electricity collected from utility companies, house rent and additional costs such as school/medical fees are however only collected at the beginning of each year (in January). They are kept constant throughout the year on the assumption that these are highly inelastic and usually record increases at the beginning of the year. An annual housing survey is therefore, conducted at the beginning of each year for the purposes of updating this data.

BNNB data collection is paper based through the use of a standardized questionnaire template. Researchers usually collect data on prices of commodities from the same individuals every month, especially food items that have to be weighed on the scale. This is because they would have already





JCTR BNNB data collector for Kabwe, Mr. Kent Mwansa, collecting data at Nakoli market

created rapport with these particular traders which makes it much easier for them to collect the data.

### 3.5 Data Entry, Analysis and Dissemination

Once the data has been collected from all the selected town it is entered in the BNNB Microsoft Access Software System for each individual town. Individual town BNNB reports are then generated from the system. The monthly BNNB reports and press statement is then sent to various stakeholders via email before or on the 7th of the following month. The BNNB statement is widely circulated in print media (usually quarterly), on the JCTR website and on social media. The information that is collected is then used to prepare quarterly and biannual trends reports that aid in observing the movements in the cost of living over time. Additionally, this analysis aids in the engagements with policy makers through dialogue events, press briefings and summits. The BNNB targets both micro and macro level policies that impact on the nutrition needs of the poor and vulnerable.

The BNNB reports are generated for each of the 16 individual towns and disseminated before or on the 7th of the following month though the accompanying statement is largely focused on Lusaka. A brief write up on price movements in the other fifteen towns however is also generated and disseminated. All BNNB reports and their accompanying write-ups are disseminated through multiple media platforms.



## 4.0 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

### 4.1 Who are the Users of the BNNB?

#### 4.1.1 Profile of BNNB users

The users of the BNNB are varied and cut across different sectors of society. The users can be traced to private citizens/individuals, households, civil society organisations (CSOs), academia, government and quasi-government institutions, and the private sector. The report though is more popular among CSOs that include labour unions, the media, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), faith-based organisations (FBOs) and community-based organisations (CBOs).

The assessment established that the majority of the users approached JCTR to access the information because they had a particular motivation to access the information. On the basis of the interviews conducted, it was quite obvious that the largest group of BNNB users was composed of CSOs (particularly NGOs and labour unions). However, due to the nature of the assessment, it was not possible to empirically determine the extent to which each category of users was accessing and making use of the BNNB data. It is however clear that the motivation for accessing BNNB data for CSO actors is anchored either in purposes associated with consolidating advocacy messages or negotiations with employers. All respondents equally placed more emphasis on the 'basic needs' aspect of the study while the 'nutrition' aspect was largely ignored.

The profile of the BNNB users equally cuts across the basic demographic considerations like sex and age. However, socio-economic status of the users was identified as an important determinant of interest in the BNNB reports. For instance, although the data that informs the BNNB food items is generally collected from low income men and women traders, they exhibited the least interest or knowledge about the reports. Similarly, household members interviewed (at the point of purchasing food items that comprise the BNNB) equally did not display much knowledge let alone interest in the BNNB. This gives the impression that the ordinary members of society, especially those in the low income bracket, have little interest in the BNNB. On the other hand, the more educated and financially better off officers in CSOs, academia and government had a better understanding and interest in the results of the BNNB reports. In the same vein, the more informed and



affluent householders (interviewed in workplaces as key informants) showed greater interest in the BNNB and had a wider variety of uses.

With regards to physical location, the further a district was from Lusaka, the less interest and knowledge respondents seem to have in the reports. This can be explained by two factors;

1. Lusaka being the capital city and therefore the centre of different engagements between duty bearers and rights holders; employers and trade unions; and researchers and information providers, therefore, it is natural to have greater concentration of interest in Lusaka; and,
2. There are fewer actors (media, academicians, NGOs, etc); on the periphery of the country and consequently, the citizen voices are less pronounced.

This scenario explains why successive BNNB reports in locations outside Lusaka do not receive as much attention except in exceptional cases.

#### 4.1.2 Tracking BNNB Users

Although the BNNB has been in existence for decades, the consultant observed that, JCTR itself has a significant data management gap when it relates to keeping records of the users. The organisation does not have a structured system for recording and tracking the users of the BNNB data and as a result, available user data is rudimentary and only exists in minimal quantities at several data points such as email requests, library user records and hard copy letters. Consequently, it is difficult to make an accurate and empirical assessment of who the users have been over a period of time. This is an area that needs improvement.

**Annex 2** to the assessment report attempts to provide some form of a database that JCTR can continue to build on with regards to BNNB users. It would be important to capture the important characteristics of the users such as;

- i. Name
- ii. Organisation represented
- iii. Contact details (phone/email/physical address)
- iv. iFrequency they require BNNB data
- v. Purpose of which BNNB data was requested

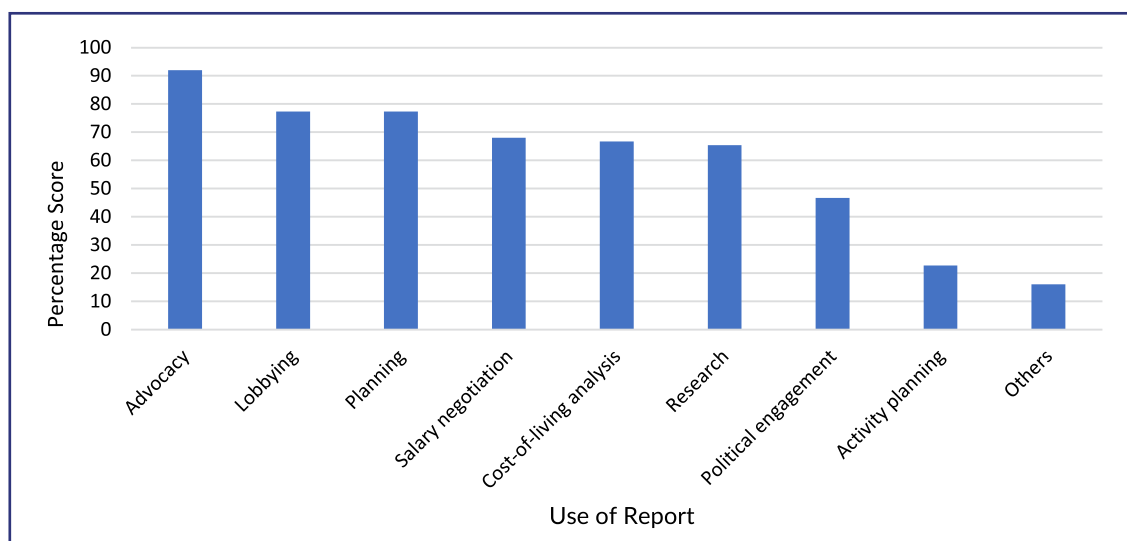


vi. User's brief evaluation/feedback on the value of the BNNB data

## 4.2 The Importance of the BNNB Data to End Users

The relevance of the BNNB was assessed based on the scale ranging from 'very small extent' to 'very large extent' as identified by the end-users. Figure 1 below shows the different uses of the BNNB scored<sup>3</sup> as a percentage. The data showed two broad categories of users of the BNNB data; one for purposes of budgeting and monitoring the cost of living, and the other for lobbying, advocacy and salary negotiations.<sup>4</sup>

**Figure 1: Percentage preference of use of BNNB**



The BNNB report is a source of data for several purposes to the users. Complete, accurate and updated data makes decision-making better informed, more equitable, more likely to protect the disadvantaged in our society including children, women and the poor.

### Advocacy

Timely and accurate information is the backbone of effective advocacy efforts. It bolsters the cause of the advocacy to public policy makers, private stakeholders and helps garner public support for policy changes. Out of a possible maximum score of 100 percent, the 15 respondents' interviewed ranked the importance of BNNB data for purposes of advocacy very highly at 92%. This was the highest ranked use for the BNNB. Advocates for more equitable wages find the BNNB very useful for making their case for rising costs of living in Zambia.

<sup>3</sup> Scores obtained by multiplying each response by the weight of the response then summing them to get total score expressed as a percentage of the maximum possible score of 75 ( 15 responses X 5 maximum score), i.e., very large extent =5, large extent=4, moderate=3 and so on.

