



Emergency Social Safety Net

February 2017 Monitoring Report

Highlights

- **204,332 applications registered in the system as of February 24, a 33% increase from January (153,543)**
- **63,027 applications assessed as eligible for ESSN, demonstrating a 34.5% inclusion rate**
- **The number of ESSN beneficiaries increased more than twofold from January (121,178) to February (259,022)**
- **35,056 cards distributed by end of February, demonstrating improved preparedness and coordination in HalkBank**
- **298 districts within 74 provinces were visited by WFP monitoring staff, including visits to 296 SASF offices, 14 TRC Service Centres and 100 HalkBank branches**
- **Language/communication barriers persist, presenting ongoing challenges at many SASFs**
- **HalkBank requiring proof of illiteracy for illiterate beneficiaries, as they are unable to sign for their cards; this proof requires often costly notary services**

Monitoring Coverage & Challenges

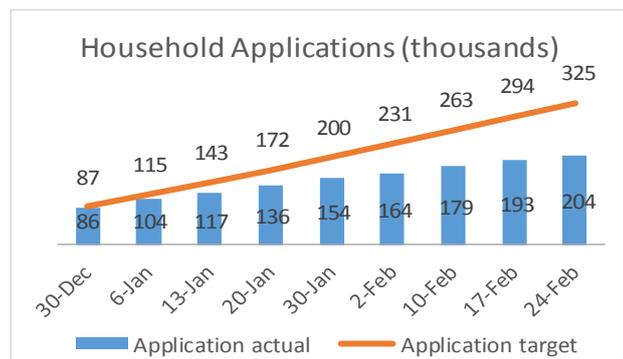
During February 2017, WFP monitoring staff visited a total of 296 SASF offices and 14 TRC Service Centres, located across 298 districts in 74 provinces. All of the SASF offices visited were assessed as ready to implement ESSN. This is an improvement when compared to January, when, on average, 88% were ready to implement. The increase may be attributed to more information about the ESSN reaching the SASF locations, and increased staffing in the SASF offices.

The lack of formal address, or proof of address, and unofficial residence areas has proven challenging in the application process in some locations, such as Basaksehir (Istanbul). Adjustments in family composition, requiring changes at the PDMM, and delayed appointments for new IDs at PDMM offices, remained major problems nationwide.

During the reporting period, distribution monitoring (DM) in HalkBank branches also took place by WFP staff. Monitoring the card distributions entailed direct observation and Beneficiary Outreach Monitoring during collection of cards by the beneficiaries and cash withdrawal at the ATMs.

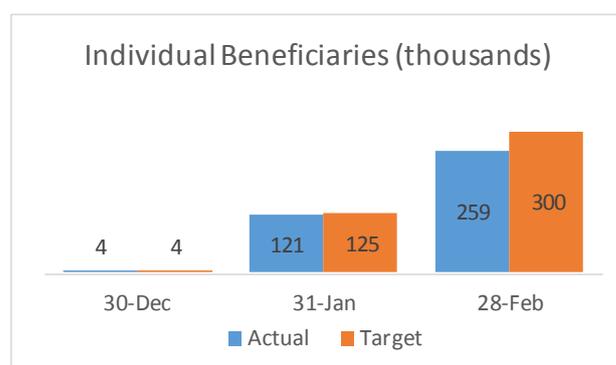
Monitoring of the ESSN roll out is based on the assessment of key areas, selected to indicate whether the ESSN is implemented in accordance with the guidelines, and SoPs. These areas include: application process; protection & safety concerns; sensitization & feedback; fraud; visibility & communication.

