



Guidance Note for
Humanitarian Food
Assistance in Yemen
Effective April 2024



1. Introduction

Yemen continues to face significant challenges as it remains one of the world's poorest and most food-insecure countries. The protracted nature of the food crisis in Yemen is characterized by interlocking vulnerabilities and compounding factors including conflict, displacement of populations, economic instability at both the local and global levels, currency fluctuations, rising food prices, climate change hazards and sub-optimal access to basic services. An estimated 17 million people in Yemen (52 percent of the total population) are likely to be severely food insecure (IPC phase 3 and above¹²) 2024. In 2024 FSAC humanitarian partners require \$ 1.36 Billion to assist 12.8 million beneficiaries facing precarious food insecurity levels. FSAC partners aim to provide humanitarian food assistance to 10 million of the most vulnerable food insecure individuals covering 50-80 percent of their minimum daily requirement (based on sphere standards reference of 2,100 kcal/person/day).

HFA 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. HFA can also be used to protect and strengthen the livelihoods of a crisis-affected population, to prevent or reverse negative coping mechanisms (such as the sale of productive assets, or the accumulation of debts) that could engender either short-term or longer-term harmful consequences for their livelihood base, their food-security status or their nutritional status. Adequate food consumption may not ensure adequate nutrition. Poor health may inhibit the digestion and utilization of nutrients leading to malnutrition. Therefore, complementary interventions, including those that ensure safe food preparation (e.g. provision of cooking fuel), or access to potable water, hygiene, and health services, are critical alongside direct food assistance, to prevent or treat malnutrition.

Therefore, in summary, below are the objectives of HFA;

- 1) To safeguard the availability of, access to, and consumption of adequate, safe and nutritious food for populations affected by ongoing, firmly forecasted, or recent humanitarian crises to avoid acute malnutrition and famine risks, or other life-threatening effects and consequences;
- 2) To protect and restore livelihoods threatened by recent, ongoing, or imminent crises, minimize damage to food production and marketing systems, and establish conditions

¹ <https://reliefweb.int/report/yemen/yemen-humanitarian-needs-overview-2024-january-2024>

² <https://www.ipcinfo.org/>



to promote the rehabilitation and restoration of self-reliance; and

- 3) To strengthen the capacities of the humanitarian aid system, to enhance efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of food assistance.

In Yemen, the main FSAC partner for HFA is World Food Programme (WFP) who implement the programme through cooperating partners (CPs). Other FSAC partners implement smaller-scale HFA programmes to complement the WFP-funded HFA coverage or to respond to new shocks and stresses that have an impact on food security outcomes. These guidelines provide a framework for the **design, planning, coordination, implementation, reporting, and monitoring of all humanitarian food assistance (HFA) in the Country**, to ensure a need-based, coordinated, efficient, at-scale and impactful response. The guidelines outline key considerations and best practices to ensure the effective and equitable delivery of HFA in Yemen.

2. HFA Principles

- **Humanitarian Imperative:** Food assistance should prioritize saving lives, alleviating suffering, and protecting the dignity of beneficiaries.
- **Needs-Based Approach:** Assistance should be targeted based on a thorough assessment of vulnerabilities and food insecurity levels ensuring that food assistance provided to the most vulnerable populations is appropriate, timely, effective, efficient, and based on needs and shared principles.
- **Do No Harm:** HFA Interventions should not inadvertently create dependency or disrupt local markets. HFA should address the food and nutritional needs of the most vulnerable populations to improve access to, and consumption of, adequate, safe and nutritious food without causing or threat to life or creating security concerns.
- **Accountability and Transparency:** HFA partners must be accountable to beneficiaries, donors, and the wider community, facilitating information-sharing, cooperation, and coordination, and providing a forum for discussion in order to improve the effective, efficient, and coherent use of resources to respond to food needs.
- **Participation and Empowerment:** Involve beneficiaries and all local actors in program design, implementation, and monitoring.
- **Gender Equality:** Ensure women and girls have equal access to food assistance and decision-making processes.
- **Protection mainstreaming:** Ensuring the process of incorporating protection principles and promoting meaningful access and safety in food assistance.
- **Disability mainstreaming:** Involving food assistance to find structured ways of responding to the needs and circumstances of persons with disabilities.
- **Harmonized Assistance:** Ensuring the assistance provided by all actors is harmonized with FSAC guidelines.

