



GUIDELINES

VULNERABILITY CRITERIA



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Background

Targeting is the process of identifying the intended beneficiaries of a programme and then ensuring that as far as possible, the benefits actually reach those people and not others". Targeting helps humanitarian agencies to provide assistance to those who are in need, reduce inclusion and exclusion errors and is the central component of all humanitarian response.

Finding the right balance between meeting immediate needs, and the increased time and cost of faultless targeting, is a difficult task for humanitarian agencies especially in the WR. Effective targeting requires significant time, resources and in-depth contextual analysis of risks, vulnerabilities, and capacities, to develop appropriate solutions for the precise targeting of beneficiaries.

Errors related to targeting cannot be avoided, but they can be reduced by improved targeting methods. Therefore, targeting is necessary in order to provide assistance to those with the greatest need amidst lack of adequate resources. Applying the vulnerability criteria will help humanitarian agencies in selection of beneficiaries and avoid providing it to those who are not vulnerable.

Development of the Vulnerability Criteria

The longer the list of the vulnerability criteria used, the higher the likelihood of inclusion error. To manage this risk and facilitate use by field staff to identify vulnerable households, only those criteria that were most often associated with vulnerable households were selected for inclusion in the targeting tool.

Some criteria are high frequency, important and correlate to winterization – e.g., shelter, food, access to safe drinking water, malnourishment, households who lost their livestock/income sources etc. – were not included due to the difficulty of identifying and verifying them in a context of fluid and high-level displacement. It is recommended that this criteria is broadened for targeting the most vulnerable households irrespective of their status. This will support moving towards a needs based approach to assistance in Afghanistan rather than one that is based on the status of the affected population.

Vulnerability Criteria and Scoring

There are 9 different kinds of vulnerabilities identified within the targeting criteria. All 9 are used for community level targeting of households. Community level targeting will be used for need based assistance to returnees, prolonged IDPs, vulnerable host population, especially in areas of large influx of displaced population. This criteria does not apply to newly displaced population (within a six months period), either due to conflict, natural disaster or a combination of both as these are covered by the Emergency Response Mechanism (ERM) partners.

Vulnerability Criteria

SN	Criteria	Weight	Descriptions
1	Women or child HoH without male adult[1]	3	Includes women who are widows, separated or divorced. This category excludes households with adult able body and mind male that are not HoH and where adult members are sending remittances from within or outside the country. However, it includes households where the women are effectively the head of household, e.g., responsible for income generation or with adult males with disability.
2	HHs with dependency ratio of 8 or more	3	Dependency ratio is calculated only with respect to able body and mind adult male or adult working woman (i.e., earning a livelihood or having an income generating source that is not based on exploitation or a degrading form of employment). Dependency ratio for these criteria is the total number of household members divided by able bodied and mind adult male and adult working woman. Adult male or adult working woman with physical or mental disability, or any form of chronic illness that renders her/him incapable of undertaking any form of income generating/livelihood activity will not be considered an able bodied and mind male or adult working woman for the purposes for calculating the ratio.

[1] In the vulnerability table, male adult refers solely to able bodied male adults between the age of 18 and 59 and does not include male adults with disabilities or chronic illnesses that renders them unable to access livelihood or income generating activities.

