**Sector Objective 1:** Provide lifesaving and life-sustaining assistance to meet the food needs of the most vulnerable crisis affected groups.

People receiving food assistance against SRP targets:

- **6.53 million reached at peak with food baskets or cash/voucher food assistance.**
- **5.94 million provided with food basket or cash/voucher food assistance on average each month.**

People provided with monthly food baskets (average):

- **5,829,592**
  - **94% Covered**

People provided with wheat flour and bread (average):

- **2,253,940**
  - **136% Covered**

People provided with cash/voucher assistance (average):

- **111,487**
  - **21% Covered**

People provided emergency food rations (cumulative):

- **740,819**
  - **91% Covered**

**Sector Objective 2:** Protect and strengthen the assets base, support income generating activities and increase agriculture production

People receiving livelihood/agriculture assistance against SRP targets:

- **1.9 million reached cumulatively from January to December.**

Households provided with agricultural inputs:

- **107,972**
  - **77% Covered**

Households benefiting from horticulture and small livestock production support:

- **149,816**
  - **187% Covered**

Households receiving animal feed, veterinary services & animals treated/vaccinated:

- **19,581**
  - **20% Covered**

Households receiving cash for work and/or agriculture vouchers:

- **38,360**
  - **372% Covered**

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**Funding required:**

- **USD 1.2 billion**

- **Received:** USD 574 million
  - **47% Funded**

- **Gap:** USD 644 million

**People targeted:**

- **7.5 million***
  - 7 million food assistance
  - 2.5 agriculture
  - *Approximately 2 Million receive both food assistance and agriculture support.

**Number of Partners**

- **Syria Hub:** 8
- **Jordan Hub:** 11
- **Turkey Hub:** 99
- **Iraq:** 4
  - **Total SRP partners all hubs:** 35

**Sector/cluster meetings:**

- **Syria Hub:** Once/monthly & sub-national coordination meetings in 5 sub-national hubs
- **Turkey Hub:** bi-weekly, plus agriculture working group meeting bi-weekly
- **Jordan Hub:** Once/monthly
- **Iraq:** Once/monthly

**FSS WOS product links**

- Six month bulletin Jan-Jun 2015
- July Response Factsheet
- August Response Factsheet
- September Response Factsheet
- October Response Factsheet
- November Response Factsheet

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**Website:** [http://foodsecuritycluster.net/countries/syria](http://foodsecuritycluster.net/countries/syria)

**Contact:** Info.Wos@foodsecuritycluster.net

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The FSS co-lead agencies are WFP and FAO. The FSS NGO co-chairs are Mercy Corps (WOS), GOAL (Turkey Hub) and an INGO Jordan Hub.
Food Security Situation

The prevalence of food insecurity is higher in rural than in urban areas, in part because between three and ten times per month.

The WFP Food Security Assessment (2015), which was the basis of sector HNO along with other assessments, identified that one in three Syrians – 6.3 million people – are food insecure, and 2.4 million are at high risk of slipping – quickly – into food insecurity. This figure would have been higher but for the assistance already provided by Food Security Sector partners. Less than 16 percent of the population are food secure.

The 6.5 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) give rise to the greatest concern: they are the most vulnerable and the most food insecure. More than 40 percent of IDPs and returnees are estimated to be food insecure.

In all governorates, the overwhelming majority of people are either already food insecure or at risk of becoming food insecure. Analysis of the 164 critical sub-districts shows variations in severity: 20 sub-districts have more than 80 percent prevalence of food insecure people and most sub-districts are within the 20-40 percent prevalence range.

Most Syrians were found to use food-related coping strategies. More than 60 percent of Syrians use livelihood coping strategies. More than half of all surveyed households had gone into debt to pay for their food needs. One in three people are going to bed hungry between three and ten times per month.

The prevalence of food insecurity is higher in rural than in urban areas, in part because people in urban areas typically have more markets and potential income opportunities than in rural areas.

Key food security concerns

- UNDP (2015) estimate that two-thirds of Syrians now live below the poverty line, while CARE (2015) report that at least 88 percent of households in southern Syria fall under the extreme poverty line ($1.25 per person per day).

