Food Assistance Monitoring Tools

Onsite, Post distribution and Market tools

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Background

As part of the agreement during the November, gFSC program quality working group, a team was tasked to finalise the consolidation of the monitoring tools that are used by different agencies. It was acknowledged that there were key themes that emerged from the different partners that could be consolidated for having an effective Monitoring system. A number of partners shared their tools as indicated below:

![Data Sources](image)

However, as the team tried to consolidate the tools, it emerged that the finalized tools were overly summarized. Based on this, WV was tasked to finalise the tools and consolidate them based on some of the common elements that were already present from different partners and the feedback received during the face to face meeting. Additionally, Impact Initiative worked on the consolidation of indicators to be used for monitoring food assistance programmes both at output and outcome levels. These tools have taken into account the indicators to make sure that these are also part and parcel of the finalized tools.

Below are some of the common features from the different monitoring tools from different agencies
Based on the above analysis, this document presents different monitoring tools appropriate for food assistance programs. These are General Food Distribution, Food for Assets, School Feeding and Cash transfers. To fulfil the minimum commitments for participation in the cluster, the partners have agreed to mainstream protection in programme delivery including respect for principles of non-discrimination, do no harm and mainstreaming cross cutting themes including gender, age, disability and accountability. The objectives of the tools could be summarized as below;

1. To determine effectiveness of food assistance in relation to addressing the needs of the affected communities. The sex and age disaggregated data (SADD) through the onsite and post-distribution monitoring tools will be collected and reporting based on the stipulated frequencies.
2. Identify short comings during the implementation process
3. Identity achievements and highlight them (Acknowledge and cerebrate success)
4. Enabling project implementers and managers to review progress made

1. **Post distribution Monitoring – General Food Distribution**

Post distribution monitoring is a tool which aims at systematic collection and analysis of information of the project during implementation. It provides management with valid information which they can use to assess the efficiency of various inputs of the project and effectiveness of that project in terms of meeting set objectives.

This General Food Distribution PDM provides information from targeting, registration, obtaining information on the usage of complaints mechanisms. It also assesses the beneficiary satisfaction with registration and distribution process and also allows the assessment of impact of the program on beneficiaries.

In order to ensure effective data collection, this PDM has included food consumption score as well as coping strategy index modules for comprehensiveness of the information collected from the field. This
has allowed the PDMs to collect more information at outcome level as indicated through the critical indicators needed to be collected in the field based on the consolidated indicator list for food security cluster.

**Key issues**

- Responding to the past comments from different members of the working group, this tool has been enhanced to ensure other indicators are included
- Household details on the first page is necessary to ensure that sex and age disaggregated data is collected and analyzed as part of the monitoring process.
- The recommendation is to collect this data on quarterly basis for effective usage of the information as opposed to monthly or bi monthly as food consumption score and Coping strategy index are part of the modules.
- The data is collected at household level (household survey)
- The sample will be determined using a sample size calculator or any statistical sound sampling approach

2. **Onsite Distribution monitoring**

The objective of onsite monitoring is to ensure that there is immediate feedback in terms of the distribution process as well as beneficiary satisfaction with the whole process. This allows the agencies to make quick adjustment during the process to ensure that all people are served accordingly. This onsite monitoring is for both General food distribution and Food for Work projects.

**Key issues**

- Coverage of all Distribution points – 100% coverage on monthly basis
- Observation and checking of different standards and systems put in place at the distribution point. The tool can be done by one monitor at each food distribution point

3. **Post distributions for Food for Assets Programmes**

Unlike the post distribution monitoring for General food distribution, Food for Asset programmes have other critical areas that needs to be monitored effectively to ensure that the programmes achieve the intended objectives. As such, the PDM for FFA has been enhanced and it focuses on the asset being created, work norms, environmental issues as well as the other typical areas i.e. registration, distribution and protection issues. It needs to be noted that there are other modules that are similar with GFD as such, for projects that are integrated; it is possible to combine the tools. Households involved in FFA
interventions are randomly selected and the tool administered at the household level. Calculation of the sample size will be determined using a sample size calculator or any method which is statistical sound.

4. Post distributions for School Feeding/Food for Education

Considering that there are still a number of countries implementing school feeding, it is ideal to have its own separate monitoring tool. School feeding continues to remain one of the responses that is able to use the school as a center of development and achieve various outcomes through this intervention.

