

## JOINT PRINCIPLES FOR TARGETING ASSISTANCE TO MEET FOOD AND OTHER BASIC NEEDS TO PERSONS OF CONCERN

### I. PURPOSE

UNHCR and WFP (hereafter “the Agencies”) agree that individuals caught in different crisis situations have distinct needs and capacities. Humanitarian assistance delivered for their benefit can thus be differentiated on the basis of these needs while ensuring that their protection is not put at risk. Undertaken properly, targeting of assistance ensures that individuals receive the most appropriate support to address their needs and reinforce their capacities<sup>1</sup>. It thereby also contributes significantly towards a more effective use of resources.

Under UNHCR’s overall protection and solutions strategy for persons of concern, WFP and UNHCR provide assistance to ensure that food and other basic needs<sup>2</sup> are met. Recognizing the complementarity between this assistance and the increased use of cash as a modality, UNHCR and WFP commit to collaborate on targeting in-kind and/or cash assistance to those most in need based on rigorous analysis to ensure a protection-focused, collaborative and evidence-based approach in support of the humanitarian principles.

This document sets out joint principles that UNHCR and WFP have agreed for targeting assistance to meet food and other basic needs<sup>3</sup> of refugees, asylum - seekers, returnees and stateless persons, (hereafter referred to as “persons of concern”). These principles are also relevant for targeting livelihoods assistance to support self-reliance in food security and nutrition objectives<sup>4</sup>. It also outlines how UNHCR, WFP, governments, partners and other stakeholders will collaborate throughout the targeting process.

Funding and resource constraints faced by many operations today may compel prioritization of assistance. Prioritization is driven by inadequate resources to meet the needs whereas targeting of assistance aims to meet the established needs. Depending on the context, the two processes could intersect and even follow similar procedures. In either case, all efforts will be made to ensure that

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<sup>1</sup> *Capacities* refers to the human, natural, physical, economic and social capital of persons of concern that influences their livelihoods opportunities.

<sup>2</sup> Food assistance is a set of interventions designed to enable food-insecure populations to access sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. Other Basic Needs assistance includes utensils, cooking pots, fuel, and soap and complements a range of services and activities designed to ensure access to life-saving and essential health care; water, sanitation and hygiene; education, livelihoods and access to shelter. Food and other basic assistance can be provided in-kind or as cash in support of sector-specific interventions and services depending on the context.

<sup>3</sup> The principles have been elaborated bearing in mind the scope of collaboration between the two organizations set out in their Global Memorandum of Understanding of 2011.

<sup>4</sup> As per the UNHCR/WFP Joint Strategy for Enhancing Self-Reliance in Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Refugee Settings (September 2016)

the needs of the most vulnerable<sup>5</sup> are covered in ways that strengthen protection outcomes, foster self-reliance and durable solutions, and contribute to community cohesion. Meanwhile, UNHCR and WFP will also seek to mobilize the resources to address the needs of the population of concern as comprehensively as possible.

Joint Operational Guidelines on Targeting Assistance to Meet Food and Other Basic Needs is forthcoming and will further elaborate on the joint process, approaches and steps in targeting and prioritising assistance.

## II. RATIONALE

UNHCR's mandate is to ensure international protection for refugees and asylum-seekers and cooperate with states in seeking permanent solutions<sup>6</sup> for their problems. UNHCR also protects and assists returnees, stateless and internally displaced persons. Based on registration data combined with multi-sector and protection-focused assessments, UNHCR supports states to provide protection, universal primary health care, shelter, livelihoods, energy, access to clean water and sanitation and education alongside other basic assistance to persons of concern. WFP's mandate is to contribute to ending hunger, to save lives and livelihoods, to improve nutrition and to help build assets and promote self-reliance of vulnerable people, including refugees. Robust assessment methods and analyses provide the evidence and inform the design of WFP's food assistance programmes. Both agencies work in close partnership with governments, international and national organizations, civil society, and the displaced and affected populations themselves.

