

ECHO – note on remote management

3.1: Is there an access problem due to security or administrative obstacles

The operating environment in Syria is complex due to the active conflict. Fighting and insecurity, as well as the presence of radical armed groups, pose significant constraints in reaching beneficiaries in high conflict areas of the country. In addition, administrative requirements often lead to access denials or delays in accessing affected populations. However, the February 2016 Munich Agreement has led to increased approvals and improved access to a number of besieged and hard-to-reach areas.

3.2: Does the proposed action include acceptance-building measures?

Building local acceptance is an essential measure to secure access to affected populations, as well as safeguard the delivery of humanitarian assistance and minimise risks to humanitarian staff. During the implementation of the proposed action, efforts will continue to strengthen local acceptance, sensitize communities on humanitarian principles and response, as well as identify and cooperate with partners with strong community networks.

3.3: Is it a direct life-saving action or an action aimed at preserving crucial livelihoods?

The proposed action is a direct life-saving action. It is an emergency response to a humanitarian crisis, which focuses on affected families without any possibilities of survival.

3.4: Have all possible measures been taken to reduce the risk of losing the lives of those undertaking the work on the ground?

To ensure safety of staff, Security Risk Assessments are periodically undertaken by the security team to identify threat levels. These assessments inform the Minimum Operating Security Standards (MOSS), which sets the required standards and mitigation measures

for operations in volatile environments. The MOSS dictates the standard operating procedures (SOP) in operational areas such as emergency communication systems, security management system, vehicle and staff movements, medical support services, security of premises and facilities, security trainings and briefings and residential security measures.

Accordingly, a series of mitigation measures are currently in place, including the use of armoured vehicles for all official movements inside Syria, vehicle GPS tracking systems, regular radio checks, security clearances, an effective warden system, evacuation plans for international staff and relocation of local staff to residences to safer areas. Moreover, WFP staff are required to take specific security trainings to minimize the risks on the ground. Once SOPs are in place, the programme criticality matrix is developed under the risk register, and the relevant SOPs are reviewed as the situation changes.

In addition, as the security situation remains fluid and unstable, WFP coordinates regularly with relevant local actors and partners on the ground to ensure that staff movements and missions take place within acceptable security conditions. In turn, cooperating partners also put in place mechanisms to monitor the security situation, including networks of focal points within the community who provide regular and timely updates on the situation on the ground. This enables partners to rapidly redirect deliveries and distributions in the event of a sudden deterioration of the security situation, thus minimising staff's exposure to risks.

3.5: What is the source of the needs assessment in a remotely-managed action?

The proposed action is not remotely-managed but directly implemented through physical presence in the country and through partners operating cross-border from neighbouring countries. However, needs assessments are conducted through third-party service providers who are trained in basic food security concepts and needs assessments. Furthermore, WFP has recently established the

mVAM approach which enables food security and vulnerability data collection through mobile technology.

3.6: Have robust systems been put in place to allow staff on the ground to provide all of the relevant information to those who are ultimately responsible for the management and the quality of the action?

A food security monitoring system is being established to periodically assess changes in the food security situation across the country. In the interim, WFP relies on its network of partners who provide time-sensitive information on emerging needs on the ground. In addition, WFP's price monitoring system, established before the crisis, collects food and fuel prices on a weekly basis to keep track of fluctuations in the price of food and fuel. In areas accessed cross-border, WFP has deployed the GRASP technology (georeferenced realtime acquisition of statistics platform) which enables the uploading of realtime collection of post-distribution monitoring data to WFP's central office. Furthermore, mVAM was recently established to support household food security and vulnerability surveys through mobile technology.

3.7: Are monitoring arrangements adapted for remote management?

The proposed action is not considered to be remote management given WFP's physical presence in several parts of the country and partnership with cross-border actors. However, a third-party monitoring system is in place to ensure face-to-face monitoring of assistance provided in high conflict areas. This complements WFP's direct monitoring of assistance provided to affected populations in areas permissible for UN staff.