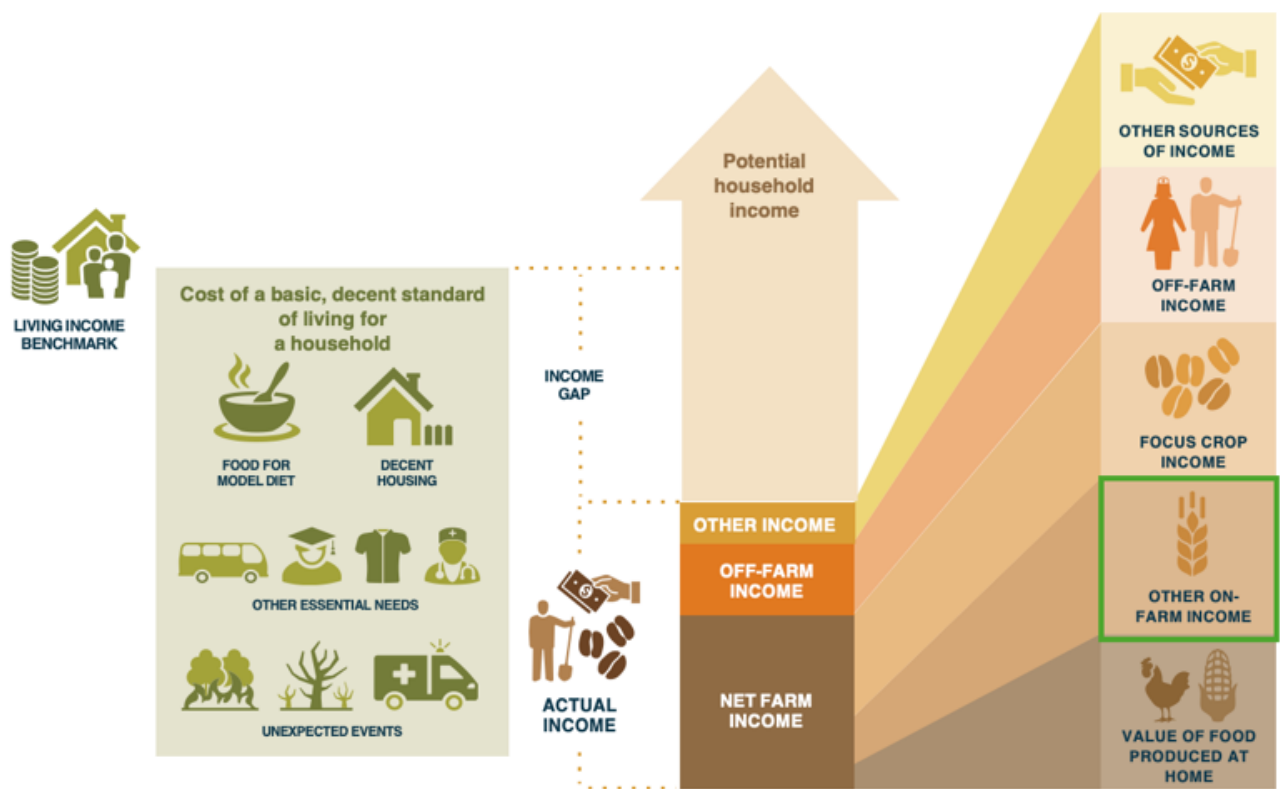


MEASURING OTHER ON-FARM INCOME: A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO CHOOSING THE RIGHT APPROACH

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How to Use this Guide

This guidance document stems from a structured conversation held at a Technical Advisory Committee meeting in February 2026. It is an accompaniment to the LICOP FAQ on Actual Income Measurement (found [here](#)) and is meant to provide deeper guidance on the subject of measuring and analysing other on-farm income. Read it in full or use the contents below to jump to the sections most relevant to your questions. Throughout, references link to specific tools and resources for further practical guidance.

As LICOP continues to develop guidance on income measurement, the goal is not to prescribe a single correct approach, but to equip practitioners with the knowledge to make informed, defensible methodological choices and to communicate those choices clearly to the stakeholders who rely on the data.

