



**Shelter Cluster Yemen**  
ShelterCluster.org  
Coordinating Humanitarian Shelter

# NON-FOOD ITEMS GUIDELINES

## REPUBLIC OF YEMEN

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This document has evolved through an inclusive consultation process conducted between September and November 2023, led by the Yemen Shelter Cluster's Technical Working Group.

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## OVERVIEW

Non-food items (NFIs) play a crucial role in meeting the needs of vulnerable populations affected by crises. However, findings from post-distribution monitoring in Yemen have indicated that there is a need for improvement in the content and quality of NFI kits to better serve the most affected individuals. In response to these findings, the Yemen Shelter Cluster (YSC) established a Technical Working Group (TWiG) to review and enhance the current NFI kit composition, distribution protocols, and guidelines.

The TWiG identified essential objectives to address the shortcomings in NFI distribution in Yemen. These objectives included reviewing and improving the content, specifications, and cost estimation of the NFI kits in accordance with different contexts and weather conditions across the country. Additionally, the TWiG aimed to update guidelines and protocols to ensure a more efficient and effective distribution of NFIs, increasing impacts on the lives of affected communities. Considering market fluidity and access considerations, the TWiG also reviewed and recommended the most feasible modality for delivering NFI assistance, including cash, voucher, and in-kind.

Reflecting on more critical and needed NFIs, the TWiG conducted focus group discussions (FGDs) with targeted communities in various areas nationwide. This process allowed for receiving community feedback regarding the kit content and necessary improvements. Consequently, the TWiG worked on enhancing the standardized list of items and updating guidelines related to NFI distribution.

This document serves as a comprehensive guide for humanitarian agencies involved in NFI assistance delivery in Yemen. This guide was crafted to provide direction on assisting vulnerable families by providing them with individual or general household items, ensuring the preservation of their health, safety, dignity, and overall well-being. While the kits outlined in this guide are tailored for an average family size of seven members, the document acknowledges the substantial diversity in family composition. It also provides flexibility in customizing packages in accordance with cluster specifications.

It emphasizes on ensuring that the distributed items effectively address the recipients' needs, are durable, purpose-fit, and pose no risks to the beneficiaries. Notably, the price indications in the guidelines do not encompass operational costs such as warehousing, transportation, distribution, and customs clearance. The outlined specifications in the guidelines set a standard for quality, and the kit contents should not only meet the minimum requirements defined below but also align with the findings of needs assessments.

Adhering to this guideline empowers humanitarian agencies to optimize the effectiveness and appropriateness of NFI assistance, improving the distribution process and ultimately contributing to the well-being and enhanced living conditions of the affected population in Yemen. This guideline is a live document and will be updated based on community feedback.

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# STEP 1

## IDENTIFICATION OF NFI KIT

To enhance the appropriateness of Non-Food Items (NFIs) provided, the Technical Working Group (TWiG) conducted focus group discussions (FGDs) with communities across various regions. Through this interactive process, valuable feedback on the kit content was gathered, and areas for improvement were identified. **Refer to (Annex 2) the report on FGD results related to NFIs.**

Consequently, the TWiG has focused on refining the standardized list of items and revising the distribution guidelines for Non-Food Items (NFIs). The result of this collaborative effort was reflected in this guide.

### SECTION 1.1 EMERGENCY STANDARD NFI KIT

The primary objective of updating the NFI guideline was to address the diverse needs stemming from varying geographical areas and weather conditions across the country. For example, beneficiaries in colder regions may require thicker thermal blankets, while those in hotter areas may find medium thermal blankets sufficient. However, in the planning phase for emergency stocks, the unpredictable nature of emergencies and the necessity to transfer stock between different areas based on demand pose challenges in determining the specific location where the kit will be utilized. Hence, it was crucial to develop a standardized emergency kit that includes items suitable for diverse locations and varying weather conditions. This approach ensures adaptability and flexibility in response to the dynamic nature of emergencies and their associated needs. **Refer to (Annex 1.1) BOQ for Emergency Standard NFI Kit.**

### SECTION 1.2 COLD AREAS NFI KIT

The intended use of this NFI kit is for programming where the targeted cold location is identified and confirmed before formulating the NFI activity. Consequently, it is pre-determined that beneficiaries in this specific location will require high thermal blankets rather than medium thermal ones. As a result, the cost of this kit is higher compared to the Emergency Standard NFI kit, primarily due to the inclusion of high thermal blankets, which approximately doubles the cost of medium thermal blankets.

