

Guideline on Food Security and Agriculture Cluster Response Packages

The Food Security and Agriculture Cluster (FSAC) has been a central part of the humanitarian response in Afghanistan. The FSAC is co-led by the World Food Program (WFP) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), with a non-governmental organization (NGO, currently WHH) as Co-chair. The Cluster is supported by over 253 registered NGOs (international and national), United Nations (UN) agencies and donors operational in all 34 provinces.

FSAC response strategy 2023 includes food assistance through cash and in-kind modalities, agriculture kit, vegetable kit, livestock kit, ruminants and poultry, and livestock vaccination. It is important to use uniform approach as per minimum acceptable humanitarian standards across the country where relevant to avoid inequality, harm and improper utilization of already stretched resources. In case of significant change in the context like vulnerability or market price changes, the packages need to be better explained to justify humanitarian intervention. These guidelines are thoroughly discussed with FSAC partners, donors and humanitarian agencies in various FSAC meetings and approved and agreed by all relevant stakeholders.

Food Assistance: Food assistance is one of the largest interventions in the humanitarian response strategy. FSAC partners agreed to have separate food basket for cash and in-kind response because of multiple challenges including logistic constraints associated with in-kind distribution. FSAC's cash basket is different from in-kind basket. Rice is not included in the in-kind basket due to cost and logistical challenges. Considering however beneficiaries' preference and consumption habits and feedback from partners, FSAC included domestic¹ rice in its cash basket.

Basic rules that have been considered to design food assistance package are:

- Minimum 2100 kcal/person/day for emergencies, but it varies with climatic conditions, type of work/livelihoods and vulnerable groups
- Family size
- Nutritional balance
- Cultural food habits and practices
- Specific need coming from evidence-based assessment (nutritional deficiency etc.)
- Overall needs vs funding availability
- Logistic constraints
- Equality, equity and do no harm

In-kind food basket: In-kind response food basket must include 100 kg wheat flour, 8 kg pulses, 8 litres oil, and 1 kg salt to provide 2100 kcal/person/day. This package provides enough amount of protein, micronutrients and fat for a household of 7 members for a month. WFP distribute a slightly different food basket and that includes 92 kg wheat flour, 9.1 kg vegetable oil, 12.5 kg

¹ Produced locally (not imported), having the same nutritional value as the imported rice.

pulses, 1 kg salt plus 2.1 kg high energy biscuits and 1.5 kg Plumpy Doz. This package also provides 2100 kcal/person/day and enough protein, micronutrients, and fat, however, logistically it is not possible for NGOs to distribute this package because wheat flour is being sold in bags of 50 kg in the local market. If logistically feasible, partners can decide to distribute either package.

Cash-based food basket: To give beneficiaries a wider choice of food commodities the cash-based food basket must include wheat flour, domestic rice, vegetable oil, pulses and salt.

Cluster recommended basic food basket (100% - 2,100 kcal/person/day for a family of seven) August 2023			
Items	Unit	Quantity	Average Price in USD
Wheat Flour	kg	89	36.48
Domestic Rice	kg	21	16.73
Vegetable Oil	litre	7	9.50
Pulses	kg	9	12.08
Salt	kg	1	0.20
Total (USD)			75 USD*
<i>*FSAC is recommending distribution of 50% of the recommended food basket</i>			
<i>* Equivalent AFN amount should be based on the prevailing exchange rate</i>			

Considering the availability of some sources of food from own production and the market, and to enable FSAC to address the needs of as many people in need FSAC is recommending distribution of 50% of the recommended food basket (both in-kind and cash) for IPC Phase 3 and 4 populations. The recommendation changes depending on season and funding situation, partners should always consult FSAC before project implementation.

Monitoring of food basket value and adaptation of transfer value: FSAC has set triggers/thresholds to enable review of the transfer value in a timely manner in line with inflation and exchange rate fluctuations. The transfer value will be changed when there is:

1. Trigger 1: A change in food basket cost =>10% and <20% sustained for a period of eight consecutive weeks warrants a food basket cost revision. A tolerance of ±1percentage point or a price change of between 9% and 11% would also trigger a revision.
2. Trigger 2: A change in food basket cost =>20% sustained for a period of four consecutive weeks' warrants a food basket revision. A tolerance of ±2percentage point or a price change of between 18% and 22% would also trigger a revision.

FSAC and the CVWG have agreed on a dedicated process for undertaking the modification of the transfer value.

Cash for work: Cash for work is commonly used in Afghanistan to cover food and income gap for the basic food basket and to rehabilitate basic livelihoods infrastructure. Cluster had a discussion in regional meetings, consultation with national FSAC partners to come up with recommended rates. These are 350 AFs to 400 AFs for unskilled and 700 AFs for skilled labor adjusted as per local rates to avoid large pool of labour from formal labour market. To know how many days a person should work to achieve 100% food basket through cash for work, food basket cost (\$75) should be divided by daily wage labour. The basket cost and each food item amount should be adjusted if a partner wants to support families with half food basket. Half food basket distribution should be justified and supported by assessments and first-hand data.

