

RECOMMENDATIONS ON LEVERAGING EXISTING PROTECTION PROGRAMMING TO FACILITATE ACCESS TO ESSN

NOTES FROM 13-14 JULY INTER-AGENCY WORKSHOP “TO IDENTIFY PROGRAM RESPONSES TO FACILITATE ACCESS TO SERVICES IN TURKEY” FOR GOVERNMENT OF TURKEY REVIEW AND FEEDBACK



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1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

At the request of the Inter Sector Working Group in Gaziantep and the Protection Working Group, the Cash-Based Interventions Technical Working Group (CBI TWG) produced an analysis of the need for cash-based interventions for people living under temporary protection (TP) or international protection (IP) in Turkey. The analysis aimed to describe the refugee population in Turkey who require cash assistance to meet their basic needs and, in the absence of such assistance, may face heightened vulnerability to certain protection issues (e.g. child labour, early marriage, etc.).

On behalf of the CBI-TWG, UNHCR's Data Management Unit and UNHCR's Information Management Unit undertook the analysis and the UNHCR Cash-Based Interventions (CBI) Unit coordinated inputs and prepared the narrative of the analysis; however, all CBI-TWG members reviewed and endorsed the final report.

To discuss the findings of the analysis and develop draft recommendations, the Cash-Based Intervention Technical Working Group (CBI TWG), the Basic Needs Working Group and the Protection Working Group organized a workshop in Gaziantep on 13-14 July 2017. The workshop aimed to ensure that all Syrian and non-Syrian refugees in Turkey are able to meet their basic needs and do not resort to negative coping mechanisms which heighten protection risks by leveraging existing protection programmes to support vulnerable households to meet the ESN pre-requisites.¹ More specifically, the workshop objectives included:

1. To discuss the challenges that vulnerable households are facing in meeting the pre-requisites to accessing the ESN and identify opportunities to address these through existing programming (e.g. ECHO-funded Individual Protection Assistance);
2. To propose ways to assist vulnerable refugees who do not fit the ESN demographic criteria.

Workshop participants agreed that it would be critical to share the draft recommendations emanating from the workshop with the Government of Turkey for review and input.

¹ While definitions might vary, the term "Basic needs" can be summarized as including access to basic services and assistance in health, nutrition, WASH, food, shelter, energy, education, as well as domestic items. In some cases, it might also encompass specialized services for people with specific needs.



2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Analysis of the profiles of the refugee population in Turkey who require assistance to meet their basic needs has shown that despite the ESN's immense coverage and the continuing effort to include the most vulnerable refugees, individual applicants/households continue to face challenges in meeting the ESN pre-requisites and navigating the application process. Analysis also illustrates that there are some vulnerable households that do not meet the ESN's demographic targeting criteria.

In particular, some refugees face difficulties in meeting the pre-requisites and obtaining associated documentation to access the ESN. These include registering under Temporary Protection (Syrians) or as an International Protection Applicant (non-Syrians), registering a residential address, and, where households are exclusively eligible under the ESN's disability criterion, acquiring a disability health report.

With this in mind, partners have begun to explore ways in which existing programming – in particular, ECHO-funded Individual Protection Assistance (IPA) and case management programmes – can support individual applicants/households to access the ESN, complementing other assistance available on-the-ground. This report therefore seeks to expand on ways in which NGO protection assistance can be leveraged to facilitate the ESN application process at the individual/household level. Note that all recommendations are intended as draft, pending the Government of Turkey's review and input.



3. FINDINGS OF THE CASH GAP ANALYSIS

The ESSN programme, which aims to reach over 1 million people is the largest programme providing Syrian and non-Syrian refugee households with basic needs assistance in Turkey.² Through the ESSN, eligible households receive TRY 120 /person/month of unrestricted cash assistance and quarterly top ups depending on the family size to meet their basic needs.

However, with anecdotal evidence suggesting that individual applicants/households face challenges in meeting the ESSN pre-requisites and navigating the application process, humanitarian actors requested a deeper analysis to inform individual/household-level support. It was also suggested that the exercise seek to describe refugee households that do not meet the ESSN's demographic targeting criteria but nonetheless require assistance to meet their basic needs and to inform a discussion on complementary programming.

