



WFP/Ryan Matias

Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Service (VAM)



World Food
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Targeting and Registration in Emergency Contexts

Cross-functional Technical Note

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Introduction

The **Targeting and Registration in Emergency Contexts Cross-functional Technical Note** directly contributes to WFP's existing Targeting Operational Guidance (2021): it clarifies the applicability of the guidance in emergency contexts and guides on the selection of targeting and registration settings in emergencies.

WFP's operational landscape has become increasingly challenging – emergencies occur more frequently, last longer and are more complex than ever before, and there is greater demand for assurance that WFP's assistance reaches intended recipients without diversion. In addition, fewer funding streams and overall limited resources require greater focus on the effectiveness and impact of programmes. Accordingly, WFP must always ensure the highest possible level of assurance around the accuracy and quality of its targeting and registration activities which, while often separate, are intimately linked particularly in emergency settings.

Effective targeting in emergency contexts might require a nuanced approach depending on constraints that each emergency presents. Ultimately, targeting for unconditional food assistance along with complementary programming in emergency contexts requires a central understanding of the *Do No Harm* principle and of conflict sensitivity to ensure targeting decisions do not exacerbate vulnerabilities or create unintended negative impacts on affected populations. On the other hand, registration in these contexts is not only critical to ensuring that assistance reaches the right (targeted) individuals and households but also presents opportunities to improve future targeting especially when it is implemented first, as is often the case in crisis situations.

This technical note on targeting and registration in emergency contexts is designed to complement the main guidance note on targeting and prioritization. It offers in-depth insights into applying the principles outlined in the main note across diverse emergency scenarios and should be viewed as an enhancement, not a replacement.

Targeting and Registration during Emergencies



Differentiating Targeting from Registration

Although closely linked, targeting and registration are distinct yet complementary processes and should not be used interchangeably:

Targeting refers to the cross-functional and continuous process through which communities, households and/or individuals are selected for assistance. Targeting is informed by needs assessments, programme objectives, and conducted with the equitable and meaningful participation of diverse members of affected communities. Targeting outcomes are continuously monitored and processes refined as appropriate.

Registration is the systematic process of collecting, verifying, and maintaining important identity, demographics, and vulnerability information about individuals and households. It ensures that the people registered are the ones targeted for assistance, confirms their eligibility, and prevents duplication of the individual/households in WFP's systems. The information collected is used to plan and deliver programs effectively, and it also includes the process of regularly updating the information to keep it accurate.

Understanding the difference between these two processes is critical to ensuring that assistance reaches the right people, at the right time, through the right mechanisms.

Why target during emergencies?

In emergency contexts - particularly sudden-onset and complex emergencies - the most appropriate immediate response often follows a “No-Regrets” approach. However, as more detailed vulnerability information becomes available, **introducing more refined targeting and prioritization methods becomes essential to ensure assistance reaches those most in need, especially when resources are limited**. Variations in vulnerability within affected communities — such as differences in socioeconomic and nutrition status, coping capacity, and access to assistance — are the fundamental basis to identify the need for a more refined approach. This transition must be risk-informed and evidence-based, grounded in meaningful community engagement and supported by effective stakeholder feedback, coordination and communication to maintain trust and accountability.

In addition, emergency response strategies must carefully **balance speed and coverage** — reaching as many people as quickly as possible — **against the adequacy of assistance provided**, ensuring meaningful, appropriate support rather than spreading resources too thin. Often, when funding is insufficient to meet assessed needs, country offices need to make difficult prioritization decisions, choosing between breadth and depth approaches, especially in emergency situations. While there is no one-size-fits all approach, there are key considerations every CO needs to balance when making these decisions.

Why register during emergencies?

Within WFP's assurance and accountability framework, registration is a critical activity that ensures WFP knows who receives assistance and enables full traceability across all contexts – whether emergency or development. Its importance is heightened in emergencies, where social order is often disrupted, even as the “no-regrets” is used. Besides this assurance role, a well-designed registration process serves multiple critical functions:

- Prevents duplication and resource wastage: It helps avoid the same individual receiving assistance multiple times, thereby optimizing resource use.
- Lays the foundation for future targeting: By collecting data that reflects the vulnerabilities of affected populations, registration enables cost-efficient prioritization once the immediate crisis stabilizes.
- Leverages existing data: Where reliable data is already available, Country Offices (COs) can build on existing datasets rather than conducting a full-fledged registration exercise, saving time and effort.



Adapting targeting and registration to the nature of the emergency

Emergencies come in different forms, from their severity and magnitude to the speed at which they unfold. For this reason, each emergency context will likely require an adaptation of the standard guidance around targeting in WFP operations to fit the specific operational situation at hand. The targeting approach chosen in emergency contexts should ensure **balance between speed, equity, and impact in delivering assistance, and should be closely in line with the [targeting corporate requirements](#)**. Similarly, the registration process should be designed to swiftly, accurately, and efficiently verify and enrol targeted households - minimizing errors while capturing sufficient information, such as eligibility criteria where feasible. Eligibility data can support targeting implementation (when registration precedes it) or inform subsequent prioritization efforts. **Key considerations for both should include:**

- Scale and severity of the crisis
- Resource availability
- Information accessibility
- Operational feasibility, including access considerations for the most-at-risk
- Risk management, including of exclusion and inclusion error

Finally, **coordination with government and humanitarian partners** is critical to minimize exclusion errors, duplication of efforts, social tensions, and enhance complementarity of services.

Expanded Operational Classification of WFP Emergencies

To enhance clarity on the operationalization of nuanced targeting and registration approaches within the technical note, building on the [Definition of Emergencies](#), emergencies have been further reclassified according to **i) speed of onset**; and **ii) severity and magnitude**; as elaborated in the table:

Table 1. Expanded operational classification of emergency responses

Speed of onset		
Rapid/Sudden Onset	Slow Onset	Protracted
These emergencies take place extremely <u>quickly</u> , often with devastating impact. They come with <u>little or no warning</u> (like an earthquake), <u>some warning</u> (like a typhoon or hurricane), or may be <u>anticipated</u> (such as an expected conflict or cyclical flooding). ' <u>No regrets</u> ' approaches are typically applied in these contexts.	These emergencies show <u>early warning signals</u> that can be <u>observed for a considerable time</u> before escalating into an acute humanitarian crisis. Typical slow-onset emergencies are often <u>climate-related and/or cyclical</u> , such as droughts.	These emergencies last for <u>years or decades</u> . Most often a result of ongoing <u>conflict</u> situations, they commonly result in the creation of <u>refugee or Internal Displacement settings</u> . Protracted crises are considered <u>ongoing emergencies</u> when the conditions for transition to recovery or other interventions are not in place.

Severity and Magnitude		
Minor <100,000 people affected	Moderate 100,000 – 500,000 people affected	Major >500,000 people affected
These emergencies usually have a <u>limited impact</u> on the affected population, are often localized and <u>manageable with local resources</u> and capacities. Impact on households includes <u>diminished access</u> to food sources and <u>temporary</u> disruption to livelihoods. Examples include <u>small-scale</u> natural disasters (localized floods or minor earthquakes), disease outbreaks and spikes in acute malnutrition in specific areas, or <u>temporary</u> disruptions in essential services due to <u>localized</u> incidents.	These emergencies have a <u>significant impact</u> on a <u>specific region or population</u> , requiring <u>external assistance</u> and coordination to address them effectively. Impact on households includes <u>impeded access</u> to adequate food sources and disrupted livelihoods for an <u>extended period</u> . Examples include <u>regional</u> natural disasters (such as widespread flooding or moderate earthquakes), disease outbreaks and spikes in acute malnutrition affecting <u>multiple communities or regions</u> , conflict-related displacement and humanitarian crises in specific areas.	These emergencies have a <u>widespread and severe impact</u> , often affecting <u>entire countries or regions</u> and requiring <u>substantial international response</u> and support. Impact includes (almost) <u>complete loss of access</u> to essential needs and reliance on negative coping mechanisms for <u>survival</u> . Examples include <u>large-scale</u> natural disasters like tsunamis, major hurricanes, or massive earthquakes, <u>severe</u> epidemics or pandemics with significant impact on morbidity, malnutrition, and mortality rates and <u>spreading</u> beyond a contained/localized area, or <u>complex</u> emergencies involving widespread conflict and displacement, often spilling over to neighbouring regions/countries.

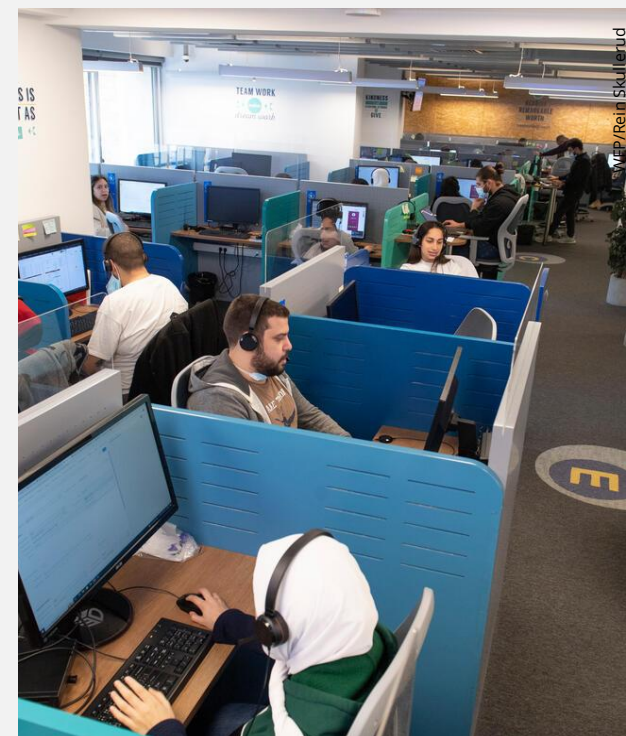
Conflict vs. Non-Conflict Settings

Targeting in conflict-affected settings presents unique challenges that demand heightened sensitivity to context, power dynamics, and associated risks – particularly related to protection and conflict sensitivity. In line with the humanitarian principles of neutrality and independence, WFP must remain vigilant to the potential for interference by conflict actors, including host governments, de facto authorities, and local gatekeepers who might favor one side. Such interference can take many forms, from directing assistance to specific areas, manipulating beneficiary lists or restricting access to assistance. A nuanced understanding of identity factors – ethnic, political, religious, social, or otherwise – is essential to avoid inadvertently privileging one group over another. Failure to do so risks undermining the principle of impartiality and exacerbating tensions across communities.