<sup>4</sup> Based on Factor Analysis

## Lobbying

In an attempt to influence government policies and legislations, different sectors of the economy have representatives that communicate their interests to government through lobbying activities. The private business sector has professional and business associations representing their business interests, government departments attend to the government's interests as a duty bearer while the rest of society's mutual aspirations and needs are usually represented by different facets of civil society. To effectively lobby for the poor and marginalised in society, they need to advance evidence-based arguments. The BNNB as such acts as an essential tool for lobbying. Civil society lobby activities includes making submission on the national budget in Zambia (Bwalya, Phiri and Mpembamoto, 2011) and other national issues such as debt transparency and in the past debt cancellation through the Highly Indebted and Poor Countries (HIPC initiative) that included Zambia. The 15 respondents ranked the relevance of BNNB in lobbying at second highest with a score of 73%. This score tied with that for planning and affirmed the centrality of the BNNB report as a tool for lobbying.

## Planning

Similarly, the importance of good data for purposes of planning cannot be over-emphasised. Data keeps the planning process grounded in reality. The BNNB has a list of food and non-food necessities for a family of five with the average price of each commodity in a given locality. It therefore serves as an important tool for planning expenditures as well as income at household level. Residents in the respective districts are able to plan better with readily available information in the BNNB report bearing in mind that the food costs differ (in some instances significantly) across towns. Households relocating to new cities find the BNNB useful in taking into account the cost differences and planning accordingly. The value of the BNNB in household budgets with a score 73% is indicative of the importance it plays in household budgets – albeit only those with a higher than average education.

## Salary Negotiations

Labour unions routinely use the BNNB data during their wage negotiations with the management of their organisations. Since the BNNB is accessible to both employers and employees, the use of BNNB in negotiations as support for the rising cost of living has contributed to eliminating suspicions between the two parties, thereby reducing the bargaining time. Increasing numbers of workers

have received salary increment as a result of their union representatives using the BNNB as a tool in salary negotiations. This function of the BNNB scored 68%, which is fairly high considering that a wage increase is premised on many other factors including worker productivity and market conditions.

### **Cost of Living Analysis**

A family's cost of living is simply calculated by adding up all its monthly expenses. The BNNB makes this process easier by standardising the family size, nutritional requirements and having a standard 'basket' of basic items thus making comparison easier across locations and over time. As one respondent from a well-respected research institution put it: 'The BNNB Tool has simplified the economic jargon and technical language that goes with statistics that comes from Zambia Statistics Agency and other technical people like us, hence making the ordinary members of our society to understand and relate to the document.' The BNNB tracks the evolution of the prices of the goods in this basket of basic food and non-food items, it is a useful tool for analysing the cost of living. It particularly makes it easier for the majority of people in the country to easily understand and relate as opposed to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) which is steeped in sophisticated mathematical jargon. In the case of the BNNB, it easily responds to inflation through an overt increase in the cost of items in the basic basket. The score given by respondents of 67% as such demonstrates the importance attached to simple cost of living analysis that the BNNB brings.

### **Research**

As a research tool, the BNNB was scored 65% in terms of its importance. It is a good rating for the BNNB as a research tool. The research could be in various areas the basket touches on including the cost of living and nutrition. The use of the BNNB as a tool for research could be raised further by increasing awareness about its availability among the academicians since the cost of living is an important area of study for a wide range of disciplines such as economics, development studies, social work and public health among others. Researchers observed that the credibility of the BNNB data makes it an important source that is often cited in academic papers to bolster arguments proffered.

### **Political Engagements and Relevance to Government**

The Government of the Republic of Zambia (GRZ), equally uses BNNB data to inform its different functions and at various levels. Parliament, which one arm of

government often refers to the report in policy debates in the chamber. Advocates and lobbyists for pro-poor policies including the minimum wage legislation and social welfare programs draw on the BNNB information to advance their positions for improved support towards social sectors. At operational levels of government such as the Zambia Police's (ZP) Victim Support Unit (VSU) often makes reference to the BNNB in making a determination on the quantum of support that should be rendered when handling cases of child support. Local courts also find the report useful for similar purposes. Further, the labour relations court refers to the data in cases of labour dispute settlements involving payments.

Equally importantly, albeit not in a robust manner, the BNNB contributes to the national nutrition policy in a number of ways. Firstly, it is a source of information to policy makers since it gives the cost of a basket of basic foods and non-food items. This gives an indication of the cost constraints people are faced with in the quest to attain good nutrition. Secondly, the BNNB is instrumental in the attainment of the good nutrition objectives of the policy because the BNNB is a household's guide to a balanced diet. Thirdly, the BNNB's nutrition information encourages households to produce indigenous nutritious foods.

However, the use of the BNNB in political engagements is quite low, with a score of 47%. This is in part because of the low acceptance of the BNNB results by some government officials and institutions. There is a bias against the BNNB among certain government officials who perceive it as a tool to paint their efforts in bad light.

### **Activity Planning**

The BNNB is a relevant tool as a guide and tool for planning activities. For example, there are some CSOs that plan their activities using the information in the BNNB. Some organisations find the BNNB as good support for their funding proposals for programmes that are meant to benefit the community. Some households plan their activities such as household production and consumption adjustments using the BNNB information. However, this use was ranked very lowly, with a meagre 23% score. This could be indicative of the low awareness of potential uses of the BNNB.

### **Enhancing the Catholic Social Teachings (CST)**

The work of the JCTR is guided by the Church's social teaching which places heavy emphasis on human dignity in the community. The BNNB is designed to measure



whether an average Zambian household can afford the minimum needs to achieve a life of dignity. Consequently, the BNNB in highlighting the plight of the poor and raising their concerns is guided by such values as;

**Dignified life** - The BNNB's approach is grounded within CST, which recognises most essentially the dignity of every person. CST takes as its entry point into policy formulation a belief in the fundamental dignity of every human person. This is a scriptural teaching found in Genesis 1:27 that states that human beings are "made in the image and likeness of God." It follows that every woman and every man has basic rights and corresponding duties. These are inalienable and are not the consequence of benign state action but rather of generous creative endowment. In *Pacem in Terris*, Pope John XXIII states that: "Any well-regulated and productive association of human beings in society demands the acceptance of one fundamental principle: that each individual is truly a person, endowed by nature with intelligence and free will. As such he or she has rights and duties, which flow together as a direct consequence from this human nature. These rights and duties are universal and inviolable, and therefore inalienable." The state has the obligation to protect, foster and promote human rights. This belief in the fundamental dignity of every human person requires not only that people are treated in ways that reflect and respect their inherent dignity, but also that every policy, every programme and every priority must be measured and evaluated by whether it enhances or diminishes human life and dignity.

**Right to Food** - The BNNB is an avenue through which the interests and needs of the poor are exposed in order to draw attention to their plight. The right to food (PT, 26) 'Beginning our discussion of the rights of man, we see that every man has the right to life, to bodily integrity, and to the means which are necessary and suitable for the proper development of life; these are primarily food, clothing, shelter, rest, medical care, and finally the necessary social services.' Food is not just a basic need. According to many international human rights instruments the right

**"The BNNB has helped us to negotiate for improved conditions of service with our employer, without which we would have (had) no starting point"**

**Game Stores Workers' Union Representative**

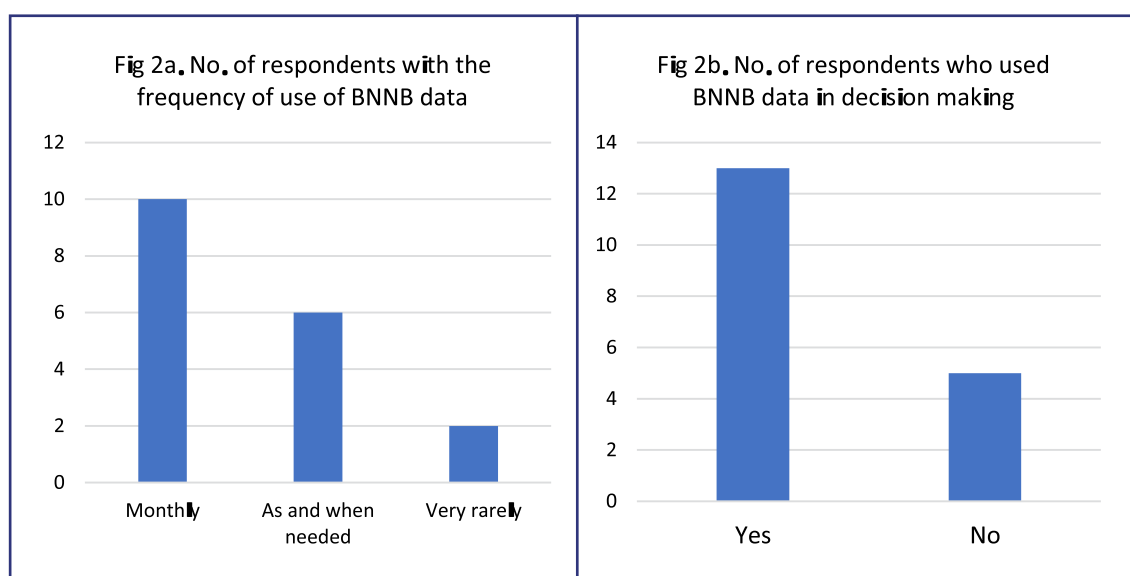
to food is a fundamental human entitlement. The CST teaching has joined the rest of humanity in recognizing that the right

to food is another element of the body of rights due to human beings by virtue of their God endowed dignity.

