

Beneficiary Selection and Targeting Inter-Sectoral Guidelines for Pakistan July 2011

These guidelines are an effort to ensure an independent needs-based and principled approach to humanitarian response and appropriate targeting of beneficiaries to ensure equitable access, especially for the most vulnerable, within Pakistan.

Six Guiding Rules for Beneficiary Selection and Targeting

1. Independent selection and verification of beneficiaries through organisation and project specific needs-based selection criteria is critical.
2. Prioritisation of the most vulnerable is necessary.
3. Facilitation of access to assistance for all, especially the most vulnerable is required
4. Geographical coverage must be focussed on the areas and populations most in need.
5. Taking into consideration pre-existing social, cultural and political dynamics or practices that may marginalise or exploit certain groups is fundamental.
6. Developing monitoring mechanisms to check that assistance is independent and needs based is required.

Beneficiary Selection and Targeting Guidelines - Explained

1. Independent selection and verification of beneficiaries through organisation and project specific needs-based selection criteria
 - Each organization must develop and use clear criteria for beneficiary selection, using the following beneficiary selection and targeting guidelines to inform these criteria
 - Beneficiary selection criteria should be available to all and criteria must be widely disseminated to the affected population and shared with local government authorities. Clear and understandable justification must be provided for any targeting of aid to a specific group or for exclusions of a specific group.
 - Organisations should not rely solely on lists of affected or registered locations or beneficiaries provided by political or other influential actors including civil servants, landlords, military actors, community or tribal leaders.
 - Where possible organisations should always carry out their own needs-based assessments following these guidelines and further guidelines developed by your sector.
 - Where access is restricted, organisations should ensure that targeted locations and beneficiary lists are cross-checked by an independent monitor such as a team comprised of a local NGO, local authority and community member with representation from both men and women and where applicable representation from minority communities.
 - Cross-checking of beneficiary lists should take place to address both inclusion (to ensure that only those who meet the needs-based criteria are receiving aid) and concerns around exclusion of eligible beneficiaries – particularly vulnerable and socially or politically marginalized groups.
2. Prioritisation of the most vulnerable

The agencies agree that the following will be their working definition of vulnerable persons:

Persons who are exposed to a combination of risks and have a limited ability to cope in the face of those risks.

This may include vulnerable or socially marginalized groups, such as but not limited to: religious or ethnic minorities, transgender people, women, female-headed households, children, child-headed households, landless persons, non-document holding Pakistani nationals, refugees - including Afghan refugees, stateless persons, undocumented migrants, older persons, persons with disabilities, persons with chronic diseases or serious medical conditions, the illiterate and the chronically poor.

In many cases, the most vulnerable are persons or families who have a combination of these characteristics. This is not an exhaustive list and identification of the most vulnerable may also be influenced by sector specific needs and local dynamics.

Population displacement (internal or cross-border) features as an important factor impacting on the type of vulnerability experienced; displacement brings multiple risks, reduces capacity to cope and impacts on possible responses. Those that do not flee, also face increased risk as they often remain hazardous situations with reduced capacity to cope and often cut-off from markets and humanitarian assistance.

Vulnerability is influenced by displacement, geographic location, specific cultural and social power dynamics, access to information and education, access to material and financial resources, access to services and infrastructure, social support networks and specific characteristics of the group, family or individual. For this reason it is useful carry out a vulnerability assessment to understand the specific vulnerabilities of and within a population group as well as the existing capacity to cope.

3. Facilitate access to assistance for all, especially the most vulnerable: Restrictions can by physical, social, cultural, legal, based on security or lack of information.

3.1 Inclusion and participation

- Always consult with communities in planning and support their participation in decision making and implementation, including for the distribution of relief items.
- Community committees, leadership structures, focus group or community discussions are often the main way for ordinary people to provide input in decision making processes.
- In all consultations or planning for the delivery of services or distribution of aid, ensure that there is participation from men, women, older persons, persons with disabilities, minority communities.
- Ensure that all vulnerable groups are proportionally represented and that their opinions are represented by the leadership or community committees. It is important to note that even when vulnerable groups participate in committees and leadership structures, discriminatory attitudes often continue to marginalise their role. They may be provided with few opportunities to speak and their input may not be listened to or taken seriously. This should be monitored and alternative consultation techniques should be used if it happens. For example, it might be important to consult women in a separate forum to men to allow them the freedom to express themselves.
- Ensure that consultations are carried out in the local language, and that arrangements are made for persons with special needs such as deaf persons.

