

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

HARMONIZATION OF FOOD ASSISTANCE RESPONSE

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BACKGROUND

Following the multiple emergencies to which the different members of the FSL have responded in the last years, including Idai and Kenneth cyclones in March and April 2019 respectively, followed by the COVID-19 pandemic response in 2020, and the conflict in Cabo Delgado that started in 2017, the Food Security Cluster (FSL) members agreed on the need to review the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) developed in 2017 to standardize food assistance response and to define future activities. The main areas covered by this reviewed SOP are a) operational planning b) targeting and registration c) conditionality d) transfer values and e) transfer modalities. This SOP is a living document and the FSL will review it accordingly as and when the need arises.

PURPOSE OF THE SOP

The purpose of this SOP is to provide guidance on the process to be followed for food assistance. The proposed actions are recommended with the below key principles in mind:

- How to meet food needs of all affected populations;
- How best to enhance programme design and ensure that programme objectives are met;
- Operational feasibility considering constraints faced in the Mozambique context;
- Community and beneficiary ability to adhere to set out guidelines;
- How to provide food assistance using different modalities of transfer;
- Coherence and synergy with government policies and programmes.

This SOP presents the overlying guidelines and any deviations must be done in consultation with the Food Security Cluster with clear justifications provided.

This SOP supersedes “STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES; HARMONIZATION OF FOOD ASSISTANCE RESPONSE” from November 2017, “STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE (SOP) ON GEOGRAPHICAL/BENEFICIARY TARGETING: 2016/2017 EL NINO RESPONSE” and “SOP: CASH BASED TRANSFERS” developed in November 2016.

The SOP will be updated as and when required.

SECTION 1: OPERATIONAL PLANNING

1. Allocation of Geographical Locations for Assistance

- 1.1. The FSL will be the platform for determining the allocation of districts among different FSL members. In the case where more members are present in the district, the FSL will determine allocation of areas to work within the district in coordination with the local Government. In case of no presence of any FSL partner in the specific district, Cluster members will be approached to cover the gap.
- 1.2. Only districts that have been identified by official government assessments to be in need of assistance should be considered. Prioritization of districts will be also based on the multi-sectoral assessments coordinated by the ICCG.
- 1.3. Each district will be assigned a lead actor that will be overall responsible for food assistance in the respective district. Decision on selection of locations of operation for each actor will be made based on a) presence and capacity of actor in the area b) experience of working in food assistance in the area and c) caseload to be covered vis. a vis. available funding and d) endorsement of actors by local authorities.
- 1.4. FSL Members should inform in writing or in relevant meetings on the intention to expand operations to a new district to ensure that there are no overlaps between FSL implementing partners. The allocation of FSL member could take in account the harmonization of suitable assistance modality used by other humanitarian actor.

2. Determination of Beneficiary Numbers for Assistance

- 2.1. All FSL members are expected to make reference to the government approved reports or the approved equivalent when deciding on the number of people to reach.
- 2.2. The number of people targeted should, at all times, not be more than approved national figures for the number of people in need. Intentions to reach more people compared to official numbers should be done based on a strong technical justification backed by FSL, HCT and INGD.
- 2.3. A scale-up over the officially approved estimate for the number of people in need of assistance should be backed by a strong technical justification and endorsed by relevant government authorities.

3. 5W

- 3.1. Based on the government approved figures, a 5W indicating Who does-What-Where-For Whom-When as well as funding availability/gaps will be completed by the FSL members as per the enclosed template in annex 1.
- 3.2. Following the review, the final 5W accompanied by mapping of locations endorsed by the FSL will be shared with the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) as well as relevant authorities.
- 3.3. The 5W will be uploaded on the online platform showing the Map and partner presences in the country and or regions of interest.

4. Information sharing:

- 4.1. FSL members planning assessments should, to the greatest extent possible, opt for joint assessments where possible. Information on future assessments should be shared with FSL

- members and interested and able FSL members should join in the relevant assessments. FSL members should use the government-endorsed harmonized Rapid Needs Assessment Tool,
- 4.2. FSL members must share all relevant information gathered through secondary data, assessments or field missions at the FSL meeting.
 - 4.3. Information may be shared in FSL meetings, or when urgent, shared with the FSL coordinator for circulation to the wider group.