For affected populations who have already received the NFIs with high thermal blankets, there is no need for additional winterization assistance in terms of blankets. However, they can still be provided with support for winter clothing as needed. **Refer to (Annex 1.2) BOQ for Cold Areas NFI.**

### SECTION 1.3 HOT AREAS NFI KIT

The NFI kit specified was designed for programming in hot areas. Although there is no alteration in the type of blankets provided (Medium Thermal), beneficiaries in these regions have communicated additional needs. Firstly, they require extra bed sheets to cope with the summer season. Additionally, due to the prevalence of mosquitoes in these areas, beneficiaries have expressed the need for mosquito nets to protect themselves from mosquito-borne diseases. Moreover, considering the hot climate, there is a demand for water thermoses to keep drinking water cool and refreshing. By addressing these specific requirements, the NFI kit aims to enhance the comfort and well-being of affected populations in hot areas throughout different seasons.

To ensure the effective distribution of mosquito nets and prevent duplication of efforts with health partners, it is crucial to coordinate with the health office and health cluster at the district level. This coordination serves two primary purposes: firstly, to confirm that the targeted area is genuinely affected by mosquito-borne diseases, justifying the distribution of mosquito nets; and secondly, to avoid any redundancy in efforts or resources with other organizations operating in the health sector. **Refer to (Annex 1.3) BOQ for Hot Areas NFI.**

## SECTION 1.4 WINTERIZATION AND SUMMARIZATION CLOTHS

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It is crucial to recognize that the essential clothing items represent the most commonly needed items. However, acknowledging the diverse preferences and requirements of individuals, it is recommended to provide more flexibility in selecting the specific items that the affected populations need and prefer. This involves considering variations in quality, textures, colors, styles, and sizes, ensuring that beneficiaries have the opportunity to choose clothing items that align with their personal preferences and individual needs. **Refer to (Annex 1.4) Winterization and Summarization Cloths.**

## SECTION 1.5 RENEWABLE ENERGY ITEMS

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Community feedback has underscored the diverse energy needs arising from different weather conditions and contextual factors. The list of energy items includes three stove options tailored to specific contexts and community preferences. Additionally, it offers three solar systems and solar light choices, each with varying capacities and extensions. Finally, two air conditioning options are included: a solar-chargeable fan and a basic air conditioner suitable for areas with electricity access.

It is important to emphasize that there is no one-size-fits-all energy kit capable of addressing every context. Therefore, the list was crafted to present the most essential items for diverse settings, enabling beneficiaries to express their preferences and receive assistance tailored to their specific needs. **Refer to (Annex 1.5) Renewable Energy Items.**

## SECTION 1.6 PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES (PWDs) ITEMS

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Based on insights derived from focus group discussions involving individuals with disabilities, it has become evident that there is a specific demand for a tailored kit intended for families with disabled members. This specialized kit comprises essential NFIs designed to meet the unique needs of this community group, particularly addressing the requirements of elderly members with limited mobility. The purpose of this kit is to offer additional support to families with disabled members. Allocating a supplementary budget for this kit during the planning phase is essential, taking into consideration the expected number of Persons With Disabilities (PWDs) to be reached. **Refer to (Annex 1.6) BOQ for PWD Items.**

## SECTION 1.7 ADDITIONAL NON-FOOD ITEMS

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The final list comprises additional items suggested by beneficiaries but not considered top priorities. Nevertheless, these items may still be provided if budgetary constraints allow. **Refer to (Annex 1.7) BOQ for Additional Non-Food Items.**

## SECTION 1.8 NOTES ABOUT QUALITY EVALUATION

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During the quality evaluation of samples, it is essential to consider the available items and specifications identified during the market assessment. For detailed information and guidelines on quality evaluation, please refer to **Annex 1.8 on Notes About Quality Check.** This annex provides valuable insights and instructions to ensure a thorough quality assessment of the samples.