The Global Memorandum of Understanding the two organizations concluded in 2011 (hereafter the "Global MoU") establishes the framework for their collaboration and details their respective roles and responsibilities in ensuring food security for and meeting the related needs of persons of concern while contributing to their protection and pursuing solutions for them.

Persons of concern often do not have access to land, are not entitled to work or lack freedom of movement, inhibiting their ability to assure their own food and economic security. Without appropriate assistance, they may resort to negative coping mechanisms compromising their well-being. For these reasons and recognizing the variety of vulnerabilities caused by displacement, UNHCR and WFP have often provided food assistance and other basic assistance to all persons of concern while ensuring specific services and assistance (such as treatment of acute malnutrition and disease, as well as livelihoods assistance and legal support) are targeted based on individual needs. Moving forward, the Agencies agree to target assistance to meet food and other basic needs, where appropriate and feasible, based on rigorous analysis of food insecurity, protection risks and socio-economic vulnerabilities.

## III. JOINT PRINCIPLES

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<sup>5</sup> As per the Global Memorandum of Understanding.

<sup>6</sup> Durable solutions include voluntary repatriation, local integration and resettlement in a third country. UNHCR also pursues complementary pathways toward solutions.



The principles outlined below shall guide the actions of UNHCR and WFP in selecting and identifying persons of concern in need of assistance of food and other basic needs.

Principle	Guidance
<b>Protection-focused</b>	Targeting must promote and reinforce the protection of persons of concern and contribute to livelihood and solutions outcomes as feasible in line with a rights-based approach. Accordingly, targeting should be informed by an analysis of protection risks and benefits and continuous monitoring of protection results, as well as measures to identify and mitigate possible negative consequences.
<b>Collaborative</b>	UNHCR and WFP will coordinate and work collaboratively with governments and partners to jointly decide on the most appropriate approach, eligibility criteria and implementation methods for targeting assistance in each context. The Agencies will share knowledge and information to support these processes within the framework of a global agreement on data sharing. <sup>7</sup>
<b>Participatory</b>	Participation of persons of concern must be ensured at all stages of targeting in an inclusive, timely, systematic and transparent manner.
<b>Inclusive</b>	Targeting must not be discriminatory and should take into account specific needs and risks related to age, gender, disability and diversity. Targeting processes, criteria and outcomes need to reflect this inclusive approach at all stages and respond adequately to the specific needs and risks identified.
<b>Evidence-based</b>	Food-insecure, economically vulnerable and individuals/groups with specific protection risks shall be identified and targeted for assistance to meet their food and other basic needs based on objective information and practical eligibility criteria.
<b>Relevant</b>	In-depth contextual, risk, food security and vulnerability analyses are the bedrock for defining needs and subsequent relevant assistance for persons of concern and should inform targeting decisions. The agreed targeting approach should be designed and actioned jointly for the specific context in question.
<b>Accurate</b>	The objective of the targeting process is to include all eligible persons of concern while excluding those not eligible and provide appropriate levels of assistance to households and individuals based on their identified needs. Eligibility criteria must be reviewed and periodically adapted according to the context and in light of feedback and monitoring.
<b>Coherent</b>	The targeting of assistance for food and other basic needs should be coordinated to ensure that needs are met in a coherent and balanced manner. Failure to meet the other basic needs of populations of concern could result in food assistance not being used as intended, potentially comprising food security. The food security situation of the host community should also be reviewed and considered to avoid potential conflict between

<sup>7</sup> As of the time of issuing these principles, UNHCR and WFP are finalizing a global agreement on data sharing which will become an Addendum to their Global MoU.

	the two groups.
<b>Proportionate</b>	The Agencies should aim to transfer the adequate quantity/value of assistance to meet the need of persons of concern. The total financial costs to carry out a targeting exercise should be weighed against the costs to provide assistance to all and overall protection outcomes of targeting.
<b>Accountable</b>	Accountability to persons of concern must be ensured through communication, participation, transparent processes, feedback, and complaints mechanisms that help to identify unmet needs, detect errors and correct targeting as necessary. Information on targeting – including eligibility criteria – must be discussed with persons of concern.
<b>Monitored</b>	The targeting process, eligibility criteria, protection risks, risk mitigation mechanisms and food security outcomes should be monitored across the population of persons of concern and the approach adapted as necessary.