SECTION 2: TARGETING AND REGISTRATION

1. Rapid on-set emergency

1.1. Geographical targeting:

- 1.1.1 Rapid multi-sectoral assessment conducted by the National Institute of Disaster Management (INGD) as the coordinating body to indicate: a) initial numbers of affected populations b) location of affected population and c) extent of damage and needs. It is recommended that where possible, support from humanitarian partners is provided to INGD in conducting this assessment.
- 1.1.2 While the INGD assessment may be multi-sectoral in nature, the FSL will take into account information on food security and livelihoods only.
- 1.1.3 In cases where INGD is unable to conduct the assessment or information is not made available by the third day of a request from the government for assistance, a joint rapid assessment made up of a team from the FSL will be conducted to provide initial figures using the questionnaire in annex 2. FSL will be in favor of a multi sectoral assessment where and when possible.
- 1.1.4 Based on findings of the assessments indicated in 1.1.1. or 1.1.3, and following government request, FSL members will need to provide immediate support for up to a maximum of 30 days based on the initial figures within a maximum of 72 hours.
- 1.1.5 However, response should be spaced out; a maximum of 15 days food ration is to be provided at once in order to cater for potential beneficiary movements, influx and outflux in case of IDPs in temporary accommodation services.
- 1.1.6 15 days following the disaster, INGD will conduct a follow up assessment (Emergency Food Security Assessment - EFSA) using the questionnaire in annex 3 in order to refine the response. Results from the EFSA are expected to be made available by day 25 (ten days following assessment).
- 1.1.7 In addition to the INGD assessment, the FSL will be responsible for assigning a focal point to coordinate with INGD for the collection of remote sensing data from Water Management National Unit (DNGRH), National Institute for Meteorology (INAM) and FEWSNET, or WFP to indicate rainfall levels, normalized vegetation index, precipitation levels, soil moisture etc., to be used to complement EFSA findings when and where relevant.

- 1.1.8 Decision on the duration of assistance will be made based on the assessment findings and must be agreed upon within the FSL.

1.2. Household targeting:

- 1.2.1. Once results of the EFSA are provided, FSL members will be responsible for either a) working directly with communities to obtain a list of vulnerable affected households or b) working with authorities to provide a list of vulnerable households.
- 1.2.2. For both of options “a” and “b” stated above, FSL members will be responsible for sharing the vulnerability criteria with the authorities and communities to obtain a list of affected Households (HHs).

1.3. Vulnerability criteria:

- 1.3.1. For rapid onset response, all disaster affected populations are, by definition, eligible to humanitarian assistance and plans should be made on this basis.
- 1.3.2. However, a prioritization exercise may be conducted based on funding and operational capabilities. Should there be constraints in reaching all disaster affected, prioritization will be made by considering the below four categories:
- i) Head of household characteristics (single headed, elderly, child headed, disabled or chronically ill);
 - ii) Household member characteristics (1 or more chronically malnourished member, 1 or more pregnant or lactating woman, over 3 dependents);
 - iii) Disaster affected characteristics (loss of production or labor opportunities, displaced, home or household items lost);
 - iv) INAS beneficiaries enrolled in the PSSB programme.
- 1.3.3. Households must a) fulfil at least two characteristics within the stated vulnerability criteria, b) be existing INAS PSSB beneficiaries or c) eligible for INAS PSSB programme to be entitled for assistance to be part of the first priority for assistance.

** Please refer to annex 4 for details on the vulnerability criteria.*

1.4. Verification exercise:

- 1.4.1. In order to ascertain accuracy of the received lists of households, actors must conduct a verification exercise of the affected populations using the existing INGD questionnaire.
- 1.4.2. All actors must use the same sampling methodology in line with SMART sampling methodologies for verification exercises.
- 1.4.3. A simple random sampling methodology assuming a 5% margin of error and a minimum of 95% confidence interval should be used. For assistance on calculation of sample size, FSL members may refer to this link. For additional information on types of sampling and guidelines, refer to annex 5.

- 1.4.4. Verifications should be done in coordination with local authorities.
- 1.4.5. Should the verification exercise indicate a large inclusion/exclusion error ($\geq 20\%$), actors must re-engage with community committees to provide a revised list. First focus will be on communities that showed those $>20\%$ errors.