## STEP 2

# IDENTIFICATION OF ASSISTANCE DELIVERY MODALITY

NFI program can be implemented using either an in-kind modality or cash/voucher modality, depending on the context in the area of distribution.

### SECTION 2.1 CASH/VOUCHER ASSISTANCE

The cash modality offers the advantage of providing beneficiaries with the flexibility to choose items based on their individual priorities. However, it may not be suitable for all contexts. Before implementing a cash modality program, a thorough analysis of the context is crucial to ascertain beneficiary preferences for this approach. Additionally, a market assessment should be conducted to ensure the presence of nearby and accessible markets in the targeted area, offering sufficient quantities of the required Non-Food Items (NFI) at appropriate prices and quality. The ability to restock should also be considered to prevent inflation. Finally, a risk analysis is essential to ensure the safety of the chosen modality.

#### 2.1.1 RESTRICTION

Assistance can be **restricted** and channeled through the distribution of vouchers to beneficiaries, enabling them to choose specific items from a pre-identified list of suppliers with whom partners have established prior agreements.

Alternatively, assistance can be made **unrestricted** by distributing cash to beneficiaries, granting them the flexibility to select any NFIs they require from any supplier in the market.

#### 2.1.2 CONDITIONALITY

To ensure that the cash assistance is used to purchase NFIs, it is important to introduce **conditionality**. Otherwise, the cash will be used as multipurpose cash and will not meet its intended purpose. The conditions can be put for this activity are as follows:

- The beneficiary is required to sign an agreement with the organization, affirming the intention to utilize the cash specifically for the purchase of NFIs.
- In collaboration with the organization, the beneficiary will be asked to list the NFIs needed, which shall be put in a BOQ to be attached to and signed with the agreement.
- It is advisable to disburse the cash assistance in two installments. Following the receipt of the first installment, the beneficiary must present the purchased items and the corresponding purchase invoice to the organization's monitors as a condition to receive the second installment.

It is important to closely follow up with beneficiaries in the days after distributing cash assistance to ensure that they use it for its intended purpose. Additionally, distributing cash in multiple installments incentivizes beneficiaries to use each installment for its intended purpose in order to receive the next installment.

## **SECTION 2.2**    **IN-KIND ASSISTANCE**

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The In-kind modality offers the advantage of ensuring quality assurance and the ability to provide items with specifications suitable for beneficiaries. Moreover, it is more cost-effective to purchase and transport items in bulk than at the family level. Additionally, the In-Kind modality becomes the preferred option when the market assessment indicates that the market is insufficient to support a cash modality.

## **SECTION 2.3**    **EMERGENCY RESPONSE**

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The In-kind modality is the preferred approach during emergencies for two primary reasons. Firstly, the cash modality would necessitate multiple distributions, potentially involving two installments for small amounts of cash, leading to delays in response. Secondly, the cash modality requires close monitoring to ensure it is used for the intended purpose, which can be challenging during emergencies. Nevertheless, if the partner possesses the capacity, tools, and techniques to guarantee that beneficiaries will use cash for NFI purposes, the cash modality may be considered as an assistance option.

## **SECTION 2.4**    **POST EMERGENCY RESPONSE**

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For regular responses, particularly those targeting protracted displaced families, the cash modality is most suitable. This is due to the likelihood that these families have already received some NFIs from organizations or purchased them independently. Additionally, they possess a better awareness of the local markets and the availability of required items. The cash modality empowers these families to select the most needed items based on their individual preferences and needs.

## **SECTION 2.5**    **CLOTH ASSISTANCE**

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The cash/voucher modality is the preferred choice for clothing provision, as it grants beneficiaries the autonomy to choose specific items based on their individual needs and preferences. Recognizing the diverse preferences and requirements of individuals, this approach accommodates variations in quality, texture, color, style, and size. Market capacity and community preferences should also be taken into consideration when implementing this modality.

# STEP 3

## BENEFICIARY SELECTION

### SECTION 3.1 TARGETTING CRITERIA

Targeting criteria are pivotal in determining eligibility for assistance under this program. The primary criteria include:

#### 3.1.1 Targeting Criteria:

- Households currently lack the essential NFIs necessary for maintaining a dignified standard of living.
- Households exhibit a low or no regular income and/or are not receiving any financial support.
- The primary targeted group for this activity is Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs).
- IDP returnees recently returned to their areas of origin.
- The most vulnerable families within the host community can be targeted, particularly in areas where IDPs reside. The maximum percentage for host community inclusion is 20% of the overall target.