- Poverty rates are compounded by rising prices. In the year to November 2015, WFP found the average cost of a standard basket of dry goods increased 62 percent, while diesel increased by 96 percent. In the six months to November 2015, Reach (2015) found the food price index rose by 22.8% in Syrian pounds.

- Increasing prices are forcing households to resort to coping strategies to meet basic food needs. WFP found that 37 percent of Syrians are using emergency coping strategies such as selling land or their last female animals. This can have long-term, harmful effects that reduce the possibility of climbing out of food insecurity, as this decreases future production and are difficult to reverse.

- In most besieged areas, access to food is increasingly problematic due to limited food availability, high prices and diminishing employment opportunities, resulting in dwindling purchasing power, deteriorating consumption, and use of negative coping. For instance, the price of a standard food basket in Deir-ez-Zor is 16 times higher than pre-siege prices.

- Unemployment shows no sign of abating, having increased from 10 percent in 2011 to 57 percent in 2014. While salaries and government pensions are the most common source of income for half of the Syrian population, there is widespread variation geographically. CARE for instance reports engagement with armed actors as the most prevalent primary source of income in the south, relied upon by 17 percent of household.

- The depreciation of the Syrian pound is exacerbating pressure on households, as those without access to foreign currency through remittances are more vulnerable to rising prices.

- CARE’s (2015) identified that the continued impact of high fuel costs and disrupted transport routes present challenges for agricultural producers. Further, the lack of electricity impacts costs and productivity due to inability refrigerate and use machinery.

- Mercy Corps (2015) also noted the lack of men of productive age for labour, high prices of fertilizers and pesticides, and the reported disappearance of Syrian Government agricultural extension services, including cessation of large-scale aerial spraying, as further inhibiting agricultural production.

Food Security Sector’s response

In 2015, Food Security sector partners responded to the deteriorating food security situation in Syria through two sector objectives:

1. Provide lifesaving and life-sustaining assistance to meet the food needs of the most vulnerable crisis affected groups and
2. Protect and strengthen the assets base, support income generating activities and increase agriculture production.

These two sector objectives ensure that the sector has a holistic approach towards the affected population so that their immediate food needs are met through appropriate food
assistance and also where the conditions are conducive their livelihoods are restored. Resilience is an integral part of this approach as it provides an opportunity to the massive number of people in need of food assistance to cope with their current crisis and at the same time where the conditions are favourable can re-establish their livelihoods.

**Sector Objective 1: Provide lifesaving and life-sustaining assistance to meet the food needs of the most vulnerable crisis affected groups**

During 2015, the sector assisted 5.9 million people with food baskets (monthly ration), cash and voucher food assistance on average every month.

### Beneficiaries receiving food basket and cash/voucher food assistance 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jan</th>
<th>Feb</th>
<th>Mar</th>
<th>Apr</th>
<th>May</th>
<th>Jun</th>
<th>Jul</th>
<th>Aug</th>
<th>Sep</th>
<th>Oct</th>
<th>Nov</th>
<th>Dec</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6,396,776</td>
<td>6,183,672</td>
<td>6,115,487</td>
<td>6,069,836</td>
<td>6,030,907</td>
<td>6,532,129</td>
<td>5,742,696</td>
<td>5,358,809</td>
<td>6,573,762</td>
<td>6,183,672</td>
<td>6,030,907</td>
<td>5,256,622</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### December 2015 Highlights

In December, sector partners together were able to reach 5.7 million people in 135 sub districts with food baskets, cash and voucher assistance. Out of 135 sub districts, cash and voucher assistance was reported in 15 sub districts. The response also included wheat flour and bread distribution in 51 sub districts; and emergency food rations in 41 sub districts. Overall, FSS partners reported assisting:

- 5,650,552 people with food baskets
- 1,462,103 people with wheat flour and bread
- 18,709 people with cash and vouchers
- 18,709 people with emergency food rations. Cumulatively in 2015, 740,819 people were reached with emergency food rations in 41 sub districts, predominantly in the governorates of Aleppo and Idlib.

This amounts to 28,958 MT for food basket and 6,441 MT for wheat flour and bread.