3. Design and planning

- **Prioritizing the most highly vulnerable geographical areas and households:** NGOs should consult the hub-level coordinator (as detailed in Annex 1) on geographic prioritization and get a formal written endorsement through email in the earlier stages of designing the project. This practical step ensures that resources are allocated strategically based on various factors, including food security status (for example; IPC, FSLA), current gaps, response scale, vulnerabilities of the areas, and any recent shocks such as floods or displacement. The geographical targeting and prioritization should encompass all administrative levels, including the governorate, district, sub-district, and villages. This will minimize duplication and ensure HFA is provided in high priority locations. During the project design phase, partners employing the twin track/graduation approach must consult with the respective Hub-level FSAC SNCC, irrespective of whether they choose to work independently or as a consortium.
- **Ensure consultation with relevant authorities such as MOPIC, SCMCHA, IDPs Exu and local authorities.** This consultation is essential to maximize the impact of the interventions, the alignment of efforts, and ensure timely approval of projects. New partners should consult hub-level FSAC Sub-national coordinators to support the coordination with relevant authorities.
- **Establish or use existing food security community committees:** In an effort to improve community participation, representation, and accountability, partners are encouraged to strength/establish local food security community committees (CCs). Access and security considerations may limit continuous oversight of HFA by partners in complex situations, and CCS can be instrumental in ensuring the principles of HFA are respected in this context. CCs should participate in the periodic revision and adjustment of the beneficiary lists should there be adjustments that need to be made in the lifespan of the project, to account for developments in the food security situation.

The formation of the CCs should take into consideration the below;

- a) They should be selected by community members through a fair and transparent process with community members observing and endorsing the process. The different CCs and their respective roles and responsibilities should be documented, shared and clearly explained to the community members. The main role of the CC includes sensitizing the communities at the sub-district and village level on the targeting criteria and selection process and facilitating the selection of beneficiaries. They should also be part of the complaint handling mechanism on HFA.
- b) Selected members must be willing to serve the community on a voluntary basis.
- c) They should be residents of the area and should be well respected by community

- members.
- d) They should not have any vested interests/conflict of interest in HFA.
 - e) CCs should be gender balanced, including disabled people, people from marginalized groups and representative of all cultural groups in the targeted area to address the different power dynamics.
- **Conduct needs assessment:** Conduct a needs assessment at a localized geographical area of the target population to gain a comprehensive understanding of the specific food security needs and vulnerabilities in that specific context. This assessment will provide valuable insights into the local context, to ensure the project design is tailored based on the actual needs on the ground. The needs assessment should be coordinated with FSAC hub-level coordinator to ensure adherence FSAC standards and guidance and to support approvals by relevant authorities.
 - **Selection of response modality:** Choose the most appropriate food assistance modality based on the context, needs, and resources. Options include:
 - **General Food Distributions/In-Kind Distribution:** Distributing a selection of food items as per the FSAC Minimum Food Basket (MFB) guidance directly to beneficiaries.
 - **Cash Transfers:** Providing electronic or cash vouchers alongside community mobilization and awareness sessions as per FSAC unconditional cash transfer guidance allowing beneficiaries to purchase food in local markets.
 - **Food Vouchers:** Distributing redeemable vouchers for specific food items in designated shops or vendors.
 - **Alignment with FSAC standards:** Ensure adherence to the FSAC standards and guidelines during the project design. This includes the recommended transfer value and the package of the MFB, minimum Kilocalories for MFB, number of cycles, response approaches, monitoring and others to ensure a harmonized, effective and impactful HFA intervention. The FSAC UCT guideline is available here:
<https://fscluster.org/yemen/document/fsac-unconditional-cash-transfer>
 - **Submission of HFA plans:** All HFA plans covering the period January-June and July to December, that are funded, or likely to be funded should be submitted to the FSAC National IM for planning purposes to avoid duplication and to advocate for better coverage where gaps exist. Emergency HFA (HFA provided outside the regular programme in response to stresses or shocks e.g. flood, displacement that exacerbates the food insecurity levels) has to be factored in partners respective contingency plans and shared in the contingency planning tool available here:
<https://ee-eu.kobotoolbox.org/preview/ORHllwNE>