Active conflict also brings significant operational constraints. Security risks can limit access, hinder data collection, and restrict safe community engagement, all of which can compromise the accuracy and accountability of targeting efforts. While non-conflict emergencies may face logistical and capacity-related challenges, they typically involve fewer political sensitivities. All contexts require strong assurance mechanisms and proper documentation of operational choices. However, in conflict settings, there must be an even stronger **emphasis on neutrality, impartiality, conflict sensitivity, and safeguards against manipulation** by local actors and gatekeepers.

In addition, conflict situations frequently lead to large-scale displacement and sustained mobility among affected populations, driven by the nature and progression of the conflict itself. Targeting and registration strategies must account for this fluidity, ensuring that households remain identifiable even as they relocate, and that vulnerability assessments are contextually responsive. In many cases, biometric registration becomes indispensable and should be implemented in a way that facilitates its broader use for effective targeting and prioritization, all the while ensuring adherence to relevant corporate guidance.

In conflict settings, targeting should be transparent and adaptive, and updated to reflect changing needs and economic realities, to prevent exclusion errors, build trust, and mitigate community tensions. It should also mitigate bias and external interference in beneficiary selection, safeguarding data, ensuring operational independence, and implementing robust verification processes to preserve the integrity and legitimacy of assistance. Lastly, effective community engagement, tailored communication, and strong community feedback mechanisms are key to manage expectations, promote social cohesion, and prevent conflicts that can arise from targeting decisions.



Nuancing targeting and registration according to emergency type and severity

In the following section, practical considerations for targeting and registration in emergencies will be outlined following the four main steps of the targeting process: needs and context analysis, targeting design, targeting & registration implementation, monitoring. Note that while the actions listed in the tables are categorized by specific emergency types and severity levels, emergencies can present differently depending on the context and complexity. Therefore, the tables should be viewed as indicative, with actions potentially applicable across various types and levels of emergencies.

Step 1: Needs and Context Analysis

Table 2. Operational considerations for conducting needs and context analysis in emergencies of various speed and severity/magnitude

		Speed of onset		
		Rapid/Sudden Onset	Slow Onset	Protracted
Severity/Magnitude	Minor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within the first 72 hours, leverage existing remote, real-time, and geospatial data to provide a “good enough” snapshot of needs and priorities • During the next 7-10 days, verify and refine the initial report through partner field missions, satellite imagery, KIIs, and secondary data • Leverage local multi-stakeholder or government-led rapid needs assessments, keeping early-warning under review for potential escalation of the emergency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use routine Food Security monitoring and seasonal/context analysis to track gradual trends and inform early-warning alerts • Prioritize data preparedness before a shock happens. This includes having “ready-to-map” GIS data and a repository of relevant secondary data • Engage representatives of local communities to identify existing and emerging vulnerabilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out routine, representative assessments, monitor key indicators to decide how often to assess, and use government or partner-led systems to help with early analysis. • Leverage local partners to monitor vulnerabilities, investigate conflict-sensitivity and community's attitude towards WFP
	Moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct immediate rapid assessments, leveraging remote, real-time, and geospatial techniques and secondary data sources • Get insights on vulnerabilities from stakeholders, conducting geographically representative FGDs and KIIs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On the basis of early-warning signals, run in-depth vulnerability analyses using seasonal trends, predictive analytics, and risk/context assessments • Engage representative local communities (FGDs, KIIs) to identify existing and emerging vulnerabilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct regular, in-depth assessments and risk/context analyses to fill data gaps and capture emerging vulnerabilities, ensuring indicators on eligibility are included in assessment tools and can be monitored over time • Leverage community engagement to foster trust and enable comprehensive understanding of vulnerabilities

Major

Speed of onset

- Scale rapid assessments, in coordination with other humanitarian actors while using geospatial and remote methods
- Engage with diversified groups of the community (FGDs and KIIs) to map variability in needs and vulnerabilities, paying attention to any disproportionately disadvantaged groups
- Conduct comprehensive vulnerability and risk assessments and analyses, complementing with seasonal trends, predictive analytics
- Triangulate with existing and emerging vulnerabilities identified through widespread community engagement with diversified groups of the community (FGDs and KIIs)
- Institutionalize periodic, large-scale assessments and adaptive risk reviews to support long-term programming, ensuring indicators on eligibility are included in assessment tools and can be monitored over time
- Establish country wide community engagement strategy

Cross-cutting (for all severities/magnitudes and speed)

- Always aim to answer, as confidently as possible, the standard questions for assessments: Who are the food insecure or vulnerable people? How many are there? Where do they live? Why are they food insecure or vulnerable? How is the situation likely to evolve? and What are the risks threatening them?
- Ensure compliance with the ED circular on MINIMUM MONITORING REQUIREMENTS (MMRs) AND COMMUNITY FEEDBACK MECHANISM (CFM)
- Maintain a consolidated secondary-data review for a common operating picture
- Identify major protection and conflict sensitivity risks within assessments
- Leverage real-time and geo-spatial techniques, available secondary sources, and aim to validate/triangulate with field level observations when feasible
- Plan for and conduct meaningful community engagement
- Maintain a roster of capable enumerators and/or field level agreements with capable partners for rapid deployment in the event of an emergency - in-depth training may be a necessary preparedness measure to achieve desired capabilities in some contexts
- Estimate Identity Card (ID) coverage and possession rates, either as part of the rapid needs assessment or using official/secondary sources where feasible, to support the identification of the appropriate targeting/registration design

Vulnerability Frameworks

In **rapid-onset emergencies**, when targeted assistance is chosen vis-à-vis blanket, targeting often builds on existing **contextual indicators of need or deprivation** (utilizing frameworks that often primarily rely on the food consumption score). This is to ensure swift assistance distribution given the often-limited data availability. In **other types of crises**, a more **multi-dimensional** vulnerability framework should be considered, incorporating various factors such as food security, coping capacity, and economic capacity to meet needs. These typically call for detailed vulnerability assessments to ensure effective targeting in every situation and sustained support for those most in need. Regardless of context, vulnerability frameworks should be aligned with corporate guidance on the use of outcome indicators to ensure consistency, accountability, and evidence-based decision-making. Also, any data collection should always include socio-demographic indicators (including gender dimensions, disability status and chronic illnesses) to allow construction of accurate vulnerability profiles and effective targeting criteria regardless of the vulnerability framework being used. On the other hand, when blanket assistance is selected (typically following a registration exercise), it is important to anticipate the vulnerability framework that will guide future targeting. By leveraging the registration process to collect relevant data, such as socio-demographic variables, VAM and programme teams can lay the groundwork for categorical or vulnerability-based targeting, ensuring that the transition from blanket assistance is cost-efficient.

Step 2: Targeting Design

Table 3. Operational considerations for designing targeting in emergencies of various speed and severity/magnitude

		Speed of onset		
		Rapid/Sudden Onset	Slow Onset	Protracted
Severity/Magnitude	Minor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritize life-saving assistance; consider a short initial blanket phase (≈3 months or as locally justified) • Aim to minimize exclusion errors and plan to monitor inclusion errors as systems stabilize • Conduct rapid community validation of criteria, ensuring high-risk sub-groups/locations are covered • Draw from existing analyses to inform design of the registration tool, without slowing distribution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programming in these contexts tends to be resilience-oriented: adapt targeting to programme objectives, consulting with relevant GHQ/technical units • Aim for a balance between exclusion and inclusion error that will ensure programme sustainability • Co-develop eligibility criteria together with the community, especially for resilience • For recurring small-scale events, keep cumulative figures/locations and maintain a light, quickly deployable targeting design and registration tool 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Align to considerations for the “slow” onset, but with a stronger emphasis on light, repeatable mechanisms for small recurrent shocks. Consider and participate in multi-agency frameworks (e.g., Rapid Response Mechanism) to enable rapid activation or transitions in assistance types • Plan periodic reviews and robust targeting monitoring to minimize inclusion as well as exclusion errors • Engage communities and partners regularly to adapt to evolving vulnerabilities • Design a comprehensive registration tool enabling traceability and adjustment for scale-downs/ups
	Moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritize life-saving assistance; consider a short initial blanket phase (≈3 months or as locally justified), before selecting a design that will support subsequent programme scale up/down • Minimize exclusion errors initially; plan to monitor inclusion errors as stability improves • Consult communities and conduct rapid community validation of criteria, ensuring high-risk sub-groups/locations are covered • Design a flexible, easily deployable registration process ensuring inclusion of vulnerability-relevant socio-demographic information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a comprehensive vulnerability-based targeting approach: sharpen geospatial analysis (e.g., previous surveys, remote sensing, mobile-phone data where available) to identify hotspots of vulnerability (geographic targeting). • Aim for a balance between exclusion and inclusion error that will ensure programme sustainability • Adapt targeting criteria to regional differences, ensuring iterative community consultations to co-develop/validate criteria • Design a registration tool enabling traceability and ensure inclusion of vulnerability-relevant socio-demographic information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a flexible, cost-effective vulnerability-based approach that anticipates scale-up/scale-down and stricter prioritization during scale-downs • Plan periodic reviews and robust targeting monitoring to minimize inclusion as well as exclusion errors • Plan periodic engagement with communities and partners as well as reviews of the CFM to adapt eligibility criteria to evolving vulnerabilities • Design a comprehensive registration tool enabling traceability and adjustment for scale-downs/ups

Step 2: Targeting Design

Table 3. Operational considerations for designing targeting in emergencies of various speed and severity/magnitude