#### 3.1.2 Families Who May Not Be Targeted:

- Families that already have their basic needs met, or do not require assistance.
- Households that recently received NFI assistance, specifically families who received NFIs within the last year in IDP sites or two years in urban areas. This criterion is applicable for protracted displacement response rather than emergencies (e.g., floods, emergency displacement), where NFIs could be lost or damaged due to the emergency.

### SECTION 3.2 VULNERABILITY PRIORITIZING CRITERIA

The implementing partner is required to conduct a vulnerability assessment to identify the households that are most vulnerable and meet the program's criteria. In locations with a significant concentration of internally displaced persons (IDPs), a scoring system is commonly employed as the best practice for prioritizing affected populations. Please see (**ANNEX 3 - Score Card**) as an example of a scoring card.

#### 3.2.1 Prioritizing Vulnerability Criteria:

- Families that have not received any previous NFI assistance.
- Single women who are facing additional vulnerability elements, such as a medical condition.
- Households headed by minors.
- Women with special needs who are unable to support themselves or their families, encompassing those without male support, lacking a traditional family protector, dealing with serious legal issues, experiencing or having faced sexual and gender-based violence, facing threats to their physical safety, stigmatized, and rejected by their community due to cultural, domestic, or social problems, and those who are victims of torture.
- Survivors of Sexual Gender-Based Violence.
- Single pregnant women at their first seven months of pregnancy.
- Individuals with psychological or mental health problems.
- Individuals with serious health problems who, due to their health situation, cannot support themselves or their families.
- Couples with one spouse who is bedridden or suffering from a medical condition that prevents the other partner from working.

- Unaccompanied and separated children under 18 years of age.
- Unaccompanied elderly persons of concern over 60 years of age who lack support from their community.
- Single parents taking care of a child with a disability.
- Persons with disabilities, including those with physical and mental disabilities, who cannot support themselves.
- Families who are facing significant protection risks, including the threat of forced eviction.

## **SECTION 3.3**      **REGISTRATION**

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In addition to capturing general information, details about previous assistance, and vulnerability criteria, the registration tool should also collect data essential for the distribution protocol. This primarily includes the number of family members disaggregated by gender and age. Specifically, children under each gender should be categorized into three groups: infants less than one-year-old, children aged one to eight, and children aged eight to eighteen. Furthermore, individuals with disabilities should be disaggregated with information about their specific disability, ensuring the provision of suitable items from the Persons With Disabilities (PWDs), as each item caters to different types of disabilities.

# STEP 4

## NFIs DISTRIBUTION

### SECTION 4.1 DISTRIBUTION PROTOCOL

**Kitchen Set, Water Buckets, and Sleeping Mats:** One kit shall be provided regardless of the family size.

**Bedding Items (Blankets – Mattresses):** Blankets and mattresses should be distributed based on the number of family members during actual distributions. The distribution protocol is as follows:

**Persons more than 8 Years old:**

1 Mattress and 1 Blanket to be considered for every person.

**Children of 1 year to 8 years:**

Only 1 Mattress and 1 Blanket are to be considered for every two children from the same gender (to be rounded up to the nearest integer).

**Infants less than 1 year:**

No mattresses or blankets are to be provided<sup>1</sup>.

**Project Planning, Procurement, and Distribution of Mattresses and Blankets:**

- For planning purposes, the estimated cost of the Non-Food Items (NFI) can be based on the average number of family members, typically 7 persons.
- During procurement, if the specific family members in the targeted households are not identified yet, it is recommended to procure 7 blankets and 7 mattresses for each household.
- Subsequently, the distribution should adhere to the established distribution protocol.

**Remaining Blankets and Mattresses:**

- In response to protracted displacement (Post-emergency targeting), the partner is expected to have information about family members before delivering blankets and mattresses.
- In cases where the average (7 blankets – 7 mattresses) was procured and specific family members are not identified, partners have the option to negotiate with selected suppliers to exchange part

of the remaining quantity with other Non-Food Items (NFI) to create additional complete NFI kits.