2. Conflict affected population (IDPs + Host Communities)

2.1. Geographical targeting:

- 2.1.1. Decisions on the duration and type of assistance will be made based on the Government of Mozambique (GoM) requests, UN agencies and assessments findings agreed within the FSL.
- 2.1.2. Assessments, specifically MIRA - Multisectoral Rapid Needs Assessment Tool are to be conducted by humanitarian agencies to indicate: a) initial numbers of affected populations and population movements, b) location of affected population and c) extent of damage and needs. Assessment team must contact the local/district authorities to introduce the purpose of the assessment and request their permission. The team must also contact Government counterparts to inform them about the assessment. The local government may ask to send someone with the team and this should be accepted.
- 2.1.3. Multi-sectoral rapid needs assessments will be coordinated by the National Institute for Management and Disaster Risk Reduction (INGD), and when possible, FSL cluster members are expected to participate, with OCHA as the coordinating body of the UN system with INGD.
- 2.1.4. While the MIRA and INGD assessments may be multi-sectorial in nature, the FSL cluster will take into account information on food security and livelihoods only.
- 2.1.5. Based on findings of the assessments indicated in 2.1.2. or 2.1.3, and following Government requests, depending on funding availability and readiness, FSL members will need to provide immediate support based on the initial figures within a maximum of 72 hours.
- 2.1.6. Decision on the duration of assistance will be made based on the assessment findings and must be agreed upon within the FSL.

2.2. Household targeting:

- 2.2.1. During the first 6 months of the response in conflict affected areas, targeting lists for IDP's HH are provided by the districts and provincial level authorities, along with the National Institute for Management and Disaster Risk Reduction (INGD) as the coordinating body. They must indicate a) number of households of affected populations - IDP's and b) location of affected population. FLS Cluster shall circulate the data provided by the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) part of International Organization for Migration, organization that gathers and analyzes data to disseminate critical multi-layered information on the mobility, vulnerabilities, and needs.
- 2.2.2. After that period, FSL members should change from status-based household targeting to vulnerability based, including hosting communities. Partners are responsible for sharing the vulnerability criteria and consulting with the authorities and communities.

2.3. Vulnerability criteria:

- 2.3.1. During the first 6 months, FSL partners should follow the IDPs lists provided as they are the official lists of beneficiaries and assistance should be based on status rather than needs or vulnerability. If needed, FSL partners could conduct some verification of the lists, as long as this exercise is coordinated and agreed upon with government authorities. Support through status-based targeting (prioritizing IDPs only) will enable a rapid and effective response to internal displacement in its initial stage. Should resources allow, a percentage of max 20% of the vulnerable households from the host communities can be added to the total caseload to avoid social tensions between IDPs and host communities.
- 2.3.2. After the first 6 months of response, FSL partners should change household targeting to vulnerability based, including hosting communities, as some beneficiaries might have been able to gain access to livelihoods opportunities and therefore have reduced their level of vulnerability. Those most in need receive the assistance they require (regardless of their displacement status) and as many people in need as possible are reached to optimize resources available.
- 2.3.3. Vulnerability targeting should consider the potential heterogeneities in food insecurity and adapt targeting methods for particular types of population: New arrivals of IDP's in resettlement centers, Mixed communities (IDPs and hosting families) in rural areas and Mixed communities (IDPs and hosting families) in urban areas. New arrivals and IDP's in resettlement centers are considered highly vulnerable. Therefore, blanket assistance is still recommended (no targeting) for both groups.
- 2.3.4. Vulnerability prioritization will be made by considering inclusion criteria reflecting households' structure and income-generating potential, and the second represents potential predictors of food insecurity. Below it would be the proposed categories for inclusion, which could be adjusted depending on the specific context:

Demographics:

- Head of household characteristics (single headed, elderly, child headed, disabled or chronically ill);
- Household member characteristics/nutrition related (1 or more chronically ill member, 1 or more pregnant or lactating woman, 1 or more Children under 5 years of age, or over 3 dependents);
- Household member in working-age or engaged in income-generating activities.

