ACF INTERNATIONAL

FOOD ASSISTANCE

MANUAL FOR FIELD PRACTITIONERS

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FOOD ASSISTANCE

MANUAL FOR FIELD PRACTITIONERS

Scientific and Technical Department

Action contre la Faim - France

PREAMBLE

Food assistance operations form an important share of ACF interventions portfolio, aiming at improving access to food in sufficient quality and quantity in times of crisis time and to prevent undernutrition. The purpose of this manual, along with its toolbox, is to provide ACF field teams with the practical elements for the definition, implementation and monitoring of food assistance interventions. It includes a complete set of information, recommendation, methodologies and tools, as well as practical case studies, to guide the teams throughout the project cycle.

Our experience in the use different types and modalities of food assistance (for example, general or targeted food distributions, cash or voucher transfers…) has been captured over the years in a number of practical manuals and tools. This manual is an update of these documents based onthe most recent available experience and evidence.

The Food Assistance manual is consistent with already existing ACF guidelines, referring to these where relevant. These different guides are therefore complementary with the Food Assistance manual and must be consulted in parallel according to the project cycle stage. Especially:

- *The manual Food Security and Livelihoods assessment* details the steps and provides methods and tools for the initial situation and the definition of an appropriate response strategy, which may include food assistance interventions;
- *The manual Implementing cash based interventions* provides all the elements for the preparation and implementation of cash and vouchers interventions. When this transfer modality is chosen within the framework of a food assistance intervention, one should refer to the latter for more detailed recommendations and examples;
- *The manual Food Security and Livelihoods Monitoring and Evaluation* details the methods, tools and indicators to be used to monitor food security and livelihoods interventions, including food assistance ones.

The manual consists of this guide and its accompanying toolbox which includes all documents, tools, examples and models useful for the definition, implementation and monitoring of food assistance interventions.

MANUAL STRUCTURE

THE BOOK

The book is structured around 4 main chapters:

- **Chapter 1 - Food Assistance interventions: overview**

  This chapter provides an introduction to food assistance interventions, their main features, objectives and modalities. It also gives a detailed description of the links between food assistance interventions and prevention of undernutrition, a reminder of basic concepts in nutrition, nutritional needs of the populations and nutritional quality of foodstuffs.

- **Chapter 2 - From initial assessment to formulation of the intervention**

  This chapter describes the stages leading from the situation analysis to formulation of food assistance interventions. It describes the methods and tools to define when a food assistance intervention is needed, choose the appropriate intervention modalities with regard to context and needs, and plan for the intervention.

- **Chapter 3 - From implementation to final evaluation**

  This chapter describes preparation, implementation and monitoring and evaluation stages of food assistance interventions. It covers operational, logistical and administrative aspect, according to the intervention modalities.

- **Chapter 4 - Summary sheets: food assistance intervention types**

  This chapter provides summary sheets describing the main type of food assistance interventions, summarizing their specific objectives and scope, prerequisites and technical and operational characteristics.

THE TOOL BOX

The toolbox is a repository gathering, in an organized way, various documents and practical tools complementary to the book.

- **« Tools »:**

  which can be used in the preparation or implementation of specific activities.

- **« Templates »:**

  often from past programs, they have to be adapted according to the context and the intervention.

- **« Examples »:**

  practical examples of past interventions, highlighting lessons learned and recommendations.

- **« Handbooks »:**

complementary guides and manuals, enlightening with more details some technical aspects of the project cycle, directly linked to food assistance interventions or covering more general or cross cutting issues.

- **« Policies and positioning papers »:**

scoping documents describing principles and positions which must be taken into account in the food assistance interventions.

The tool box is structured in six sections:

- **Section 1: Identification and formulation**
- **Section 2: Implementation**
- **Section 3: Human resources**
- **Section 4: Monitoring and evaluation**
- **Section 5: Reporting and capitalization**
- **Section 6: General documents**

In the book, references to the toolbox documents are notified at the end of each section by the symbol 🗁, followed by the file number for easy access.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACRONYMES

ACF	Action contre la Faim
ALNAP	Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action
BMI	Body Mass Index
BSFP	Blanket Supplementary Feeding Program
CBI	Cash Based Intervention
CCT	Conditional Cash Transfers
CFW	Cash for Work
CMAM	Community based Management of Acute Malnutrition
CSB	Corn Soya Blend
CSI	Coping Strategy Index
DAC	Development Assistance Committee (OECD)
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EC	European Commission
ECHO	European Community Humanitarian Office
EMMA	Emergency Market Mapping and Analysis
FAC	Food Assistance Convention
FANTA	Food and Nutrition Technical Assistance
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FBF	Fortified Blended Food
FBM	Food Basket Monitoring
FCG	Food Consumption Group
FCS	Food Consumption Score
FEWSNet	Famine Early Warning Systems Network
FFW	Food for Work
FSL	Food Security and Livelihoods
GAM	Global Acute Malnutrition
GIEWS	Global Information and Early Warning System
GMO	Genetically Modified Organisme
H/A	Height for Age
HDDS	Household Diet Diversity Score

HEA	Household Economy Approach
HPG	Humanitarian Policy Group
HPN	Humanitarian Practice Network
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDDS	Individual Diet Diversity Score
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
IPC	Integrated Food Security Phase Classification
IYCF	Infant and Young Child Feeding
IYCN	Infant and Young Child Nutrition
KAP	Knowledge, Attitudes et Practices
LNS	Lipid-based nutrient supplement
MAM	Moderate Acute Malnutrition
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MHCP	Mental Health and Care Practices
MUAC	Mid Upper Arm Circumference
NCA	Nutrition Causal Analysis
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OFDA	Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance
PCM	Project Cycle Management
PDM	Post distribution monitoring
REACH	Renewed Effort Against Child Hunger
RUCF	Ready to Use Complementary Food
RUF	Ready to Use Food
RUSF	Ready to Use Supplementary Food
RUTF	Ready to Use Therapeutic Food
SAM	Severe Acute Malnutrition
SFC	Supplementary Feeding Centre
SFP	Supplementary Feeding Program
SMART	Standardized Monitoring and Assessment of Relief and Transition
SUN	Scaling Up Nutrition
TAFAD	Trans-Atlantic Food Assistance Dialogue
TFC	Therapeutic Feeding Centre

UCT	Unconditional Cash Transfers
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissionner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children Emergency Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VFW	Voucher-for-Work
W/A	Weight for Age
W/H	Weight for Height
WaSH	Water, Sanitation, Hygiene
WFP	World Food Program
WHO	World Health Organisation
WSB	Wheat Soya Blend
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissionner for Refugees (Haut-Commissariat pour les Réfugiés)
UNICEF	United Nations Children Emergency Fund (Fonds des Nations Unes pour l'Enfance)
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VIH	Virus de l'immunodéficience humaine
WSB	Wheat Soya Blend (Mélange de farines de blé et soja)

LIST OF BOXES

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER 1

FOOD ASSISTANCE INTERVENTIONS: OVERVIEW

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1. FOOD ASSISTANCE: DEFINITIONS, OBJECTIVES AND MODALITIES

KEY QUESTIONS

- What is food assistance?
- What is at stake and what are the objectives of food assistance?
- In which contexts and to address which issues can food assistance interventions be implemented?
- What are the different types of food assistance interventions? And what are their main modalities?
- Who are the main stakeholders and what are the main mechanisms of food assistance?
- What are the standards and best practices which must be followed?

1.1 DEFINITIONS AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Food assistance includes a number of operations intended to ensure adequate food consumption for populations and individuals. The operations can take the form of transfers of food in-knid, non-food items allowing the storage, transportation, preparation and/or food consumption[1], and/or cash transfers to give access to these goods as well as complementary services[2].

The different types and methods of food assistance are described in *Section 1.3* of this chapter, and detailed in notes in *Chapter 4* of this manual.

Over the last few years the term food assistance has progressively replaced the more restrictive term food aid, especially in connection with the development and generalization of cash based interventions. In simplistic terms, food aid describes the distribution of in kind food, while food assistance includes a larger set of tools and methods, sharing the same objective of ensuring adequate and sufficient food consumption.

It can be noted in these definitions that the range of food assistance interventions can be of different scale, including in certain cases: providing inputs for production (especially agricultural) and transfer of skills or knowledge, but also interventions intended to indirectly reinforce the local availability of food, especially through market based interventions.

For ACF, and in this manual, we will limit food assistance to transfers allowing direct access to and adequate consumption of food, even if as we will see throughout this manual, complementary activities such as the promotion of good nutritional practices must be an integral part of our food assistance interventions.

1 - For instance, kitchen utensils, fuel and cooking equipment.
2 - For instance, transportation to and from the local market, grain milling and other transformations.

BOX 1 FOOD ASSISTANCE DEFINITIONS

Several international stakeholders propose definitions of food assistance, two of which are shown below, proposing complementary visions of the objectives of food assistance on the one hand and the mechanisms and methods on the other:

"Humanitarian food assistance aims to ensure the consumption of sufficient, safe and nutritious food in anticipation of, during, and in the aftermath of a humanitarian crisis, when food consumption would otherwise be insufficient or inadequate to avert excessive mortality, emergency rates of acute malnutrition, or detrimental coping mechanisms. This includes ensuring food availability, access to nutritious food, proper nutrition awareness, and appropriate feeding practices. Food assistance may involve the direct provision of food, but may utilize a wider range of tools, including the transfer or provision of relevant services, inputs or commodities, cash or vouchers, skills or knowledge." *European Commission, 2010*[3]

"Food assistance refers to a set of interventions designed to provide access to food to vulnerable and food insecure populations. Included in the definition are instruments, such as in-kind food, voucher or cash transfers, to assure access to food of a given quantity, quality or value. These instruments can be used to pursue specific objectives, such as nutrition, education or disaster risk reduction." *World Food Program, 2010*[4]

"TAFAD defines international food assistance as any internationally financed direct food, cash or voucher transfer to food insecure individuals or households for the purpose of immediately increasing the quality and/or quantity of food consumed." *TAFAD, 2010*[5]

In addition it should be noted that the scope of food assistance, as it is treated in this manual, does not include curative nutritional interventions (supplementary and therapeutic nutritional programs). These interventions, which can be assimilated with medical interventions, are the subject of strict protocols developed in other documents.

1.2 IN WHICH SITUATION SHOULD FOOD ASSISTANCE INTERVENTIONS BE USED?

The primary objective of food assistance is to ensure immediate access to an adequate quantity and quality of food for all vulnerable populations, with the ultimate goal of protecting human life and nutritional status. The prevention of undernutrition is one of the major objectives for the implementation of food assistance interventions.

3 - European Commission, 2010, Humanitarian Food Assistance, Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament . COM(2010)126.

4 - WFP, 2010, Revolution. From food aid to Food assistance, Innovations in overcoming hunger. Edited by Omano, Gentilini and Sandström, Rome.

5 - TAFAD, 2010, Food Aid or Food Assistance Convention? Briefing Paper June 2010.

Humanitarian food assistance can also serve to protect and strengthen the livelihoods of the population affected by a crisis, to prevent or reverse negative coping mechanisms (such as the sale of the means of production or the accumulation of debts) which can have harmful consequences, for both the short and long-term, for their livelihoods or their situation with regard to food security and nutrition[6]. Finally, food assistance interventions can in certain cases be used to prevent displacement of populations or promote schooling or creation of community assets[7].

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If food assistance is part of emergency interventions in response to food crises related to conflicts, natural disasters or economic or political crises, it can also be implemented in other contexts, especially to prevent anticipated crises, supporting recovery phases, and in the context of food safety nets and chronic crises.

In any case, food assistance interventions must be part of an integrated response taking into account immediate and long-term needs, and especially making sure that the assistance is not detrimental to the recovery phases.

1.3 DIFFERENT FOOD ASSISTANCE TYPES AND MODALITIES

Food assistance groups together a relatively wide set of interventions, with quite different practical modalities according to the context, local needs and capacity and the objectives set for the intervention.

There are 5 main types of food assistance:

- **Food distribution**
- **Canteens**
- **Vouchers distribution**
- **Cash transfers**
- **Non-food items distribution**

These 5 categories can include different implementation modalities according to the objective of the intervention, the items distributed, the target mechanisms and conditionality. *Table 1* below summarizes these principal types and methods:

6 - European Commission, 2010, ibid.

7 - Maxwell, D., Sadler, K., Sim, A., Mutonyi, M., Egan, R., Webster, M., 2008, Emergency food security interventions. Good practice Review. Commissioned by HPN/ODI, London.

Table 1: *Types and methods of food assistance*

<table>
<tr><th>Types</th><th>Description</th><th>Specific methods</th><th>Common modalities[8]</th></tr>
<tr><td>FOOD DISTRIBUTION</td><td>Transferring food in kind, in “dry” form (uncooked), intended to make quality food available directly to populations</td><td>- Distribution of dry food rations
- Distribution of ready to use food
- Distribution of high energy biscuits
- Distribution of micronutrients</td><td rowspan="3">- General distribution: distribution covers all the population in a given zone; there is no targeting system. These distributions generally target households, and not individuals.
- Targeted distribution: distribution is intended for only a part of the population, according to predefined targeting criteria. These distributions generally target households, and not individuals.
- Blanket distribution: These are distributions specifically targeting populations at risk of under-nutrition, generally children under age 2 or 5 years, as well as pregnant or breastfeeding women. They are called “blanket” because beyond the criteria above, there is no other form of targeting. They involve distributions of individual rations, nutritionally richer than the classic family rations. Blanket distributions are part of supplementary feeding programs.</td></tr>
<tr><td>CANTEEN</td><td>Distribution of cooked food rations</td><td>- Canteens in the context of blanket distribution
- Canteens in the context of classic food distribution</td></tr>
<tr><td>FOOD VOUCHERS DISTRIBUTION</td><td>Vouchers in paper or electronic form which can be exchanged with merchants against goods or services</td><td>- Distribution of “commodity” vouchers: the voucher gives its holder access to a quantity of specific predetermined goods or services.
- Distribution of “cash” vouchers: the voucher gives its holder access to goods or services equal to a defined cash value.</td></tr>
<tr><td>CASH TRANSFERS</td><td>Transfer of money, in cash, electronically or through bank accounts</td><td>- Restricted transfers: the amount distributed must be used for the acquisition of specified goods or services.
- Unrestricted transfers: there is no restriction on the use of the distributed cash.</td><td rowspan="2">- Transfer for Work: the receipt of a transfer is conditional upon participation in work, generally community work.
- Conditioned distribution: receipt of a transfer is dependent on participation in other activities, such as training, sensitization or regular visits to a health center for example.</td></tr>
<tr><td>NON-FOOD ITEMS DISTRIBUTION</td><td>Transfer of non-food items intended for food assistance. It is noted that, as with food, the transfer can be in kind, or through a voucher or cash transfer.</td><td></td></tr>
</table>

As we will see in *Chapter 2*, the choice between the different types and modalities of food assistance will be guided by the objectives of the intervention, local context and situation, as well as the target population. It should be noted that several types and/or modalities can coexist in the same project, or succeed each other, or target the same persons. For example:

8 - These common modalities are in theory applicable to any type of food assistance intervention. Practically, some are only associated with specific interventions. For example, blanket distributions are specific to food distribution or canteens; transfers for work are difficult to apply to canteens.

- Food distribution + milling voucher
- Food distribution + cooking fuel distribution
- Family cash transfer + blanket distribution for children under 2 years old

Chapter 4 of this manual provides summary sheets with the essential elements for each of the main types of food assistance intervention. Reference can also be made to the ACF manual, Implementation of cash based intervention for further information on the main principles concerning cash transfers and vouchers.

1.4 INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK AND MAIN STAKEHOLDERS

At the international level, food assistance brings together a number of stakeholders, mechanisms and programs. An international convention defines and governs the main principles, as well as the financing and implementation of the strategies of food assistance programs. It should be noted that for some stakeholders, food assistance represents a specific sector per se, while for others it is one of the mechanisms of a wider food security sector.

Box 2 below brings together and briefly describes the main components of this environment, giving priority to those which are the most useful for definition and implementation of interventions in the field.

BOX 2 FOOD ASSISTANCE KEY STAKEHOLDERS

- **Food Assistance Convention (FAC)**

  Several arrangements govern food assistance at the international level. Among such arrangements, the Food Assistance Convention is particularly important because it represents the only legal instrument to ensure a minimal quantity of food assistance.

  Created in 1967 to "carry out a food aid program with the help of contributions for the benefit of developing countries", the FAC has been renewed several times. Over the years, the components of the Convention have largely remained unchanged until recently. One of the main values of this Convention until recently was in the undertaking by the signatories to provide a certain annual quantity of food assistance. Between 2010 and 2012, an important work of revision and renegotiation of this Convention took place, in order to modernize and improve it, make it more adapted to current needs and introduce new principles and mechanisms in line with current evolution in the sector.

  Among the significant improvements seen in the new convention, there is the promotion of principles of good programming of international food assistance, with a priority given to local and regional purchases, and the extension of assistance modalities (including cash intervention, therapeutic nutritional products and food rich in micronutrients). In addition, it takes into consideration calls for more transparency in implementation methods.

  http://www.foodaidconvention.org/fr/default.aspx
  http://www.tafad.org/

- ## World Food Program (WFP)

The World Food Program (WFP) is the food assistance organization of the United Nations. It was created in 1963, initially as an experimental FAO program, with a limited role of emergency intervention. Over time, the WFP became the United Nations' most important humanitarian agency and has long had as its principal activities the supply, transportation and distribution of foodstuffs in connection with crises, directly, or more often, through partners such as NGOs. Beginning in 1999, the WFP broadened its mandate as a supplier of emergency food aid and reaffirmed its role in supporting economic and social development. The WFP also aims to reduce the infantile mortality rate, to improve the health of pregnant women and combat micronutrient deficiency and illnesses such as HIV/AIDS.

In connection with its 2008–2013 strategic plan, the WFP set **five strategic objectives**[9]:

1. **Save lives and protect means of subsistence in emergencies.**
2. **Prevent acute hunger and invest in disaster preparation and mitigation measures.**
3. **Restore and rebuild means of subsistence in post-conflict, post-disaster and transition situations.**
4. **Reduce malnutrition and undernourishment.**
5. **Strengthen the ability of countries to reduce hunger, through program transfers and local food purchase.**

The plan was a new turning point for the WFP, with an evolution toward food assistance and integration of tools and methods of intervention more diversified than simple food distribution, even if that remains the organization's main intervention.

- ## Food Security Cluster

The food security cluster mission is to *"save lives by coordinating emergency interventions ensuring food security for people affected by serious humanitarian crises. By facilitating exchange of information and supporting coordination, humanitarian aid is more efficient, more predictable and more transparent."*

To the extent possible, the cluster supports governments and coordinates operations of United Nations organizations, nongovernmental organizations and the International Movement of the Red Cross and Red Crescent. The World Food Program (WFP) and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) co-direct the food security cluster.

The cluster defines and promotes priority measures for needs assessment, advocacy initiatives, information exchange and gap analysis. In some countries, a cluster or specific food assistance sector group is created to specifically handle these interventions.

Principal scope of the FS cluster[10]:

- Food assistance: food transfer through general food distribution, food for work/training, cash transfer, or voucher;
- Support to the market (direct or indirect assistance);
- Interventions for livelihoods: technical support, input support for preservation and restoration of livelihoods.

9 - WFP, 2008, WFP Strategic Plan 2008-2013.
10 - Adapted from: Global Food Security Cluster, 2012, Food Security Cluster Coordination Handbook. Draft 3, June 2012.

Note that the **Nutrition Cluster** also constitutes an important platform for coordination of food assistance, given its nutritional objectives, and due to the fact that in many cases, additional food interventions, including blanket distributions, are handled by it.

The food or nutrition Security Clusters constitute important platforms at the international and national levels to obtain practical information, to be informed on the strategies and interventions of other players and to coordinate the implementation of coherent and complementary interventions.

http://foodsecuritycluster.net/
http://oneresponse.info/globalclusters/nutrition/Pages/default.aspx

• ECHO - Food assistance

The European Commission, via its humanitarian agency ECHO, is one of the main funders in terms of food assistance. In 2011, the Commission financed €509 million of food and nutrition assistance projects with 57 partner organizations in 47 countries. The top seven countries receiving food assistance in 2011 were Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia, Pakistan, Kenya, Ethiopia and the Palestinian Territories.

Food assistance is a specific line item in the ECHO budget. ECHO's policy concerning food assistance was reviewed in 2010[11] and the institution produced in 2009 (updated in 2013) a specific guide for cash based interventions[12].

http://ec.europa.eu/echo/what/humanitarian-aid/food-assistance_en

• Food for Peace

The Food for Peace Act, the new name since 2008 for Public Law 48 (or *Agricultural Trade Development Assistance Act*) is the main mechanism by which the American government implements its international food aid. The law authorizes direct donations of United States agricultural products for implementation of emergency and development programs. The agricultural products supplied through Food for Peace can also be sold or exchanged to finance food and nutrition security programs (monetization principle).

The objectives of *Public Law 48* are:

- Combating hunger and malnutrition in the world
- Promoting sustainable development
- Extending international commerce
- Developing and extending the export market for American agricultural products

The law is divided into 4 titles/programs with food assistance activities grouped under title 2 (Emergency and Private Assistance Programs, managed by USAID).

Since 2010, title 2 has been complemented by the Emergency Food Security Program which includes interventions based on local or regional purchases of food or cash based interventions.

http://transition.usaid.gov/our_work/humanitarian_assistance/ffp/

11 -European Commission, 2010, Humanitarian Food Assistance, Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament COM(2010)126.

12 - European Commission, 2013, The use of cash and vouchers in humanitarian crisis. DG ECHO funding guidelines.

The principal international donors in terms of food aid are the United States, Japan, Canada, United Kingdom and the European Commission[13]. There is no reliable and precise data today in terms of food assistance in general, especially due to divergences in the definition, as seen above.

At the national level, there is no typical stakeholder responsible for food assistance. It is nevertheless important to contact the following stakeholders to obtain information, especially on national regulations:

- the Health and Agriculture Ministries
- The national representatives of organizations and programs cited in Box 2
- The representatives of national and international NGOs intervening in food assistance
- The clusters, especially Food Aid, Food Security and Nutrition clusters

1.5 FROM FOOD AID TO FOOD ASSISTANCE: RECENT EVOLUTIONS AND STAKES

International food aid began in the United States and Canada in the beginning of the 1950s. It was part of the national American agricultural policy with a goal of supporting the production of North American farmers and stabilizing prices of agricultural products by developing outlets for the distribution of surplus production. Since these origins, food aid has not been only an instrument for combating hunger in the world, but above all a political tool used by developed countries to promote and increase their own agricultural markets[14].

These policies still exist, even if they have greatly evolved recently at the instigation of the NGOs, receiving countries and some donor countries. The recent revision of the Convention on food assistance, the production in 2010 of an updated European Commission policy on humanitarian food assistance, as well as the new American Farm Bill under ratification, are among the important signs of an increased taking into account of best food assistance practices.

One of the main effects of this recent evolution is the inclusion of cash based interventions among the food assistance responses, with the eventual possibility of reducing in kind donations. Promotion of food purchases at the national or regional level, rather than importation from overseas, is also a sign of this evolution, even if the quantities at stake are nowadays marginal as compared to donations.

13 - WFP, 2011, 2010 Food aid flows. International Food Aid Information System (INTERFAIS).

14 - ACF, 2006, Position Paper on Political Aspects of Food Aid.

BOX 3 "PURCHASE FOR PROGRESS" INITIATIVE

In 2008, the World Food Program launched a pilot initiative over five years aimed at promoting the development of agricultural markets in the intervention zones: Purchase for Progress – P4P. The objective of this initiative is to promote the development of agricultural markets so that by 2013, at least 500,000 small farmers will be able to sell a part of their surplus production at profitable prices, especially by guaranteeing them outlets and purchase prices. This initiative, launched as a pilot for a period of five years in 21 countries, uses the double leverage of purchases of basic food products (grains, legumes and prepared foods) that the WFP distributes and the technical skills of a wide variety of partners in order to support the agricultural organizations with access to credit, increasing their production and the sale of high-quality agricultural products.

3 principal axes constitute this initiative:

- **purchases:** increase purchases in developing countries from small operators;
- **partnership:** training, technical support and reinforcement of capabilities of small operators;
- **learning and sharing of knowledge:** the initiative must allow building an experience for integration in future WFP policies and programs.

Source: World Food Program, 2008, P4P: Purchases for Progress.

Beyond the political aspects, recent technical advances and the development of technological solutions give hope for a better efficiency in humanitarian aid generally and food assistance in particular. Here again, studies, research and practical experience developed around cash based interventions in recent years have brought new possibilities of intervention, both in terms of impact, whether short or medium term, and in coverage and speed of intervention.

Work on nutritional products, especially ready to use food (RUF) but also on enriched/fortified food[15], show the possibilities of more efficient undernutrition prevention in crises, but also raise questions as to cost and their production system vis-à-vis local food options.

Among the current evolutions and stakes in food assistance, we note the following:

- Evolution and systemization of market analysis methods, including in emergencies, to determine the most appropriate responses;
- Optimizing and strengthening nutritional impact through better targeted interventions, based on needs and not resources, and on distributed food quality;
- Giving priority to cash based interventions, anywhere feasible and suitable, and developing large-scale cash responses;
- In the case of in kind distributions, give priority to local or regional purchases;
- Minimizing negative impacts on the local market and production, and better utilizing food assistance interventions to support this production;

15 - For further information about these types of food, refer to section 2.4 below.

- Encouraging technical development and integration of technological evolution (especially NICT[16], but also electronic cash transfer systems) in emergency interventions;
- Development of new foods and formulas for undernutrition prevention, and for local production and commercialization systems.

1.6 STANDARDS AND REGULATIONS

To the extent possible, ACF interventions comply with international standards and regulations, some of which are specific to the type of intervention. Among the main standard humanitarian aid references, the Sphere handbook, revised in 2011, has become indispensable and to be used consistently in defining and implementing humanitarian interventions.

BOX 4 THE SPHERE PROJECT

A group of humanitarian NGOs and the International Movement of the Red Cross and Red Crescent launched the Sphere Project in 1997. Their objective was to improve initiative quality during disasters and to be held accountable. They founded the Sphere Project philosophy on two basic convictions: the first is that people affected by a disaster or armed conflict have the right to live in dignity and, therefore, to receive the assistance they need; the second is that everything possible must be done to alleviate human suffering from a disaster or armed conflict.

Source: Sphere Project, 2011, the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response.

The *Sphère Handbook*[17] brings together a set of common principles and minimum universal standards, intended to guarantee a quality response, but also to strengthen stakeholder accountability. The minimum standards cover four areas essential to humanitarian assistance:

- water, sanitation and hygiene;
- food security and nutrition;
- shelter and non-food items;
- health.

Actions and key indicators are set out for each standard, as well as guidance notes with more details on certain aspects.

In the context of food assistance responses, one must refer to the **food security and nutrition** section, as well as the **non-food items** section, in addition to the cross-disciplinary chapters on **protection principles** and **core standards**.

The 6 core standards provide the general principles on which basis all humanitarian responses should be defined and implemented. They also apply to food assistance responses.

16 - NICT:New Information and Communication Technologies .
17 - *Sphere Project, 2011, the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response.*

BOX 5 THE 6 CORE STANDARDS

I. People's capacity and strategies to survive with dignity are integral to the design and approach of humanitarian response.

II. Humanitarian response is planned and implemented in coordination with the relevant authorities, humanitarian agencies and civil society organizations engaged in impartial humanitarian action, working together for maximum efficiency, coverage and effectiveness.

III. The priority needs of the disaster-affected population are identified through systematic assessment of the context, risks to life with dignity and the capacity of the affected people and relevant authorities to respond.

IV. The humanitarian response meets the assessed needs of the disaster-affected population in relation to the context, the risks faced and the capacity of the affected people and State to cope and recover.

V. The performance of humanitarian agencies is continually examined and communicated to stakeholders; projects are adapted in response to performance.

VI. Humanitarian agencies provide appropriate management, supervisory and psychosocial support, enabling aid workers to have the knowledge, skills, behavior and attitudes to plan and implement an effective humanitarian response with humanity and respect.

Source: Sphere Project, 2011, the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response. 2011 Edition.

The main thematic standards for food assistance response are shown in table 2 below. It should be noted that today they are much more developed for food transfers, and to a certain extent non-food items, while there is only one relatively general standard for cash based interventions. *Table 2* shows the key notions and activities for each standard, and the section of the present manual in which the matter is covered in detail.

Table 2: *Selection of thematic standards related to food assistance*

SECTION	SPHERE STANDARDS	Subjects treated and where to find information in the manual
ASSESSMENT OF THE SITUATION	**Standard 2.** **Nutritional situation:** When the population affected by a disaster is at increased risk of undernutrition, assessments are conducted using internationally accepted methods to understand the type, degree and extent of undernutrition and identify those most affected, those most at risk and the appropriate response.	- Needs and nutritional situation assessment - Assessment of the causes of undernutrition - Seasonality and trends - Non-food needs ➔ ***Chapter 2 - Section 1. Situation analysis and needs identification***

FOOD TRANSFER	**Standard 1.** **General nutrition requirements:** Ensure that nutritional needs of the disaster-affected population, including those most at risk, are met.	- Needs assessment - Population and specific needs ➔ ***Chapter 1 - Section 2.5. Ensuring the nutritional quality*** ➔ ***Chapter 2 - Section 1. Situation analysis and needs identification***
	Standard 2. **Appropriateness and acceptability:** The food items provided are appropriate and acceptable to recipients so that they can be used efficiently and effectively at the household level.	- Assessment of local availability - Use, food preferences and cultural aspects - Household coping strategies ➔ ***Chapter 2 - Section 1. Situation analysis and needs identification*** ➔ ***Chapter 2 - Section 3. Defining the intervention and choosing modalities*** ➔ **Chapter 3 - 1.6. Food safety quality assurance and control**
	Standard 3. **Food quality and safety:** Food distributed is fit for human consumption and of appropriate quality.	➔ **Chapter 3 - 1.6. Food safety quality assurance and control**
	Standard 4. **Supply Chain Management:** Commodities and associated costs are well-managed using impartial, transparent and responsive systems.	- Logistical assessment - Logistical resources ➔ ***Chapter 2 - Section 2. Logistical, administrative and financial assessment*** ➔ ***Chapter 2 - Section 4. Plan and formulate the intervention***
	Standard 5. **Targeting and distribution:** The method of targeted food distribution is responsive, timely, transparent and safe, supports dignity and is appropriate to local conditions.	- Define the objectives, results expected and length of the intervention - Choose the most appropriate intervention - Define the composition of the transfer - Define the method and criteria for beneficiary targeting and identification ➔ ***Chapter 2 - Section 3. Defining the intervention and choosing modalities***
	Standard 6. **Food use:** Food is stored, prepared and consumed in a safe and appropriate manner at both household and community levels.	- Sensitization and community approach; ➔ ***Chapter 3 - Section 2.3. On-site communication***

CASH AND VOUCHER TRANSFERS	**Standard 1.** **Access to available goods and services:** Cash and vouchers are considered ways to address basic needs and to protect and re-establish livelihoods.	- Define the most appropriate intervention - Define the composition of the transfer ➔ ***Chapter 2 - Section 3. Defining the intervention and choosing modalities***
NON FOOD ITEMS	**Standard 1.** **Individual, general household and shelter support items:** The affected population has sufficient individual, general household and shelter support items to ensure their health, dignity, safety and well-being.	- Non-food items; define the composition ➔ ***Chapter 2 - Section 3.3. Defining the transfer composition***
	Standard 3. **Cooking and eating utensils:** The disaster-affected population has access to culturally appropriate items for preparing and storing food, and for cooking, eating and drinking.	
	Standard 4. **Stoves, fuel and lighting:** The disaster-affected population has access to a safe, fuel-efficient stove and an accessible supply of fuel or domestic energy, or to communal cooking facilities.	

Source: Sphere Project, 2011, the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response. 2011 Edition.

In addition to the international standards, it is also important to contact local governments on standards, regulations and national policies in order to comply with them. The WFP national office or the Food Security Cluster are good sources of information. For example, national regulations may or may not authorize the distribution of food from genetically modified seeds, they may set a minimum or maximum payment in cash for work activities, or may or may not authorize importation and distribution of certain ready to use foods (RUF).

Finally, coordination with the other stakeholders in presence, be they governmental, from the civil society, non-governmental or international, as part of clusters, local coordination groups, or informally, is a crucial activity in its own right to ensure the coherence, efficiency and a ultimately maximal impact on the targeted populations. The coordination key elements, in the context of food assistance interventions include:

- Initial needs assessment
- Markets analysis
- Response analysis, choice of the most relevant type of intervention
- Definition of the food ration, of the type of voucher or of the amount of the cash transfer
- Identification, assessment and contracting services providers for electronic transfers
- Markets monitoring

TOOLBOX / MORE INFORMATION

→ ACF, 2006, *Position Paper on Political Aspects of Food Aid* [- 111]

→ ACF, 2008, *Implementing cash-cased interventions. A guideline for aid workers* [- 64]

→ Barrett C., Maxwell D., 2005, *Food Aid After Fifty Years. Recasting its role, London.*

→ European Commission, 2010, *Humanitarian Food Assistance. Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament. COM(2010)126.* [- 112]

→ European Commission 2013, *The use of cash and vouchers in humanitarian crisis. DG ECHO funding guidelines.* [- 112]

→ Harvey P., Proudlock K., Clay E., Riley B., Jaspars S., 2010, *Food Aid and food assistance in emergency and transitional contexts: A review of current thinking.* Londres: ODI.

→ Sphere Project, 2011, *The Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response.* [- 661]

→ Maxwell, D., Sadler, K., Sim, A., Mutonyi, M., Egan, R., Webster, M., 2008, *Emergency food security interventions. Good practice Review.* Commissioned by HPN/ODI, London.

→ WFP, 2008, *WFP Strategic Plan 2008-2013.*

→ WFP, 2010, Revolution. *From food aid to Food assistance, Innovations in overcoming hunger. Edited by Omano, Gentilini and Sandström.*

→ TAFAD, 2010, *Food Aid or Food Assistance Convention? Briefing Paper,* June 2010.

2. FOOD ASSISTANCE AND NUTRITION

Access to food and maintaining adequate nutrition are key elements for survival during a disaster. People affected by a disaster are often already chronically undernourished when it strikes. Undernutrition is a serious public health problem and one of the main causes of mortality, whether directly or indirectly.

This section underlines the importance of taking into account undernutrition to define and implement food assistance interventions, since a priority objective is maintaining or protecting the nutrition status of populations. For that, a short description of what undernutrition is, its different forms and how to measure it will be set out before providing the key elements and general recommendations on the relation between food assistance and nutrition.

Two key documents, from which most of the elements in this section have been taken, are recommended for more detail on the basics of nutrition and the interactions between food security and nutrition:

> ACF, 2012, *The Essential - Nutrition & Health: the key to understand nutrition and health.*

> ACF, 2011, *Maximising the nutritional impact of food security and livelihoods interventions. A manual for field workers.*

KEY QUESTIONS

- ➔ What is undernutrition?
- ➔ What are the elements of a balanced diet?
- ➔ What are the nutritional issues in food assistance programs?
- ➔ What are the specific foods and products used in food assistance programs?
- ➔ How can nutrition be integrated into food assistance programs?

2.1 AT STAKE: PREVENTING UNDERNUTRITION

• Scope and size of the undernutrition problem

Undernutrition is widespread throughout the world and affects millions of people every year. It is mainly concentrated in sub-Saharan Africa and Asia. Maternal and infant undernutrition is responsible for more than a third of the deaths of children under 5 years old and 11% of the worldwide illnesses.

In 2011[18]:

- 115 million children under 5 years old were underweight.
- Growth retardation affected 186 million children under 5 years old.

18 - UNICEF, WHO, World Bank, 2012, Levels and trends in child malnutrition. Joint child malnutrition estimates.

- 13 million children were underweight at birth or born prematurely.
- 52 million children under 5 years old suffered from acute malnutrition, 19 million of which were severe cases.
- More than 2 billion people had multiple micronutrient deficiencies: vitamin A, iron, iodine and zinc, as well as folic acid and vitamin B12.

• Immediate and long-term consequences

Undernutrition causes many undesirable short-term consequences. It affects the growth of children and their cognitive and physical development; it weakens their immune system, increasing morbidity and mortality risks. Undernourished children also have a higher risk of suffering chronic diseases (such as diabetes) in adulthood. Maternal undernutrition, and particularly anemia due to a lack of iron, results in lower fertility, increases the risk of maternal death and the risk of giving birth to children who are underweight and suffer intra-uterine growth restriction. Mental and physical retardation due to undernutrition have negative long-term consequences; they reduce human and economic development of a country (e.g. adults are less productive and often ill). The economic cost of undernutrition is estimated between 2 and 8% of the Gross National Product (GNP) of a country[19].

The vicious circle of undernutrition is repeated from generation to generation. Undernutrition generally begins before birth and lasts through infancy, extending through adolescence and into adulthood, particularly among girls and women. It has repercussions for several generations. A woman with chronic undernutrition will most probably give birth to a low birth weight child, with a much higher risk of dying. Children who survive undernutrition risk remaining imprisoned in a cycle of recurrent illnesses and growth problems, irreversibly damaging their development.

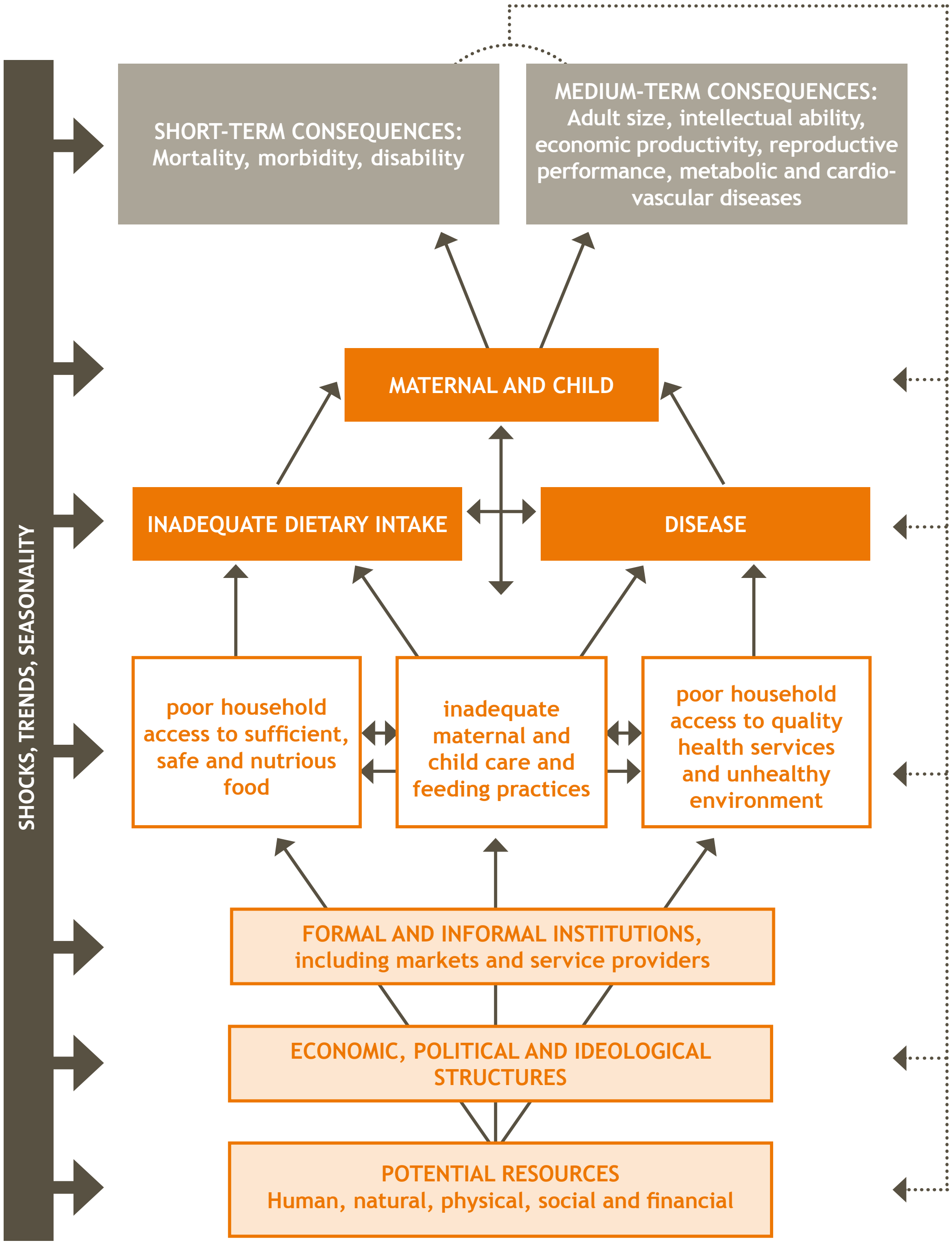
• Causes of undernutrition

The causes of undernutrition are complex. The conceptual diagram of figure 1 is a useful framework for analyzing interaction among the various factors contributing to undernutrition. The immediate causes are illnesses and/or insufficient food intake, resulting from underlying poverty, household food insecurity, poor health care practices in households or the community, poor quality water, lack of hygiene or sanitation and insufficient access to healthcare. Disasters such as cyclones, earthquakes, floods, armed conflicts and drought all have a direct influence on the underlying causes of undernutrition.

