



# **Food Security Cluster/Sector HRP Targeting Guidance**

This guidance aims at providing an overview of all elements to be considered for Food Security Cluster/Sector (FSC/S) teams to define the FSC targets for humanitarian response plans (HRPs).

It does not cover targeting at household level<sup>1</sup> but only the broader establishment of FSC targets, i.e., the number of people FSC partners plan to reach in a set country within a specific response plan. Because of operational challenges and current funding constraints, prioritization considerations are also presented.

Note: while the document mainly refers to HRP, the same principles are applicable for other response plans (Flash Appeals, Refugee Response Plans, etc.).

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## Contents

Needs as starting point.....	3
Avoid duplications .....	4
Partner Capacity and geographical presence .....	5
Access constraints.....	6
Funding prospects.....	7
FSC target definition approach.....	8
Food assistance.....	8
Agriculture and off-farm livelihoods assistance.....	9
Disaggregation / aggregation of targets.....	10
HRP targets key steps – a visual representation.....	12
Annex – Additional details on food assistance targets.....	13

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<sup>1</sup> While this guidance does not cover targeting at household level, FSC teams are recommended to lead discussions with partners around the harmonization of targeting criteria.

## Needs as starting point

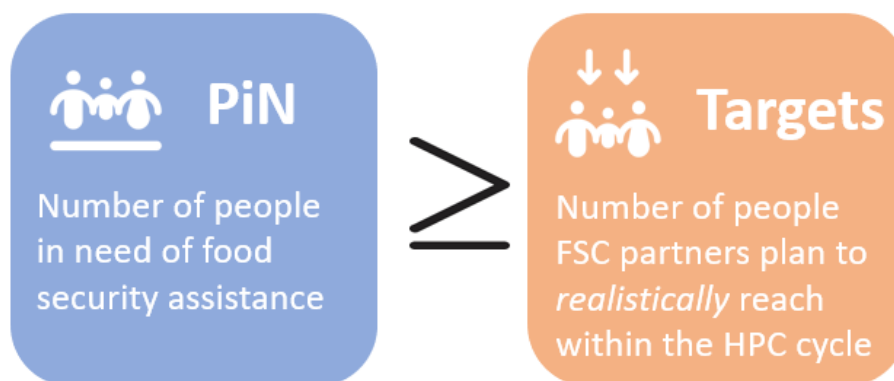
FSC HRP targets are calculated based on the FSC People in Need (PiN) figures of the Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO).

While the **People in Need (PiN)** figure indicates the number of people in need of food security assistance in the considered geographical area, the **target** figure indicates the number of people FSC partners plan to *realistically* reach within the HPC cycle<sup>2</sup>.



### Key point

The target figure is either lower or equal to the PiN (being a sub-set of it, it cannot be higher than the PiN).



Considering that the FSC target for the HRP is a subset of the HNO PiN, and that the FSC PiN usually encompasses people in IPC/CH 3+ (or equivalent, based on the country PiN calculation methodology<sup>3</sup>), FSC partners should target populations in IPC/CH3+.

**Ideally, in absence of intervention from the government or other actors, the FSC should target the whole population in IPC/CH3+.** However, this is rarely the case due to operational issues and/or funding constraints – hence a need to prioritize assistance. The sections below describe in detail the considerations to be taken to define the FSC HRP targets.

*Important note: If funding constraints or operational issues prevent a part of IPC3+ population (and/or areas) from being included in the target, and therefore exclude them from the response, this can severely compromise their food and nutrition*

<sup>2</sup> Please note that at the organization-level FSC partners could have different definitions of “targets”.

<sup>3</sup> Please refer to the [FSC Guidance on PiN and Severity calculation methodology](#)

conditions. This, in turn, would most likely translate into more severe levels of food insecurity in the future.

**tip!** Explain the above point in the narrative of the HRP and advocate for these needs to be covered.

## Avoid duplications



### ***Are other actors targeting the FSC targeted population with identical or similar interventions?***

Before setting its target, the FSC should map the interventions and targets of all stakeholders involved. The cluster should not target populations or locations whose food security needs are already fully covered by other stakeholders who do not contribute to humanitarian or flash appeals. However, when needs are only partially covered, the FSC should analyze the gaps and include the unassisted population people in their HRP target (if relevant or appropriate).

Example: WFP Iraq provided full rations to IDPs living in camps to fill in the gaps of the government's response. When the government distributed half rations, WFP complemented the gap and distributed the other half, to ensure that the targeted population receive their full entitlements without disruption.