		Speed of onset		
Severity/Magnitude	Major	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rapidly deploy life-saving assistance, introducing vulnerability-based targeting where feasible. Where not feasible, use a short initial blanket phase (≈3 months or as locally justified) and develop a clear transition plan • Minimize exclusion errors initially; plan to monitor inclusion errors as stability improves • Consult communities and conduct rapid community validation of criteria, ensuring high-risk sub-groups/locations are covered • Design a flexible, easily deployable registration process ensuring inclusion of vulnerability-relevant socio-demographic information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce a comprehensive vulnerability-based targeting with broad consultation and context tailoring • Aim for a balance between exclusion and inclusion error that will ensure programme sustainability • Ensure criteria are adaptive and evidence-driven, finalized with meaningful community engagement • Design a registration tool enabling traceability and deduplication, while ensuring inclusion of vulnerability-relevant socio-demographic information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce a long-term, structured, vulnerability-based targeting with sustainability and accountability built in • Plan periodic reviews and robust targeting monitoring to minimize inclusion as well as exclusion errors • Plan periodic engagement with communities and partners as well as reviews of the CFM to adapt eligibility criteria to evolving vulnerabilities • Design a comprehensive registration tool enabling traceability and adjustment for scale-downs/ups
	Cross-cutting (for all severities/magnitudes and speed)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow corporate guidance on targeting/prioritization and relevant advisories during targeting design • Align with the WFP Concept of Operations (CONOPS)/response plan and relevant inter-agency processes/plans • Ensure community engagement and do-no-harm <p>Crises are especially prone to frequent operational scale-up/scale-down: Synchronize targeting and registration designs to enable adjustments, accompanied by relevant SOPs on the management of associated digital systems in place</p>		



Refugee settings

Refugee targeting, typically in protracted emergency contexts, begins with **registration and data management**, where UNHCR's **ProGres system** serves as the primary database to record and update demographic and vulnerability information for all refugees. Next, **needs and vulnerability assessments** are conducted periodically through **Joint Needs Assessments (JNA, JAM)** and household surveys and data are analyzed through the **Joint Analytical Framework (JAF)** along with Standardized Expanded Nutrition Survey (SENS) and other complementary surveys. These tools allow to refine targeting and identify refugee needs and conditions, then are applied to the whole refugee population for whom a number of indicators are available in the ProGres refugee database. Finally, **coordination and information sharing** with UNHCR, government agencies, and other humanitarian partners ensures that targeting criteria remain consistent, harmonized, and aligned with broader assistance efforts while avoiding duplication and enhancing efficiencies. Where feasible, establish a link between assessment and registration data by incorporating a unique household identifier into assessment questionnaires. This connection enables more rigorous and longitudinal analysis, supporting evidence-based targeting design and program refinement over time. However, it is essential to obtain informed consent from beneficiaries or respondents during data collection to ensure ethical and responsible data use.

Step 3: Targeting and Registration Implementation

Table 4. Operational considerations for implementing targeting and registration in emergencies of various speed and severity/magnitude

		Speed of onset		
Severity/Magnitude		Rapid/Sudden Onset	Slow Onset	Protracted
	Minor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perform light-touch registration in the first 1–4 weeks to enable rapid response and traceability • Capture basic vulnerability-relevant socio-demographic data (name, HH size, location, available IDs) • Evaluate the need for targeting and verification once the initial no regret approach period is stabilized • Maintain a simple, accessible CFM to raise urgent issues and support real-time adjustments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin with community-based lists or light registration for initial distributions - transition to full digital registration as operational conditions allow • Include both identity and programmatic data (name, gender, date of birth, IDs, household composition, delivery-related information) and biometric data where relevant. • Conduct comprehensive eligibility assessment and verification • Integrate CFM into routine monitoring and accountability processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Register new arrivals on a rolling basis and update HH information every 6–12 months through case management • Maintain accurate, up-to-date household and/or beneficiary lists, including both identity and programmatic data as well as biometrics where feasible • Ensure eligibility verification accompanies any new or adjusted targeting round • Plan for formal, multi-channel CFM with dedicated staff
	Moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perform light-touch registration at onset, and launch full registration within 1–3 months in priority areas/groups • Include identification and vulnerability-relevant socio-demographic data (name, HH size, location, available IDs and biometrics where appropriate) • Targeting and eligibility verification conducted as soon as feasible, preferably within 3–6 months of initial assistance • Ensure CFM is rapidly deployable, accessible through multiple channels, and managed by available staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure a balance between speed and accuracy in registration by cross-checking lists, leveraging government/humanitarian databases, etc. • Enable comprehensive eligibility assessment/verification by registering identity and programmatic data (household surveys, IDs, biometric systems where feasible) • Perform eligibility verification at each (re)targeting, adapting to evolving needs • Deploy CFM through multiple channels, capturing urgent concerns and triggering real-time adjustments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutionalize registration systems with routine updates (6–12 months) and rolling registration • Collect both identity and programmatic data, as well as biometrics where feasible, to facilitate retargeting/caseload adjustments • Ensure eligibility verification accompanies any new or adjusted targeting round • Integrate multi-channel CFM into routine monitoring and accountability processes, closely reviewed by internal governance structure
	Major	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use mass registration approaches that preserve traceability and scalability, while prioritizing early deduplication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement large-scale digital registration (community-based lists, Self-Registration Application, or pre-existing databases), while leveraging government /humanitarian databases for cross-checks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustain robust registration systems with interoperability and case management, with routine updates (6–12 months) and rolling registration

Major

- Include identification and vulnerability-relevant socio-demographic data (name, HH size, location, available IDs and biometrics where appropriate)
- Targeting and eligibility verification conducted as soon as feasible, preferably within 3–6 months of initial assistance
- Ensure CFM is rapidly deployable, accessible through multiple channels, and managed by available staff
- Facilitate deduplication and include socio-demographic, programmatic and biometric data (household surveys, ID checks, biometric systems where feasible)
- Perform eligibility verification at each (re)targeting, adapting to evolving needs
- Deploy CFM through multiple channels, capturing urgent concerns and triggering real-time adjustments
- Maintain a clear deduplication and identity-validation strategy across platforms, ensuring both identity and programmatic data as well as biometrics are collected
- Perform eligibility verification every time a new targeting is put in place or adjusted
- Integrate multi-channel CFM into routine monitoring and accountability processes, closely reviewed by internal governance structure

Cross-cutting (for all severities/magnitudes and speed)

- Consult with communities on the validation of eligibility criteria before selecting beneficiaries
- Ensure eligibility verification occurs every time a new targeting is introduced or adjusted
- Apply a context-appropriate deduplication strategy (biographic checks, photo verification, or biometrics where relevant) to maintain unique identities and prevent duplication
- Communicate to beneficiaries how they can appeal the targeting decision
- Update eligibility criteria based on CFM outputs for the next targeting

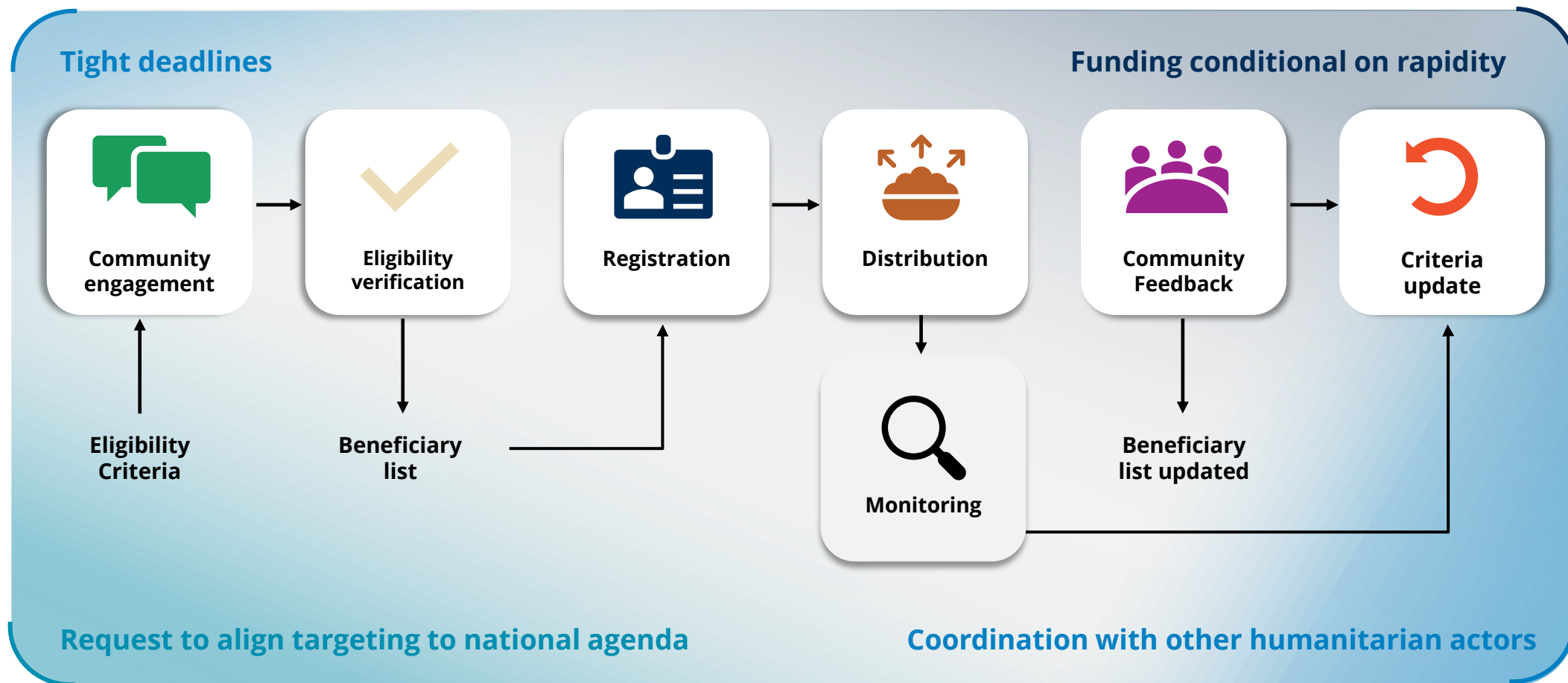
Managing Pressure During Implementation

Targeting implementation is a particularly stressful process as **coordination requirements between multiple actors meets pressure to implement at speed from stakeholders** – this pressure is heightened when facing emergency contexts. During implementation, VAM needs to coordinate with colleagues from programme, gender, protection and AAP to align the targeting with the intended programming while limiting potential negative impacts (conflict sensitivity, discrimination, etc.) At the same time, colleagues working on IDM and systems need to be involved to ensure those targeted will be the ones ultimately assisted. In addition, targeting and registration is often implemented by cooperating partners and the process might require involving colleagues working on access negotiation. This is all done while ensuring appropriate community feedback mechanisms can be implemented.

In parallel, management and donors can be pushing for a rapid targeting, registration and distribution while facing threats of funding being pulled back if the flow is not sufficiently responsive. Additional pressures can be faced from local authorities wanting to align WFP's targeting to their own agenda, which might not align with the humanitarian principles. Finally, especially in emergencies, WFP is expected to coordinate with other humanitarian actors to ensure the highest possible effectiveness in the response.

