

Identification of Beneficiaries – Standard Operating Procedure¹

Following NRC mandate, the target groups included in our **Cash for Rent** (CfR) or Occupancy Free of Charge (OFC) interventions will include Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), families affected by Natural Disasters or Conflict, and/or Refugees and Returnees.

It is important to note that when we refer to beneficiaries as vulnerable, in fact, what we are referring to is that said persons are under vulnerable conditions as a result of a range of economic, social, cultural, institutional, political and psychological factors – and at a particular time.

Reaching out target groups

- NRC must work in areas with high concentrations of IDPs, Returnees and Refugees: based on identification of these beneficiaries through field assessments, secondary data (e.g. IOM and UNHCR lists and reports), and through the Shelter Cluster.
- To promote integration across Core Competencies, the Shelter team should communicate the selection criteria to other Departments and conduct assessments in the catchment areas of NRC supported schools or NRC Community Centers and Neighbourhood Committees supported by the UDOC project.
- NRC might also conduct assessments after receiving requests from local authorities, through referrals from other agencies or by “scouting” areas to identify isolated families that require assistance. However, not all referred families (names on a list) will automatically be included into the programme.
- The team should distribute the number of beneficiaries from a specific grant, proportionally to the needs in the area.

Assess vulnerability conditions

- Even when a family is identified as IDP, refugee or returnee, the impact as a result of displacement, conflict or natural disaster varies. The households (HH) assessment identifies determining factors, such as the composition of the HH (number, characteristics and abilities of different members), their proximity to the shock, their preparedness and individual resilience (including coping mechanisms and social support networks).
- NRC Afghanistan uses a Shelter *Beneficiaries Selection Scorecard*. Properly implemented and analyzed, this template is useful because it collects relevant household composition, living conditions, special needs, social and economic characteristics, as well as an indication of the household’s capacity to pay rent.
- The criteria should be measurable, verifiable and clear. In terms of being measurable, for example, if we are seeking to support those affected by displacement, through the HH assessment, it should be noted where the families came from and when they arrived. The verification can be supported by documentation such as a UNHCR or IOM certificate, but also through observation.
- As the assessment takes place at a household visit, the team can describe the housing conditions or confirm, for example, if the head of the household has a disability.

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- One indicator alone is insufficient to evaluate the vulnerability² conditions of a household. For instance, during the assessment, a respondent might report they are able to pay rent – but this, only in an overcrowded or substandard unit – and therefore they should not be disqualified from getting assistance. On the other hand, a Female Headed Household (FHH) should not be automatically included in the programme when the HH is living in the same compound with relatives able of providing support.
- Homeless families, families living in substandard housing, staying in overcrowded accommodation and/or at risk of eviction are prioritized in order to reduce heightening protection risks and exacerbating conditions that will require additional assistance (e.g. aggravating existing health problems due to improper sanitation or exposure to the elements). Accompaniment for these families might be necessary to find a rental unit.

Protection considerations during HH assessment

- Field staff must be very sensitive and cautious in asking questions that could potentially harm or ostracize respondents.
- If a member of the team learns through any household visit of a case of human trafficking, survival sex, child abuse or domestic violence or other protection issues (e.g. child labor, unaccompanied girls and boys, adolescents at risk of recruitment, or associations with armed groups due to socio-economic hardship or family situation), she/he has the responsibility to confidentially and immediately report to the Programme Manager or the Protection Department.
- Beside strictly legal considerations, broader social issues should be part of the assessments, especially related to possible social tensions (based for example on ethno-sectarian discriminations or association with parties to the conflict) which might be factors leading to evictions or forced relocations.

Conducting household surveys³

- Review the questionnaire in advance. Questions should be translated into the local language. Administer the questionnaire in pairs and coordinate to avoid duplication;
- Avoiding being intrusive, Observation and technical skills are also necessary in able to rate the Shelter conditions.
- Collect only the data requested through the NRC Score Card; after asking for consent to conduct the interview and following NRC Data Protection Policy.
- The data should be tagged by geographical area, date, source of information and reliability to facilitate merging it with primary data. Upload the data from the tablets immediately after the survey is completed or as soon as there is internet connection.
- The surveyor should give an opportunity to the respondent to ask any questions, and if it is clear that final decisions on beneficiary selection will take place at the office.

² Vulnerability: “the characteristics determined by physical, social, economic and environmental factors or processes which increase the susceptibility of an individual, a community, assets or systems to the impacts of hazards.” UNISDR (United Nation Office for Disaster Risk Reduction) Terminology, 2017. The overall Risk level can be based on the risk equation tool: $R=V*T/C$. *Vulnerability (V)* is directly linked to the condition of the assessed individual/HH as described above. *Threats (T)* are external factors linked to possible perpetrators exposing the assessed individual/HH to additional danger (e.g. intra-familial violence; or extortion from local figures of power over money); and *Capacities (C)* are related to personal, family, socio-cultural resources people can rely on, such as presence of family/community support, level of education or access to livelihoods, which normally contributes to enhanced resilience at individual and HH levels.

³ Refer to the NRC Afghanistan Shelter Market Assessment SOPs for further details.

Given the limited resources, the Shelter Project Manager with the support of the Shelter Specialist will provide final approval of selected families to be included in the program aiming to serve the most vulnerable families. This selection will be based on the consideration of multiple vulnerability factors and additional hardship. Some of these factors are found at the community level such as access to other humanitarian assistance, level of isolation of a village and level of family-based and social ties among/between communities. A portion of the assistance might also be allocated towards individuals from the host community in extremely vulnerable conditions.