Working closely with non-HRP actors, the FSC will guarantee complementary and integration of approaches and interventions, while avoiding duplications.

Tip: In case FSC teams have no direct knowledge of development and/or government activities, they can reach out to the CLAs (sitting in the UN Country Team working on development issues) and the CWG (who often liaises with social safety net schemes) to gather this information.

### *Who are the non-HRP actors / activities?*

- The ICRC and the IFRC: despite implementing humanitarian activities in line with the FSC response, the ICRC and the IFRC are not appealing partners in the HRP / Flash Appeal
- The Government: in some countries, government interventions (food / cash / seeds distributions) constitute a major share of the humanitarian response.

- The development actors and their programmes: while in many cases these interventions would differ in nature from the humanitarian response, in some instances the activities (and targeting) carried out are similar to the HRP ones. Key examples of this are: shock responsive social safety nets, livelihood interventions with short-term focus.

## Partner Capacity and geographical presence



### ***Do FSC partners have the operational capacity to reach the targeted population?***

- *Are they active, or will they be able to access the geographical areas to be targeted?*

It is essential to have a realistic assessment of partners' operational capacity and geographical presence to efficiently define FSC target. The FSC must also determine the geographic areas to be covered. Targets may vary based on regional elements of food insecurity (severity and magnitude), as well as accessibility.

In defining FSC HRP targets there is no mathematical rule to follow. Here are some criteria to be considered: context, access (e.g., considering conflict dynamics), partners' ability to attract funding, partners' capacity and work experience in the country. See the practical examples showcasing the logic to be followed:

- If in country X, due to bureaucratic impediments by the host Government, a limited number of NGOs is allowed to be registered and operate in the country, the target should consider this element and align to the realistic number of people the organizations allowed to operate can reach.
- If in a given region, high operational and logistics costs prevent FSC partners from being present or accessing the area, this must be taken into account when determining the targets for that region.

### ***tips!***

- ✓ It is recommended to consider previous trends of people reached as proxy of operational capacity and its geographic distribution. This can be done using the 5Ws historical data to estimate partners' capacity.

- ✓ FSC teams are recommended to always discuss with the CLAs about their planned capacity, in light of the high share of the response implemented by the CLAs.
- ✓ If the context or emergency level has evolved in the meantime, targets will need to be updated and it is recommended to ask partners to share their information of their planned interventions / forecasted capacity.



### Key point

The FSC must have frequent updates on partners' capacity and presence to adequately set HRP targets.

## Access constraints



### ***Do FSC partners have access to the targeted population?***

Beyond partners' operational capacity, the FSC must evaluate their capacity to reach the areas in which the population they want to target is located.

Targeting should not be limited to easily accessible areas: FSC partners should always advocate for and aim at accessing also hard-to-reach areas with a significant number of people in need.

Example 1: Due to regular shifts in power or conflict in a district, partners may not be inclined to take on projects in an operationally challenging district due to security issues.

Example 2: some areas could be hard to reach due to physical impediments such as the lack of infrastructures (roads, bridges, etc.), or extensive flooding, among others. This would limit partners' reach to a limited scale or specific periods of the year. All these indications are to be considered when defining the number of people targeted in these areas<sup>4</sup>.

### **tip!**

In this aforementioned situation, it is advised to also discuss with the other clusters as well as the Access Working Group, where available, to ensure we act according to humanitarian principles (and leave no one behind).

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<sup>4</sup> Beyond targeting, access constraints will also impact the cost of the humanitarian response. For details on HRP costing, refer to [FSC Guidance on costing](#)

## Funding prospects



***Shall FSC define targets based on availability of forecasted resources? If donors indicate that they will reduce their funding, shall FSC adapt its target accordingly?***

While the previous elements (avoiding duplications, operational capacity, access constraints) are strong determinants of the FSC HRP targets, funding prospects should be carefully considered in the equation. A fine balance should be achieved for targets to be at the same time ambitious (covering the highest portion of needs) and realistic (given the constraints of expected financial resources).



### Key element

**HRP Funding trends:** the funding status of the previous HRPs and forecasts on future funding may contribute to a more realistic targeting and prioritization exercise.