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MEASURING OTHER ON-FARM INCOME

Measuring the living income gap for smallholder farming households requires building a complete picture of net household income beyond the income from the 'focus' crop.¹ However, measuring other on-farm income (the net income from all crops and livestock other than the focus crop) is notoriously difficult. It can make surveys excessively long, place significant burden on farming households, and often produces data of uncertain accuracy. Moreover, this data is sometimes simply used only to "round out" focus crop income to be able to understand net household income, making the burden particularly not worth the effort. At the same time, skipping or oversimplifying it risks systematically misrepresenting the living income gap and, where relevant, ineffective programme design.

In February 2026, the Living Income Community of Practice (LICOP) Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) discussed this challenge. The session brought together practitioners, researchers, and measurement specialists, with presentations from Akvo, IDH and Dear Impact. This guidance document summarises the key methodological options discussed, the challenges each seeks to address, and practical guidance on choosing the right approach for your context.

There is no single correct approach to measuring other on-farm income. The LICOP TAC discussion confirmed that a range of approaches each have their place depending on the purpose, context, and capacity of the study. What matters most in measuring other on-farm income is the alignment between the chosen method and the purpose of measurement, combined with transparent documentation of the trade-offs made.

Relationship with value of food produced at home

Food produced at home is another important component of net household income as it reduces the amount of cash that farming households must spend on food purchases. Methods for calculating the value of food produced at home are closely related to methods for measuring other on-farm income. Some of the approaches discussed in this paper integrate the calculation for these two variables. Other approaches use entirely different methods for these two variables. This paper focuses on measuring other on-farm income, but many of the same principles, especially around balancing use case and capacity, also apply to measuring value of food produced at home. This paper does not cover all available approaches for measuring the value of food produced, but it notes if an approach integrates the calculation of these two variables.

WHY OTHER ON-FARM INCOME IS DIFFICULT TO MEASURE

- **Survey fatigue:** Collecting revenue and cost data for multiple crops over an entire year is time-intensive and can lead to survey fatigue, which leads to inaccurate responses across the whole survey.
- **Complexity of smallholder income:** Many smallholder farmers have limited record-keeping, lower literacy, and manage complex mixtures of crops (e.g., intercropped crops, self-

¹ The "focus" crop doesn't need to be the primary cash crop for the household. It is the focus of study (i.e., cocoa in the case of a study conducted on behalf of a chocolate company).

consumption crops, market crops, livestock, etc.) making it very hard to accurately assign revenues and costs.

- **Seasonality:** Not all farming activities may take place over the full course of the year and periods for production costs do not align with periods for harvest and income generation. An annual reference period could be challenging for farmers to remember accurately but narrowing scope to a last month could miss the importance of one income source vs another.
- **Multiple household income managers:** Often, women and men manage different crops. Getting an accurate picture of the household therefore often requires interviewing multiple household members, which takes additional time and is often not feasible or not prioritised.
- **Data quality and validation:** Without understanding underlying production data (volumes, yields, prices), it is very difficult to validate whether reported income values are realistic. Outliers and wildly inconsistent data are common when only total income figures are collected (as opposed to calculating it from underlying revenue and cost variables).

STARTING WITH USE CASE AND CAPACITY

A key point from the TAC discussion is that there is no universally 'right' method for measuring other on-farm income. Methodological decisions should be made based on two core factors: use case and capacity.

Use Case (your purpose)

The intended use of the data should drive every research design decision. Ask:

- Is the primary goal to calculate the living income gap for a general baseline to understand risk or materiality? If yes, would a rough estimate of other on-farm income be acceptable?
- Will the study inform programme design that may include a diversification component? Or does the programme intend to or already intervene on diversification? In these cases, an understanding of current diversification strategies and challenges and/or a detailed and accurate tracking of other on-farm income may be essential.
- Do you need to track change over time, or is a point-in-time estimate sufficient? If tracking over time, what core components will need to be collected so you can understand changes (for instance in how certain diversification crops are contributing to changes in household income)?
- What is the relative importance of the focus crop versus other crops? If the focus crop only accounts for 20–30% of household income, other on-farm income measurement becomes far more important to accurately understand net household income, than if the focus crop accounts for 80-90% of income. In those cases, other on-farm income also becomes more central to the overall income improvement strategy and may be critical information for farming households themselves as they make more informed decisions about their cropping systems.

In this guidance document, we use three example use cases to structure guidance on other on-farm income collection. LICOP FAQ on Actual Income Measurement identifies nine use cases for actual income measurement. These three are a subset and intended to complement rather than replace that framework.