For these reasons, country offices are highly encouraged to invest in emergency preparedness activities (see Annex 1) which could streamline targeting and registration processes when the emergency hits. Having in place a Targeting Working Group and clear targeting SOPs can also ensure all functions know their role when it comes to targeting and can more easily collaborate when faced with an emergency situation. For slow onset emergencies, scenario planning together with internal and external stakeholders is also highly suggested.

Figure 1. Implementing a coordinated approach to targeting and registration under pressure



Functions involved during implementation

VAM	Monitoring	Programme	Gender	Protection	AAP
TEC	IDM	CFM	Admin	CP	Access

Leveraging Social Registries for Targeting and Registration

Social registries are government-led systems that collect and manage data, on households to determine eligibility for social assistance (such as names, dates of birth, gender, household composition, phone numbers, ID numbers). When well-developed and up to date, they hold strong potential to support WFP's targeting, offering a ready **source of data** that can reduce **duplication** and foster **alignment with national systems**. However, in many contexts, **interoperability challenges, outdated or incomplete data, and the absence of food security indicators** limit their use. Investing in strategic **engagement with governments** is key to strengthen registries, ensuring they are inclusive, regularly updated, and reflective of food security dimensions that meet humanitarian needs.

When strong government-managed social registries are in place, WFP should prioritize using these systems to receive data rather than creating parallel registration and data management processes. This not only avoids duplication but also ensures greater efficiency, sustainability, and alignment with existing structures.

A good example is the Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) in Türkiye, where WFP fully relied on the government's social registry. Registration into the program was conducted entirely through government systems, allowing the programme to continue seamlessly, even after WFP transitioned out of direct implementation.

Step 3: Monitoring

Table 5. Operational considerations for monitoring targeting in emergencies of various speed and severity/magnitude

		Speed of onset		
		Rapid/Sudden Onset	Slow Onset	Protracted
Severity/Magnitude	Minor	<p>Considerations for monitoring are not dependant on the speed and severity/magnitude of the crisis. Colleagues should always refer to the ED Circular on Minimum Monitoring Requirements (MMRs) and Community Feedback (CFM) Mechanisms Standards in WFP Country Offices to determine the appropriate approach to monitoring.</p> <p>For monitoring of targeting effectiveness (through the monitoring of targeting errors), monitoring exercises should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beneficiary and non-beneficiary samples Food security outcome indicators <p>Questions related to the eligibility criteria used for the targeting (enabling the identification of eligible vs. non-eligible households)</p>		
	Moderate			
	Major			

Practical Considerations

Table 6. Practical considerations during the rollout of targeting and registration in emergencies of various speed and severity/magnitude

		Speed of onset		
Severity/Magnitude		Rapid/Sudden Onset	Slow Onset	Protracted
	Minor	<p>Localized shocks often trigger immediate blanket distributions because data and access constraints make household-level targeting impractical. Registration is typically ad hoc (community lists, paper records), risking duplication and weak traceability.</p> <p>Example: In recurrent rural floods in Bangladesh, partners usually rely on a diverse community targeting committee to identify most vulnerable households, leading to speed but requiring more facilitation and monitoring to avoid biases. Government social registries can also be used where available.</p>	<p>Slow, low-intensity shocks can be overlooked until vulnerabilities accumulate. Without early vulnerability mapping, exclusion errors mount. Registration data may not be updated until after the response starts.</p> <p>Example: In parts of the Sahel, early rainfall deficits in minor years went unnoticed until seasonal food insecurity spiked, forcing last-minute adjustments to beneficiary lists.</p>	<p>Small-scale displacement or pockets of need in otherwise stable contexts often end up absorbed into host community programmes. Registration may rely heavily on national systems rather than humanitarian lists, limiting dedicated tracking.</p> <p>Example: Initial small Rohingya inflows (pre-2017) were registered by UNHCR and benefit from some freedom of movement/access to host community educational system. UNHCR continue to register Rohingya refugees who arrived during/following the 2017 influx, but those do not benefit from the same freedom of access.</p>
	Moderate	<p>Infrastructure collapse and chaotic conditions mean initial targeting and registration are highly constrained. Lists are compiled rapidly with minimal verification, requiring large revisions later.</p> <p>Example: After the 2010 Haiti earthquake, destruction of records and displacement made it impossible to verify eligibility; WFP used blanket food distributions at first, then gradually shifted to digital registration when conditions stabilized.</p>	<p>Crises that build over months demand iterative targeting refinement. If early analysis is weak, groups may be missed; registration has to expand in waves as new vulnerable populations are recognized.</p> <p>Example: In the 2011 Horn of Africa drought, slow recognition of worsening conditions led to late registration drives, creating coverage gaps and forcing prioritization of the most food-insecure groups only.</p>	<p>In moderate, long crises, access and political interference often constrain fair targeting. Registration systems must be maintained under stress, with high turnover and contested beneficiary lists.</p> <p>Example: In eastern DRC, continuous displacement and the presence of armed groups make targeting politicized and vulnerable to manipulation. It also restricts safety access to assistance and limits monitoring of effect/impact on households. SCOPE biometric registration reduces risks of fraud and manipulation.</p>
	Major	<p>Sudden disasters at largescale overwhelm systems. Humanitarian actors often must distribute aid without eligibility checks. Registration is delayed or simplified, with deduplication postponed.</p> <p>Example: The 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami affected millions across multiple countries; WFP and partners initially relied on geographic blanket targeting before rolling out systematic household registration.</p>	<p>Very large slow-onset crises may require blending blanket and targeted methods. Registration systems must be scaled rapidly but also kept flexible to adapt to evolving needs.</p> <p>Example: In Typhoon Haiyan (Philippines), initial blanket assistance was delivered at scale before moving to more refined targeting for protracted recovery.</p>	<p>In protracted, high-severity crises, data collection and monitoring become extremely difficult. Targeting is challenged by fragmented control, politicization of lists, and limited ability to update registration.</p> <p>Example: In Syria, prior to December 2024, WFP struggled to apply consistent targeting approaches across areas of control; fragmented ID systems and varying access to households for assessment and monitoring made design and verification challenging.</p>

Operational Configuration of Targeting and Registration Processes

Targeting and registration are core processes that determine who receive assistance and how quickly support can be delivered. Their configuration varies by emergency type: in sudden-onset crises, they may be combined into one rapid step using blanket or community-based approaches with light registration; in protracted settings, phased approaches may be more appropriate. Each approach carries **operational implications: combined steps may reduce accuracy and oversight but allow faster delivery, while phased approaches can improve precision and accountability but require more time, coordination, and access.** Regardless of the model, registration should aim to collect **key unique identifiers** – such as names, dates of birth, gender, household composition, phone numbers, ID numbers (for all household members) – **to ensure identity verification and deduplication.** In addition to key identifiers, data connected to potentially evolving eligibility criteria should be collected where possible to support changes in caseload. Strong planning, clearly defined roles, and robust oversight mechanisms are essential to maintain both speed and integrity in response.

Figure 1: Scenarios for the configurations of targeting and registration processes

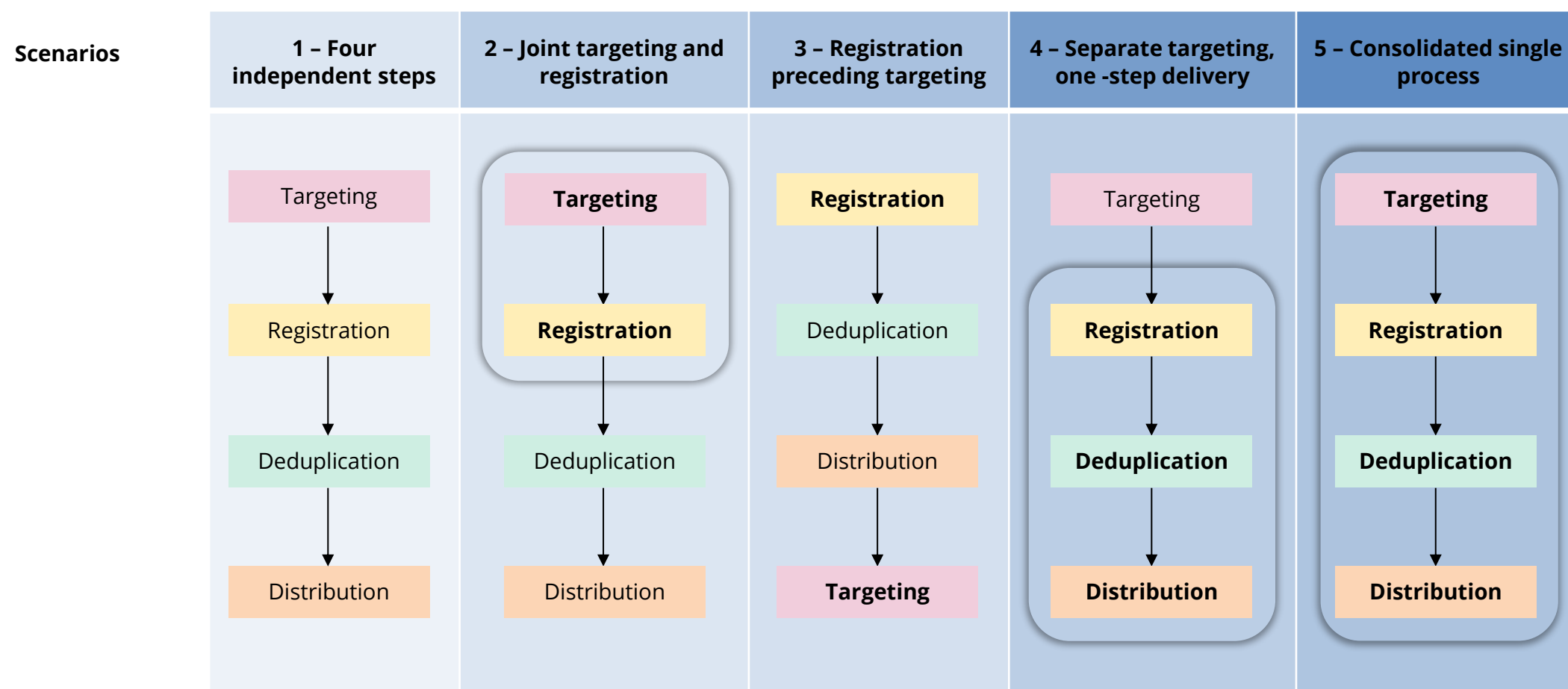


Table 7. Key features of the configuration scenarios between targeting and registration

