

Addendum to the guidelines on Food Security Sector Response Packages - Monthly Food Assistance

March 2023

(This document is to be used as a supplementary to the guidelines issued by Food Security Sector on response package under Sector Objective One)

1. Background

The Food Security Sector issues guidance on response package as per Sphere Standards to maintain a harmonized response. The response package for monthly food ration is recommended for targeted assistance to the most food insecure households on a monthly basis so that their thresholds for food insecurity improves over time. Therefore, this particular response package is crucial to improve food insecurity in Syria which has been consistently over 30 percent at national level (with pockets of higher levels of food insecurity).

For emergency life saving assistance and to meet the immediate food needs, the sector recommends the provision of full 2100 kcal/person/day through Ready to Eat Rations (Sector Objective 1, activity 1.1 in sector Humanitarian Response Plan). For monthly life-saving and life-sustaining food assistance (Sector Objective 2, activity 1.2 in sector Humanitarian Response Plan), the sector recommends that at a minimum¹, food insecure households are provided with approximately 1500 kcal per person/day (70% of 2100 kcal). The sector also recommends that within the targeted households receiving monthly food rations, persons with specific needs² should receive additional kcal as top up provided ideally through cash/voucher modality with a specific objective of enhancing dietary diversity (access to fresh food).

The current document advocates for the distribution of full 2,100 kcal needs of an individual in emergencies as well as in two scenarios outlined below. These two scenarios are through a combination of area based and household assessment using most appropriate modalities.

Overall for monthly food assistance, the sector recommends partners to target the most food insecure households based on a combination of food security, socio-economic and status-based selection criteria. The sector recommends reaching these households on a monthly basis at a minimum 8 times in a year with a 30 day feeding period.

Learning from previous years, the sector is providing additional guidance on how to design the monthly response package taking into account various levels of food insecurity, context of operation (camp vs non-camp, urban vs rural, hard to reach and newly accessible areas), as well as Do No Harm. Based on consultation with key operational partners and donors across all hubs in the Syria response, the sector recommends that the monthly food ration is adapted as per agreed contexts outlined below using the sample baskets for a harmonized response. This is to cater for differing levels of food insecurity and access which will provide a basis for adapting the package. Thus, context driven recommendation is provided to support in such decision making.

2. Contextual scenarios

In 2022 the sector recognizes that food security crisis in Syria is indeed "a protracted crisis", and remains characterized by very complex drivers and contributing factors (i.e. continued economic coercive measures / economic decline and weakened local currency / sharp devaluations both of the Syrian pound as well as of the Turkish lira, price inflation pushing down households' purchasing power which further impact food insecurity through erosion of purchasing power / climate and crisis-induced agriculture production losses / water scarcity / protracted conflict in some areas of the country / protracted civilian displacement / Covid-19 disruptive impact on supply chains etc), it now requires the sector and partners to go beyond short-term responses, but to also focus on scaling up early recovery, restoration, protection and promotion of livelihoods, over the short- to-medium-term. Including work around the entire food system and its related value chains, including water. Therefore, for the 2022-23 response the sector recommends response packages to be adapted to the operational context around food insecurity in two broad categories:

(a) Household food insecurity

(b) Access and severity of needs.

¹ This excludes all emergency contexts whereby the full 2,100 kcal should be provided to individuals for ensure food security as per Sector Objective 1.1, refer to Recommendations for Food Assistance – March 2021

² Persons with special needs: such as children, Pregnant and Lactating Women, Persons with Disabilities and vulnerable elderly receive access to supplementary food assistance.

As per Sphere standards, food rations should be designed to make up the difference between the nutritional requirement and what people can provide for themselves. Additionally, where people have no access to any food at all, the distributed rations should meet their total nutritional requirements. Within this purview, the sector has established two contexts for guiding partners to have a harmonized response package as per agreed two contexts.

Household food insecurity: This relates to food security status at household level which may vary in the same area. For 2022 Humanitarian Needs Overview the classification of food insecurity is based on Consolidated Approach to Reporting Indicators of Food Insecurity (CARI)³. As per CARI⁴ there are four categories of food insecurity: Food Secure, Marginally Food Secure, Moderately Food Insecure and Severely Food Insecure. In the Humanitarian Response Plan for 2022-23, **the sector targets moderately and severely food insecure households for monthly life-saving and life-sustaining assistance**. Thus, the sector recommends that partners use a similar approach to determine the kcal for monthly food assistance. WFP’s vulnerability/targeting criteria is a reference tool to identify the different categories of food insecure households. Partners can also analyse their targeting/vulnerability criteria to determine thresholds of food insecurity in coordination with other sector partners/members. The sector strongly advocates for a harmonised approach to beneficiary selection and vulnerability criteria in 2022, the table below highlights the different food insecure categories for an improved targeting system.