1. **Hotspot analysis:** The primary goal is to estimate net household income to compare it to a living income benchmark across different locations. A hotspot analysis is meant to be a light

touch and could help stakeholders prioritize before they collect more detailed data for program design.

2. **Focus-crop programme design:** Programme design will concentrate on the focus crop (e.g. cocoa productivity and price). Other on-farm income data is needed to understand net household income, but will not directly drive intervention design.
3. **Diversification programme design:** The study will inform or evaluate interventions on the focus crop as well as on diversification (e.g., new crops, livestock, agroforestry, intercropping). Understanding what farmers currently grow and how much they earn from other on-farm production is essential to programme logic. The focus crop may account for a smaller share of income.

For endline studies, it is often best to use the same methodology as the baseline or initial design study, so you can attribute changes to the program rather than different methodologies. However, for midline studies, there are sometimes ways to reduce survey burden while maintaining the same broader methodology. For example, if you collect detailed production and cost data on household's other on-farm income in a baseline, in the midline you could first ask farmers if there have been any changes to the production since the last survey. If the farmer responds yes, you would re-collect all detailed data. If the farmer responds no, you would not have to ask the farmer any additional information and you could instead use the same production volume data as the last survey but update the market sale price, labor costs, and fertilizer costs with local expert estimates or context assessment.

Capacity

Capacity constraints shape what is feasible. Ask:

- What is the availability of existing secondary data sources?
- What is the budget and time available for data collection and how will you prioritize within those constraints?
- What is your access to and relationship with the farming households, what is appropriate to ask?
- What is the level of farmer literacy and record-keeping capacity?
- Are you able to engage local implementation partners, who are often essential for understanding measurement units, local price data, and crop management practices?

FIVE APPROACHES TO MEASURING OTHER ON-FARM INCOME

LICOP's Aligned Inclusive Indicators identifies four main approaches for measuring and reporting on other on-farm income, ordered from lower rigor estimates to more rigorous primary data collection.² This is not an exhaustive list of all methods for estimating income components, but these are the most common generalized approaches for smallholder value chains. With use case and capacity in mind, the TAC discussed each in terms of what they are designed to address and where they fall short. In

² LICOP, Aligned Inclusive Living Income Narrative and Indicators, 2024. https://www.living-income.com/fileadmin/living_income/The_Concept/Measurement/LICOP_publication_-_Aligned_Inclusive_Living_Income_Narrative_and_Indicators.pdf, p. 18.

addition to these four, Vincent Fobelets from Dear Impact presented a new approach that was well received by the TAC members as an innovative way to address specific challenges.

To illustrate the five approaches below, we use several open-source methodologies that are multi-stakeholder reviewed and accepted so that readers may reference the different approaches.

Estimating Farmer Household Income: how to use secondary data to estimate farmer household income, developed by Impact Institute: To help organisations find a less costly method of actual income assessment, Impact Institute adapted LICOP's and its own methods for actual income calculation to rely solely or primarily on information that is readily and publicly available.³

Cocoa Household Income Study Methodology (CHIS): CHIS provides the first sector-wide, standardised framework for assessing cocoa-farming household income. The methodology offers a reliable way to compare incomes against recognised living-income benchmarks (with minimum requirements and more rigorous options clearly marked).⁴

Income Measurement Guidance (IMG) tool developed by Akvo and IDH: an Excel-based instrument that helps companies generate tailored household income survey questions across multiple commodities, making explicit the trade-offs between precision and resource burden. The tool allows users to choose between a lean and a detailed approach to other on-farm income collection and can mix primary and secondary data collection depending on resource availability.⁵

Note: the CHIS methodology and IMG tool are aligned. The CHIS offers detailed methodological guidance developed specifically for cocoa growing households while the IMG tool offers a survey that can be tailored to the user's needs and covers several crops.

A. Secondary Data

Potential use case: Hotspot analysis

Use existing external sources (e.g., national agricultural surveys, census data, cooperative records, published research, or public living income or other socioeconomic studies, etc.) to estimate other on-farm income without collecting primary data from farming households.

This approach is best suited when reliable and locally representative secondary data exist, and when the study goal requires only a broad estimate of other on-farm income. It eliminates survey burden entirely for this component. However, it will not capture farm-level variation, and data currency and representativeness must be carefully assessed. If using secondary data to replace all data to understand other on-farm income, it would likely need to come from an already published living income study, as building up other on-farm data from secondary sources would be difficult.