Vulnerability Criteria

SN	Criteria	Weight	Descriptions
3	HHs with no adult male of working age or adult working women.	2	There are two reasons for inclusion of this criteria: (i) cultural reasons that prevent women from working outside the home and (ii) limited working opportunities available for women. An adult is only a person between the age of 18 and 59.
4	Person with disability, chronic illness or elder as HoH	3	
5	HH with poor asset holdings	1	HHs that lack basic assets, such as winter clothing, heating stove, and cooking facilities. A HH can be considered vulnerable if they are missing any of the mentioned items due to lack of financial resources.
6	HHs residing with or hosting other HH.	1	This criterion is applied for the IDP/returnee household when residing with a host community member, and for host community HH when they are hosting IDP/returnees. For displaced and returnee living with hosting HH is often sign of social cohesion and safety nets that supports the HH during the period of displacement. However, it may also indicate a lack of access to housing due to the lack of property ownership or access to housing due to financial constraints, for an example to rent a house, that make both the hosting and the hosted household displaced more susceptible to risks and vulnerably. Hosting IDP or returnee families may also strain family resources for both households. Support to these HH contributes positively towards the cohesion between the two households and addresses needs arising from the sharing resources.
7	HHs living in open, emergency, or makeshift shelter	3	These types of shelter include tent, makeshift housing whose shelter condition is poor and inadequate for the safety, dignity and living condition of the family. It includes IDPs living in critical climatic conditions due to altitude, temperature, and weather, including the following. Families living in open space. Families living in damaged, makeshift, and poor shelters conditions. Families living in informal settlement. Families forced to relocate and in urgent need of shelter assistance
8	HH relying only on borrowing, begging or zakat	3	HHs that rely solely on borrowing, social charity, begging and support from others to survive. These HHs may have able male members who have the capacity to work but are unemployed due to limited work opportunities.
9	HH relying on casual labour by one member	1	HH relying on casual labour by one member as the main or only source of income. This should be considered in the context where the number of available working days are scarce. HHs with more than one member who is a casual labourer will not be considered in this category. Household size and reliance on casual labour must be considered in the classification. This is based on the NRVA 2011/12 which found that a HH with 1-2 casual labourers was living below the poverty line.
10	Households without any source of livelihood or income generating activities	2	Household with no access to livelihood or income generating activities are most commonly implementing negative coping strategies. The type of negative coping strategies becomes increasingly more dangerous if households are unable to meet their basic needs which also leads to households to greater vulnerability to shocks, lower resilience, and decreased capacity for rebuilding lives.
11	HHs with one or more members having disability or chronic illness, excluding HoH	2	Household providing for people with physical or mental disability, or to members with chronic illness must tend to multiple needs of such household members. If the HoH has disability or chronic illness they need to be counted under criteria These are often correlated with medical costs, decrease in household time dedicated towards to income generating opportunities, decrease in the number of household members contributing to income generating activities, stigmatisation, marginalisation, and other concerns that directly impact the overall shelter situation of the household.

Application of the vulnerability criteria

Given the context of large population, the vulnerability criteria at these locations needs to be concise and easily verifiable within short time frame. As such, the vulnerability criteria applied is a simplified and is based on the highest vulnerability characteristics that are easily verifiable. A household that meets any one of the below criteria will be considered as vulnerable and no weight scale will be applied for assessing vulnerability.

Serial	Criteria
1	Women or child HoH without adult male
2	HHs with dependency ratio of 8 or more
3	Person with disability or elder as HoH
4	HH referred by the protection agencies

Scoring

A weight to each vulnerability criteria is assigned based on its severity of the specific vulnerability. The weight ranges from 1 to 10 and the higher the weight of the criteria the higher is the severity of vulnerability. The households will be identified as not sufficiently vulnerable, vulnerable and most vulnerable by adding the weights of each specific vulnerability that a household is meeting. Households with the score below or equal to 8 are considered as not sufficiently vulnerable to receive assistance, while households with vulnerability equal to or above 9 are considered as vulnerable and thus entitled to assistance. The overall vulnerability of the household must be read in conjunction with each specific vulnerability – e.g., a female-headed household will most probably also be one with no-adult male of working age.

Total Score	Category of HH
0 to 8	Not Sufficiently Vulnerable
9 to 16	Vulnerable
17 to 24	Most Vulnerable

These criteria are a set of alive parameters and must be periodically reviewed to assess the applicability in an evolving context and adjusted based on updated information from ongoing and forthcoming assessments. It is important to remember that these criteria are applied at the household level and not at the individual level.

Contextualisation of the Scoring Criteria

The scoring for each vulnerability provides a system of assessing vulnerability that can be adapted to the context in which the agency is responding. In this criteria the vulnerability threshold is delineated at 8 points. However, this can be adjusted to higher or lower scoring with respect to a specific operational context, evolving concerns and level of funding to ensure the most vulnerable populations are always assisted.

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