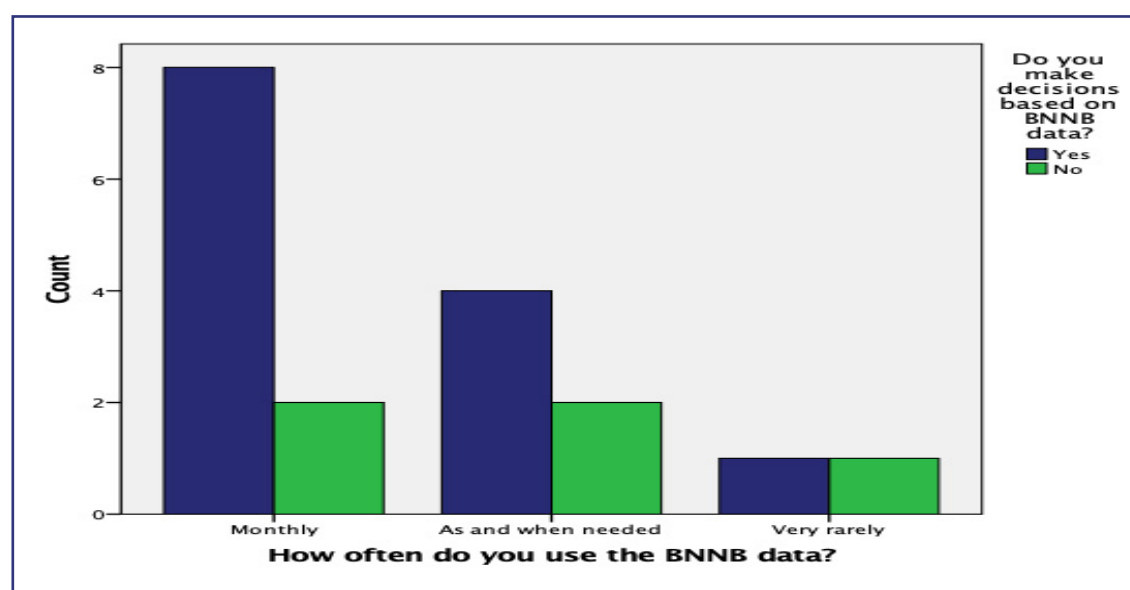
### 4.3 Effectiveness of BNNB Data Usage

In this section the effectiveness of the BNNB is discussed in light of the results. Effectiveness of usage is defined in terms of the BNNB being used to make any decision in the preceding six months to the study. The BNNB's effect is measured in terms of being the basis for some decisions. In Figure 2 below, of the 18 technocrats interviewed, 10 used the BNNB on a monthly basis, 6 as and when they needed to and 2 used it very rarely to make decisions. Asked if they had made any decision based on BNNB in the past 6 months, 13 of them responded in the affirmative compared to 5 who did not. This represents a 72% usage rate which is a fairly high level of effectiveness.

**Figure 2: Frequency of use and decision making based on BNNB data**



**Figure 3: The relationship between frequency of use and decision making**



All in all, the BNNB is a relevant tool to the different users. And while monthly use is highly preferred among the users, it is not the only way the report is used to influence decision making by the end users. This is in part due to differences in the uses the report is put. Households make decisions on budgeting including budget adjustments in response to changing prices of basket items. They also make local production decisions based on the BNNB report. For instance, they are able to decide which foodstuffs they will produce in their garden and stop buying in order to save money. For budgeting purposes the BNNB is more likely to influence decisions if used on a monthly basis while for local production purposes even using it as when they want to make the decision will impact on the decision made.

During a workshop held with marketeers, [those men and women who earn a living through trading and hawking], it emerged that one of the factors contributing to the high cost of food in Livingstone, was the high transport costs faced by marketeers transporting their goods across town from the wholesale market to respective retail markets in the communities. The local field researcher for the JCTR, working in cooperation with a local Councillor managed to introduce the BNB into a full council meeting, which helped convince the authorities to allow the operation of buses in Livingstone in order to facilitate not only cheaper transportation, but cheaper food prices for the residents.

Source: A presentation to the Pontifical Commission on Justice and Peace on the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of Mater et Magistra, 16-18 May 2011 by Leonard Chiti, SJ

CSOs make decisions pertaining to advocacy activities for different causes and large sections of society including women and children. For example, CARITAS was advocating for the revelation of the level of the public debt with a view to understanding how to explain how the debt burden was affecting the cost of living for the citizens. A number of CSOs

find the BNNB very useful in its value in a supporting document in donor proposals and for these purposes the BNNB is able to influence their decision even when their usage is one-off such as when workers' union representatives as well as government bureaucrats use the BNNB to make decisions pertaining to salary negotiations and lobby activities respectively.

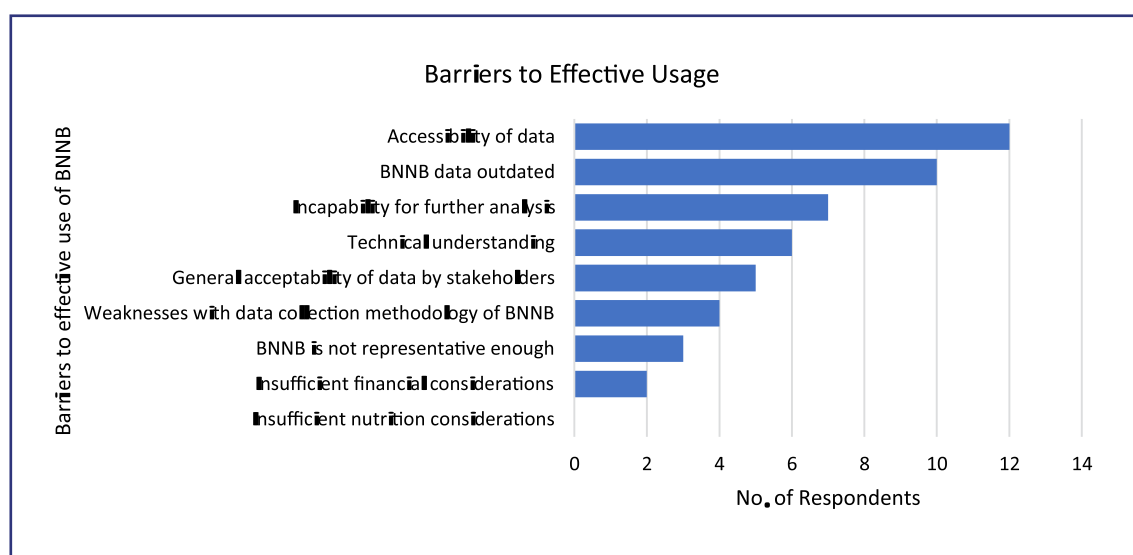
The effectiveness of the BNNB is perhaps seen more potently at the international level. The World Food Programme (WFP) for instance has routinely used BNNB data to draw parallels between maize prices and effects on household food and income security. 5 In their Food Security Brief of August 2021, the organisation draws a conclusion that seems to point to a correlation between increases in maize prices with increases in the BNNB for a family of 5. The effectiveness of the BNNB is perhaps seen more potently at the international level. The World Food

Programme (WFP) for instance has routinely used BNNB data to draw parallels between maize prices and effects on household food and income security.<sup>5</sup> In their Food Security Brief of August 2021, the organisation draws a conclusion that seems to point to a correlation between increases in maize prices with increases in the BNNB for a family of 5.