Based on an initial analysis of existing information by UNHCR, on behalf of the CBI-TWG, the points below were among the key findings. Notably, this analysis started with the initial ESSN targeting criteria, which has been subject to some changes that were incorporated later on. However, it is hoped that the findings can still be considered indicative.

- a) Under the original demographic targeting criteria, 40 per cent of refugee households represented in the datasets analyzed were eligible for the ESSN. Applying the current demographic targeting criteria, 56 per cent of refugee households represented in the datasets are eligible for the ESSN.
- b) While the ESSN will benefit a large number of vulnerable households, there are households which do not appear able to meet their basic needs and do not meet the ESSN's demographic targeting criteria. This underscores the importance of exploring ways to identify and extend basic needs assistance to such households.
- c) According to the information available, 6.8 per cent of households are eligible to the ESSN under the criteria of having one or more household members with verified disability (note however, that the data did not take severity of disability into account, so may include households which do not meet the 40 per cent threshold). This underscores the importance of ESSN applicants being able to access disability health reports in a dignified and timely manner.
- d) A small percentage of households (<2.8 per cent) were eligible for the ESSN but had not completed their registration under Temporary or International Protection.³ This will cause delays in their access to the ESSN. Notably, this figure does not account for refugees who have registered in a province other than their area of current residence and are unable to apply for the ESSN until registering locally. Nonetheless, it illustrates the importance of registration as a pre-requisite to accessing the ESSN.
- e) Some 23 per cent of households eligible for the ESSN lived in substandard and inadequate shelters, which may not have a recognized address.⁴ This will create challenges to registering on their residential address and underscores the need to support ESSN applicants with the civil

² Basic needs assistance, in this context, includes food assistance, given that, in Turkey, food insecurity is primarily addressed through a basic needs lens (i.e. multipurpose cash programming). Basic Needs assistance in Turkey also covers rental assistance.

³ This is according to the original ESSN criteria, and may therefore be somewhat higher under the revised/updated criteria.

⁴ As above.



registration process. Note that there is a limitation around the analysis of substandard and inadequate shelters as this is a subjective observation.

- f) The data available shows that households qualifying under the ESSN have lower income and lower expenditure levels per family member than those not qualifying for the ESSN; nevertheless, on average, *both* eligible (TRY 174 per capita) and ineligible (TRY 219 per capita) households' reported average monthly spending per person prior to receiving the ESSN falls below the southeast Turkey minimum expenditure basket, estimated at TRY 286 per capita, and the national absolute poverty line, estimated at TRY 232 per capita.
- g) When analyzing other potential indicators of socioeconomic vulnerability, such as shelter conditions, coping strategies, school attendance, and levels of debt, there appear to be households which are not eligible to receive ESSN assistance (under both the initial and revised criteria) which are in need. This supports the assertion that there are households which are not eligible to the ESSN that require basic needs (and/or protection) assistance.

Notably, in an effort to bring families in need who are not eligible under the demographic targeting criteria under the ESSN umbrella, WFP, TRC, the Ministry of Family and Social Policies (MoFSP), European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) and other relevant ESSN stakeholders are discussing the possible introduction of SASF allowances. Though which SASFs would be able to identify very vulnerable households that do not meet demographic criteria and facilitate their enrollment in the ESSN.

Disclaimer and data privacy

UNHCR was tasked to lead on this analysis using sound statistical criteria and methodologies. However, it is important to note the following:

- With the exception of UNHCR's own dataset, CBI TWG partners supplied the information underpinning this analysis drawing, in most cases, upon the information on refugee households collected through their operations. UNHCR reviewed all datasets to identify and exclude data with obvious quality issues. However, UNHCR is not in a position to further ascertain the quality of the data collection process, neither in terms of field work nor in terms of data entry.
- This exercise relied on data previously collected for purposes other than this specific analysis. No additional data was collected for the purpose of this exercise.

All datasets submitted to UNHCR were anonymized (i.e. all names, ID numbers, phone numbers and addresses were removed prior to submission of the datasets to UNHCR).