Livelihoods:

- Access to land
- Food stock and access to water
- Sources of income
- Ownership of productive assets

** Please refer to annex 4.1 for details on the vulnerability criteria.*

3. IPC classification and/or slow on set emergency:

3.1. Geographical targeting

- 3.1.1. Endorsed SETSAN assessments will be used to identify the IPC classification per district or districts affected in addition to the affected number by district. Results of SETSAN assessments will be presented within the FSL cluster.
- 3.1.2. Based on the IPC classification and agreed number of affected people by SETSAN/INGD confirmations, FSL members will provide district authorities with the vulnerability criteria for the selection of communities.
- 3.1.3. District authorities supported by FSL members and/or FSL member Cooperating Partners (CPs) will be responsible for identifying which communities were most affected and require assistance. If remote sensing data will be available, this communities most affected will be confirmed against that analysis, as an added layer of confirmation.
- 3.1.4. In instances where remote sensing data does not match with the list of communities provided by local authorities, verification of information will be done through conducting Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) in a) communities selected by district authorities and b) those indicated by remote sensing data to allow for a comparison between the two.
- 3.1.5. Based on the results of the FGDs, FSL members will discuss with authorities on the final communities to be selected.

3.2. Household targeting:

- 3.2.1. Following selection of communities, and based on the approved vulnerability criteria, community authorities and a community advisory committee will be responsible for developing a list of the affected individuals/households. The committee will be formed of community representatives and will have specific responsibilities as detailed in annex 6. Community leaders will not be part of the committee.

3.3. Vulnerability criteria:

- 3.3.1. The below vulnerability criteria will be considered:
 - I. Head of household characteristics (single headed, elderly, child headed, disabled or chronically ill)
 - II. Household member characteristics/nutrition related (1 or more chronically ill member, 1 or more pregnant or lactating woman or children under 5 years of age, number of dependents)
 - III. Household economy characteristics (land access, loss of labor opportunities and livestock assets)
 - IV. INAS beneficiaries enrolled in PSSB programme
- 3.3.2. Households must either a) fulfil at least two characteristics within the stated vulnerability criteria, b) be existing INAS PSSB beneficiaries or c) eligible for INAS PSSB programme to be entitled for assistance.

** Please refer to annex 7 for details on the vulnerability criteria.*

3.4. Verification exercise:

- 3.4.1. In order to ascertain accuracy of the received lists of households, actors must conduct a verification exercise of the affected populations using the existing INGD questionnaire (annex 2).
- 3.4.2. All actors must use the same sampling methodology in line with SMART sampling methodologies for verification exercises.
- 3.4.3. A simple random sampling methodology assuming a 5% margin of error and 95% confidence interval should be used. For assistance on calculation of sample size, agencies may refer to this link. For additional information on types of sampling and guidelines, refer to annex 5.
- 3.4.4. Verification should be done in coordination with local authorities.
- 3.4.5. Should the verification exercise indicate a large inclusion/exclusion error, actors must re-engage with community committees to provide a revised list.

3.5. Household size & gender:

- 3.5.1. Given that transfer value/ration are determined based on the kilocalories required per individual, in order to meet the set out food security objectives, the actual household size should be used for the provision of assistance.
- 3.5.2. However, in the below scenarios, agencies may exceptionally use the average household size 5 or the average established by the government following results of census or relevant assessments.
- 3.5.3. To the greatest extent possible, the main household recipient must be female. It is encouraged that an alternative also be identified to receive assistance in case of absence of the main recipient during distributions.

3.6. Registration systems:

- 3.6.1. Humanitarian agencies should aim to collect all criteria used for selection a minimum set of data for targeted populations including household head name, location/community, alternate, age and gender breakdown, and number of pregnant and lactating women, including people with disabilities. These fields constitute the minimum data to be gathered. However, additional information such as mobile number, marital status, disabilities etc. may be captured as necessary.
- 3.6.2. The two main systems currently being used are World Vision's Last Mile Mobile System (LLMS) and WFP's SCOPE system. FSL members are all encouraged to use one of those two systems for registrations. In cases where registration is done by one actor, they are encouraged to share relevant information with other agencies.
- 3.6.3. No two agencies should conduct registrations in the same location, rather they should refer to available information.

- 3.6.4. FSL members must consult and provide information to the existing INGD database when and where relevant.