#### 4.4 Barriers to Effective Use of Data

Useful as the BNNB is, it still presents a lot of opportunity for improvements if it is to attain its full potential. A number of barriers stand in the way of the users and potential users. Figure 4 below displays the barriers that hinder the effective use of the BNNB based on interviews conducted with the key informants in the assessment who are current users of the BNNB.

Figure 4: Barriers to effective use of the BNNB



#### Accessibility of the BNNB Data

Limitations in accessing the BNNB data was the greatest barrier to its effective use. Over three quarters (78% of respondents), cited access to the BNNB as a barrier to its widespread and effective use. For the most part, end users relied on accessing a hard copy, or a copy which was scanned and shared with them by a third party. At least 3 end users cited their access to BNNB as being dependent on a JCTR volunteer sharing a hard copy of the BNNB report. Consequently, for many users, by the time they get a copy of the BNNB report for that month, it is outdated. Efforts to address barriers to effective usage of the BNNB should

<sup>5</sup> <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000132912/download/>



focus on increasing availability of updated data to the end users using a variety of distribution channels.

### **Outdated BNNB Data**

The second most cited barrier to the effective of the BNNB was outdated data which 56% of the 18 key respondents highlighted. This was attributed to the over reliance on physical distribution of the BNNB reports to the many end users. The end users noted that sometimes they did not receive updated information in good time which drastically reduced the usefulness of the report especially if the information was required in order for immediate action to be taken. One user reported that: 'There is a lack of frequent review of the items that are reflected in the BNNB despite changes that occur in the market for food items and household priorities.'

### **Capability for Further Analysis**

According to 39% of key informants, the lack of capacity to analyse the BNNB further was a barrier to its effective use since they did not have access to the raw data. Some of the end users could not make decision based on the reports due to their failure to analyse the report further to gain insights useful to them. Making the raw data available (even at a fee) to those that wish to conduct more detailed analyses or establish trends could remedy this. Furthermore, engagements with stakeholders should emphasize capacity building in the use of the BNNB data. Currently, the labour movement seems to be well catered to in this regard through the stakeholder meetings. However, a number of respondents alluded to a long lapse since such meetings took place.

### **Technical Understanding**

The BNNB report is fairly easy to understand. However, there are sections of the society it was meant to serve who find it difficult to interpret, let alone understand. These include the data providers themselves and those that are English illiterate such as small scale traders in markets who, otherwise, can benefit from the aggregated information found in the BNNB. Their lack of understanding sadly seems to alienate them. They are the ones who are not eager to use the BNNB. The assessment established that a third of the respondents (33%) cited absence of technical understanding as a major barrier to the extent to which the BNNB is used.

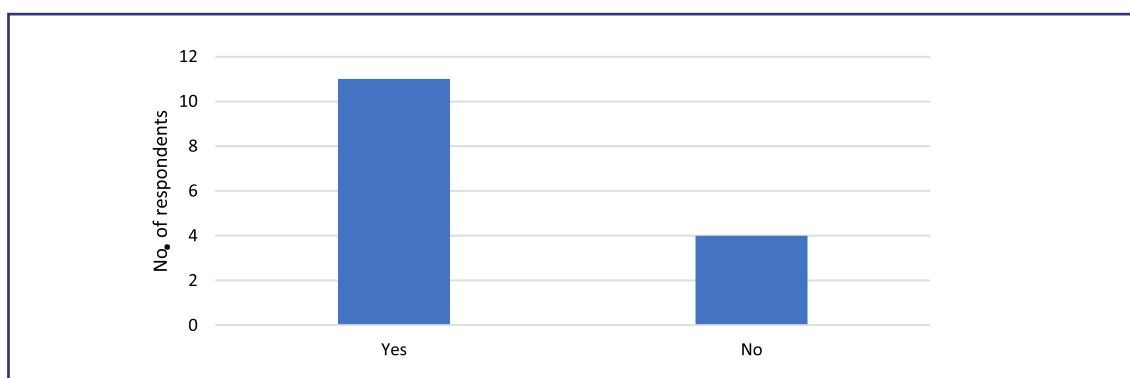
## General acceptability of the data among stakeholders

Unfortunately, the BNNB does not enjoy universal acceptance among all stakeholders. Due to the nature of its focus (cost of living), it has so much appeal among opposition political actors but hardly the party in power. The opposition use it to amplify their criticism of the government of the day who they accuse of failing to deliver better living conditions and nutrition of the many poor people in the country. The backlash is often that the ruling party then attempts to downplay the significance of the report or its methodological accuracy. One of the assessment respondents for instance remarked that, “The UPND was quick to make reference to the BNNB while in opposition, I hope they will be doing the same in power.” His sentiments exemplify the lingering doubt that politicians have a tendency to use the BNNB for gaining political mileage. About 28% of KIIs identified this as a barrier.

Related to general acceptability of the report, some organisations expressed reservations about the BNNB due to their perceived weaknesses in the data collection methodology. This was raised as a barrier by 4 of the interviewees (representing 22% of key informants). However, when asked what the perceived methodological weakness are, only 2 interviewees (from the 4) cited insufficient financial considerations while 3 highlighted lack of representativeness. This represented 11% and 17% (Figure 5 below) respectively. These barriers do not pose a serious concern in relation to the use of the BNNB. This perception can partly be explained by the absence of a detailed methodology for public scrutiny in a public space like the JCTR website.

It is worth noting that none of the technocrats thought the BNNB has insufficient consideration for nutrition. The nutrition aspect of the BNNB is seems to be glossed over with focus being placed on the ‘cost of food’ as opposed to its nutritional value.

**Figure 5: Is the BNNB Representative of wider society?**



The fact that the largest barrier reported was accessibility of the BNNB data, and related to that the related challenge of the BNNB data not being useful by the time it is received, is indicative of an information transmission problem. It is also revealing the fact that current users do not consistently get the reports. During interviews, it was common for the respondents to inquire if the (BNNB) reports were still being produced. With widened and quicker transmission, both current end-users and would-be end users could increase utilization of the BNNB data.

Arguably, some users reported that they find the BNNB to be rather biased towards the urban based middle classes while the people in rural areas are neglected. They further argue that the prices of food in Nkeyema and other remote areas may not be the same as in urban areas. Clearly, this is an illustration of the limited knowledge of the BNNB's purpose and methodology on the part of respondents but it also exposes the gaps that exist with regards to distribution of the BNNB. It also engenders the need for the RBNNB to be enhanced and its scope widened in order to address this perceived neglect of rural price and product nuances.

## **4.5 Addressing Barriers to BNNB Data Usage**

### **4.5.1 Practical suggestions for addressing barriers**

The barriers to the use of the BNNB can be broadly classified into those to do with the methodology of the report and those to do with its dissemination. Here we discuss how to address both categories of barriers:

#### **Improving Dissemination**

As Section 2.4 above revealed, the most significant hindrance to the use of the BNNB is limited access to the report. Dissemination of the BNNB report is therefore, the greatest area requiring improvement. Other than increasing the channels for disseminating the BNNB, packaging the results for the different audiences would substantially improve usage of the BNNB reports. Academics for instance would want more detailed information with raw data and trends over time while people selling in the markets simply want information that shows them that they need to consume certain combinations of food, given the increased cost, to stay healthy.

Strategic partnerships are proposed to widen coverage and accelerate access of the BNNB publication both in electronic and hard copy versions. For electronic dissemination, it will be important to broaden the distribution list. For instance, people can sign up for the monthly bulletin in order to regularly

receive copies of the BNNB in their emails. This can be done by including a prompt on the JCTR website encouraging visitors to sign up for the monthly BNNB. This way, people without regular access to the website will not have to wait until they can access the site but will receive the BNNB report as soon as it is launched.

Distribution of hard copies can be enhanced by utilising the vast network of Roman Catholic Churches (and identifying other partner churches), leaving copies at public libraries' information desks, and posting them at public notice boards especially in low demand districts. These public places can be shopping centres popular in most towns, civic centres, bill payment centres, etc. While it is acknowledged that JCTR is already using TV and radio,<sup>6</sup> it is also obvious that a lot more can be done to encourage more of these regular communication channels to disseminate results. Specifically at national level, a concrete partnership can be forged with one or two TV stations for a monthly robust dissemination of the BNNB results. This can be achieved through deliberately having analyses with visuals during peak viewership times such as the evening news. Prior promotion of the activity would further enhance viewership and citizen engagement. The same can be done through wide coverage radio stations. One way of crafting the partnership (with no cost on the part of JCTR) would be through acknowledging the TV and radio station(s) in the partnership as strategic partners of the BNNB throughout the year.