³ Impact Institute for LICOP, Estimating farmer household income, 2020.

https://www.impactinstitute.com/wp-content/uploads/0c5ab3_de11a0e9da2f4e6b97da2c801ec950d6.pdf.

⁴ van der Haar, S., Janssen, V.C.J., Diallo, O., Boza, F.B., Diarra, I., Ingram, V., Kouadio, K.A.S., Laven, A., N'dri, A.N., N'guessan, A., Waarts, Y., 2024. Cocoa household income study approach; A sector-wide approach to assessing the living income status of households in the cocoa sector. Wageningen, Wageningen Economic Research, Report 2024-038. <https://worldcocoafoundation.org/storage/files/2024-cocoa-household-income-study-approach-wur-english.pdf>

⁵ Akvo and IDH, Income Measurement Guidance (IMG) tool, 2024. <https://idh.org/resources/income-measurement-guidance>

More likely, secondary data will play a role alongside primary data collection.

- *To provide accompanying data to that which is collected at the farm level.* For instance, you may collect data on the quantity of different types of crops harvested and match that with market prices from secondary data. Or as we will see in the asset-based approach below, matching the number of plants / livestock with a typical yield and market price from secondary data.
- *Triangulation.* For example, national agricultural censuses (where available and sufficiently granular) can help to validate household responses, to understand if yield / income from specific crops are feasible.

When is this approach best used?

If using only secondary data:

- Secondary data exists that is relevant (study population overlaps with population of interest), recent (previous 5 years), and of good quality
- This is a one-time estimate
- Any interventions stemming from this research will concentrate on the focus crop
- Income from focus crop is perceived to be a large proportion of net household income

If using secondary data alongside primary data:

- Secondary data exists that is relevant and of good quality
- Enough primary data is collected to capture difference across farmers, to be complemented with standard secondary data

See the [Impact Institute paper](#) on how to use and document secondary data to estimate farming household income for more information.

B. Self-Reported Percentage of Total Net Income

Potential use cases: Hotspot analysis or Focus-crop programme

This approach takes advantage of more detailed focus crop income data collection, to understand the “remaining share” of net household income. Note, this can be done to understand all other non-focus crop income (including off-farm and other income) or to just understand other on-farm income (paired with different approaches for understanding off-farm and other income).

An example of this approach is the minimum requirement approach described in the CHIS.⁶ Farmers list all household income sources and estimate what percentage of their total net income comes from each. The other on-farm income figure is then derived as the remaining shares (apart from focus crop income) to understand total net household income. This CHIS approach is fast to administer but asks farmers to estimate percentages of net income, often a challenging task for smallholders without formal record-keeping.

Practical Tips:

⁶ <https://worldcocoafoundation.org/storage/files/2024-cocoa-household-income-study-approach-wur-english.pdf>, p. 20

- Using visual or participatory techniques — such as asking enumerators to present income proportions as a basket of 100 beads (one technique referenced from CHIS guidance) — can make the concept more concrete and improve accuracy.
- Combining the percentage question with an absolute income question allows a cross-check that can flag implausible responses.
- Survey respondents are often better at accurately reporting revenue as opposed to net income. If you choose to do this, costs will need to be collected through different means (this could be through smaller survey groups, focus group discussions or secondary data where it exists). This CHIS guidance also suggests that “...for validation, more detailed data collection can be done for a small sample of cocoa-producing households”.⁷ This could apply to just costs or to the full other on-farm income figure.
- Only use this method when income from focus crop is perceived to be a large proportion of net household income (>50%). Otherwise, you are extrapolating most of the net income from only a small portion of data for which you have detailed data.

Key limitations raised in the TAC discussion include:

- Percentage estimation is difficult, particularly when applied to the concept of 'net income' across multiple sources. One TAC member noted a survey in which extrapolating from self-reported coffee income percentages produced implied household incomes of well above what could be accurate, which raises the importance of pairing this approach with 1) local teams who can help to walk farmers through the process and understand where responses do not seem feasible and 2) triangulating data where possible.
- Small inaccuracies in the percentage estimate are magnified when applied to derive other on-farm income.
- Percentage-based estimations lack a clear 'ground truth' and are difficult to validate (particularly during survey delivery).
- Sensitive income sources (e.g., large landholdings of other crops) may be under-reported.