4. ESSN PRE-REQUISITES

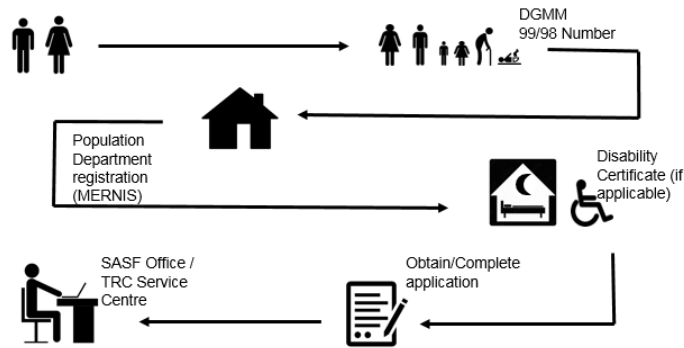
The ESSN is anchored on the Turkish national system, which has had important advantages in allowing programme-scale up and nation-wide coverage. In order to apply to the ESSN, the applicant/household must:

- Be living in Turkey under Temporary Protection or another form of International Protection and be living outside Temporary Accommodation Centers (TACs) (i.e. in host communities) and camps;
- Hold Foreigner Identification Number(s) starting with 99; and
- Have registered their residential address.

Applicants/households which are eligible under the criterion of having one or more disabled member must also obtain a Disability Health Report from an authorized hospital.



ESSN Pre-Requisites



Note: Chart prepared and made available by WFP and TRC, 2017.

The prerequisites to access ESSN should be distinguished from the ESSN eligibility criteria (see the text box below). It is understood that many applicants/households which meet the ESSN's demographic targeting/eligibility criteria may face challenges in accessing the programme in a timely manner as they are unable to meet the prerequisites. During the workshop, partners unpacked each of these challenges to accessing the ESSN and sought to determine the measures to be taken to support eligible individuals and households to access the programme.

ESSN Eligibility Criteria
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Single parent family: a family that comprises one adult aged 18-59 and at least 1 child aged under 18. 2. Elderly headed family: a family that has one or more adults aged 60 or over and does not have any other adults aged 18-59. 3. At least one disabled family member: a family with one or more members of family who have a disability level of at least 40% (requires a medical certificate from an authorised Turkish health institution). 4. Single female: a female aged 18 or over on her own, not accompanied by any other family members. 5. Dependency ratio > or = 1.5: (Number of family members aged 0-17 and 60+) and (number of family members with a disability level of at least 40%) / able bodied family members aged 18-59. 6. Four+ children: Any family with four or more children aged under 18.

4.1. REGISTRATION OF A TEMPORARY PROTECTION AND INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION APPLICANT ID HOLDER

Based on the findings of the analysis, during the follow up workshop, humanitarian actors looked at registration under Temporary and International Protection as relates to the ESSN application process. Due to the Government of Turkey's commitment and investment, it was recognized that the registration backlog has been reduced considerably since the beginning of 2017. However, there are vulnerable



households which require assistance to meet their basic needs but are pre-registered and are therefore unable to apply for the ESSN (note that pre-registration refers to those refugees who have had an initial appointment with DGMM and been issued a paper bearing a “98” ID number pending the background checks required to obtain full registration). As above, only those refugees who have completed the registration process and hold a Foreigner Identification Number starting with “99” are able to apply for the ESSN.

4.1.1. GROUP DISCUSSION ON WAYS TO SUPPORT VULNERABLE HOUSEHOLDS TO REGISTER UNDER TEMPORARY PROTECTION AND INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION

Overview of discussion

Humanitarian actors have observed that refugees may face difficulties in registering under Temporary Protection (TP) or International Protection (IP) due to language barriers and because service providers are overwhelmed by very high levels of demand in areas with large refugee populations. According to anecdotal evidence, those most affected among the refugee population include single and divorced women, people with disabilities, the elderly, people living in rural areas, and people living in informal housing, as these groups may face movement constraints and a lack of access to information. Refugee confusion about the processes and regulations governing registration and the internal movement of refugee populations (which requires their re-registration in their new province of residence) compounds these challenges.