	Scenarios				
	1 – Four independent steps	2 – Joint targeting and registration	3 – Registration preceding targeting	4 – Separate targeting, one -step delivery	5 – Consolidated single process
Usage	Protracted crises (e.g. refugees), low-connectivity areas and settings without formal IDs	Settings with limited connectivity, no formal IDs, and when a full registration is not critical	Rapid Onset emergency contexts with blanket geographical or status-based targeting	Contexts with reliable ID systems and management	Rapid-onset emergencies where quick delivery is essential, and ID and/or connectivity infrastructure exists
Description	A fully segmented model with four distinct steps – targeting, registration, deduplication, and distribution – executed over an extended period.	Targeting and registration happen together, followed by back-end deduplication and separate-day distribution.	Registration done as a first step on a blanket approach (often informed by geographic targeting), followed by a distribution process. Targeting done at a future date when the conditions allow.	Targeting is done in advance, followed by a combined registration and distribution process with on-site deduplication.	A single-step process where targeting, registration, deduplication, and distribution occur at the same time.
Key Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive Targeting: Households are identified and validated over time. • Detailed Registration: Includes photos and personal data collection. • Back-End Deduplication: Requires desk review and adjudication. • Separate Distribution: Conducted after all prior steps are finalized. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Combined Data Collection: Targeting and registration conducted in one visit. • No Biometrics: Typically not collected in this approach. • Back-End Deduplication: May require desk review. • Separate Distribution: Takes place later. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Light Registration: Based on criteria for blanket assistance. If data is already available from other sources (govt, partners) – this can be used or enhanced • No Biometrics: Typically not collected in this approach. • Distribution: Done based on the initial registration, to ensure we know where the assistance is going • Prioritization: Usually based on the vulnerability data collected during registration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeting First: May require eligibility verification data processing or community validation • Integrated Delivery: Registration and distribution happen together. • On-Site Real-Time Deduplication: Enabled by available IDs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rapid Deployment: Optimized for speed. • Real-Time Processing: Immediate registration and real-time deduplication. • Fully Integrated: All steps in one touchpoint.
Important Considerations	Multiple touchpoints and longer timelines are required.	Efficient where infrastructure is limited.	Efficient and practical where infrastructure is limited.	Requires relatively stable connectivity and ID systems.	Best for contexts where speed in delivery of assistance is the key consideration.
Examples	DRC, Somalia, South Sudan	Chad, Ethiopia, Mali, Yemen	Gaza, Sudan	Ukraine.	Afghanistan (e.g., fall of government, returnee response, etc.), Gaza emergency response.

Self-targeting vs. self-registration

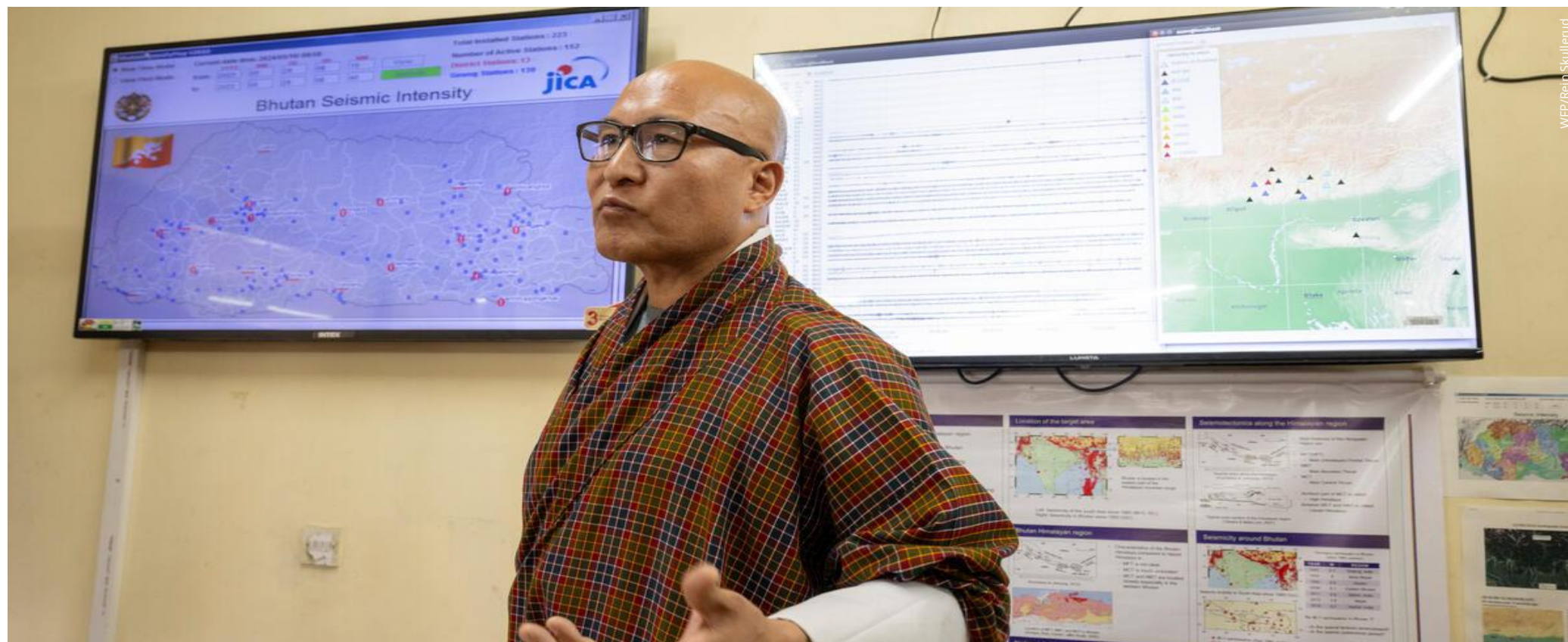
Self-targeting (or self-selection) is when people opt into assistance because the programme is designed to discourage better-off households from participating - for example, offering below-market wages in public works or distributing less-preferred staple foods, among other features. While this can direct support toward poorer groups, it raises ethical concerns in the context of emergency response: inferior food undermines dignity, visible self-selection can stigmatize recipients, and barriers such as literacy or mobility may prevent some vulnerable households from receiving life-saving rations. For these reasons, WFP does not recommend self-targeting for its humanitarian food assistance activities, where fairness, quality, and accountability are essential. It is, however, often used in resilience and livelihoods programmes, such as food or cash assistance for assets, where modest incentives or labor requirements can effectively limit demand from better-off households.

Self-registration is a process that enables individuals or households affected by crises to independently register with WFP. Through WFP's corporate self-registration web portal, beneficiaries can input their personal and household information, indicate their needs, and verify their identity - without requiring direct facilitation by WFP staff or co-operating partners. This approach enhances accessibility, empowers communities, and supports more inclusive coverage, especially in remote or high-volume emergency settings. Once individuals self-register for assistance, their data is validated prior to any delivery of assistance. In the case of cash-based assistance or where collaboration with government systems is possible - identity verification is typically conducted remotely, leveraging KYC checks or interoperable registries. For in-kind assistance, data validation is done by confirming beneficiary details at the point of distribution.

In summary, while self-targeting is generally not recommended for humanitarian food assistance due to ethical concerns and risks of stigma, self-registration has emerged as an innovative approach that enhances access and inclusion in emergencies. Unlike self-targeting, self-registration allows crisis-affected households to independently record their details in a secure digital system, enabling rapid enrolment even when access for staff or partners is limited. This approach is typically guided by geographic-level targeting analysis, which determines in which areas registration is opened, and often results in blanket assistance within those areas. Self-registration therefore offers a practical entry point for large-scale enrolment in highly constrained emergencies, while leaving space to link with classical targeting approaches as more data becomes available.



Adapting Targeting and Registration to Contextual and Institutional Readiness



Data Availability Considerations

The level of data availability in a crisis setting, whether data-scarce or data-rich, shapes the options available for targeting and registration. In sudden-onset emergencies, where time is critical, WFP often faces severe data gaps that constrain targeting possibilities, while in other cases, pre-existing information systems or assessments provide a stronger foundation for rapid, data-informed responses. In slow-onset emergencies, WFP teams and partners typically have more lead time to establish data collection mechanisms and strengthen registration systems before conditions deteriorate. Likewise, in protracted crises, the data environment usually evolves over time, with successive operations generating and consolidating information - though severe and persistent access restrictions can limit such progress (see following section).

It is important to note that the scale or severity of an emergency does not, in itself, determine data availability. Instead, data readiness depends on the pre-crisis information landscape, institutional capacity, and access conditions. For this reason, the table below focuses primarily on sudden-onset emergencies, where differences between data-scarce and data-rich contexts most directly influence targeting and registration approaches.