Among the direct causes of undernutrition is consumption of poor-quality food in insufficient quantities. Well-performed food assistance interventions can therefore play a basic role in preventing undernutrition, and the related mortality and morbidity, and on individuals' long-term physical and mental capacities. In this regard, a strong collaboration between food assistance and nutrition teams is required, as we emphasize throughout this handbook. Likewise, food assistance intervention strategies must be designed coherently and aligned with other strategies seeking to prevent or reduce undernutrition, especially curative programs which it can complement.

19 - Gwatkin, D, R, Rutstein, S, Johnson, K, Suliman, E, Wagstaff, A, Amozou, A, 2007, Socio-economic difference in health, nutrition and population within developing countries: an overview, World Bank, Washington.

***Figure 1:** Undernutrition conceptual framework*



Adapted from UNICEF (1990) and Black (2008)

2.2 ESSENTIAL NOTIONS IN NUTRITION

• Nutrition, Malnutrition and Undernutrition

Nutrition is the collection of processes whereby living organisms utilize food to ensure the life, their growth, the normal functioning of organs and their tissues as well as the production of energy. In other words, nutrition refers to the processes of absorption, digestion and the body's utilization of food for growth and development, as well as reproduction, physical activities, and preservation of health.

It should be noted that the idea of "nutrition" is often understood as "feeding" or "food intake", but these terms are not synonymous; nutrition is much more complex and brings into play other factors beyond food consumption.

Malnutrition is a broad term commonly used as an alternative to undernutrition, although technically it also refers to overnutrition *(see figure 2 below)*. People are malnourished if their diet does not provide adequate nutrients for growth and maintenance, often due to economic political and socio-cultural factors, or they are unable to fully utilise the food they eat due to illness (under-nutrition). They are also malnourished if they consume too many calories (over-nutrition). Underweight (including both stunting and / or wasting), overweight and micronutrient deficiencies are all forms of malnutrition[20].

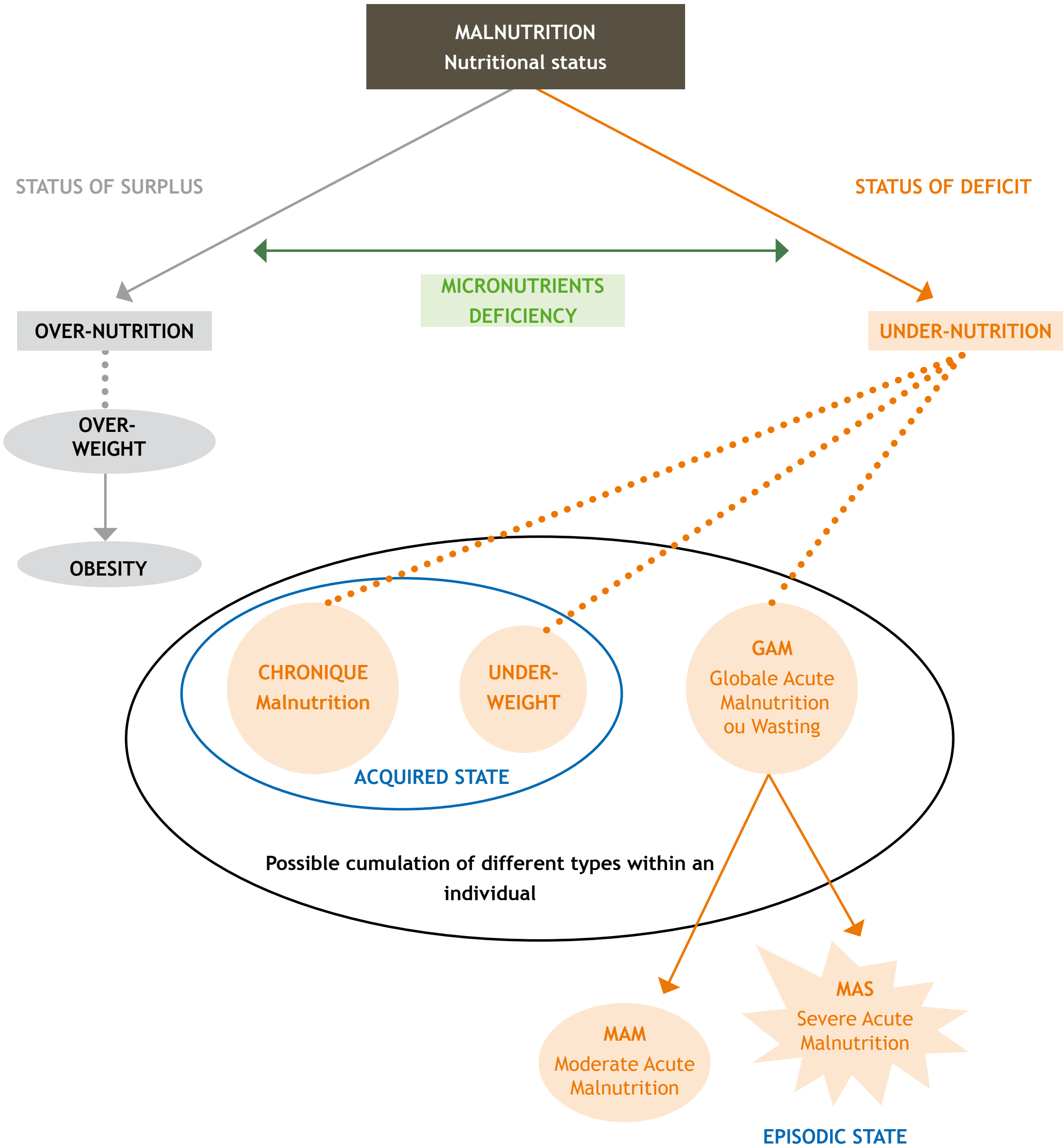
Undernutrition is one of the two forms of malnutrition and is defined as the outcome of insufficient food intake and repeated infectious diseases and poor care practices, often due to economic political and socio-cultural factors. It includes being underweight for one's age, too short for one's age (stunted – Chronic undernutrition), dangerously thin for one's height (wasted – acute undernutrition) and deficient in vitamins and minerals (micronutrient malnutrition)[21]

As described above, the term "malnutrition" is often used to describe what is in fact "undernutrition" which is the more technically correct, and therefore preferred term.

20 - ACF, 2011, *Glossary of terminology commonly used to prevent, diagnose and treat undernutrition.*

21 - Adaptation from UNICEF, in: ACF, 2011, *Glossary of terminology commonly used to prevent, diagnose and treat undernutrition.*

Figure 2: Types of malnutrition



Source: ACF, 2011, Glossary of terminology commonly used to prevent, diagnose, and treat undernutrition.

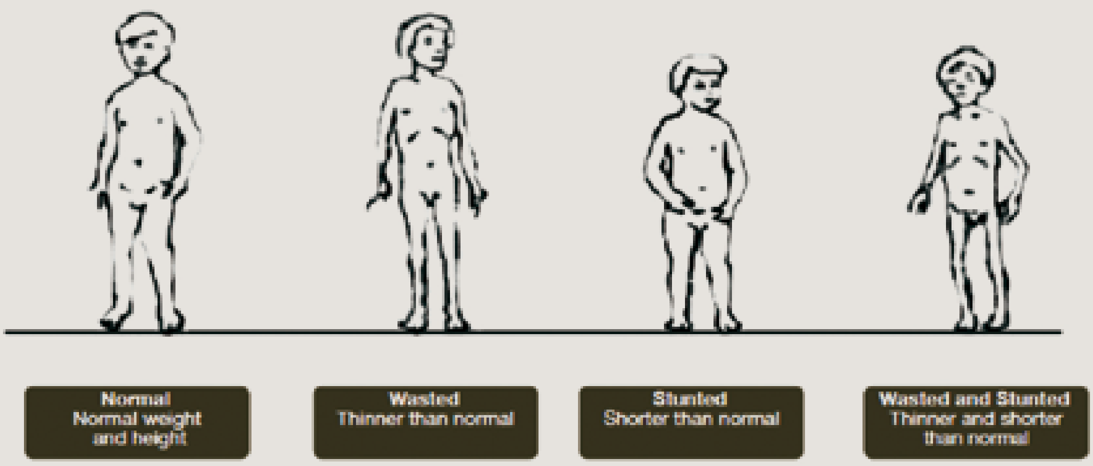
- ## Different forms of undernutrition

Undernutrition does not refer to a single condition, and is found in different forms important to distinguish and understand to define appropriate responses, especially in the context of food assistance interventions.

BOX 6 DIFFERENT FORMS OF UNDERNUTRITION

Undernutrition encompasses a range of conditions, including:

- Severe and moderate forms of **acute malnutrition** (leading to wasting), indicated by a low weight-for-height (WFH) or presence of bilateral oedemas. This occurs as a result of recent rapid weight loss, or a failure to gain weight within a reasonably short period of time. Wasting occurs more frequently with infants and young children, often during the stages where complementary foods are being introduced to their diets, and children are typically more susceptible to infectious diseases. Acute malnutrition can result from food shortages, a recent bout of illness, inappropriate child care or feeding practices or a combination of these factors
- **Stunting** or **chronic undernutrition,** resulting in growth retardation, is indicated by a low height-for-age (HFA); stunting is the consequence of prolonged or repeated episodes of nutritional deficiencies (energy or micronutrients). Stunting is typically a result of intrauterine growth retardation, but it can also reflect exposure to repeated infection or other illnesses throughout the early years of life, compromising the growth of a child.
- **Micronutrient deficiencies**, occurring when the body does not have sufficient amounts of vitamins or minerals due to insufficient dietary intake and/or insufficient absorption and/or suboptimal utilization of the vitamins or minerals by the body.
- **Maternal undernutrition**, resulting in poor nutritional status of the mother during pre-conception, pregnancy and post-natal stages and is indicated by a low Body Mass Index (BMI) and micronutrient deficiencies.
- **Low birth weight of newborn infants**, weighing less than 2,500g at birth irrespective of gestational age.
- **Underweight**, this is a composite measure of both acute and chronic malnutrition, indicated by a low weight-for-age (WFA).



Source: ACF, 2011, Maximising the nutritional impact of food security and livelihoods interventions. A manual for field workers.

• Nutrients and their role

Nutrients are all the organic or non-organic components which constitute food and can be used by the organism for its metabolism. According to their type, they serve different biological and biochemical functions of the organism.

- There are 40 nutrients essential for health.
- If a person is deficient, even in one nutrient, he will not be in good health (e.g. lack of iron = anemia) and will be less resistant to disease.
- "Macronutrients" refers to proteins, carbohydrates and lipids and "micronutrients" to vitamins (A, B, C, D, etc.) and minerals (iron, iodine, calcium, zinc, etc.)

▶ **Macronutrients:** Proteins, carbohydrates (sugars), and lipids (fats) must be available in large quantity in the body to be used for energy. Water is also part of macronutrients.

BOX 7 PROTEINS, LIPIDS, CARBOHYDRATES, AND WATER

- **Proteins** **(essential and non-essential Amino Acids)**

  Proteins constitute the skeleton around which the cell is built, according to a rigorous composition. Proteins are absolutely necessary for life as they are needed for maintenance, growth, reparation, pregnancy and lactation. The organism does not store proteins as such. Proteins can be found in animal source foods (meat, fish, milk, eggs) and plants (peanuts, beans, legumes), with animal-sourced proteins being better assimilated by the body.

- **Lipids** **(fatty acids)**

  Lipids are the constituents of fats, both animal and vegetable. Lipids play a role in the metabolic and structural balance of the body (cell membranes of organs and tissues, the nervous system). They also constitute important energy stores, in the form of adipose tissue. Lipid intake is also important for the supply of lipid soluble vitamins (such as vitamin A and E).

- **Carbohydrates** **(sugars)**

  Carbohydrates are sugars:
  - Complex: slowly assimilated by the organism, they are found in roots and tubers.
  - Simple: Rapidly assimilated, these are the sugars and their derivatives, found in milk (lactose) or fruits (fructose).

  Just as lipids do, carbohydrates provide most of the energy used and stored by the organism. Sugar is essential for the production of energy for the brain.

- **Water**

  70% to 80% of the body is composed of water. Water is by far the most important constituent of the body (present in all tissues). Water has several functions in the organism. Regulation of body temperature is one of them.

  Half of intake is ensured by drinks, the other half by water contained in food and water produced by the organism during oxidation reactions. Water requirements increase in individuals involved in intense physical effort and even more so in warm environments or climates.

Source: ACF, 2012, The essential Nutrition & Health. The key to understand Nutrition & Health and ACF position.

- Micronutrients: Essential vitamins (e.g. A, B, D) and minerals (e.g. calcium, zinc, copper) are required by the body in small quantities throughout the lifecycle.

Micronutrients are organic and mineral substances with no energy value. That is why people lacking them feel no sensation of hunger. However they are essential for the proper functioning of the organism and must be provided through food consumption, as humans cannot synthesize or produce them in sufficient quantities.

The World Health Organization (WHO) classifies deficiencies in zinc, iron and vitamin A among the top 10 causes of morbidity in developing countries.

Individual micronutrients requirements being extremely variable, recommended nutritional intake levels have been established for most vitamins and minerals, according to the category of population. In addition there are certain maximum recommended levels for certain micronutrients (e.g. vitamin A, vitamin D, iron, magnesium, etc.) which, if consumed in too large quantities over the long-term, represent a health risk.

Table 3: *Role of the main micronutrients for the body*

MICRONUTRIENT	MAIN USE IN THE BODY
Iron	To make haemoglobin, the protein in red blood cells that carries oxygen to the tissues. To allow the muscles and brain to work properly.
Iodine	To make thyroid hormones that help to control the way the body works. Iodine is essential for the development of the brain and nervous system in the foetus.
Zinc	For growth and normal development, for reproduction and to keep the immune system working properly.
Vitamin A	To prevent infection and to keep the immune system working properly. To keep the skin, eyes and lining of the gut and lungs healthy. To see in dim light.
B-group Vitamins	To help the body use macronutrients for energy and other purposes. To help the nervous system to work properly.
Folate	To make healthy red blood cells and to prevent abnormalities in the foetus.
Vitamin C	To aid the absorption of some forms of iron (see Box 6). To destroy harmful molecules (free radicals) in the body. To help wound healing.

Source: FAO, 2005, Family Nutrition Guide.

Table 4: Main types of micronutrient deficiencies

DEFICIENCY	DESCRIPTION
Iron deficiency	Lack of iron eventually results in iron-deficiency anaemia. Typical signs are: paleness, tiredness, headaches and breathlessness.
Vitamin A deficiency	Vitamin A deficiency results in xerophthalmia, which affects the eyes. The main signs in order of severity are: nighttime blindness, Bitot's spots (Foamy accumulation on the conjunctiva, inner eyelids, which often appear near the outer edge of the iris), corneal xerosis (dryness, dullness or clouding=milky appearance of the cornea), keratomalacia (softening and ulceration of the cornea), permanent blindness.
Iodine deficiency	Causes a series of anomalies, including goiter (swelling of the thyroid gland in the neck) and cretinism (mental and physical deficiencies).
Vitamin C deficiency	Results in scurvy. Classic signs include: swollen and bleeding gums and bleeding; brittle hair, slower healing of wounds.
Niacin deficiency	Results in pellagra, which affects skin, gastro intestinal tract and nervous system. For this reason, it is sometimes called the disease of the 3Ds: dermatitis, diarrhea and dementia. Dermatitis is the most distinctive characteristic, developing as redness and itching on area of the skin exposed to sunlight.
Thiamin deficiency (Vit. B1)	Thiamin deficiency results in beriberi, which produces cardiac insufficiency and neurological difficulties.

Source: IASC, 2011, The Harmonized Training Package. Resource Material for Training and Learning on Nutrition in Emergencies. Version 2.

2.3 NUTRITIONAL NEEDS

Nutritional needs of individuals are defined according to:

- Required quantity of energy (in Kcal)
- The portion of energy provided by main types of macronutrients (in % of energy provided)
- The quantities of micronutrients consumed (in grams or specific units according to the micronutrients)

• Average nutritional needs of a population

Average norms have been defined for a population (see table 5 below), especially to help decision-making in emergency responses.

Table 5: *Standards of average nutritional needs for a population in the context of an emergency response*

NUTRIENT	MINIMUM POPULATION REQUIREMENTS (expressed as reference nutrient intakes (RNI) for all nutrients except energy and copper)
Energy	2,100 kcal
Proteins	53 g. (10% of total energy)
Fats	40 g. (17% of total energy)
Vitamin A	550 µg REA*
Vitamin D	6.1 µg
Vitamin E	8 mg alpha-TE*
Vitamin K	48.2 µg
Vitamin B1 (Thiamin)	1.1 mg
Vitamin B2 (Riboflavin)	1.1 mg
Vitamin B3 (Niacin)	13.8 mg
Vitamin B6 (Pyridoxine)	1.2 mg
Vitamin B12 (Cobalamin)	2.2 µg
Folic acid	363 µg DFE*
Pantothenate	4.6 mg
Vitamin C	41.6 mg
Iron	32 mg
Iodine	138 µg
Zinc	12.4 mg
Copper	1.1 mg
Selenium	27.6 µg
Calcium	989 mg
Magnesium	201 mg

*Alpha-TE: alpha-tocopherol equivalent
REA: retinol activity equivalent
DFE: dietary folate equivalent

Source: Sphere Project, 2011, the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response.

For the population, average daily energy needs are estimated at 2,100 Kcal per person. Energy provided by proteins must represent 10 to 15% of the total energy value of a ration; carbohydrates from 50% to 55% and lipids from 15% to 30% of the total energy value.

• Specific nutritional needs

One must also remember that nutritional needs, especially for energy, can vary widely according to:

- Age
- Sex
- Body weight
- Physical activity
- Climate and ambient temperature
- Nutritional and health status

There are also specific needs for women during pregnancy and breastfeeding.

Energy and nutrient needs vary first according to **age and sex**, as shown in *table 6* below, especially during growth (up to 18 years old) and physical activity.

***Table 6:** Daily recommended intake for energy and nutrients*

SEX/AGE	BODY-WEIGHT (kg)	ENERGY (kcal)	PROTEINS (g)	IRON (mg)	ZINC m	VITAMIN A (mcg Re)	VITAMIN C (mg)	FOLATE (mcg DFE)
0-6 months	6,0	524	11,6	0[a]	1,1	375	25	80
6-11 months	8,9	708	14,1	9	0,8	400	30	80
1-3 years	12,1	1 022	14,0	6	8,4	400	30	160
4-6 years	18,2	1 352	22,2	6	10,3	450	30	200
7-9 years	25,2	1 698	25,2	9	11,3	500	35	300
10-17 years (girls)	46,7	2 326	42,6	14/32[b]	15,5	600	40	400
10-17 years (boys)	49,7	2 824	47,8	17	19,2	600	40	400
WOMEN	55,0							
18-59 years		2 408	41,0	29/11c	9,8	500	45	400
Pregnant		+278	+6,0	High[d]	15,0	800	55	600
Breastfeeding		+450	+17,5	15	16,3	850	70	500
60 and over		2 142	41,0	11	9,8	600	45	400
MEN	65,0							
18-59 years		3 091	49,0	14	14,0	600	45	400
60 and over		2 496	49,0	14	14,0	600	45	400

a. Fill term babies are born with sufficient iron stores for six months.
b. Amount needed when menstruation starts.
c .Amount needed after menopause.
d. Needs are so high that iron supplements are usually recommended for pregnant women and pregnant adolescent girls.
kcal = kilocalorie.
RE = retinol equivalents.

Source: FAO, 2005, Family Nutrition Guide.

Even if nutritional needs seem lower in absolute value for young children according to *table 6*, the first 2 years of life (as well as for the period of conception) represent a crucial period for the physical, motor and intellectual development of the child. The response to their nutritional needs is therefore critical during this period, especially since young children have small reserves.

The term **"window of opportunity"** (or "1,000 days") is used for this period which is critical from a nutritional point of view, going from beginning of pregnancy until the child is 2 years old.

During pregnancy and breastfeeding, women need more than 2,700 Kcal per day. They also have extra needs in iron, zinc and folic acid. If they lack of food, the nutritional reserves of their bodies will be used in priority for fetal development. The woman will lack strength and her immune system will be weakened.

Individuals already malnourished or ill (especially those with chronic illnesses such as AIDS) or convalescing also have extra nutritional needs.

Physical activity requires energy and the average value of 2,100 Kcal is calculated on the basis of average or light activity; energy needs will be higher (+100 to 250 Kcal/day) according to the intensity of the activity[22].

Finally, ambient exterior temperature is also a factor to take into consideration because a low temperature increases the organism's energy consumption, especially where shelter and heating are inadequate. *Table 7* below shows the necessary adjustments in terms of energy needs depending on the ambient temperature.

Table 7: *Energy needs adjustment according to the external temperature*

TEMPERATURE	20°C	15°C	10°C	5°C	0°C
Calorie adjustment	-	+ 100 Kcal	+ 200 Kcal	+ 300 Kcal	+ 400 Kcal

2.4 NUTRITIONAL INTAKE: FOOD AND NUTRITIONAL SUPPLEMENTS

The adequacy of food consumption for the needs of each individual is primordial; food assistance teams need several basic notions of food's nutritional composition to optimize the impact their intervention can have on undernutrition. These elements are useful during the stage of defining the composition of the food assistance transfer that we will see in *Chapter 2 - Section 3.3*.

The first source of nutrients is the food consumed daily, not forgetting that water is primordial for the organism as a complement to macro and micronutrients. Also included are other forms of food prepared specifically to respond to nutritional needs such as enriched or fortified foods, nutritional ready to use foods, energy biscuits or micronutrient powders which will be described later.

Except unusual needs (folic acid for pregnant women, pathological conditions, etc.), a diet

22 - To take into account particularly when implementing food or cash for work interventions which usually require important physical work from the participants.

sufficiently diversified and rich in fresh foods will result in reaching the level of recommended daily inputs of micronutrients and prevent risks of deficiencies.

A balanced, healthy diet should satisfy the body's energy needs and give it essential nutrients. But the needs and food energy recommendations cannot be used independently of other food nutrients, because the lack of one will influence the others. In addition, beyond the nutrient composition of food consumed, one must realize that certain associations of food will favor, or to the contrary prevent absorption (and therefore availability for the organism) of certain micronutrients, just as poor health can reduce absorption.

• Food groups and nutritional value

The main foods, according to their characteristics, can be classified in "food groups". A combination of foods from each group must be consumed daily to ensure a healthy diet and prevent malnutrition. Table 8 below shows the principal food groups and their nutritional interest.

***Table 8:** Main food groups and nutritional interest*

FOOD GROUP	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLES OF FOOD
Cereals	Cereals are basic foods; they provide the principal source of energy in most cultures. They also contain proteins, vitamin B and iron.	wheat, millet, sorghum, corn, rice
Legumes and oilseeds	Legumes are good sources of proteins and rich in vitamin B and iron. Oilseeds provide lipids.	beans, peas, lentils, peanuts, cowpeas, chickpeas, soya, sesame
Tubers and roots	Tubers and roots contain essentially carbohydrates but only few proteins.	yam, taro, manioc, sweet potatoes, Irish potatoes
Fruits and vegetables	These are important sources of micronutrients and food fibers, but the quantities vary according to the type of vegetable and fruit. Orange vegetables, such as orange sweet potato and carrots, as well as orange fruits, like mango and papaya, but not including citrus fruits (for example: orange, lemon), are excellent sources of vitamin A. Most fresh fruits and vegetables (not too cooked) provide vitamin C. Green-leafed vegetables bring folate to the organism and a bit of vitamin A.	Large choice of fruits and vegetables available according to the area.

Meat, fish and eggs	They represent excellent sources of protein and often lipids. They provide large quantities of iron (especially red meat and red offal) and zinc, and many other micronutrients, especially group B vitamins. Liver, of all kinds, is very rich in iron and vitamin A.	Beef, goat, mutton, pork, poultry, fish, offal, eggs
Fats and oils	Fats and oils improve the palatability of food and are a concentrated source of energy. Fats contain fatty acids, certain of which are necessary for growth. Milk fat is a source rich in vitamins A and D. Plant oils and fats do not contain these vitamins unless they are enriched.	Groundnut, soya, sunflower, sesame oil
Milk and milk products	Maternal milk can provide all the necessary nutrients during the first six months of life and a useful proportion of the nutrients necessary until at least the age of 2. Breastfeeding must be actively protected, supported and encouraged. Animal milk and milk products, such as curd, yogurt and cheese are excellent sources of proteins, lipids and numerous micronutrients, such as calcium (but not iron).	Maternal milk, animal milk, milk products

No food or food group provides all necessary nutrients. The best way to be sure that we receive enough of each nutrient and enough calories is to consume a variety of foods.

It should be noted that powdered milk must be used with extreme caution: First, if it is prepared with unhealthy water or in inappropriate hygienic conditions, there is a high risk of bacterial contamination; second, this milk risks being used to feed young children, for which this milk is not appropriate. Therefore, it should not be distributed in powder form. It can however be mixed with a premix containing flour, oil and sugar for example, on the condition that this preparation be consumed within 7 days.

• Enhanced foods

There are numerous products or food enhanced from a nutritional point of view. Some can be used in food assistance interventions, according to the context, identified specific needs and targeted populations.[23]

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23 - Refer to Toolbox for detailed product/food sheets [- 61]

Table 9: Types of enhanced foods and main examples

TYPE OF FOOD	DESCRIPTION AND USE	EXAMPLES OF FOOD
Foods fortified/ enriched in micronutrients	Foods enriched by one or more micronutrients in a process of industrial transformation. Used by all people, in order to prevent or reduce specific micronutrient deficiencies. Relatively low-cost production.	- Iodized salt - Vitamin A or D enriched oil - Flour enriched in vitamins A, iron, riboflavin, etc.
Fortified blended foods (FBF)	Mixtures of several foods, most often cereal flours (wheat, soya, corn) fortified with micronutrients. Often used in interventions to prevent undernutrition (or even treatment) and in blanket distributions for populations at risk (children from 6 to 59 months, pregnant and breastfeeding women), together with sugar and oil for the preparation of gruels. FBFs are however also often distributed in general food distributions.	- CSB (Corn Soya Blend) - SuperCereal - SuperCereal Plus - Exist in local production, for example Unimix in Ethiopia
Ready-to-Use Food (RUF)[24]	Nutritional products, usually foods, specifically developed to treat and prevent nutritional deficiencies. These products are also developed as "ready to use", thus requiring no preparation or cooking. Most often based on lipids, rich in micronutrients, they can be stored at ambient temperature for a relatively long time. Thus they facilitate storage, transportation and distribution. Relatively high cost, these foods are usually imported. They are used in interventions targeting populations suffering or at risk of undernutrition: children from 6 to 59 months and breastfeeding and pregnant women	- PlumpyDoz - QBmix - WawaMum - Nutributter
MICRONUTRIENT POWDERS	Powders which are a mixture of micronutrients (vitamins and minerals), in sachets, to add to a meal during preparation. These powders are often used when micronutrient deficiencies are shown or suspected, especially due to a lack of access to a balanced diet. They have no energy value. Easy-to-use, long-lasting, they are sometimes not well accepted by populations. They target all members of the household.	- Sprinkles - MixMe
HIGH ENERGY BISCUITS (HEB)	Emergency, nutritionally balanced food rations, consumable without preparation, in the form of biscuits. Often distributed on a temporary basis during the first days of an emergency response, they allow rapid coverage of many people. They are packaged individually, vacuum sealed, and are long-lasting at ambient temperature.	- BP5 - NRG5

24 - RUF are composed of therapeutic food (RUTF), supplementary food (RUSF) and complementary food (RUCF). Only the two last categories can be used as par of food assistance operations as defined in this manual.

Some of these enhanced foods have been developed for a strictly therapeutic use as part of protocols for the treatment of undernutrition and are not intended to be used in food assistance. ACF has recently developed a positioning document on nutritional products, their use and pending questions on their use[25]. Please refer to this document if you need to formulate or implement a food assistance intervention with nutritionally enhanced foods or products or consult a member of the nutrition team to identify the most appropriate foods.

• Associations and absorption of nutrients

Without going into the detail of metabolism, it is important to note that foods rich in nutrients do not necessarily provide effective absorption of these nutrients by the human body. Certain factors, related to the form of the nutrients in foods, and the associations with other nutrients/or foods can prevent or facilitate absorption.

Iron in meat or maternal milk for example is much more easily assimilated than iron in plants; on the other hand, meat, fish and food rich in vitamin C (fresh fruits and vegetables) increase the absorption of iron from plants.

Some foods such as whole grain cereals, or drinks such as tea or coffee, contain "anti-nutrients" (such as phytates) which lessen the absorption of iron or zinc.

Methods of storage, preparation and cooking of food also have an impact on the micronutrient content of food, as well as its form, which can be more or less absorbable by the organism. Copious rinsing of rice for example, causes it to lose vitamin B, while storing oil too long reduces its vitamin A content.

In fact, a good variety of food is necessary to ensure optimal absorption of nutrients, and when possible, education on good food practices, or cooking demonstrations can be useful to ensure the best use of the available food.

Finally, adequate food consumption does not in itself guarantee adequate nutrition. Poor health can prevent digestion and assimilation of nutrients, which can be a factor in malnutrition. Therefore, it is often necessary not to limit to food assistance intervention in terms of prevention of undernutrition. Complementary interventions, especially intended to guarantee the safety of food preparation (for example providing cooking fuel) or access to potable water as well as hygiene and health services, in parallel with direct food assistance, can be necessary.

2.5 ENSURING THE NUTRITIONAL QUALITY OF FOOD ASSISTANCE INTERVENTIONS

Food assistance interventions, in response to a problem of availability or access to adequate food, are intended to ensure adequate, balanced food consumption, with the objective of preventing undernutrition.

25 - ACF, 2011, Products are not enough. Putting nutrition products in their proper place in the treatment and prevention of global acute malnutrition. Briefing and Position Paper.

Whatever the type and methods of intervention, it must give access to food fitting the target population's nutritional needs, whether completely (the intervention aims at covering all food needs), or as a complementary resource for targeted populations or other interventions. In any case, the intervention must *"do no harm"* and ensure that it has no negative effects on the nutritional status of the populations. This section also contains several reminders and key recommendations from the handbook: ACF, 2011, *Maximising the nutritional impact of food security and livelihoods interventions*.

• Defining and giving access to a balanced, nutritive and adapted ration

- Be sure that the food ration is **sufficient for the minimum nutritional needs of the target populations for energy, macro and micro nutrients**. Providing access to appropriate micronutrients is particularly important for populations which have access to food only through food assistance, such as refugees or displaced persons living in camps. As a reminder, table 5 sets out the Sphere standards for the composition of emergency food rations.
- Take into account the other substances in the food such as phytates, polyphenols and enzyme inhibitors which can **improve or inhibit absorption** of nutrients by the body.
- Use enriched foods in order to improve the quality of the ration, particularly for groups with specific needs. The WFP recommends use of SuperCereal and SuperCereal Plus (previously CSB+ et CSB++ respectively), fortified for young children. SuperCereal Plus contains milk proteins while SuperCereal does not. It is also possible to use other nutritionally enhanced products. Also look for local food supplement products, making sure that they are of good quality and follow health norms.
- Use **fortified foods** to improve the micronutrient content of the ration. Some products are systematically fortified when they are supplied by the WFP (e.g. salt, vegetable oil). Many countries also have large national programs of food fortification (e.g. wheat and corn flour, cooking oil and condiments). Remember to use these products when possible)
- Encourage **home fortification**, if that seems necessary. There are many varieties of inexpensive micronutrients in batter or powder, adapted for home fortification.
- When possible combine food aid with interventions for **access to fresh food** (for example, vouchers for fresh food), home gardening or interventions promoting small livestock rearing.

• Meeting the nutritional needs of specific groups

- The "standard" ration is not always appropriate for the real needs of certain people within a standard targeted population. Make sure that the specific needs of children under two years old, pregnant and breastfeeding women and chronically ill people are well covered, when necessary, even if the food ration is only complementary.

- Distribute products specifically for these groups. Where possible, promote fresh food (fruit, vegetables, animal products) or add additional food complements such as micronutrient powders or lipid-based nutrients (e.g. PlumpyDoz®, Nutributter®).

- Adopt a preventive approach for general distribution, by targeting groups by age and physiological condition, rather than by nutritional condition (e.g. all pregnant or breastfeeding women or women of childbearing age, as well as all children from 6 to 23 months), in order to improve the distribution of food rations. This allows targeting not only those who show physical signs of undernutrition. Food aid can be used in addition to nutritional programs, which treat acute malnutrition.

• Making sure that food aid does not replace breastfeeding

- Take all opportunities to **promote maternal breastfeeding only for children under 6 months old, continuing breastfeeding until 2 years old as well as appropriate weaning practices**, because it is essential to the survival of the child. Children from 6 to 8 months old only need about 200 Kcal per day in addition to the calories in maternal milk, if breastfeeding is sufficient. Be particularly careful not to allow food assistance to replace breastfeeding for infants under 6 months old and children from 6 to 23 months old.

• Providing food products that are easy to cook and consume safely

- Because of the many responsibilities of mothers and caregivers, encourage consumption of **food which is long-lasting and easy to cook**. Make sure that there is food in the ration which is easily consumable by children between 6 and 23 months old (easy to chew, swallow and digest).
- Make sure that the **milling price** (for whole grains) is not prohibitive and cover this cost through complementary actions such as milling vouchers.
- Encourage the use of **energy efficient stoves** in order to reduce respiratory infections and gaining time for women and children. Also encourage good storage of food and cooking practices which preserve the nutrient quality. Add soap to the rations in order to encourage people to wash their hands.

• Ensuring the acceptability of the ration

- To the extent possible, **encourage consumption of food products locally available and culturally acceptable** by the targeted population. If new products or new preparation methods are introduced, make sure that an appropriate sensitization is provided in the project. Inform the beneficiaries of the reason for which they should use the product, the cooking method and who should receive it first. In addition, a list of ingredients, directions for use and storage in the local language must be on the packaging of the food products.

2.6 DO NO HARM

Food assistance interventions can potentially have a negative impact on food security, health and nutritional condition of the beneficiaries, care practices, relations between men and women, just to name a few.

To minimize this risk:

- Systematically identify the potential negative unexpected effects and risks for nutrition during the planning of the intervention and develop mitigating measures; exchange views with your team and colleagues, especially in other areas, to make a list of potential negative impacts.
- Use the Program Theory to study unexpected obstacles in your program, as well as enhancing factors. Modify the planned activities to improve them (for example sensitization on food preparation during food distribution), or change your approach.
- Put in place a continuous monitoring system to permit detection of negative impacts in time and to implement corrective measures.

A practical tool has been developed by IYCN[26] to evaluate potential negative impacts on nutrition in agricultural interventions, but which can also be used for other kinds of intervention. This simple tool provides a list of steps to follow during the definition of the intervention.

Table 10 below gives several examples of potential negative impacts of food assistance projects as well as possible preventive mitigating measures.

Table 10: *Potential negative impacts of interventions and mitigating measures*

POSSIBLE NEGATIVE IMPACTS	PREVENTIVE MITIGATING MEASURES
Increase in women's workload (distance to travel and time to devote to take advantage of the assistance, physical effort in work for assistance)	- Make sure that the distribution points are not too far away - Limit waiting time at the distribution site - Distribution periods, as well as work, training, sensitization sessions take into account the other activities of the women.
Other livelihoods are compromised by the implementation of the food assistance program	- Study seasonality during the assessment (e.g. periods traditionally reserved for agricultural work) - Activities must not be put in place to the detriment of other livelihood activities (e.g. for work activities which take a lot of time and must not be implemented during periods normally consecrated to other productive activities; distributions must not take place on market days, etc.)

26 - IYCN: Infant and Young Child Nutrition, USAID Program aiming to strengthen infant and young child nutrition. www.iycn.org

Risks related to food safety (risks of illness related to food contamination)	- Use the Sphere standards: numerous regular and independent quality inspections throughout the food chain - Regular training on optimal food hygiene practices - Food hygiene training for local suppliers and market sellers (especially fresh food suppliers)
Market distortions/inflation risks related to the intervention	- Implement regular market studies to rapidly detect any distortion.
Additional beneficiary expenses (e.g. milling of the grain, transfer costs, transportation costs to and from the distribution point)	- Make sure that the additional/hidden expenses are fully taken into account, reduced and perhaps paid (voucher/cash transfer)
Possible accidents but also the deterioration of health of those participating in cash/ voucher/food for work programs	- Evaluate the risks related to these activities, avoid riskier activities and implement strict safety rules known by the teams and participants - Supply protective clothing and/or equipment: gloves, masks, hats, boots if necessary
Children are indirectly deprived in order to benefit from the assistance, due especially to the inclusion criteria	- Identify the selection criteria which will minimize the risk - Sensitize the community and beneficiaries to these risks - Perform a close monitoring during the intervention

Source: ACF, 2011, Maximising the nutritional impact of food security and livelihoods interventions. A manual for field workers.

As we will see in the following chapter, these recommendations are to be taken into account from the first steps of project identification to its closure, including identification and measurement of the effects on nutrition through project monitoring system, to ensure the intervention's validity.

