

UNHCR-WFP JOINT APPEALS PROCESSES FOR TARGETED ASSISTANCE

Key considerations for decision-makers

This document provides an overview of appeals processes for targeted assistance delivered by UNHCR and WFP. It is intended to support decision-makers in planning for the establishment and maintenance of appeals processes, including the allocation of necessary financial and human resources. The document is intended for UNHCR and WFP senior management in contexts where targeting of assistance is being implemented, as well as for donors involved in funding targeted assistance.

APPEALS PROCESSES ARE AN INTEGRAL PART OF TARGETING

When humanitarian organizations implement targeting or prioritization¹ with the aim of providing assistance according to vulnerabilities, needs and capacities, and in line with available resources, forcibly displaced people are often grouped into different vulnerability categories. Those that are more vulnerable in meeting their essential needs receive a higher level of assistance than less vulnerable households, while households considered to be self-reliant may stop receiving assistance after a transition period.²

Households that are not in agreement with their vulnerability categorization, meaning that they are either receiving a lower level of assistance or no assistance at all, should have the option to appeal to have their vulnerability level and categorization reassessed. **Appeals processes are an integral part of responsible and accountable targeting.** As no targeting approach ever perfectly captures all forcibly displaced people who are vulnerable in meeting their essential needs, a robust appeals process plays a crucial role in identifying those that have fallen through the cracks.

MITIGATING POTENTIAL RISKS

Not having an effective appeals process in place increases **potential risks**, including, among others:

- An increase in the use of **negative coping strategies** by vulnerable households not receiving adequate assistance.
- Decreasing **community trust** in UNHCR, WFP and its partners, leading to a worsening of relations between forcibly displaced people and humanitarian organizations, with potential spillover effects such as protests and/or security risks as well as reduced access to forcibly displaced people.
- Negative impacts on **organizations' reputations**, which may impede future interventions.

ADDRESSING EXCLUSION ERRORS

Appeals processes help address **exclusion errors**. While different types of exclusion errors exist, one important way to address exclusion errors – in contexts where registration data is available and used to categorize households – is by correcting this data for households that are eligible for assistance but not receiving any assistance or an incorrect level of assistance due to **outdated, inaccurate or missing data**. Since targeting approaches cannot perfectly capture all forcibly displaced people who are vulnerable, a robust appeals process should also help identify **vulnerable households that are in need of assistance but that do not meet the eligibility criteria**.³

¹ Targeting is the process by which people in need are identified to enable the provision of timely and relevant assistance. Prioritization is resource-driven and occurs when funding shortfalls mean that not all needs can be met with the available resources.

² In order to simplify the language of this document, only *household-level targeting* is mentioned from here on, but the same considerations are equally valid for individual-level targeting as well as household and individual-level prioritization.

Furthermore, even though this document primarily focuses on the targeting of basic needs assistance, it should be noted that the different assistance packages for the different vulnerability categories should also include an appropriate livelihoods component to help strengthen the self-reliance of targeted households that have the potential to become self-reliant.

³ In the context of prioritization, the main focus will be on identifying *highly* vulnerable households that do not meet the eligibility criteria.

PROVIDING TIMELY OPPORTUNITIES FOR APPEAL SUBMISSIONS

Appeals should be received, followed up on and responded to **before changes are made to households' assistance** to the greatest extent possible. This is crucial to avoid vulnerable households temporarily receiving less assistance or no assistance until their appeals have been dealt with and they are included in the appropriate vulnerability category.

It is important to provide **regular opportunities for appeals to be submitted** so that any changes in a household's vulnerability level over time can be responded to (e.g. if a household head who was previously the main source of income has an accident and thereafter lives with a disability, the vulnerability level of that household likely increases). This means that the timeframe during which appeals are received, also called the 'appeals window', should ideally be open-ended (appeals are received continuously). Alternatively, appeals can also be received at regular intervals.

APPROPRIATE RESOURCING FOR AN EFFECTIVE APPEALS PROCESS

As soon as households are informed about their vulnerability categorization and what this means for their assistance, those among them who feel that they have been incorrectly categorized will want to submit an appeal. This usually leads to a **significant peak in appeals** during the initial weeks of the process. Appeals processes must be **appropriately resourced** to ensure that such a peak in appeals can be handled in an effective way.

Most importantly, resource planning should consider **UNHCR, WFP and partner capacities** for regular communication with forcibly displaced people, the intake of appeals (e.g. help/protection desk staff and helpline operators), appeals data management (data cleaning, processing and referrals), follow-up on appeals (e.g. by registration staff and caseworkers, including household visits where necessary), and the provision of responses to appellants. Where existing capacities are limited, **surge capacity** for a limited time period (e.g. three months) may be necessary so that the initial peak in appeals can be managed in an effective and timely manner. This may include financing for UNHCR, WFP and/or partner staffing, tablets and/or laptops to facilitate the recording and follow-up on appeals, the hiring of additional vehicles, regular training of relevant staff as well as community representatives, and regular communication with forcibly displaced people (e.g. staff travel to conduct community meetings, radio announcements, SMS, posters, leaflets, etc.).

The resourcing needs of a joint appeals process change over time since the number of incoming appeals falls to a much lower baseline after the initial peak. This reduction in the number of appeals should enable operations to manage the continued follow-up on appeals with their existing capacities.

ENSURING THE INCLUSION OF SUCCESSFUL APPELLANTS

Households that have successfully appealed should be included in the correct vulnerability category and receive assistance accordingly. To make sure that such changes in vulnerability category also lead to an actual change in the level of assistance, it is essential that a reasonable **appeals resource buffer** is planned, meaning the resources required for higher levels of assistance to successful appellants are specifically allocated for that purpose.

If additional resources are required, UNHCR and WFP should **jointly fundraise**, underlining the importance of appropriately resourcing the joint appeals process to ensure its effectiveness and accountability, as well as to support quality programming and responsible targeting.

For more information on the key considerations to keep in mind when setting up or reviewing an appeals process, see the [technical brief](#) and the [country examples](#) as well as the [checklist](#).

For more information on the UNHCR-WFP Joint Programme Excellence and Targeting Hub, please visit <https://unhcr-wfp-hub.org/>