Below are some of the objectives of school feeding:

- To provide a complimentary meal to school children and non-attendees aged between 4 – 14 years from vulnerable households.
- To increase/maintain school attendance and enrolment.
- To improve the nutritional status of children between the ages 4 – 14 years

Objectives of SFP Post Distribution Survey

- To monitor the distribution efficiency of food rations and other resources.
- To assess the school children satisfaction with the quality and quantity of food received.
- To establish the impact of school meal on the food consumption at home.
- To detect related shortcomings and irregularities which might need immediate attention.
- To provide early warning information on food security at household level.
- Provide data which can be used in proposal writing.
- The tool will be administered on quarterly basis to school children receiving school meal.

5. Cash transfers

Post distribution monitoring for cash allows the agencies to establish whether the beneficiaries of a project have received their entitled cash payments. It is also a way to clarify the model of utilization of cash i.e. was cash shared, spend or saved. These are critical issues facing the implementation of cash transfer programmes. This type of monitoring also assists manager to find out types of problems the beneficiaries faced during distribution and to evaluate overall effectiveness of the distribution process. Some questions are asked in order to obtain a more general ideal of the beneficiary appreciation of the distribution system, the distribution agency, the amount received, the beneficiaries coping mechanism and their social economic situation. For cash transfers, the PDMs will serve the following purpose:
• To reinforce accountability- checking if agreed amounts of cash was received and any challenges
• Improve programming- whether Cash was the most appropriate model and if it needs to be adjusted. It verifies also the usage of cash by the beneficiary households
• Improve cash payments methodologies- PDMs identifies strength and weaknesses of the current system used as well as time spend waiting for cash and security issues
• Identify and prevent protection risks- it checks whether Cash transfers created protection risks, i.e. security threats
• These tools can be administered on bi monthly basis or quarterly depending on the context.

6. Onsite monitoring for voucher and cash in envelopes

Similarly, as with any other distribution process, there is need to ensure that during the actual distribution process, effective onsite monitoring is done for cash distributions. For cash transfers, depending on the modality, i.e. voucher distribution or cash in envelopes, onsite monitoring is critical as it is able to pick any irregularities that could be addressed immediately. However, other models of distributions i.e. banks, or mobile, require the reinforcement of PDMs to collect the relevant information from beneficiaries. The tool will be administered to a small sample of CBP beneficiaries randomly selected at the distribution/collection point on monthly basis.

7. Market Survey

This tool will be administered on monthly basis to monitor market prices, food availability, supply sources, influence of food assistance on the market and other food security indicators. The tool also tracks the sale of livestock comparing prices to the seasonal norm and the reasons for livestock sales. Roughly, 5-10 markets will be sampled for each survey, the composition of the market categories (wholesalers, retailers, open market etc.) will depend on the context. 6 livestock traders which will include cattle, goats, sheep, camels, horses/donkey and poultry will be interviewed as well as 2 agricultural and livestock inputs suppliers. An equal representation of male and female traders is recommended.

Frequency of data collection: The market surveys should be carried out on a monthly basis or bi-monthly. However, this should be context specific.
In addition, the market assessment tool is proposed to assess the functionality of the markets in terms of stock movement, replenishments, and quality issues and also track the general market operations. Market assessments provide data essential for informed decision making on appropriate transfer mechanisms either in-kind (food) or cash-based if relief is to be provided. It facilitates collection of data in selected marketplaces. Information on commodities from key informants and traders is collected through individual interviews and focus group discussions.

Some of the key information collected using the tool are:

- Volume of sales at different times of year, for key goods per trader
- Sources of finance to run the business.
- Storage of commodities stocked.
- Mode of transportation of goods from the source to the business premises.
- Buyers in terms gender (female male)
- Accessibility and safety of the market to all buyers particularly women, children and persons with disability. If not, what are the dangers?
- Traders’ ability to extend credit to customers?
- Challenges encountered in running the business, whether due to formal or informal government regulation, financing or logistical constraints, licensing, staffing issues, etc.?
- Presence of traders or suppliers that control the market or have an unfair advantage? (e.g. controlled by local elite families or officials)
- Ability to replenish stocks promptly in order to meet the increased demand?