TOOL BOX / MORE INFORMATION

- ACF, 2005, *Food Aid and Nutrition: two complementary approaches. Blanket food distribution for children under five years of age*. [- 111]
- ACF, 2006, *Les micronutriments et leurs carences. Capitalisation thématique*. [- 62]
- ACF, 2011, *Glossary of terminology commonly used to prevent, diagnose, and treat undernutrition* [- 62]

- ACF, 2011, *Maximising the nutritional impact of food security and livelihoods interventions. A manual for field workers*. [- 62]
- ACF, 2011, *Products are not enough. Putting nutrition products in their proper place in the treatment and prevention of acute malnutrition. Briefing and Position Paper* [- 62]
- ACF, 2012, *The essential Nutrition & Health. The key to understand Nutrition & Health and ACF position*. [- 62]
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- FAO, 2010, *Combating micronutrient deficiencies. Food-based approaches*. Edited by Brian Thompson & Leslie Amoroso. [- 62]
- IASC, 2011, *The Harmonised Training Package*. Resource Material for Training and Learning on Nutrition in Emergencies. Version 2. http://nutritioncluster.net/training-topics/harmonized-training-package/
- IYCN, 2011, *Nutritional Impact Assessment Tool*. [- 123]
- Sphere Project, 2011, *the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response*. [- 661]
- UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, WHO, 2003, *Food and Nutrition Needs in Emergencies*.
- WFP, 2000, *Food and Nutrition Handbook*.

CHAPTER 2

FROM INITIAL ASSESSMENT TO THE FORMULATION OF THE INTERVENTION

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1. SITUATION ANALYSIS AND NEEDS IDENTIFICATION

The situation analysis and needs identification are necessary prior to any intervention, even in emergency situations. In the case of food assistance programs, this analysis will guide us in the choice of response and the definition of the most appropriate intervention modalities. The initial assessment covers current and anticipated needs, existing capacity to respond to all or part of the needs, and the elements allowing definition of the most appropriate response in view of a specific context, as well as the potential risks related to intervention.

Thanks to the initial assessment, we should be able to respond to the following key questions:

KEY QUESTIONS

- What is the nutritional and food situation and what are the risks of degradation?
- Which geographic zone is the most affected or the most at risk?
- Which are the groups most affected or most at risk?
- What are the local capacities and coping strategies in place? Are these strategies viable and long-lasting?
- How many people are at risk/or need assistance?
- What type of assistance do they need?
- When and for how long will assistance be necessary?
- What are the local/national capacities to respond to the identified needs?

The analysis must also continue as a process through the continuous monitoring over the implementation of the project. The situation and needs evolve over time, sometimes quickly, especially following a sudden emergency; monitoring and evaluation of the intervention must also analyze the evolving situation throughout the project to make adjustments if need be, including ending it if it is no longer relevant.

The following sections synthesize only the key elements to consider in the case where a food assistance intervention is envisaged. For more complete information on food security and livelihoods assessments refer to the manual: ACF, 2010, *Food Security and Livelihoods Assessments. A practical guide for field workers*.

1.1 NUTRITIONAL SITUATION, TRENDS AND CAUSES

As detailed in Chapter 1, protecting the nutritional status of people (and more specifically children under 5 years old), or preventing its degradation, constitutes a priority objective for food assistance interventions. During the initial assessment stage, it is therefore necessary to obtain the most precise information possible on the nutritional situation in order to respond to it in the best way possible. The description of the nutritional situation of a population includes the following factors:

- Prevalence of undernutrition in the area, in its different forms (acute or chronic malnutrition, micronutrient deficiencies) in normal times and following the crisis;
- Proven or suspected causes and risk factors causing the undernutrition;
- Trends and seasonality of undernutrition and risk factors.

• Assessing the prevalence of the different forms of undernutrition

The indicators to measure the nutritional situation are provided in *table 11* below. *Table 12* gives the severity thresholds of different forms of undernutrition. Finally *table 13* shows the severity threshold for low birth weight, as defined by the WHO.

***Table 11:** Indicators and definitions of different types of undernutrition*

TYPES	DEFINITION
Wasting or Acute malnutrition	Weight-for-height < -2 Z-scores of the WHO 2006 standards
Severe Acute Malnutrition	Weight-for-height < -3 Z-scores of the WHO 2006 standards or MUAC < 115 mm or bilateral pitting oedema
Stunting	Height-for-age < - 2 Z-scores of the WHO 2006 standards
Underweight	Weight-for-age < -2 Z-scores of the WHO 2006 standards
Low Birth Weight	Birth weight< 2500 g
Chronic energy deficiency (CED)	Body Mass index (weight (kg)/height (m)2) < 18.5

***Table 12:** WHO categorisation of the public health significance of undernutrition*

INDICATOR	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH	VERY HIGH
% Stunted	<20	20≤29	30≤39	≥ 40
% Underweight	<10	10≤19	20≤29	≥ 30
% Wasted	<5	5≤9	10≤14	≥ 15
% Women of childbearing age with BMI <18,5	5-9,9	10-19,9	20-39,9	≥ 40

***Table 13:** WHO categorisation of the public health significance of low birth weight*

INDICATOR	PUBLIC HEALTH SIGNIFICANCE WHEN THE PREVALENCE IS
% Low Birth Weight in newborn	≥ 15

Source for the 3 table: WHO Expert Committee. 1995. Physical Status: The Use and Interpretation of Anthropometry, WHO Technical Report Series #854, Geneva, WHO.

Most of the data related to these indicators is generally available from the Nutrition sector of the mission or can be obtained from the local office of the Ministry of Health or UNICEF for example (see Box 8 showing the principal sources of Nutrition information). If the data is not locally available, or is considered unreliable or too old, it is recommended to make a quick nutritional evaluation as part of the initial assessment in coordination with the Nutrition sector. This quick assessment is also necessary following a disaster, which could have caused a rapid and major change in the local nutritional situation.

For an example of the nutritional evaluation methodology using the MUAC, see annex 3 of the handbook: ACF, 2010, *Food security and livelihoods assessment. A practical guide for field workers.*

Do not forget to gather information on possible micronutrient deficiencies, since food assistance interventions can be intended to strengthen the consumption of certain micronutrient rich foods. It is complicated and costly to directly measure deficiencies, but the WHO has compiled data[27] by countries which can be useful to consult. In addition, it is possible to make an assessment of food intake to determine the risk of **micronutrient deficiencies - especially in Vitamin A, iron and zinc** through questionnaires on the frequency of food consumption. Note however that these assessment methods are long and complex to implement.

For some examples of assessment methodologies for consumption of micronutrients, see annexes 6 and 7 of the handbook: ACF, 2011, *Maximising the nutritional impact of food security and livelihood interventions. A manual for field workers.*

There are other options such as tests to measure the content of iodized salt, use of HemoCue™ to measure anemia linked to iron deficiencies or the analysis of serum retinol to detect vitamin A deficiencies. These tests can be performed during a nutritional survey, for example.

BOX 8 KEY SOURCES INFORMATION IN NUTRITION

- National nutrition and health surveys or country profiles, including Demographic and Health surveys (DHS) and Multi Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS). The UNICEF child info system, the Health and Nutrition Tracking System and the WHO Mental Health Atlas are also of relevance.
- National surveillance systems. Note that WHO compile health and nutrition information at country level in the WHO Nutrition Landscape Information System (NLiS).
- Anthropometric surveys (e.g. Standardized Monitoring and Assessment of Relief and Transitions surveys (SMART).
- Micronutrient surveys. Note that micronutrient surveys are costly and require use of invasive techniques and are therefore conducted less often. However, WHO compile micronutrient information in the WHO Vitamin and Mineral Nutrition Information System (VMNIS).
- Nutrition Causal Analysis (NCA).
- Admission rates and coverage in existing programs for the management of acute malnutrition.

Source: ACF, 2011, Maximising the nutritional impact of food security and livelihoods interventions. A manual for field workers.

27 - OMS/WHO – Vitamins and Mineral Nutrition Information System (VMNIS) - http://www.who.int/vmnis/fr/index.html

• Estimate the trends and seasonality of undernutrition

Beyond understanding the current nutritional situation it is also necessary to try to understand the dynamic aspects **(trends and seasonality)** of undernutrition. Variations in time can reveal an improvement or degradation of the nutritional situation and show evolution over the seasons. It can also be useful to define a seasonal calendar covering several years/cycles to better understand the trends and relations between the different seasonal events *(Refer to Section 1.5 of this chapter)*.

It is evident that the **trends and fluctuations of undernutrition will influence** the way to proceed and the time to begin a food security program. For example, a rapid deterioration of the nutritional situation can be a precursor of a humanitarian crisis, which would require an appropriate rapid response. On the other hand, a slower endemic deterioration can require a longer term intervention.

• Identify the causes of the undernutrition

Finally, it is necessary to obtain a maximum of information on the **probable causes** of a worsened nutritional situation, or the **risk factors** which may contribute to this short-term degradation, to better target and prioritize interventions. As we have seen, the causes of undernutrition are often multiple, related and strongly dependent on the context.

A detailed understanding of the causes is not always easy, especially in emergency situations, but an estimation of the factors potentially affecting the nutritional status must be made qualitatively, or from existing literature. At a minimum, a consultation with the nutrition teams, local health services or other stakeholders in the zone, can help in making hypotheses on the main causes. A rapid study of the profile of malnourished children admitted in nutritional programs (geographic origin, socioeconomic level and livelihoods of the family, access sanitation or health services, etc.) can also provide elements of the response.

Note, however, that this analysis of the causes is not always possible, nor required, especially following a disaster.

In other contexts, and in the context of the definition of a longer-term strategy, a more thorough study of the causes of undernutrition may be relevant. ACF has recently developed a standard methodology for this purpose[28].

1.2 FOOD SECURITY AND LIVELIHOODS

The initial assessment of food security and livelihoods is based on understanding the following aspects concerning the population and how they are affected, or may be affected, by the crisis:

- Food availability
- Access to food and food preparation
- Use of food

It also must identify the categories of the population most affected, understand the adaptation strategies implemented and identify population capacity to face the short and long-term situation.

28 - ACF, forthcoming, Nutrition Causal Analysis. Handbook. (provisional name)

The initial food security assessment should seek to understand the current situation compared to the situation prior to the crisis. It must consider the potential long-term effects and severity of the crisis. It should also estimate as precisely as possible the food needs already covered, either through local resources and coping strategies of the population, or through assistance interventions in place or planned by local authorities, civil society or other humanitarian stakeholders *(Refer to section 1.6 of this chapter)*. Finally, the assessment should estimate how the local market can respond to the needs or contribute to.

Table 14 below shows the main indicators to take into account in the initial assessment.

***Table 14:** Main food security and livelihoods indicators*

	INDICATOR	DESCRIPTION
AVAILABILITY	Food reserves	Sufficiency and diversity of food production in the markets and households
	Food imports and market functioning	Origin, diversity and availability of food in the markets
	Market prices	Prices of food and basic products; variations and trends
ACCESS	Food sources	Diversity and seasonality of food sources; changes in these sources
	Revenue sources	Diversity and seasonality of revenue sources; work migration; changes
	Coping strategies	Strategies of food consumption (adaptation, crisis, survival)
USE	Food diversity	Diversity of food consumed; frequency of meals
	Food knowledge and practices	Food preferences: Practices of storage, preparation and cooking of food
	Care practices	Practices of breastfeeding of young children and trends; practices of sharing food

Source: Adapted from: ACF, 2010, Food Security and Livelihoods Assessments. A practical guide for field workers.

Key questions to ask:

- What is the capacity of households to face the crisis?
- What are the non-covered food needs?
- What are the prices of basic products on the markets and the terms of trade, and what are the short-term perspectives?
- What are the changes in the sources of supply (purchase, borrowing, begging, gathering)?
- What is the cause of loss of purchasing power? (high-prices, loss of revenue)
- What are the changes in the type of food consumed?

- Is there a reduction in the number of daily meals and quantities consumed?
- What are the changes in the level of household food stocks?
- How livelihoods have been affected and to which extent (in terms of production, income, productive capital)?
- What are the perspectives for income (economic and agricultural) as a function of seasonal variations?
- Are coping strategies bearable or risky?

• Local food availability assessment

As soon as a major disturbance is expected in the means of subsistence of populations (production shock, breakdown of supply system), prior to any formulation of a program, we must evaluate food availability in the concerned area and perspectives according to possible market reactions. The goal is to determine if the intervention must respond to a problem of availability or access to food: the responses will not be the same depending on whether food is available locally or not.

In addition, in the case where cash based interventions are envisioned, it is necessary to know to what extent the local market can satisfactorily respond to increased demand, while limiting unacceptable inflation risks. The market study must study how the market can be an integral part of the food assistance response and, if need be, what specific support to the market is necessary (information, advance payments, organization of fairs, etc.).

It is also essential to always take into account seasonal variations (agricultural calendar of local production, for example) to identify the real impact of the crisis on the food economy. The results of this study done at the national level and within the target zone are then combined with the analysis at the household level.

BOX 9 MARKET DEFINITIONS


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A market is a formal or informal setting where buyers and sellers meet regularly to exchange goods and services

Market Performance is the extent to which the market makes goods and services available at affordable prices to meet demand. When markets perform well, households that have cash are able to find and buy what they need, when they need, at prices that reflect the traders' costs plus a reasonable trading margin (profit). When markets are not performing well, such households are either unable to find sufficient goods and services on local markets or can find it only at excessively high prices.

Market Structure is the number of buyers and sellers, the size of markets, the volume of product traded, and the degree of specialization coordination and communication within the market. It includes how markets are linked by transport, storage and communication infrastructure.

Source: ACF, 2010, Food Security and Livelihoods Assessment. A practical guide for field workers.

First, there must be an analysis of the availability of basic products before and after the crisis, in the affected zone and throughout the country, based on macro-economic data:

- seasonality of exchanges in a "normal" year:
- level and sources of production (deficit zones, surplus zones), future production;
- level of access and functionality of production sources;
- level and source of imports;
- level and destination of exports;
- level of stock (private and public[29]) and governmental policy on use of reserves;
- level of bilateral donations;
- evolution of internal and external (cross-border) trade flows;
- evolution of exchange rates (official and parallel) and their impact on prices.

As well as the functioning conditions of the markets:

- price levels;
- existence of speculative phenomena;
- monopoly situations of the stakeholders (merchants, government) which can fix prices;
- creation of new sourcing channels;
- sufficient availability or not of basic products;
- changes in the type of food and its packaging;
- type of exchanges: cash or barter;
- level and evolution of basic product prices;
- evolution of the terms of trade[30] ;
- number of active merchants and their capacity and willingness to respond to an increase in demand (for example, by transfer from a surplus zone to a deficit zone);
- capacity of storage (size of warehouses, turnover) and transportation (frequency of deliveries, size of trucks);
- existence of barriers to internal exchanges (taxes, condition of roads and bridges, insecurity, front lines, border closings);

Second, one must identify the possible scenarios of market reactions to understand the impact on food availability in the affected zone depending on whether one injects food or cash.

In certain cases, a deeper study of the market may be required, especially when one of the objectives is to support the recovery of the economy and/or local market, or if it is necessary to advocate with other stakeholders. A methodology for analyzing the market (EMMA - Emergency Market Mapping and Analysis, see box *10*)[31] was recently developed and provides a good tool to specifically study a specific value chain (or a “critical market”) from the producer to the consumer during emergencies. Implementation of this methodology is recommended when a detailed analysis of the specific critical market is necessary, but not as a first assessment tool, because it requires

29 - It may exist national cereal agencies whose role is to stabilize cereals prices by using the purchase and resale of a part of the national production and/or imported products.

30 - The terms of trade are the ratio of two prices, for example the ratio between the price of cattle and the staple food, the ratio between the price of cash crop and the staple food or the ratio between the daily salary of the unskilled labor and the staple food.

31 - Albu M., 2010, The Emergency Market Mapping and Analysis Toolkit. Practical Action/Oxfam GB.

additional time and resources. In addition, it is strongly recommended to have previously followed specific training or be supported by a person who has already used the methodology.

For further information on initial market assessment, as well as examples of tools, refer to:

> ACF, 2010, *Food Security and Livelihoods Assessment. A practical guide for field workers. Sections 4.3 and 4.4.*

> ACF, 2008, *Implementing cash-based interventions. A guideline for aid workers. Section 3.1.2 ; Annexes 10, 11, 12.*

BOX 10 MARKET ANALYSIS TOOLS: EMMA

EMMA's goals are an improvement in the efficiency of humanitarian first aid intended to guarantee survival, as well as protection of food security and livelihoods. It also intends to prevent mistakes which can be harmful to re-establishing the economy in the short or long-term.

It responds specifically to the following questions:

- How has the disaster affected key markets?
- What is the impact of the primary humanitarian emergency aid on these markets at the time of the analysis?
- What actions do all stakeholders (local and international organizations, authorities, funders) recommend against the disaster's negative impact on markets?
- How can markets be integrated into humanitarian response to help immediate and mid-term recovery?

EMMA encourages an overall, rapid analysis of market systems during the first weeks of emergency situations when:

- Basic information is limited
- The time and required capacity for analysis of the markets do not exist
- Expert capacity for market analysis is not yet available.

EMMA is not an appropriate tool for quick assessments and analysis right after a disaster. It can, however, be used as soon as the situation begins to stabilize.

Generally, that means that EMMA is used once:

- The immediate priority needs (related to survival) have already been addressed
- Displaced persons are settled, at least temporarily
- Market stakeholders (for example producers, retailers and merchants) have had the possibility to evaluate their own situation and started to design crisis management strategies.

Source: Albu M., 2010, The Emergency Market Mapping and Analysis Toolkit. Practical Action/Oxfam GB.

• Food consumption

Food consumption measures reflect the energy and nutrients provided by the diet of individuals and households. Households food consumption analysis (Food consumption score, Household diet diversity score) is generally considered as proxy indicator of **food access**, while individual consumption analysis (Individual diet diversity score) is considered as proxy indicator of actual **food utilization**.

ACF recommends not to limit to a single indicator of access and food consumption in FSL assessments, but to use several because each highlights a different aspect of the food insecurity experience. Their number and combinations will vary depending on specific assessment objectives. Assessment of modifications of food sources and meal frequency is considered the minimum required information. These indicators are generally associated with a measure of diet diversity for future monitoring of the context's evolution. In quick assessments which do not use household questionnaires, ACF concentrates on the modifications of food sources as the main indicator of food access.

***Table 15:** Food consumption indicators*

AREA OF ANALYSIS	KEY ISSUES TO CONSIDER	TOOLS AND SOURCES
Meal frequency	• Changes in number of meals taken per day • Standard definition of a meal • Seasonality	***Section 4.6.1****
Household Dietary Diversity	• Diversity of food consumed by the household • Economically important food categories that correlate with household purchasing power • Vitamin A and iron-rich food consumption. • Seasonality and trends	Household Dietary Diversity Score (HDDS) ***Annex 23****
Individual dietary diversity	• Diversity of food consumed by specific vulnerable members of the household (e.g. lactating women, children under 5 years) • Vitamin A and iron-rich food consumption • Seasonality and trends	Individual dietary diversity score (IDDS) ***Annex 23****
Household food consumption	• Diversity and frequency of foods consumed by the household • Macronutrients adequacy of diet • Seasonality and trends	Food consumption score (FCS) ***Annex 24****

** The section and annex numbers above refer to the source document*
Source: ACF, 2010, Food security and livelihoods assessment. A practical guide for field workers.

• Utilization, food preferences and cultural aspects

Utilization refers to the use of food which the household has access to and includes its storage, transformation and preparation, as well as distribution amongst the household members. It also reflects the capacity of individuals to absorb and metabolize nutrients which can be affected by illness or malnutrition.

Household level food consumption modalities are very much conditioned by traditional habits and religious beliefs influencing food choices. Even when households have access to sufficient food in their environment, taboos and traditions can restrict the use of certain food, and for certain members of the household, according to their age, sex, professional situation, etc.

For example, certain populations do not consume certain specific foods for cultural, religious or traditional reasons. In other cases, certain foods are not known, and those responsible for preparing meals do not know how to cook or prepare this food. Generally, tastes and preferences in food are different according to regions and cultures.

For all food assistance interventions, taking into account preferences and habits for food, and cultural aspects related to food in general, is necessary in order to ensure the efficiency of any future intervention by minimizing the risks of negative effects.

The understanding of these cultural aspects will be particularly useful for the choice of intervention modalities (in kind food aid, vouchers or cash transfers), in the choice of food products distributed or cooked rations supplied, but also in the implementation of complementary activities of sensitization or cooking demonstrations as necessary.[32] In any case, the choice of the intervention must give top priority to local habits and preferences.

• Household coping strategies

Coping strategies are the responses or adjustments that people implement when facing food shortage or other shocks. They often include behaviors such as changing food sources or reducing quantities of food consumed. But these strategies can take various forms, according to the context of the situation, and can be more or less viable or long-lasting.

Identification of food security needs results from the capacity of the population to face a crisis and minimize the deterioration of its livelihoods. Coping strategies are used as a proxy indicator of food access and livelihoods security.

After identifying these strategies, it is important to estimate whether they pose a risk to livelihoods on the longer term. *Table 16* below categorizes different mechanisms according to their lasting nature and the risks they pose to households.

32 - See for instance the recipe book developed by WFP (2002) Fortified Blended Foods. Recipes. [🗁- 614]

Table 16: Coping strategies by level of severity

TYPE OF COPING STRATEGY	EXAMPLES OF OBSERVED BEHAVIOR	
	CONSUMPTION STRATEGIES	LIVELIHOOD STRATEGIES
ADAPTIVE (Generally sustainable and reversible)	• Rely on less expensive/less preferred foods • Gathering or hunting nutrient/calorie rich food • Slightly reduce food consumption (e.g., limit portion size, reduce number of meals in a day) • Reduce expenditure on non-food, nonessential items • Increase consumption of staples items vs. non-staple items • Minor reduction of diet diversity	• Borrow food or cash to buy food, from neighbor/friend; • Buy food on credit (witch expectation of ability to pay back); • Atypical short-term, short-distance migration; • Engage in atypical petty trade (e.g. firewood collection); • Engage in non-preferred wage labour; • Slight sales of asset stocks (with expectation of renewal); • Adapting agricultural practices (e.g., planting quick-maturing annual switching to subsistence crops).
DISTRESS (Some not sustainable or reversible, depends on degree)	• Harvest immature crops • Moderately reduce food consumption • Consume next season's seed stocks • Devote all or nearly all cash resources to staple food purchase • Gathering or hunting of nutrient/calorie-poor foods • Send family members (especially children) to richer relatives • Major reduction of diet diversity • Begging	• Removing children from school; • Child labor; • Moderate to heavy sales of productive assets stocks; • Atypical long-term or long-distance labour migration.
SURVIVAL (Unsustainable, irreversible, high risk)	• Drastically reduce food consumption (e.g., restrict consumption by adults in order for small children to eat, skip eating for entire days) • Severe reduction of diet diversity	• Complete sale of assets; • Widespread migration to search for money/food.

Source: ACF, 2010, Food security and livelihoods assessments. A practical guide for field workers.

• Non-food needs

Beyond food needs, the initial assessment must also aim to verify the means available to households for meal preparation, including cooking utensils as well as stove equipment and fuel. A food assistance intervention must ensure that the beneficiary population has access to means to prepare meals.


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CHECK LIST

- ➔ **Food availability:** production, stocks and markets;
- ➔ **Food access:** food sources, income sources, expenditures, credit and debt level;
- ➔ **Food consumption knowledge and practices:** frequency, quality, diversity;
- ➔ **Cooking means:** utensils, fuel;
- ➔ **Food Storage, preparation and cooking knowledge and practices.**

1.3 POPULATIONS ET BESOINS SPÉCIFIQUES

Beyond taking into account the needs of the overall population, one must understand how the crisis/or general situation affects the different categories of the population. There are categories of the population at risk, or which will be affected differently or have specific needs, but also specificities that can exclude them from the intervention.

This type of question is important to take into account, and also the identification of specific populations or individuals who are at risk following a disaster.

Therefore the following populations must be specifically considered in the initial assessment:

- pregnant and breastfeeding women;
- children under 5 years old, and in this category, children under 2 years old;
- people with HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis or other chronic illnesses;
- the elderly;
- people or children with severe handicaps;
- malnourished children.

As seen in *Chapter 1*, the vulnerability of infants and young children requires that attention to their nutrition be a priority. In addition the women often play a more important role in planning and preparation of food for their family. After a disaster, family food strategies can change. To improve household food security, it is therefore important to recognize the distinct roles of each one in family nutrition. It is also important to understand the special nutritional needs of pregnant and breastfeeding women, young children, the elderly and handicapped persons in order to respond with appropriate food input.

Beyond the specific needs, these populations can easily be excluded from aid. If the procedures of registration and distribution require travel, it is possible that they will be excluded. In coordination with the traditional chiefs and the administration, one must ensure that a list of the people most vulnerable, isolated or unable to travel, is drawn up and that these persons are included in the initial assessment. An analysis of needs which is sensitive to this will show discrepancies such as unequal access to food distribution or opportunities for transfer for work, for example.

BOX 11 CASE STUDY: CASH FOR WORK IN PAKISTAN

The Sindh province was ravaged following floods which left the villagers of this region with no means of production, and land impossible to cultivate. Identified as vulnerable, the women were also culturally in a situation which did not permit them to work outside the village.

To inject money into the households, it was decided to implement a Cash For Work program to clear the villages of debris and prepare for rehabilitation. This activity required the participation of one person per household; in fact unemployed men came forth and the women did not dare do so to participate in the activities. They were de facto excluded from the program.

The teams of the organization in charge of the project, who wished to integrate the women in the program, turned toward a traditional activity: the traditional fabrication of winter quilts. The two activities, including both men and women, took place at the same time in the villages.

The material for fabrication was delivered to the villages. Each village organized itself in groups of women who wished to participate in the activity. Once the quilts were finished, the Oxfam teams passed by to collect them and pay the women by check.

54,000 quilts were produced by the villagers in two districts of the province. These quilts were redistributed to vulnerable households affected by the floods.

Several key questions to be answered during the initial assessment:[33]

- What are the demographics of the target group? (# of households and household composition disaggregated by sex and age; # of single heads of household who are women, girls, boys and men; # of M/F unaccompanied children, elderly persons, persons with disabilities, the chronically ill; # of pregnant and lactating women)
- What is the nutritional status of the affected population (disaggregated by sex and age)?
- Who receives food aid on behalf of the household (men, women, girls or boys)? Do women or men decide on its use?
- How is food shared within households? (Intra-household food distribution and consumption - who eats first and most –women, girls, boys or men?)
- How is food being distributed and allocated? What systems to register, to distribute, to transport are in place? Are food distribution points equally accessible to males and females of all ages?
- What are the customs, culture and traditions that may limit access to and control over food to female and male members of the household/community or any sub-section (e.g. ethnic, caste, racial) of the population at large?

33 - Source: IASC, 2011, IASC Gender Marker: Food Assistance and Nutrition Tip Sheets.

- What are the religion- and/or culture-based food restrictions/preferences for women and men in the community?

For gender related guidance, refer to the IASC documents on humanitarian action:

> IASC, 2011, *IASC Gender Marker: Food Assistance Tip Sheet*.
> IASC, 2011, *IASC Gender Marker: Nutrition Tip Sheet*.
> IASC, 2008, *IASC Gender Handbook in Humanitarian Action*.

1.4 CONTEXTUAL FACTORS: POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL

Analysis of the historical, political, socioeconomic and cultural context is integral to initial assessment and allows understanding of the possible causes of the situation, the environment in which the potential intervention will be implemented and the possible consequences of the project on it.

The socioeconomic and political context can constitute a fundamental cause of the malnutrition, and influence access to livelihoods and livelihoods strategies.

The socioeconomic context, the political and physical environment also affects the consequences of crises, the trends and the seasons which make up the context of vulnerability. This information is necessary for the background context for food security and livelihoods analysis and to guide interpretation of the results.

The analysis of the context is necessary to understand:

- The underlying factors which have resulted in the observed vulnerability, for example the political and economic situation, a recurrent exposition to floods or droughts, the degradation of the physical environment, a high prevalence of HIV/AIDS, weak government structures;
- which groups of the population are marginalized or made more vulnerable because of their religion, ethnicity, socioeconomic status political affiliation or similar;

And in case of a crisis:

- The geographic zone and demographic profile of the population affected by the crisis;
- The nature and extent of the crisis;
- The principal humanitarian consequences, especially health and nutrition;
- The local and national response capacity, and the principle stakeholders in the field;
- The security and stability of the situation, restrictions on physical movement and access to the interventions for both the population and humanitarian workers.

Table 17: Contextual information indicators

<table>
<tr><th>AREA OF ANALYSIS</th><th>KEY ISSUES TO CONSIDER</th><th>METHODS/SOURCES</th></tr>
<tr><td>PHYSICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL</td><td>• Climate, geography, environment;
• Physical infrastructure;
• Prevalence of natural disasters;
• Drought, deforestation, desertification, and other degradation of the natural resource base;
• Conflict related to accessing natural resources, e.g. land, water, forests;
• Seasonality.</td><td rowspan="6">SECONDARY INFORMATION SOURCES:
Government documents;
- Official and other statistics;
- Maps;
- Reports published by national and international agencies;
- Project evaluations;
- Joint assessment reports;
- Websites;
- Local organizations;
- Documents capitalized on the mission: security plan, the “sitreps”.

SOURCES OF KEY INFORMATION:
- Government representatives
- UN workers, NGO staff;
- Local authorities;
- Traditional or religious leaders;
- Teachers, researchers, health professionals, WES professionals, agronomists and other food security professionals;
- Youth groups;
- Local media.</td></tr>
<tr><td>ECONOMIC</td><td>• Major and minor production systems e.g. agriculture, livestock, fisheries;
• Sources of income, remittances;
• Seasonal migration;
• Markets.</td></tr>
<tr><td>SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC</td><td>• Socio-political context;
• Past crises and conflicts;
• Demographic breakdown;
• Ethnic groups, intra-group linkages;
• Social organization, local leadership and authority;
• Formal and informal social networks.</td></tr>
<tr><td>INSTITUTIONAL</td><td>• Existing institutions (public, CBOs, NGOs, religious, trade etc.);
• Policies and law;
• Nature of institutional programming;
• Partnerships and collaboration;
• Relationships with government and communities;
• Impacts on economic and political life.</td></tr>
<tr><td>CURRENT CRISIS</td><td>• Nature and location of the current crisis;
• Underlying factors relating to the crisis;
• Duration/frequency;
• Security of affected population;
• Displacement;
• Numbers affected;
• Numbers displaced.</td></tr>
<tr><td>HUMANITARIAN</td><td>• Health and disease;
• Nutritional status;
• Shelter;
• Availability of and access to food;
• Access to water and sanitation;
• Physical access to the affected area(s);
• Presence and type of activity of other actors.</td></tr>
</table>

Source: ACF, 2010, Food Security and Livelihoods Assessment, A practical guide for field workers.

For further information on context analysis, refer to the handbook: ACF, 2010, *Food Security and Livelihoods Assessments. A practical guide for field workers. Section 4.1.*

CHECK LIST

- The political and economic situation;
- The environmental situation;
- The economic stakes;
- The possible humanitarian actions.

1.5 SEASONALITY

Seasonality, beyond climate variations, is the variation in factors which influence the nutritional condition of populations. These seasonal fluctuations can be determined by climactic or environmental factors (for example seasonal flooding) or by human or socioeconomic factors (for example, high food prices in the markets).

For any intervention, a seasonality study must be undertaken in order to ensure that the project is appropriate to the local context for the duration of the intervention. Taking into account seasonality is an essential factor for defining the best time for intervention and the duration of its implementation.

A good intervention at the wrong time can have harmful effects, contrary results or even worsen the situation (competition with agricultural work, distribution of food outside the hunger gap period; distribution of seeds inappropriate for the time, etc.) The rainy season can also be a difficult time to intervene, with inaccessible outlying zones.

BOX 12 LINKING THE TIMING OF CASH-BASED INTERVENTIONS WITH THE INTERVENTION OBJECTIVES

Different projects have found it necessary to time their cash grants in very different ways, according to their objectives.

In Oxfam's Malawi and Zambia programmes, cash was considered an alternative to food aid and was meant to cover beneficiaries' basic needs. Hence cash transfers started at during the hunger period and ended at harvest time.

In the cash-for-herder programme in Mongolia, the objective was to provide the poorest households with enough cash to face the costs of preparations for the winter season. The situation was not an emergency and hunger was not an issue. While money was in fact distributed in October, just before winter, it was seen that May or June would have been a better time. Livestock is cheaper during those months, and more time would have been given to gather fodder for the winter.

Although one would think that cash intended for food is best given in the hunger period, this was not the opinion of beneficiaries of WFP's cash transfers in Malawi. They considered that cash transfers done just after the harvest were more beneficial, so they could take advantage of much lower prices and stock up with far more food.

Sources: Harvey and Savage (2006); Martin Dietz et al. (2004), Mwale (2006) in ACF, 2008, Implementing cash-based interventions. A guideline for aid workers.

The components to analyze for taking into account seasonality are:

- Seasonal variations of hunger and undernutrition in the community, taking into account: lean seasons, prevalence of acute malnutrition;
- Meteorological characteristics: rainy season and other relevant climactic conditions (wind, temperature, etc.);
- Seasonal risks related to climate: droughts, floods, cyclones;
- Access to and availability of water, different water sources according to the time of the year;
- Road condition and access to isolated areas;
- Seasons of food production (harvests, staple foods and fruits or vegetables), milk production or other animal products, gathering or fishing;
- Availability in the market, prices and terms of trade;
- Seasonal work opportunities, seasonal movement of population;
- Periods of illness: diarrhea, malaria, acute respiratory infections;
- Social events: holidays and festivals, marriages, beginning of school year, etc.

A good way to visualize and summarize the seasonal factors is to produce a **seasonal calendar.** This is one of the tools most used currently to gather information rapidly and precisely and to support the comprehension of seasonal models linked to community conditions, such as specific activities (linked to the profiling of activities which often last less than a year), meteorological patterns, production, income, credit, markets and morbidity. Seasonal calendars are tools which help evaluate conditions and changes in conditions, over a whole or part of a year, that affect food security and livelihoods.

BOX 13 MULTISECTORAL SEASONAL CALENDAR

ACF has developed a practical technical brief to help develop multisectoral seasonal calendars in relation to the local nutrition situation in order to:

- Undertake a rapid multisectoral analysis to better understand nutrition insecurity, fluctuations and peaks of acute undernutrition in specific areas of operation
- Develop a multisectoral seasonal understanding during strategic programmation and projects definition.

The seasonal calendar tool aims at providing a multisectoral analysis of fluctuations / changes in factors that can influence the local nutritional situation, to inform project design and implementation. It helps projects adaptation to seasonal changes and to anticipate the needs for their implementation. The technical brief provides a step by step methodology to develop a calendar in a specific area.

ACF, 2012, Nutrition Multi-sectoral Seasonal Calendar.
A rapid and multi-sectoral tool to better understand and address the seasonal peaks of wasting.

The *annex 11.3* of the *ACF handbook, Food Security and Livelihood Assessments*, provides several examples of seasonal calendars.

1.6 MAPPING OUT EXISTING INTERVENTIONS, POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

In order to ensure that the implementation of the intervention goes well, one must take into account external elements that can influence, slow down or contradict ACF strategy. The checklist below includes the stakeholders and elements to take into consideration before planning the food assistance intervention in a given zone.

For example if one considers implementing a cash based intervention in an area identified as vulnerable in order to support local populations, while another organization is already in the process of proceeding with food distributions, it would be judicious to foresee that the local market could experience fluctuations and anticipate them. Therefore one must coordinate with the other organization, especially for a possible targeting of the most vulnerable, the two interventions not being necessarily incompatible.

CHECK LIST

- National policies and strategies (food security, social protection, civil protection, disaster risk management plan);
- Existing or planed programs and projects;
- Stakeholders, mandates and roles (government, international organizations, local and international NGOs, other civil society stakeholders, donors…);
- Coordination mechanisms.

1.7 RAPID ASSESSMENT

A rapid assessment is a survey designed to be implemented rapidly and the goal of which is to obtain a quick and clear outlook of a specific context at a particular time. It is used in emergency situations and is based mainly on qualitative methods to identify the immediate needs of the population affected by crisis. It must allow a sufficient understanding of the situation in order to decide on a strategy of first emergency response, before being completed by a more thorough assessment.

Rapid assessments are performed **from the outset of crisis**, in order to collect basic contextual information and identify the risks faced by the population.

This type of assessment, sometimes called an exploratory mission, is undertaken in two steps:

1) **Rapid analysis**: it is principally documentary and requires collecting information on the extent and severity of the crisis (1 to 3 days);
2) **Rapid assessment:** it requires field study in the affected zone (10 to 15 days).

Note that, most often, rapid assessments are multisectoral and concern the identification of all basic needs in order to guarantee the survival of the population confronted with the crisis.

The objectives of a rapid assessment from a food security perspective are:

- Evaluate the changes in food availability and access to food following the crisis;
- Evaluate the functioning of the markets;
- Evaluate the severity of food insecurity and the need for an emergency intervention;
- Identify the zones and population groups most affected;
- Evaluate the severity of the underlying causes of food insecurity;
- Analyze the coping strategies;
- Identify the resources and capacity of communities to respond to their immediate needs;
- Define the appropriate interventions to support food security.

Collecting data is done through semi-structured interviews with key informants, and community groups.

A rapid assessment can include assessment of the nutritional situation *(Refer to section 1.1 of this chapter)*

Annex 5 of the *ACF handbook Food Security and Livelihood Assessments. A practical guide for field workers* provides a guide and standard questionnaire for rapid assessment. ACF uses as well the "IRA" (Initial Rapid Assessment) tool developed by IASC.

TOOL BOX / MORE INFORMATION

➔ ACF, 2008, *Implementing cash-based interventions. A guideline for aid workers.* [- 64]

➔ ACF, 2010, *Food Security and Livelihoods Assessments. A practical guide for field workers.* [- 121]

➔ ACF, 2011, *Maximising the nutritional impact of Food Security and Livelihoods interventions. A manual for field workers.* [- 62]

➔ ACF, 2012, *Nutrition Multi-sectoral Seasonal Calendar. A rapid and multi-sectoral tool to better understand and address the seasonal peaks of wasting.* [- 121]

➔ ACF, 2014, ACF gender policy. *Increasing the impact of ACF's work through gender equality programming.* [- 664]

➔ ACF, 2014, *Nutrition causal analysis. Manual.* [- 121]

➔ Albu M., 2010, *The Emergency Market Mapping and Analysis Toolkit. Practical Action/ Oxfam GB.* [- 122]

➔ IASC, 2008, *Gender Handbook in Humanitarian Action.* [- 664]

➔ IASC, 2011, IASC *Gender Marker: Food Assistance Tip Sheet.* [- 664]

➔ IASC, 2011, IASC *Gender Marker: Nutrition Tip Sheet* . [- 664]

➔ IASC, 2012, *MIRA - Multisectoral Initial Rapid Assessment.* [- 121]

2. LOGISTICAL, ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL ASSESSMENT

KEY QUESTIONS

- ➔ Why a logistic assessment of food programs?
- ➔ How and where to procure food for the program?
- ➔ What are the possibilities of delivery for cash based interventions?
- ➔ What are the key security components of a food assistance program?

It is essential that logistics and finance departments be implicated from the first stages of the initial assessment to collect information needed to select the intervention type, and to jointly validate the choices, which must consider both needs and feasibility.

The logistics departments will be especially implicated in questions of food or non-food products supply, distribution or implementation equipment (distribution cards, vouchers, tools, etc.), access to transportation, storage, choice of sites and distribution systems and security.

The administrative and finance departments will be implicated in the choice of financial operators, establishing a system to transfer the cash (or redeem vouchers), contracting with merchants or other operational partners and contracting with and payment of suppliers, etc.

Note that in the specific case of cash based interventions, ACF has developed a manual for management of logistic, financial and administrative aspects from the initial assessment to implementation: ACF, 2012, *Logistics and Administration Guideline for Cash Based Interventions*.