At local level, similar partnerships can be explored with provincial and community radio stations that would promote the BNNB at that level. These would be encouraged to use local language on the local radio and TV stations. Equally importantly though in this era of social media viral transmissions and viewership, creating a deliberate buzz around each launch (such as attaching a video with a respected person talking about the BNNB, a chart showing trends over time, or encouraging debate around the consequences of high food prices, etc). JCTR can increase dissemination by making the different media channels mutually-reinforcing to increase reach. For instance, print and broadcast media channels must point to internet and social media channels for signing up for easier access to the BNNB reports and point the public to physical locations for accessing the reports. Local JCTR volunteers can visit

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<sup>6</sup> An informal partnership between Diamond TV and JCTR in relation to the dissemination of BNNB results is specifically acknowledged



the markets where price data was collected and ensure the data providers get a copy of the BNNB to encourage ownership.

The rich collection of monthly BNNB reports can be harnessed to make the data more lively/animated to the end-users on the JCTR website. This can be achieved by building each month's cost into a long time-series. More end-users would find the report more meaningful and engage more if they can watch the trend. The trend can be made in a multi-media presentation on the JCTR website and be updated regularly. Another way to improve the presentation of the data is to use a creative data visualisation such as a heat-map showing how each district covered compares to the rest of the country in the cost of living each month.

Finally, franchising the BNNB data collection and report preparation through partnering with other research oriented organisations (academia and NGOs) can help increase coverage. It also has potential to reduce the costs for producing the reports as district partners can conduct and prepare their own BNNBs, after thorough training by JCTR.

### **Improving Methodology**

A second area of improvement pertains to the methodology. Many end-users with family sizes that are smaller or much larger than 5-6, may not fully appreciate how the BNNB relates to them. It is therefore recommended that emphasis should be placed on a per-capita BNNB. This is already possible by simply dividing the monthly cost by 5 but some users may not have understood this hence the need for emphasis. Further, the timeliness and accuracy of the data collected could be improved by implementing electronic data collection.

Methodologically, the BNNB can be improved by increasing the survey districts and markets. Due to the variations in local market conditions across the districts, covering more districts will make the national average cost of living even more representative. The current sampling of markets in the sample districts is for the 5 main markets and super markets. While this serves the purpose of sampling prices of commodities which both the lower income and middle-income households access, it has a weakness of under reporting the prices. Most of the main markets serve more like wholesale markets. For example, the likes of Soweto, Chisokone and Nakadoli markets are known to have the lowest food prices and so other marketeers buy from there only to

go and resell in other smaller markets closest to the communities with a mark-up. Therefore, the sampling of markets should be broadened to cover some smaller markets to get more representative mean prices of commodities.

A review of the items that the basket is composed of ought to be done after every five years as there are always changes to diets and food types while essential non-food items equally change. For instance, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, households have been obliged to channel money towards purchase of face masks and hand sanitizers. There is a good case for including airtime in the basket since airtime has become an essential item even for low-income households as communication is essential for work or business and has a significant proportion of household expenditure<sup>7,8</sup>. Some commodity amounts need to be revised, for example, one kilo of Kapenta per month appears too little for a family of 5. In the same vein, the BNNB should measure the different alternatives of fuel or gas per month because there are people now who are using alternative energy to do their cooking and for domestic use at a price that is cheaper than charcoal. These adjustments would make the BNNB more reflective of the evolving cost of basic needs and be a dynamic tool that responds to changes taking place in the times we are now (EIU 2021).

#### **4.5.2 A workplan for addressing the barriers**

In order to ensure that the various solutions to the barriers identified above are addressed in a systematic and practical way, it is proposed that the following workplan can be implemented over a period of 15 months effective March 2022.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.ipsos.com/en-ng/nigeria-now-and-future>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/entertainment/the-standard/2001366301/kenyans-spending-most-of-their-money-on-airtime-knbs>

Table 3: Workplan for addressing BNNB barriers

Barrier	Key tasks for JCTR to address barriers	Role of stakeholders	Time frame
Poor dissemination of BNNB results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TV and radio partnerships</li> <li>• Distribution in public spaces</li> <li>• Packaging for different audiences</li> <li>• Improving website interface</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dissemination of results</li> <li>• Critique of findings</li> <li>• Further use of results as required</li> </ul>	March 2022 – Sept 2022
Unclear Methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing the survey districts and respondents</li> <li>• Implement electronic data collection</li> <li>• Publicising methodology on website</li> <li>• Periodic review of BNNB items</li> <li>• Partnering with ZamStats</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Electronic data collection + supply Devices</li> <li>• Providing additional resources</li> <li>• Participate in engagements with JCTR</li> <li>• Lend technical capacities</li> </ul>	Oct 2022 – Dec 2022
Limited acceptability among stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Availing raw data to academics and students</li> <li>• Annual peer review of the BNNB with strategic stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing info on BNNB data needs and gaps</li> <li>• Participation in reviews</li> </ul>	May 2022
Limited technical understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Packaging results for different audiences</li> <li>• Use local language to disseminate results in some areas</li> <li>• Link value of BNNB to broad based advocacy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide translation services</li> <li>• Consultancy services</li> </ul>	April 2022 – Sept 2022
Limited opportunity for further Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make raw data available at a fee to researchers</li> <li>• Offer options for other uses of the BNNB data</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing info on BNNB data needs and gaps</li> <li>• Participation in reviews</li> </ul>	Jan 2023 – March 2023
Accessibility of BNNB data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use various media channels</li> <li>• Create an updated database (email list) of users</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Media consultancy</li> <li>• Registering into database via JCTR website and email</li> </ul>	On-going

## 4.6 Opportunities for Collaborations and Multi-sectoral Partnerships

JCTR can work more with different organisations on a range of activities around the BNNB as well those who can use the BNNB as input. At the highest level, partnerships need to be created with government and institutions that influence policy making in Zambia. Since BNNB speaks to the intents of what legislations such as the Minimum Wage seek to address, it is important to partner with parties in the Labour Advisory Committee: Ministry of Labour, Zambia Statistical Agency (ZamStats), and most representative union bodies such as Zambia Federation of Employers, Zambia Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) and Federation of Free Trade Unions (FFTU)<sup>9</sup>. Similar partnerships can be fostered with parties that influence other pro-poor policies such as the National Social Protection Policy<sup>10</sup> including the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services, Civil Society Organisations Scaling-Up Nutrition Alliance (CSO-SUN) among others.

At a technical level (which would greatly enhance methodology and acceptability of the BNNB), staff members at ZamStats have expressed interest in collaborating with JCTR on BNNB especially on the technical aspects of the report; re-designing the questionnaire, sampling, data collection and analysis. Such a collaboration has the potential of raising the acceptability of BNNB among certain stakeholders including government and academia. Similarly, opportunities abound for collaboration with academia on technical aspects of the BNNB.

Partnerships with grassroots level organisations present a great opportunity for dissemination of the BNNB to the grassroots where the information will reach the lower-income households. These organisations ought to be embraced as stakeholders, and equipped with capacity to understand and explain the BNNB to others. The goal of these engagements should be to increase ownership of the reports among different stakeholders by taking their input and disseminating the output which will translate in increased interest and usage of the data. For example, CARITAS expressed interest to collaborate on information sharing and joint activities in areas of common interest, and as disseminators of the BNNB. As relevant as BNNB is to their work, they reported limited and irregular access to the report.

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<sup>9</sup> The Minimum Wage Legislation

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.social-protection.org/gimi/gess/RessourcePDF.action?ressource.ressourceId=54164>



Further, the interest in the BNNB among stakeholders can be sustained by holding stakeholder engagement meetings regularly, say twice a year. In these meetings the mission of JCTR and the objectives of the BNNB is to be shared and input from stakeholders solicited to effectively achieve the objectives. These stakeholders should include government, labour unions, media, CSOs, and the private sector.

## 5.0 CONCLUSIONS

The importance of the BNNB in informing JCTR's advocacy work lies in its ability in advancing the needs of the most vulnerable people in society. This assessment therefore has played a crucial role in enhancing the JCTR's understanding of the relevance and usage of the BNNB across different users. It has shown that there is a large number of people and institutions that accesses BNNB data for their own needs. It is however essential that the centre develops a structured approach to keeping track of these users to ensure that their needs are adequately addressed. A database of these users would be an important first step while periodic gathering of feedback regarding the value of the reports would help in ensuring that they respond to felt user needs.