Response Rationale	Food Insecure Category	Kcal
Improve the food security thresholds of the targeted household.	Moderately Food Insecure <i>significant food consumption gaps OR marginally able to meet minimum food needs only with irreversible coping strategies</i>	70% of the daily dietary needs which is a range of 1545 – 1566 kcal/person/day
	Severely Food Insecure <i>has extreme food consumption gaps or has extreme loss of livelihood assets will lead to food consumption gaps, or worse</i>	2100 kcal/person/day
	As per the countrywide household assessment on food security conducted in Syria in 2020, the following thresholds can be referred as guidance on food insecurity status:	
	<u>Moderately Food Insecure</u> Food Consumption Score: 28.5 - 42 Livelihood Coping Strategy Index: Employed Crisis Strategies Income/Expenditure Share: 65% ≤75%	<u>Severely Food Insecure</u> Food Consumption Score – 0 – 28 Livelihood Coping Strategy Index: Employed Emergency Strategies Income/Expenditure Share ≥75%

Access and severity of food insecurity: Due to challenges in access, Hard to Reach locations (including those being reached by Inter Agency Convoys) or areas that have recently changed control may go through higher degree of severity of needs. Similarly, last resort camps where residents may not have any other sources to access food apart from humanitarian food assistance may need higher levels of kcal; as well as people recently displaced until they are assessed and included in regular programming. Thus, for such areas, the sector recommends providing **full 2100 kcal/person/day**.

3. Sample Basket

The proposed percentage breakdown of the reference basket is: **59% of energy to be contributed by carbohydrates, 12% from proteins and 29% from fat for 70% kcal coverage**. The sector strongly recommends the feeding period of 30 days and a minimum of 8 distributions (8 months out of 12 months) to the assessed same food insecure households. To prevent acute malnutrition and micronutrient deficiencies in children, families with

³ CARI: <https://resources.vam.wfp.org/CARI>.

⁴ FSS adopted the CARI approach for the HNO 2022 where usually the Integrated Phased Classification (IPC) methodology is used, due to a combination of contextual limitations and lack of solid alternative tools

children between the ages of 6 and 23 months, receiving GFD, will receive a monthly ration of the Lipid based Nutrient Supplements in coordination with the nutrition sector.

Macronutrients/Food Category	Major food items in Syria contributing to the macronutrients
Carbohydrates	Rice, Pasta, Wheat Flour (fortified), Bulger Wheat
Protein	Beans/green peas, Lentils, Split Lentils, Chickpeas Canned Meat and Fish
Fat	Oil, Ghee, olive oil
Condiments/Misc	Tea, Tahini, Thyme, Salt (iodized)

Sample Basket One for meeting a minimum of 70% daily kcal intake

Methodology: Inclusion of food items most commonly used by operational partners across the Syria response.

Please note this reference basket does not have wheat flour which may be a crucial need in some areas, especially rural locations.

Food Groups	Commodity Name	Daily ration (Grams/Person/Day)	Kcal per person per day (Nutval 4.1 version)	Ration Weight (if family size is 5)	Ration Weight (if family size is 6)
CEREALS	Rice	83	300 - 312	12.45	15
	Pasta	33	123.6	4.95	6
	Bulgur	56	190	8.4	10
PULSES/PROTEIN	Beans	36	118.4 -- 123.3	5.4	6.4
	Chickpeas	28	101.1	4.2	5
	Fish, Tuna	9	17.6	1.35	1.6
	Lentils	56	190.5	8.4	10
FAT	Oil (fortified)	44	389.3 - 392.8	6.6	8
CONDIMENTS	Salt (iodized)	6	-	0.9	1
	Sugar	28	107.5	4.2	5
	Tomato Paste	9	7.3	1.35	1.6
	Total	387	1545 - 1566	58.2	69.6

Sample Basket Two for meeting a minimum of 70% daily kcal intake

Methodology: Inclusion of wheat flour and core items recommended in previous guidance issued in 2020

Food Groups	Commodity Name	Daily ration (Grams/Person/Day)	Kcal per person per day (Nutval 4.1 version)	Ration Weight (if family size is 5)	Ration Weight (if family size is 6)
CEREALS	Wheat Flour (fortified)	100	364	15	18
	Rice	33	120	5	6
	Pasta	33	123.7	5	6
	Bulgur	33	114	5	6
PULSES/PROTEIN	Red Split Lentils	40	135	6	7
	Lentils	33	112.7	5	6
	Chickpeas	40	135	6	7
FAT	Oil (fortified)	36	322	5	6
CONDIMENTS	Salt (iodized)	7	-	1	1
	Sugar	33	133	5	6
	Total	389	1,559	58	70

Guidance on reference basket for 2100 kcal per/person/per/day

- **Option 1:** Provide fresh food/micronutrients to top up rations through voucher/ cash programming to meet full 2100 kcal needs (where markets are accessible) – see top up reference basket under 1.3⁵ for fresh food. This is recommended where entry point is provision of micronutrients with dry food rations.

