



Minutes of the National Basic Assistance Working Group Meeting Ad-hoc Session II: Appeals / Correction Mechanisms

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| Meeting Location | UNHCR Khater 8 th floor | Meeting Date | 11 Nov. 2017 |
| Chair persons | Hadi Haddad (MOSA) Khalil Dagher (UNHCR) Mirdza Abele (WVI) | Meeting Time | 11:00 A.M |
| Minutes by | Malak Rahal | Meeting Duration | 2.00 Hrs. |
| Represented Agencies | UNHCR, Solidar Suisse, WFP, Dorcas, ACF, LHIF, UNRWA, OXFAM, WVI | | |

Background

- The meeting is the second session held to discuss the appeals / correction mechanism being developed to complement the existing targeting system for regular cash assistance under the Basic Assistance Sector.
- The 2017 proposed appeals / correction process is inspired by the work done in 2016 by the Basic Assistance sector partners when the Desk Formula was introduced. The enhancement is mainly related to the quantitative nature of the review and the technical scoring component.
- A quantitative mechanism reduces time and resources needed for re-examination of cases under study.
- Consultants from the American University of Beirut (AUB) have developed and proposed a process through which additional socio-demographic information is collected to complement existing variables of the desk formula that would allow a more refined vulnerability score for households demonstrating signs of economic vulnerability yet not captured in the initial model.
- Basic Assistance sector partners have held an initial meeting to unpack the technical proposal of AUB. Feedback received recommended to further unpack operational options with minimal cost implications when it comes to the re-evaluation of refugee cases.
- The second meeting, subject of this document tried to explore different options while differentiating between two main operational objectives: (1) a legally binding appeals mechanisms, or (2) a technical scoring correction mechanism.
- Different options were presented and discussed and the participants recommended a synthesis of the different operational modalities into two/three to better inform the decision on the way forward.
- Participants discussed the different components of the appeal / correction mechanism including but not limited to: eligible population and target group, methodology, and tools to be used. The below represent a summary of the key issues discussed.

Where we stand

- From an assistance, Cash based Interventions (CBI), social protection and perspective: The gold standard is to have an appeals/review process in place, especially when using a PMT.
- Few best practices to learn from (within UNHCR and beyond) do exist, which makes it challenging as there is little guidance.
- Yet this provides room for flexibility, innovation and an opportunity to monitor, learn and refine the model at the BAWG level.

Important operational questions while deciding on the way to go:

- What are cash actors / BA partners trying to do: (1) an appeals process with legal basis for those who have been discontinued from assistance OR (2) a correction process to address the DF exclusion error? Answering this questions will define the methodology and tool to be used. In addition, a third option would combine both models using a staged approach – starting with the most needed / urgent step.

1) Appeals process (legal):

- legal implications and certain standards need to be upheld;

- A re-examination of facts or procedures without predetermined answers - that would defeat the purpose of a fair appeal = no predefined limit for the # of approved appeals;
- All appeals received that comply with predefined criteria would have to be considered;
- Target group should be narrow for operational purposes based on capacity and financial capabilities ;
- The basis of appeal needs to be conveyed to the refugees concerned.

2) Review/ correction mechanism

- An alternative would be to have technical / operational review mechanism with an aim to fill a resource-driven quota;
- Would allow for more flexibility in defining the target group, be better adjusted to resources and capacity and would raise less expectations among refugees around 'the right to assistance.

The four operational options that were presented and discussed:

Option 1:

- Addresses the exclusion error, designed to target the severely (SV) and highly vulnerable (HV) HHs and excluding mildly (MV) and least vulnerable (LV) due to funding constrains;
- The review mechanism will look only at MV & LV using the desk formula + (DF+) done without HHs visits (since HHs visits are time consuming);
- Advantages: It is the most robust and scientific way to address the margin of error and can be purely quantitative approach;
- Disadvantages : for financial constraints, only 70 % of the SV & HV are being targeted, thus it is unfair to target MV & LV;
- Raise unnecessary expectations for many HHs that fall in the cracks.

Option 2:

- Addresses discontinuation by a) addressing the migrating cases that were previously SV but went into a different vulnerability category, b) to address the SV based on the redistribution of the caseload and c) address the hybrid (all the discontinued HHs);
- It could be done through an appeal or review mechanism. The tool to be used is DF+ (can it be used on SV HHs? since it won't change anything), DF, update data and rerun DF in case of major change;
- It would be done through self-referrals, targeted approach or desk review (bottom up approach to the discontinued HHs);
- Advantages : Those who never were assisted won't get the hopes of being assisted and this option is fast and won't be costly (no administrative cost);
- Disadvantages: Doesn't give a chance to the people who never been assisted.

Option 3:

- Addresses the comprehensive appeal by opening up to anyone who is not assisted (SV not assisted and all non-assisted) through a review mechanism by updating the data and rerunning the DF - using self-referrals and waiting lists;
- Altogether only 17% of the total registered population is reached with cash assistance, thus 83% will be eligible to appeal under this option;
- There are 4,600 cases that used to be predicted as severely vulnerable under DF I and are not under DF II (migrated from SV to HV, MV & LV);
- Advantages : fair since any household can appeal;
- Disadvantages: expectations will be raised and very few assistance slots exist.

Option 4:

- Addresses specific profiles by defining few profiles e.g. elderly, women headed HHs by an appeal or review mechanism using the DF+ approach;
- Disadvantages: when defining profiles, some households are going to be automatically excluded even if they fall under the SV category.

Discussion:

- Lengthy discussions took place regarding the options with protection and legal units at UNHCR while preparing the options presented;
- Operationally speaking, limiting the target group is preferred to maintain an efficient intervention / review mechanisms especially that the appeals are to be resource driven;
- An optimal option is the one combining different approaches, quantitative and qualitative, while looking at major changes affecting the situation of households over time;
- It is suggested to have a two-step process: mitigation (errors in the formula that should be enhanced) then to expand / relate the exercise to an overall interagency referral mechanism;

Note: An enhanced options sheet has been set based on the above discussions. Kindly check the attached documents.