Recommended actions:

- The FSC teams can observe and analyze the trends of the activities and geographical locations where FSC partners were or were not funded. This does not mean that the FSC needs to limit itself and simply align to previous funding trends. However, funding analysis can give clear indications of the advocacy and fundraising efforts to be implemented.
- To correctly estimate funding forecasts for the upcoming HRP, FSC teams must liaise with donors and seek inputs from their Cluster Lead Agencies (CLAs).
- To note: in a funding constrained environment, as an alternative to reducing targets, FSC teams should consider also the option of tailoring food assistance packages (time and quantities) based on specific population needs, hence reducing HRP financial requirements.

Target should be defined with the objective to cover the highest portion of needs *realistically*, with the necessary fundraising efforts □ ***Indications of funding prospects should NOT limit and inform preventively the setting of target. FSC***

**teams (and CLAs) should push against an excessive prioritization exercise which will compromise the humanitarian imperative.**

## FSC target definition approach

As seen in the previous sections, HRP targets may end up being lower than the FSC PiN. In such situations, the FSC teams will drive discussion on who, within the IPC3+ caseload, will be targeted / prioritized. The sub-sections below provide some guidance for the two main components of the food security response, i.e., food assistance, and agriculture and off-farm livelihoods assistance.

**tip!** FSC teams are recommended to check with the CLAs on their targeting approach, in light of the high share of the response done by the CLAs. FSC teams should also discuss and validate this in the cluster meeting to have common understanding and consensus among all partners.

### Food assistance

When the FSC cannot target the entirety of the IPC3+ caseload, and a prioritization strategy needs to be adopted, the recommendation is to consider the level of severity of food insecurity and to define the target starting from the most acutely food insecure populations (for instance phase 4 and above).

Multiple options are possible when it comes to the targeting and prioritization approach:

- ❖ Setting targets starting from people who have the highest severity of needs, across the whole country – e.g., include as a minimum all people in IPC4/CH4+ within the food assistance target
- ❖ Setting targets starting from geographical areas with a concentration of (severe) needs – e.g., target as a minimum areas classified in IPC/CH4+, and/or areas with highest percentage or number of IPC3+ people.
- ❖ Targeting areas based on criteria beyond food insecurity, for instance areas with greatest nutrition needs or areas with highest intersectoral severity.

While the first option is preferred due to the humanitarian imperative of providing assistance to those who need it the most (people in IPC4 conditions are one step away from famine), needs and operational considerations will guide the decision on this.

*Refer to the annex for more details.*



## Agriculture and off-farm livelihoods assistance

All IPC/CH3+ population are proposed to be targeted for livelihood protection response but in cases where financial resources and operational challenges pose risks, the below mentioned criteria can be used to reach the most vulnerable.

1. Population in IPC/CH Phase 3+ (or other similar food insecurity scale) concentrated in rural areas.  
*(IPC/CH Phase 3+)\* % pop in rural areas sourced from Ministry of Agriculture, or World Bank or any other reliable assessment*  
If targets need to be reduced further:
  - a. Population in IPC/CH Phase 3+ (or other similar food insecurity scale) proven to be associated or linked with agriculture activities: crop production including homestead gardening, livestock or fisheries activities or daily laborers in the agricultural sector.  
*(IPC/CH Phase 3+)\* % pop associated with crop production, homestead gardening, livestock or fisheries activities sourced from DIEM, Ministry of Agriculture, or any other reliable data source)*
  - b. Population in IPC/CH Phase 3 or any other reliable assessment reporting farmers' households loss / lower income and limited access to agriculture inputs/resources (crops, fishery /aquaculture and livestock)<sup>5</sup>.  
*(IPC/CH Phase 3)\* % pop which lost income / reported lower income within last 3-6 months, Livelihood Coping Strategy Index (source from FAO Data in Emergencies (DIEM) or other source).*
2. Population in IPC/CH phase 3+ (or other similar food insecurity scale) dependent on off-farm livelihood in urban and/or rural areas affected by a shock or disaster.

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<sup>5</sup> Examples:

- Households facing significant difficulty in the last 3-6 months in terms of agriculture production (crops, fishing, livestock) or in off-farm production in the last/ongoing season.
- Households projected to face significant difficulty in terms of agriculture production in the upcoming harvest season (e.g., due to natural disaster, security preventing access to land, etc.).

## Disaggregation / aggregation of targets



***What are the people targeted with? Which activities are proposed for the targeted populations?***

The overall FSC target needs to be disaggregated by strategic objectives and activities (food assistance, agriculture, off-farm livelihoods, among others<sup>6</sup>) based on the same criteria as above: needs, non-HRP interventions, access, operational capacity and availability of funding.