Tracking Outputs of ESSN Operations

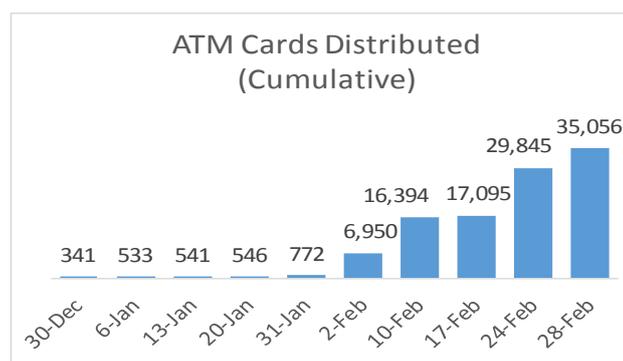


As of February 24, 2017, applications from 204,332 households were received in the MoSFP system. This cumulative figure represents a 33% increase when compared with the applications at the end of January (153,543 households). This increase can be attributed to additional SASF offices and new TRC Service Centres being operational and accepting applications.

Of the total received applications by February 24, 63,027 were assessed as eligible for the ESSN according to the targeting criteria, representing an inclusion rate of 34.5%. The number of ESSN beneficiaries increased more than twofold from January (121,178) to February (259,022). This figure is approaching the established programme target of 300,000. Istanbul, Sanliurfa and Gaziantep are the top three provinces with the highest number of beneficiaries.



The average household size of the beneficiaries is 6.24 people per household. For the February cycle, the percentages of females and males receiving ESSN assistance are 51% and 49%, respectively.



As the January distribution of cards to the eligible beneficiaries was quite limited, the bulk of card distribution and uploads took place in February.

During the first week of February, card distribution was delayed. This seemed to be a result of coordination issues between the HalkBank Head Office and the branches. However, as indicated in the chart above, card distribution improved progressively within the course of the month.

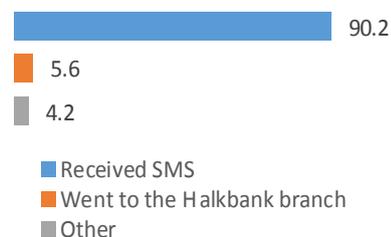


Beneficiary Outreach Monitoring (BOM)

During the card distributions, field monitors take the opportunity to conduct brief interviews with beneficiaries, focused on their perceptions of the process, and identifying key issues.

While 90% of the beneficiaries indicated having received an SMS to inform them about collecting their cards, 6% indicated having to go to the bank to enquire about their cards. While at the bank, before receiving their cards, 100% of respondents indicated that they were asked for DGMM ID by the bank staff as proof of identify.

How were you informed about collecting Kizilay card? (% of beneficiaries)



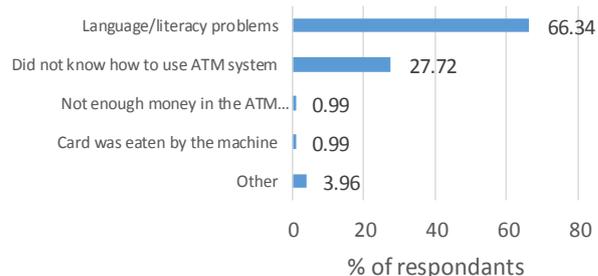
Average time spent (% of beneficiaries)



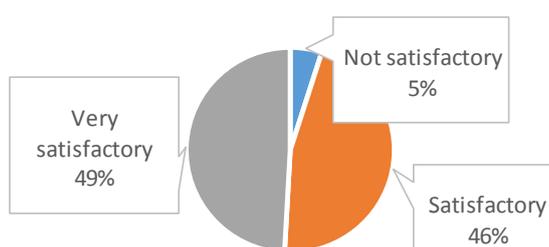
75% of the interviewed beneficiaries indicated having paid for transport services to and from the bank. On average, the beneficiaries interviewed reported spending 6.3 TL for transport. On the duration it took them to travel to the bank, 61% of indicated taking half an hour or less. When asked about the time spent queuing at the bank, 64% reported waiting for 30 minutes or less. For more details, refer to the graph on the left.

Language/literacy problems were mentioned as the main issue encountered while withdrawing money at the ATM (noted by 66% of the beneficiaries), while 28% indicated that they did not know how to use the ATM card.