#### IV. TARGETING PROCESS

The process of targeting includes assessing the distinctive needs and capacities of the persons of concern, defining eligibility criteria and identifying those eligible. It entails close review of the overall context, including relevant government policies, the assets of the persons of concern and their ability to access livelihoods and/or markets. An appeal, complaints and feedback mechanism and regular monitoring are vital to enable the revision of the targeting approach and eligibility criteria as things move forward. A referral system for individuals in need of other assistance beyond food and other basic needs, such as protection services or health care, is crucial. Stakeholders should be closely engaged throughout the process; thus, UNHCR and WFP will jointly identify existing-, or establish multi-stakeholder mechanisms for inclusive discussion and decision-making on targeting. The forthcoming Joint Operational Guidelines on Targeting Assistance to Meet Food and Other Basic Needs will elaborate on the process in greater detail.

#### ASSESSING NEEDS OF PERSONS OF CONCERN

Understanding the vulnerabilities, specific needs and capacities of persons of concern is a critical component of targeting. In contexts that involve refugees, UNHCR and/or governments register persons of concern in order to protect and understand their needs. Registration data can provide an overview of needs (though the extent of the data collected depends on the situation). In refugee contexts, UNHCR coordinates multi-sector needs and protection specific assessments as well as on-going protection monitoring with the government and partners to inform the response. UNHCR and WFP will jointly assess the food security, nutrition and socio-economic situation of persons of concern to understand overall food and other basic needs to inform targeting of assistance and guide livelihood and self-reliance programming.<sup>8</sup> Additional sector-specific assessments, in such areas as shelter, health and education, will be required to inform the targeting of sector-specific assistance. For assessments not implemented jointly, the Agencies will share assessment procedures

<sup>8</sup> Section 3.6 of the Global MoU.



and results among themselves and with other partners to avoid duplication and enhance efficiency and effectiveness.

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## DECIDING THE APPROPRIATENESS OF TARGETING

Targeting should be considered at the earliest stage possible in the programme cycle, recognizing that in sudden onset emergencies provision of assistance to all (blanket assistance) may be most appropriate. This should however be reviewed, and the feasibility of needs-based targeting determined, as soon as possible.

Targeting may not be appropriate or feasible in all circumstances due to factors such as the cost, security or protection risks associated with targeting. The decision to target assistance should be based on an analysis of the mentioned factors as well as the food security, nutrition and socio-economic context and conditions with the 'do no harm' principle in mind.

In stable situations and in collaboration with partners and governments, UNHCR and WFP will, through joint assessments, such as the JAM, or other multi-agency assessment processes, jointly decide whether or not to target, whom to target and which criteria and approaches to use. A decision to target or not to target assistance should be documented and reviewed periodically (and included as a standard feature of JAMs).

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## SELECTING A TARGETING APPROACH

Based on joint contextual analysis and the particular objectives of the assistance, UNHCR, WFP, the local authorities and, where relevant, partners will agree on the most appropriate targeting approach. Typical approaches include:

- Demographic/categorical targeting based on vulnerability criteria such as households headed by women, households with children under 5, pregnant and breastfeeding mothers or disabled.
- Geographic targeting focusing on people living in specific locations.
- Community-based targeting in which the community takes part in defining the eligibility criteria and/or identifying beneficiaries.
- Self-targeting whereby individuals must apply for assistance or self-select for activities designed to attract those with, for example, the right capacities for certain livelihood activities.
- Statistical methods such as proxy means tests.

Often a mixed methods approach is most appropriate.

Regardless of the approach used, UNHCR and WFP will promote and ensure the participation throughout the targeting process of persons of concern of different ages, gender and other personal characteristics without discrimination. The Agencies will document, discuss with and communicate the objectives, rationale and purpose of the targeting to persons of concern in a transparent manner.