### SO1: Key analysis from sector partners combined response from all hubs

- **District level coverage:** In December 2015, FSS partners were able to access 50 districts (out of a total 61 districts). Food assistance was not reported in 11 districts. These are Al Bab, Jerablus, Menbij in Aleppo; Abu Kamal, Al Mayadin and Deir-ez-Zor in Deir-ez-Zor, Tell Abyad, Ar-Raqqa and Ash-Thuwarah in Ar-Raqqa, As-Sanamayn in Dar’a and Tadmor in Homs.

- **Sub district level coverage:** In December 2015, out of a total of 272 sub districts, 148 sub districts were reached by FSS partners.

- **Hard to reach (HTR) communities:** Of 135 HTR communities in December 2015, 24 received food assistance in Aleppo, Damascus, Dar’a, Hama, Homs, Idlib, Lattakia and rural governorates. Of the estimated 2.1 million food insecure people in HTR communities, 612,000 were provided food assistance.

- **Besieged communities:** Two of the 18 besieged communities were reached with food assistance in December 2015 – in the sub districts of Damascus and Markaz Darayya. Of an estimated 0.6 million people in need, 12,000 were provided food assistance.

- **Food basket kilocalorie (kcal) coverage:** Food basket kcal information is available...
from 16 partners for 131 sub districts for December. Of these 131 sub districts, 54 received a kcal value of 1,600 per person per day. Of the 5.65 million assisted with food baskets in December, 1.54 million were assisted with 1,600 kcal and 4.1 million received less than 1,600 kcal per day (based on partners' reported caseload). A map depicting reported kcal coverage is available in Annex 1, indicating gaps where the minimum kcal of 1,600 is not covered. The funding gap has been a major issue in maintaining the recommended kcal of 1,600 per person per day.

- **Wheat flour and bread**: In December, 1,462,103 people in 51 sub districts were provided wheat flour and bread. 46 sub districts received both food baskets and wheat flour/bread. This exceeds the target for wheat flour and bread at 136 percent. FSS partners scaled up this activity to meet emerging needs in response to a reduction in government subsidies to bakeries.

- **Cash and voucher**: 92,174 people were reached in December, representing 17 percent of the average monthly target due to funding and access issues faced by partners.

**Cash and voucher assistance highlights**

Cash and voucher food assistance was provided to an average of 111,187 people per month in 2015. This compares to a monthly target of 540,000 people, indicating 21 percent achievement of the target.

The provision of cash and voucher food assistance increased steadily throughout 2015, with the monthly average increasing from 77,769 in the first six months of the year to 144,606 in the final six months.

The Cash Based Response Working Group based in South Turkey is currently assessing the feasibility of cash and vouchers in Syria. The WOS Food Security Sector aims to conduct a similar study with an adapted methodology in other areas of Syria in 2016.

**SO2: Key analysis from sector partners combined response from all hubs**

- **District level coverage**: A total of 17 partners have provided assistance under the Sector Objective 2. In December 2015 FSS partners were able to access 59 districts with various types of agriculture/livelihoods assistance.

- **Sub district level coverage**: In December, out of a total of 272 sub districts, 249 sub districts were reached by FSS partners with SO2 activities.

- **Hard to reach (HTR) communities**: 53,734 people were reached with livelihood and agriculture assistance in 59 HTR communities – out of an estimated 2.1 million food insecure people.

- **Besieged communities**: 5,826 people in two communities (in Deir-ez-Zor and以外6 partners for 131 sub districts for December. Of these 131 sub districts, 54 received a kcal value of 1,600 per person per day. Of the 5.65 million assisted with food baskets in December, 1.54 million were assisted with 1,600 kcal and 4.1 million received less than 1,600 kcal per day (based on partners’ reported caseload). A map depicting reported kcal coverage is available in Annex 1, indicating gaps where the minimum kcal of 1,600 is not covered. The funding gap has been a major issue in maintaining the recommended kcal of 1,600 per person per day.

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- **Besieged communities**: 5,826 people in two communities (in Deir-ez-Zor and
Markaz Darayya subdistricts) received livestock support and agricultural inputs – out of an estimated 0.6 million people in need.

**Agricultural inputs (Cereal seeds and vegetable packages):** Sector partners reached 107,972 households against the SRP target of 139,400 households annually.