Problems with ATM withdrawals



Quality of Bank Services



Overall, almost half of the interviewed beneficiaries rated the bank services as very satisfactory, 46% satisfactory, while 5% were not satisfied.

The three main reasons given for rating the bank as unsatisfactory were: lack of Arabic screen in the ATMs, general language/literacy issues, and overcrowding in the bank branches.

Pre-Assistance Baseline (PAB)

Training

In mid-February, WFP held a two day training for the TRC call centre staff, who are responsible for conducting the PAB calls to eligible and ineligible households. The first day of the training was classroom based, covering the all the questions and key indicators included in the PAB survey tool. Prior to the training, WFP had analysed the data collected during the pilot testing of the PAB, and consolidated key lessons. These lessons were shared and discussed with the call centre operators on day one.

Day two included practical exercises; all operators conducted at least one survey, while more experienced staff observed. The sessions concluded with feedback based on the practical exercises, and discussion with enumerators on the way forward.

Data Collection

The PAB data collection started at the end of February; almost 600 eligible households were surveyed prior to receiving their Kizilay cards at the end of the month. Following the start of the card distribution, the ineligible households were called to participate in the surveys.

Monitoring & Evaluation Database System (MEDS)

Development

WFP IT solutions, working closely with the VAM/M&E unit, adapted an existing database system to the needs of ESSN monitoring. This system, the Monitoring & Evaluation Database System (MEDS), was rolled out in February.

MEDS is based on a system developed for WFP Lebanon, aiming to document and track key monitoring issues. The system allows field monitors to record monitoring visit dates and locations, specify issues, and escalate problems requiring action. MEDS allows for automated tracking of issues, thereby providing an important documentation trail.

Training

In February, trainings were held for all WFP Turkey Area Office and Field Office monitoring staff. The trainings were co- led by VAM/M&E staff, and IT solutions, and included a refresher training on the On-Site Monitoring (OSM) and Distribution Monitoring (DM) tools, in addition to the explanation of the MEDS system, its purpose and step-by-step practical guidance on the use of the system.

Implementation

Following the trainings, field staff began using MEDS to document On-Site Monitoring and Distribution Monitoring visits. Through this process, new features and improvements were requested and developed.

Focus Group Discussions

Focus Group Discussion (FGD) provide an important way to triangulate the data collected quantitatively, and allow better understanding of specific issues. In February, an FGD checklist was created, focused on the ESSN application process, the procedures at HalkBank and the ATM, and beneficiary experiences and perceptions.

In mid-February, this checklist was piloted in Bagcilar district of Istanbul through two FGDs, one male and one female. TRC called the beneficiaries to arrange the groups, and provided two rooms in the TRC community centre to hold the discussions.

The FGDs demonstrated that the tool allowed for capturing of useful information, though was too long and ambitious for a single FGD. Following the discussions, the tool was amended and streamlined to focus on essential application process questions. FGD trainings will be planned for all WFP field monitors in the upcoming months.



ESSN: February Monitoring Report

On-Site Monitoring: Key Issues



CRITICAL RISK ISSUES

ACTION TAKEN / FOLLOW UP

Critical Risk Issues will stop or cause disruption of the ESSN project activities at the specific location, represent a serious security or protection risk that could endanger others, and/ or could cause serious reputational damage if not resolved.

Lack of readiness to roll out ESSN programme by SASF offices and TRC centres (SCs): SASF office in Mersin, and TRC SCs (Mersin, Akdeniz, and Toroslar) were not functional as of end of February, however renting procedures are being finalized. These offices are tentatively scheduled to be operational as of 1st week of March 2017.

TRC is establishing the necessary procedures to ensure that these SCs become functional ASAP. WFP will continue to monitor the progress, and at the same time advocate these SCs to open during the management meetings.

Challenges with MERNIS: Several refugees without proper addresses, for example those living in caves, tents, and in unofficial residence areas (in particular, Basaksehir, Istanbul) are yet to be registered in MERNIS in some locations and hence cannot apply for the ESSN.