- Inclusion and participation of the most vulnerable will help you identify how to ensure their access to the service or relief distribution.

3.2 Do not rely on civil or legal documents for beneficiary selection and inclusion criteria, as reliance on this may exclude the most vulnerable who frequently lack documentation.

- Ensure that programming and beneficiary selection does not exclude people who do not possess Computerised National Identify Cards (CNICs) as currently many people in Pakistan, including the most vulnerable, do not have these cards. As identified by NADRA, those lagging behind in registration for CNICs include women, persons living in Kacha areas (riverine/floodplains) and those living in remote rural areas and the illiterate. Refugees and stateless persons are also unable to register for the CNIC, but may also be in need of relief and recovery assistance.
- Do not use Watan card ownership as a beneficiary selection criteria for further early recovery assistance as it has been identified that some of the most vulnerable were unable to access the Watan Card.¹
- Do not base relief assistance on formal land ownership or tenancy registration as many of the most vulnerable live in situations of landlessness and insecure tenancy.
- Rather than using civil or legal documentation as beneficiary inclusion criteria, where possible, conduct assessments to determine those in most need and verify their identity and cross-check duplication through community leaders and local authorities
- Establish procedures for supporting access to assistance for those that do not have the required documentation.
- Also where possible, work with local civil society, NGOs, and government authorities to identify those who are lacking civil or legal documentation to find ways of ensuring appropriate documentation is provided to those who want it.

3.3 Physical accessibility

Physical distance may pose a problem for older persons, persons with disabilities, female headed households or single women, pregnant women, populations living in remote locations as well as the poorer members of community

- Take the service or distribution point as close to the affected community as possible.
- Identify locations where the less able bodied beneficiaries are located and carry out mobile services or special distributions.
- Alternatively, facilitate access by providing transportation for older persons, persons with disabilities and pregnant women.
- At service locations or distribution points provide seating for those less able to stand, prioritise these groups in queues and keep them safe from crowds.
- Check that buildings or locations chosen for service provision or distributions are physically accessible for persons in wheelchairs or those unable to climb stairs.
- Essential items such as water and sanitation facilities must be physically accessible

3.4 Socio-cultural accessibility

- Ensure that buildings or locations chosen for service provision or distributions are socially and culturally appropriate and accessible to all. For example, do not use a mosque where women are not allowed to enter

¹ Protection Cluster report on Watan Phase I: 'The Watan Scheme for Flood Relief: Protection Highlights 2010-2011'.

- Ensure that male and female staff are present to assist all beneficiaries
- Ensure that separate queues, rooms and spaces are available for providing services or distributing aid to women observing *purdah* (separation of men and women). If separate spaces are not possible, organise separate times to assist women only
- Essential items such as water and sanitation facilities must be placed in locations and adapted to allow women and children safe access, locations should be close, private, away from men and public locations

3.5 Safety and security for all beneficiaries must be considered when choosing locations, distribution methods, access to essential items and services.

The “Do No Harm” principle must be used as part of the guidance during planning of humanitarian assistance, that is, accessing aid should not place beneficiaries at further risk of harm.

- Carry out risk assessments to gauge the different risk factors for different members of the community at distribution/service delivery locations, distribution methods, etc
- Ensure that access to services and distribution is safe for all, including men, women, older persons, children, persons with disabilities, and minority communities.
- Consider the safety and security needs of vulnerable groups. For example, physical distance, remote locations or male dominated spaces may pose major security risks to women and children trying to access them, including increased exposure to physical violence and sexual violence.
- If locations are considered unsafe then vulnerable groups will either miss out on assistance, will become dependent on others for access which in turn exacerbates their vulnerability (they become vulnerable to exploitation or extortion), or they will be put at physical risk of harm.
- Ensure that beneficiaries are not put at risk of dispossession and that their security of property and land is not put at risk.

3.6 Accessible Information

- Information on distributions, assistance or services and beneficiary criteria must be accessible to all – this means making special effort to target those who are illiterate, blind, deaf, live in remote locations, have restricted movement (including women) or marginalised to ensure they are aware of and will be able to access service provision and distributions.
- Information should not rely on one form of dissemination, but must be distributed in a variety of ways through community groups, audio and visual media, and through community mobilisers and should target remote locations and marginalised groups.
- Information must be disseminated in the local language.

4. Geographical coverage must be focussed on the areas and populations most in need, and not only the most accessible areas.