Table 8. Data availability considerations for the rollout of targeting and registration in emergencies

Data Availability Scenario		
	Data-scarce context	Data-rich context
Needs and Context Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to pre-existing data can be limited and assessments are often less precise and require frequent updates, to inform potential targeting adjustments Rely on rapid, ad hoc data collection through community consultations, KIs, context analyses and risk assessments, and/or observational data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leverage existing national statistical data, census, social protection systems, social/beneficiary registries, and administrative data Focus on verifying and updating existing data rather than collecting from scratch Leverage disaggregated analysis to identify trends in certain groups
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refer to ED Circular on Minimum Monitoring Requirements (MMRs) and Community Feedback (CFM) Mechanisms Standards in WFP Country Offices Tools such as remote sensing and geospatial analysis can complement information 	
Targeting Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Might require blanket assistance approaches Eligibility criteria are often simplified and based on general sociodemographic characteristics Categorical or community-based approaches are common due to the lack of household-level socioeconomic data <p>Community engagement (local authorities and affected communities) should be especially leveraged to co-develop and validate targeting criteria</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Might favour targeting approaches other than blanket assistance Eligibility criteria can be developed; pre-established eligibility criteria from social protection systems may be adapted to the emergency context Data-driven targeting approaches (PMT, scorecard) can be chosen integrating registry data with real-time eligibility verification <p>Community engagement, including through consultations, integral to the process to validate assumptions</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Re-evaluate the validity of eligibility criteria every time a new PDM or assessment becomes available To evaluate inclusion and exclusion errors, refer to the Targeting Advisory #2 	
Targeting and Registration Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In contexts lacking formal ID systems and reliable population data, beneficiary registration relies on community engagement, manual data collection, and offline mobile tools; WFP may issue functional ID cards, using validated community or partner lists for initial distributions and gradually consolidating data with light registration within 1–2 weeks Appeals and CFM, as well as the analysis of this data, should be simple, accessible, built on existing informal channels, and clearly communicated to affected populations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In contexts with reliable national IDs, WFP leverages these to streamline beneficiary registration and identification, prioritizing the most trusted and widely used ID types; biographic deduplication is applied across all IDs (except the low-coverage ones), and where ID systems are trusted, biometric data collection may be unnecessary Appeals and CFM build on existing systems, often digitized for systematic tracking, faster response times and more structured decision-making
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Feedback Mechanism (CFM) must meet global CFM assurance standards and align to CFM in emergencies 	
Monitoring	Refer to ED Circular on Minimum Monitoring Requirements (MMRs) and Community Feedback (CFM) Mechanisms Standards in WFP Country Offices	
Practical Considerations	Lack of frequent and quality data, potential bias in beneficiary selection, slow feedback loops, all of which can impact the accuracy and efficiency of targeting processes.	Over-reliance on existing data (which may be outdated), challenges in integrating new data sources and interoperability concerns can lead to limited adaptability to emerging needs and an exacerbated risk of excluding newly vulnerable groups.

Accessibility Considerations

Emergency situations can often impact the ability of WFP staff and partners to physically access vulnerable populations, for example due to conflict or natural disasters impacting roads and network. Without access, evidence generation on needs and vulnerability might rely on remote and geospatial systems as a first source of information. Moreover, hard-to-reach areas can limit our ability to validate the targeting methodology with affected communities and conduct registration. For this reason, the table below focuses on how to adapt targeting and registration processes to the specific constraints of contexts with limited access.

Table 9. Accessibility considerations for the rollout of targeting and registration in emergencies

Non-accessible contexts	
Needs and Context Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct remote assessments (such as rapid surveys and mVAM) providing a viable way to still obtain information in hard-to-reach settings Conduct a detailed stakeholder mapping exercise in consultation with HMI/Access colleagues to understand the power dynamics in the context and likely sources of undue influence on the targeting and registration exercises Refer to ED Circular on Minimum Monitoring Requirements (MMRs) and Community Feedback (CFM) Mechanisms Standards in WFP Country Offices
Targeting Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop simplified criteria based on available assessment sources as well as contingency plans to adapt targeting criteria as access evolves, or more reliable data becomes available Assess feasibility of community consultations and, where possible, leverage partners to conduct in-depth exercises Consider that cooperating partners (e.g., TPMs) will play a significantly greater role in implementation and adapt the targeting design accordingly, in close consultation with HMI/Access teams. In scenarios where self-registration is to be used, jointly explore opportunities to integrate vulnerability-informed socio-demographic information and how the exercise can be leveraged to provide contextual insights and plan future prioritization. Re-evaluate the validity of eligibility criteria every time a new PDM or assessment becomes available To evaluate inclusion and exclusion errors, refer to the Targeting Advisory #2
Targeting and Registration Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rely on simplified beneficiary registration through local partners using community-based pre-registration lists compiled by local actors, with remote validation to inform early assistance Consider enabling remote registration through self-registration, where feasible-provided the context supports adequate connectivity and a basic level of digital literacy among the target population. Biometric registration often not possible, so uniqueness maintained through self-declared IDs, household details, and community validation, with remote verification and triangulation applied cautiously until access allows for in-person follow-up Set up remote or partner- or community-led appeal and community feedback channels and establish oversight and regular reporting mechanisms Leverage partners to clearly communicate targeting criteria and rights to appeals to communities Community Feedback Mechanism (CFM) must meet global CFM assurance standards and align to CFM in emergencies
Monitoring	Refer to ED Circular on Minimum Monitoring Requirements (MMRs) and Community Feedback (CFM) Mechanisms Standards in WFP Country Offices
Practical Considerations	In hard-to-reach areas, some targeting steps often rely heavily on local partners, making it essential for WFP to establish robust oversight mechanisms, Provide clear guidance, and maintain regular coordination to ensure targeting remains transparent, inclusive, and accountable despite limited physical presence.

Country best practices

1 Country Example | Palestine (MENAEERO)

Speed of onset: Sudden onset (conflict escalation)

Magnitude: Major (highly mobile, displaced population)

Accessibility context: Highly constrained

Data context: Fragmented and volatile



In response to the escalating conflict and displacement in Gaza, WFP rolled out a customized self-registration module to address severe operational constraints. This allowed households to register and update their details remotely, avoiding unsafe crowding at distribution points and reducing reliance on manual partner-led registration.

The key challenge was the frequent displacement of households, which made it difficult to track locations, maintain contact, and plan last-mile delivery. The new system enabled dynamic data management: families could update their location and household composition online, and the platform would automatically share updates with distribution partners, ensuring real-time responsiveness.

This approach demonstrates how self-registration can inform or strengthen targeting in volatile contexts: by capturing household movements in real-time, it can provide insights on the characteristics of the affected population, reduces duplication, ensures continuity of assistance for displaced families, and can enable protection referrals for vulnerable groups.

As of September 2025, over 1.95 million individuals have registered through the Self Registration system, with 1.2 million having updated their data since initial registration. The Gaza experience highlights how self-registration can complement classical targeting by providing a live database that informs prioritization, while ensuring inclusivity and responsiveness in fluid contexts.

2 Country Example | Sudan CO (ESARO)

Speed of onset: Sudden onset (conflict escalation), now protracted

Magnitude: Major (25 million people in need, 60% facing access constraints)

Accessibility context: Severely constrained (remote, insecure, and administratively restricted areas)

Data context: Fragmented, with limited documentation and disrupted field access

In response to the complex and rapidly deteriorating humanitarian crisis in Sudan, WFP deployed an online self-registration platform to reach populations inaccessible and conflict-affected areas. Households were able to register remotely for assistance, particularly cash-based transfers, where insecurity and displacement made conventional registration impossible.

Key features included:

- A mobile- and browser-accessible self-registration interface.



- Georeferencing and GPS validation to verify physical location.
- Know Your Customer (KYC) protocols integrated with digital banking systems.
- Data analytics tools to detect anomalies and prevent manipulation.
- Community engagement through awareness campaigns and local validation partners to counter misinformation and build trust.

By March 2025, over 6.7 million individuals had registered via the platform. The system improved data quality and accountability through technology-driven risk controls and demonstrated a scalable, secure, and rapid model for humanitarian access in complex emergencies.

The Sudan experience shows how self-registration can create an operational bridge between blanket enrolment in high-risk areas and more structured targeting later on. By generating a secure, scalable registry, it provides a potential foundation for subsequent vulnerability analysis and prioritization, while ensuring rapid life-saving coverage in the short term.

3 Country Example | Myanmar (APARO)

Speed of onset: Sudden onset

Magnitude: Major (6.2M people affected – areas MMI VII or above)

Accessibility context: A mix of accessible and inaccessible, urban and rural

Data context: Fragmented and volatile



After the earthquake in March 2025, the primary sites were identified with rigorous geospatial analysis, overlaid with projections of food insecure populations and the unadjusted population figures of Worldpop in the earthquake impacted areas. Immediate food assistance was targeted to the most impacted areas. Initial face-to-face rapid assessments to the most impacted areas where conflict was not a limiting factor were conducted, followed by FGDs including vulnerability profiling questions. In the absence of up-to-date, lower admin level information on poverty or vulnerability data, the core consideration for targeting and prioritization was to utilize latest food security analysis, findings from the rapid assessments, and qualitative FGDs to target using a categorical approach.

A blanket approach to targeting was not selected in this sudden-onset earthquake emergency since the impact was different amongst lower admin boundaries and socio-economic vulnerabilities were linked to the ability to recover from the impact. Assistance was provided to households in the most impacted geographic locations who were less able to recover from the impact.

4 Country Example | Bangladesh (APARO)

Speed of onset: Protracted

Magnitude: Major (1.05 million refugees)

Accessibility context: Accessible

Data context: Extensive data availability



For many years, new waves of Rohingya have been displaced from Myanmar to the Cox's Bazar district of Bangladesh. A large number of refugees arrived in 2017, triggering a complex humanitarian emergency.

In January 2025, 1.05 million vulnerable refugees were supported through General Food Assistance (GFA). The WFP's Refugee Influx Emergency Vulnerability Assessment (REVA) is a detailed, annual essential needs survey with panel data going back to 2020. It allows the design and periodic revision of refugee targeting through the lenses of essential needs.

Using a data driven categorical targeting approach, the profiles are then applied to UNHCR database which is shared with WFP at the end of every month and beneficiary lists are updated for the different WFP GFA programmes.

Using WFP's building block system, a WFP's blockchain-based digital ledger, WFP can ensure the validity of the registered population, and that the targeted households are the ones ultimately receiving assistance.

A good network of CFM channels is available (different humanitarian actors), and the Community Feedback Mechanism ensures no one is left behind if there is any limitation of the registry data.