Follow-up by WFP required with the Ministry and the TRC on best approach to ensure that these households have addresses so that they could apply for ESSN.

Challenges with DGMM: Adjustments in family composition and slow registration by DGMM is still noted in many areas as reported by Hatay FO and Istanbul AO. The issuing time for new IDs vary significantly from location to location; for example while Sinop PDMM needs only 1-2 weeks, in Eskisehir it takes more than 3 months. In Ankara and other big cities, it has been observed that there are many refugees who have illegally moved there for job opportunities. Since these cities are currently “closed” for additional refugee registration, these people cannot register and therefore cannot apply for ESSN.

WFP and TRC will engage with the Ministry to jointly advocate with DGMM regarding this issue.

Eligibility criteria: In most of the SASF offices visited, the general feeling is that the eligibility criteria is very rigid and excluding many vulnerable households. This results in many complaints to the SASFs by ineligible beneficiaries. Ineligible beneficiaries are advised to call the TRC hotline with these complaints, however their direct engagement with SASFs is creating extra workload at the SASF offices.

WFP will establish a consultative process for revising the targeting criteria, including meetings with SASFs to understand their concerns. Revised criteria will be agreed upon, and publicized, so refugees understand how they are assessed.

HIGH RISK ISSUES

ACTION TAKEN / FOLLOW UP

High Risk Issues will likely disrupt the ESSN project activities, cause serious delays or could result in people missing their entitlement.

Lack of translators: 17 of the SASF offices visited from 1 to 20 February indicated that the TRC has no official translators working with them. These offices use different approaches to overcome the translation challenges, such as use of volunteers, and Turkish application forms.

There are indications that the TRC has started to deploy translators to the SASF offices. For example, according to Hatay FO, TRC has recruited and deployed several translators, and started supporting SASF staff for data entry and/or house visits.

Beneficiaries being asked to pay for application related services: This was observed in previous visits. For example, in Kilis (Elbeyli SASF), WFP staff were informed that the widows are requested to prove their marital status with the legal translation of their Syrian Family ID. They have to pay 70 TRY for the translation.

Follow-up regarding previous visits where this was observed is urgently needed to check whether this is still happening or has been addressed.

ESSN: February Monitoring Report

On-Site Monitoring: Key Issues



HIGH RISK ISSUES (CONTINUED)

ACTION TAKEN / FOLLOW UP

Difficulties to obtain disability report: This issue still remains a challenge, as noted during the previ-

WFP will continue to advocate for way forward with the MoSFP & TRC.

Different assessment methods being applied: During previous visits to some SASF offices (e.g. Nevşehir SASF and Aksaray SASF), it was reported that SASFs are only accepting application forms from those beneficiaries the SASF staff felt were eligible.

Throughout this reporting period, this issue was not observed, but follow-up and close monitoring should continue to check whether the problem persists. WFP staff advised that applications from all refugees to be accepted regardless of their situation and their data to be submitted into the system.

MEDIUM RISK ISSUES

ACTION TAKEN / FOLLOW UP

Medium Risk Issues: could cause delays or disruptions to the ESSN or could result in people not accessing their entitlement if not resolved. The issue could also pose safety or protection issues. The issue has the potential to move to a higher risk category if not addressed adequately.

SASF staff not well informed about the ESSN programme and not adequately trained: For example, in Malatya-Yazlıhan SASF, the staff indicated that none had attended training.

During the monitoring visits, WFP teams will continue to provide information and sensitisation about the ESSN to the SASF staff. Further trainings to the SASF staff are also planned for March.

Limited donor visibility on the ESSN programme: Lack of sufficient ESSN donor visibility was observed in 16 locations. This was in regards to the materials about the ESSN programme such as, ESSN branded posters with the TRC, WFP, the MOFSP and EU Logos, other TRC branded posters, and leaflets.

WFP should ensure that visibility and sensitization materials are distributed in these locations. The issues should also be brought to TRCs attention during all meetings.