When is this approach best used?

- Interventions stemming from this research will concentrate on the focus crop
- Income from focus crop is perceived to be a large proportion of net household income (>50%)
- In supply chains with higher levels of literacy/professionalization among farmers

C. Self-Reported Estimated Total Value

Potential use cases: Hotspot analysis or Focus-crop programme

In this approach, households are asked to provide an estimated total net income or total revenue figure for non-focus crops and livestock, as either a single aggregate or broken down by crop / livestock groupings. This approach offers a middle ground between the speed of the percentage method (B above) and the rigour of detailed crop-by-crop collection (D below). However, several TAC participants noted a limitation of this method. Without underlying production data (quantities, yields,

⁷ <https://worldcocoaoundation.org/storage/files/2024-cocoa-household-income-study-approach-wur-english.pdf>, p.20

prices), it is difficult to identify outliers or assess plausibility. This method therefore places more weight on careful enumerator guidance and farmer familiarity with their own income patterns.

When is this approach best used?

This approach is best when there is a large share of net household income that comes from the focus crop, meaning the other on-farm income portion matters more for completeness than for precision. It is less suitable when other on-farm income is highly variable or when farmers are unlikely to have a reliable sense of their aggregate earnings across multiple crops. It is generally not recommended unless there is strong record keeping on the farmer side, or a carefully designed questionnaire on the data collection side, which improves reliability considerably.

IMG Tool Type 1 Lean Method⁸

The lean method for the Income Measurement Guidance Tool developed by Akvo and IDH follows this approach. It first identifies all income sources and then isolates the two most income-significant non-focus crops. For those two crops it then collects a single aggregate income figure (total amount received per year). If a farmer has more than three crops, the net income from the additional crops is captured as a single aggregated figure.

For livestock, the lean method captures a single aggregated revenue figure across all livestock types. Costs for keeping livestock are measured through questions on the number of workers, their daily wage, and the number of days worked, plus any other costs.

D. Detailed Collection of Revenue and Costs per Income Source

Potential use case: Focus-crop programme, Diversification programme

The most rigorous approach involves collecting detailed data individually for each non-focus crop and livestock type. A survey asks the household to list the crops grown and then asks about revenue and costs. This is a commonly used method and can be conducted with differing levels of detail, giving options to align with your use case and capacity.

Several TAC members found that more detailed measurement consistently reveals higher total other on-farm income. This in turn shifts income diversification ratios and can substantially change a study's conclusions. Studies using simpler methods may be systematically overestimating the relative importance of the focus crop and inaccurately representing living income gaps.

While this method is considered the most rigorous, it does carry challenges as well:

- Very resource intensive for field teams and time intensive for farming households. This can be addressed in part by choosing a leaner method within this approach.
- Requires significant contextual input from local partners to pre-load crop-specific measurement units into survey instruments.

When is this approach best used?

This approach can be done with varying degrees of detail, depending on your use case and capacity. For example, if diversification-focused program elements will be focused on select crops / livestock options, you could choose to collect detailed data on these 1 or 2 select crops / livestock and more

⁸ <https://idh.org/resources/income-measurement-guidance>

general data on other on-farm income. If research is meant to track changes in whole farm investment decisions over time and/or to inform programme design for on-farm diversification, it might make sense to collect detailed data on all other on-farm income sources.

In addition to using this method to estimate other on-farm income for every household in a study, you can use it to estimate other on-farm income for specific farm typologies to then apply the estimate to all farmers in that typology.

IMG Tool Type 2 Detailed Method⁹

The detailed method for the Income Measurement Guidance Tool developed by Akvo and IDH follows this approach. By collecting revenue and cost variables independently, this methodology enables calculation of mean income values per crop, identification of outliers, and correction of data errors during or after collection. It first identifies all income sources and then isolates the two most income-significant non-focus crops. For those two crops, this approach collects:

- Quantity produced, sold, consumed, price per unit to calculate revenues. Quantity sold is sufficient for estimating income, but also capturing quantity produced and quantity consumed gives insights into broader production and food security indicators, including value of food produced at home. *Requires preloading input on what these other crops and measurement units may be.*
- Production costs for inputs, labour, other

For income sources beyond the three main crops (focus crop plus two others), users can apply the lean approach described in section C or opt for a more detailed measurement.