The assessment has also shown that the BNNB reports are being used for a wide variety of purposes. This is a very positive development which the centre can build upon. The reports are used by users for budgeting, lobbying and advocacy, research, activity planning, etc. However, issues of timely and widespread access to the reports have restricted usage. The several suggestions made towards rectifying this challenge, if implemented, would further increase the appeal and acceptability of the BNNB reports. One concern that could be raised is the cost of expanding reach and partnership. It is however the view of the assessor that this can be effectively managed by identifying strategic partnerships and gradually increasing reach over time.

The effectiveness of the BNNB justifies its relevance. Clearly, there is still room to expand its effectiveness across the different strata of users and the proposed measures such as packaging the results to suit the user appear to be reasonable options that will enhance effective user application. Similarly, localization of the reports seems appropriate in enhancing ownership.

The assessment has also identified several barriers to usage of the BNNB but it has also provided some tangible solutions which JCTR will do well to consider and apply. All in all, there is a lot of potential inherent in the BNNB as a cross cutting tool for intelligent and information based discourse. This report has shown that with some minor modifications, the monthly BNNB reports can be an even bigger force for social change.

## REFERENCES

1. Bwalya, S.M., Phiri, E. and Mpembamoto, K. 2011. How non-state actors lobby to influence budget outcomes in Zambia. *Journal of International Development* 23(3), 420–442
2. Economic Intelligence Unit (EIU), 2021. *Worldwide Cost of Living 2021*. London: The Economist.
3. The Minimum Wages and Conditions of Employment Act
4. The National Social Protection Policy

## ANNEX

### Annex 1: List of Assessment Respondents

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	Name	Organisation	Location	Position
1	Jackson Mujege Mbewe	CARITAS	Kitwe	Program officer
2	Clement Mwenda	Zambia Statistics Agency	Kitwe	Statistics Clerk
3	Chansa Chiyenge	Breakthrough Believers Church	Kitwe	Church leader
4	Stephen Mukupa	National Union of Miners and Allied Workers	Kitwe	Secretary General
5	Victor Chilufya	National Assembly Office	Kitwe	Programs officer
6	Mweene Himwiinga	Citizens for a Better Environment	Kitwe	Researcher
7	David Mwamba		Kitwe	Former unionist/ data disseminator
8	Imelda Chungu	JCTR	Luanshya	Data collector/consumer
9	Elizabeth Chileshe	JCTR	Chinsali	Data collector/consumer
10	Peter Phiri	JCTR	Mpika	Data collector
11	Dorothy Chiluba	JCTR	Kasama	Report dissemination
12	Finess Kasanda	JCTR	Kitwe	Data collector/disseminator
13	Martin Sikonda	JCTR	Kitwe	Volunteer
14	Maximus Choongo	JCTR	Kitwe	Volunteer
15	Dieudonne Micomyiza	JCTR	Solwezi	Staff
16	Chisenga Kapilya	JCTR	Kitwe	Volunteer
17	Ray O. Mwape	JCTR	Ndola	Volunteer
18	Samuel Mupeta	JCTR	Kasama	Volunteer
19	Ignitius Luyanga	JCTR	Mongu	Staff
20	David Limbuwa	YWCA	Mongu	Staff
21	Mr Chimuka	Africa Housing Fund	Mongu	Staff
22	Joseph Ngenda	Radio Lyambai	Mongu	Staff
23	Lydia Chiwaya	JCTR Staff	Monze	Staff
	Jerry Mukosiku	CSPR, Market Association	Monze	Member
24	Mr Imusho	BETUZ Monze	Monze	Staff
25	Kanchele Kanchele	Monze Council	Monze	Representative
26	Erick Liwali	Livingstone City Council	Livingstone	Representative
27	George Makaha	JCTR	Livingstone	Volunteer
28	Jacob Musabula	CARITAS	Livingstone	Staff
29	Christine Mutema	YWCA	Livingstone	Staff
30	Cunha Shantel	Resident	Livingstone	
31	Gerald Masenga	Resident	Livingstone	
32	Evelyn Bwalya	Resident	Livingstone	



33	Joseph Mweemba	Resident	Livingstone	
34	Centia Lyambai	Resident	Livingstone	
35	Siazilo Patricia	Resident	Livingstone	
36	Noble Petiwale	Resident	Livingstone	
37	Cynthia Chongo	Resident	Livingstone	
38	Chansa Nondo	Resident	Livingstone	
39	Beauty Munanswi	Resident	Livingstone	
40	Kingsley Mwengwe	Resident	Livingstone	
41	Melody Chiyanika	Resident	Livingstone	
42	Miyanda Muzyamba	Resident	Livingstone	
43	Davis Mulenga	Resident	Livingstone	
44	Mama Hamoonga	Resident	Livingstone	
45	Prisca Simasiku	Resident	Livingstone	
46	Collins Singalamba	Resident	Livingstone	
47	Francis Chishimba	Resident	Livingstone	
48	Sitali Abner- Livingstone	Resident	Livingstone	
49	Prudence Mungonze	Resident	Livingstone	
50	Imboela James	Resident	Livingstone	
51	Chanda Henry	Game Stores Workers Union-	Lusaka	Workers Rep
52	Hezel Mwila Bwalya	USAID	Lusaka	Staff
53	Richard Kajokoto	Varun Beverages (Z) Ltd	Lusaka	HR Director
54	Madam Ngelemina	Water AID	Lusaka	Staff
55	Rhoda Mofya Mukuka	IAPRI	Lusaka	Researcher
56	Madam Chansa	World Vision	Lusaka	Staff
57	Mr Mbewe	ZIPAR	Lusaka	Researcher

## Annex 2: Current and Potential BNNB Users

### Some Current BNNB Users Interviewed

Names	Organisation	Contact	Frequency of Use
Benson Fungai Chipungu	Zambia Water and Sanitation Engineering and Allied Workers' Union	<a href="mailto:bchipungu@lwsc.com.zm">bchipungu@lwsc.com.zm</a>	Monthly
Chansa Chiyenge	Breakthrough Believers Church	<a href="mailto:chanchiyn@gmail.com">chanchiyn@gmail.com</a>	Monthly
Christine Mutema	YWCA		Monthly
Clement Mwenda	Zambia Statistics Agency	0966653817	Monthly
David Limbuwa	YWCA		Monthly
David Mwamba	former ZCTU executive	0965407593	Monthly
Erick Liywali	Livingstone City Council		Monthly
Haakachaba Oliver	Basic Education Teachers Union of Zambia		Very rarely
Ignitius N. Luyanga	Youth and Child Care Foundation (CBO)		As and when needed
Jackson M. Mbewe	CARITAS	<a href="mailto:jackson.mbewe@yahoo.co.uk">jackson.mbewe@yahoo.co.uk</a>	As and when needed
Jacob Musabula	CARITAS		As and when needed
Mr Chimuka	African Housing Fund		Monthly
Ngenda Joseph	Radio Lyambai		Monthly
Peter Sinkamba	Citizens for a Better Environment	cbezambia@hotmail.com	As and when needed
Stephen Mukupa	National Union of Miners and Allied Workers	<a href="mailto:numaw2003@gmail.com">numaw2003@gmail.com</a>	As and when needed
Victor Chilufya	National Assembly	<a href="mailto:chilufya.vicmalozz@gmail.com">chilufya.vicmalozz@gmail.com</a>	Monthly
Chanda Henry	Game Stores Workers' Union	0979700221	As and when needed
Miss Ngelemina Livingstone	Water Aid	0979190074	As and when needed
Hazel Mwila Bwalya	US AID	0967984490	As and when needed
Richard Kajokoto	Varun Beverages (Zambia) Ltd	0966712512	As and when needed
Madam Chansa	World Vision	0977805600	
Mr. Mbewe	ZIPAR	0977860366	
Rhoda Mofya Mukupa	IAPRI	0975570456	