LOW RISK ISSUES

ACTION TAKEN / FOLLOW UP

Low Risk Issues: are expected to have a moderate effect on the ESSN implementation, can be resolved on the spot, though some may require follow-up. These issues could escalate to a higher category if not resolved.

Use of different ways to capture application data: Where there are challenges with translation, the SASF offices mostly use Turkish forms to capture the application data as opposed to the applicants having to complete the form themselves in Arabic, which can increase the likelihood of capturing incomplete, inaccurate data.

Close monitoring should continue to help ensure high quality data wherever this practice is taking place.

Negative reactions from the host community: In some locations, the local population is unhappy about being excluded from the ESSN assistance.

Awareness about the ESSN must be increased among Turkish populations, particularly highlighting that the assistance amounts do not exceed national social welfare amounts, and that the funding is from the European Union, rather than the Turkish government.

ESSN: February Monitoring Report

Distribution Monitoring: Key Issues



CRITICAL RISK ISSUES

Critical Risk Issues will stop or cause disruption of the ESSN project activities at the specific location, represent a serious security or protection risk that could endanger others, and/or could cause serious reputational damage if not resolved.

ACTION TAKEN / FOLLOW UP

Lack of readiness to start card distributions in most of the HalkBank branches visited during the onset of ATM cards distribution: This was mostly prevalent during the first days of card distribution, whereby cash uploads were delayed, beneficiaries had not been informed to pick their cards. There seemed to be general lack of coordination between the HalkBank Central level and the branches. Furthermore, bank staff seemed not fully informed about the card distribution. 19% of the visited banks indicated having experienced challenges at the onset of card distributions.

By the end of first week, progress in card distribution was noted. WFP will continue to provide close monitoring during the distribution week, to ensure progress is sufficient.

In almost all the banks visited, illiterate beneficiaries are being requested for proof of illiteracy, requiring notary services: In all locations, these notary services are provided at a fee—usually around 60 TL. In some cases, extra fees are required because an official translator is required to complete the procedure, and thus beneficiaries end up paying a total amount of around 200 TL to obtain the document and their name stamps.

WFP has flagged this issue to the HalkBank. WFP was informed that this is in compliance with the Turkish law. The TRC and HalkBank legal teams are working rapidly to identify a solution to this issue.

Language/communication challenges: Most of the banks visited did not have Arabic speaking staff, hence the bank staff were not able to provide sufficient information to the beneficiaries on how to use the cards. For example in Kirklareli district (Kirklareli province), it was noted that there were communication related problems when dealing with the beneficiaries in HalkBank branches, which led to delays in the distribution of ATM cards.

Since the banks are not planning to hire Arabic speaking staff, some banks have requested WFP for support with translation services. WFP staff continues to support the banks with translation. In Ankara during week 4, the increased use of translators and other language aids was observed to be improving card distribution efficiency.

Banks did not accept to issue cards to beneficiaries with DGMM cards starting with 98: This required the beneficiaries going to PDMM to get the 99 number printed on their ID cards, which is frequently a time consuming process.

The 98/99 issue appeared to be resolved during week 3 and 4, either by banking staff checking the DGMM website or beneficiaries bringing paper. WFP is working with HalkBank for a written agreement option. Close monitoring is required to check on the progress.

A different residence permit is requested by the bank officials: For example, in Sisli (Istanbul) HalkBank branch, the bank officials informed the team that all the beneficiaries should issue this new permission or show the officials their passports in order to take the ATM card.

WFP will escalate this issue with HalkBank to better understand why this requirement is compulsory for the beneficiaries, and identify solutions.

ESSN: February Monitoring Report

Distribution Monitoring: Key Issues



HIGH RISK ISSUES

ACTION TAKEN / FOLLOW UP

High Risk Issues will likely disrupt the ESSN project activities, cause serious delays or could result in people missing their entitlement.

Internal controls at HalkBank branches: The ATM cards that reach the banks do not have names printed on them. While the banks receive a list of beneficiary names, if they do not check the names off the list during the distribution of ATM cards, beneficiaries can potentially receive their cards more than one time. This was the case in two HalkBank branches (Gungoren-Istanbul and Sariyer-Istanbul) that we have visited.