**Horticulture and small livestock production support:** Sector partners reached 19,581 households against the SRP target of 97,300 households annually.

**Horticulture and livestock support:** Sector partners have reached 149,816 households with livestock support that includes animal feed and provision of veterinary services. At the end of December 8.67 million animals had been treated/vaccinated against a target of 80,000 households and 4 million animals in the SRP.

**Cash for work activities and agriculture vouchers:** 38,360 households have been reached by sector partners for cash for work and agriculture voucher support. This was against the SRP target of 10,300 households.

Further analysis of SO1 and SO2 demonstrate that in 130 sub districts both food assistance and livelihood assistance have been provided by FSS partners in the month of December (illustrated right).

**Combined SO1 and SO2 response map**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector assessment coverage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In September 2015, GOAL produced an economic evaluation of their food assistance programmes in Idleb governorate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WFP released the Food Security Sector Assessment report in October 2015 – the first country wide food security survey of Syria, providing a baseline for continued monitoring of food security impacts. WFP also released its Market Price Watch Bulletin for Syria in November 2015.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REACH performed a market monitoring exercise in Northern Syria from June to November 2015. The report provides a comprehensive overview of price movements and the impact of exchange rate fluctuations on households.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solidarités International produced a case study illustrating the impact of cash based projects in Aleppo in November 2015.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A summary of partners’ assessments is compiled through a sector assessment registry for comprehensive analysis at the WoS sectoral level, available here.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Progress on priorities identified in last bulletin:

1. Setting up sub national coordination for improving operational coordination through Syria and South Turkey hubs.
   - Five sub national hubs have been established in Aleppo, Tartous, Homs, Qamishly, and Damascus.
   - The sub national coordination mechanism focuses on needs and response analysis in their respective areas and engages with a variety of actors including Syrian NGOs.

2. Improving Needs, Response and Gaps analysis
   - Regular needs, response and gaps analysis were produced and distributed in the second half of 2015. However, for gaps analysis comparing response with people in need, more effort will be actioned from January 2016 using new figures from the HNO 2106.

2- To inform the strategic decision-making

FSS strengthened its assessment coordination by establishing a sector assessment registry and incorporating sector assessment coverage for 2015. This will be an ongoing exercise to analyze and harmonize assessment methodologies and findings through the various technical resources/partners of FSS. This will assist in compiling needs/evidence based analysis for strategic decision making.

Progress on priorities identified in last bulletin:

1. Delivery of Technical Working Group (TWG) of Food Security experts’ ToRs
   - TWG established in August 2015 with representatives from all hubs. The TWG met in September 2015 to develop the People in Need numbers and Severity Ranking, along with key messages for needs for the HNO 2016.
   - The TWG will carry forward the work of periodic food security analysis, updating People in Need numbers, severity analysis and providing other technical support to the sector in 2016. It will also focus on streamlining assessment tools and indicators for partners.

2. Developing sector Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO)
   - The 2016 HNO was finalized in mid-October 2015, providing a solid common basis for the humanitarian community’s response.

3. Strategy for protection, gender and AAP mainstreaming including a system for documenting evidence and good practices aligned to the sectoral guidance
   - Survey on integration of protection mainstreaming and AAP in Food Security programs undertaken with six partners from Jordan hub in January 2016 (findings outlined in box below).
   - Gender, Age and AAP in Food Security Programmes study on documenting good practices and lessons learned is planned for February and March 2016.
Progress on priorities identified in last bulletin:

1. Linkage with nutrition cluster to be operationalized
   - The WoS recommendations on response packages such as food baskets, reference baskets for cash and voucher, backyard farming are nutrition sensitive. Nutrition experts were engaged with this process.
   - The FSS and Nutrition cluster held a joint workshop in Gaziantep in November 2015. Recommendations from the workshop on food basket nutrition and harmonization can be downloaded from http://bit.ly/1RY2tG1 (English) and http://bit.ly/1Ztc9cy (Arabic).
   - A Nutrition sensitive agriculture training was conducted in South Turkey in November 2015.
   - On programming, preventive care such as distribution of plumpy doz was scaled up with food baskets.