⁵ Sector Objective 1.3 recommended items refer to Recommendations for Food Assistance – March 2021

- **Option 2:** Increase the intake of the suggested reference baskets for dry food rations to reach 2100 Kcal. This is recommended where entry point is provision of 2100 kcal through dry rations and where households have enough cooking facilities/fuel to utilize food. (see sample baskets below)
- **Option 3:** Provide two packages of Ready to Eat Rations along with reference baskets. This is recommended where entry point is provision of diversified diet, access to cooking facilities/fuel is limited and is especially relevant for camps, Inter Agency Convoys, newly accessible areas and hard to reach locations (accessed less than 3 times continuously); and where markets are inaccessible.
- **Option 4:** Consider Micronutrient Powders (MNP) supplementation through in-kind distribution, to address the gaps in Household Dietary Diversity (HHDD) and micronutrient deficiencies.

Sample Basket One for meeting full 2100 kcal/person/day

Methodology: Inclusion of food items most commonly used by operational partners across the Syria response.

Please note this reference basket does not have wheat flour which may be a crucial need in some areas, especially rural locations.

Food Groups	Commodity Name	Daily ration (Grams/Person/Day)	Kcal per person per day (Nutval 4.1 version)	Ration Weight (if family size is 5)	Ration Weight (if family size is 6)
CEREALS	Rice	100	360	15.0	18
	Pasta	73.3	272.1	11.0	13.194
	Bulgur	100	342	15.0	18
PULSES/PROTEIN	Beans	46.67	155.4	7.0	8.4006
	Chickpeas	46.67	169.9	7.0	8.4006
	Fish, Tuna	13.3	27.7	2.0	2.394
	Lentils	46.67	160.1	7.0	8.4006
FAT	Oil (fortified)	48.53	429.5	7.3	8.7354
CONDIMENTS	Salt (iodized)	6	-	0.9	1.08
	Sugar	40	154.8	6.0	7.2
	Tomato Paste	9	7.3	1.4	1.62
	Total	530.14	2078.8	79.5	95

Sample Basket Two for meeting full 2100 kcal/person/day

Methodology: Inclusion of wheat flour and core items recommended in previous guidance issued in 2020

Food Groups	Commodity Name	Daily ration (Grams/Person/Day)	Kcal per person per day (Nutval 4.1 version)	Ration Weight (if family size is 5)	Ration Weight (if family size is 6)
CEREALS	Wheat Flour (fortified)	100	364	15.0	18
	Bulgur	66.67	228	10.0	12
	Rice	100	360	15.0	18
	Pasta	40	148.4	6.0	7.2
PULSES/PROTEIN	Red Split Lentils	40	137.2	6.0	7.2
	Whole Lentils	40	137.2	6.0	7.2
	White Beans	40	133.2	6.0	7.2
FAT	Oil (fortified)	48.53	429.5	7.3	8.7
CONDIMENTS	Salt (iodized)	6.67	-	1.0	1.2
	Sugar	40	154.8	6.0	7.2
	Total	521.87	2092.3	78.3	94

Guidance on modality

- The modality for delivering these response package should be contextualized as per the area of operation, implying all response packages can be delivered in kind, cash or voucher based on the feasibility of such modalities.
- In case partners seek to provide micro nutrients to households with specific needs as supplementary to the macro nutrients baskets then reference is provided under activity 1.3 for such top ups.⁶
- For the food component in SMEB, a combination of macro and micro nutrient is recommended to define the food basket. The sector works with Cash Working Groups on the harmonization of the cash transfer value for food assistance according to the SMEB.⁷

4. Household Size

- From the perspective of food security, a household is defined as the number of people eating from the same pot. Thus, determining household size is challenging.
- The average size of household varies across Syria and a summary of the average household by governorate is provided below (source: countrywide Food Security Household Assessment, 2020). This shows a range of 5 – 8 members on average across the 14 governorates.

Governorate	Total HH members, Average	Governorate	Total HH members, Average
Damascus	5	Al-Hasakeh	6
Aleppo	5	Deir-ez-Zor	7
Rural Damascus	5	Tartous	5
Homs	5	Ar-Raqqqa	6
Hama	6	Dar'a	6
Lattakia	5	As-Sweida	5
Idleb	6	Quneitra	5
National	6		

- As operational partners have established their supply chain based on packaging as per their organization's caseload, the sector provides options for various ways to accommodate the household size.

Option 1: Packaging by individual ration needs and providing packages as per number of people in a family.

Option 2: Providing 2 packages for large families (for instance if the package is for 5 persons, provide 2 packages to families with more than 5 people).

Example from a partner

Distribution of kits will be based on the following breakdown based on household size:

		Total weight per HH category
1-2 people in HH	1 kit	21.6kg
3-4 people	2 kit	43.2kg
5-6 people	3 kit	64.8kg
7-8 people	4 kit	86.4kg
9 + people	5 kit	108kg

5. Reporting:

⁶ Sector Objective 1.3 recommended items refer to Recommendations for Food Assistance – May 2022

⁷ Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB), North Syria: Guidance Note – Cash Based Responses Technical Working Group (CBR-TWG): February 2017. Please ask your hub Cash Coordinator for guidance note.

- For Reporting purposes please indicate the family size by reporting on the number of individuals you are targeting rather than family size to ensure we capture the correct numbers