



RECOMMENDATION FOR PROGRAMMATIC CONTINUITY IN THE CONTEXT OF THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK

In all countries, whether COVID-19 cases have been reported or not, FSC partners should ensure they maintain the ability to deliver critical food assistance.

The following are general recommendations for food security assistance in the context of the COVID-19 outbreak. *They have been drawn from WFP's Guidelines, and adjusted for the Food Security Cluster.*

All engagement and adjustments to operations should be aligned with country-specific guidance prepared and shared by the relevant health authorities and partners (e.g. Ministry of Health, WHO), national-level emergency preparedness and response plans, as well as inter-agency agreements and decisions (e.g. UNCT / HCT / UNRCO etc.). Complaint and Feedback Mechanisms (CFM) should be prepared to respond to information request on the various adjustments and to collect feedback.

– **Community engagement:** in a context of active transmission in-country, community engagement will be crucial to contain the spread of the disease and reduce fear, misinformation, confusion and tension. FSC partners' activities can be leveraged as platforms to disseminate sensitization messages at community level for that purpose. Such messages should be disseminated in simple / local language, taking into consideration local cultural, as well as special needs of marginalized communities. All adjustments should also be made in alignment with country-specific guidance prepared and shared by the relevant health authorities and partners (e.g. Ministry of Health, WHO) - please refer to Pillar 2 of WHO Operational Planning Guidelines to Support Country Preparedness and Response (<https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/covid-19-sprp-unct-guidelines.pdf>)

and "How to include marginalized and vulnerable people in risk communication and community engagement" (<https://fscluster.org/coronavirus/document/covid-19-how-include-marginalized-and>)

– **Protection:** in a context of active transmission in-country, FSC partners must continue to ensure equal access to impartial assistance according to need and without discrimination. This includes identifying beneficiaries who may be reluctant to come forward for treatment because they are marginalized or fear marginalization due to the virus, and preserving sensitive information on affected persons or communities.

– **Procedures for food / cash / agricultural inputs distribution:** adjustments may include increase in number of distribution sites / outlets to avoid large gatherings, staggering of distribution cycles and loading procedures to reduce frequency of gatherings, changes in packaging / kitting procedures to reduce time on site and contact between beneficiaries for redistribution; adjustment of SOPs to minimize the risk of exposure of personnel, service providers and beneficiaries during implementation of various activities.

– **Beneficiary registration / identification procedures:** where not absolutely critical / necessary for operational continuity, avoid biometric data collection, or, depending on the

circumstances, avoid registration/data collection exercises altogether in an active contamination context. Such measures should be communicated (to affected populations, and FSC partners) ahead of time, while ensuring that data protection principles continue to be respected.

- **Pre-positioning of food / agricultural inputs stocks:** pre-positioning food / agricultural inputs closer to distribution points may be required in order to anticipate/ mitigate potential supply chain disruptions;
- **Food basket composition:** supply chain disruptions may affect the availability of specific commodities, triggering the need for adjustments in the food basket;
- **Assistance modalities:** changing conditions may affect the viability of different assistance modalities in different areas (e.g. adjustments might be required either for converting part of the assistance from Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) to in-kind or vice-versa);
- **Beneficiary targeting and re-prioritization:** access / movement restrictions may affect FSC partners' ability to reach their beneficiaries, prompting a revision of the targeting and prioritization;
- **Agriculture / livelihoods trainings:** consider postponing non-essential training activities, such as field farmers schools, or vocational trainings, or use technology to carry out the activities, whenever possible.
- **Programme criticality:** review and adjustment of programme criticality to ensure priority will be given to life-saving activities (e.g. food and nutrition assistance to refugees, IDPs, climate and conflict-affected populations etc.) in case FSC partners are unable to continue all their regular operations.
- **Other measures:** consider cancelling or postponing non-critical / time-sensitive activities which could increase the risk of transmission (e.g. assessments, focus group discussions (FDG), identity verification and authentication exercises etc.).