- Other crops: The detailed approach measures net income per crop type, asking both total net income and production costs for each individual crop.
- Livestock: The detailed approach measures revenue per livestock type. Costs are captured in more detail than the lean method, covering labour (number of workers, days hired, and daily wage), fodder and water, and medicines and veterinary services.

CHIS Recommended Approach¹⁰

The CHIS recommended approach follows a similar logic as the IMG Tool. Respondents first list all household income sources (excluding cocoa) and identify the two most important crops by income. For those two crops, the survey collects:

- The responsible household member
- Gross income per day/week/month
- Total production costs per the same time period
- The number of days/weeks/months per year in which income was obtained.

All remaining crops are grouped into an "Other crops" category, for which respondents report total amount received per year and frequency of payment. This approach captures the detail needed to understand crop-level income contributions while keeping the survey manageable by limiting full revenue-and-cost collection to the two highest-value non-focus crops.

⁹ <https://idh.org/resources/income-measurement-guidance>

¹⁰ <https://worldcocoafoundation.org/storage/files/2024-cocoa-household-income-study-approach-wur-english.pdf>

E. The Asset-Based Approach: A New Innovative Approach

Potential use cases: Focus-crop programme or Diversification programme

One of the most novel methods discussed in the TAC session was an alternative approach developed by Dear Impact in partnership with ofi, which seeks to balance accuracy with survey burden. It is particularly well-suited to contexts with high crop diversification, intercropping, and limited farmer record-keeping. The method does not ask farmers to recall revenues and costs. Rather, the approach separates data collection into that collected at the farm level and that coming from secondary sources:

Collected from farmers (individual survey):

- A list of all crop and livestock types produced
- For each type: the number of productive plants, trees, or animals. If your data/survey architecture allows, it is advised to use hectares for annual crops, like rice.¹¹

Collected at a higher level (sub-sample, cooperative, agricultural surveys, published research, expert knowledge):

- Average actual yield (as opposed to target or feasible yield) per crop, livestock, or area unit under typical management¹²
- Average market price per crop or livestock unit
- Average operating margin (revenues minus production costs divided by revenues) per crop or livestock type under typical management or, or as an alternative depending on the production system, resource availability, and desired accuracy of results, calculated only for the 2 or 3 key crops and livestock.

Income per crop type is then computed by combining the farmer-reported asset count with the higher-level yield, price, and margin data. This means that farmers are never asked to estimate revenues or costs, only the quantity of crops/livestock on farm. Using a pre-defined list of locally relevant crops, developed with local partner input can help to keep farm-level collection manageable.

Advantages

- Avoids difficult percentage and financial estimation questions, reducing cognitive burden and the risk of recall errors.
- Automatically covers both sold and self-consumed products by valuing all output at market price. Could be paired with a question about what portion is consumed vs. sold if it is helpful to have separated results for value of food produced at home for programme decision-making.
- Asset counts (number of trees, animals) may also be relevant for environmental and sustainability monitoring, such as carbon sequestration calculations.

¹¹ To minimize survey fatigue and resource intensiveness as much as possible, the farmer is only asked to provide an estimation of the asset count per crop or livestock. Depending on your organization's resource capacity and the farmers' time availability, you could build on this approach and, for example, ask the farmer about the use of improved yield varieties. This also means that you need to collect additional higher-level data (per crop, the average actual yield of improved varieties vs. regular varieties).

¹² For annual income calculations, this is an annualized value. This means that, for goods that are not harvested each year (such as wood or meat), the amount produced should be divided by the amount of years it takes to grow the good on the farm. For example, if a pig spends on average 4 years on a farm before it is sold or consumed for its meat, the average annual production is 0.25 pig.

- Tracking changes in assets (e.g., the number of banana trees) over time is more reliable than percentage-based income estimates, making progress tracking easier.

Key limitations

- Relies on the assumption that average yields, costs of production, and operating margins are sufficiently representative of the farmer population. Individual management differences that may result in yield / quality variation are not captured.
- Requires a separate data collection pathway for yield, price, and costs.
- It may be most precise for cases where farmers have managed planting themselves to improve data accuracy on plant or tree counts

When is this approach best used

- Contexts with high crop diversification, intercropping, and limited farmer record-keeping.
- Research is meant to track changes in non-focus crop investment decisions over time.
- Research is meant to inform programme design where on-farm diversification interventions may be included.