- Ensure that all affected locations and populations are identified and mapped before deciding on target locations. Coordinate with communities, civil-society, other NGOs and government civil servants to identify all affected locations.
- Carry out independent needs and capacity assessments of locations and populations to identify the most in need and those with the lowest capacity to respond.
- Coordinate with other assistance providers, within and in-between cluster/sectors and with the government officials, to ensure all affected areas and populations are assisted and standardise quality of assistance.

5. Bear in mind pre-existing social, cultural and political dynamics or practices that may marginalise or exploit certain groups. This may be indirectly harmful and will leave certain groups vulnerable to neglect.

- Ensure that aid distribution is not used for political purposes, for example, ensure that it is not targeting certain political supporters, or used to gain votes. Aid should be based on need.
- Ensure that affected populations themselves are targeted and not their landlords/landowners or tribal leaders, and do not rely on landlords or tribal leaders to distribute aid.
- Ensure that organisations or individuals providing and delivering aid recognise all affected groups – irrespective of caste, class, gender, age, physical or mental ability, sexual orientation or political views.

6. Develop monitoring mechanisms to check that assistance is independent and needs based.

- Reporting must be disaggregated by gender, age, disability and other vulnerability criteria used in beneficiary selection criteria.
- Carry out spot checks and monitoring to check that all beneficiaries who have received or will receive assistance meet the established beneficiary criteria.
- Work with local civil society, NGOs, and government authorities to identify any excluded groups who may qualify.
- Establish grievance mechanisms to allow affected communities to appeal decisions, lodge complaints, or make suggestions.

Annex 1: Background to the Beneficiary Selection and Targeting Guidelines

The findings from the Inter-Agency Real Time Evaluations (RTE) commissioned by IASC after the Pakistan floods in 2007 and 2010 identified that a principled approach and independent needs based response was missing and that coverage was poorly prioritised. The reports found that access to relief assistance was not appropriately targeted to ensure equitable access, especially for the most vulnerable and the most vulnerable were narrowly categorized as widows and orphaned children which meant that many of the other vulnerable communities and families were not targeted for relief assistance

A key recommendation of the 2011 RTE was that the 'Special Envoy and HC/RC promotes needs based and principled approaches during humanitarian responses and all humanitarian actors need to commit to it' (RTE 2011 p. 8). The Beneficiary Selection and Targeting Guidelines are based on the below noted recommendations from the RTEs of 2007 and 2011, and are grouped into two key areas, 'lessons learnt', and 'key issues identified -problems for beneficiary selection'

A. Lessons Learnt: Non-prioritised and Politicised Response and Inequitable Coverage

The Inter-Agency Real Time Evaluation (RTE) commissioned by Inter Agency Standing Committee (IASC) and conducted by DARA in January 2011 identified that a principled approach and independent needs based response was missing during the response to the 2010 floods in Pakistan.² The report specifically notes that due to the 'sheer scale of the emergency, the response was soon stretched to the limit. As a result coverage was limited and poorly prioritized' (RTE 2011 p.8). It goes on to note that, 'a principled approach and independent needs based response was often missing due to interference, primarily at local levels from politicians, landlords or tribal leaders, but also due to limited access' (RTE 2011 p. 56). The details of the findings are located in paragraphs 72-75 (RTE 2011 pp.36-38).

During the 2007 floods the IASC Real Time Evaluation also identified that access to relief assistance was not appropriately targeted to ensure equitable access, especially for the most vulnerable. The 2007 report explains that it 'was clear from the beginning that the relief operations were aimed at addressing beneficiary needs as a whole, and not at segmented communities with varying abilities to access relief goods (both physical and social)' (RTE 2007 p.7). The 2007 RTE goes on to note that relief assistance also narrowly categorized the most vulnerable as widows and orphaned children which meant that many of the most vulnerable communities and families, including tenants, socially marginalized groups, ethnic, religious, or other minority communities, the politically marginalized and so on, were not targeted for relief assistance (RTE 2007 p.7).

In 2010, these concerns from the 2007 RTE were echoed and expanded on in the Protection Cluster's Rapid Protection Assessments that took place in the four flood affected provinces. Additionally, the same concerns are also noted in the Protection Cluster's report on protection concerns during the Watan (CDCP) relief distribution 'The Watan Scheme for Flood Relief: Protection Highlights 2010-2011', and UNIFEM's Rapid Gender Needs Assessment report.

The need for improved beneficiary targeting is also outlined in the Government of Pakistan's Preliminary Damage and Needs Assessment (DNA) for the 2010 floods, where the Government identifies that urgent attention 'to beneficiary identification and eligibility levels is required' (DNA 2010 p. 91), as well as in the

² <http://daraint.org/about-us/>

NDMA presentation on lessons learnt from the 2005 earthquake where support to the most vulnerable was identified as being inadequate.