2.1 SUPPLY SYSTEMS

Food assistance interventions can require large volumes of purchases, especially for in kind distributions. Purchases of food by ACF are a possibility to envision and evaluate as soon as food aid program are considered. Supply can also be accomplished through the WFP or a donation.

Supply possibilities are:

- the local market;
- the national market;
- the regional (neighboring countries) or international market;
- World Food Program (WFP);
- a donation from the government, other NGOs, other UN agencies.

Food is not the only component of the program which must be supplied by the logistics department. It also includes:

- distribution cards (taking into account risks of falsification),
- vouchers (taking into account risks of falsification),
- items necessary for transfer for work programs (tools, material and safety equipment such as gloves, hats, masks, etc.),
- distribution material: delimitation stakes and ropes, loudspeaker, ticket punchers, etc.
- material for construction/rehabilitation of canteen sites,
- equipment for canteen sites (portable stoves, utensils and containers, tables and benches, etc.),
- material for repackaging food if necessary (bags, bottles, cans, etc.),
- equipment for quality assurance (thermometer, humidity meter, aflatoxin kits, sampling kits, etc.),
- visibility material: T-shirts, hats, etc.

When the purchases are performed by ACF, a market study will permit the identification of its functionalities, the availability and quality of the items sought, the relation between the local market and the rest of the country, the delays for supply and the reliability of the supplier.

The following must be evaluated:

- **possible impact of the purchases:** in general in the intervention zone, the local markets are not sufficiently large to support a food distribution program. In a food deficit zone, making local purchases can disrupt the local market resulting in an increase of prices, or unavailability of some items. Such an effect can be completely perverse resulting in a weakening of food security for the population living in the purchase zone. One can envision a study of the principal markets at the country level (capital) and neighboring countries.
- **the cost of purchase and transportation of food:** The budgets of our interventions are limited and this cost will often influence our capacity for action by limiting the volume of food that can be mobilized and therefore the number of rations that we can purchase and distribute.
- **the reliability of the supplier and transporter:** It is at the time of this assessment that quality control of the food must be raised in order to ensure that quality will be respected all throughout the program.
- **supply time periods:** according to the supply source, the period between the effective order and delivery at the distribution site can vary widely (from several weeks to several months) and must also be evaluated and taken into account.
- **possibility of a partnership with the WFP:** Are the stocks already pre-positioned in the possible intervention zone? What are the logistical capacities in the zone: transportation, warehouses?

Beyond purchasing strictly speaking, the initial assessment must also gather information on:

- possibility and rules concerning importation,
- transportation of the items: availability and cost of transporters, access to the distribution site, especially in the rainy season, and transportation security,
- storage, in the capital and near the distribution site,
- quality control *(Refer to Chapter 3, Section 1.6)*,
- necessity to repackage, assemble, transform the items, and human resources, necessary equipment or possibility of sub-contracting.

The choices made for supply sources are based both on the initial technical assessment, which will define the needs, and the logistical assessment, which will estimate the feasibility and constraints and define the best way to respond to the needs. The coordination and exchange of information from the first stages of the initial assessment is therefore extremely important for the smooth operation of the project. One must not forget to work in close collaboration with the finance department which will approve the purchases, contract with suppliers and transporters and plan cash flow needs for payment.

CHECK LIST

- ➔ Assessment of supply sources;
- ➔ Capacity assessment of humanitarian actors providing food and other necessities (WFP, UNICEF, UNHCR, ICRC);
- ➔ Supplier reliability (ability to meet quality, quantity, delivery delays), carrier reliability, if different from the supplier;
- ➔ ACF logistics capacity to ensure the level of purchase;
- ➔ Cost of purchasing and transport;
- ➔ Potential impacts of purchases on the local market;
- ➔ Food Quality, commitment to maintain level of quality over the duration of the contract;
- ➔ Speed of local supply: location of existing food stocks, their availability, their mobility.

2.2 CASH TRANSFER MECHANISMS, OPERATORS AND SYSTEMS

The initial assessment will assess the availability and reliability of different systems for cash transfer to beneficiaries in the case of cash based interventions, to merchants in case of vouchers, or to suppliers. This specific analysis must take place relatively early in the initial assessment, because it will be key in the choice of the intervention modality, especially in deciding on the feasibility of a cash transfer intervention. As with the assessment of supply systems with the logistics department, the evaluation of financial systems is done in close collaboration with the administrative department and program team, as early as possible in the initial assessment phase.

There are several possibilities of systems and operators to accomplish a transfer (or payment), the main ones being briefly described in *table 18* below:

Table 18: *Main cash transfer mechanisms*

CATEGORY	PAYMENT SYSTEM	DESCRIPTION	OPERATOR(S)
DIRECT CASH TRANSFER	Direct transfer	The transfer is made directly in cash to the beneficiary or the merchant, either by the ACF teams, or a trusted intermediary	- ACF - Micro-credit agency
TRANSFER VIA INTERMEDIARY	Bank transfer	The transfer is done from an ACF bank account to the bank account of the beneficiary or merchant	- Bank
	Transfer via a transfer agent	The transfer is done via a national or international money transfer agent, a specialized private service provider for cash transfers from individual to individual, set up in the country of intervention. Transfer agents usually have payment offices throughout the country, and in neighborhoods throughout the main cities, providing transfer points in proximity to the population.	- Cash transfer agency
	Transfer via a nonofficial bank ("Hawala")	"Hawala" means "trust" or "exchange" in Hindi. It is a traditional system of informal payment. The basic principle is to circulate money in a network of exchange agents. The system functions entirely on trust among the agents of the network	- Cash transfer agency - Informal intermediary ("Hawala")
CARDS	Smart Card	Smart cards are cards which can store and register data, especially on the type and amount of assistance its holder is entitled to. Biometric data or a PIN code can also be recorded in the card to be used for a secure identification of the beneficiaries.	- Credit card organization - Bank - Merchants
	Prepaid card	Prepaid cards are payment cards with a pre-loaded amount, permitting the holder to obtain goods up to the value charged in the card.	- Credit card organization - Bank - Merchants
	Debit card	The withdrawal cards are bank cards connected with a bank account. They permit purchases from a merchant who has the necessary technology or withdrawal of money from a fixed or mobile ATM.	- Bank
BANK CHECK	Check	Transfer is made using a paper check, to be endorsed in a bank.	- Bank

MOBILE PHONE	Electronic voucher	The beneficiaries receive a code on their telephone that they can use directly as a voucher in selected stores, in exchange of goods. The amount is predefined, as well as the type of items.	- Mobile phone company - Merchants
	Withdrawal by portable telephone	The beneficiaries receive money through a text message on their mobile phone which provides a code, allowing them to obtain the amount which is due to them. The money can be transferred from telephone to telephone, without using a bank account.	- Mobile phone company
	Mobile banking	M-banking allows the beneficiary to perform transactions via a portable telephone, directly or from his bank account.	- Mobile phone company - Bank

Source: ACF, 2011, Mécanismes & Technologies de transferts monétaires. Fiches techniques.

The initial assessment must identify the systems and functional operators in the zone intended for intervention, their reliability and capacity to respond to an increase in activity, their costs, their knowledge and the trust beneficiaries may have in these systems and operators.

The following questions *(table 19)* must be addressed:

Table 19: *Key questions for assessment of transfer mechanisms*

CRITERIA	ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS
DELIVERY OPTIONS AND EXISTING IN-FRASTRUCTURE	- What delivery options are available in the area (banks, Postal Service, mobile operators)? How does the local population transfer money (e.g. remittances, social transfers)? - What proportion of the population has access to the banking system, uses remittance providers and mobile phones? - Do mobile operators provide money transfer services? - Is there mobile phone coverage? - Does the agency have existing links with potential providers or other humanitarian actors which they could leverage to encourage co-operation and coordination? - What are the motivations of potential providers? (e.g. financial gain, social mission, image-boosting) *If there is no distribution route possible, the assessment process will be more limited and must be centered mainly on the identification and choice of the most appropriate agent(s) and distribution agents.*
COST	- What are the costs of different options for the agency (provider charges, staff, transport, security and training costs)? - What are the costs for the recipient (charges, travel costs, waiting time)?
EFFICIENCY AND RELIABILITY	- Amount of normal management time of the bank and capacity for increased activity; - Time necessary for transfers and waiting time at payment point; - Time necessary to obtain cards, checkbooks, etc.

SECURITY	- What are the security risks associated with each distribution option for the agency and recipients?
CONTROL/ RISKS	- What are the key risks that need to be managed (consider also the risk of fraud and errors)? - What corruption risks are associated with each delivery option? - What fiscal controls and standards are in place? Are mechanisms in place to meet them? *Consider the level of automation, security at the place for cashing, capacity to inspect and rapidly make corrections, security in the reporting process and reconciliation.*
HUMAN RESOURCES	- How many staff is required for each option? - What level of skills and training would need to be provided for each option?

Adapted from: CaLP, Cash Transfers Training - Level 2. Handout 4.4.

In addition it is important to identify the beneficiaries' habits, as well as the knowledge and trust they have in one or the other systems. A system of payment by mobile phone, for example, could be too complex, because it is not known in a specific context, especially among illiterate populations. While in some country, it is already extensively used by the population *(see box 14 below)*.

BOX 14 CASE STUDY: CASH TRANSFER THROUGH MOBILE PHONE IN IVORY COAST

The post-electoral crisis in Ivory Coast began immediately after the second round of presidential elections on 28 November 2010.

In Abidjan, following the post electoral crisis at the end of 2010, an estimated 14,000 people fled the city or were taken in by members of their family in other neighborhoods. Assessment missions, between February and May 2011, indicated that food was one of the urgent humanitarian needs, with half the households having lost their principal source of revenue and the number of households having access to one meal per day having increased ten times. In parallel, 90% of retailers in the targeted neighborhoods had a significant drop in their sales of food products compared to the prior year.

In response to this situation of degraded economic access to food, ACF, in partnership with the WFP, implemented a cash transfer program using mobile phones.

10,800 households living in the Abobo and Yopougon neighborhoods received food assistance in the form of unconditional cash transfer over 2 months. The monthly amount of transfer was 33,000 FCFA per month per household, corresponding to the monthly value of a family's basic food basket.

After an assessment of the possible transfer mechanisms, the portable telephone was used for the following reasons:

- Rapid and safe transfer;
- Numerous cash withdrawal points in the targeted areas;
- Possibility for the beneficiary to withdrawal money in several steps;
- Possibility to purchase directly from merchants with the portable telephone;
- Free registration with the cash transfer service of the selected company;
- Computerized monitoring of cash transfers offered by the company;
- Possibility for the WFP to use the company's platform to send SMS sensitization or information messages.

The option to use the banking system for the transfers was not used because:

- The main banking agencies had been pillaged in the Abobo and Yopougon neighborhoods.
- Some beneficiaries would have been required to pay for transportation to one of the branches.
- There was doubt as to the capacity of local bank branches to ensure the transfer for so many people.

TOOL BOX / MORE INFORMATION

➔ ACF, 2011, Mécanismes & Technologies de transferts monétaires. Fiches techniques. [- 254]

➔ ACF, 2012, Log-Admin guideline for cash-based interventions. [- 253]

➔ CaLP, 2010, Delivering Money. Cash transfer mechanisms in emergencies. [- 254]

➔ CaLP, 2012, Cash transfers in emergencies practical guides. (4 guides) [- 641 & 642]

➔ CaLP, 2014, E-transfers in emergencies: implementation support guidelines [- 254]

3. DEFINING THE INTERVENTION AND SELECTING PRACTICAL MODALITIE

Using the elements of the initial assessment, the next step is to define the response. The first decision is whether an intervention is necessary or not, if ACF has the capacity of implementing a response and finally defining what intervention would be the most relevant and its practical modalities and required resources. The process of intervention definition, even if it is not formalized in a document, is a decisive step in consolidating the information gathered and decision making, before the actual project formulation.

The following sections focus specifically on the definition and design of a food assistance intervention, which is the subject of this handbook. Of course, the process of deciding on the most appropriate type of intervention should consider all other types of intervention depending on the context and the needs. The process is described in the *ACF handbook, Food Security and Livelihoods Assessments. A practical guide for field workers. Chapter 6.*

Box 15 below sets out the main steps of the identification process; the following sections show in more detail steps d. to h.

BOX 15 MAIN STEPS IN THE IDENTIFICATION PROCESS

a. Examine the main factors related to vulnerability as well as the priority needs expressed locally, and determine if a response is really necessary and desired.

b. Identify the overall intervention and the capacities of other stakeholders to cover the needs, and the gaps in the plans.

c. Use zoning to prioritize the affected geographical regions according to the level of vulnerability and coverage needs by other stakeholders. Improve zoning as a function of operational strategies and institutional priorities.

d. Identify the series of possible interventions taking into account the “do no harm” principle and other humanitarian standards such as Sphere.

e. Anticipate scenarios of the developing situation and actions to take in each case.

f. Select the most appropriate response or combination of responses.

g. Prepare recommendations which include criteria of targeting, scale, and strategies of duration and exit.

h. Share the results and recommendations with the affected communities and get their reactions.

Source: ACF, 2010, Food Security and Livelihood Assessments. A practical guide for field workers

KEY QUESTIONS

- ➔ How to define an intervention according to the context?
- ➔ What are the modalities to take into account?
- ➔ How to define the transfer amount?
- ➔ What elements should be taken into account in the definition of the transfer composition?

3.1 DEFINING THE OBJECTIVES, EXPECTED RESULTS AND DURATION OF THE INTERVENTION

The first step is to define the priority specific problem to which we wish to respond by an intervention. As we saw in *Chapter 1* although food assistance interventions always respond to a food crisis, their objectives can vary.

The interventions can, for example, aim to ensure the immediate availability of food and/or strengthen mechanisms for food access. These programs are generally limited to a short time, and are complementary to parallel or subsequent actions, especially in terms of livelihoods recovery.

More specifically, food assistance interventions can be part of a wider action to prevent undernutrition by specifically targeting populations at risk and providing enhanced food rations.

In case of early recovery or stabilization, food assistance interventions may respond not only to immediate causes but also underlying causes of malnutrition and prevent a deterioration of livelihoods, such as decapitalization of productive capacity. They can prepare or complement recovery strategies, aiming to support the populations in recovering their food self-sufficiency. At a minimum they can ensure that the food assistance intervention does not compromise the recovery strategies.

Note that these interventions are rarely developed in isolation, and are part of a larger response to a crisis, in parallel with or in support of other food security and livelihoods, nutrition, care practices and/or water and sanitation interventions. The strategy and objective of this broader response can contribute to refining the specific objective of the food assistance intervention and, in any case, the latter must be coherent with the broader response of ACF and other stakeholders. It is strongly recommended at this stage to pool the results of the initial assessment with other mobilized stakeholders and to consider together a coordinated food assistance response strategy. It is especially the role of the Food Security (or Food Aid) cluster to ensure this coordination and plan an intervention strategy with the different stakeholders.

Finally, the food assistance interventions must not compromise the responses or coping strategies implemented by the communities or the households if they are long-lasting, but seek to strengthen them if necessary.

When the objective of the intervention is defined, it is then necessary to set which specific results the intervention aims to reach: it is important to be both precise and realistic in setting out what one hopes to achieve.

***Table 20:** Examples of food assistance intervention objectives and results*

OBJECTIVES	RESULTS
Respond to immediate households food needs	Households have access to food in sufficient quantity and quality to cover all the nutritional needs of their members.
Protect or support the recovery of livelihoods	No households decapitalization is observed. Households recover their livelihoods and self-sufficiency to ensure their food security. Households purchasing power is maintained OR recovered to the pre-crisis level.
Anticipate households distress coping strategies	Households do not have recourse to coping strategies harmful to their livelihood.
Anticipate undernutrition risks for at risk population	At risk individuals have access to food in sufficient quantity and quality to cover all their nutritional needs. Households at risk of undernutrition receive adequate information on feeding practices and nutritional value of food to which they have access, as well as its adequate use.
Reduce or prevent micronutrient deficiencies	Households have access to food in sufficient quantity and quality to cover all the micronutrient needs of their members. Households at risk receive adequate information on feeding practices, nutritional value of food to which they have access, as well as its adequate use. Individuals suffering from micronutrient deficiencies have access to additional food and/or nutritional products rich in micronutrients.
Provide meal preparation resources	Households have the necessary resources and cooking utensils for meal preparation.

The objective and expected results allow a determination of an adequate duration of the intervention. It is especially necessary to assess, to the extent possible, the potential duration of the crisis, the time necessary for a return to normal of external factors (security, access to and recovery of the market, access to and recovery of livelihoods) and take into account the time of the next harvest.

However, one must remember that often, especially in an emergency context, it is very difficult at the time of identification, to precisely foresee the evolution of the situation in the short and mid-term, and to be able to define a definite duration of the intervention or its exit strategy. Nevertheless, hypotheses must be made, as well as a precise monitoring plan for following the evolution of the context and indicators which will allow adjustments as needed, and even eventually the objective and duration of the intervention (for example, the crisis continues and the intervention must be prolonged; or, to the contrary, undernutrition risk factors are reduced, and it is possible to go from a pure assistance strategy to a recovery strategy).

If the interventions involve displaced populations, it is important to try to foresee, to the extent possible, the future movements of the population: return to their place of origin, another displacement or long-term installation in the place of displacement, etc. According to the situation, it may be necessary to provide aid for the return or reinstallation, which may include a food assistance intervention.

3.2 SELECTING THE MOST ADEQUATE TYPE OF INTERVENTION

When the specific objective and expected results of the intervention are set, and it has been determined that a food assistance intervention is necessary, the type of intervention should be chosen according to:

- Its capacity to respond in the most efficient way to the set objectives,
- The preferences of the beneficiary population,
- Its possible negative effects on the target population, the community in general or the market,
- The coherence and complementarity with national strategies and policies, and other stakeholders response strategies,
- Feasibility with regard to the initial assessment (supply, banking system, security, etc.),
- The capacity and skills of the mission, from a technical, as well as logistical and financial point of view.

As seen in *Chapter 1 Section 1.3*, the types of food assistance interventions are varied and require putting in place very different activities according to whether one chooses to develop an intervention of canteens, food vouchers or cash transfers. Note also that in certain cases, a mixed intervention including several types of food assistance can be necessary (for example: distribution of dry rations + milling vouchers; blanket distribution for children under 5 years old in the form of canteen + distribution of dry family rations; distribution of cooking utensils + cash transfer, etc.). Likewise, it is possible to define an intervention in phases, beginning for example with in kind distributions during the first weeks, followed by voucher scheme to support market recovery as soon as possible.

One can categorize different interventions in the following way, according to the local problematic to which it responds[34]:

➔ **Lack of availability of (or physical access to) food:**
- General food distribution;
- Targeted food distribution (specific category of population);
- Conditional food distribution: for work, training, etc.;
- Distribution of cooked meals via a system of canteens;

➔ **Lack of economic access to food:**
- Targeted or general cash or vouchers transfer;
- Conditional cash or vouchers transfer: for work, training, etc.;

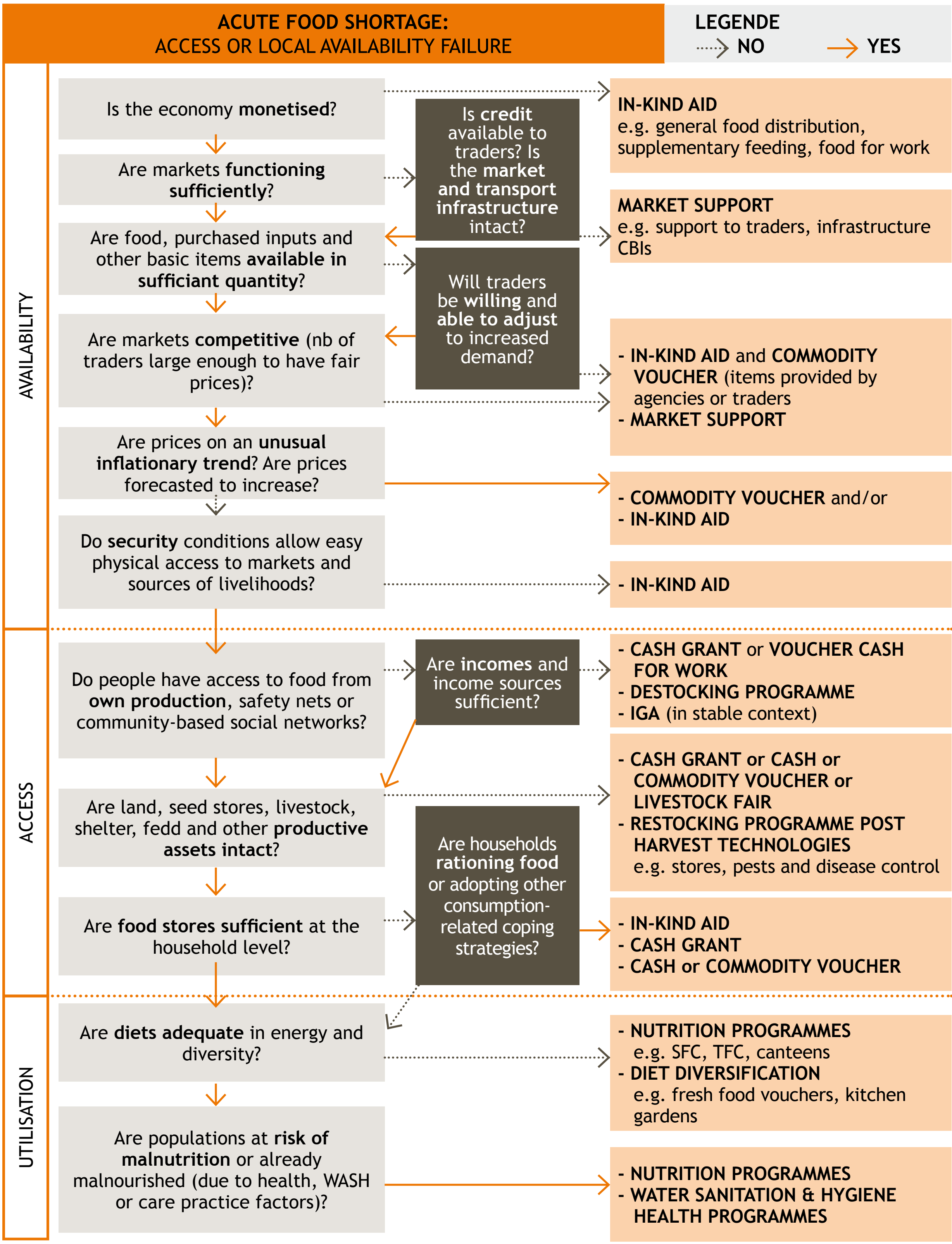
➔ **Improper use of food or lack of adequate resources to prepare meals:**
- Distribution of equipment for preparation and storage of food (e.g.: drinking water, cooking utensils, fuel and cooking equipment), in kind or via a cash intervention;
- Training and sensitization to nutrition and feeding practices.

➔ **Widespread acute malnutrition or micronutrient deficiency:**
- Blanket distribution of food complements for individuals at risk of undernutrition: blanket supplementary feeding programs (for all children under 5 years old and/or pregnant and breastfeeding women);
- Distribution of nutritional supplements (e.g.: micronutrients distribution or increasing micronutrient content in food);
- Sensitization to nutrition and dietary diversity.

The decision tree below, through a set of key questions, proposes a guide to defining the most appropriate type of intervention:

34 - Adapted from: European Commission, 2010, Humanitarian Food Assistance. Commission staff working document accompanying the Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament. COM(2010)126

***Figure 3:** Decision tree for acute food crisis*



Source: ACF, 2010, Food Security and Livelihood Assessments. Practical guide for field workers.

3.3 DEFINING THE TRANSFER COMPOSITION

The composition of the transfer, whether it is in kind, voucher or cash, must be defined strictly in function of the objective set and expected results, and thus in relation to the identified non-covered needs.

In any case, being a food assistance intervention, the contents or value of the transfer will be defined with respect to a determined quantity of foods or food basket[35], even if in the case of cash transfers or some types of vouchers, the final choice will be made by the beneficiary household.

First, one must decide if the transfer will cover all the food needs of an individual or household, or only part. The needs analysis must allow a response to this question and a decision on the level of coverage which the intervention seeks to provide.

According to the objective set for the intervention, it will also be necessary to define if the transfer seeks to respond to specific nutritional needs, such as deficiencies in certain micronutrients, or to complement an unbalanced food basket. In this case, the transfer should provide certain specific nutritional elements: food fortified in micronutrients, micronutrient powders, "fresh food" vouchers (e.g. giving access to fruits, vegetables, meat, fish). In other cases, especially for supplementary feeding interventions, rations or specific products (ready to use supplementary food) will be distributed to individuals at risk of undernutrition.

In any case, the stage of defining the composition of the transfer constitutes a crucial phase, which must bring together the Food Security and Nutrition teams, and take into account the recommendations and ongoing activities of other stakeholders, especially the Nutrition and/or Food aid cluster when it is in place.

Finally, it is important to take into account practices of other stakeholders in the intervention area and to ensure coherence. Ideally, the Food Security Cluster, or a regional coordination group, should play this role and allow the different stakeholders to agree on the composition of the transfers in a given area.

BOX 16 NUTRITIONAL INADEQUACY OF FOOD RATION

One of the most frequent problems is that the food ration is not nutritionally adequate, mostly in terms of quality. By definition, most general rations are insufficient in calcium, vitamin B2 (riboflavin), and often fat, vitamin C and A (especially if blended food such as fortified CSB is not part of the general ration). This creates a dilemma for those that conduct the distribution as they knowingly provide a deficient food ration and that, if access to other food products is limited, the recipients will eventually become micronutrient deficient.

35 - Or non food items kit.

Though many humanitarian actors acknowledge this phenomenon, little is (or can be) done:

- Inclusion of fresh food is a solution but is logistically challenging and therefore expensive. Provision of food rations that exceed the required calories allows for bartering for other food and non-food products, but not necessarily always of high nutritional value.
- Provision of fortified CSB is mostly restricted to SFPs and does not reach all recipients. Cash vouchers for specific nutritionally valuable commodities can help.
- Cash vouchers for specific nutritionally valuable commodities can help.
- Micronutrient supplementation in the form of powders has become more common to address the micronutrient gap but suffers still from acceptance and therefore adherence problems.
- Ready to use food (RUF), rich in micronutrients, is efficient and easy to distribute, but very expensive and often reserved for supplementary feeding or therapeutic programs.

In any case, and despite constraints, the objective must remain to diversify as much as possible the content of food rations in distributions in kind, in order to limit the risks of deficiencies.

Source: IASC, 2011, The Harmonised Training Package. Resource Material for Training and Learning on Nutrition in Emergencies. Version 2.

• In kind distribution: Defining the food ration

The food ration is the food basket physically distributed to the beneficiaries of the intervention. It is defined by the list of foods which constitute it and their respective quantities (for a duration and number of persons).

The basic principle is that the food ration must, by itself or in complement with other inputs (stocks or household purchases, other distributions), respond to the energy and nutritional needs (proteins, lipids, vitamins and minerals) of each individual. The Sphere project has defined an “acceptable” composition of a complete individual food ration for a population *(Refer to Table 5, Chapter 1)* for emergencies in terms of macro and micro nutrients.

These target values constitute an “average” for the population, but individual needs, according to age, physical condition, activity and being pregnant or breastfeeding, can be very different *(Refer to section 2.3, Chapter 1)*. According to the objective of the intervention and the target population, it may be necessary to adjust the content of the ration distributed, while the standard ration remains the favored solution for general distribution to populations.

The content and quantities of foods in the ration are determined as a function of minimal standards, but also the habits of the population, acceptability of certain food and availability. The first step consists of defining if, with regard to the situation, the ration must cover 100% of the individual food needs, or only a part.

Table 21 below gives 5 examples of rations corresponding to the minimal standards in terms of energy, proteins and lipids.

Table 21: Example of complete rations adequate in terms of energy, proteins and lipids for populations entirely dependent on food aid

FOOD ITEM	RATIONS (QUANTITY IN G)				
	Example 1	Example 2	Example 3	Example 4	Example 5
Cereals	400	450	350	400	400
Legumes	60	60	100	60	50
Oil (Vitamin A fortified)	25	25	25	30	30
Fish/Meat	_	10	_	30	_
Fortified blended foods (FBF)	50	40	50	40	45
Sugar	15	_	20	_	25
Iodized salt	5	5	5	5	5
Energy (Kcal)	2 113	2 075	2 113	2 146	2 100
Proteins (in g and % Kcal)	58g / 11%	71g / 13%	65g / 12%	55g / 10%	65g / 12%
Lipids (in g and % Kcal)	43g / 18%	43g / 18%	42g / 18%	42g / 17%	39g / 17%

Source: UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, WHO, 2003, Food and Nutrition Needs in Emergencies.

Be careful, these rations are not necessarily appropriate in terms of micronutrients; see below on how to define an adequate ration with respect to micronutrients.

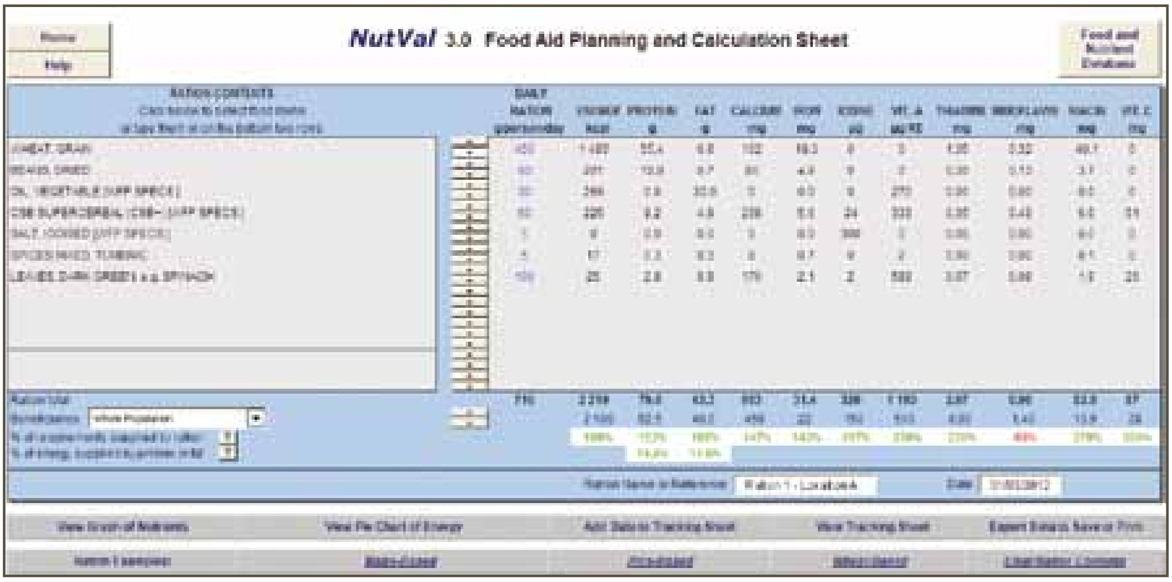
NutVal software

Beyond standard rations, the NutVal software developed by the World Food Program (WFP) or other specialized nutrition software (NetWisp™ ou FoodWork™) can be used to define a balanced ration. NutVal is the simplest to use and is freely available[36].

The definition of a food ration, whether a complete monthly ration covering the nutritional needs of a person for a month, or a half ration or a nutritional ration responding to specific needs, can be done with the Nutval software.

The confirmation of the ration's balance and suitability must be done by an ACF nutritionist.

Figure 4: Example of calculating an individual ration with NutVal



36 - Refer to Toolbox [- 241]. Can also be downloaded at: http://www.nutval.net/2008/05/download-page.html

Micronutrients provision

Generally, good food diversity results in satisfactory micronutrient input. Taking into account logistical and budgetary constraints, a ration must also aim to have as wide a variety as possible, taking into account other food sources of the population.

Providing access to appropriate micronutrients is particularly important for populations which have access to food only through food assistance, such as refugees or displaced persons living in camps. Note that aside from these specific situations, we often face populations with chronic micronutrient deficiencies.

Table 22 below shows different sources of micronutrients which can be used in food assistance interventions:

***Table 22:** Les sources de micronutriments: avantages et limites.*

SOURCES	EXEMPLES[37]	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
FRESH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES	Tous les fruits et légumes disponibles localement	- Provide most of the essential micronutrients if there is diversity in consumption - Easily fits the food habits of the population - Local purchases and vouchers make the local market and population more dynamic and strengthen long-term availability - Relatively limited costs	- Very difficult to manage logistically (very short storage duration, fragile products) in the case of distribution in kind - Limited sources for large quantities or need to deal with many suppliers - Variable availability depending on seasons - Wide variability in micronutrient content according to preparation and cooking methods
FORTIFIED FOOD	- Iodized salt - Vitamin A or D enriched oil - Flour enriched in vitamins A, iron, riboflavin, etc.	- Can be a response to certain micronutrient deficiencies - Relatively limited cost compared to classic food - Classic distribution methods - no specific logistical constraints - Relatively long conservation - According to the country, food widely available in the markets or from suppliers	- Generally a specific fortified food in one micronutrient: responds to one specific deficiency but does not ensure intake of all necessary micronutrients - According to the country, fortified foods not available for purchase - According to the food, does not always correspond to food habits of the population
FORTIFIED BLENDED FOODS (FBF)	- CSB (Corn Soya Blend, corn and soya wheat) - SuperCereal - SuperCereal Plus - Produced locally	- Nutritionally balanced, providing essential macro and micronutrients - Classic distribution methods - no specific logistical constraints - Relatively long conservation	- Relatively high cost (3 to 5 times the price of "normal" flour) - Local supply not possible - Can lead to modifications of the population's food habits - Does not always correspond to food habits of the population

37 - Refer to Toolbox for detailed food/products sheets [🗁- 61]

READY-TO-USE FOOD (RUF	- PlumpyDoz - QBmix - WawaMum - Nutributter	- Nutritionally balanced, providing essential macro and micronutrients - Classic distribution methods - no specific logistical constraints - Relatively long conservation - Food ready to be consumed, requiring no preparation, water or fuel	- Much higher cost - Local supply not possible; food usually must be imported (not allowed in certain countries) - Not in the food habits of the population (requires a specific sensitization, even inspections, on use) - Acceptability by populations, especially depending on basic food used for these products (often peanut based) - Food very rich in lipids - Must be treated as nutritional products rather than classic food
MICRONUTRIENT POWDERS	- Sprinkles - MixMe	- Bring a variety of essential micronutrients - Complement classic food rations - Classic distribution methods - no specific logistical constraints - Relatively long conservation - Easy to use: Mixes in the plate just before the meal	- Metallic taste; poor acceptance by part of certain populations - Overdose can be toxic; precise analysis of deficiencies in the population is necessary - Local supply not possible; food usually must be imported (not allowed in certain countries)

Ration for blanket supplementary feeding programs

BOX 17 SUPPLEMENTARY FEEDING PROGRAMS

Supplementary Feeding Programs (SFP) are nutritional interventions aimed at preventing or treating acute malnutrition. There are 2 main categories:

- **Therapeutic programs,** or targeted supplementary feeding, supervised and implemented by nutrition teams, and targeting population suffering from moderate acute malnutrition;
- **Preventive programs,** or blanket supplementary feeding, supervised by nutrition teams and in certain cases implemented by food assistance teams.

The second category is a part of food assistance interventions. These programs specifically target populations the most at risk of undernutrition: children under 5 years old, as well as pregnant and breastfeeding women. They involve distribution of foods specifically designed to prevent episodes of undernutrition, usually in emergency situations.

For further information on this type of intervention, see:

> ACF, 2005, *Food Aid and Nutrition: Two complementary approaches. Blanket food distribution for children under five years of age.*

> Global Nutrition Cluster, 2014 , *Moderate Acute Malnutrition: A Decision Tool for Emergencies*

Within these specific programs, nutritionally enhanced rations or products are distributed: the content of rations, their quantities, according to the targeted populations, are in any case defined with or by nutrition teams, usually in line with the national Nutrition Cluster. *Table 23* below provides international recommendations:

Table 23: Supplementary foods and products according to vulnerable groups

TARGET GROUPS	PRINCIPLE RECOMMENDATION	ALTERNATIVE
Prevention of MAM		
6 - 23 or 59 months	- SuperCereal Plus - LNS average quantity - RUSF †	***SuperCereal/oil/sugar or ½ RUSF sachets***
Pregnant and/or breastfeeding women	SuperCereal/oil/sugar	***LNS average quantity***

†: Only in situations where the supplement is the principal source of food

Source: Global Nutrition Cluster, 2014, Moderate Acute Malnutrition: A Decision Tool for Emergencies.

Other considerations for defining the food ration

In the context of in kind distributions, beyond the content in terms of food, it is necessary to take into account other aspects before deciding on the ration to distribute:

- packaging is very important: according to the distribution methods (scooping, grouping, canteen – *Refer to section 3.4 of this Chapter*), it may be necessary to slightly adjust the quantities to distribute for a ration, especially to avoid scooping;
- taking into account the variations in effective content of the distributed bags: it regularly happens that these do not have the weight indicated on the packaging, but are several kilograms heavier or lighter.

It is also necessary to assess the related costs for the beneficiaries and, if necessary, plan for a cash complement to the food distribution:

- Milling costs for cereals; Distributing cereal flour instead of grains can be a solution to mitigate this issue. If this option is chosen, close attention must be paid to the storage conditions and turnover in the warehouses due to a higher risk of aflatoxin contamination in flours;
- Cost of the transportation of the food from the distribution site to the household;
- Cooking fuel costs, also cooking utensils when they have been lost following a disaster or displacement;
- Concerning fuel, risks of degradation of the environment and/or conflicts related to collecting fuel, especially in displacement or refugee camps;
- Finally, it is important to remember that the choice of the ration's content must be guided by the preferences and habits of the targeted populations, in terms of taste, but also knowledge of the food and its preparation, or forbidden foods, linked to religion or tradition.

BOX 18 **MILLING VOUCHERS IN DARFUR**

In 2007, ACF set up a programme of milling vouchers in the IDP camps of Darfur, to improve the nutritional use and effectiveness of distributed food aid. Assessments had showed that significant parts of the food ration were sold to cover the cost of milling of cereals, hence reducing the total nutritional value of the food ration.

The programme rapidly showed positive results and was very popular among the beneficiaries and the millers. Overall, 96% of the vouchers were used for their intended purpose (milling and cleaning of cereal). The first post distribution monitoring showed that after two months of operation, the percentage of households selling the food aid cereals decreased significantly (55% to 70% decrease). The share of households bartering the cereals also plummeted to almost 0%. The use of cash for milling purposes also dropped. On the other hand, about 20% of the cereal ration continued to be sold to cover for the purchase of fresh foods and firewood as well as food and education related expenses.

This Darfur milling voucher scheme shows an easily duplicable and practical way of coupling traditional food aid with an innovative approach to promote effective use of aid, beneficiary satisfaction and to enhance the nutritional impact of food aid. It was later coupled with a fresh-food voucher scheme.

Source: ACF, 2011, Maximising the nutritional impact of food security and livelihoods interventions. A manual for field workers.

• Cash transfer: Defining the amount

As with the definition of the composition of a food ration, the amount of cash transfer should be defined on the basis of the objectives of the intervention and needs of the target populations. However, in addition, consideration must be given to the local market price for goods and services to which the program aims to give access.

The first questions to ask are the same as for the definition of a food ration:

- what is the objective of the intervention?
- does the intervention aim to cover all food needs are just a part?
- beyond food needs, will the transfer also cover other needs such as milling of grains, cost of transporting the food from the market to the domicile, fuel costs and other meal preparation resources?