Depending on the planned response approaches (e.g., integration of food and livelihood assistance for the same beneficiaries, different activities for different IPC phases, sequencing of activities, etc.), the FSC must carefully consider if two or more different HRP activities target the same populations. In such situations, this should be highlighted in the narrative and considered when calculating the final consolidated FSC target. Note: the same approach should be considered in the reporting mechanisms to calculate the number of unique beneficiaries reached. The active engagement of the FSC IMO will be paramount to successfully obtain this aggregation or disaggregation.

### **Example:**

**Sectoral Objective 1:** provision of emergency food and emergency livelihoods assistance

- Activity 1: Provision of immediate life-saving emergency food assistance
- Activity 2: Distribution of emergency crops, livestock or fisheries kits.

**Sectoral Objective 2:** Protect vulnerable livelihoods and promote resilience building activities (i.e., livelihoods strengthening/diversification, assets building/restoration, etc.)

- Activity 3: Rehabilitation of community assets and infrastructure through conditional cash transfer
- Activity 4: Provision of support to restore vulnerable livelihoods assets, assistance in establishing micro businesses and trainings to enhance employability.

Response approach: a “twin track” approach aiming at progressively transitioning people from emergency food assistance to livelihoods programmes.

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<sup>6</sup> Other SO can include Capacity Building, Early Warning/Early Action

**SO1 targets:**

- Activity 1: 8M (80% IPC3 targeted with food assistance)
- Activity 2: 1.5M (15% IPC3 targeted for emergency livelihoods short-term)
- Total SO1 target = 8M (same as activity 1 target, since by design the 15% IPC3 targeted for emergency livelihoods should be part of the 80% IPC3 targeted with food assistance)

**SO2 targets:**

- Activity 3: 2M (20% of IPC3 people targeted with Conditional cash transfers, overlapping with 80% food assistance – “graduation” from unconditional to conditional support)
- Activity 4: 500k (5% of IPC3 targeted with support to resilience - not overlapping with any of the above activities)
- Total SO2 target = 2,5M (sum of the two above, as activity 4 is meant NOT to overlap with any other activity beneficiaries)

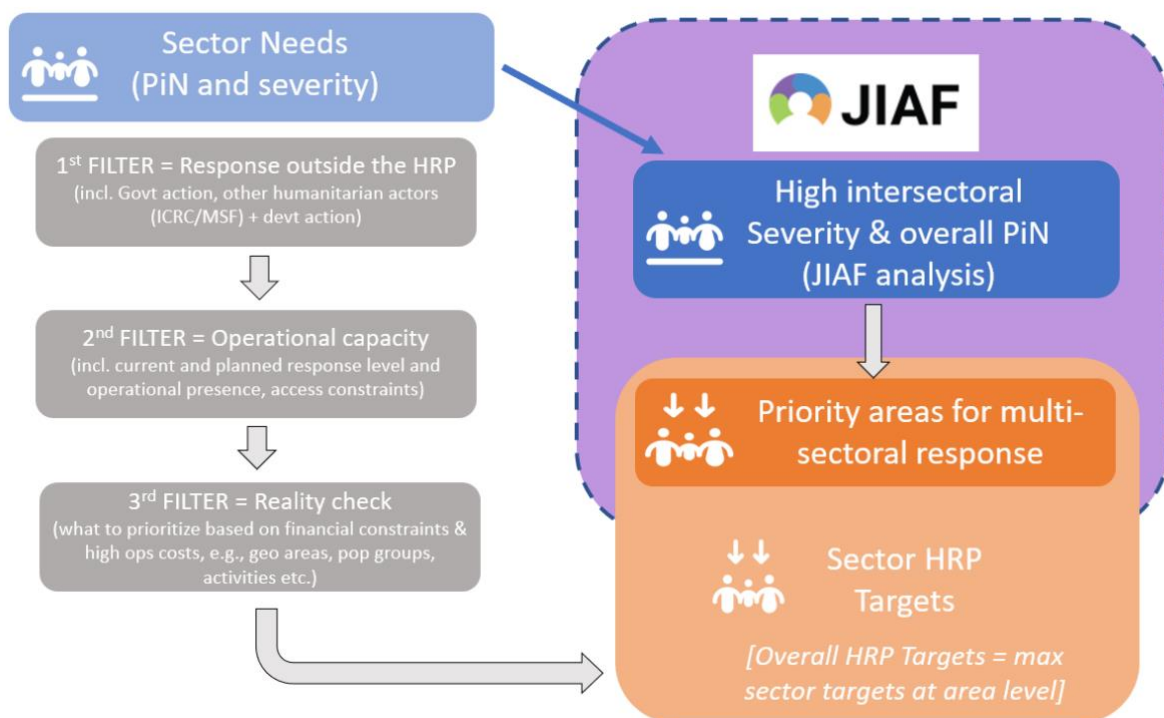
Total target = activity 1 (8M) + activity 4 (0,5M) = 8.5M