4. Coordination and collaboration

- A. Agencies that are not currently part of FSAC members are advised to join FSAC to enhance coordination and ensure adherence to all FSAC guidance. They are requested to apply to join FSAC by filling out the following application: <https://fscluster.org/yemen/document/fsac-membership-application-form> and to reach out to Ahmed Al Kherbi, FSAC IM, for any inquiries at following, aalkherbi@immap.org. Partners are encouraged to actively participate in FSAC Coordination meetings at national and hub levels which serves as a platform where partners receive important updates on the food security situation, response efforts, existing gaps, and avoiding any potential overlapping.
- B. Once funding is confirmed, coordinate with the respective FSAC Sub national Cluster coordinator on the HFA intervention, to discuss several aspects such as targeting areas, HFA modality, transfer value/items of MFB, number of cycles, targeting groups, etc. In addition, partners are advised to review the FSAC Interactive Response Dashboard for all information related to other partners achieved/planned responses, through the following link: <https://fscluster.org/yemen/document/information-management-products-2023>
- C. Coordinate with government partners such as SCMCHA, MoPIC, IDPs EXU, the effectiveness of the intervention. Partners should familiarize themselves with governing laws for implementation of humanitarian assistance in Yemen.

5. Implementation

- **Adhere to need-based impartial targeting and prioritization process:** To optimize the impact of HFA interventions, it is advisable to prioritize targeting the poorest, highly food insecure and most vulnerable communities. Given that non-WFP funded HFA interventions typically involve smaller caseloads, directing resources and support toward those who are most in need can maximize the effectiveness and reach of these interventions, to make a significant difference in addressing food insecurity and improving the well-being of those who are most marginalized in Yemen. Partners are requested to coordinate with hub-level coordinators who will facilitate the process of coordination with all partners implementing the same activities within the same district/sub-district and cross-check the list of targeted HHs for duplicates. Once the cross-check process is completed, partners should ensure all beneficiaries' HHs lists are verified and in adherence with FSAC targeting criteria. The FSAC Vulnerability and Targeting Guidance Note is available in the below link: https://fscluster.org/sites/default/files/documents/fsac_vulnerability_targeting_guidance_final_june_2021.pdf. **Please note that an update of the FSAC Vulnerability and**

Targeting Guidance Note is currently being worked on.

- **Adhere to FSAC guidelines and standards:** Partners should fully align with the guidance provided in the FSAC Unconditional Cash Transfer available in the below link: <https://fscluster.org/yemen/document/fsac-unconditional-cash-transfer>.
- Partners who want to implement double rations due to exceptional circumstances should discuss and get clearance from your respective hub-level coordinators. This must be accompanied by extensive community awareness sessions explaining the rationale and when the regular cycle will resume.
- **Conduct needs and market assessment:** Partners are advised to conduct localized needs assessments to identify the specific food security and agriculture needs of affected populations. This assessment should include collecting data on livelihoods, access to food, food consumption, and other relevant factors. Furthermore, conducting market assessments and feasibility studies is crucial to assessing the condition of the market and determining the most suitable modality for delivering food assistance.
- **Community Mobilization and Awareness:** Key considerations during the community awareness and orientation session are:
 - a) Organizing separate meetings based on sensitivity analysis to avoid gathering two/multiple groups that are not culturally accepted.
 - b) Use local language with communities to give information about the program, overall goal, objectives, outputs, duration, beneficiary selection criteria and process, duration of the project, food basket or transfer value a household will receive per type of intervention.
 - c) Introduce a complaint response mechanism and process to file a complaint.
- **Inter-sectoral Integration:** Foster complementarity and integration with other sectors, including Health, Nutrition, Shelter, and WASH, to address the interconnected challenges related to food security and other areas. Ensure that HFA interventions are aligned and coordinated with efforts in these sectors to effectively address the underlying causes of food insecurity and malnutrition, to minimize the impacts of the humanitarian crisis on food security, health, nutrition, and water and sanitation outcomes of the affected people in Yemen.
 - **Nutrition Cluster:** Ensure adherence to nutrition-sensitive targeting as detailed in the FSAC Vulnerability and Targeting guidance note. Nutrition awareness is key to ensure households purchase and consume adequate dietary diversified diets, to prevent and combat the soaring malnutrition levels in the Country. The below materials should be used during their food distribution as part of integration and raising awareness for infant and young child feeding and care practices;

- - a) [FSAC related messages for infant and young child feeding](#)
 - b) [Guidance for enrolling SAM and MAM](#)
 - c) [Exclusive breastfeeding for 6 months](#)
 - d) [Positions for breastfeeding](#)
 - e) [Breastfeeding Skin to skin contact after delivery](#)
- **Cash and Markets Working Group:** Complementarity in household targeting to avoid duplication with multi-purpose cash assistance (MPCA) as detailed in the 2024 Joint FSAC and CMWG workplan available in this link <https://fscluster.org/yemen/document/yemen-2023-2024-joint-cmwg-and-fsac>
- **Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM):** Coordination on displacement tracking, camp level needs assessments including food security and livelihood situation of IDPs, IDP numbers, monitoring of the response, identification of response gaps and complaint handling mechanism, etc.
- **Shelter Cluster:** Implement an integrated approach to enhance the response effectiveness for individuals requiring both shelter and FSAC assistance as detailed in the Integrated Initiative by Shelter and FSAC Clusters in Yemen available in this [A joint integrated initiative by the Shelter and FSAC in Yemen Draft 1.docx - Google Docs](#)