SECTION 3: CONDITIONALITY

1. **Three types of conditionality will be considered for food assistance:**

- i. Unconditional assistance: meaning beneficiaries do not have to undertake any type of activity to receive assistance.
- ii. Soft conditionality assistance: meaning beneficiaries will have to participate in light activities such as trainings, social behavior change activities, hygiene campaigns etc. in order to receive assistance; and,
- iii. Conditional assistance: meaning able bodied beneficiaries will have to participate in heavier duty type of activities to receive assistance, typically asset creation activities.

2. **In the selection of conditionality various factors need to be taken into consideration:**

- i. Speed of response and IPC classification/level of need: how fast agencies need to respond depending on level of need.
- ii. Resources available as compared to the size of the assistance required, and prioritization between food assistance and costs for conditionality activities.
- iii. Planning: time available for planning conditional assistance
- iv. Cost efficiency and effectiveness: taking into consideration impact of proposed activities and value for money considering the impact versus costs being put in.
- v. Minimum technical standards/work norms and sustainability.
- vi. Displacement: return of populations to original area or resettlement following displacement.
- vii. Access: to plan, implement and monitor the activities continuously.
- viii. Needs to support reconstruction/restoration of livelihoods.
- ix. Ability of HHs to engage in work: Irrespective of type of conditionality selected as a general response type, considerations must always be made for HHs that may not be able to engage in conditional activities allowing them to benefit from unconditional assistance.

3. **It is recommended that conditionality be defined depending on IPC level and type of response:**

3.1. **IPC classification:**

- 3.1.1 In IPC 2 locations, FSL members should aim for conditional assistance with the exception of rapid onset disasters, and the harvest/planting season. In IPC 2 areas, resilience building activities, disaster risk reduction and livelihood protections will be usually implemented.
- 3.1.2 In IPC 3 a combination of unconditional, soft conditionality and conditional assistance could be provided depending on the specific context.
- 3.1.3 In IPC 4 and 5 only unconditional assistance should be considered.

3.2. Rapid onset:

- 3.2.1 Particularly during immediate response, agencies should aim to provide unconditional assistance for a minimum of 60 days. While the duration will be determined by needs assessments and each specific context, FSL members should aim not to exceed 3 months of unconditional assistance, but possible extendible depending on the context and the needs (for example if it is the harvest or planting season).
- 3.2.2 Following the immediate response, agencies may move to soft conditionality or conditional assistance depending on the context and on IPC classification (if available) as indicated in 3.1. The move to conditional will be made once the above-mentioned conditions are met.

3.3. Slow onset:

- 3.3.1. During slow onset, all unconditional, soft conditionality or conditional assistance may be considered based on IPC classification (if available) as indicated in 3.1, with a recommendation to focus on conditional assistance only where proper planning and preparation are done.

Please refer to Table 1 for a summary on conditionality to be considered based on IPC classification.

SECTION 4: TRANSFER VALUE

Setting the transfer value and ration provided will be made based on the below process:

- i. Assuming 2,100 kilocalories as the average required per person per day, needs assessment should indicate an estimate of what % of the food needs families are able to cover through their own means.
- ii. In cases where assessments do not clearly highlight the kilocalorie gap, FSL members will aim to provide a 100% ration to those in IPC 5 areas, minimum of 90% ration to those in areas classified in IPC 4 locations, minimum of 75% ration to populations in areas classified in IPC 3 areas and minimum of 50% ration to those in areas classified in IPC 2.
- iii. In cases of displaced people with total loss of assets and food stocks, 100% ration will be provided.

Specific to Cash Based Transfers (CBT), the below process will be followed:

- i. Based on the food preferences across the various provinces, a fixed food basket per province is to be used as a basis for calculating the value. The food basket will be composed through taking into account the dietary preferences as well as nutritional value as indicated by Nutval (annex 8). The food basket value may be complemented by relevant expenditures such as transport or milling costs (where required).