One must verify the availability and prices in the local markets of the goods and services to which the transfer intends to give access, taking care to estimate any possible fluctuations during the year, and especially estimating the price at the specific time when the intervention will take place. It may therefore be necessary to evaluate the possibility of transfers with varying amount over the intervention duration in relation to market prices evolution: it is therefore necessary to take into account these potential changes in budgeting the intervention.

For further information on the definition of the amount of cash transfer, refer to the manual ACF, 2008, *Implementing cash-based interventions. Section 3.1.3.4 Setting the size of the entitlement.*

Cash for Work specifics

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Even if the objective of cash for work is the same as that of a direct transfer, the way to calculate the amount distributed varies considerably. Beyond taking into account the needs one is seeking to cover, it is necessary to take into account other aspects:

- **cash for work activities** being often related to daily or seasonal work, and possibly compete with this type of activity, it is often recommended to set the level of transfer at equal to or less than the daily wages practiced in the area (or set by the government) in order not to divert labor from these activities which are often essential (especially agricultural work);
- **amount of transfer** can vary as a function of required qualifications (for team leaders especially);
- even more so than for other types of assistance, it is important to ensure that **the transfer level is the same for similar work** in other cash for work interventions in the area.

Cash for work transfers are more assimilated to a payment for a work accomplished than to a transfer based on an estimation of needs to meet. It is important to take this aspect into account in choosing the type of intervention.

• Vouchers: Defining the value and/or the composition

There are 2 main types of vouchers:

- **"Commodity" vouchers:** give their holder access to a quantity of specific predetermined goods or services
- **"Cash" vouchers:** give their holder access to goods or services up to a defined monetary value

In the first case, similar to in kind distribution, the holder does not have the choice of goods and services to which he will have access via the voucher (for example, 25kg of wheat flour); the second type of voucher, similar to direct cash transfers, allows the holder to choose the expenditures that he makes (for example, grains up to €10, or even food up to €15). The definition of the value of the voucher depends largely on its type.

The definition of the commodity voucher should follow the same process as the definition of the composition of the food ration, because one must set out in detail the ration to which the beneficiary is entitled to via the voucher.

The definition of the cash voucher should follow the method of defining the value of a cash transfer, especially the question of the evolution of this cash value over time, in relation to market prices.

BOX 19 FRESH FOOD VOUCHERS


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In response to the 2010 devastating earthquake, Action contre la Faim implemented a range of emergency activities, including a pilot Fresh Food Vouchers project to complement other food assistance and nutrition interventions.

ACF found that the use of Fresh Food Vouchers, instead of a classic in kind distribution of imported food was the most appropriate response to the lack of access to a nutritious diet. It was made possible due to the ease of access to markets and payment institutions, and because staple and fresh foods were available locally. Since the food supply was sufficient and the number of voucher beneficiaries' limited, there was little concern that the programme would lead to food price inflation. On the contrary, it was expected that the local economy would benefit from the programme especially merchants and local fresh food producers.

The food vouchers beneficiaries received the equivalent of HTG 2,250 (Haitian gourdes, approximately 45 euros) per month for four months : 5 staple food vouchers of HTG 200 each, 5 fresh food vouchers of HTG 200 and one cooking fuel voucher of HTG 250.

Other fresh food voucher interventions experiences have been collected and analyzed in a good practice review document: ACF, 2012, Emerging good practice in the use of Fresh Food Vouchers.

Source: ACF, 2012, Haiti - Fresh food vouchers to strengthen diet diversification and improve resilience. Case study.

• Non-food items: defining the composition

Non-food items (NFI) in food assistance interventions include utensils necessary for food storage, preparation and consumption. They are distributed in kind or via vouchers, most often following natural disasters and/or sudden displacements, during which populations have lost their possessions.

To define the composition of a NFI "kit", one must:

- identify utensils and equipment normally used by target populations for food storage, preparation and consumption;
- select essential, priority items (depending on the types of food available or which will be distributed in the intervention) which are not available to targeted households;
- compose kits according to household size: it is often more practical to define kits by family size (1 to 4 members, 5 to 7 members, and above, for example);
- assess the possibilities for item supply and cost (local, regional or national market; donations, UNICEF, UNHCR, Red Cross, etc.);
- assess transportation and storage possibilities and constraints, for the organization as well as beneficiaries.

Logistical constraints on non-food item purchase, transportation, storage and distribution can be different from those for supplying food. It is important to involve the logistics teams in the definition of NFI kit composition. In particular, the time needed for supply can be long, and the possibility of making up many standard kits with the exact same articles for the whole targeted population is often limited.

Note that non-food item distribution can be managed by other sectors of intervention, especially WaSH and Shelter. In this case it is important to coordinate interventions and plan joint distributions, bringing together all articles in one kit.

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CHECK LIST

- Who is the target population? What are the non-covered food and nutritional needs?
- What are the food commodities available locally?
- What are the food habits and what is the acceptance of the population for the foods to be distributed, including preparation/cooking modalities?
- What is the nutritional content of the foods to be distributed?
- What is the quantity of fuel needed to cook these foods? Is fuel available/accessible locally?
- What is the average price for a balanced diet on the local market? Does this price fluctuate according to seasons?
- Is a support needed to access cooking fuel or utensils, in addition to foods?
- Should food rations or cash transfers be adjusted to family size? Should they vary in time, depending on seasonal prices and availability?

3.4 DEFINING PRACTICAL MODALITIES AND COMPLEMENTARY ACTIVITIES

• Direct/indirect distribution

Two main distribution systems are possible:

- **Indirect distribution:** via a local intermediary: structure in place, such as merchants, associations, or local institutions; the community representative (traditional chief, elected representative, etc.). Food is then transferred to this intermediary who will distribute it to beneficiaries.
- **Direct distribution to beneficiaries:** food is distributed directly to beneficiaries, individually or per household by ACF teams.

Table 24: *Direct and indirect distribution systems*

SYSTEM	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Via local institutions	- Rapid and efficient when local infrastructure is sufficient; - Reinforces local capacity.	- Capacity of institutions limited in crises; - Costly if local infrastructures must be strengthened (rehabilitated); - Risk of political manipulation of distribution.
Via traditional leaders	- Respect for social and cultural values of the population; - Ease of communication with population during the initial phase of emergency situations or dispersed populations; - Rapid and; - Lightens workload for registering populations.	- Knowledge of social structures and power dynamics necessary; - Functional only in small communities with no internal tensions; - Risk of abuse if the social structures are in crisis or replaced by an authoritarian power; - Difficult to follow and monitor.
Through local committee creation	- Minimizes risks from abusive power plays and political manipulation; - Promotes understanding and consideration of local society; - Permits community participation and, especially, the involvement of women; - Sharing of responsibility in running the program and conflict resolution; - Low cost.	- Availability of (non-remunerated) members may be insufficient; - Appropriate only in stabilizing situations; - Committee must be elected to be truly representative of communities; - Resentment of traditional or governmental leaders not involved in the process; - Harmonizing functioning of the committees often difficult.
Directly to households	- Efficient for large and socially unstructured populations; - Higher control of the number of beneficiaries; - Minimizes the risks of manipulation and diversion; - Encourages fairness of distributed rations; - Easier to follow and monitor.	- Costly (human resources, time, equipment); - Little implication of beneficiaries in the process; - Requires substantial work and absorbs a large part of operational capacity.

Overall, direct distribution is the one most used by ACF because it provides more guarantees that beneficiaries will receive the assistance expected. However, one must remember that even in this case, it is possible that a part of the ration will be redistributed within the community.

On the condition that adequate follow-up and monitoring mechanisms are put in place, there are also contexts where indirect distributions are appropriate or justified due to security or lack of access and where they allow a larger coverage.

• Dry food rations: Pre-packaging/Scooping/Grouping

There are 3 main types of distributions of dry food rations: *pre-packaging*, *scooping* and *grouping*. Each of these methods has its advantages and disadvantages, the choice being guided by the context of the intervention, its objectives and available time and resources.

Pre-packaging (repackaging)

Pre-packaging, or rations in kit, involves putting the ration or material intended to be distributed in an individual package/kit: all the food is weighed and repackaged in the desired quantity in individual or family kits. It is possible to make up family "kits" with all the food for one family.

This method, which facilitates on site distribution, nevertheless requires substantial work beforehand. It requires labor, packaging material, time, as well as a strict monitoring of entry and exit of stock.

If the pre-packaging has not been done by the supplier itself, one must find a place in the warehouse to do the repackaging, as well as a second storage area to separate food in its initial packaging from the repackaged food.

Scooping

Food in bulk is delivered to the distribution site and is then distributed to the beneficiaries by distributors with scoops. The *scoops* are small containers whose volume is calibrated for the exact weight of the ration determined for the food item (the content of a fully filled scoop corresponds to the desired weight). The distributors fill the scoop and pour it into a container brought by the beneficiary.

It always takes a long time to obtain scoops as shown in the photos below *(Figure 5)*; jerrycans or buckets can also be used, after having been cut down to the desired volume. It is recommended to regularly verify the scoops because they can be damaged and thus no longer correspond to the predefined measure, and therefore to the ration to distribute.

The beneficiaries must be informed to bring their own empty containers when they come to the distribution point (bags, oil cans). The team must nevertheless have in stock backup containers (or use bags emptied during the operation) to avoid bottleneck situations.

When *scooping* is used on site at the time of distribution, one must also ensure a distribution chain of quality which includes the following factors:

- **Precision of given rations:** distributors must be well trained and monitored so that the measure corresponds exactly to the predetermined food weight.
- **Hygiene:** Containers and scoops must be cleaned and distributors must wash their hands before handling food. Impeccable hygiene is required.
- **Chain fluidity and rapidity:** cas with any distribution site, the system must be fluid, with no bottlenecks, whether in terms of supply, scooping process or beneficiaries' capacity to receive the food in their own containers.

Figure 5: *Scoop examples*

Sugar scoop, Dollo Ado, Ethiopia 2012

Oil scoop, Dollo Ado, Ethiopia, 2012

Grouping

The principle of grouping is to distribute a volume of food to a family group, in its original packaging, the families being responsible to fairly share the contents, which should correspond to the intended family ration. When the family rations are different according to the size of family, the groupings are made for families of the same size to facilitate sharing.

Figure 6: *Grouping - piles example*

This system simplifies and greatly accelerates distribution, and remains the least costly because it requires much less labor before and during the distribution (whether for packaging or scooping).

Despite its advantages, the system is not always the best, especially in the case where there are no strong community links or tensions exist between community members.

Sensitization is crucial to proper understanding and participation from the beneficiaries. Before and during the distribution, one should ensure that each beneficiary has knowledge of:

- the quantity by type of food to receive (according to the size of his family),
- The method for sharing the grouped ration.

Organization of the beneficiaries on the distribution sites must be well prepared. Based on their registration cards, households must be put together according to their size in the waiting area to be called by small groups to collect their grouped ration. The grouped ration will have been already prepared, and will be taken by the group of households out of the where the final sharing will be done among group members. ACF team members will be present to counsel and facilitate this sharing, although without being responsible for it.

Determination of the number of (individual) rations to group together depends essentially on the packaging of each food item. This ration is called a "group ration" and will be prepared identically for each same-sized group of families. Some adjustments will be necessary in removing or adding one or two individual rations as needed for certain family sizes.

For more detailed information on the organization of the grouping system, refer to *the capitalization document ACF, 2007 Food aid by grouping method*.

In some cases, especially in emergencies, one can distribute a single grouped ration for an entire village. The logic is the same as for grouping, despite the fact that each grouped ration is calculated specifically for each village and its number of individuals. The village's ration is delivered to a committee, persons recognized by the villagers, or traditional chiefs who take responsibility for the final sharing. This is similar to the indirect distribution method described in the previous section *Direct/indirect distribution*.

Table 25: *Distribution modalities for dry food rations*

	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Pre-packaging	- Rapid distribution for beneficiaries and distribution teams.	- Use of many plastic bags; - Long preparation time; - Need for labor and space.
Scooping	- Each beneficiary receives his ration individually.	- Slower distribution; - Need for labor; - Loss of food during scooping; - Beneficiaries must come with their container (bags, containers); - Constant monitoring on site, and scooping errors possible; - Hygiene risks (intensive food manipulation).
Grouping	- Rapid distribution; - Possibility to serve many people in one day; - Less labor required; - Less loss than scooping.	- Need for sensitization to ease redistribution amongst households; - Longer time required for redistribution amongst households.
Distribution by village	- Rapid distribution; - Involvement of community chiefs, respect for the traditional structure of the village.	- Need for sensitization on the quantities and qualities of food to receive per person and per family; - Possible diversion of food by the traditional chiefs.

• Cooked rations: Canteens

Food rations can be distributed cooked. This may be necessary when populations have lost all means of meal preparation at home or when, in a case of a supplementary feeding program, one wishes to ensure that the ration is correctly prepared and benefits only the targeted population (children under 5 years old and pregnant and breastfeeding women).

One refers to "canteens" because beyond the distribution itself one must organize a place where the meals will be prepared and consumed. The canteen requires a specific organization in addition to the distribution circuit per se: storage, kitchen, canteen/ consumption area, sanitary facility, water points.

Table 26: Cooked rations or dry rations?

	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Cooked rations	- Supports the households which have lost their means to cook; - Ensures that the ration is balanced and that all ingredients are present; - Ensures that the water used for preparation is of good quality; - Ensures that the target population (especially children at risk of undernutrition) actually consume all the ration.	- Requiert des moyens humains et logistiques importants; - Nécessite la mobilisation d'espaces pour aménager les cantines, et souvent la construction/réhabilitation d'abris; - Requiert des distributions quotidiennes; - Acceptabilité par les bénéficiaires peut être moindre.
Dry rations	- More rapid and less frequent distributions; - Requires less time for beneficiaries and the presence of single member of the household at the distribution site; - The distributed ration can cover a relatively long period (one or even 2 months).	- No monitoring of use of the ration by and within the household; - No monitoring of the way the ration is prepared: hygiene, composition of meals.

Canteens generally comprise a storage area, a preparation area (kitchen) and a consumption area. They require setting up or rehabilitating specific places, permanent or not, to receive a relatively large number of people during the day.

Storage: in general must contain food necessary for a week's functioning of the canteen. For large programs, a stock keeper is necessary to ensure that food is stored in good conditions, to manage the stocks and place order to the logistics department in time.

Kitchen: equipment and number of stoves is determined according to the number of rations to prepare each day and the number of services required. Since the kitchen consumes substantial fuel, the choice of the fuel to use must take into account availability on the market, and environmental risks, especially for wood and charcoal. Environmental considerations usually lead to the preferred use of gas when the program is in a country with a risk of degradation of the local environment. The kitchen must permit the preparation of meals and cleaning utensils in optimal hygienic conditions. Risks of fire related to the stoves must also be taken into account and safety rules established.

Canteen: It must be sufficiently large to receive the number of people planned for a service (taking into account those accompanying the children in the case of supplementary feeding programs). Tables and chairs must be available, as well as utensils (plates, eating utensils). In some cases, the beneficiaries can be asked to bring their own eating utensils and plates. Supply of potable water must be included, as well as sanitary facilities.

For a detailed example of implementation of a canteen program, see the capitalization report ACF, 2009, *Projet de Cantines populaires pour les enfants de 6 mois à 5 ans et les femmes enceintes et allaitantes (in French only).*

• Vouchers


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As seen above, there are two main categories of vouchers:

- **Commodity" vouchers:** give their holder access to a quantity of specific predetermined goods or services
- **"Cash" vouchers:** give their holder access to goods or services up to a defined monetary value

The first option allows better control over the goods to which beneficiaries will have access, by setting the precise food and quantity authorized. Negotiation concerning the price of food is made between ACF and the merchants. The second option gives more choice and flexibility (especially for negotiating price and quality) to the beneficiaries. It should be chosen when there is no real justification to specifically control the food basket.

Vouchers can be printed on paper or in "electronic" form. Electronic vouchers require the use of a mobile phone to which the voucher is sent by SMS, using a code. This form of voucher transfer, fairly new and not available everywhere, allows rapid and safe transfer of vouchers to large number of beneficiaries. It limits the risk of falsification that exists with paper vouchers. Reimbursement of merchants can also be done electronically by wire transfer, limiting the risks of manipulating and transporting cash.

Among the other modalities to define in implementing a voucher-based intervention, one notes:

- **Selection of the participating merchants:** according to the objective of the intervention, one may give priority to the capacity to rapidly deliver large quantities of food for large emergency responses; or one can specifically target small local merchants with the goal of reinforcing and stimulating local economy, with specific support measures;
- **Reimbursement system for merchants after use of the vouchers:** this can be done either directly by the ACF finance department, or via a financial intermediary in return for a commission (bank, money transfer agency, microfinance organization).

For further details on the preparation and implementation of voucher-based interventions, refer to the following documents:

> ACF, 2008, *Implementing cash-based interventions. Section 3.2.2. Voucher interventions.*

> CaLP, 2012, *Vouchers. A quick delivery guide for cash transfer programming in emergencies.*

• Cash transfers: restrictions

By definition a cash transfer intends to leave it up to beneficiaries to use the amount received according to their own needs. However there are cases where use of this money will be "limited" to certain types of purchases, especially of food in the case of food assistance interventions: That means that the organization defines a certain number of goods and/or services eligible for use with the transfer and that a monitoring mechanism for compliance with this restriction is put in place.

The difficulty in restrictive transfers is linked to the application of these restrictions. Expenditures made by beneficiary must be monitored one way or another and measures must be taken if the restrictions are not complied with. In practice, the only way to reach this goal is to pay the transfer in several payments, and for each new payment, obtain proof that the money already spent has been properly spent.

The disadvantage of this system is the administrative complexity required and the resources necessary for its application, especially in the case of many beneficiaries.

For these reasons, use of restrictions is not advised and must always be precisely justified. Experience has shown that it is preferable to leave the choice to the populations and trust them in the wise use of the money to respond to their own priority needs.

In addition, it should be noted that the simplest way to restrict use of the transfer is to use vouchers, or to pair cash transfers (for non-restricted use for part of the transfer) and vouchers (to ensure that certain purchases required by the program are done).

• Conditionality and transfer for work

It is possible to choose to condition assistance on the performance of specific tasks by the beneficiary: most often, the conditionality is linked to "work" determined in terms of working time or quantity of asset creation or rehabilitation, most often at the community level (rehabilitation or construction of roads, irrigation infrastructures, watershed management, planting, etc.): one refers to “cash and/or food for work".

<u>But other forms of conditionality exist:</u>

- **Transfer for training:** receipt of the transfer is conditioned on attendance at training or sensitization sessions on a specific topic.
- **Transfer for regular visits to health center:** assistance is conditioned on regular health check-ups, especially in the case of young children and pregnant women.
- **transfer for starting an income generating activity:** all or part of the transfer must be used for investment in productive resources.

As with restrictions, conditions must be used carefully and justified from the program viewpoint, first because its implementation is costly in time and resources (for the organization as well as the beneficiary populations), and second, it can also produce negative midterm effects in the beneficiary communities.

However it should be noted that in some communities, even in emergency situations, receiving “free assistance” is viewed negatively and a contribution, even small, from the beneficiaries is therefore required, especially in the form of community work. These aspects are important to identify during the initial assessment and the design of the intervention, in coordination with the communities.

In any case, implementation of a condition for transfer must:

- Demonstrably contribute to reaching project objectives and "do no harm", i.e. not have any negative effects either for the program, or the communities or the general environment;
- Take into account beneficiary "available" time , without negatively impacting their livelihoods, especially following a disaster;
- Be applicable and realistic from a practical point of view, the time necessary and in terms of additional costs;
- Be culturally acceptable and appropriate for the populations (Case of physical work and inclusion of women, elderly or disabled people).

Table 27 below shows the main advantages and disadvantages of direct transfers and transfers for work.

***Table 27:** Compared advantages and disadvantages between direct transfers and transfers for work*

	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Direct transfers	- Rapid and less costly to organize and implement; - Do not compete with other activities; - Less risk of excluding people unable to work; - Easier to manage on a large scale; - Larger transfers are possible (for livelihoods recovery for instance).	- Acceptability and risks of stigmatization for beneficiary populations; - Often less accepted by authorities and donors; - Relatively high risk of fraud in beneficiary lists.
Transfers for work	- Accomplishment of work useful for the community, with indirect effects in the midterm; - Fraud risk more difficult in the list of beneficiaries, especially when the payment is made at the worksite; - Allows populations to usefully occupy themselves in situations of forced non-activity; - Promotes the feeling of dignity and minimizes negative images connected with receiving assistance.	- Amount of the transfer often linked to the tasks performed and local labor market rather than an evaluation of needs; - Risk of increasing workload, especially for women, to the detriment of other activities such as child care especially; - Risk of marginalizing community work usually done for free; - Potentially excludes the most vulnerable, especially people who cannot work or are nonproductive ; - Competes with household activities and can delay the recovery process (requires careful planning according to seasons).

Source: adapted from ACF, 2008, Implementing cash-based interventions. A guideline for aid workers.

• Complementary activities

It is possible to have complementary activities to the transfers that supports, strengthens and even maximizes their impact. Depending on specific target population needs and intervention objectives, one can consider:

- Defining a transfer amount covering basic needs other than food to ensure that the part devoted to food is sufficient; especially, consider needs in terms of milling of grain, fuel for meal preparation, transport to and from the market, health and education expenditures;

- Ensuring satisfactory access to potable water, especially for meal preparation and limit the risk of waterborne illnesses;
- Supporting distribution with information or sensitization activities on good feeding practices, balanced meal preparation and nutritional value of food; if necessary, consider putting in place cooking demonstrations to promote little-known foods or those not habitually used; include promotion of infant and young child feeding practices (IYCF)[38] which include promotion of maternal breastfeeding;
- Strengthening local availability of food with nutritional value through market and/or local production support interventions.

• Transfer frequency

The definition of transfer frequency will have important consequences on the definition of human and logistical needs to mobilize, according to whether distribution takes place on a daily, weekly, biweekly, monthly or bimonthly basis.

The choice of frequency depends largely on the type of transfer, but also on logistical constraints (or security) as well as the level of control desired by the organization.

Table 28 below shows the principal criteria to take into account in defining distribution frequency according to the type of transfer.

***Table 28:** Criteria for determining transfer frequency*

TYPE OF TRANSFER	CONSERVATION/ EXPIRY	WEIGHT / TRANSPORTATION/ STORAGE	MONITORING USE BY THE HOUSEHOLD	SECURITY AND FRAUD RISKS	FREQUENCY USUALLY FOLLOWED
Cash transfer	No influence	No influence	Relatively significant influence according to the level of control, restrictions and conditions chosen	Significant influence in the case of cash transfer	Monthly to bimonthly, even quarterly in case of direct computerized or electronic transfers
Voucher	No influence	No influence	Relatively significant influence according to the level of control, restrictions and conditions chosen	Significant influence in the case of paper vouchers	Monthly
Dry food ration	No or little influence, except for fresh food; Non-fresh food can be conserved several months.	Strong influence in terms of ration weight (up to 100 kg for one family for a month), organization storage capacity and beneficiaries and access conditions	Significant influence in case of identifying resale risk	Moderate influence	Twice weekly to twice monthly, according to beneficiary storage capacity, security risks and access conditions during certain periods of the year

38 - Refer for instance to: IFE Core Group, 2007, Infant and young child feeding in emergencies. Operational guidance for emergency relief staff and programme managers. Directives opérationnelles à l'intention du personnel et des administrateurs de programmes.

Premixed dried food ration	Conservation duration of these rations is one to two weeks maximum.	Little influence, in general individual rations and duration of storage extremely limited	Significant influence in case of risk identified for sharing of the ration within a household	Little influence	Weekly or twice weekly
Cooked ration	These rations cannot be conserved and must be consumed within hours of their preparation	Little influence, in general individual rations and no storage	No influence	No influence	Daily
Non-food item(s)*	No influence	Items often voluminous	Significant influence in case of identified resale risk	Significant influence	Monthly to quarterly

** Non food items are usually distributed only once, but some consumable articles (fuel, hygiene products) can require multiple distributions.*

Note that in the case of vouchers, it is also necessary to define the duration of their validity, i.e. during what duration (or more precisely until what date) a voucher can be used in the market. This date must be clearly written on the voucher, and beneficiaries as well as merchants explicitly informed. A relatively short duration for validity may be necessary, especially for:

- Limiting risks of fraud and illicit reproduction of the vouchers (especially paper ones);
- Financial management, budget and administrative reasons;
- Facilitating management of participating merchants supply and stock, especially for fresh products.

3.5 DEFINING THE METHOD AND CRITERIA FOR BENEFICIARY TARGETING AND IDENTIFICATION

Needs assessment must allow the set-up of selection principles for the program beneficiaries. According to the situation and type of distribution chosen, all or only part of the population can be selected as program beneficiaries. Targeting is guided by the food security situation which is often heterogeneous for people in the same area.

Note however that in some cases, especially when the urgency of needs or part of the affected population is such that it is not possible (or relevant) to spend time and resources on targeting mechanisms, it is justifiable to provide aid to the entire population (case of general distributions).

In other cases, quality targeting is essential to:

- Ensure that assistance is provided on the basis of identified needs;
- Ensure that transfers reach the most vulnerable first;
- Avoid negative effects of aid and risks of conflicts within communities;
- Optimize use of limited resources.

Targeting generally begins by a zoning, establishing vulnerability levels by geographic region, the objective being to define a priority zone for interventions.

Then there are 2 types of targeting according to whether the intervention aims to reach households or individuals:

- Targeted groups can be vulnerable households whose socioeconomic situation does not allow them to respond autonomously to their needs or households affected by a disaster: farmers having lost their crop, breeders having lost their livestock, displaced persons or refugees, families hosting displaced persons, families whose capacity for work is insufficient, etc.
- Individual targeting, based on physical and anthropometric characteristics: age, pregnant and breastfeeding women, disabled, etc. In the context of interventions to prevent undernutrition, it can be decided to specifically target populations most at risk, especially children under 5 years old and pregnant and breastfeeding womens[39].

In any case, the targeting process requires the definition of precise criteria, understood by all, from implementing teams to communities where the intervention will take place. As we will see below, ideally the communities themselves should define the most appropriate criteria according to their own perception of needs and vulnerability.

Two conditions for efficient targeting are:

- Define targeting criteria that are clear, verifiable and allow practical selection of groups of populations or individuals.
- Ensure that these criteria are well accepted and understood by the population (or defined by it) and the local administration.

Table 29: *Key components for defining targeting criteria*

Locally accepted criteria	The criteria should be relevant for the local population and correspond to their own assessment of vulnerability. It is important that the criteria are understood in the same way whichever language people are using.
Clear and verifiable criteria	Criteria should not be too complicated, for people to understand them easily and for implementing staff to be able to verify them quickly and without too much intrusion. Equally they criteria should not be vague. Trying to target 'vulnerable' households doesn't really mean much, unless you specify what event they are vulnerable to, and how vulnerable.
Non-contradictory criteria	If there are several criteria, it is important that they do not contradict each other. This can happen in particular with labour-based programmes, where a poverty criterion (the objective) may not match with an ability to undertake the work demanded.
Community involvement	Community involvement in selection process may increase transparency and reduce complaints to the implementing agency, though 'communities' are groups with competing interests and are rarely truly democratic. Triangulation may reduce the power of elites to capture the process.

39 - Case of supplementary feeding programs or "blanket distributions"

Quotas	Opinions are divided on quotas, which are sometimes used in social transfers (e.g. 'the poorest 10% of households') or other targeting process. They do not allow for the fact that needs will vary from place to place, and will result in arbitrary cut-off points. On the other hand, they are simple to apply, and prevent every community insisting that more of their members are really in need of assistance. It is only fair to people that if a quota is used, it should be based on empirical evidence, some official data and objective reasoning.
Gender	Even if the intervention targets households, it is important to define who within the household will be registered and recipient of the transfer in family's name. The role and power of decision of the woman in the household, or in the community, is a key aspect to analyze before defining the targeting method.

Source: adapted from ACF, 2008, Implementing cash based interventions. A guideline for aid workers.

The selection of individual/household beneficiaries on the basis of these criteria is implemented either directly by the ACF teams on the basis of surveys which can be very long and tedious, or preferably by the communities themselves which is commonly referred to as community targeting. ACF teams are then responsible for easing the process and if necessary ensuring verification afterwards on a sample of the beneficiary lists produced.

BOX 20 COMMUNITY-BASED TARGETING

Whenever possible, involving communities in the targeting and selection process may help the programme be better accepted and understood.

The list of beneficiaries can be established via community-based targeting through:

- Established community leaders (the risk being that elite capture occurs and poorest or minority group are excluded).
- Committees specially elected by the communities (time consuming).
- Triangulation method where lists are done by different groups (e.g. elders, women, men, minority…) in the community and then compiled.

Note however that such targeting will work better where:

- Communities are cohesive and well-defined
- Large wealth differentials exist within the community
- Wealth groups are not equally affected by food insecurity

It can also be interesting to involve local NGOs in the targeting process as it may help have a comprehensive and thorough understanding of vulnerability criteria.

The selection must also be as transparent as possible with a communication of the project objective and the moment chosen for to ensure that everyone in the community can participate in the selection process. The organization is involved during the whole selection process and controls the beneficiary list to be sure that:

- The registered beneficiaries fulfill the conditions;
- Eligible persons have not been excluded;
- Information in the list is exact.

The beneficiary list must be publicly verified and any change approved by the entire community. The final lists must be posted.

BOX 21 INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION ERRORS

• Inclusion errors

Inclusion errors are where people who are not in need of assistance or who do not meet the programme criteria receive assistance.

They can be avoided by undertaking household-level vulnerability assessments. But carrying out such detailed assessments often costs more than the value of the grants distributed to people who do not meet programme criteria. Additionally, when cash transfers are designed to meet essential needs, especially after a sudden-onset disaster, the timely provision of the grant is more important than ensuring that there are no inclusion errors.

Involving the local community – who know who is eligible and who is not –is often the most effective safeguard against inclusion errors.

• Exclusion errors

Exclusion errors are when people who are in need and meet the programme eligibility criteria fail to receive assistance and can occur when:

- Social welfare lists are used as the basis for targeting – people who are newly vulnerable as a result of the disaster or emergency or those who are on social welfare waiting lists may be excluded.
- The socially marginalized (e.g., the mentally ill, migrant populations) are under-represented in community structures.
- Sudden-onset disasters exacerbate the situation of people without land or assets (who in normal situations frequently have limited earning potential). They may be excluded from transfers aimed at rebuilding livelihoods if they do not have existing assets or land.
- People's homes have been destroyed – those without land may be excluded from house-rebuilding programmes.

When targeting is being undertaken, exclusion errors should be explicitly looked for and steps taken to reduce them. It is often more important to ensure that those in need are not excluded than to rapidly implement a programme.

Source: IFRC, 2008, Guidelines for cash transfer programming.

Targeting is a continuous process and subject to verification throughout the intervention (especially in the case of staged transfers), using the prepared lists which can be corrected if necessary, but also integrating new beneficiaries as needed.

The situation and needs can evolve, and targeting adjustment can take place during the program by selection of beneficiaries who will continue to receive assistance and stopping distribution for others. Implementing such a targeting reduction must be part of the intervention strategy and can be the final step before stopping distribution.

3.6 IDENTIFYING AND BUILDING A PARTNERSHIP

Generally, ACF considers a partnership as a mean to accomplish its mission and encourage relations with other organizations of a different type, size and field of activity to bring out efficient and lasting solutions, especially for food assistance.

A partnership with other organizations can be used in all circumstances when it is relevant and there is a potential for strengthening our impact. Each partnership is unique and must be seen as such. It must be appropriate for the field of application, potential partners and the collaboration's overall goal. It can take several forms depending on the problem to be treated and the objective to be reached. ACF can join with an organization for all or part of a program: preliminary surveys, beneficiary targeting, distribution, evaluation and monitoring, etc.

Generally, it is therefore essential to start by determining what ACF is looking for in a partner and what ACF can bring to the potential partner. Identifying the right partner, constructing and managing a partnership is a collective process which is based not only on a good collaboration between different managers at the mission and/or headquarters level, but also the partner's involvement. Since contexts, by definition, are always evolving, partnership modalities must be regularly reviewed to ensure that they are still appropriate.

Within a food assistance program/project, one must consider the following points when planning to work in partnership:

- Experience in food security programs and the intervention main activities: needs assessment, intervention definition, beneficiary identification, distribution, monitoring and evaluation, follow-up of complaints from the beneficiaries participating in the program;
- Understanding of food security situation in the intervention area.

ACF has recently adopted a partnership policy as a reference framework for all types of inter-organizational relations. You can also refer to the detailed manual designed to facilitate development and management of partnerships.

3.7 IDENTIFYING THE RISKS AND DEVELOPING A MITIGATION PLAN

By their nature, ACF interventions, especially for food assistance, are subject to external factors that are more or less predictable and which may influence the efficient conduct of the activities and reach of the objectives. To the extent possible, it is important to identify these factors, and especially the risks we will face during the implementation of the intervention, during the formulation phase, in order to plan mitigation measures. The objective is to prepare for and reduce the eventuality that these risks do materialize, or to plan for mitigation measure to reduce their effects on the intervention.

Table 30 below gives several examples of risks related to food assistance interventions and mitigation actions. This list is far from being exhaustive and must be completed in light of the intervention context.

Table 30: *Examples of risks and mitigation actions*

POTENTIAL RISKS	MITIGATION ACTIONS
Conditions linked to security in the intervention area and possible developments	- Develop a security plan with logistics teams, plan for the possibility of remote monitoring work (train the teams, its role and responsibility, community information, train a distribution committee). - Identify alternative measures for supply, distributions and transfers to be used according to events. - Promote paperless transfers when it is possible or reduce the frequency of transfers.
Break in the supply chain in the case of in kind transfer	- Establish communication and coordination with suppliers and transporters in order to anticipate breakups as much as possible. - Assess the possibilities of alternative supply. - Assess the feasibility of cash or voucher transfers.
Climatic events (rainy season, cyclones, snow, etc.) preventing access to the intervention area	- If the program is formulated in the dry season, budget for rain equipment, identify roads open all year, and select storage and distribution sites that are protected. - Plan transfers outside the riskiest periods if the context allows (e.g.: pre-winter distributions to cover the period without access).
Access to the interventions zone not granted	- Prepare a plan for remote control management. - Beforehand, ensure and negotiate a guaranteed access from authorities or groups controlling the area; involve if necessary the person in charge of community beneficiaries.
Lack of collaboration from the local populations	- Include the populations in designing the program. - Strengthen communication and sensitization. - Identify persons in the community who are intermediaries and/or influential.
Misunderstanding/ or rejection of the modalities by beneficiaries	- Include the populations in designing the program and the choice of methods. - Take preferences into account. - Strengthen communication and sensitization. - Set up a feedback mechanism.
Rejection of distributed food by the beneficiaries	- Take into account cultural preferences and habits. - Include the populations in designing the program and the choice of modalities.

Inflation of commodity prices in the local market	- Ensure a regular monitoring and analysis of prices. - Perform a prior thorough analysis of the functioning of the market before defining the methods of interventions. - Assess the possibilities of changing the methods during the intervention. - Include market stakeholders in the definition of the intervention methods and take into account their capacity to respond to increased demand.

Understanding of the context and associated risks comes through targeted interviews with key informants in the intervention area, especially community leaders, local authorities and market stakeholders. Consulting ACF teams living in interventions areas can also be a good source of information.

Finally, it is useful to obtain information on past interventions in the same area implemented by ACF or other organizations. Local organizations are also good sources of information on how to approach the communities and the methods which work.

3.8 ADDRESSING SUSTAINABILITY AND FORMULATING AN EXIT STRATEGY

In theory, withdrawal/exit strategies are applicable when the program objectives have been reached or other stakeholders have acquired the necessary capacity to take over. In these circumstances, and above all in the case of emergency responses, it is also necessary to have an exit strategy, with as few negative effects as possible on the population, even before having reached all objectives. It can happen that a program must terminate prematurely because of security conditions or reduced access, or financial reasons. It is therefore crucial to have thought about the question from project start, and to develop a strategy which can be regularly updated.

In the exit strategy planning, one must[40]:

- Agree on exit criteria during the planning stage with all stakeholders (affected community/ local and national authorities).
- Design withdrawal or exit strategies to safeguard the gains of the cash intervention.
- Remember that some cash transfers may benefit from a graduated withdrawal strategy (e.g., CFW).
- Adopt time-based measures to allow for a clear withdrawal from programmes that cover immediate and temporary needs.
- Ensure that a clearly defined exit strategy is communicated to recipients in cases where cash transfers are repeated.
- Factor in links to livelihood interventions, microfinance and social protection programmes.
- Identify persons or local organizations who may be able to take over part of the activities and aim at strengthening their capacity where it is necessary, from the beginning of the intervention.

40 - From IFRC, 2008, Guidelines for cash transfer programming.

3.9 DESIGNING A MONITORING AND EVALUATION PLAN

Project monitoring and evaluation system is bringing together the processes, tools, models, personnel, equipment and activities that are necessary to collect monitoring and evaluation information, to manage, analyze, present and disseminate them. The specific objective of this system is to:

- Help to better understand project evolution with respect to objectives to better guide decisions;
- Measure project efficiency, performance and impact;
- Respond to demands for accountability, both internal and external by showing the extent to which the project produced expected results;
- Support the acquisition of knowledge for the benefit of current and future programs.

Project staff must begin preparing monitoring and evaluation plan from project start. While most monitoring and evaluation activities will occur during implementation and evaluation stages, it is essential that they be planned as early as possible, i.e. during the formulation phase. This will ensure that the required human and financial resources are correctly planned, and that monitoring and evaluation are integrated sufficiently into the activity workplan.

Definition of a monitoring and evaluation plan is crucial when defining the intervention, so the project team can prepare and implement it at the right moment and has adequate resources.

The monitoring and evaluation plan must include the following elements:

- Monitoring data to collect and analyze for each indicator;
- Methodologies to use for data collection and analysis;
- Frequency of data collection and analysis;
- Persons in charge of data collection, analysis and reports;
- Use of data, its presentation, in which form it will be disseminated and who is responsible.

The monitoring and evaluation plan is linked to a calendar detailing implementation periods for monitoring and evaluation throughout the project.

For further information on monitoring and evaluation in general, indicators and methods to use, as well as an example of monitoring and evaluation plan, refer to the handbook: ACF, 2012, *Food Security and Livelihood Monitoring and Evaluation Guidelines. A practical guide for field workers*. See also *section 3 Chapter 3* of this manual for the definition of indicators and methods suggested for monitoring and evaluation of food assistance interventions.

3.10 DESIGNING A COMMUNICATION PLAN

Communication and sensitization are two extremely important aspects for any stage of the project and particularly its start up. Misunderstandings on objectives, targeting or implementation modalities of the project risk creating conflicts and mistrust, or even noncompliance with certain rules. It is important to do everything possible to minimize these risks. All concerned persons (within and outside the organization) must have the same understanding of the intervention modalities – Why? Who? What? How? And when?

Inform the authorities and other partners of your projects. Obtain good quality written documents: when agreements have been reached during meetings, draft a brief summary of what was agreed and send it to all the participants in the meeting, if it is useful in your work context. Unless someone responds and makes modifications to what you have written, it can be considered as a confirmation by all the participants and that they are in agreement. Keep copies of all documents sent in case there are claims made and, if possible, copy different addressees for each document in order to avoid any claim that they were not received.