WFP has suggested to HalkBank that the bank branch prints the list of beneficiary names for the card distribution on a monthly basis, and require the beneficiaries to sign off their names as they receive the cards. This instruction, however, needs to come from the main Halkbank branch in Ankara.

No Arabic ATM instructions: Without Arabic on the screen, beneficiaries must seek external support to use the ATMs, which exposes them to potential exploitation. Language challenges at the ATM also makes it difficult for the beneficiaries to change their PINs for the cards.

This was a common issue in most bank branches visited, particularly in the first two weeks. WFP AAP team has worked on a document to inform beneficiaries how to change their PINs. However, it has been reported that Arabic screen in ATMs are in place in the SE. Other AOs need to check whether this is also the case in their locations.

Long wait time when calling TRC 168 hotline: Some beneficiaries had their ATM cards blocked, captured, and were advised to report the incident to the TRC call centre, which they called several times with no response. The issue continues to be observed in all locations visited across the country, with beneficiaries complaining about no answer or extremely long wait times when calling TRC hotline.

HalkBank informed WFP that their call centre will be up and running in March. All calls made to 168 related to card/ATM/bank issues will be re-directed to this HalkBank call centre by TRC free of charge and beneficiaries should be helped through HalkBank.

MEDIUM RISK ISSUES

Medium Risk Issues: could cause delays or disruptions to the ESSN or could result in people not accessing their entitlement if not resolved. The issue could also pose safety or protection issues. The issue has the potential to move to a higher risk category if not addressed adequately.

Serious crowding in some of the bank branches: Serious crowding was observed in areas with high refugee population notably Gaziantep, Urfa, Mersin & Bursa. This was exacerbated by the fact that the ineligible beneficiaries had not yet received an SMS to inform them of the outcome of their application.

It was observed that the crowds subsided as card distribution progressed, with no indication of crowding during weeks 3 and 4. WFP will continue monitoring the situation closely.

Displaying beneficiary identification information: In some of the HalkBank branches, eligible beneficiary information was printed out and displayed on the window. This method was used to reduce crowds at the bank, yet it constitutes a breach of privacy for the beneficiaries.

Where this practice was observed, WFP monitoring teams requested the bank officials to take down the beneficiary information lists. The issue seemed to be resolved during week 3 and 4. WFP will continue to closely monitor this issue.

Challenges with the SMS: Some of the beneficiaries did not receive the SMS message and only learned that they were on the list when they went to check with the bank. Some of those who received the SMS indicated that the branch information was not given in the SMS message, forcing them to check with several banks. Ineligible households not notified through SMS messages also went to the banks to check for their cards, resulting in extra work for the bank staff.

WFP continues to advocate to the TRC and the Ministry the importance of ensuring that the ineligible households are informed regarding the status of their application.

ESSN: February Monitoring Report

Distribution Monitoring: Key Issues



LOW RISK ISSUES

Low Risk Issues: are expected to have a moderate effect on the ESSN implementation, can be resolved on the spot, though some may require follow-up. These issues could escalate to a higher category if not resolved.

Heavy workload for HalkBank staff: Some banks, particularly in Gaziantep, Sanliurfa, and Hatay, indicated quite a heavy workload due to the card distribution coinciding with the end of the month, which is already a busy time during their schedules.

Monitoring activities not permitted: WFP field monitors have reported numerous occasions where HalkBank staff have not allowed them to conduct their standard monitoring activities.

ACTION TAKEN / FOLLOW UP

Managers requested to avoid the last days of the month for the card distribution, as they are the busiest days for the branches due to the heavy workload during that time.

WFP/TRC to share a list of all WFP field monitors with HalkBank centrally, to be disseminated to bank branches. WFP/TRC will also request a letter from MoFSP explaining the purpose of the monitoring, which monitoring assistants can present at HalkBank if questioned.