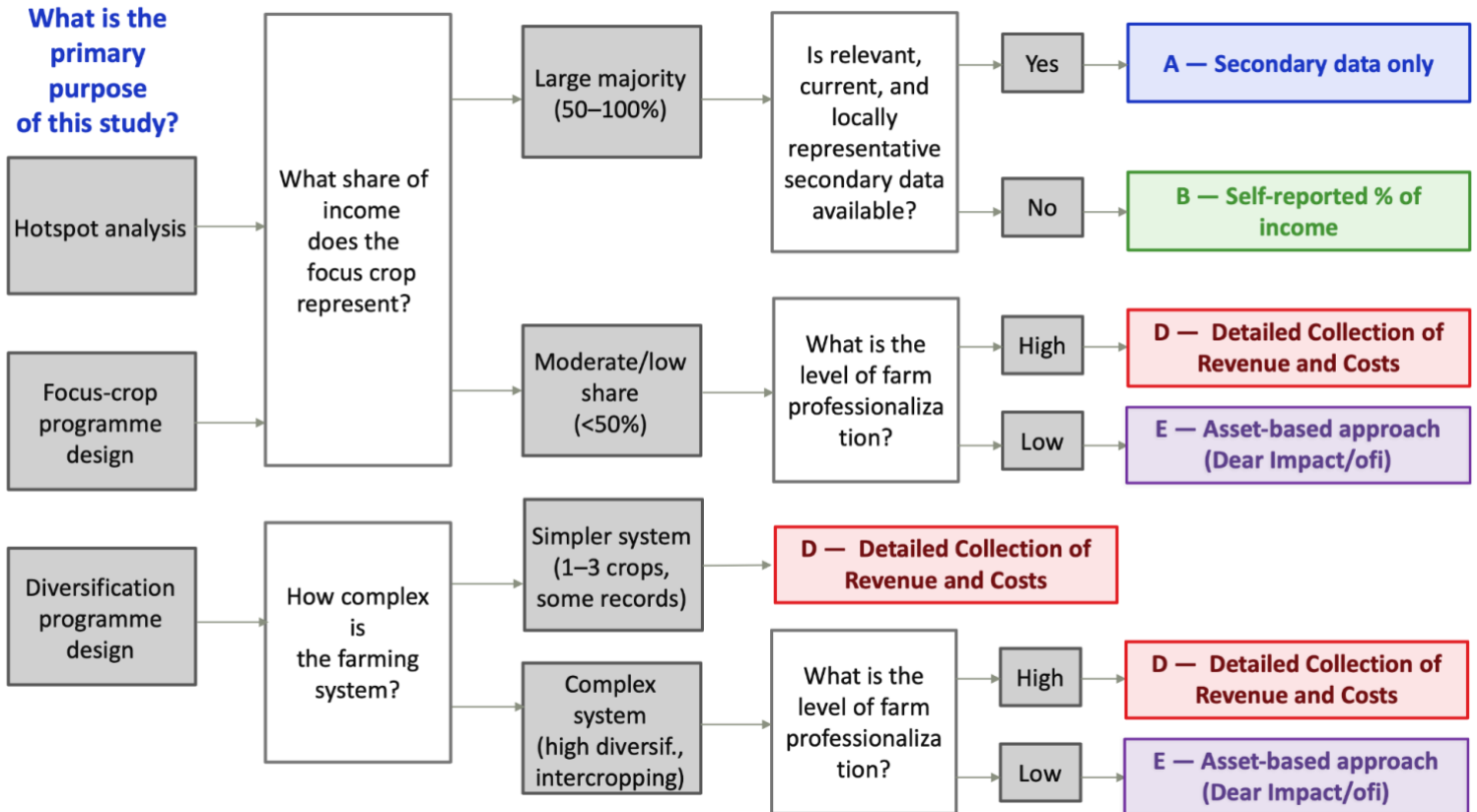
SUMMARY OF METHODS

The table below summarises all five main approaches discussed by the LICOP TAC.