- ii. The Cash Working Group (CWG) will compile market price information from available sources and circulate to the CWG on a monthly basis during periods of implementation. In case of multipurpose cash assistance, this discussion shall be coordinated with the Cash Working Group or at the Inter-Cluster coordination Group if CWG is not active.
- iii. The value of the assistance must be continuously reviewed based on the market prices. If there is a deviation of +/-10% the voucher or cash transfer value must be updated. To assist in the assistance of value calculation, refer to annex 9.
- iv. The assistance value may differ across provinces as the food composition will be different. However, values may not differ within the same district.
- v. Values must be aligned to government social protection values (PASD) to the greatest extent possible. A deviation of 15% maximum may be accepted. If cases of higher deviation, the food basket composition may be revised in discussion with the CWG.

SECTION 5: TRANSFER MODALITY

1. FSL members should ensure that the transfer modality selection is made based on appropriate assessments that confirm appropriateness of each modality depending on location of intervention. A comparison in terms of cost efficiency and effectiveness, beneficiary preferences, impact, operational ease must therefore be made before deciding on a transfer modality
2. To provide overall guidance, a joint market assessment done by FSL members should be conducted to provide information on market functionality across selected provinces. Additionally, the cash working group will be responsible for initiating discussions with SETSAN to include questions on market functionality across the assessed districts. This would mean that once assessment results are available, agencies would already have information on market functionality across the different locations.
3. At a micro level, agencies would need to conduct assessments using standard tools as agreed within the cash working group and enclosed in annex 10. The assessments would need to cover the below aspects:
 - i. Market functionality: if not covered in the assessment mentioned in point “2”, look into supply flow, volumes being traded, proximity of markets to beneficiaries, prices etc.
 - ii. Availability of Service Providers (SPs): including banks, telecommunication companies or IT companies and assess possibility of partnership.
 - iii. Cooperating Partners (CPs): considering CP capacity, experience, financial procedures and risk measures.
 - iv. Authority regulations: consultations with authorities at different levels to assess willingness and understanding of different transfer modalities.
 - v. Security assessment: highlighting risks that may be associated with the different transfer modalities.
 - vi. Cost efficiency/effectiveness: considering cost of delivering assistance through the different transfer modalities.

4.This range of assessments will assist in informing the appropriate transfer modality depending on location.

5.To assist in the decision on the transfer modality, refer to the decision tree in annex 11.

6.FSL members must share assessment results within the FSL.

7.FSL members should aim to provide assistance through the same transfer modality within a district, but different transfer modalities may be used within a province.

SECTION 6: WAY FORWARD

The FSL recognizes the need for additional and complimentary SOPs to support in harmonization of response. As such, the FSL plans on developing the below additional SOPs within coming months:

- i. Development of SOPs/guidelines on Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) with an emphasis on feedback and complaint mechanisms and protection of populations during intervention periods.
- ii. Guidelines on productive assets and asset creation activities

Table 1 – Assistance based on IPC classification

Phase	IPC 1	IPC 2	IPC 3	IPC 4	IPC 5	RAPID ONSET
Ration size	No assistance	>= 50%	>= 75%	>= 90%	100%	100%
Conditionality	-	Conditional assistance	Unconditional, soft conditionality and conditional	Unconditional	Unconditional	Unconditional followed by soft conditionality and conditional
Transfer modality	-	All applicable	All applicable	All applicable	All applicable	All applicable
Remarks	More than four in five households (HHs) are able to meet essential food and non-food needs without engaging in atypical, unsustainable strategies to access food and income.	Even with any humanitarian assistance at least one in five HHs in the area have the following or worse: Minimally adequate food consumption but are unable to afford some essential non-food expenditures without engaging in irreversible coping strategies.	Even with any humanitarian assistance at least one in five HHs in the area have the following or worse: Food consumption gaps with high or above usual acute malnutrition OR Are marginally able to meet minimum food needs only with accelerated depletion of livelihood assets that will lead to food consumption gaps.	Even with any humanitarian assistance at least one in five HHs in the area have the following or worse: Large food consumption gaps resulting in very high acute malnutrition and excess mortality OR Extreme loss of livelihood assets that will lead to food consumption gaps in the short term.	Even with any humanitarian assistance at least one in five HHs in the area have an extreme lack of food and other basic needs where starvation, death, and destitution are evident. Evidence for all three criteria (food consumption, acute malnutrition, and mortality) is required to classify Famine.	Loss of assets and livelihoods, displacement, breakdown in markets