2. Technical guidance related to indicators and monitoring
   - The FSS held an assessment coordination meeting in August 2015, attended by partners from all hubs and Iraq. Consultations led to two concrete suggestions; (1) Situation monitoring: Taken forward by the TWG for assessment coordination and (2) Programme monitoring: An exercise with partners’ representatives for programme standards/ monitoring from all hubs to harmonize and guide the sector on targeting/ selection criteria and monitoring indicators. The outcomes were:
     a) Through consultations with Sy, Jordan, South Turkey and other locations, agreed recommendations for geographical targeting, household selection criteria and response packages were published in January 2016 – available here.
     b) In the HRP, the FSS logframe includes output and outcome indicators. The output indicators are linked to the 4W template and outcome indicators will be part of ongoing work with partners to collect qualitative information on a quarterly basis.

Joint Operational Planning for the sector

- In August 2015 the FSS developed a Joint Operational Plan for prioritized activities for the second half of 2015

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Preliminary protection mainstreaming survey findings – Jordan hub

While FSS partners from Jordan hub are yet to commence using the sector’s protection mainstreaming and AAP checklist, many indicated they are already implementing actions recommended for safe distributions in the checklist, including:

- Establishing multiple distribution sites to avoid crowding (100%)
- Ensuring beneficiaries do not travel long distances to access distribution sites (67%)
- Ensuring distribution takes place during daylight (67%)
- Considering the specific needs of people with disability, older people, pregnant women, child headed households through house to house distributions or any other means (67%) of the time

Further, to ensure accountability to affected populations:

- 75 percent of respondents indicated making distributions based on food security needs
- 75 percent of respondents reported establishment of feedback mechanisms

3- To plan and develop strategy

Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) 2016

The FSS Operational Plan for the HRP 2016 was developed via two steps. Firstly, each hub held a workshop with partners to determine sector objectives, activities and targets to address the key drivers to food insecurity identified in HNO 2016. Secondly, 15 WOS partners representing various hubs met and reviewed the drafts. The drafts were consolidated into a single document with the final recommendations on the sector objectives, activities, indicators and target.

The FSS Operational Plan targets 7.5 million people and aims to ensure adequate food consumption for the most affected populations; reduce the number of people adopting negative coping mechanisms; support early and medium term recovery of critical agricultural/livelihood assets and essential services related to food security. In doing so, the sector aims to contribute to the overall goal of food security so that food is available in sufficient quantities at both household and community levels; affected people have access to food through regular assistance, purchase or production; and food consumed has a positive nutritional impact on the targeted population.

In total 40 partners submitted 60 project sheets with a total sector envelop of 1.23 billion USD.
Advocacy with donors and key stakeholders on food security situation in Syria

Progress on priorities identified in last bulletin:

Building capacity of partners as required in each hub
- FSS worked closely with RFSAN, who conducted a price monitoring workshop on 26-27 October 2015. Partners from nine FSS and other sectors attended.
- Working on Contingency Planning for key hotspot areas
- In total, six contingency plans were developed for locations including Dar’a, Idleb and Aleppo. These plans assisted in the coordinated response to the sudden onset displacement.

WOS coordination mechanisms in Iraq

In 2015, the sector engaged with Quamishli partners working in North East Syria to link them with the WOS coordination mechanism. An additional partner will be brought on in 2016.

An NGO coordinator is expected to arrive in 2016 for Iraq NGOs – to facilitate the establishment of a broader, more integrated coordination system.

4- To build national capacity in preparedness and contingency planning

Progress on priorities identified in last bulletin:

In regards to Emergency Response/Humanitarian Pooled Funds, FSS prioritized the following activities in different hubs. Prioritization of projects for the remainder of the year focusing on:
- Food assistance to most vulnerable Syrian and Palestinian refugees
- Wheat flour and bread support to bakeries
- Cash and vouchers as modality for food assistance
- Distribution of agricultural inputs and animal feed, veterinary services and horticulture/livestock production

Funding highlights for 2015

HPF and Emergency Response Fund (ERF) funds received
- Jordan hub: USD 500,000 received for HPF
- South Turkey Hub: USD 12.3 million received for HPF
- Syria hub: USD 2.5 million received for ERF

Annex 1: Kcal coverage, based on 16 partners’ inputs