Agriculture Kit: Agriculture package was discussed in detail with both MAIL (ministry of agriculture, irrigation and livestock) and FSAC partners and everyone agreed on the below package:

Crop package (per HH)	Units	Price per 1 MT (USD)	Price per kg (USD)	Cost per unit (USD)
Certified wheat seed	50 kg	570	0.57	29
DAP fertilizer	50 kg	770	0.77	39
Urea fertilizer	50 kg	360	0.36	18
Transportation cost	150 kg			4
Total Package Cost				89 USD

Prices for certified wheat seeds, DAP and urea fertilizers include transportation cost up to the district centres in all provinces. Most of the distribution are taking place at district level so additional 300 AFs (4 USD) are included for beneficiaries to transport inputs to their homes as per community demand. Basic guidelines must be provided to farmers to make good use of the inputs for better production. For the areas where farmers are cultivating maize or for summer crops, cluster and MAIL recommend providing 12.5 kg maize seed, 50 kg Urea and 50 kg DAP. Variety of seeds and types of fertilizers may change in some areas, so cluster recommends partners to have discussion with regional focal points and MAIL directorates before planning input distribution. In cash 90 USD should be provided if certified seeds and quality fertilizers are available in local markets.

Vegetable Kit: FSAC packages are designed to tackle with nutrition problem in the country as Afghanistan shows one of the worst nutrition indicators across the globe. Cluster is aiming to provide nutritious vegetable seeds and tools to grow nutritious vegetables at the household level for own consumption. Detail of the package is:

Vegetable package (per HH)	Units	Unit Cost (USD)	Total Cost (USD)
Minimum 4 different types of vegetable seed	1 kg (250 g seeds from each vegetable type)	40	40
Basic tool kit including spade, rake and hoe	Kit	10	10
Total Package Cost		50 USD	

Livestock Package: FSAC partners agreed to include livestock protection activities in the cluster response plan especially for natural disaster context where livestock depletion is very high. 69% people are associated with livestock, so government is advising to support small scale subsistence livestock farmers. Package includes below interventions, but it can be adjusted based on needs and justification. Like in 2018 drought because of the harvest loss wheat straw was not available in local markets. Wheat straw can be adjusted with additional animal feed.

Livestock package (per HH)	Units	Unit Cost (USD)	Total Cost (USD)
Animal feed	100 kg	0.35	35
Straw (where possible and logistically feasible)	200 kg	0.2	40
De-wormer	2 litres	8	16
Transportation cost			4
Total Package Cost		95 USD	

Emergency livestock treatment and vaccination campaign will be carried out in close coordination with MAIL in case of major disease outbreak where government have no or limited capacity to response. This package is proposed for only vulnerable households having maximum 2 large ruminants and 8 small ruminants.

Poultry package: Poultry play an important role in improving daily food consumption and income to poor rural communities. FSAC designed the below package in consultation with NGO partners and government to improve food security and nutrition status, especially for women and children. Same package can be provided in cash where markets are functional and poultry package is available in local market.

Poultry package (per HH)	Units	Unit Cost (USD)	Total Cost (USD)
Chicken (3 roosters & 27 hens)	30	6	180
Feed	150 kg	0.55	82.5
Drinker	3	2	6
Feeder	3	2	6
Chicken coop support for material	1 coop	120	120
Total Cost (USD)		395 USD	

All agriculture-based food security and livelihoods intervention outlined in the FSAC strategy is integrated with food assistance and nutrition programme and the purpose of the intervention is to minimize direct food support and ensure food security and nutrition in remote targeted locations on long term basis.

Small ruminant package: Small ruminant packages offer an important way to diversify household income for poor families and improve food consumption. As multiple sectors have delivered small ruminant packages in the past, it is important to standardize this intervention and to ensure that inputs are delivered in a way to ensure sustainability.

Small ruminant package	Unit	Unit price (USD)
2 local available goats with 2 kids or pregnant	200	400
2 Bags concentrated animal feed (100 kg)	35	70
2 Bottles de-wormer (200 ml)	2	4
Total Cost (USD)		474 USD

Large ruminant package: Large ruminant packages offer a high value asset that can greatly improve household income. This intervention should carefully consider the household's access to additional resources such as water, adequate rangelands and winter fodder.

Large ruminant package	Unit	Unit price (USD)
1 local available cow with 1 calve or pregnant	800	800
2 Bags concentrated animal feed (100 kg)	35	70
2 Bottles de-wormer (200 ml)	2	4
Total Cost (USD)		874 USD