During the workshop, participants considered ways to support the most vulnerable households to register under Temporary or International Protection in order access the ESSN in a timely manner.

4.1.2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Partners which identify issues related to registration should ensure these are shared with the Protection Working Group (or dedicated sub-working group/task force) and also share the information with TRC for direct follow up with DGMM.
- With consideration to these issues, the PRT WG could then identify/refer IPA and CM partners to support the most vulnerable individuals/households to register through provision of transportation, interpretation, and other support, as needed (thus ensuring a coordinated approach and strengthening accountability).
- UNHCR (as the Protection sector lead) and its partners will also share observations related to registration with the Turkish authorities to inform discussion and related measures, such as the ongoing verification exercises.
- Building upon the good practices demonstrated in verification-related outreach, UNHCR and partners should explore the possibility of collaborating with the Turkish government to organize information sessions on registration regulations and processes at the field level.

4.2. REGISTRATION OF A RESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

As noted above, registration of a residential address is another of the prerequisites for applying to the ESSN. During the workshop, one session therefore focused specifically on refugees living in informal



housing without an official street address. Informal housing shelters include tents, unfinished buildings and commercial buildings. As with registration under Temporary or International Protection, the services for the registration of a residential address are often under strain in areas hosting large numbers of Syrian refugees.

4.2.1. GROUP DISCUSSION ON WAYS TO SUPPORT VULNERABLE HOUSEHOLDS TO REGISTER AN ADDRESS

The group discussed challenges related to the registration of a residential address and possible support to vulnerable individuals/households at the field level. Specifically, it was noted that refugees are sometimes not able to register due to a lack of adequate documentation, such as a lease agreement or letter from the muhtar. Some refugees require interpretation. The most entrenched challenge however, is that people who live in informal housing are sometimes not able to register an address.

4.2.2 RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Partners to continue to report large caseloads of refugees (10+ households) unable to register their address to ESSN Task Force using the existing template. WFP will then coordinate with its partners to verify and assist these cases.
- At the field level, for small caseloads (up to 10 households) partners may use IPA and other relevant programmes to assist and cover direct and indirect costs related to individual cases. NGO support at the individual/household level may include: support to negotiate with landlords for the provision of a lease agreement; support to obtain alternative documentation (e.g. a utility bill or letter from the muhtar); coordination with municipalities to assign an address to refugees living in informal housing; provision of transportation, translation, and/or individual support throughout these steps; and, where the situation proves intractable, provision of support to refugees living in informal housing to move to a recognized residential address.

4.3. ACQUIRING A DISABILITY HEALTH REPORT

During the workshop, humanitarian actors considered the steps and documentation required to acquire a Disability Health Report (DHR). The DHR is required to access any available state service that support people with disabilities, and applicants/households need to present a DHR to be considered under the ESSN criterion related to disability. NGO observations indicate that some refugees face difficulties in obtaining DHRs, including language barriers, lack of information, costs of multiple visits to the hospital, the charging of fees for the free report and associated costs (e.g. translation).

4.3.1. GROUP DISCUSSION ON CHALLENGES TO OBTAIN THE DISABILITY HEALTH REPORT

The group discussed the challenges that refugees, in particular, face in obtaining a DHR. It was noted that some hospitals may not have the resources required to meet demand and that the procedures to obtaining DHRs can differ from hospital to hospital. Confusion is witnessed when refugees do not have an SASF referral letter (which is not always needed), and at times fees are charged to refugees for the necessary examinations, which should be free-of-charge for refugees under Temporary Protection.



As with other steps in the ESSN application process, language poses a significant challenge in the process of obtaining a DHR. This is especially the case for examinations of mental impairments, primarily because of confidentiality concerns around use of interpreters.