5 Country Example | Egypt (MENAEERO)

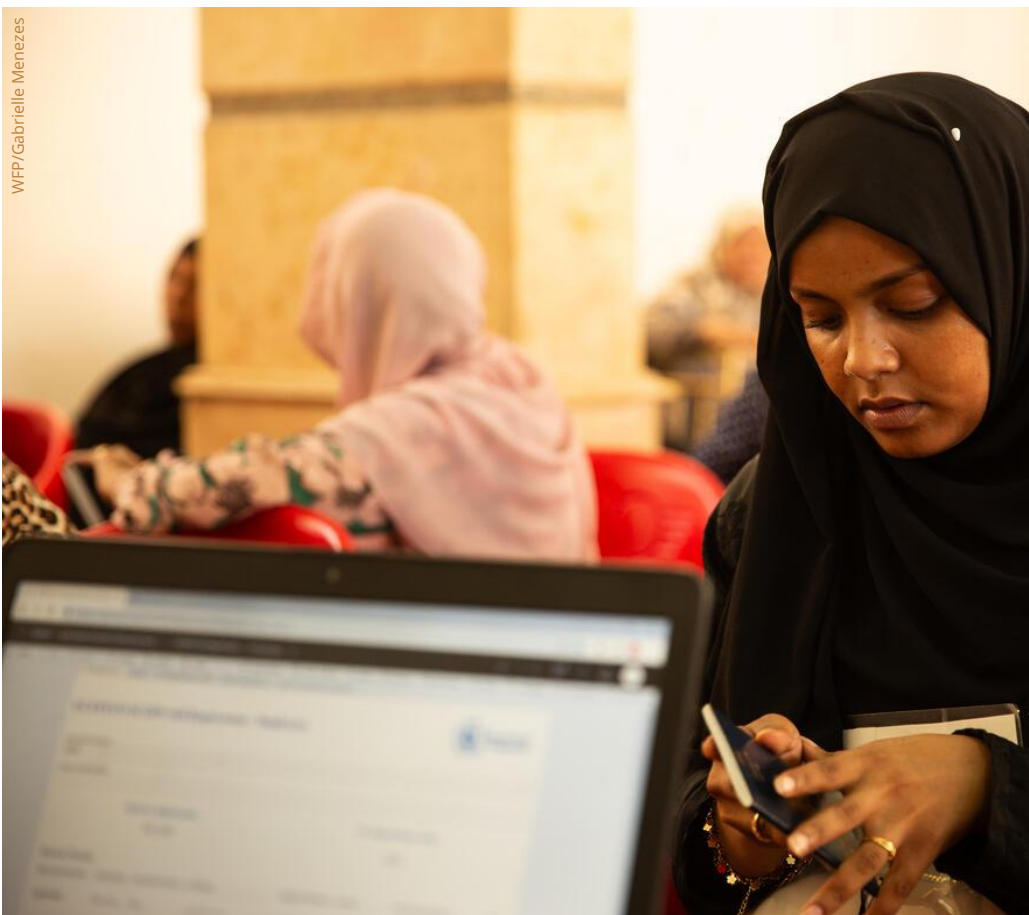
Speed of onset: Sudden onset (now protracted)

Magnitude: Major (1.5 million people affected)

Accessibility context: Accessible

Data context: Mixed (fragmented at onset, improving over time)

Before April 2023, refugees eligible to receive assistance from WFP in Egypt were targeted using a PMT formula (developed in 2016). In April 2023, rapid escalation of civil war in Sudan pushed massive flows of refugees into Egypt and other surrounding states. Decision was taken to identify the most vulnerable based on individual-level targeting and protection sensitive criteria, following a qualitative assessment and community consultations



To enable rapid delivery of humanitarian assistance, the CO built an operational dataset on Sudanese arrivals: enrollment was conducted by WFP based on vulnerability criteria (and not status) filling a critical time gap in delivering humanitarian assistance, while formal registration with UNHCR was conducted in parallel and required lengthy timelines given the high influx. Provisions were made for coordination mechanisms and future integration with UNHCR.

A key innovation was the full integration of targeting, registration, real time deduplication, and on-the-spot cash distribution—delivering assistance in just 3 minutes per person. This agile model marked a first for WFP and demonstrated strong emergency responsiveness.

In early 2024, a vulnerability assessment of existing Sudanese caseload was conducted to further refine the targeting through a score card methodology. A self-registration tool was deployed to support household-level data and tailored to meet Egypt's urban context where door-to-door registration was less feasible. Eligibility verifications for self-registration were done in the distribution sites, while some random household visits were conducted on limited scale.

By mid-2025, EGCO is finalizing a comprehensive retargeting exercise of Egypt's full refugee caseload based on an updated assessment of refugee vulnerability conducted jointly with UNHCR, the UNHCR-WFP Joint Programme Excellence and Targeting Hub, and the Egyptian Statistical Authority (CAPMAS). This will enable a return to unified registration via the UNHCR ProGres database, while ensuring targeting of the most vulnerable and food insecure, leveraging lessons from the Sudanese response to enhance equity, accuracy, and responsiveness across the refugee operation.

6

Country Example | Somalia (ESARO)

Speed of onset: **Slow onset** (forced returns)

Magnitude: **Major** (6.5 million people)

Accessibility context: Inaccessible

Data context: Data Rich

WFP Somalia's response to the 2022-2023 severe drought and resulting rapidly escalating needs, particularly in hard-to-reach areas, required a "no regrets approach" prioritizing speed and flexibility to enable early assistance based on the best available evidence. A multi-sector response was enabled through the 'Early Warning-Early Action' framework, which guided early decision-making and strategic resource allocation. This approach ensured timely geographic and household-level prioritization before worsening of food security conditions.



Approximately 236,000 extremely food-insecure individuals were selected across 13 high-to-reach locations to receive one-month unconditional food assistance (extended to 3-6 months for households at highest risk of food insecurity). The response also included nutrition, where the Targeted Supplementary Feeding Programme was implemented for moderately malnourished children, while cases of severe acute malnutrition were referred to partners such as UNICEF and WHO for further treatment. Joint prioritization and referral mechanisms were instrumental in reaching the most vulnerable. Capacity building efforts included technical trainings to local partners and field actors during and after the emergency response rollout, to strengthen emergency preparedness and replication of the model in future crises.

The “no regrets” approach was only introduced briefly in hard-to-reach areas to limit the risk of aid diversion. During the first month, vulnerability profiles and biometrics of households in the affected areas were registered to allow for beneficiary identification and prioritization starting from the second round of distribution. After the first line response, over 122,000 people were registered in SCOPE using safe delivery zones. In Q4 2022, the introduction of a sub-district-level assessments, service mapping and reporting allowed to transition to a more precise geographical targeting, de-duplication exercises and sequencing of interventions leveraging inter-agency collaboration.

7 Country Example | Afghanistan (APARO)

Speed of onset: Sudden onset (forced returns)

Magnitude: Major (319,000+ returnees assisted)

Accessibility context: Border zones and transit corridors

Data context: Fragmented at entry, structured post-registration

In response to the mass return of undocumented Afghan nationals from Pakistan, WFP Afghanistan deployed a rapid registration and distribution model tailored to high-volume, transient populations. The approach was designed to deliver blanket assistance rapidly while maintaining biometric integrity and operational flexibility.

At Transit Centres (TCs), returnees like receive a pre-created SCOPECARD Light upon arrival. Fingerprints and household details are registered on-site in close collaboration with IOM, and the dummy profile is immediately amended and personalized. The QR code is scanned, and assistance is delivered instantly after PIN authentication—often within minutes of arrival.



If the HH is eligible for additional rounds of assistance, beneficiaries receive a new personalized SCOPECARD Light and can transition to biometric authentication. For longer-term support.

This single-touchpoint model contrasts with conventional two-step registration, which involves targeting, card issuance, and assistance delivery. Fast registration is ideal for emergencies involving floods, returns, or displacement, where speed and adaptability are critical.

Key features include:

- Pre-created dummy profiles in SCOPE, personalized on-site.
- Immediate assistance delivery via on spot targeting, registration, biometric authentication and distribution.
- Seamless transition to conventional registration for durable caseloads.
- Operational efficiency in high-turnover environments.

The Afghanistan experience demonstrates how digital features in SCOPE system can be leveraged to deliver assistance quickly, securely, and at scale—without compromising data quality or beneficiary dignity.

Concluding Remarks

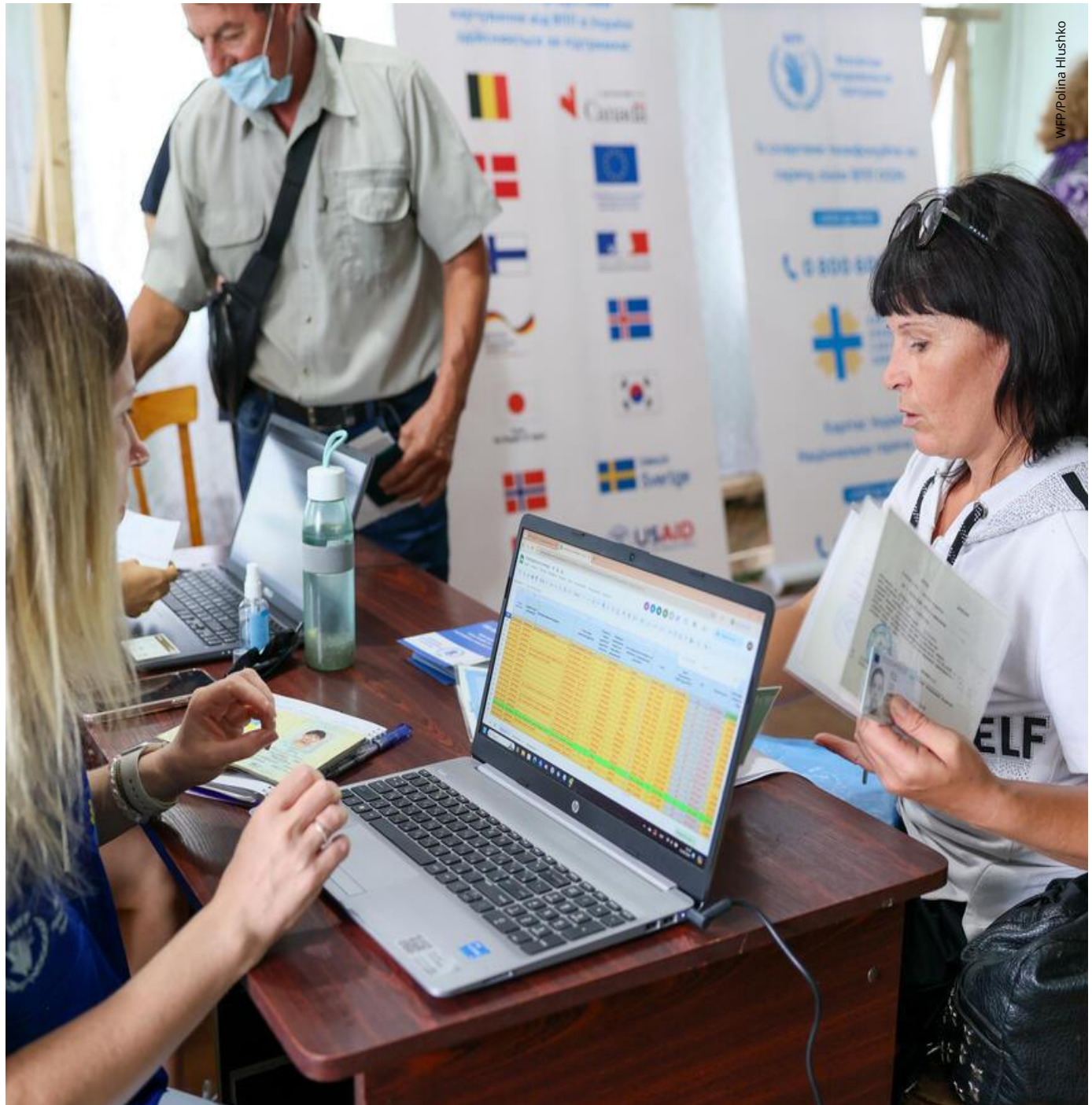
Effective targeting and prioritization in emergency contexts require a **balance between speed, equity, and adaptability**, ensuring that assistance, along with targeted programmes, reaches those most in need, while maintaining operational efficiency.