The design of a project must be based on seeking the points of view of potential recipients of that aid although that can be done without specifically mentioning the program in order to avoid raising expectations. Once the program is designed and approved, the target communities must be informed sufficiently ahead of time to be able to adapt it following suggestions and recommendations.

The community of beneficiaries must be kept constantly up-to-date on all elements of the program (objectives, selection criteria, transfer amount, progress made and future steps).

Each party in charge of implementation (ACF, the beneficiaries, the overall community, the local government, the merchants) must understand their rights and obligations, and the obligations of each.

Ensure that the team members receive the necessary training; they will be responsible for the dissemination of messages, provision of answers to questions and support to beneficiaries in receiving assistance. It is important that the translation of all documents be exact and reflects the true purpose of the project and that it be well understood (and disseminated) by the team.

BOX 22 SENSITIZATION AND COMMUNICATION

- All local authorities, key actors and the local population should be informed at all times about the programme, its purpose(s), its process, its schedule and any modification to it.
- Allow time for balanced community-based approach and cross-checking of the information given.
- Make sure that each "party" in the project (beneficiaries, community and ACF) is aware of its duties and rights. A Community Action Plan can clarify responsibilities of each party.
- Community members participating in the project but who are NOT beneficiaries (authorities, leaders) may ask to be paid for their involvement (usually voluntary): make sure to have a clear and acknowledged policy on the issue.
- Sensitize communities and especially beneficiaries on:
  - The project's purposes, implementation process and duration.
  - The selection process (community-based, selection criteria, monitoring of beneficiary lists, public validation).
  - The entitlement: what, how much and why this amount, how it should be used and when.
  - Potential cash uses (balanced food intake, asset creation, etc.) depending on project's objective.
  - The progress of the project, what the next steps will be at each stage, and any changes that are made, if any (e.g. distribution dates, monitoring, duration).

- To make sure the information is reaching as many people as possible, sensitization should be repeated many times: during the selection phase, when beneficiary lists are validated, before and during the distribution itself and informally during field visits or other surveys.
- Make sure that ACF staff is well trained on the messages to be relayed to the population and that everybody is saying the same thing (you may want to prepare a list of answers for frequently asked questions). Accurate translation of programme's documents needs to be ensured.

Source: ACF, 2008, Implementing cash-based interventions. A guideline for aid workers.

The design of a communication plan, like a monitoring and evaluation plan, formalizes and brings together in a summary way the communication and sensitization activities to implement during the project, the targeted audience, the timing and frequency, and the resources to mobilize.

Table 31: *Example of a communication plan*

THEME	OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITIES	TIMING AND FREQUENCY	TARGET GROUPS	RESOURCES/ TOOLS
Targeting based on vulnerability criteria	Explain the choice of this targeting and the criteria; Ensure that the criteria are known and accepted by all	Meet with traditional chiefs and people representing the community	Before startup of the targeting activity Then during and at the end of the targeting process	The community of the village selected for the program	Summary sheet of criteria, information note for the sensitization team

TOOL BOX / MORE INFORMATION

- ACF, 2005, *Food Aid and Nutrition: two complementary approaches. Blanket food distribution for children under five years of age.* [- 111]
- ACF, 2007, *Food aid by grouping method.* [- 245]
- ACF, 2008, *Implementing cash-based interventions. A guideline for aids workers.* [- 64]
- ACF, 2009, *Projet de Cantines populaires pour les enfants de 6 mois à 5 ans et les femmes enceintes et allaitantes.* [- 631]
- ACF, 2010, *Food Security and Livelihoods Assessments. A practical guide for field workers.* [- 121]
- ACF, 2011, *Mécanismes & Technologies de transferts monétaires. Fiches techniques.* [- 254]
- ACF, 2011, *Maximising the nutritional impact of food security and livelihoods interventions. A manual for field workers.* [- 62]
- ACF, 2012, *Emerging Good practices in the use of Fresh Food Vouchers.* [- 642]
- ACF, 2012, *Log-Admin guideline for cash-based interventions* [- 253]
- ACF, 2012, *Haïti - Fresh food vouchers to strengthen diet diversification and improve resilience. Case study.* [- 644]
- ACF, 2012, *Food Security and Livelihoods Monitoring and Evaluation Guidelines. A practical guide for field workers* [- 41]
- CaLP, 2012, *Communicating cash. A quick guide to beneficiary communications in cash transfer programming.* [- 64]
- CaLP, 2012, *Cash transfers in emergencies practical guides. Vouchers* [- 642]
- European Commission, 2010, Humanitarian Food Assistance. *Commission staff working document accompanying the Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament*. COM(2010)126. [- 112]
- Global Nutrition Cluster, 2014, *Moderate Acute Malnutrition: A Decision Tool for Emergencies.* [- 123]
- IFRC, 2008, *Guidelines for cash transfer programming.*
- IASC, 2011, *The Harmonised Training Package. Resource Material for Training and Learning on Nutrition in Emergencies. Version 2.* http://nutritioncluster.net/training-topics/harmonized-training-package/
- IFE Core Group, 2007, *Infant and Young Child Feeding in* Emergencies. Operational Guidance for Emergency Relief Staff and Programme Managers [- 62]
- *NutVal software* [- 241]
- UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, WHO, 2003, *Food and Nutrition Needs in Emergencies.*

4. PLANNING AND FORMULATING THE INTERVENTION

KEY QUESTIONS

- ➔ How to plan the activities?
- ➔ What is the logical order for the implementation of the activities?
- ➔ Which team for which program?
- ➔ How to create a budget, which elements to take into account?

4.1 ACTIVITY TIMETABLE

As soon as the key elements of the intervention have been defined (type of intervention, implementation modalities, target population, monitoring and evaluation plan and communication plan), it is important to organize them over time by ensuring that they follow a logical order: certain activities cannot take place until others are completed. Producing a detailed timetable allows one to visually represent in a chronological order all activities to implement during the project life. This can be more or less detailed, and, for example, include only the principal steps in the formulation phase of the project, then be considerably more detailed at the time of startup.

In any case, it is important that the production of the timetable includes all stakeholders in the project, and especially includes the support services (logistics, finance, human resources) in order to ensure that planning the project activities is compatible with the other activities of these services. These services will also give indications on the time required to implement specific activities under their responsibility (for example: duration for recruitment of a team member; duration of the food supply process).

It is also crucial to take into account seasonality (climactic, access, implementation of livelihood activities, etc.) in the intervention zone in order to verify if certain activities will be possible or not at certain periods of the year.

Figure 7 below provides a non-exhaustive list of elements to take into account for the creation of a project timetable. Starting with a detailed list of activities related to the project, one should then position these activities in the timetable starting with those which will end the project, and “go back in time"; this is called a “retro planning” process. This allows one to identify all preliminary (or prior) activities which must be accomplished for another one to take place.

Figure 7: Example of project timetable elements

LOGISTICS PREPARATION	TEAM SET UP	SENSITIZATION AND COMMUNITY APPROACH	BENEFICIARY SELECTION	IMPLEMENTATION
- Supply plan - Equipment needs (for registration, distribution…) - Choice of distri-bution site(s) - Choice of cash transfer system	- Organization chart - Recruitment plan - Training plan	- Communication plan - Sensitization of the communities - Creation of distribution committees - Sensitization/ training of the committees	- Setting selection criteria - Registration - Creation and verification of beneficiary lists and databases - Creation and distribution of identification cards, vouchers	- Preparation of distribution sites/ canteens - Distribution - Sensitization on the distributed items and their use - Monitoring and verifications

It is important to be realistic in planning the activities and not be tempted to try to fit into a timetable activities which duration has been underestimated. On the other hand it is necessary to have "buffer" periods to be prepared for time delays at critical stages. It is necessary, for certain key activities, to calculate in detail the necessary time and resources: for example, for the stage of registering beneficiary populations, estimate the number of families that one organization leader can register in one hour, and multiply by the number of working hours. Be careful to take into account travel time from village to village, rest time and meal time and respect working hours. As seen above, add a buffer period for unexpected events.

Be careful to take into account and correctly assess “hidden” activities, often forgotten or masked by other more “visible” activities: for example, during the planning phases of distribution, don’t forget to include site preparation activities, communication to the populations, “briefing” of the teams, inspections of the site and distributed rations, counting/verification of stock, writing the distribution report, etc.

4.2 LOGISTICAL MEANS

Food assistance programs, in particular those based on in kind distributions, rely greatly on preparation and organization of activities in coordination with the logistical services, as we saw in *Section 2 of this chapter.*

The planning of logistical needs consist mainly in the preparation of a Project Procurement Planning[41] (PPP) which brings together all of the purchases necessary to implement the project and their staggering over time. This Planning allows the logistical service to plan its activities and plan for the necessary human resources, in coordination with the other projects of the organization during the same period. It allows a better anticipation of project upstream needs and guarantees that the necessary materials and equipment will be available when needed. It also allows budgeting for these resources.

41 - The logistics department of your mission will provide the template and appropriate indications to fill the Project Procurement Plan.

Purchases for a food assistance intervention can include the following elements:

- beneficiary identification cards,
- vouchers (taking into account risks of falsification),
- foodstuffs,
- items necessary for transfer for work programs (tools, material and safety equipment such as gloves, hats, masks, etc.),
- distribution material (food, vouchers and/or cash): delimitation stakes and ropes, loudspeaker, ticket punchers, etc.
- material for construction/rehabilitation of canteen sites,
- equipment for canteen sites (portable stoves, utensils and containers, tables and benches, etc.),
- material for repackaging food if necessary (bags, bottles, cans, etc.),
- equipment for quality assurance (thermometer, a moisture meter, aflatoxin kits, sampling kits, etc.),
- visibility material: T-shirts, hats, etc.

In addition to purchases, logistical resources to mobilize and plan include:

- storage infrastructures,
- needs for commodities and equipment transportation,
- needs for transportation of the teams.

All of these resources are assessed jointly by the project teams and logistical teams.

4.3 ADMINISTRATIVE MEANS

In the context of implementing cash based interventions specifically, the administrative services must be mobilized to develop and implement the transfer system, whether a cash or voucher transfer. Administrative services are responsible for ensuring the transfer preparation and implementation, whether physical or by wire transfer, whether to beneficiaries directly, or via a financial intermediary, or to merchants (in the case of vouchers), and to ensure the monitoring and reconciliation, in close relation with the project team.

It is therefore necessary to jointly assess system to budget correctly, as well as additional human resources potentially necessary within administrative services. Here again, activity planning must be done jointly to ensure that concerned services will have adequate resources as needed.

The intervention's financial system is that put in place to monitor delivery of cash or voucher subsidiaries to beneficiaries. It must be designed in close collaboration with the financial department.

4.4 HUMAN RESOURCES

Regardless of the type of intervention, it is essential to have established a clearly defined human resources structure dedicated to the project, with an organization chart and job descriptions, detailing the responsibilities of each, as well as interactions between positions.

Tables 32 and 33 below provide examples of positions for food distribution or cash transfer implementation.

Table 32: Example of positions for a food distribution program

Site supervisor	- Ensure effective operation of the distribution - Supervise distribution teams - Respond to organizational problems of the distribution - Compile the daily report
Registrar	- Verify the identity of beneficiaries - Keep up-to-date distribution lists - Prepare the daily report
Distributor/Scooper	- Distribute the defined ration to the beneficiaries according to instructions - Ensure the scooping on-site - Ensure food safety and hygiene
Warehouseman, labor to support with commodity movements	- Bring food for distribution from storage place to distribution site - Assist beneficiaries in obtaining and moving their ration out of the distribution site
Site watchman	- Let only beneficiaries enter - Monitor and ensure proper flow of persons on the site - Organize waiting lines
Monitor	- Monitor on site distribution process and ensure food basket monitoring - Ensure program monitoring and evaluation
Database manager	- Creation of beneficiary database - Updating of data following distributions

Table 33: Example of positions for a cash based program

Supervisor	- Ensure effective operation of distribution - Supervise field teams - Compile daily report
Registrar/Distributor	- Verify the identity of beneficiaries - Hand over vouchers, checks, envelopes to beneficiaries
Site watchman	- Let only beneficiaries enter - Monitor and ensure proper flow of persons on the site - Organize waiting lines
Monitor	- Support and monitoring of merchants/payment points - Monitoring of market - Ensure program monitoring and evaluation
Database manager	- Creation of beneficiary database - Updating of database following distributions
Support administrator	- Draft contract with merchants and ensure their monitoring - Monitor transfer system and sort out any dysfunction - Ensure relation with organization financial service and external financial partner - Ensure monitoring of transfers and bank reconciliations

Composition of the project team will depend on project size, implementation modalities (intervention type, distribution system, number of sites and distribution frequency), the extent of the intervention area, locally available skills and the degree of intervention urgency. Note that the needs for specific profiles can evolve during the project (needs in terms of registration at project start, needs in terms of implementation of distributions and monitoring and evaluation during and at the end of the project): it will be necessary to recruit different persons for different durations, and/or to create positions, the activities of which will evolve over time, on the condition that the required skills and qualities remain similar.

When the list and the number of positions are determined, it is useful to draw up an organization chart which represents graphically all the team and the relations (hierarchic and functional) between the different positions. This graphic representation will permit adjustments, if necessary, of the distribution of positions if imbalances are noted. The *Toolbox file 31_Team composition proposes examples of organization charts*.

The last step is to define precisely the role for each position by preparing job descriptions. Mission human resources services have standard job descriptions for all types of interventions. The *Toolbox file 32_Job descriptions provides examples of job descriptions*.

All of these elements, to be aligned with the activity timetable, will permit budgeting of human resources and planning activities for recruiting and training the teams, in coordination with the human resources service.

4.5 BUDGETING THE INTERVENTION

At this stage, all the elements necessary for an intervention budget should be available. It is the last phase in formulation of the intervention which attempts to put a precise cost on the financial resources required, and adjust as necessary. It is important to have brought together all the elements which may represent a financial cost necessary for implementing the intervention.

The budget is prepared in close cooperation with the project team and financial, logistical and human resources services, to estimate all intervention costs accurately.

The main categories of expenditures constituting the budget of a food assistance intervention are the following:

- Costs of items distributed in kind, or total amount of transfers done (including 5 to 10% margin to compensate any losses during in kind distribution and any changes in prices or exchange rates)
- Costs associated with the distribution system: registration and distribution equipment, transfer fees, communication/sensitization equipment
- Equipment and material to implement work activities in the case of transfers for work
- Costs associated with complementary activities (milling vouchers or transportation, cooking demonstrations, etc.)

- Costs associated with supply, storage, transportation, repackaging and quality control of distributed items
- Human resources associated with the project, including costs associated with recruiting, training, insurance
- Equipment and items (transportation, computer and telecommunications equipment, software, office supplies, etc.)

TOOL BOX / MORE INFORMATION

- ACF, 2008, *Implementing cash-based interventions. A guideline for aid workers. Section 3.1.3.8 Budgeting the intervention.* [- 64]
- ACF, 2012, *Log-Admin guideline for cash-based interventions.* [- 253]
- *Workplans* [- 211]
- *Team composition* [- 31]
- *Job descriptions* [- 32]
- *Supply Planning* [- 213]

CHAPTER 3

FROM IMPLEMENTATION TO FINAL EVALUATION

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1. PREPARATORY PHASE AND INTERVENTION LAUNCH

KEY QUESTIONS

- ➔ What are the preparatory stages for Food Assistance intervention?
- ➔ How to build, recruit and train the Food Assistance team?
- ➔ How to identify, select and register the beneficiaries?
- ➔ What are the key elements of distribution sites preparation?
- ➔ What are the key elements in preparing cash transfers?
- ➔ How to ensure quality control of food before distribution?
- ➔ What are the logistics preparatory stages?

1.1 TEAMS RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING

The recruitment of the team is one of the first steps in the implementation of an intervention, and one of the most important because it is about surrounding oneself with the skills and workforce necessary to ensure quality activities. It is a process that can be long (up to several weeks), depending on the locally available skills and the procedures required in the country of intervention. In any case, consult with the human resources service of the mission to obtain information on the process and the time periods for recruitment.

Recruiting can be done locally, i.e. in the intervention area, or relocated personnel can be sought, especially for positions requiring specific and difficult to find skills. Local recruiting is often difficult for positions with responsibility (supervisor, monitor, registrar) and recruiting for relocated personnel can be considered, but this can create tensions in the communities where one intervenes. It is also important to verify the possibilities of communication in relation to the different languages or dialects according to the regions.

For all positions like: distributor, watchman, flow controller and warehouseman, local recruitment is usually easy, and it is also a non-negligible source of money for the community. If these positions are considered as daily workers, the salaries/daily wages must take into account the local market so as not to create tension. Remember to verify the daily wages used by other humanitarian stakeholders present in the zone in order to avoid tensions.

The important points to consider in choosing between local and relocated recruitment are:

LOCAL RECRUITMENT	DELOCALIZED RECRUITMENT
• Better acceptance by the local populations • Knowledge of local context and community • Risk of stronger pressure exercised on person • Risks of corruption or favoritism	• Level of training often higher • Less risk of pressure and corruption • Problem of acceptance by populations; • Higher costs related to relocation: transportation, lodging, per diem

It is not always easy to precisely evaluate the skills and qualities of candidates for certain positions. The use of tests[42] and simulations with concrete examples are recommended.

Team training is also a key time in preparing the interventions, even if some training must be continuous and done throughout implementation. Training must include general elements about the implementing organization, its values and principles, functioning, rules and safety rules, applicable to all personnel.

The entire team must also be trained on the program:

- Objectives, rationale and expected results (especially on the basis of logical framework of the intervention);
- The target population;
- Activities to implement place and timetable;
- Specific modalities and methods of implementation;
- Constitution of the team and the role of each;
- Main monitoring indicators.

Then, according to the position, it will be necessary to provide specific training on:

- Registration system and criteria;
- Community mobilization and communication and sensitization methods;
- Data collection, recording and analysis;
- Distribution preparation and implementation; distribution site management;
- Distributed food utilization, storage and preparation;
- Administrative, financial and logistical procedures on specific points related to the intervention;
- Distribution and stock report production;
- Monitoring and evaluation methods and indicators.

You can also refer to the various existing thematic manuals, as well as training materials already developed: consult with mission human resources and refer to *file 🗁- 34_Training*.

Remember that in terms of training, the form and learning methods proposed are very important: Adapt your message to your public, its experience and its capacities; give priority to participative methods and practical exercises rather than long presentations; and do not hesitate to repeat key messages in different forms.

1.2 BENEFICIARY REGISTRATION AND IDENTIFICATION CARD PRODUCTION

• Registration

Whatever the type of intervention and its methods, registration of the beneficiary population and creation of a beneficiary lists is an essential step for proper project functioning; it is essential for it to function well and to reduce tensions within the communities. The production of beneficiary lists is also key in the project accountability system towards donors, authorities and communities.

42 - See recruitment test examples in Toolbox [🗁- 33].

Figure 8: Beneficiary identification process

Definition and communicaton of targeting criteria

↓

Chosing the registration method, in agreement with the community

↓

Beneficiary registration:
- Lists creation
- Lists entry into electronic database

There are several objectives to registration:

- Precisely quantify the number of beneficiaries by distribution site and for the whole program;
- Obtain nominative lists of beneficiaries or heads of families which will be used during distribution to identify beneficiary households;
- Obtain a minimum of personal information to understand the identity and family situation and key beneficiary socioeconomic data (for example, family size and number of children, village of origin).

Registration is based on the targeting process detailed in *Chapter 2 – Section 3.5*. Before creating a list it is necessary to precisely determine the needed information, taking care to limit to key information strictly necessary to implement the intervention. The registration process and list creation is potentially long to implement, and thus it is important to limit the information to collect.

The minimum information for food assistance interventions is the following:

- Name of family head;
- Name of a relative in case family head cannot travel to the distribution site;
- Family size;
- Place/Village/Residence camp;
- Name of village head;
- Registration date.

In addition to the basic information, information related to the criteria defined for targeting must be collected. It is also important to verify obligations in terms of reporting, especially for donors financing the operation and who can require specific data about intervention beneficiaries (for instance age and sex of children under 5 years old in the households).

In the case of cash based transfers involving a financial partner (bank or money transfer agent) registration must also include the elements for proof of beneficiary identity, in certain cases the national identity card number, the bank account number (if accounts already exist) or even biometric elements (fingerprints or retinal scans) when the identification system requires it. Financial partners can be involved in the registration and identification process.

In the case of transfers by mobile phone, the telephone number must also be collected.

Effective registration which consists of establishing a list of intervention beneficiaries must be done before any distribution. Sometimes, however, this is not the case, due to the level of nutritional urgency or security constraints and access to the population. Nevertheless it must be done as soon as the situation permits.

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There are several methods of registration:

- Use of existing lists, for example from other organizations or supplied by the authorities;
- Registration by the population itself, often in cooperation with traditional chiefs;
- Registration by the organization teams or a partner.

In any case, a verification of the list by the organization will be necessary, either through surveys or a representative list sample.

Table 34: *Registration methods*

METHODS	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Use of existing lists	- List obtained rapidly; - No specific resources required for registration.	- Requires verification of the lists to ensure that the beneficiary selection criteria are applied; - Requires verifying impartiality of the source and evaluating risks of exclusion.
Registration by the population	- Mobilizes and enlists participation by the population in the intervention; - Relatively rapid; - No specific resources required for registration.	- Requires verification of lists to ensure that beneficiary selection criteria are applied; - Requires the time to fully explain criteria and ensure that they are well integrated; - Translation of registration lists into local language neede.
Registration by the organization or a partner	- In principle allows production of reliable lists, on the basis of selected criteria; - Possibility of noticing the beneficiaries living conditions and therefore the truthfulness of the criteria; - Limits the risk of exclusion of marginalized populations.	- Requires specific resources for registration; - Long to implement, especially if habitations are dispersed; - Risk of duplicate registration of the same people.

Even if, as we have seen above, the definition of selection criteria and the method of registration must be done in the most participative way possible, it may be necessary in some contexts not to communicate the registration dates in advance, to avoid population travel from other zones to the registration place, artificially inflating the lists. But then the risk is that of finding homes empty, inhabitants working and unable to complete the registration.

• Beneficiary database

The list must be entered into a computer database to facilitate preparation of transfers and complementary activities (calculation of amounts/compositions of ration per household/village/ distribution site; phone numbers in the case of electronic transfers, for example).

The database can be used to detect possible duplications during the field registration. It also serves in creating statistics on beneficiary population composition and monitoring. Finally it is the basis for distribution list drafting and printing.

It is important to remember that in some contexts, information collected during registration can be sensitive, even dangerous for the persons listed. In all cases, it is private information which must be used only by the organization for the intervention, be protected and not be shared: The source file must be protected with a password; do not make unnecessary copies of the database or lists; inform users precisely of their confidentiality obligation, rules of use and data storage. When the intervention is terminated, gather all databases and lists in one place and archive them safely; ask the advice of the administrative service on rules for archiving confidential mission documents.

These rules will also help limit the risk of fraud in the lists.

BOX 23 HOUSEHOLD DEFINITION

This notion, and its local acceptance, requires special attention, since often the unit used to receive a transfer is the household, and it is from this unit that are calculated the composition or the amount of the transfer; and it is on this basis that are calculated as the number of rations / transfers.

A precise definition needs to be established locally with communities to find out what is included in the notion of household locally, what is the composition of the family, and if there is a difference with the household.

"A household is social unit composed of individuals, with family or other social relations among themselves, eating from the same pot and sharing a common resource base (e.g. income sources, water sources)"

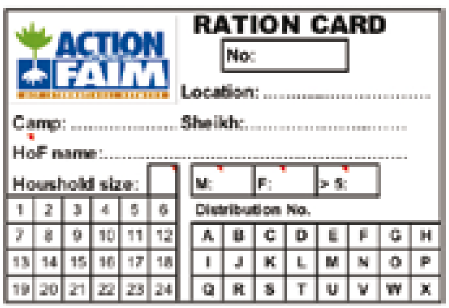
Source: UNHCR/ WFP Joint Assessment Mission (JAM) Guideline, 2008, second edition. Glossary

Examples of tools for preparing and editing registration lists can be found in *the Toolbox - 🗁 223_Registration.*

• Identification cards

Once beneficiary lists are finalized, identification cards can be prepared. These are not required, but strongly recommended, even if one can do without them in the case of a single transfer or electronic transfers.

Figure 9: Identification card



The card allows:

- Identification of project beneficiaries at all times during the intervention (distribution phases but also during the phases of verifying conditionality application and monitoring and evaluation);

- More rapid organization and data registration during physical distributions;
- Control of people who have already received their transfer (by a system of stamping or electronic proof in the case of use of "smart" cards);
- A form of guarantee for beneficiaries of their inclusion in the project.

At a minimum, an identification card must contain the following information:

- A unique identification number, the same as in the database/registration list;
- One or more elements of holder identification: the name of the family head or individual beneficiary, photograph, identity card number;
- Period of validity;
- A place of geographic attachment: distribution site or village/camp/area of habitation;
- A system of marking receipt of a transfer: box to tick or stamp; in the case of multiple transfers, the card must have as many boxes as the number of transfers to receive.

In some cases it may be also useful to provide:

- The name of the distribution site of attachment;
- The name of the village/camp/district;
- The composition of the family: number of individuals by age and sex;
- The name of a representative or other family member, if the registered family head cannot travel on the distribution day.

It is also important to have on the card, whether visibly or not, a system limiting fraudulent card duplication and falsification: printed in color and using specific paper, adding a stamp, a hologram (in the print paper or as a sticker) or a signature.

The card must also be easily identifiable for teams and distinguishable from other cards used by other programs or organizations, for example by including the organization logo and specific colors.

In addition it must, if possible, be covered in plastic, in order to limit its degradation, especially in the case of multiple transfers or interventions over several months.

BOX 24 TIPS FOR BENEFICIARY CARDS DESIGN

- Having different colors of card for each area may be useful.
- If other agencies have also distributed cards, do not use the same color/shape to avoid confusion.
- Laminate cards, to prevent changes being made and to keep the card in good condition.
- Include a logo on the card. (This aids rapid identification and also makes it harder to forge.) Don't forget the logo of the donor.
- If similar names are common, include other characteristics on the card as well (e.g. names and age or name and father's name).

- If several people can receive the cash or to plan for people who cannot come to get their cash, you can include two names (or a deputy name) on the card (this may also minimize instances of fraud).
- Photographs can be included, if feasible and culturally accepted. Printing digital photos is relatively simple and cheap, though the work involved in taking many photos may be high. In practice a photo may not be effective at preventing fraud, since it is hard to distinguish faces clearly enough. It does, though, act as a strong deterrent against impersonation.
- Make sure you use a serial number that is practical in your context. You may want to include a letter indicating the village or the camp sector, followed by the beneficiary number.

Source: ACF, 2008, Implementing cash-based interventions. A guideline for aid workers.

The preparation of the paper cards can be very long when the beneficiary population is large. Several simple tools for automatic preparation of cards from the beneficiary database are proposed in the *Toolbox* - 🗀*224_ Identification cards*.

The printing of these cards is a step to follow closely: if the printing is done by a printing shop, it is important to check for falsification risks during this stage: to the extent possible, the printing shop must not be nearby the place of intervention (printing in capital city for example); it is also necessary to plan to add a differentiating mark AFTER printing, by the organization.

Note that it is also possible to use “smart” cards which contain the necessary information in electronic form: cards with chips (smart cards), cards with magnetic strip (Swift cards). These cards are produced and supplied by a service provider and require specific equipment to read them, which represents a cost but can be more efficient and a real timesaver for large interventions involving several transfers and where the risks of fraud/falsification of paper cards are high. Beyond the time-saving and security of the beneficiary identification at the time of transfer, these systems also allow automatic registration of the transfer in the database, avoiding filling out distribution reports by hand.

Along the same lines, use of a barcode, imprinted on the paper card, is an intermediary system, not requiring an exterior service provider (barcodes can be generated using Excel or specific software). Automatic registration of the transfer in a database is possible. The system requires specific equipment to read it.

In all cases, an assessment of the availability of this type of technology in the intervention country and the associated costs will be interesting to perform with the support of the logistical service.

BOX 25 « SMART CARDS »

Smart cards are cards that can store and record data, including the identity of the recipient and the nature and amount of assistance to which it entitles the holder. Biometric data or PIN code can also be stored in the chip of the card to enable field identification.

Beneficiaries, who have been previously identified and registered, receive a smart card on which the financial partner uploads the defined amount. Recipients can then withdraw money directly or reload their card to an ATM or sometimes benefit from the passage of a mobile ATM.

To withdraw money, the family representative must insert the card into a terminal (Point of Sale) and be identified (biometric device or PIN code). Once identified, the person may withdraw part or all of the money available. The system automatically updates the account information via the chip.

Source: ACF, 2011, Mécanismes & Technologies de transferts monétaires. Fiche technique 2

Refer also to:

> CaLP, 2012, *Delivering cash through cards.A quick delivery guide for cash transfer programming in emergencies.*

> CaLP, 2014, *E-transfers in emergency: Implementation support guidelines.*

Delivery of the cards to the beneficiaries can be done:

- On the day of the first distribution: while it can help saving time for the teams and the beneficiaries, it is a process difficult to handle because one must manage the distribution flow of both the cards and the transfer;
- Before the distribution: a special day can be organized to deliver the cards individually to the beneficiaries;
- Via community/village heads;
- Via the financial partner in charge of the transfer.

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1.3 SPECIFIC PREPARATORY STEPS FOR VOUCHER BASED INTERVENTIONS[43]

• Voucher design

The most common form of vouchers currently used is paper voucher, in comparison to electronic forms using a mobile phone or a "smart" card.

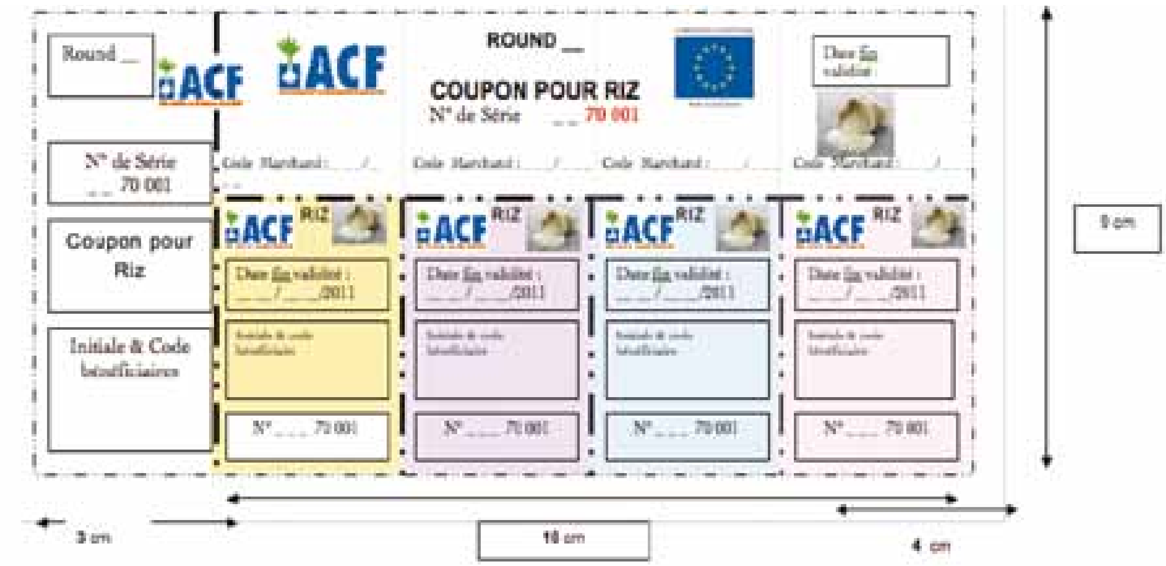
Paper vouchers, like an identification card, take time to design, prepare and distribute, depending on the number of beneficiaries, transfers and vouchers distributed per cycle.

The type of voucher distributed must not be too complicated (so that its use is easily understood), while at the same time it must not be easy to falsify:

- It must be translated into the local language;
- It must have a unique serial number, in order to ensure monitoring and reconciliation, and to limit the risks of falsification.

43 - From ACF, 2008, Implementing cash-based interventions. A guideline for aid workers. Section 3.2.2. For more details about vouchers intervention preparation, please refer to this guideline.

***Figure 10:** Example of food voucher*



- Each voucher must be in three parts, each marked with the unique serial number of the voucher:
    - The first part is kept by the organization during voucher distribution; the beneficiary signature or fingerprint is affixed during distribution;
    - The second part will be given to the retailer by the beneficiary during the exchange of the voucher for commodities; this part of the voucher will then permit reimbursement from the organization;
    - The last part is kept by the beneficiary as proof of participation and to facilitate post-distribution monitoring.
- The type of goods or services to which the voucher gives access, in a precise and explicit manner;
- As with beneficiary cards one must use different colors and the organization's logo to facilitate identification and reduce falsified vouchers; colors or images can also be useful in distinguishing various vouchers types (for example according to the value of the voucher or the types of commodities allowed) to facilitate their exchange and limit risks of error;
- For illiterate people, symbols can be used to help them identify the value of each voucher. In some countries, there may be local practices which associate certain symbols with commercial value. In the case of commodity vouchers, a photo of the item as well as a representation of the quantity would also be useful.

According to the total transfer amount, it may be useful to divide it into several vouchers with a limited value, to facilitate exchange with several shopkeepers, or spread out the exchanges over time, according to needs. This system offers more flexibility to beneficiaries, but requires more preparatory work and a larger number of vouchers to print.

BOX 26 TIPS FOR PAPER VOUCHERS DESIGN

- **Prevent forging and cheating:**
  - The voucher serial number is the tracking system (NEVER use the same number, even if vouchers are distributed in different areas).
  - Use different colors, e.g. for different payment round, payment areas or values.
  - You can use a voucher stub for extra control.
- **Ease of use:**
  - The voucher must be translated.
  - Locally used signs or drawing should be included, and different values must be easily recognized.
  - The validity of the voucher should be clearly stamped on the vouchers.
- **Distributing several vouchers of different values:**
  - Gives more flexibility for purchasers…
  - but brings more work and costs for the agency.
- **Printing the voucher:**
  - Should be done in good time for payment.
  - Should be done by a professional and reputable printing company outside the area.

Source: ACF, 2008, Implementing cash based interventions. A guideline for aid workers.

Use of barcodes, printed on the vouchers, if the shopkeepers have an adequate reading device, is also an interesting possibility, ensuring more security and ease of processing later: reimbursement of shopkeepers and reconciliation of the data related to the transfer.

Finally, the step of printing the vouchers is key, as with the identification cards, because one must print a large number of vouchers, while limiting the risks of falsification.

BOX 27 USE OF HOLOGRAMS IN HAITI

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Following the Port-au-Prince earthquake, the Haitian capital, in 2010, ACF implemented a large food vouchers project over several months.

Risk of counterfeit vouchers was identified as high. At first, it was decided to print the vouchers outside the country, which meant logistical constraints and considerable time for supply. Nevertheless, cases of fraudulent vouchers were observed.

In the project's second phase, it was decided to use local printing, but to add a small hologram sticker to each voucher at the last minute, purchased in Europe and theoretically impossible to falsify. Vouchers with holograms were clearly identifiable by participating shopkeepers, and no voucher without this hologram could be accepted.

However, the operation of affixing the holograms to each voucher is a time-consuming operation and it is crucial to keep the holograms stock in a safe place.

• Merchants selection and contracting

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A voucher-based food assistance intervention implies participation of merchants with whom the vouchers can be exchanged for specified items, and contracting with them.

A number of merchants, ready to participate and to comply with the rules set by the project, must be selected.

For legal reasons, it may be necessary to contract only with merchants having the required commercial licenses, paying taxes and fulfilling any other required local condition. When a wide range of products can be purchased by the vouchers (for example any food product) it may be simpler, from an administrative point of view, to limit contracts to merchants offering a wide product choice. The organization can also choose to exclude any merchant who does not meet other necessary conditions, such as hygiene, quality of products and storage area cleanliness.

Note that it may also be necessary to take some time to explain merchants the functioning of voucher system to arouse their interest: some may be reticent to get involved with a little-known system.

BOX 28 VOUCHER – INVOLVING MERCHANTS

Selecting merchants may not be an easy task for the following reasons:

- You may want to include small-scale traders but they do not have the financial/storage capacity.
- Small-scale traders may not even apply because they believe they are too small to qualify.
- Traders may be wary of the voucher process.
- Traders may not see the advantages of the programme for them.
- Some of the selected traders may not be trusted by the voucher-holders.

The following suggestions may help answer some of these issues:

- Try to give small-denomination voucher so that even small-scale traders can be included.
- Set-up regular repayment times for the vouchers (so that traders do not have to wait for too long before getting cash back).
- Make sure that the call for tenders is well broadcasted and understood and reaches ‘all’ traders (everybody can apply).
- Explain the voucher process extensively.
- If security allows, give the approximate number of vouchers which will be distributed (so that traders can evaluate their potential benefit).
- Try to involve the community (and the traders) in the selection process (for greater acceptance and social control).
- The shops should be located at a reasonable distance from the community settlements/ the households.

The commercial advantages of being registered in the voucher program for a merchant may be considerable, especially when the number of commercial transactions with vouchers is expected to be relatively high. Those who participate will benefit, but those who are not may lose a non-negligible share of business. Therefore the selection process of only some merchants can be a source of corruption. It is important to include both small and large traders to the extent possible not to distort the market. The objective is that all merchants taken together can meet the demand.

Because beneficiaries may receive several vouchers of small value, they can then make their purchases as they usually do in different shops for different products. There is therefore no reason to limit participation to shops offering a wider choice only. Nevertheless, if you need to closely monitor vouchers (for example because of a known risk of misuse), limiting the number of merchants can help.

It is important, especially for small merchant with little cash flow, that voucher redemption is done in a timely fashion. From an administrative point of view it is perhaps not possible to organize redemption every day for all merchants, but there is no reason to wait for all vouchers to have been used.

Merchants may request a commission for accepting vouchers. In principle since participating to a voucher scheme is in their own commercial interest and does not create additional costs, such a request is hardly justified. It is however important to understand constraints and possible extra costs for merchants before taking a decision.

Once participating merchants have been selected, a contract must be signed with each and a copy kept by each party. The contract between the organization and the merchant must include the following elements:

- **Redemption details** (payment conditions and due dates).
- **Commission the organization** will pay, if applicable.
- **Each party's tasks/responsibilities** (supply, storage, distribution, reimbursement, verification of voucher validity).
- **Sanctions** if contract terms are not complied with or if there is dishonesty.
- For commodity vouchers, it is necessary to **agree on the selling prices of the selected commodity,** even though some adjustments may be renegotiated during the intervention, in the case of local market prices evolution.
- **Minimum quality of commodities** to be sold to vouchers holders.

1.4 DISTRIBUTION SITE DESIGN AND PREPARATION

Whether it is a distribution of food, vouchers or cash, distribution site organization requires meticulous preparation to define the number of sites, select adequate locations, distribution site design for efficient and secure distribution, as well as resources and teams to mobilize. These elements are defined in light of the type of distribution *(food, nonfood items, vouchers)*, modalities (prepackaging, grouping, scooping, canteens), the volume of food to distribute and the number of beneficiaries, as well as elements related to security.

• Defining the number of distribution sites

According to context and geographic dispersion of the beneficiaries, it is often necessary to put in place several distribution sites. Multiplying the number of sites makes it easier to assist a dispersed population. It also avoids concentrations of people, often a factor of confusion, or even insecurity, but generally requires more human and logistics resources and can reduce our supervisory capacity.