4.3.2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Feedback on challenges to obtaining the DHR should be documented using the existing online service feedback form. Links to the form as follows:
 - English: <https://goo.gl/forms/rJdRsznyOhuMKhVw1>
 - Turkish: <https://goo.gl/forms/xQs3z4nGQMjN90XJ3>
 - Arabic: <https://goo.gl/forms/OCVsdvnnh81HNNjC2>

Information will be shared with the Protection Working Group, Health Working Group, and ESSN Task Force to inform cross-sectoral discussions with the MoH on possible solutions (a dedicated cross-sectoral task force could be established, or discussion could remain ad hoc);

- Partners with IPA programmes should support vulnerable DHR applicants at the field level, covering direct and indirect fees that arise during the process of obtaining a DHR (and/or providing transportation, translation, and accompaniment services);
- WHO to follow up to clarify protocol on cost coverage for refugees registered under Temporary Protection and support the development of a harmonized referral pathway to obtain DHR.

It was recognized that assistance to PwDs should be inter-sectoral, meaning that in addition to the support provided under the ESSN, PwDs will also require sector specific support from health, education, and/or livelihood actors. Further, the focus on the DHR as a prerequisite to applying to the ESSN is an entry point to the larger conversation on how to best humanitarian partners may serve and protect refugees with disabilities in Turkey.

5. INTRODUCTION TO INDIVIDUAL PROTECTION ASSISTANCE IN TURKEY

During the workshop, given the focus on individual protection assistance (IPA), a presentation was provided to clarify the differences between: case management (CM), a six step process to deliver a tailored response to protection cases; the Special Needs Fund (SNF), one off support for cases that fit pre-defined criteria; and IPA, a one-time assistance that is intended to facilitate access to a service. While case management has extensive follow up of the case, SNF and IPA involve only limited follow up.

All three interventions can be used to support households to access the ESSN, though the focus is on IPA. During the workshop, examples were given where support through provision of transportation, accompaniment to the relevant offices or provision of interpreters were used to support vulnerable households to obtain the necessary documentation to access ESSN.

6. TRANSITIONAL / STOP-GAP BASIC NEEDS ASSISTANCE

During the workshop, it was recognized that it may take some refugees a significant amount of time to obtain the documentation required to access the ESSN, during which the applicant/households may not



be receiving any assistance to meet his/her/their basic needs. Those who seem to face the greatest challenges in meeting the pre-requisites to the ESSN, and thus the greatest delays in accessing the programme, are refugees who are not registered under TP or IP and/or live in informal housing. Given that these households are likely to have urgent needs, and, in the latter case, may require assistance to transition to move into proper residential accommodation, workshop participants discussed possible modalities of providing transitional/stop-gap assistance to these households. It was recommended that this should be temporary support, coupled with protection assistance which aims to transition them to the ESSN as soon as possible. Transitional/stop gap assistance should cease as soon as their access to the ESSN has been confirmed.

6.1. RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1.1. TRANSFER VALUE

Partners agreed that the value of “stop gap” assistance (when delivered as unrestricted cash) should not exceed the ESSN transfer value (i.e. TL 120 / person / month). While, in principle, households should not be “penalized” while still trying to obtain the documents required to access the ESSN, it is understood that setting the transfer value at slightly less than the ESSN transfer value may be necessary to ensure households remain incentivized to apply for the ESSN. While the proposed transfer amount is intended to cover basic needs (i.e. shelter, protection, education, health, etc.), other needs (e.g. to transition into formal housing) might be assessed in some cases and further assistance might be necessary.

6.1.2. DURATION OF SUPPORT

The transitional support will end as soon as ESSN assistance is received. For that, partners commit themselves to closely coordinate with the TRC to cross-check their beneficiary lists against ESSN recipient households on a regular basis. While the proposed transitional support is intended to cover basic needs for refugees and bridges the gap until they can access ESSN support, partners are strongly encouraged to actively look for solutions regarding the problems causing the delay. In detail, this includes, among other support, assistance to obtain the necessary documentation (translation, transportation, accompaniment, etc.).

6.1.3. MODALITY

Unrestricted, unconditional cash assistance is provided under the ESSN, but stop-gap assistance could be either restricted (e.g. e-voucher assistance) or unrestricted. Conditionality related to the recipient households continued cooperation in measures to facilitate their access to the ESSN may be explored.