- For emergency stock, the remaining quantity can be stored in the warehouse and distributed as partial kits for households that only need mattresses and blankets. For instance, after a flood, some families may have only blankets and mattresses damaged as the main items exposed to flood damage.

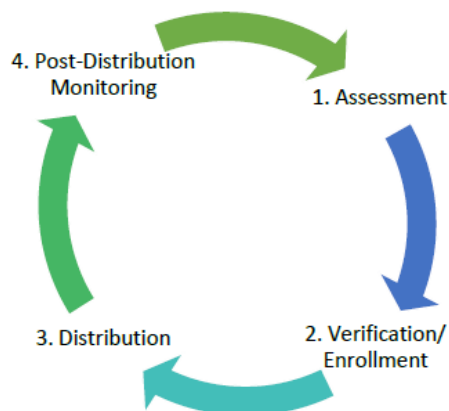
**Note:** For emergency purposes when the emergency stock is already procured and the partner is planning to urgently respond in a limited time, a set quantity (7 blankets – 7 mattresses) can be distributed to each household regardless of the number of family members. This approach aims to avoid delays that may arise during registration, detailed verification to acknowledge the different age group of families.

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<sup>1</sup> It is considered that infants are sharing the same beddings with their mothers.

## SECTION 4.2 DISTRIBUTION

The distribution follows a process with universally applicable stages, extending beyond Non-Food Item (NFI) distributions. This guideline offers recommendations on approaches and outlines minimum requirements including community engagement during the whole cycle. The following chart illustrates the distribution cycle as per the Shelter Cluster Distribution Guidelines. (Refer to Annex 4 for Guideline of Distribution).



## SECTION 4.3 PROTECTION MAINSTREAMING

This guidance note provides practical steps for seamlessly integrating protection considerations into Non-Food Item (NFI) programs in Yemen. Organized into four sections, each dedicated to one of the four fundamental components of Protection Mainstreaming, the content, while not exhaustive, offers examples of critical actions. These actions are essential for ensuring the incorporation of protection elements, effectively delivering NFI assistance in Yemen.

### 4.3.1 Ensure the Safety and Dignity of Beneficiaries and Prevent Harm:

- Carefully select secure distribution points and plan access routes that minimize risks and provide sufficient space for organized distribution.
- Avoid locating distribution points near military installations, conflict zones, or areas prone to violence.
- Schedule distributions during daylight hours to ensure beneficiaries have ample time to travel home before nightfall.
- Pay special attention to the needs of women heads of households or households with many women and girls to mitigate risks of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and other vulnerabilities.
- Implement distribution methods that minimize safety risks, considering potential threats such as theft, intimidation, harassment, or threats during transportation.
- Explore alternative approaches like door-to-door distribution to enhance safety and accessibility.

### 4.3.2 Promote Equitable and Impartial Access for All "Meaningful Access":

- Collect and analyze disaggregated data by sex, age, and diversity to inform programming effectively.
- Identify and prioritize vulnerable groups in the community to ensure assistance reaches the most vulnerable individuals and prevent discrimination or exclusion.
- Address challenges faced by IDPs with difficulty finding accommodation or at higher risk of eviction.
- Implement outreach strategies during beneficiary registration to ensure vulnerable individuals, including older people.
- Remove barriers to access assistance related to lack of documentation.
- Ensure distribution locations are accessible to all community members, including vulnerable groups.
- Establish separate queues for males and females and ensure the presence of female staff at distributions to facilitate access for women, girls, and older people.
- Tailor the NFI kit to meet the specific needs of women, girls, and older persons.
- Provide special arrangements for individuals with restricted mobility or marginalized groups who face

difficulties accessing distribution points or carrying kits.

- Ensure the availability of suitable infrastructure in distribution areas to improve accessibility for individuals with reduced mobility.
- Prioritize individuals with specific needs, such as older persons, persons with disability, unaccompanied children, and pregnant and lactating women, during distribution processes.
- Ensure gender balance in distribution teams and committees, representing the community's diversity.
- Provide clear information to beneficiaries about obtaining NFI assistance, including distribution locations, schedules, kit content, duration of distribution, and assistance usage instructions.
- Utilize various communication channels and formats to reach the broader community, considering different literacy levels and using signs when necessary.