The recommendation of the 2011 RTE to address these issues was that the Special Envoy and HC/RC must promote 'needs based and principled approaches during humanitarian responses and all Humanitarian actors need to commit to it' (RTE 2011 p. 8).

B. Key Issues Identified - Problems for Beneficiary Selection:

1. Often, because of access restrictions, organizations were 'directly given lists of beneficiaries by the local administration or feudal landlords. These beneficiary lists were not always verified or prioritised' (RTE 2011 p.31). This meant that 'The selection of beneficiaries was, at times, **not done independently** but was subordinated to political interference' (RTE 2011 p.36). 'Targeting was particularly weak as there was no systematic registration or verification process - **often there were no beneficiary lists or selection criteria established**' (RTE 2011 p.36)
2. 'When [beneficiary] lists were prepared, these were **not drawn up on the basis of vulnerability**. As a result, unknown quantities of assistance have reportedly reached those that were the least vulnerable, close to feudal landlords or connected through certain political affiliations' (RTE 2011 p.36). 'Many people from ethnic and tribal **minorities and most vulnerable individuals** and groups, such as widows or other female-headed households, **were not prioritised** and therefore deprived from any assistance at all' (RTE 2011 p.36). In the 2007 flood response it was identified that vulnerability was narrowly defined as widowed women and orphaned children but this led to a neglect of many of the other vulnerable groups and the wider 'context of the deprivation of entire communities to which they belong. Thus, there were some strategic interventions where those being actively denied access, or those who were unable to access relief (such as the landless, or those belonging to a difference caste) were excluded from being counted as vulnerable... Thus the opportunity to address vulnerability issues in a robust manner in the implementation of disaster relief and recovery was lost. The issues around data gathering mentioned later in this report added to the problems, as did the lack of resources for protection issues' (RTE 2007 p.7).
3. Overall geographical coverage was found to be **too focused on more accessible areas**. 'Humanitarian assistance was mostly concentrated in larger towns and areas that were more accessible ... Smaller communities or entire areas in the same provinces received significantly less or no attention at all' (RTE 2011 p. 38). 'People that went into **organised camps were better assisted** than those in spontaneous camps; while those in host families received limited assistance' (RTE 2011 p.36).The findings from the Protection TG lessons learnt exercises also identified that assistance was often provided to those areas where access was easy; in addition, those areas which were declared by NDMA as flood affected in early phase benefited from more assistance as sometime partners would run out of funding/did not have capacity to implement in additional districts. The recommendations where: Timely coordination on area coverage between service provider was also required based on the capacity and specific needs of the community.
4. **Coordination** within and in-between clusters is required to 'to ensure a more comprehensive coverage, **clearer prioritisation or rationalised relief efforts**' (RTE 2011 p.38).

5. In addition to the findings of the 2011 RTE, the Protection Cluster identified that **IDPs affected by counter insurgency and refugees were forgotten** during the flood response, although in some instances they were also affected by floods and thus, even more vulnerable due to their continuous displacement situation.
6. The Protection Cluster has noted that the targeting of beneficiaries is not solely about the establishment of transparent, independent and needs based beneficiary lists, but is also about ensuring the that **access to the assistance is facilitated for all**. Concerns around access to assistance have been outlined in the 2011 Protection Cluster report 'The Watan Scheme for Flood Relief: Protection Highlights 2010-2011,' in the Protection Cluster Rapid Protection Assessments carried out after the 2010 floods and in UNIFEM's Rapid Gender Needs Assessment Report 2010.
7. Finally, the Protection Cluster noted that Relief was also reported anecdotally to be issued to landlords for further distribution to their tenants and there were **reports that landlords were exploiting tenants and charging for relief aid or withholding relief**.

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Annex 2: Guiding questions to be addressed by each Sectoral Working Group/Cluster

1. Is there standard criteria for beneficiary targeting and selection
2. Who is responsible for selecting beneficiaries
3. Are there specific policies or guidelines developed for targeting vulnerable persons including, women, children, older persons and persons with disabilities during distributions.
4. Are there guidelines developed for dealing with cases of discrimination or exclusion of socially marginalised groups?
5. What monitoring mechanisms are used to ensure that assistance is given based on need and vulnerability
6. Is there an established mechanism for ensuring geographic coverage based on need and vulnerability

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