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## DEFINING ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Robust analysis is required to define eligibility criteria. UNHCR and WFP will jointly analyse information from needs-, sectoral, socio-economic assessments, protection monitoring as well as registration data when determining eligibility criteria. The type of analysis will differ across operations and according to the targeting approach, depending on the availability and robustness of registration and other data. Decisions should also be informed by previous experiences and learning and in cooperation with the authorities when appropriate.

In general, eligibility criteria should be:

- SMART (specific, measurable/identifiable, agreed, relevant and valid for a period of time);
- Operationally practical (using e.g. household demographic indicators captured in *proGres* – UNHCR’s registration and case management system – wherever possible, to minimize the need for additional data collection);
- Informed by joint needs assessments, monitoring exercises and reviews and associated with food insecurity, nutrition, economic vulnerability, self-reliance, specific protection needs; and
- Agreed by both Agencies, the government, persons of concern, and the stakeholders and partners involved.

Drawing on the results of monitoring and engagement with the persons of concern, individual cases with specific protection vulnerabilities yet excluded from targeted assistance will be reviewed by both agencies to ensure their needs are met.

UNHCR and WFP country offices that do not have the capacity to develop or agree on joint targeting methodologies or eligibility criteria shall approach their respective Regional Bureaux or Headquarters for technical support.

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#### ACCURACY OF ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA: REVIEW AND FEEDBACK MECHANISMS

A targeted approach aims to accurately identify those in need while excluding those not in need so as to maximize the efficiency of assistance. Because errors can occur in the selection of beneficiaries eligible for targeted assistance based on a standard set of criteria, there should be robust monitoring, complaints and feedback mechanisms to identify and address errors and provide feedback on the effectiveness of the eligibility criteria. Together with partners and persons of concern, UNHCR and WFP will review the information from monitoring and feedback mechanisms and address the issues arising. In particular, targeting methods and/or eligibility criteria shall be adapted to ensure that those in need are included in appropriate assistance.

When self-targeting approaches are used, steps will be taken to ensure that those most in need are mobilized and have the opportunity, means and/or capacity to apply for assistance.

When assistance is targeted, UNHCR and WFP will jointly monitor the situation of recipients and non-recipients of assistance provided to meet food and other basic needs.

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#### DATA SHARING FOR TARGETING

UNHCR and WFP will work together to analyse the information and data available – including contextual, protection and operational aspects – so as to understand the needs of the persons of concern.



Different types of data and information are required to analyse the situation, assess needs and define eligibility criteria for targeting as well as for actual implementation and monitoring. The agencies will share pertinent data in line with the Addendum on Data Sharing to the Global MoU so as to facilitate the targeting process and avoid duplication while paying due attention to the respective institutional policies and guidelines on data protection<sup>9</sup>, in particular that:

- The need for the data in question is legitimate and fair for purposes of the relevant actions.
- The need for data in question is specified, necessary and proportional.
- The rights of the subject of the data are respected.
- The data is treated with the necessary confidentiality and security and is accountably supervised.

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## IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PRINCIPLES

The Agencies commit to a joint process for targeting assistance to meet food and other basic needs of persons of concern. Recognizing varying operational capacities and programme cycles, it may not be feasible or realistic to jointly conduct each step in the targeting process. However, the agencies commit to joint decision making throughout the targeting process guided by a protection-focused and evidence-based approach and in support of joint plans of action. Regional Bureaus and Headquarters will support Country Representatives where necessary in this process.

Joint Operational Guidelines on Targeting Assistance to Meet Food and Other Basic Needs are forthcoming and will support country operations to roll out targeting based on these principles.

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## GENERAL PROVISIONS

These Joint Principles will come into effect on the date of the signing of this document by both Agencies. These Joint Principles may be modified at any time by mutual written agreement of the Agencies.

All provisions in the Global MoU remain valid and applicable, including that of the dispute resolution process.

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Filippo Grandi

High Commissioner, UNHCR



David Beasley

Executive Director, WFP

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<sup>9</sup> UNHCR Data Protection Policy: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/44570>, WFP Data Protection Policy: <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/e8d24e70cc11448383495caca154cb97/download/>

James M. Smith