6. Monitoring and Accountability to Affected People

5.1. Monitoring

- Ensure that baseline assessment is carried out prior to the first distribution. This aims to give a clear starting point for the key food security indicators and measure to which extent the desired impact has been achieved.
- For partners implementing HFA using a cash-based modality, market assessments prior to commencing the project and post-distribution monitoring after every distribution cycle are mandatory. The PDM surveys are meant to monitor expenditure patterns, levels of satisfaction among target beneficiaries, patterns of assistance and utilization including intrahousehold/community dynamics and spending habits to tailor the relevant programmatic aspects as necessary. The PDMs should also monitor whether cash assistance successfully reached beneficiaries without any diversion and whether they were adequately informed about the objectives, timing, amounts and modality of cash transfer in a timely manner.
- Monitor the community perception of and satisfaction with service provision and support

the collective monitoring of whether the targeted population feels consulted, informed and their grievances addressed throughout the entire humanitarian response cycle.

- Collect market price data at least monthly, to proactively monitor and mitigate any potential negative impacts caused by the HFA intervention, ensuring that it does not lead to inflation or market distortions.

5.2. Accountability to Affected People.

- Information sharing sessions should be conducted with affected communities and all stakeholders to know more about activities, overall objectives, activities, inputs, and brief introduction about implementing agency.
- Protection, gender, and accountability to affected populations (AAP) should be at the core of the HFA response. Partners are encouraged to refer to FSAC Guidance for mainstreaming AAP in Yemen FSAC Response, available at the following link: <https://fscluster.org/yemen/document/guidance-mainstreaming-aap-yemen-fsac>.
- Ensure that the intervention considers the specific needs, vulnerabilities, and rights of different groups, including women, children, the elderly, and persons with disabilities. Incorporate measures to prevent and respond to gender-based violence, promote women's empowerment, and ensure the meaningful participation of affected communities in decision-making processes.
- Establish a robust complaint and feedback mechanism that allows individuals and communities to voice their concerns, provide feedback, and report any issues related to the HFA intervention.
- Partners should ensure adherence to the Do No Harm approach through upholding the principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, and independence in the design and implementation of HFA interventions. Partners should undertake regular assessments to identify and monitor potential risks and unintended negative consequences of HFA to minimize or mitigate harm and maximize the positive impact of interventions.
- It is advisable to share the monitoring reports with the respective FSAC Sub-National Coordinators to keep them informed on the changes in the food security situation, the effectiveness of the HFA response and other operational issues.

6. Reporting

- Refer to all key information tools and handbook for more information, in the following link; <https://fscluster.org/yemen/document/information-management-tools>.
- Provide all information related to HFA intervention achievements through using the FSAC IM 5W tool as the reporting template to collect information on Partner identifier details; Reporting period by month; location of the project at admin 2 level (Governorate and District); intervention description by SO, type, modality of implementation, quantity and

frequency of assistance and beneficiary description by quantity, gender, age, and disability. Follow the reporting requirements and formats set by the FSAC IM team.

- Provide planning information for HFA intervention through using the planning tool available at this link <https://fscluster.org/document/2024-fsac-planning-tool>.
- Share all the relevant information at the FSAC Sub-National cluster coordination meeting at the hub-level to keep all partners informed on any updates.
- Share success stories or case studies, to demonstrate the tangible impact and valuable lessons learned from the HFA intervention, highlighting practical examples of positive outcomes. Partners are encouraged to share their success stories/case studies/assessment reports and other materials with the respective FSAC SNCCs for inclusion in the FSAC monthly newsletter. (Refer to FSAC Monthly Newsletter, January 2024 as an example:<https://fscluster.org/yemen/document/fsac-monthly-newsletter-january-2024>).
- Inform the respective FSAC Sub-National Cluster Coordinators at hub levels, on any dynamic changes related to the food security situation in localized areas. This ensures timely awareness and enables an agile response to the evolving conditions, facilitating effective interventions and support.

Annex 1. FSAC Coordination and IM Team

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