***Table 35:** Number of distribution sites: advantages and disadvantages*

METHODS	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Limited number of distribution sites	- Fewer personnel necessary - More presence and supervision - Less infrastructure necessary (buildings, roads, distribution structures) - Less transportation - Reduced implementation costs	- Longer distance for beneficiaries to collect rations - Reduced access for the people with low mobility - Strong concentration of people, from different and possibly rival communities and related risks
Higher number of distribution sites	- Less risk related to crowd control and conflicts between communities - Better access for the population, in particular the most vulnerable - Distribution points easier to manage - Easier information and contact with the population	- Need for qualified teams (supervision); or more time to cover all the sites - More complex management and monitoring of the program - Need for more transportation and storage infrastructure on site

In a context of dispersed habitations with a small number of beneficiaries per village, but accessible by road, a mobile distribution point should be considered, consisting simply of having a vehicle circulating in each selected village. For small-sized villages, a reduced supervision team accompanying the vehicle is enough to monitor distribution.

In a camp for displaced persons or refugees, the site should not be at a distance more than 5 km from the area of habitation.

• Choosing the location of distribution sites

Accessibility

- **Access for commodities:** the distribution point must be accessible by road or boat. Vehicles must be able to circulate and unload freely, regardless of the weather. In case of extreme emergency, use of aviation resources (helicopters, airplanes) may be considered, but these are extremely expensive and/or not readily available.
- **Access by the beneficiaries to the site:** the distribution point must be accessible to beneficiaries. For example, passing through checkpoints, insecurity on the road, conflictual situation between population leaving in the surrounding of the distribution sites and other beneficiaries can be dissuasive. Discriminatory policies make this phenomenon likelier.
- **Distance:** Physical inabilities can be a limiting factor when the distance to travel by the

beneficiaries is too important. In addition, one must remember that the time beneficiaries take to come to the site, wait and receive their food keeps them from other activities, including productive one, during this time.

Accessibility and the distance to travel can dissuade beneficiaries from coming for assistance. This can also result in taxation at checkpoints, or the resale of commodities too heavy to carry over long distances, sometimes to finance the transportation back home.

Capacity

- The distribution point must be able to contain the commodities to be distributed (including sometimes storage for several days, and even quasi-permanently in the case of canteens), the distribution circuit (see below) and the beneficiaries themselves. In terms of space, one must assume that the number of persons present at the distribution point will probably be higher than the number of beneficiaries planned for.

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- The ideal distribution point must offer the beneficiaries access to drinking water and sanitary facilities. This condition is required for the installation of the canteen.
- Protection against the sun (shade) and/or bad weather is essential for both the beneficiaries and the personnel. A drainage system must be dug to evacuate rainwater, if necessary.

Security

- The site must allow bringing together and channeling many people, requiring the installation of barriers or ropes in order to sufficiently mark out the different work areas (waiting, verification, distribution circuit, exits, sanitary facilities, etc.).
- The site must be sufficiently far away from concentrations of people, such as markets, stadiums, religious sites, etc.
- The site must be sufficiently far away from unstable areas (borders, areas of open conflict) to minimize the risk of looting.

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• Distribution site circuit (except canteens)

Waiting area

It is necessary to establish a first waiting area outside the distribution site. The list of beneficiaries, as well as any information thought useful for proper implementation (for example, explanation of criteria used and information about the ration/voucher distributed) will be posted there to inform the public.

After a first filtering of people with a valid identification card, a second waiting area will allow grouping together beneficiaries only. This place must be sufficiently large and clear. It is also necessary to be vigilant about factors of this area (barriers, old low walls, stakes, etc.) which can be dangerous during crowd movements or riots.

One must not forget that beneficiaries are often people who have suffered a severe trauma or are in a highly unstable situation. Assistance is therefore a question of survival for these persons and their family. Impatience, worry about whether they are going to receive this aid (is there enough for everyone?) can make them nervous and stressed. One or more persons must always be on the site to dialogue with the population, beneficiaries and their representatives to transmit information or instructions on the sequences of the distribution process. This information, transmitted also through posting or loudspeaker, must be clear and understandable, both on the distribution process and entitlements.

In addition, the waiting time, while the targeted population is brought together, is also a good opportunity to organize sensitization sessions.

The waiting areas must be shaded and/or protected from bad weather. To the extent possible, it is important to provide water points.

Calling-in point

This is a place to call the beneficiaries to enter the distribution circuit. Depending on the distribution system, different solutions are applicable for this operation. In any case, good communication is necessary between the team at the calling-in point and the distribution point to regulate flow and call a number of people consistent with the capacity to serve them (flow optimization).

Sometimes it is useful to break down the call in several steps. For example, one can have a first call and a first grouping of beneficiaries for a predetermined category (for example the same origin, current residence or family size, especially in the case of grouping) and then, once this filtering has been done, proceed to the calling of names from the lists established for this category.

Identity/eligibility verification

Once called, the identity must be verified of the people who show up and/or ensure that they are on the distribution list, using predefined "proofs" of registration (identification cards or identity documents). It is at the same place that proof of receipt of aid by the beneficiary is established, via the beneficiary's signature on a register (with a fingerprint for persons unable to write), marking (stamping, punching) on the identification card. The signature is necessary in order to establish that the aid was actually received/handed over.

The way in which the lists have been drawn up influences the rapidity and efficiency of the phase: classification by place of origin, alphabetical order, family size, beneficiary numbering, etc. The beneficiaries may be requested to read the number corresponding to their name on the list posted outside to find them more easily on the list when they present themselves at the verification office. At this moment registration validity can be checked.

The presence of the village head or committee members can facilitate identity verification.

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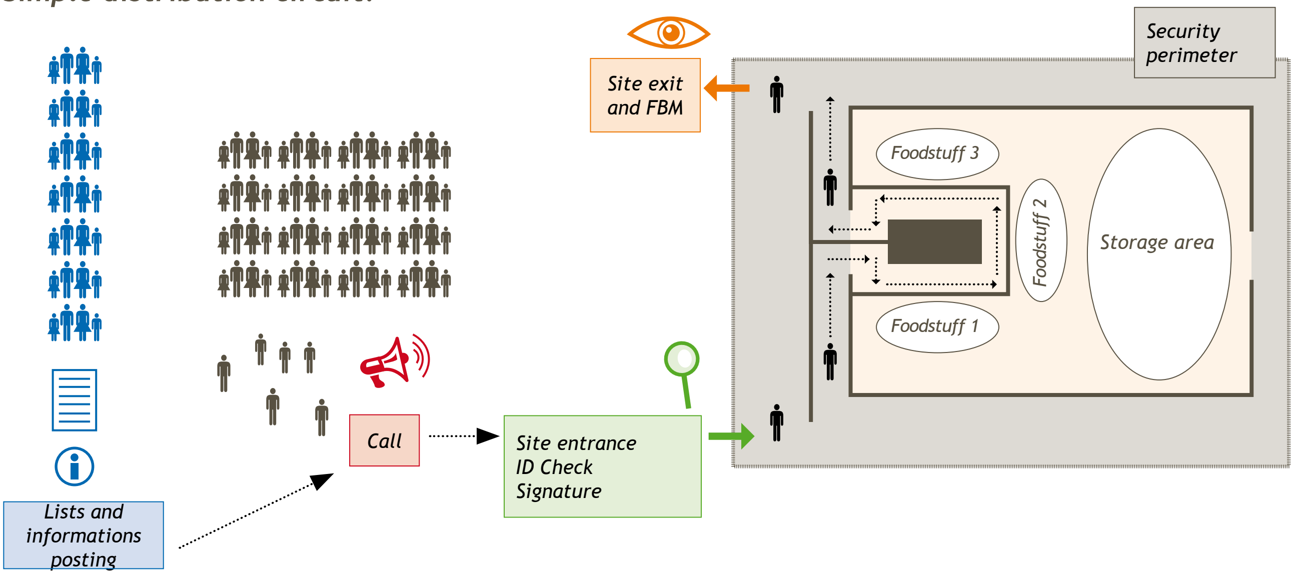
Distribution area

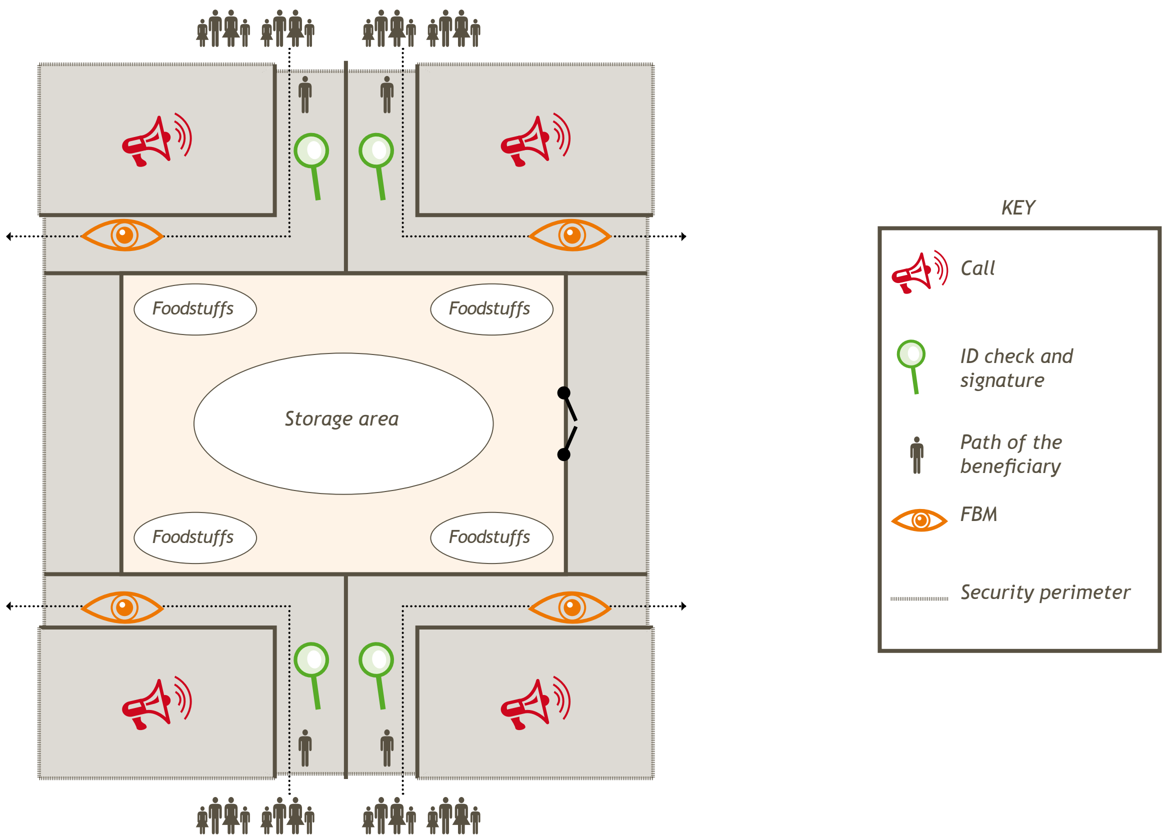
The distribution area itself can be based on single or multiple circuits *(see Figures 11 and 12 below)*.

Figure 11: *Distribution circuits*

Simple distribution circuit:



Multiple distribution circuit:



The multiple circuits shown here comprise four single circuits. They allow serving more people on the same site and are therefore valid when one wishes to distribute rapidly and the beneficiary population is large. They require good organization in dividing up beneficiary lists between different entry points and information given to the beneficiaries on the entry point where they must present themselves.

Starting with these basic plans, effective organization and distribution area size will vary depending on the type and methods of distribution *(prepackaging, grouping, scooping)*:

- **Vouchers:** requires little space, the flow can be more or less rapid depending on the number of vouchers to distribute.
- **Pre-packaging:** rapid distribution system, with an almost constant flow of beneficiaries in the area.
- **Scooping:** requires a specific space to perform the scooping, as well as a storage area for food in initial packaging; the flow will be less rapid.
- **Grouping:** requires a large space for piles, including sufficient space between each other's to allow access.

Exit area

The exit must be wider than the entry and a clearance area, which must remain empty, should be set up to prevent blockages which could slow distribution flow.
Checks are made before exiting to verify that received quantities are adequate.

• Distribution site circuit for canteens

The organization of canteen sites is quite different from other types of distribution.

Kitchen

By definition, the canteen must have a kitchen, where cooked rations are prepared. Meal preparation organization must be rigorous to ensure fluid distribution, without the plates being prepared too early or the meals being served cold. The preparation method must be clear and simple, in order to guarantee the similar served rations. It is recommended to determine a dose for each type of food and water per cooking pot for a fixed number of rations.

Portable stoves and fuel reserves are required.

When there are many sites with little distance between each (in an urban context for example), one can consider establishing a central kitchen for preparing meals for all the sites. This centralization can facilitate site management and reduce operational costs, but requires specific transportation resources.

Distribution area

Generally situated directly next to the kitchen, to avoid handling of cooking pots.

The distribution is made in measured rations (scooping) and must take into account the amount of water added during preparation to comply with the composition and quantities of each food initially determined. To allow a precise monitoring, each cooking pot must contain a fixed number of rations.

Refectory - consumption area

Ideally the consumption area allows beneficiaries to consume the distributed meals on site. This guarantees the results in terms of prevention of malnutrition of targeted populations, by minimizing the risk of sharing of the ration within the household. Due to lack of space, it is often necessary to organize several distribution services during the day.

In comparison with the classic distribution site, the team mobilized to manage a canteen is larger (between 15 and 30 people, according to the size of the site and putting in place a refectory) and includes positions of organizers, cooks and hygienists. Due to the daily movements of food, the post of stock keeper is crucially important for the quantitative monitoring of food distributed.

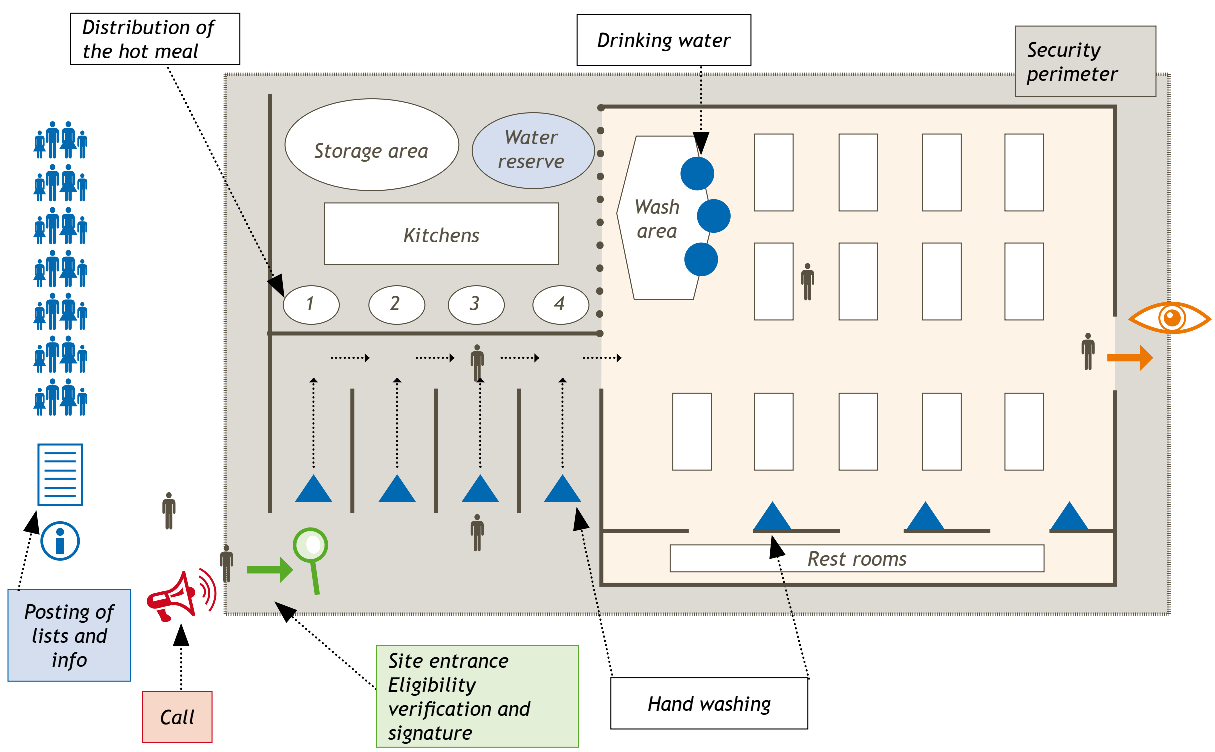
Storage area

A protected, closed and clean space for storage is necessary: food is stored on-site continuously.

Hygiene and hand-washing places

The canteen must provide exemplary hygienic conditions. Personnel are specifically dedicated to the inherent activities in order to ensure cleanliness of the site. Dishes and kitchen equipment is cleaned and water point with soap are installed for beneficiaries' hand-washing.

***Figure 12:** Example of organization of a canteen*



CHECK LIST

- Water points in the waiting area and canteens;
- Hand-washing area and equipment;
- Size and capacity of site adapted to the number of people and amount of commodities;
- Site access for beneficiaries, personnel and commodities;
- People and goods safety.

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1.5 ELECTRONIC TRANSFER SYSTEM DEFINITION AND PREPARATION

Money or vouchers transfers can be carried out in a dematerialized way thanks to the development of new technologies; one speaks then about electronic transfers. Electronic transfers are a type of cash transfers which lean on digital payment systems. These transfers can be made through 3 main mechanisms:

- Cards (with magnetic strip or chip)
- Mobile phones
- Electronic vouchers

In the 3 cases, they require a partnership with a specialized service provider and the use of data transfers network (mobile telephony network or internet) functional in the intervention area.

The electronic transfer's service providers can be:

- an operator of mobile network
- a bank or another type of financial institution
- an authorized third party (for instance a payment company such as Visa or Master Card) with or without banking partnership

The preparation of this kind of transfer, and the choice of the most suitable mechanism, requires a preliminary analysis of the existing service providers and mechanisms in the country (the intervention area), a negotiation process and signing a contract agreement. It is considered a classic service purchase procurement that must follow ACF purchase procedure. Close work with the logistic team is required for this stage[44]. In all cases, the implementation of these dematerialized transfer mechanisms, still new, requires to dedicate a sufficient preparation time, that usually lack in the context of an emergency response. The first steps in this preparation phase should be carried out insofar as possible prior to potential future emergencies, within the framework of the Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan. *Table 36* below describes the standard planning process for the set-up of electronic transfers and provides an estimation of the required time to complete each step:

44 - See also CaLP, 2014, E-transfers in emergencies: implementation support guidelines. Section B. Partnership with service provider.

Table 36: Electronic transfers planning process

STAGES	ESTIMATED TIME
1. Assess the commercial landscape of services and providers	2 weeks
2. Understand the regulatory context surrounding the e-transfer options under consideration	
3. Negotiate and sign a service contract with the chosen service provider (including tendering process and contract vetting by aid agency legal teams)	3-6 weeks
4. Ensure compliance of the e-transfer service with internal and donor requirements	1 day
5. Open an account at the partner bank of the service provider - optional	3 working days
6. Order e-transfer devices (cards/SIMs/mobile vouchers, e-voucher batches, etc.)	1 week or more
7. Register beneficiaries with associated e-transfer devices and train them on how to use the e-transfer device (In the case of a voucher programme, register and train merchants)	Depends on the size of the beneficiary (and merchant) population
8. Set up a disbursement account from which e-transfers to beneficiaries will be made - optional	1 week
9. Receive training on using the online interface to access the disbursement account	2 days
10. Populate beneficiary data and make a transfer	1 day
TOTAL	> 2.5 months

Source: CaLP, 2014, E-transfers in emergencies: implementation support guidelines.

The main criteria to take into account to choose the mechanism and the service provider are the following:

- Adequate connectivity to support e-transfer transactions
- Acceptable transaction limits on the e-transfer device (number and value of the transactions that can be carried a day/a month suited to the needs of the targeted beneficiaries)
- Sufficient presence of cash collection/transaction points
- Acceptable maximum travel distance to cash collection/transaction points
- Adequate levels of liquidity (cash availability at agent)
- Technical support (technical issues, PIN number reset, use of the disbursement interface,
- Error correction, etc.)
- Reporting processes that meet agency and donor requirements
- Willingness to sign aid agency's code of conduct including for data protection
- Acceptable risk management procedures (particularly regarding privacy and security)

The CaLP document (2014), *E-transfers in emergencies: implementation support guidelines, Section E-3* provides a complete check list to help selecting electronic transfer mechanism and service provider.

BOX 29 ELECTRONIC VOUCHERS IN THE PHILIPPINES

In response to rapid-onset floods of May 2011, Action Contre la Faim (ACF) implemented a cash-based intervention in Cotabato City, in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao in the Philippines. ACF established a voucher programme with local supermarkets to provide flood-affected residents with essential food and non-food items, and piloted the first humanitarian use of magnetic stripe cards in the Philippines.

Through a partnership with CaLP, Visa Inc. helped ACF establish an arrangement with the Philippines Veterans Bank (PVB) to use magnetic stripe cards as cash vouchers. The commodity and point of sale restrictions on the cards reduced both security threats and the potential for diversion of funds.

Magnetic stripe cards had the advantage of allowing beneficiaries to shop multiple times. They simplified the set-up process because they did not require a special design and, distribution only had to occur once as the cards were reloaded electronically. They skirted the security issues in the area and eliminated the potential for misuse of funds for items not included in the intervention because the cards were programmed to only be valid at selected supermarkets.

On the negative side, the cards cost more than paper vouchers. They prevented unspent funds from being reallocated due to usage limits. Finally, they complicated implementation because of the lack of community awareness about payment cards. A key lesson learned was that the use of new technology needs to be accompanied by training and support to beneficiaries.

Source: ACF, 2012, Philippines, New cash transfer technologies to attend to basic emergency needs. Case study.

1.6 FOOD SAFETY QUALITY ASSURANCE AND CONTROL

The question of food safety of distributed food is crucial in implementing food assistance operations. The organization in charge is liable for the sometimes high health risks in consuming unfit food.

That means that quality control must be performed at each step of the supply chain and project implementation, up to the final user, in order to guarantee food safety, compliance with the regulations in force and the adequacy of the items for the program's needs. Quality control is a continuous, standard and permanent process, as long as the articles considered are under the responsibility of ACF, i.e. until the distribution/delivery to the beneficiaries.

The notion of quality includes evaluation of needs, definition of technical specifications, selection of suppliers, verification of products ordered, monitoring of deliveries and transportation, guarantees for optimal practices in storage, transformation, repackaging, preparation and, finally, distribution/delivery to the beneficiaries.

The process is continuous in the sense that watchfulness must be permanent, especially since some products may be unstable and rapidly alter over time, but it is particularly important and obligatory at each stage of the supply chain implying a "change" which can influence the quality of the products: travel, transformation, repackaging, preparation.

BOX 30 MYCOTOXINS

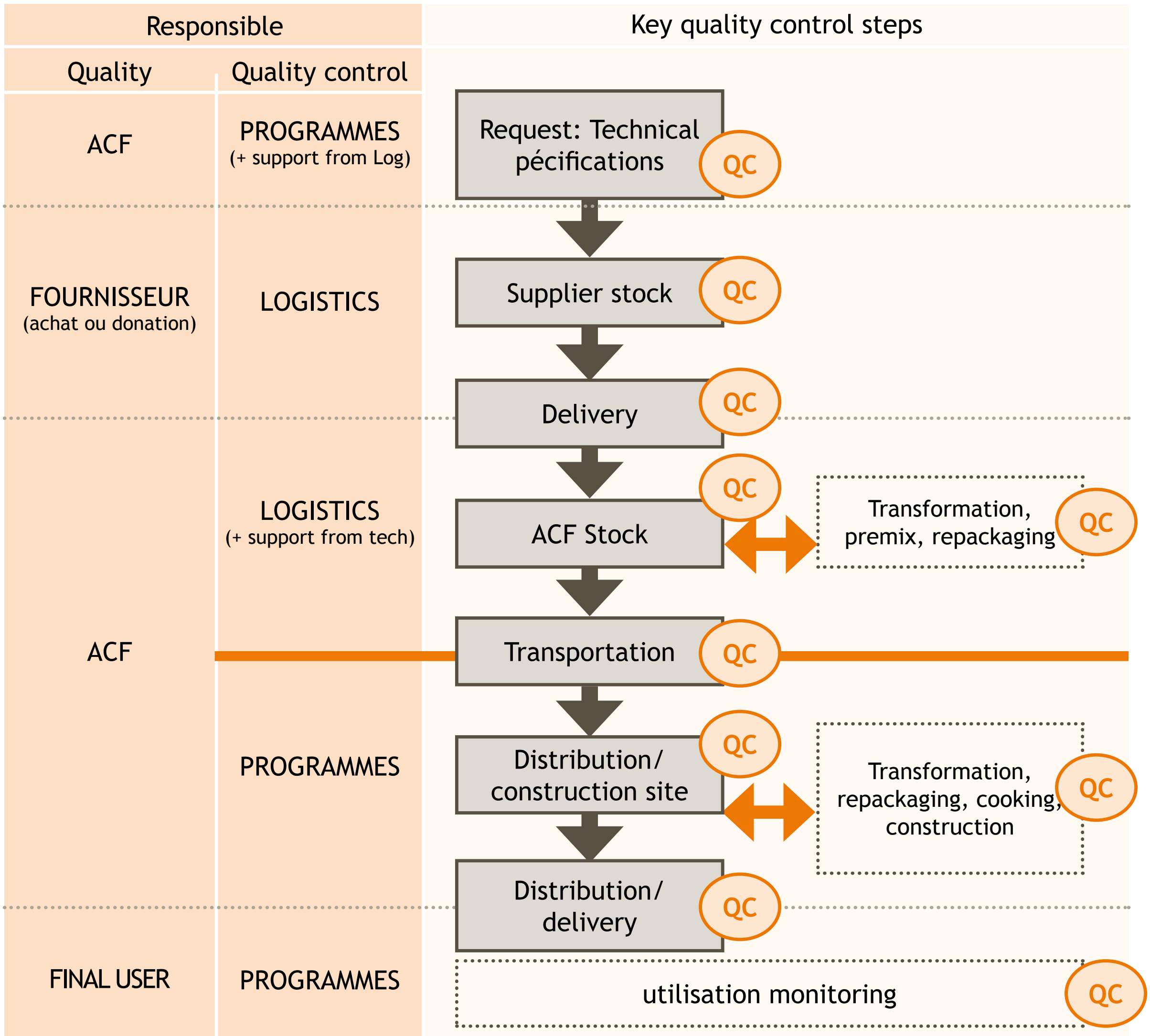
Among fungi, there is a mycotoxin proliferating rapidly in warm, moist environments: aflatoxin is harmful to the health of both humans and animals and has a high carcinogenicity.

It grows mainly in groundnuts, maize, wheat, almonds, hazelnuts, walnuts, coffee, cassava, soybeans…

Moisture is the most fertile ground for the growth of fungi and storage conditions of foodstuffs are very important to prevent development of aflatoxin.

ACF has a specific procedure and handbook[45] on the subject which details the steps of the quality control process as described in *figure 13* below. Refer to these documents in the ACF KitLog for further information.

***Figure 13:** Responsibility and key steps in quality control*



Source: ACF, 2014, Quality control procedure (in ACF KitLog).

45 - ACF, 2014, Quality control procedure; ACF, 2014, Quality control manual (in ACF KitLog).

Quality assurance begins with the definition of precise specifications for the food to be distributed. It then continues at each critical stage of the supply and distribution chain, with organoleptic tests (visual and tactile aspects, taste and odor) and laboratory analyses. All of the food and nonfood items must be subject to quality control, including those from donations (WFP and others).

Quality control activities take time and are potentially costly due to the required laboratory analyses; therefore they must be planned during project design, to take account of the time to obtain results of analyses in developing the intervention timetable.

1.7 LOGISTICS PREPARATORY STEPS

The main logistics preparatory steps are the following:

- Order for necessary material and equipment (items to distribute, cards and vouchers, as well as any equipment needed for implementation)
- Identification and organization of transportation and storage modes
- Quality control at the different stages of the supply chain
- Receipt and verification of identification cards (and vouchers if necessary)
- Identification and preparation of the distribution sites
- Repackaging and/or *premix* according to the distribution modality chosen

Most of the steps have been detailed above in the sections detailing intervention design stage. We will detail here two aspects not covered above and which require attention and a specific investment ahead of the transfer itself.

• Repackaging, in the case of a food pre-packaging system

Repackaging of food in the form of individual or family rations is generally done nearby the storage warehouse. It requires a large workspace and team. The time needed to repackage rations must be taken into account and correctly estimated during intervention planning.

Repackaging, put in place by the logistical department, requires monitoring of the entry and exit of stock and a strict control of the content of new rations made up, since there is a high risk of error due to large volumes. A daily reconciliation between the quantities brought out of the stock in its original packaging, and those in repackaged form, is required in order to identify any sources of loss.

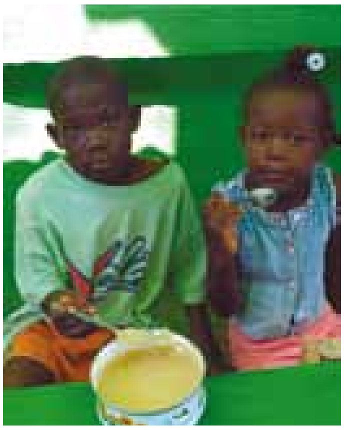
The hygiene of the workers and the packaging area require a monitoring of strict rules, because they involve food handling.

Finally, the new packaging must clearly identify the type of packaged foods, their weights and the date of repackaging in order to ensure during distributions that the oldest bags are distributed first *("first IN, first OUT")*.

Quality control is very important at this stage, and if the repackaging is done by the logistical teams, it is important that the project teams perform regular additional inspections of the repackaging process.

• Preparation of premix, in the case of a supplementary feeding program

Premix is a mixture of food, most often made up of grain flours, oil and sugar, used in the preparation of gruels intended for children in blanket supplementary feeding programs. The food is most often "pre-mixed" before distribution in order to ensure that the final constitution of the gruel complies with the nutritional specifications and above all prevents part of the food being used for other purposes (especially preparation of family meals, use of the sugar for tea). In addition, as concerns individual rations, distributing a single item (the mixture) instead of several (the different foods separately) simplifies and greatly accelerates the distribution process.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The preparation of the *premix* however requires a lot of preparation prior to the distribution. The rules set out above for repackaging are valid here, along with several additional points.

- The proportions of each food constituting the premix must be strictly complied with in order to respond to nutritional specifications; the use of a scoop or measuring cup is advisable to prepare the mixture in adequate proportions.
- Since *premix* is intended for a vulnerable population considered at risk of undernutrition, the question of strict compliance with hygiene rules in the preparation of premix is crucial. The teams in charge must be strictly sensitized and trained; the equipment and work area must be cleaned daily
- The *premix* has a much shorter duration of conservation compared to non-mixed foods (2 weeks maximum): it must therefore be distributed and consumed within a short period after preparation. This requires putting in place a continuous flow between preparation and distribution and does not allow the preparation of premix in advance, with the risk that a delay in preparation will directly impact the following distributions. It is therefore necessary that the place to prepare the premix is close by to the distribution sites.

TOOL BOX / MORE INFORMATION

- ➔ ACF, 2011, *Mécanismes & Technologies de transferts monétaires. Fiches techniques.* [🗀 - 254]
- ➔ ACF, 2008, *Implementing cash-based interventions. A guideline for aid workers.* [🗀 - 64]
- ➔ ACF, 2012, *Log-Admin guideline for cash-based interventions.* [🗀 - 253]
- ➔ ACF, 2012, *Philippines, New cash transfer technologies to attend to basic emergency needs. Case study.* [🗀 - 644]
- ➔ ACF, 2014, *Quality control procedure. ACF Kitlog*
- ➔ ACF, 2014, *Quality control manual. ACF Kitlog*
- ➔ CaLP, 2012, *Delivering cash through cards. A quick delivery guide for cash transfer programming in emergencies.* [🗀 - 254]
- ➔ CaLP, 2014, *E-transfers in emergencies: implementation support guidelines* [🗀 - 254]
- ➔ Training [🗀 - 34]
- ➔ *Identification and targeting* [🗀 - 22]

2. DISTRIBUTIONS IMPLEMENTATION

This section underlines several general points to keep in mind during the distribution stage itself. They should be adapted to the type of transfer being implemented, as well as the context, the size and number of sites.

KEY QUESTIONS

- ➔ How to manage the distribution point? What is the basic equipment needed?
- ➔ How to ensure on site communication?
- ➔ How to ensure on site security?
- ➔ How to ensure on site distribution monitoring?
- ➔ What are the core elements of on-site quality control?
- ➔ How to ensure post-distribution data consolidation and beneficiary lists update?

2.1 DISTRIBUTION SITE MANAGEMENT

• Distribution material and equipment

- Beneficiary list for the distribution site: prepared from the database, it includes basic information such as the name of the beneficiaries, the name of the village, the identification number and a space for signature. This list is called the “presence list” because it permits verification and checking off the registered beneficiaries coming to collect their transfer;
- Tally sheets;
- Punches for the distribution cards;
- Tables, chairs, stationery items (pens, highlighters, staplers, plastic covers, stamps, ink, etc.);
- Loudspeaker;
- Scooping equipment and plastic sheets;
- Scales (10, 25 and/or 100 kg according to the weight of the items to distribute);
- Empty bags, empty containers;
- Equipment for marking out the site;
- Security equipment: communications means, emergency first aid kit, etc.

• Time management on site

The times for the beginning and end of distribution are indicated and communicated beforehand to the beneficiaries. This timing must take into account the transportation time for the teams and the beneficiaries to the distribution site, waiting time, local customs, the season of intervention (heat waves, risks of rain at the end of the day, etc.).

If necessary, it may be appropriate to set different distribution times for different groups of beneficiaries (e.g. according to their village of origin), in order to limit waiting at the site and having to manage a too large crowd.

In any case, it is important to begin the distribution at the time set, in order to limit tension and to plan to terminate relatively early in the day to allow the beneficiaries to return home and the teams to clean up the site before returning. Any delay or slowdown in the distribution must be communicated and explained to the community representatives or members of the committees.

To limit delays on the day of distribution, prepare and verify equipment the day before, verify that each member of the team is clear on his role and briefly remind the distribution process.

To the extent possible, try to organize the order of distributions to limit waiting time for pregnant women, handicapped or chronically ill people and the elderly. If the distribution takes place over several days, one day of distribution can be reserved for them. Also give priority in the order of distribution to the persons and households from villages the most far away from the distribution site.

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• Complaints and requests for information

Often people who are not registered present themselves on the day of distribution, requesting information or why they are not included. If these requests can be taken into account and deserve an answer, the moment of distribution and the distribution site are not the most appropriate for individual responses. It is important to plan a system to handle these requests, if necessary with a staff member (or member of the community) in charge of collecting them and informing them of the procedure to follow. It will especially be possible to plan time at the end of the distribution to handle these requests, or if necessary to make an appointment for another day.

Here again communication and community mobilization before the distributions is key and should limit this type of questions on the day of distribution.

2.2 CROWD MANAGEMENT

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On the distribution site, around the stock or a truck, crowds gather quickly, and one can be confronted with crowd movements (impatience, fatigue, insecurity, etc.) which are risk factors for the teams and the beneficiaries themselves. Some populations, depending on the context, can suffer from stress or trauma and react rapidly and follow a movement initiated by a small group. In any case, the day of distribution is a stress factor for all the participants - the teams and beneficiaries.

The creation of the distribution committee and the role of the heads of the community should be brought out to help the ACF teams maintain calm at the site. A strict preparation of the distribution and a well-organized site are also important factors for preventing stress and crowd movements, as well as punctuality and limited waiting time.

To limit the risks, it is recommended more specifically:

- not to be too ambitious in the number of beneficiaries covered during a day of distribution and to provide for large margins in planning (opening time and closing time);
- to communicate the distribution times precisely, if necessary read out according to the villages of origin, and comply with them;
- to take particular care in the organization and marking out of the site: the space must be sufficiently large within and around the distribution site and a buffer zone should be set up between the site and the waiting area;
- to plan on enough food for the expected number of beneficiaries (as well as a margin of +5%);
- to keep the main food stock away from the distribution area;
- to involve the distribution committee and the traditional chiefs in communication and crowd management;
- to plan a sufficient team, and have available people not assigned to the distribution itself for communication, management of complaints and crowd management; the members of the team in charge of community mobilization before the distribution must be present on-site if possible.

2.3 ON-SITE COMMUNICATION

Even if much communication has been done prior to the distribution, it is important to pursue it and recall the key elements of intervention, especially:

- The objectives of the intervention;
- The targeting criteria and methods;
- The amount of the transfer or the content of the ration to receive;
- The mechanism feedback/complaints mechanism put in place that can be used in the case of questions or complaints.

This information must be provided in writing and orally in the waiting area in the local language. Pictograms can be used for illiterate populations.

According to the objectives of the intervention, a specific sensitization can also be done at the distribution site, even if this is not the best moment to have the complete attention of the participants. It will most often be a recall or the first step of a more complete sensitization strategy. A sensitization in a playful or theatrical form will also facilitate waiting time and reduce stress.

Sensitization sessions can cover:

- food distributed which is not traditionally used by the beneficiary communities, especially fortified blended foods (such as CSB, SuperCereal), micronutrient powders. These foods can be presented, with a simple explanation of their interest, as well as their preparation. In some cases, practical demonstrations will be necessary.
- vouchers and their use: what they give access to, where to exchange them, with which shopkeepers, validity dates, rules and limits of use, etc.
- best practices in terms of feeding, hygiene, breastfeeding and their relation to health.

2.4 SECURITY MANAGEMENT

The security aspects will vary greatly depending on the context and it is difficult to set out standard rules. The management of security during the distribution is however an extremely important element, and must be the subject of a joint analysis between program and logistical teams (referring to the security team if necessary) for the production of specific procedures which must be known and complied with by all of the team.

In addition to the specific rules for managing security, several good practices for limiting risks related to the preparation and implementation of activities are set out in *Box 31* below.

BOX 31 GOOD PRACTICES FOR LIMITING SECURITY RELATED RISKS

- If the community has been well informed about the programme, it should reduce complaints, threats and potentially dangerous behaviour on the payment day.
- Reduce the number of persons who have all the details of the process (senior staff involved and the expatriates or senior staff in charge of logistic and administration).
- Involve the community in ensuring security (make sure they understand what will be the consequences of a security incident – i.e. most probably the end of the programme).
- If possible, the itinerary taken by the ACF car should be different each time and should be disclosed to the driver only upon departure.
- The ACF car should as usual be parked close to the distribution point, ready to leave quickly if needed.
- Make sure that the distribution point is well located so that people can go home relatively quickly and during daylight.
- Make sure staff members are aware of security procedure and site evacuation plan if one has been defined.

Adapted from: ACF, 2008, Implementing cash-based interventions. A guideline for aid workers

It is important to remember that security risks affect not only the members of the team but also potentially the beneficiaries of the intervention. The plan for managing security must also take into account the specific risks that the project poses for them.

2.5 ON-SITE DISTRIBUTION CONTROL –FOOD BASKET MONITORING

Stricto census, Food Basket Monitoring (FBM) consists of checking the food basket the beneficiaries receive at the exit of the distribution point. By extension, it involves controlling the transfer received, whether it is in the form of food, non-food items or money, and the distribution system as a whole. This type of inspection is conducted on-site, during the distribution, at the exit or within the distribution circuit.