## Potential Users of the Monthly BNNB

Names	Email address
Allan Ngobola	<a href="mailto:angobola@yahoo.com">angobola@yahoo.com</a>
Barbara Mukuka Malilwe	<a href="mailto:barbaramukuka@yahoo.co.uk">barbaramukuka@yahoo.co.uk</a>
Brenda Mwaba	<a href="mailto:kayulamwaba2016@gmail.com">kayulamwaba2016@gmail.com</a>
Brian Mctribouy	<a href="mailto:mctribouy@gmail.com">mctribouy@gmail.com</a>
Bwalya Mutale	<a href="mailto:bwalyagmutale@yahoo.com">bwalyagmutale@yahoo.com</a>
Carol Mulenga	<a href="mailto:mulengac547@gmail.com">mulengac547@gmail.com</a>
Charles Musonda	<a href="mailto:kokolikofm@gmail.com">kokolikofm@gmail.com</a>
Christopher Lungu	<a href="mailto:chrislungu@gmail.com">chrislungu@gmail.com</a>
Clement Mwenda	<a href="mailto:mwendaclement3@gmail.com">mwendaclement3@gmail.com</a>
Clement Mulenga	<a href="mailto:clementmulenga0000@gmail.com">clementmulenga0000@gmail.com</a>
Dr Nelly Chunda Mwango	<a href="mailto:nchunda@gmail.com">nchunda@gmail.com</a>
Dr Rose Makano	<a href="mailto:rose.makano@gmail.com">rose.makano@gmail.com</a>
Edna Kabala Litana	<a href="mailto:ednackabz@gmail.com">ednackabz@gmail.com</a>
Emmanuel Ngozo	<a href="mailto:demanemmangozo@gmail.com">demanemmangozo@gmail.com</a>
Gerald Mutelo	<a href="mailto:geraldmutelo@gmail.com">geraldmutelo@gmail.com</a>
Henry Mupeta	<a href="mailto:jewhenry@outlook.com">jewhenry@outlook.com</a>
Koji Samuel	<a href="mailto:dekuku.1971@gmail.com">dekuku.1971@gmail.com</a>
Lubinda Nabiwa	<a href="mailto:lubinda84@gmail.com">lubinda84@gmail.com</a>
Luwi Muchima	<a href="mailto:kwalicha@gmail.com">kwalicha@gmail.com</a>
Margrate Pansho	<a href="mailto:margaretpansho@yahoo.com">margaretpansho@yahoo.com</a>
Martha Kafunda	<a href="mailto:Kafundamartha@yahoo.com">Kafundamartha@yahoo.com</a>
Mr Mambwe	<a href="mailto:mambweken@gmail.com">mambweken@gmail.com</a>
Mrs Mwaka Sinyinza	<a href="mailto:lungurumwaka@gmail.com">lungurumwaka@gmail.com</a>
Mutumwenu Muhau	<a href="mailto:tutumuhau87@gmail.com">tutumuhau87@gmail.com</a>
Mwamba Mutale	<a href="mailto:mutalemwamba521@gmail.com">mutalemwamba521@gmail.com</a>
Nathan Mbandama	<a href="mailto:mbandamanathan@gmail.com">mbandamanathan@gmail.com</a>
Olivia Banda	<a href="mailto:oliviabanda06@gmail.com">oliviabanda06@gmail.com</a>
Paul Mac'wani	<a href="mailto:pmacwani22@gmail.com">pmacwani22@gmail.com</a>
Peter Phiri	<a href="mailto:phiripeter35@gmail.com">phiripeter35@gmail.com</a>
Rev Jeremiah Chenge	<a href="mailto:jeremiahchenga45@gmail.com">jeremiahchenga45@gmail.com</a>
Richard Chella	<a href="mailto:bishrow@gmail.com">bishrow@gmail.com</a>
Rodney Mwamba	<a href="mailto:mwambarodney@gmail.com">mwambarodney@gmail.com</a>
Sydney Kapembwa	<a href="mailto:skapembwa@gmail.com">skapembwa@gmail.com</a>

## Annex 3: Terms of Reference

### CONSULTANCY TO UNDERTAKE STUDY AND PRODUCE REPORT ON THE USAGE AND RELEVANCE OF THE JCTR BASIC NEEDS AND NUTRITION BASKET AND CREATE A BNNB USAGE AND RELEVANCE TRACKING DATABASE

## Background

### 1.1 Introduction

The Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection (JCTR) is a faith-based organisation and a Ministry of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits). The Centre was formed in 1988 to translate into action Christian principles and values in a quest to promote social justice in Zambia. It provides from a faith inspired perspective, a critical understanding of current social, political and economic issues and generates action to address them. Key to its mission is the gathering and analysis of pertinent and topical data on issues, whose results are then employed in popular education and engagement with policy makers, service providers and other duty bearers on the identified issues.

JCTR has for over 30 years been monitoring the cost of living through its urban Basic Needs and Nutrition Basket (BNNB) and just commenced its rural Basic Needs and Nutrition Basket (RBNNB). The findings from the surveys are used to advocate for improved wellbeing of Zambians especially the poor, marginalised and vulnerable. Specifically, the urban BNNB is a monthly survey of prices of essential food and non-food items in selected towns. The RBNNB on the other hand is a quarterly survey assessing prevailing caloric intake and service provision against recommended indicators. Additionally in order to understand how people are coping given the cost of living in high density areas the Centre conducts the Satellite Homes Survey (SHS). The urban and rural BNNB together with the SHS thus form key JCTR tools in its mandate of promoting a faith that does justice.

JCTR with support from Irish Aid is implementing the Nutritious Foods Availability and Affordability Promotion Project whose goal is improved wellbeing of women and children through improved access to locally produced diverse and nutritious foods. It is aimed at complementing efforts of other partners to combat malnutrition by making information on the affordability and availability of nutritious foods available. This information aids consumers to understand the cost of a nutritious diet, whilst encouraging Government to put in place policies that address the affordability and availability of locally produced nutritious and diverse foods.



## **RATIONALE TO THE STUDY ON THE RELEVANCE AND USAGE OF THE BNNB**

Given the role that the BNNB plays in informing JCTR's advocacy work, it is therefore of great interest to the Centre to have an in-depth understanding of the relevance and usage of the BNNB to different stakeholders. This is in a bid to sustain improvements to the tool and enhance stakeholder engagements and collaboration.

## **Scope of Work**

### **1.1 The Usage and Relevance of the BNNB**

This work will respond to the following key research objectives:

1. To identify the main users of BNNB information and those that would be interested in the information through a mapping exercise.
2. To determine the importance of the BNNB data to the end-users.
3. To assess how effectively the data is used by the end-users
4. To identify barriers to effective use of the BNNB data.
5. To identify ways of addressing the barriers and improving BNNB as an advocacy tool
6. To identify opportunities for collaboration and multi-sectorial integration

### **Audience and Use**

The report will further inform project objectives. The database is pertinent for the regular tracking of BNNB usage and relevance. It is anticipated that this work will inform innovations and enhancement to JCTR's BNNB.

### **Deliverables and Proposed Timelines**

- The consultant will work under the supervision of the Social and Economic Development Programme Manager.
- The consultancy is for a proposed duration of twenty-five (25) working days
- Submit to JCTR an inception report outlining the consultant's understanding of the terms of reference, proposed methodology, timelines and activities to be conducted in undertaking this assignment.
- Final report adequately addressing all points in Clause 3.1 above with clear

recommendations the Centre can use to continue to track the usage and relevance of the BNNB.

- Availability to participate in further follow-on activities if need arise.

## **Consultant Requirements**

- The Consultant will need to demonstrate:
- At least 10 years of experience working in development related consulting.
- At least a university master's degree for the lead consultant in relevant educational background such as Economics, Policy Analysis, Statistics, Development Studies or other related fields. PhD degree will be an added advantage.
- Understanding of the role of communication in sensitisation and advocacy work. With strong speaking, and applied training skills.
- Demonstrated strong writing skills and ability to produce high quality research work as evidenced by publications of relevant studies, reports and/or articles.
- Proven track record of previous development of achievements with the Government, NGOs and Donor Agencies is desirable.

## **Expression of Interest**

All expressions of interest (of no more than eight pages) should include:

1. Technical Proposal: This should include a brief profile about the consultant with particular emphasis on previous experience related to this consultancy; the consultants understanding of the Terms of Reference, proposed work plan (timelines) and tasks to be accomplished etc.
2. Financial Proposal: This should provide cost estimates for the consultancy (fees based on person's days for the assignment). Tax obligations should be included.