The combination of **geographical and household-level targeting** is a widely adopted approach, which allows to first prioritize the most affected areas and then refine assistance as more information becomes available.

Differences in **emergency severity/magnitude and speed** necessitate distinct and context-tailored considerations for targeting, including for data collection, targeting design, registration, eligibility verification, and appeals, ensuring flexibility in rapidly evolving situations.

Community engagement, conflict sensitivity, and accountability mechanisms are critical enablers of effective targeting, especially in fragile contexts, and enhance transparency, mitigate risks, and uphold humanitarian principles.

By integrating **robust emergency preparedness measures, targeting approaches in line with corporate standards, and regular monitoring**, WFP and its partners can strengthen emergency responses and enhance the impact of food assistance in diverse crisis settings.



Annex 1 – Roles and Responsibilities

	Responsible	Accountable	Consulted	Informed
Emergency Preparedness				
Targeting included in preparedness plans	VAM	Programme	Management	Other functions
Resource availability for targeting closely monitored	BPO	Management	Programme, VAM	Other functions
Early warning information on escalation/deterioration regularly reviewed to trigger appropriate actions (such as scale-up or scale-downs);	Programme	Management	VAM	Other functions
Partnerships with NGOs/CPs and the Government for assessment, targeting and registration purposes established	VAM/IDM	CP Management	Programme	Other functions
Available sources of information evaluated, and rosters of qualified enumerators maintained	VAM	HR	Field offices	Other functions
Systems to be deployed for targeting and registration are available, understood and relevant for the type of emergency and modality expected	VAM/IDM	TEC	Programme, field offices	Management
Local and national government targeting capacities and processes clearly understood and mapped to WFP processes for rapid action	VAM	Programme	Government	Management
Using the Targeting Assurance Framework , investigate power structures and previous targeting systems to maintain an updated mapping of risks, vulnerabilities, strengths, and challenges	VAM	Management	Programme, Risk and Compliance, Field offices	TWG
Enhanced coordination with relevant clusters and partners to leverage existing capacities and promote joint work in case of emergencies	Programme	Management	VAM, Relevant clusters and partners, access	TWG
Internal governance structures (such as Targeting Working Groups) established, with clearly defined roles and responsibilities to guide decision-making, ensure accountability, and coordinate across functions	VAM and Programme	Management	Protection/Conflict, Gender, AAP, CFM, TEC/IDM, SP, BPO, CP management, monitoring, access	Protection/Conflict, Gender, AAP, CFM, TEC/IDM, SP, BPO, CP management, monitoring, access
Needs and context analysis				
Needs assessments and context analyses rolled-out and leveraged, including key targeting indicators (area-based metrics for the geographic targeting and socio-demographic factors for household-level targeting)	VAM	Management	Programme, access	TWG
Context- and programme-relevant vulnerability frameworks (based on quality, up-to-date quantitative and qualitative information) and household profiles are generated	VAM	Management	Programme, Protection/Conflict, Gender, AAP, CFM, Access	TWG

	Responsible	Accountable	Consulted	Informed
Appropriateness of implementing targeting is assessed against the context information and decisions made on following steps	VAM	Management	Programme, Protection/Conflict, Gender, AAP, CFM, Access	TWG

Targeting Design

Targeting design and methodology selection are participatory and adhere to Do No Harm principles and balance speed and precision according to context	VAM	Management	Protection/Conflict, Gender, AAP, Programme	TWG
Conflict sensitivity analysis performed, ensuring WFP's commitment to preventing tensions and avoiding negative impacts	VAM/ Protection/ Conflict sensitivity/ programme	Management	Programme, Gender, AAP, Field offices, Access	TWG
Context-specific indicators used to develop inclusive and equitable targeting criteria (for needs of marginalized and vulnerable groups)	VAM	Programme	Protection/Conflict, Gender, AAP	TWG
Consultations with key informants and affected communities are carried out to co-develop and validate targeting criteria	VAM/AAP/Field offices	Programme	Protection/Conflict, Gender, Access	TWG, Management

Targeting and registration Implementation

WFP staff and CPs are adequately trained and resourced to carry out beneficiary identification, deduplication, adjudication and registration	VAM/IDM/TEC	Management	Programme	TWG
Finalization of the Registration and Deduplication strategy and SOP, including registration form, validation controls, deduplication process, and adjudication procedures	IDM	Programme	TEC/VAM	TWG, Management
Digital solution configuration and set up (based on business requirements and SOPs)	TEC	IDM	Programme, VAM	TWG, Management
WFP staff and CPs are adequately trained and resourced to carry out eligibility verification	VAM	Programme	IDM, Programme, Field offices, CP management	TWG, Management
WFP staff and CPs are adequately equipped to set up, manage and respond to appeals and coordinate CFM implementation	AAP	Management	CP management, BPO, Gender/Protection, VAM, Programme.	TWG

	Responsible	Accountable	Consulted	Informed
Roles and responsibilities are assigned to maintain segregation of duties, especially in the event of a targeting scale-up	VAM/ Programme	Management	CP management, Field offices	TWG
Enabling access for field activities	Access/HMI	Management	VAM/CP Management, Programme, Field offices	TWG
Community engagement and communication are ensured throughout the process (targeting criteria, registration and eligibility verification processes, assistance decisions, appeals and CFM) to foster transparency and acceptance	VAM/ IDM/ AAP/ Programme/fiel d offices	Management	Gender, Protection, Access	TWG,
Eligibility verification processes, and appeals handling are flexible and can be rapidly adapted to respond to evolving emergency needs	VAM/ AAP	Programme	Protection, Gender	Clusters relevant for CFM
CPS' performance is evaluated through regular reviews that assess their adherence to agreed roles and responsibilities and the quality and timeliness of their contributions to T&P processes	VAM, Field offices	CP management	Programme	Management

Monitoring and Evaluation

Existing process and outcome monitoring systems are leveraged for both assisted and non-assisted populations	VAM, Monitoring	Management	CFM, access, Programme	TWG
Monitoring and CFM insights are used to refine targeting, assess impact, and ensure accountability while maintaining a conflict sensitive and Do No Harm approach	VAM/AAP/ Monitoring	TWG	Protection/Access	Other functions
Monitoring systems allow for real-time adjustments, ensuring targeting remains responsive to evolving needs	Monitoring	VAM	Programme, AAP, Protection, Gender	TWG/Management
Continuous accountability and risk tracking is in place to assess errors, identify process improvements, and address targeting-related risks, including conflict risks	VAM/ Monitoring	TWG/ Management	Risk and Compliance	Other functions

Annex 2 – Contacts and Key Documentation

Function	Contact	Key Documentation
Targeting	WFP_Assessment_Targeting@wfp.org	Targeting Assurance Framework Targeting and Prioritization Operational Guidance Note
IDM Registration	registration.dss@wfp.org	Guidance on the Use of Biometrics in WFP Operations Cash Assurance Framework IDM Assurance for In-Kind Framework IDM Assurance for In-Kind Technical Note
Emergency Preparedness and Response	hq.epr.support@wfp.org	Emergency Preparedness guidance and Checklist

Acronyms

AAP	Accountability to Affected Populations	GFA	General Food Assistance
APP	Analysis, Planning and Performance Division	GBV	Gender-Based Violence
BPO	Business Process Owner	GHQ	Global Headquarters
CAPMAS	Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (Egypt)	HMI	Humanitarian Access / Movement & Security Interface (appears as “Access/HMI”)
CARI	Consolidated Approach for Reporting Indicators of Food Security	HH	Household
CD	Country Director	HoP	Head of Programme
CE	Community Engagement	HQ	Headquarters
CFM	Community Feedback Mechanism	I-CARA	Integrated Cross-Cutting Context Analysis and Risk Assessment
CH	Cadre Harmonisé	ID	Identity Document / Identification
CP	Cooperating Partner	IDM	Identity Management
CPC	Cooperating Partner Committee	IDP	Internally Displaced Person(s)
CSP	Country Strategic Plan	IOM	International Organization for Migration
DCD	Deputy Country Director	IPC	Integrated Food Security Phase Classification
ED	Executive Director	KII / KIIs	Key Informant Interview(s)
ENA	Essential Needs Analysis	MMI	Modified Mercalli Intensity (earthquake scale)
ESSN	Emergency Social Safety Net (Türkiye)	MMR	Minimum Monitoring Requirement
FGD / FGDs	Focus Group Discussion(s)	MoU	Memorandum of Understanding

Acronyms

mVAM	mobile Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping	UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
NFR	Note for the Record	UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
PDM	Post-Distribution Monitoring	UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
PIN	Personal Identification Number	VAM	Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping
PMT	Proxy Means Test	WHO	World Health Organization
REVA	Refugee Influx Emergency Vulnerability Assessment	WFP	World Food Programme
SCOPE	WFP's digital beneficiary and transfer management platform	UN	United Nations
SCOPECARD / SCOPECARD Light	Beneficiary ID cards linked to SCOPE		
SEA	Sexual Exploitation and Abuse		
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure		
SP	Social Protection		
TC	Transit Centre		
TEC	Technology Division		
TOR	Terms of Reference		
TPM	Third Party Monitoring / Monitors		
TWG	Targeting Working Group		
UN	United Nations		



Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Service (VAM)

This guidance has been jointly developed by the Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Service (VAM), the IDM Registration Team, and the Targeting Cross-Functional Working Group, with valuable contributions from regional targeting officers and featured country offices, whose insights are highly appreciated

World Food Programme

Via Cesare Giulio Viola 68/70, 00148 Rome, Italy

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