Method	Potential use case	Survey burden	Data accuracy	Key strengths	Key limitations
A Secondary data only	1. Hotspot analysis	Very low	Context-dependent	No survey burden on households; suitable as primary approach when a recent representative source exists; useful for triangulation alongside any primary collection	No farm-level variation; local representativeness must be carefully assessed
B Self-reported % of income	1. Hotspot analysis 2. Focus-crop programme	Low	Moderate	Fast and low burden; sufficient to round out household income for gap analysis; improved by visual aids (e.g. '100 beads' technique)	Percentage estimation is cognitively difficult; errors amplify; hard to validate in the field
C Self-reported total value	1. Hotspot analysis 2. Focus-crop programme	Low	Low	Fast and low burden; sufficient to round out household income for gap analysis; well-suited for professionalized farmers	Produces inconsistent results without underlying production data to anchor or validate responses
D Detailed collection of revenue and costs per income source (more and less rigorous methods)	2. Focus-crop programme 3. Diversification programme	Medium-High	Medium-High	Enables outlier identification and correction; captures crop-level detail for diversification design; flexible depending on need	More resource-intensive
E Asset-based approach (Dear Impact/of)	2. Focus-crop programme 3. Diversification programme	Low (farm level)	Medium-High	Suited to high-diversification and intercropped systems; asset counts more reliable than income recall for longitudinal tracking; includes value of food produced at home	Assumes representative average yields/margins; requires separate secondary or expert data pathway

EXAMPLE DECISION TREE

Below is an example of a decision tree for how practitioners can decide on what methodology might be best suited to their use case and capacity. In addition to the decision points in the below tree, the final choice might depend on the already existing data collection frameworks in place, sampling strategy, available resources, budget, etc.



SUMMARY OF KEY INSIGHTS AND PRACTICAL ADVICE

No matter what methodology is chosen, there are some key insights that will help to guide a practical approach to other on-farm income.

1. Start with purpose

Every methodological decision should flow from why other on-farm income is being measured, or what LICOP refers to as the “use case”. The rigor with which you collect this data depends on two main areas:

Typical role of diversification for smallholders: Where the focus crop dominates and other on-farm income is minimal, a rough estimate may be appropriate.

Possibility of on-farm diversification intervention: Where diversification (non-focus crop and livestock) may be part of the strategy to build net household income, more detailed measurement is essential. Where the study user will only intervene on the focus crop, less rigorous measurement is suggested to ease the burden on farming households. The choice exists on a continuum, and describing that choice clearly, with its implications for budget, accuracy, and data variability, is the most useful guidance practitioners need.

2. Expect higher totals with more detail

Moving from simple to more detailed measurement tends to reveal higher other on-farm income. This risk of underestimating the importance of other crops with less detailed data collection matters for the living income gap calculation, for income diversification conclusions, and for programme design. Studies using less detailed methods should acknowledge this limitation explicitly.

3. Ask about revenues, not net income

Many farmers find gross revenue easier to recall than net income (revenue minus costs). For other on-farm income, consider collecting revenues from farmers and developing production cost estimates separately from secondary data or expert input.

For intercropped systems, production costs are often shared between crops (e.g., fertiliser applied to a mixed coffee, vanilla, banana plot), making accurate cost attribution very difficult. In these types of systems, you may choose to focus on revenue and then collect whole plot costs which can then be disaggregated by the portion of plot covered by the crop.

4. Talk to multiple household members

Often, women and men manage different crops within the same household. Where possible, build time for speaking with multiple household members into study design, particularly for studies aiming for detailed other on-farm income measurement.

5. Invest in local partner collaboration

Local partners are essential: they identify the relevant crop mix, provide local measurement unit conversions, and support enumerator training on difficult questions. Particularly, with less rigorous

forms of measurement, where estimates or secondary data is used, local collaboration is critical to ensure a minimal level of accuracy.

6. Use harvest patterns and payment frequency for income stability insights

Asking how often and on what basis farmers receive income from different sources can illuminate income stability and vulnerability to lean seasons and price fluctuations. This is valuable context that sits beyond income level measurement alone. For market-oriented crops, payment frequency is a useful proxy, but for crops consumed at home, income is better understood through the frequency of harvest, household consumption patterns, and whether output can be stored or is perishable. Where income diversification is a central program objective, tracking harvest patterns and how crops are allocated (sold, consumed, stored, or given away) over time may justify more detailed data collection.

7. Document methods and assumptions transparently

Whatever methodology you use, document the rationale, assumptions, and limitations alongside the income figures. Clear documentation supports comparability across studies, understanding of data irregularities, and reader understanding of the validity of results.