#### **4.3.3 Ensure Accountability to Affected Populations:**

- Foster transparency by providing accessible and timely information on assistance selection criteria, organizational procedures, and processes impacting affected populations.
- Establish accessible, confidential, and effective feedback mechanisms to gather suggestions and address complaints, improve programming, and empower affected populations.
- Consider complaints and feedback mechanisms that protect the safety and privacy of affected populations.
- Respond to complaints promptly and communicate responses timely.
- Consider establishing joint feedback mechanisms with other clusters to streamline feedback processes.
- Ensure diverse representation in NFI distribution staff and committees, enabling them to identify issues related to exclusion and discrimination and represent marginalized groups.
- Establish and adhere to a Code of Conduct emphasizing respect for humanitarian standards and affected population's rights.
- Provide training on the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) to all staff, humanitarian partners, and volunteers involved in distributions and direct contact with affected populations.
- Convey that beneficiaries are not required to make any payments or provide favors in exchange for Non-Food Item (NFI) assistance.
- Collaborate with protection actors to enhance the community's capacity in monitoring, reporting, and referring protection concerns.

#### **4.3.4 Strengthen Participation and Empowerment of the NFIs programme:**

- Involve and consult all segments of the affected populations in identifying and responding to NFI needs, considering power dynamics and different criteria.
- Seek input from women, men, boys, girls, persons with disability, older persons, and marginalized individuals regarding their specific requirements and preferences for NFI assistance.
- Actively involve the community and representative committees in decision-making processes.
- When directly engaging women in decision-making proves challenging, seek assistance from women protection and Gender-Based Violence (GBV) partners.
- Coordinate with civil society organizations working with individuals with impaired mobility or disabilities to improve service delivery and facilitate case referrals.

## STEP 5

# PROGRAMME MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Program monitoring and evaluation (M&E) should be conducted by the organization through independent staff members or a third-party monitoring (TPM) body. The M&E process should develop a report analyzing survey questions to highlight the success, effectiveness, and quality of the program. Additionally, the report should summarize valuable lessons learned to inform and enhance future programs.

### ACTIVITY 5.1

### PROGRAMME MONITORING AND EVALUATION

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Utilizing the post-distribution monitoring (PDM) tool (**refer to Annex 5**), the partner is required to conduct a PDM within two to four weeks after the Non-Food Item (NFI) distribution. This aims to confirm the assistance reached them, assess beneficiaries' perceptions of the item quality, ensure proper utilization, and identify any additional material needs. Furthermore, the partner should actively seek beneficiaries' feedback on information sharing, distribution management, and the overall implementation of the activity. (**Refer to Annex 5 for PDM HH Survey Tool**).

## REFERENCE

This document represents an enhancement of the earlier Shelter Cluster Yemen guidelines pertaining to the Distribution of Non-Food Items (NFIs). The development of this guideline was informed by the below references utilized in the Technical Working Group (TWiG) meetings in addition to the community feedback.

### REFERENCE LIST:

- New NFI Kit Composition - Aug 2020  
<https://sheltercluster.org/yemen/documents/nfi-new-kit-composition>
- NFI Guideline - Sep 2020  
<https://sheltercluster.org/yemen/documents/nfi-guideline-sept2020-v22pdf>
- NFI Kits - Sep 2020  
<https://sheltercluster.org/yemen/documents/nfi-minimum-kit-procurement-envelope-and-anticipated-use>

## ANNEXES

- [Annex 1: NFI Catalog](#)
  - Annex 1.1: BOQ for Emergency Standard NFI kit
  - Annex 1.2: BOQ for Cold Areas NFI kit
  - Annex 1.3: BOQ for Hot Areas NFI kit
  - Annex 1.4: Winterization and Summarization Cloths
  - Annex 1.5: Renewable Energy Items
  - Annex 1.6: BOQ for PWD Items
  - Annex 1.7: BOQ for Additional Items
  - Annex 1.8: Notes about Quality Check
- [Annex 2: Report about FGD NFIs](#)
- [Annex 3: Score Card](#)
- [Annex 4: Distribution Guideline](#)
- [Annex 5: PDM HH Survey Tool](#)

 <https://sheltercluster.org/response/yemen>

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