## HRP targets key steps – a visual representation

The graph below shows the steps FSC teams should take to define the HRP targets. The criteria to be considered (described above) are presented as “filters” to move from HNO PiN numbers to HRP Target numbers.

The box on the right side also shows the relation between sectoral and inter-sectoral (JIAF) analysis and how the areas with high intersectoral severity / needs should be considered in the framework of the HRP targeting.

It is important to note that the **FSC should NOT limit its areas of interventions (geographic targets) to the areas identified with high intersectoral (JIAF) severity / needs**, if significant FS needs are present in other areas (and not covered by other actors) and FSC partners have capacity to respond. FSC team must provide critical evidence on those areas which are of no interest for other clusters so that these can be added as priority areas.



## Annex – Additional details on food assistance targets

When the FSC cannot target the entirety of the IPC3+ caseload, and a prioritization strategy needs to be adopted, the recommendation is to consider the level of severity of food insecurity and to define the target starting from the most acutely food insecure populations (for instance phase 4 and above).

Multiple options are possible when it comes to the targeting and prioritization approach:

- ❖ Setting targets starting from people who have the highest severity of needs, across the whole country – e.g., include as a minimum all people in IPC4/CH4+ within the food assistance target
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- ❖ Targeting areas based on criteria beyond food insecurity, for instance areas with greatest nutrition needs or areas with highest intersectoral severity.

While the first option is preferred due to the humanitarian imperative of providing assistance to those who need it the most (people in IPC4 conditions are one step away from famine), needs and operational considerations will guide the decision on this; for instance:

- Is there a concentration of people in need in the areas classified in IPC4+ so as to justify targeting only these areas? Or would the FSC leave behind a big percentage of the population in IPC4+?
- Are the costs of operating in the whole country prohibitive due to physical access constraints, hence the need to concentrate the response in fewer areas?

### ***What to do when a “people targeting” approach is chosen***

When prioritization if needed, the FSC would start from targeting the whole population in IPC4+ across the country.

To define the percentage of IPC3 population to include in the target at the national level, three main criteria are to be considered: the overall partners’ operational capacity, the capacity of non-HRP actors, and the prospects of financial resources (*please read the above chapters for more information on these*).

For instance, if operational capacity and funding prospects are low, it is reasonable to prioritize populations in higher phases of food insecurity, starting from the entire population (100%) facing phase 4+ conditions, and include a lower percentage of populations facing phase 3 conditions.

It is important to remember that the percentage of IPC3 population included in the target does not have to be the same across all areas of the country. Multiple criteria can be used to define an area-specific percentage of IPC3 population included in the FSC target, for instance:

- Partners' presence and capacity (including access constraints): some areas of the country may have very limited presence of FSC partners; in these areas the FSC team could limit the targets to IPC4 population only (or include a lower percentage of IPC3 population)
- Presence of other actors (government, development actors, non-HRP humanitarian actors) covering already humanitarian needs: it is important for the FSC HRP targets to complement existing interventions and not to duplicate them
- Presence of other needs, such as high malnutrition rates or strong impact of humanitarian shocks, may lead FSC to consider including a higher percentage of IPC3 in the target of these prioritized areas.

### ***What to do when a "geographic targeting" approach is needed***

Although this is not a recommended approach, in some circumstances it could be necessary to prioritize based on geographical criteria.

The FSC would start from targeting all the areas classified in IPC/CH 4+, or areas with a high percentage or number of people in IPC3+ (the percentage / number would change from country to country, based on the IPC/CH results) – while taking into account operational and social cohesion considerations (including for instance expected intervention modalities and their potential impact on local economy).

Caveat: in an area classified, say, in severity 4, the FSC will **not** target 100% of the population of that area, but only (maximum) the IPC3+ population within the area.

Example: 10M people live in an area classified as IPC4, 6M of whom have been identified to face IPC3 conditions and 2M IPC4 conditions. The FSC will target between 2M (minimum) and 8M people (maximum).