The three goals of Food Basket Monitoring are:

- Verify the quantity and quality of the items the beneficiaries receive and detect possible errors (a missing item, quantities of each food items especially when using a scooping method).
- Reveal possible dysfunction in the distribution system (flow within the distribution circuit, beneficiaries' understanding of distribution modalities, etc.).
- Enabling the distribution process to be adjusted quickly/in real-time to correct errors and dysfunctions detected.

Depending on the distribution type (*scooping*, *grouping*, cooked rations, pre-packaged kits, vouchers….), the risk of error is different and thus the monitoring system to carry out will also be different:

- When the goods distributed are pre-packaged in advance (kits), by ACF or its supplier, an initial verification of the quality and quantities of goods is conducted in the warehouse. When it leaves the distribution chain, it must simply be verified that the goods received correspond to the information written on the registration card, including the number of packages received by the beneficiary.
- In the case of *scooping*, *grouping* or cooked ration distribution, you must also weigh the goods to ensure that the people in charge of the distribution have correctly carried out their task, in other words that they properly measure and distribute the ration to be supplied.
- In all cases, the number of items received must be counted.

FBM consists of two components:

- Random checking of rations/transfer received at the exit of the distribution site;
- An individual questionnaire, to find out the beneficiaries' perception on the distribution system, the quality of the transfer received, the information received by the distribution teams.

Dysfunction observed during FBM should be corrected in real time when possible, to prevent recurrent distribution errors. A daily summary at the end of the day noting the observations made during FBM should be done with the team so that more significant adjustments can be made for the next distributions, and reinforce sensitization/training on the critical aspects of the distribution system.

Finally, an FBM report should be produced within two days after data collection, including the corrective measures implemented. The FBM report is one of the documents required for the project and must be kept and archived with the distribution reports.

The Toolbox folder - 43_ FBM provides a method and FBM examples.

2.6 ON SITE QUALITY CONTROL

As mentioned earlier, the quality assurance process requires both a continuous monitoring system and at each stage, a quality inspection of the goods distributed. The phases of delivery and distribution to beneficiary populations can also involve a risk of contamination/degradation of the quality of items. Moreover, it is also the final stage where ACF is still fully and solely responsible for the items, before delivering them to the final beneficiaries: as such, a final verification of the quality should be performed.

According to the distribution methods, careful inspection should ensure:

- the quality of packaging and verification of the expiration dates
- organoleptic verification before distribution or use
- good storage conditions at the delivery site (heat, humidity, hygiene)
- respect of hygiene rules (for staff, premises/sites, utensils and containers…)

The storage site for the goods, even if it is for a short period before distribution, should be clean. It should be free of elements likely to contaminate or damage food.

An inspection should be conducted on a representative sample while the goods are being received on-site, just before distribution begins, and continuously throughout distribution, notably in the context of distribution that uses a scooping system or in the case of canteens.

Equipment used for *scooping*, *repackaging*, cooked meal preparation and service in the context of canteens should be absolutely clean, including the immediate environment of the sites where these activities are carried out. Clean water and detergent suited to culinary equipment should be available in sufficient amounts.

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The people involved in these activities should also respect strict hygiene regulations and should be trained. Frequent visual inspections should be conducted while these activities are performed.

2.7 UPDATING REGISTRATION LISTS

Presence lists and registration lists are two distinct tools. Registration lists are the basis for the production of presence lists. It is recommended to stop using registration lists when they have been completed, as they should be archived in the office under restricted access to avoid fraud.

A presence list must be completed by ACF personnel during the distribution process, after having controlled the identity of beneficiaries entering the distribution site.

Presence lists will help update the list of beneficiaries, especially to remove absent beneficiaries: for example, after 3 consecutive absences during distributions, the beneficiary or household will be crossed off of registration lists.

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With regard to the possible addition of new beneficiaries (new arrivals in a camp, errors made during registration), it is recommended to process it outside of distribution days and sites: requests for inclusion or lists submitted are registered, but processed and verified later following the initial registration process.

BOX 32 SUPPLEMENTARY FEEDING DISTRIBUTION PROGRAM, HILAWYEN REFUGEE CAMP

During a supplementary feeding distribution program to prevent malnutrition in children aged 6–24 months old and pregnant and lactating women, registration lists have been continuously updated, to adapt to the constant stream of refugees and in respect to targeting criteria. When beneficiaries who were unregistered but responded to the criteria presented themselves, they were included in the lists after on-site verification. Likewise, beneficiaries who did not meet the criteria anymore were excluded from the lists in the same pro-active way.

This system demands significant coordination with the logistics team to ensure that stock is not exhausted due to the variable number of beneficiaries and thus, number of rations to distribute.

To update the registration lists, you must consider:

- Population movements;
- the evolution and change in status of the beneficiaries regarding target criteria;
- absence during distributions;
- changes in project modalities (e.g. defining more restrictive targeting criteria as the program evolves or in the perspective of an exit strategy).

2.8 VERIFICATION, RECONCILIATION AND CONSOLIDATION OF DISTRIBUTION DATA

Consolidation of distribution data, controls of registration lists, controls of the transfer received (FBM), market, monitoring, distribution lists, and post-distribution monitoring (PDM) are critical continuous project monitoring tools. Data from these different monitoring mechanisms are cross-checked to identify possible discrepancies. For example, the amount of food taken out the warehouse out during the day should be matched with the number of beneficiaries who were registered on the distribution list.

To control the quality of the distribution process and help with the distribution report (end of the distribution cycle when all the beneficiaries have received their ration), data must be consolidated daily after each distribution. The consolidation is done for each distribution site, and then globally in the case of multiple distribution points. The data needed for this consolidation includes:

- The number of beneficiaries expected for the distribution day;
- The number of beneficiaries served by the end of the day;
- The number of absentees;
- The quantities by item expected to be distributed at the start of the day;
- The quantities by item given out by the end of the day;
- The quantities by item remaining at the site;
- Estimated losses from scooping and estimation of volume of distribution errors from Food Basket Monitoring analysis;
- Feedback and remarks about the day, short narrative explanation.

The result of the equation below, at the end of a distribution day for a site, should be as close to 0 as possible:

Quantities delivered to the distribution site -
(Quantities distributed + Quantities lost + Quantities remaining at end of distribution) = 0

If this is not the case, the source of the error must be researched and identified immediately to be corrected.

Daily data are then compiled for the end-of-cycle report, accompanied by the presence lists, distribution lists and FBM reports.

This verification and consolidation step is needed even if the distribution is carried out by a third party (for instance in the case of certain cash transfers).

The interaction of different ACF departments (Programs, Logistics, Finances) requires data consolidation to finalize the end-of-distribution report. Several types of data and information sources should be cross-checked:

- **Concerning logistics:** procurement files; stock reports; delivery forms; reports of damaged goods.
- **Concerning finances:** bank reconciliation; cash transfer reports.

TOOL BOX / MORE INFORMATION

→ ACF, 2012, *Log-Admin guideline for cash-based interventions.* [- 253]

→ ACF, 2014, *Quality control procedure. ACF Kitlog*

→ ACF, 2014, *Quality control manual. ACF Kitlog*

→ *Food Basket Monitoring* [- 43]

→ *Crowd management* [- 26]

3. MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING

KEY QUESTIONS

- What are the objectives and modalities of monitoring & evaluation?
- What are the components of a food assistance intervention monitoring & evaluation system?
- How to capitalize on the intervention?

Any intervention requires a monitoring and evaluation system that enables verification that the project unfolds as initially planned, that it achieves the expected results, and allows to make necessary real-time adjustments if need be.

Learning, or capitalization, is needed to continuously improve practices by collecting and consolidating the lessons learned.

The present section presents a summary of key elements with regard to monitoring, evaluation and learning which are detailed in the ACF manual *Food Security and Livelihood Monitoring and Evaluation Guidelines*.

3.1 REMINDER: MONITORING DEFINITION, OBJECTIVES AND MODALITIES

Monitoring is the systematic and continuous collection, analysis and utilization of information on project achievements as implementation progresses. It is an on-going activity, taking place continuously throughout an intervention. Monitoring is a project management tool to identify achievements and challenges, any variance between targets and what is actually achieved, and facilitate constant improvement modification.

A good monitoring system should be:

- Simple, relevant to and easily comprehensible against plans;
- Participatory and focused on beneficiary needs;
- Analytical, with information used for evidence-based decisions to improve performance;
- Accessible to stakeholders (e.g. affected populations, partners, donors, Government).

The objectives of monitoring are:

- To assess the extent of progress of a project, if it is on track against its objectives and targets and determine what still needs to be done to meet objectives.
- To assess the degree of relevance and success of a project through satisfaction feedback from beneficiaries and other stakeholders on if needs are being addressed and quality control.
- To identify successes and learning from positive experiences that can boost motivation and learn lessons from challenges for future activities.
- To supply data to inform evaluations.

Monitoring is critical to a project's success. If monitoring information is analyzed regularly and used effectively to make decisions, it can be invaluable to manage a project well, correct issues before they become problems and ultimately make a different for those you are trying to assist. Monitoring should not only focus on to who has received what; but it should assess the contribution of humanitarian assistance and the difference made in populations and beneficiaries lives to address their needs.

• Types of monitoring

There are different types of monitoring:

- **Result/progress monitoring** – Assesses the effect and change brought about by the project, in terms of the three levels of results (outputs, outcomes and impact). For follow up on these results, a baseline against which to establish progress should be in place (e.g. comparing Pre-Project and Post-Project monitoring results).
- **Process or activity monitoring** – Assesses if resources or inputs (e.g. funds, goods in kind, human resources) are being used at the planned rate, and activities are happening in line with activity plans to deliver outputs. This is particularly important for managers in terms of determining resource allocations.
- **Financial monitoring** – Looks at whether income raised and expenditure spent are in line with project plans, as well as assessing actual cost for inputs and activities against those in the budget. This is done through budget follow up in liaison with the Finance team.
- **Beneficiary monitoring** - Assesses beneficiary perception of and satisfaction with a project. Beneficiary feedback or complaint mechanisms can help track perceptions. As the key stakeholders in an intervention, allowing beneficiaries to participate in the project and provide feedback is key to a successful project. Gathering indirect beneficiaries' and non-beneficiaries' feedback can also gauge success of a project.

• Monitoring methodologies

Baseline and endline surveys form an important part of any M&E system, and can be seen as a start and end to monitoring activities, providing a snap shot of the status of the situation before activities start and after their conclusion.

- **The baseline survey** gives a picture of the situation before project activities commence and provides measurements for indicators before monitoring of change against these begins. This provides benchmark data, so that M&E data collected during implementation can assess progress against the baseline, the extent to which the project has made a difference, and the extent to which objectives have been met. It is difficult to measure the impact of a project without having assessed the starting situation.
- **The endline survey** measures the same aspects and indicators as the baseline though at the end of a project, and so allows a comparison with baseline data to assess progress.

There are different methodologies available to carry out project monitoring, for example:

- Individual interviews
- Household interviews
- Focus groups discussions
- Observation

3.2 REMINDER: EVALUATION DEFINITION, OBJECTIVES AND MODALITIES

ACF defines evaluation in its Evaluation Policy and Guideline[46] as, *a coordinated process of data collection about the activities, systems, processes and outcomes of projects and / or programmes, for use by specific people (internally and externally) to reduce uncertainties, improve effectiveness and make (short, mid and/or long term) decisions with regards to what ACF programmes are doing.*

Most evaluations are based on assessing performance against the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) criteria: Impact, Coherence, Coverage, Relevance / Appropriateness, Effectiveness and Efficiency.

Evaluations should always clarify their primary purpose around internal/external accountability or learning and their primary audience.

The evaluations aim to:

- Analyze performance against expected results and impact, and the resources required to achieve these.
- Improve performance through assessment of success and failures, analysis of what caused these and recommendations for improvement.
- Provide analysis to facilitate decision-making.
- Contribute to project and organizational learning, on how to better manage and deliver projects to affected populations. They provide opportunities to reflect upon and share experience and learning, to build on our strengths and address challenges.
- Recognize the principle of accountability and transparency.
- Provide information that can be used to support communication to stakeholders, resource mobilization, advocacy, and to recognize and acknowledge accomplishments.

The evaluations often need an external evaluator, but ACF has developed a complementary self-evaluation tool that allows teams to evaluate their own ongoing project – ACF, 2008, *Self-Evaluation Tool*.

3.3 MONITORING AND EVALUATION FOR FOOD ASSISTANCE INTERVENTIONS

The main tools for the development of a project's monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system are the following[47]:

- The **project logical framework** summarizes the project plan and ways of measuring achievements;
- The **project M&E plan** summarizes M&E data to be collected, how, frequency and by whom *(See section 3.9 of Chapter 2)*;
- The **project budget** summarizes project costs including M&E budget resources (depending on project size, the M&E budget line(s) should account for 5-15% of the total budget);

46 - ACF, 2011, Evaluation Policy & Guidelines. Evaluation Policy & Guideline. Enhancing Organisational Practice through an Integrated Evaluation, Learning & Accountability Framework.

47 - For more information on these tools, refer to Chapter 2 of the ACF guide, 2012, Food Security and Livelihood Monitoring and Evaluation Guidelines. A practical guide for field workers.

- The **reporting templates** detail what needs to be reported on, frequency and to whom;
- The **monitoring tools** *(e.g. questionnaires)* detail the methods by which data will be collected.

Project staff should start thinking about and preparing for M&E right from the beginning of the project. While the bulk of M&E activities will be carried out at implementation and evaluation stages of the project cycle, it is critical that they are planned for as early as possible. This facilitates to:

- Ensure that planning for the results desired shapes the project design;
- Ensure the process of agreeing M&E activities that will measure whether the project is achieving;
- its objectives is participatory, with communities shaping indicators of success;
- Ensure that M&E activities are appropriately budgeted for and the appropriate staff are put in place and trained accordingly to undertake these activities.

• Monitoring indicators for food assistance interventions

The indicators of the monitoring and evaluation system should include the FSL core indicators as defined by ACF *(see Box 33)* as well as a selection of other relevant thematic indicators.

BOX 33 ACF CORE MONITORING INDICATORS

ACF has chosen six key indicators, which give an overview of factors that have an impact on household food security and, over time, on malnutrition. The indicators and all the details on the way to measure them are described in *Tool 3 of the ACF manual – Food Security and Livelihood Monitoring and Evaluation Guidelines*. The key indicators are mandatory for all the FSL projects.

A triangulation of the results of the key indicators is indispensable for increasing and strengthening the influence and understanding of each indicator in relation to household food security and malnutrition.

- Food diversity among households or individuals, measured by the Household or Individual Dietary Diversity Score (HDDS/IDDS) or the Food Consumption Score (FCS)
- Severity of household food insecurity measured by the Household Food Insecurity Access Scale (HFIAS)
- Availability of household food in sufficient quantity measured in Months of Adequate Household Food Provisioning (MAHFP)
- Risk of malnutrition in children under the age of 5 years living in the household measured with MUAC (Middle Upper-Arm Circumference)
- Change in market prices assessed through routine market surveys
- Number of people benefiting from the activities of the project monitored

A list of the FSL thematic indicators for food assistance interventions is provided in the *tables 37 to 39* below, and detailed in Tool 3 of the ACF *FSL Monitoring and Evaluation Guidelines*. This list is an example of specific indicators for food assistance interventions, which, however, remain optional, and the project staff can choose the indicators that are best suited to the objectives, activities, and context.

By choosing from a predefined list of indicators, it simplifies standardization and harmonization in projects while also allowing for some flexibility in order to adapt them to the context. The thematic indicators are in no way exhaustive. They aim to support and inspire the creation of appropriate and harmonized indicators for monitoring projects and programs.

• Monitoring the outcomes and the impact

It is difficult to attribute change to a program in particular because there are several factors that affect the food and nutritional security of a given population.

The following questions should guide the monitoring of the effects of intervention:

- What has changed since the beginning of the program?
- What is the extent of the changes made since the beginning of the program?
- Who has experienced these changes the most/least?
- How and why were (or weren't) the changes made?
- To what extent can the changes be attributed to the program in itself rather than to external factors?
- How these changes have been perceived by the community?

***Table 37:** Food Assistance Thematic Indicators - Impacts and Outcomes*

INDICATOR	MEANS OF VERIFICATION	DATA COLLECTION
Number of households able to cover their food needs following distribution	> Household survey > Focus group discussions > Ration details > Distribution list	Following each distribution, final list Baseline/Endline, if multiyear programme depending on comparison requirements between lean season and other seasons, consider at interim reporting/evaluation stage
Change in coping strategy index (CSI) used by the household	> Household survey > Focus group discussions	Baseline/Endline, if multiyear programme depending on comparison requirements between lean season and other seasons, consider at interim reporting/evaluation stage

Change in food sources of the household	> Household survey > Focus group discussions	Baseline/Endline, if multiyear programme depending on comparison requirements between lean season and other seasons, consider at interim reporting/evaluation stage
Change in income sources of the household	> Household survey > Focus group discussions	Baseline/Endline, if multiyear programme depending on comparison requirements between lean season and other seasons, consider at interim reporting/evaluation stage
Change in food expenditure of the household	> Household survey > Focus group discussions	Baseline/Endline, if multiyear programme depending on comparison requirements between lean season and other seasons, consider at interim reporting/evaluation stage
Change in meal frequency for adults and children in the household	> Household survey > Focus group discussions	Au lancement et en fin de projet Si le programme est pluriannuel, la collecte repose sur des exigences de comparaison entre la période de soudure et les autres saisons Envisager lors du rapport d'étape/de la phase d'évaluation
Number of households able to cover their caloric needs following distribution	> Household survey > Ration details > Distribution list	Baseline/Endline, if multiyear programme depending on comparison requirements between lean season and other seasons, consider at interim reporting/evaluation stage
Change in availability of food on household level	> Household survey > Focus group discussions > Market survey	Following each distribution, final list Baseline/Endline, if multiyear programme depending on comparison requirements between lean season and other seasons, consider at interim reporting/evaluation stage
Change of household usage of the received food assistance	> Household survey > Focus group discussions	Following each distribution, final list Baseline/Endline, if multiyear programme depending on comparison requirements between lean season and other seasons, consider at interim reporting/evaluation stage

• Monitoring the outputs

Il s'agit ici essentiellement de renseigner le nombre et la qualité des personnes recevant ou participant à l'assistance, le nombre de distributions et services délivrés.

***Table 38:** Food Assistance Thematic Indicators - Outputs*

INDICATOR	MEANS OF VERIFICATION	DATA COLLECTION
Number of people/households assisted with food assistance	> Distribution lists > Procurement/logistics reports > Finance records	Monthly updates, final list
Number of days/months people/households are assisted with food assistance	> Distribution lists > Procurement/logistics reports > Finance records	Monthly updates, final list
Number of food distributions organized	> Beneficiary list > Mapping of distribution points	Post Distribution Monitoring, final list
Number of voucher fairs/ rounds organized	> Beneficiary list > Trader list > Mapping of distribution points > Finance records > Voucher exchange proof	Post Distribution Monitoring, final list
Number of traders supporting food vouchers/ fairs or transfers	> Beneficiary List > Market survey > Trader lists > Payment/financial records > Voucher transfer exchange proof	Post Distribution Monitoring, final list
Number of households participating in public work schemes	> Work attendance/participants list > Food/voucher distribution list > Market prices survey	Post Distribution Monitoring, final list
Number of community public work structures created/ rehabilitated	> Work attendance/participant list > Public work plan record > Observation	Monthly updates, final list
Number of individual/ household structures created/ rehabilitated	> Work attendance/participant list > Individual work plan record > Observation	Monthly updates, final list

• Monitoring the processes and activities

Processes and activities monitoring of a food assistance intervention should control the following elements:

- Quality of the beneficiary targeting and registration processes
- Quality of the supply and distribution processes
- Quality of the distributed items
- Quality of the partnership with merchants in the case of a voucher intervention
- Quality of the works achieved in the case of a transfer for work intervention

Table 39: *Food Assistance Thematic Indicators – Processes and Activities*

INDICATOR	MEANS OF VERIFICATION	DATA COLLECTION
Number of beneficiaries selected by type (e.g. IDPs, hosts, nomad, people living with HIV etc.), gender and age	> Beneficiary lists > Distribution lists	Monthly updates, final list
Quantity of food/voucher/grants distributed (MT/kg/Money) (by type)	> Distribution list > Procurement/logistics reports > Cash transfer exchange proof	Monthly updates, final list
Proportion of nutrition programme beneficiaries receiving food assistance	> HH survey > Beneficiary list > Nutrition programme admission records	Monthly updates, final list
Number of households satisfied with the food assistance distribution process	> Household survey > Focus group discussion	Post-distribution monitoring, final list
Number of households satisfied with the quality of the food assistance provided	> Household survey > Focus group discussion	Post-distribution monitoring, final list
Number of households receiving food assistance in time according to agreed planification	> Household survey > Focus group discussion	Post-distribution monitoring, final list
Number of complaint mechanisms established and managed in the targeted communities	> Observation > Focus group discussion > Complaint management records	Monthly updates, final list
Baseline and Endline monitoring surveys facilitated	> Available reports and records	Baseline/end-line information, according to the implementation plan of the monitoring and evaluation project
Post-distribution monitoring facilitated	> Available reports and records	Post Distribution, according to M&E Implementation Plan of the project

• Market monitoring

Market monitoring is particularly important for food assistance interventions, whether in-kind or cash based, since they can have effects on food availability, prices and suppliers. Conversely, these elements can influence effectiveness of the intervention and/or provide new opportunities to take into account in the modalities of intervention.

For example, an in-kind transfer project can evolve into a cash transfer if monitoring shows that food availability has improved since the startup of the project; on the contrary, if food prices increase greatly, or availability decreases, it may be necessary to review the intervention modalities, by either increasing the value of the transfer, or turning to in-kind distributions.

Market monitoring includes dynamic data collection on available foods (quantities and diversity), prices, quality, the number of merchants and supply sources, and the evolution demand. It is also important to understand the way consumers buy food (bartering, credit, frequency, market choice according to the type of foods and season).

According to the context, some of these factors can evolve very quickly, and it is then necessary to adapt the frequency data collection and analysis accordingly. Market monitoring can be done once a week if risks of inflation or shortage are significant or less often if there is little fluctuation or if the intervention has only a little influence on the local market (canteen, cash for work, vouchers on a small scale).

Refer to Tool box- 🗀- 44_Market monitoring.

3.4 LEARNING AND CAPITALIZATION

Capitalization of knowledge is defined as a process designed to gather knowledge from information or knowledge available in an organization. It is designed to monitor that each individual's experience is not limited to himself, but serves the community within the framework of a knowledge sharing strategy. The implementation of new programs or the management of new interventions are facilitated by safeguarding and relaying of experiences and acquired knowledge.

Capitalization of knowledge is defined as a process meant to build up a capital from information or knowledge available in an organization. It is designed to ensure that every individual’s experience is not confined to him or herself alone, but serves the community in a knowledge sharing movement. The implementation of new projects or the conduct of new actions, are facilitated by the preservation and transmission of acquired experience and knowledge.

Capitalization should seek to answer the following questions:

- What happened?
- How did it happen?
- Why did it happen?
- What are the lessons learned?
- What are the best practices and recommendations that we should capitalize?

Table 40: Capitalization of interventions	
Objectives	To learn lessons of best practice for future application through the buildup and sharing of information or knowledge within and between organizations.
Methodology	Internally facilitated desk and workshop-based reviews of project or organizational lessons around what was done, how and why.
Timing	Mainly at project end.
Results	Lessons learned (neutral) around how approaches were used.
Audience	Field/HQ staff and partner organizations

Source: ACF, 2011, Food Security and Livelihood Monitoring and Evaluation Guidelines

The users of capitalization documents are ACF field staff who implements interventions. With capitalization documents, they can know about approaches, experiences and practices that have or have not worked according to different contexts. Capitalization also allows making available specific tools and methods developed in the field.

Refer to ACF document, 2010, *Learning from Experience and Sharing Knowledge: A Capitalization Manual*.

TOOL BOX / MORE INFORMATION

- ACF, 2008, *Self-Evaluation Tool*. [- 47]
- ACF, 2010, *Learning from Experience and Sharing Knowledge: A Capitalization Manual*. [- 52]
- ACF, 2011, *Evaluation Policy & Guideline. Enhancing Organisational Practice through an Integrated Evaluation, Learning & Accountability Framework*. [- 46]
- ACF, 2012, *Food security and Livelihood Monitoring and Evaluation Guidelines. A practical guide for field workers*. [- 41]

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY SHEETS: FOOD ASSISTANCE TYPES AND MODALITIES

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1. FOOD DISTRIBUTION

DESCRIPTION AND FIELD OF APPLICATION

A food distribution is a distribution of food in-kind targeting transitory or chronic food insecure populations. It consists of a direct transfer of a food basket, in a “dry” form (i.e. not cooked), with the aim to make quality food available to the target populations.

It comprises distributions of dry food rations, ready to use food, high-energy biscuits and/or micronutrient supplements.

General distribution covers in general the entire population in an area, but can sometimes be targeted towards a part of this population, on the basis of criteria linked to their social and economic status, their displaced/refugee status, their vulnerability regarding to access to food and/or having faced a shock. Supplementary feeding programmes (blanket distributions) are targeted food distributions aiming at preventing undernutrition of at-risk population, in general children under 5 years old and/or pregnant and lactating women through the distribution of foods with high nutritional value.

- **Specific objectives:**
  - Respond to immediate food needs during or after a crisis
  - Protect the nutritional status of populations
  - Protect livelihoods
- **Expected results:**
  - Direct access to food in quality and quantity
  - Reduction or prevention of undernutrition prevalence
  - Prevention of negative coping strategies, in particular de-capitalization of productive assets (livestock, tools)
  - Safety net

CONDITIONS	
Context: - Large-scale emergency - Sudden onset disaster - Extensive population movements - Abnormally high or increasing level of undernutrition **Food market:** - Breakdown of the production system or market supply - High food prices and/or inflation - Abnormally low availability of basic foods, and absence of some of them	**Population:** - Population cut off from its usual source of food (refuges, displaced persons) - Population having lost its harvest or its livelihoods - Insufficient capacity to produce food or generate income (small family size, single-parent family) - Poor access to means of production/access to land **Logistics/security:** - Capacity to supply large quantities of food - Direct access to populations

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES	
ADVANTAGES	**DISADVANTAGES**
- Can respond to a problem of local food availability; - Allows the provision of a balanced ration/a ration with high nutritional value; - Allows to covering a large number of beneficiaries; - Relatively long preservation of the ration (in comparison to cooked ration) –monthly/ bimonthly distribution of rations possible - Complements available products in the market	- High response cost; - Need for logistic capacity: transport, storage; - According to supply modalities, may be long to set up; - Population dietary habits can be disrupted; - Risk of sharing of the ration in the cases of blanket distributions; - Risk of sale of all or part of the ration to cover other needs; - Risk of disruption of the local market: price reduction, parallel market; risk of discouraging effect on the local market - Distribution-related security risks

PARTICULARITIES AND POINTS TO CONSIDER

Definition of the food rations content: Rations must be made taking into account the nutritional needs of target populations, their eating habits, and the quantities of food to which they may already have access to. The distributed ration can either cover all the needs of a family or be defined as a complement to bridge the difference between the accessible food and needs, or be a nutritional supplement for most vulnerable individuals.

Procurement (purchase, storage, transport) of food is provided by the organization or via the World Food Programme. The management of these supplies is a critical component of this type of intervention; the main risks are the stock-out and management of the supply chain (procurement-transport- storage), poor management of distribution flows that can create long waiting time and security risks, poor food quality management throughout the supply chain.

The quality of the food distributed is another critical component. Food quality control system is necessary throughout the supply chain, including laboratory tests, organoleptic tests, storage and re-packaging conditions monitoring, control of expiration dates.

Distribution sites: substantial preparation to identify and organize the distribution site that can accommodate large flows of food and people. The distribution circuit must be visible and understood by all. The choice of location is made according to the land conditions, logistics and security considerations. A relatively large space is required to accommodate the storage, piles, distribution circuit, and waiting area. Distribution site identification must be made with the community.

Security of goods and people: food can be an important issue in different contexts; developing specific security procedures is mandatory, and should consider risks of robbery during transportation, on site storage, distribution, and after distribution for beneficiaries on their way home.

2. CANTEEN - DISTRIBUTION OF COOKED RATION

DESCRIPTION AND FIELD OF APPLICATION

Canteen interventions are food distribution programs, providing prepared, cooked rations. The canteen can be limited to a meal preparation and distribution site, or can include a refectory for on-site consumption. It can be implemented in the context of general distribution (targeting the overall population) or blanket supplementary feeding (targeting individuals who are the most at-risk for under-nutrition).

Canteen interventions, more logistically complex and more costly to implement than classic food distribution, are generally implemented either to respond to a population's lack of access to means to prepare meals, or, in the case of blanket distributions, because there's a risk that the food ration intended to specific individuals is shared with other family members.

- **Specific objectives:**
  - To respond to immediate food needs following a crisis
  - To protect the nutritional status of populations
  - To protect livelihoods
- **Expected results:**
  - Direct access to food in quality and quantity
  - Reduction or prevention of undernutrition prevalence
  - Prevention of negative coping strategies, in particular de-capitalization of productive assets (livestock, tools)

CONDITIONS

Context:
- Large-scale emergency
- Sudden onset disaster
- Extensive population movements
- Abnormally high or increasing level of undernutrition
- Breakdown in institutional social system
- High concentration of population (urban context, camps)

Food market:
- Breakdown of the production system or market supply
- High food prices and/or inflation
- Abnormally low availability of basic foods, and absence of some of them

Population:
- Population cut off from its usual source of food (refuges, displaced persons)
- Population having lost its harvest or its livelihoods
- Insufficient capacity to produce food or generate income (small family size, single-parent family)
- Poor access to means of production/access to land
- Lack of access to means to prepare meals

Logistics/security:
- Capacity to supply large quantities of food
- Direct access to populations
- Capacity to supply large quantities of food
- Availability of sites that are both accessible and of sufficient size to accommodate canteens (storage/preparation/distribution/ consumption)
- Easy daily access to the different canteen sites

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES	
ADVANTAGES	**DISADVANTAGES**
- Does not required additional support for supplying cooking utensils and fuel; - Ensure consumption of the distributed ration and limit the risks of resale; - Low risk of misappropriation of distributed food due to small quantities distributed daily; - Nutritional quality of meals; - Possible community participation in canteen management; - Local employment to run canteens daily; - Possibility of purchasing fruits and vegetables from local markets to complement rations; - Possibility of reviving the social network dynamic;	- Difficulty in providing a variety of daily meals; - Program runs 7 days a week, 2 meals a day. - Significant logistic resources required (transport, storage, site preparation/construction, water, cooking fuel), requires rigorous organization; - Strict flow management and distribution circuits organization required in the canteen site; - Significant need for human resources to run the canteens; - Food safety quality control is critical, considering cooked meals - Need for beneficiaries to present daily to the distribution site - opportunity cost; - Possible competition with local economic activities (existing market of cooked meal sale/ small restaurants).

PARTICULARITIES AND POINTS TO CONSIDER

Definition of the food rations content: Rations must be made taking into account the nutritional needs of target populations, their eating habits, and the quantities of food to which they may already have access to. Diversification of meals prepared daily should be considered.

Procurement (purchase, storage, transport) of food is provided by the organization or via the World Food Programme. The management of these supplies is a critical component of this type of intervention; the main risks are the stock-out and management of the supply chain (procurement-transport- storage), poor management of distribution flows that can create long waiting time and security risks, poor food quality management throughout the supply chain.

The quality of the food distributed is another critical component. Food quality control system is necessary throughout the supply chain, including laboratory tests, organoleptic tests, storage and re-packaging conditions monitoring, control of expiration dates. It is essential to respect strict hygiene rules for on-site preparation, distribution and consumption.

Distribution sites: substantial preparation to identify and organize the site, which must include storage space for raw commodities, cooking - preparation space with access to safe water, stoves, distribution area and optionally consumption area. In the case of on-site consumption, a large space is required, and it is often required to organize multiple services at fixed times during the day. Importance of maintaining cleanliness, the provision of hand washing facilities, and the provision of drinking water on site.

3. FOOD VOUCHERS DISTRIBUTION

DESCRIPTION AND FIELD OF APPLICATION
Distribution of food vouchers is a form of cash based intervention involving the transfer of vouchers issued in paper or electronic form that can be exchanged with shopkeepers for foodstuffs. Access to goods is thus ensured through the local market. There are two main categories of vouchers: - "Commodity" vouchers give the holder access to a pre-determined goods or services ; - "Cash" vouchers give the holder access to goods or services of their choice up to a defined monetary value. In the context of food assistance interventions, vouchers can in certain cases also be exchanged for cooking fuel, utensils and cooking equipment or cereal grinding services. • **Specific Objectives:** - Respond to immediate food needs during or after a crisis - Protecting the nutritional status of populations - Protecting livelihoods • **Expected Results** - Direct access to food in quality and quantity - Reduction or prevention of undernutrition prevalence - Prevention of negative coping strategies, in particular de-capitalization of productive assets (livestock, tools) - Support recovery of local economy

CONDITIONS	
Context: - Lack of access to food due to a low level of income and loss of purchasing power - Abnormally high or increasing level of undernutrition **Markets:** - Availability of food in the markets - Capacity and will of merchants to develop their activity (increase of the offer) - No hindrance to commercial exchanges - Price volatility limited	**Population:** - Population not having sufficient purchasing power to cover their basic needs - Population cut off from its usual source of food (refuges, displaced persons) - Insufficient capacity to produce food or generate income (small family size, single-parent family) **Logistics/security:** - Sufficient supply and storage capacity for merchants - Capacity to generate multiple contracts with merchants - Capacity to manage a voucher reimbursement system adapted to merchants needs and capacity

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES	
ADVANTAGES	**DISADVANTAGES**
- Based on the local market, with a potential to support the local economy and production; - Fosters choice for beneficiaries in terms of food, and thus the respect of their eating habits - Flexibility on the days to collect food at the market by the beneficiaries - Can allow access to a more diversified food basket, including fresh products (vegetables, fruits, meat, fish); - Can target vulnerable populations, (handicapped, elderly people) who are unable to work; - Need for limited internal logistic capacity	- Relatively slow and complex set up; - Requires a strong internal administrative capacity to manage contracts with participating merchants and for voucher reimbursement; - Risk of falsification of vouchers; - Less control on the quality of purchased foodstuffs; - Population and merchants need for guidance in using vouchers; - Prices and foods may vary over time during the program; - Limit in number of merchants who can participate

PARTICULARITIES AND POINTS TO CONSIDER

Market analysis: a market analysis is required to establish the availability of diversified, quality foodstuffs, stability of supply and prices, and the capacity and will of merchants to participate in the program.

Definition of the type, value and composition of the voucher: the choice of the type and composition of the voucher should take into consideration the nutritional needs of target populations, eating habits, as well as the availability of goods in the local market. According to the habits of the beneficiaries, the frequency of market days and the distance from them, the value and number of vouchers to distribute should be adapted.

Quality of the voucher: increasingly, dematerialized (electronic) voucher options are worth considering, as compared to paper voucher, and assessed against feasibility, cost, management time, speed and reliability of reimbursement of merchants, reliability of the system, security. In the case of paper vouchers, the choice of material, printing quality, supplier and anti-falsification elements are defined to limit the risk of loss, theft, falsification and misuse of vouchers.

Identification and contractualization of merchants: selection of participating merchants is an important step since they will be stakeholders in the program in their own right. To assess specifically: their capacity to get and provide foodstuffs in the quantities required; the commitment to supply quality goods and not abusively increase the prices; the capacity to ensure financial advances until being reimbursed for the vouchers exchanged; the proximity to the beneficiaries' living areas. When signing a contract with the merchants, the payment terms, quantities, quality, and type of goods or services must be specified.

Mechanism of voucher redemption: a redemption mechanism that is reliable, flexible, secure and adapted to the needs of participating merchants must be put in place. Redemption mechanism can be highly time consuming, and requires adequate team, or involving subcontracting with a local financial institution.

Monitoring the quality and prices of goods in the markets: to ensure that the goods purchased through vouchers are of sufficient quality, and sold for a fair price, a control/monitoring mechanism must be implemented in the markets and at participating shops.

4. CASH TRANSFER

DESCRIPTION AND FIELD OF APPLICATION

Cash transfer is money distribution in the form of cash, electronic money or via a bank account, to strengthen the beneficiaries' economic access to locally available foodstuffs. Cash transfer is usually not linked to an obligation for particular purchases, nor to make purchases from pre-identified shopkeepers: the use of the money received by the recipient is left to his own choice, even if other program modalities can guide this choice. Thus, a cash transfer also allows response to immediate needs other than strictly food needs, during an emergency or recovery response.

- **Specific Objectives:**
    - Respond to immediate food needs during or after a crisis
    - Protecting the nutritional status of populations
    - Protecting livelihoods
- **Expected Results:**
    - Direct access to food in quality and quantity
    - Reduction or prevention of undernutrition prevalence
    - Prevention of negative coping strategies, in particular de-capitalization of productive assets (livestock, tools)
    - Support livelihoods recovery
    - Support local economy recovery

CONDITIONS

Context:

- Lack of access to food due to a low level of income and loss of purchasing power
- Abnormally high or increasing level of undernutrition

Markets:

- Availability of food in the markets
- Capacity and will of merchants to develop their activity (increase of the offer)
- No hindrance to commercial exchanges
- Price volatility limited

Population:

- Population not having sufficient purchasing power to cover their basic needs
- Population cut off from its usual source of food (refuges, displaced persons)
- Insufficient capacity to produce food or generate income (small family size, single-parent family)

Logistics/security:

- Sufficient supply and storage capacity for merchants
- Capacity to set up and manage a secure cash transfer system

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES	
ADVANTAGES	**DISADVANTAGES**
- Based on the local market, with a potential to support the local economy and production; - Fosters choice for beneficiaries in terms of food, and thus the respect of their eating habits - Flexibility on the days to collect food at the market by the beneficiaries - Can allow access to a more diversified food basket, including fresh products (vegetables, fruits, meat, fish); - Supports the local economy; - Can target vulnerable populations, (handicapped, elderly people) who are unable to work; - Need for limited internal logistic capacity - Can be relatively quick to implement and cover a large population.	- Requires a strong internal administrative capacity to set up and manage the transfer system in the case of direct cash distribution - No control over purchases made -Risk of antisocial use of money depending on the context; - Need for guidance and support to beneficiaries in the case of electronic transfers, notably for illiterate populations - Quantity of goods accessed to through the transfer varies with market prices; - Potential security risk for beneficiaries and teams, depending on transfer modalities (cash envelop, bank or electronic transfers)

PARTICULARITIES AND POINTS TO CONSIDER

Market analysis: a market analysis is required to establish the availability of diversified, quality foodstuffs, stability of supply and prices, and the market's capacity to bear an increase in demand.

Definition of the value of the transfer: must consider the nutritional needs of target populations, eating habits, as well as the availability of goods in the local market, but also other goods and services that make up other primary needs and for which the cash may be used.

Mechanism of payment: particular attention must be paid to the choice of payment mechanism, depending on the context, habits of the beneficiaries, availability of mechanisms and suppliers of electronic transfer services, aspects related to security, isolation and number of beneficiaries and the cost of implementation.

Monitoring the quality and prices of goods in the markets: to ensure local availability of quality goods remain steady throughout the intervention and ensure that inflation is not too high, continuous market monitoring. This monitoring includes a prospective analysis of short- and medium-term variations, including analysis of the seasonality of supply.

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