## Submission of Expression of Interest

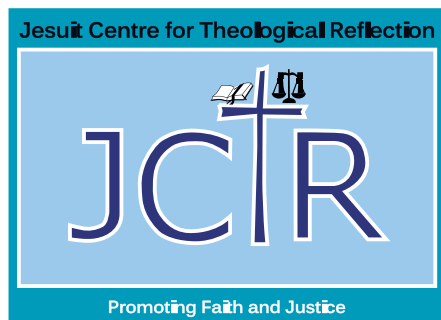
All expressions of interest should be addressed to:

The Executive Director  
Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection  
P.O. Box 37774  
Lusaka

The deadline for submission of the expressions of interest is Friday 13th August, 2021 at 12:00hours. In view of COVID-19 health concerns, all expressions of interest should be submitted electronically to [admin@jctr.org.zm](mailto:admin@jctr.org.zm)

For further details, contact us on (+260 211 290 410 or +260 955 290 410)

## Annex 4: Data Collection Tools



### Study on the Usage and Relevance of the JCTR Basic Needs and Nutrition Basket

#### Questionnaire for BNNB Users - Technocrats

##### Introduction:

JCTR has for over 30 years been monitoring the cost of living through its urban Basic Needs and Nutrition Basket (BNNB). The BNNB tracks the costs of food and non-food items in order to assess the cost of living for the average family size of five members. On a monthly basis, prices of selected food and non-food items are collected, analysed and disseminated to the public. Information generated from the BNNB has been used in various ways. These include; exposing the plight of the poor, monitoring effectiveness of government policies, wage negotiations, budgeting at individual and household level, promoting diet diversity at individual, household and national level.

The primary purpose of the assignment is to appreciate the Usage and Relevance of the BNNB with a view to then;

1. Addressing the barriers to effective use of the BNNB data;
2. Improving BNNB as an advocacy tool; and,
3. Identifying opportunities for collaboration with other organisations

We would therefore be very grateful if you can provide us with your views on a few questions regarding the BNNB. The interview will take 30 minutes at most and your views will be treated with the utmost confidentiality that they deserve.

**Are you willing to participate in the study? Yes/No**



Name of interviewee: .....

Sex of Interviewee: .....

Organisation/Institution Represented: .....

Name of interviewer: .....

Location: .....

Time start: .....

Time end: .....

#### A: Users of BNNB Data

1. Have you ever heard of the Basic Needs and Nutrition Basket (BNNB)?
2. Does your institution/organisation use the BNNB data in any way?
3. For how long have you been using the BNNB data?
4. Which other organisation are you aware of that uses BNNB data?

#### B: Importance of BNNB data

5. What is the most important feature of the BNNB data to you?
6. How have you benefited from the BNNB monthly reports?
7. To what extent do you use the BNNB data for the following: (tick all that apply)

	Possible use	Very large extent	Large extent,	Moderate extent,	Small extent,	Very small extent
a	Advocacy					
b	Lobbying					
c	Planning					
d	Research					
e	Activity planning					
f	Salary negotiations					
g	Cost of living analysis					
h	Political engagements					
i	Budgeting					
j	Others (Specify)					

8. How is the BNNB information contributing to the national nutrition policy or agenda?
9. From your perspective, what limitations does the BNNB data have?
10. Are you familiar with the BNNB methodology (i.e.; How the monthly BNNB is arrived at for each district)?
11. What improvements, in your view, need to be made to make the BNNB data more useful to your institution/organisation?

	Are of Improvement	Specific improvement actions
A	Improvements in dissemination of results	
B	Improvements in the design of the BNNB (technical content)	
C	Improvements in focus (i.e.; on both basic needs and nutrition)	
D	Improvements in increasing technical expertise around the BNNB	
E	Improvements in enhancing acceptability	
F	Increasing the amount of data collected	
G	Other(specify)	

**C: Effective use of BNNB data**

12. How often do you use the BNNB data?
  - a. Monthly (every time it is released)
  - b. Quarterly
  - c. Every six months
  - d. Annually
  - e. As and when needed
  - f. Very rarely
13. If not monthly, why don't you use the data more frequently?
14. Do you ever make decisions based on the BNNB data that you have collected?
15. What kind of decisions have you made in the past 12 months based on the collected BNNB data?

**D: Barriers to effective use**

16. To what extent is the current BNNB representative of the current market and nutrition situation and needs in the supported districts and or provinces?
17. What barriers hinder you from using the BNNB data more effectively? (select all

that apply)

- a. Accessibility of the data
  - b. Technical understanding of the BNNB data
  - c. General acceptability of the data by stakeholders
  - d. Weaknesses with data collection methodology of BNNB
  - e. BNNB is not representative enough
  - f. Outdated information/Delays in releasing the statistics
  - g. Not addressing financial considerations sufficiently
  - h. Not addressing nutrition considerations sufficiently
  - i. No internal capacity for further analysis
  - j. Other (Specify)\_\_\_\_\_
  - k. Ways of addressing the barriers and improving BNNB
18. What (dissemination) measures need to be taken to ensure the BNNB is used more widely (coverage)?
  19. What specific (methodological) improvements ought to be made to the BNNB (methodology)?

**F: Opportunities for collaboration and multi-sectorial integration**

20. How can your organisation engage more closely with JCTR's BNNB?
21. What opportunities exist for integration of the results/findings of the BNNB in decision making within the sector your organisation operates in?
22. Which other organisation/institution do you think would benefit or add value to the model of the BNNB?
23. How would they benefit/add value?

**Other Remarks by Interviewee**

## Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection

### Study On The Usage And Relevance Of The Jctr Basic Needs And Nutrition Basket

#### Questionnaire for BNNB Users

**Note:** Interviewer introduces the purpose of the study, significance of the interviewee, length of interview and gets consent to proceed with interview.

Name of interviewee: .....

Organisation/Institution Represented:.....

Name of interviewer:.....

Location: .....

Time start:.....

Time end:.....

#### A: Users of BNNB Data

24. Have you ever heard of the BNNB?
25. Do you use the BNNB data in any way?
26. For how long have you been using the BNNB data?
27. Which other organisation are you aware of that uses BNNB data?

#### B: Importance of BNNB data

28. What is the most important feature of the BNNB data to you?
29. For what purposes do you use the BNNB data? (tick all that apply)
30. To what extent do you use the BNNB data for the following:

	Possible use	Very large extent	Large extent,	Moderate extent,	Small extent,	Very small extent
a	Advocacy					
b	Lobbying					
c	Planning					
d	Research					
e	Activity planning					
f	Salary negotiations					
g	Cost of living analysis					
h	Political engagements					
i	Budgeting					
j	Others (Specify)					

31. From your perspective, what limitations does the BNNB data have?
32. Are you familiar with the BNNB methodology?
33. What improvements need to be made to make the BNNB data more useful to you?
  - a. Improvements in dissemination of results
  - b. Improvements in the design of the BNNB (technical content)
  - c. Improvements in focus (i.e.; on both basic needs and nutrition)
  - d. Improvements in increasing technical expertise around the BNNB
  - e. Improvements in enhancing acceptability
  - f. Other\_\_\_\_\_

**C: Effective use of BNNB data**

34. How often do you use the BNNB data?
  - a. Monthly (every time it is released)
  - b. Quarterly
  - c. Every six months
  - d. Annually
  - e. As and when needed
  - f. Very rarely
35. Why don't you use the data more frequently?
36. Do you ever make decisions based on the BNNB data that you have collected?
37. What kind of decisions have you made in the past 12 months?

**D: Barriers to effective use**

38. What barriers hinder you from using the BNNB data more effectively?
  - a. a. Accessibility of the data
  - b. Technical understanding of the BNNB data
  - c. General acceptability of the data by stakeholders
  - d. Weaknesses with data collection methodology of BNNB
  - e. BNNB is not representative enough
  - f. Outdated information/Delays in releasing the statistics
  - g. Not addressing financial considerations sufficiently
  - h. Not addressing nutrition considerations sufficiently
  - i. No internal capacity for further analysis



**E. Ways of addressing the barriers and improving BNNB**

- 39. What measures need to be taken to ensure the BNNB is used more widely?
- 40. What specific improvements ought to be made to the BNNB?

**F: Opportunities for collaboration and multi-sectorial integration**

- 41. How can your organisation engage more closely with JCTR's BNNB?
- 42. What opportunities exist for integration of the results/findings of the BNNB in decision making within the sector your organisation operates in?
- 43. Which other organisation/institution do you think would benefit or add value to the model of the BNNB?
- 44. How would they benefit/add value?



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