



# WFP Yemen Emergency Food Assistance: Prioritization and Targeting Strategy

## Background

Since the conflict began in mid-March 2015, the food security and nutrition situation in Yemen has rapidly deteriorated. The conflict has destroyed people's livelihoods and ability to purchase food, making it difficult for many Yemenis to meet minimal food and nutrition needs. The vicious cycle between poverty, food insecurity and malnutrition in Yemen continues its alarming upward trend with 60 percent of the Yemeni population not having access to sufficient, nutritious food to live a healthy life.

In April 2017, WFP launched a new Emergency Operation aimed at assisting 6.8 million people with General Food Assistance through an in-kind food basket and commodity vouchers and 2.9 million with critical nutrition support. WFP is targeting only *severely food insecure* people, therefore focusing mainly on life-saving activities. WFP also recognises that it may not be able to raise the necessary resources required to support the 6.8 million planned for assistance under the Emergency Operation. Against this backdrop, it is WFP's responsibility to prepare for the undesirable possibility of funding shortages. If WFP is unable to meet all the life-saving objectives of the EMOP, WFP will have no other option than to prioritize within the most vulnerable with emphasis on those at risk of dying from starvation. To achieve this, a district level analysis and prioritization exercise was carried out which resulted in identification of 120 highest priority districts for both Nutrition and Food Security and Agriculture Clusters.

The objective is to ensure that targeted beneficiaries in the highest priority districts receive full rations of food assistance and resources for this group are secured before assisting other priority groups. WFP will carefully monitor the situation of those *non-highest* priority groups, as they are also food insecure and lack of assistance may move them closer to famine. The selection of beneficiaries will be done using a robust targeting process described below.

## Targeting

Targeting (identifying food-insecure communities and reaching households and individuals with food assistance), is the central element of all WFP food assistance operations. It informs every aspect and the duration of a WFP programme from initial problem identification and vulnerability analysis and mapping, early warning and needs assessment to programming adjustments, monitoring and evaluation. WFP defines targeting as the process by which areas and populations are selected for a resource transfer in a timely manner. A targeting system comprises mechanisms to define target groups, to identify members of the target populations, to ensure that assistance reaches intended beneficiaries, and to ensure it meets their needs.

The complexity of the Yemen context in terms of widespread needs, resource constraints and challenges of access to affected population requires robust and carefully designed targeting guidelines to ensure that assistance reaches those who are most in need.

Given the fact that population groups in Yemen are on the brink of famine, it would be more acceptable to have inclusion errors within acceptable margins than exclusion errors, be it at the administrative or household level targeting process. WFP is following a two-step sequential targeting approach to reach the severely food-insecure people in Yemen: geographic and household targeting. This means that highest priority geographic areas selected first and only 'qualifying/eligible' households from those areas will receive WFP food.

## Geographic Targeting

The district prioritization is mainly based on the percentage of severely food-insecure people inside the district, the criteria put the 20% as threshold value, which means that any district with 20% or more severely food-insecure households will be included in the food distribution. Some districts with slightly below 20% of severely food-insecure households were included in order to minimize the risk of exclusion. Moreover, within the targeted districts, there will be a second level sub-district geographic targeting which involves selection of villages/communities where assistance will be provided. Targeting at this level will be done by WFP Cooperating Partners (CPs - who will be trained by WFP) in close consultation with local authorities, communities, key informants such as health workers, extension workers, teachers, etc.

## Household Targeting

Within the selected districts and sub-districts, eligible households for receiving emergency food assistance will be identified using the overall framework of household selection criteria endorsed by Food Security Agriculture Cluster (FSAC) partners in which WFP played a leading role. The initial targeting criteria are based on directly observable and/or proxy indicators of vulnerability such as demographic characteristics, age, nutrition status, etc. residential status like IDPs/returnees, which have been developed by WFP using the generic profiles of food-insecure households. The Food Assistance Committees, with oversight by WFP/Cooperating Partners (CPs), will apply the targeting criteria to identify beneficiaries to ensure impartiality (i.e. in accordance with need and without any barriers such as discrimination).

The principal eligibility criteria for household selection is the severity of food insecurity among the most vulnerable families. While households' status (such as being IDPs/returnees, headed by women, etc.) is an element of their vulnerability, the primary indicator of need is that they are severely food-insecure<sup>1</sup> and so are consequently eligible for emergency food assistance. WFP's cooperating partners and targeted communities are important sources of information for refinement of household-level targeting criteria. The initial criteria proposed under the EMOP are listed below:

Household Targeting Criteria (in order of importance)	Estimated share (%) <sup>2</sup>
Households with Pregnant and Lactating Women (PLW) and/or children under five years registered in curative activities for Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) or Moderate Acute Malnutrition (MAM)	35%
IDPs living in public camps, shelters, without sources of income and no means of accessing food <sup>3</sup>	20%
Households from socially and economically marginalized communities (mohamasheen) who do not have any sources of food	15%
Households headed by females/widowed who live independently with their children and have no means of income	15%
Vulnerable households headed by physically-challenged persons and chronically ill persons without bread winners	5%
Elderly-headed households who have no income and means of accessing food	5%
Child <sup>4</sup> -headed households who have no income and means of accessing food	5%