

`Emergency Operation EMOP 200040 “Assistance to Iraqi Refugees in Syria”

Duration: 12 months (May 2010 - April 2011)

Number of beneficiaries: 150,000

WFP food tonnage: 23,808 mt

WFP food cost: US\$ 16,195,490

WFP cash/voucher cost: US\$ 5,682,400

Total cost to WFP: US\$ 32,061,874

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since the onset of conflict in Iraq, the Syrian Arab Republic continues to host the largest population of Iraqi refugees, most of whom have settled in the capital Damascus. Many of these refugees have been made vulnerable by the extended duration of their displacement and the erosion of their means of subsistence. As refugees in Syria are not permitted to work, own property or obtain licenses to operate businesses, they are fully dependent on external support, including remittances and humanitarian assistance. This external support is frequently insufficient to cover basic living expenses, such as the cost of food, rent and health care; the plight of the refugees has also been further compounded by the global economic crisis, which has driven up food and fuel prices and reduced remittances. This situation is forcing an increasing number of refugees to seek unofficial employment, and exposing them to situations that raise protection concerns. The 2010 elections in Iraq have further renewed uncertainty amongst the refugees about the likelihood of an early return home.

WFP currently provides food assistance to Iraqi refugees in Syria through Regional EMOP 10717, which will end on 30 April 2010. This proposed new phase of the EMOP, EMOP Syria 200040, “Assistance to Iraqi Refugees in Syria”, has been designed on the basis of the findings and recommendations of a UN Joint Assessment Mission (JAM) in June 2009, a Response Analysis Project (RAP) mission conducted by WFP headquarters in July 2009 and a review of lessons learnt from the current EMOP 10717. Both the JAM and the RAP confirmed the need to continue food assistance to all categories of registered refugees, to diversify the food basket and to adjust the ration size.

The EMOP Syria 200040 aims to save lives and protect the livelihoods of Iraqi and non-Iraqi refugees (WFP Strategic Objective 1), by providing adequate food assistance to the most vulnerable refugee groups. It also aims to strengthen the capacity of government entities to implement emergency operations (WFP Strategic Objective 5) through partnerships in the implementation of the EVS, with its possible integration in the national safety nets programme at a later stage.

The EMOP is for a duration of 12 months and will cover a caseload of 150,000 beneficiaries. It will be implemented in partnership and cooperation with UNHCR, the State Planning Commission (SPC), the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) and (for the EVS) the General Establishment for Storage and Marketing of Agricultural and Animal Products (GESMAAP).

Under the EMOP, WFP will expand food assistance to include all refugee groups identified as vulnerable, including previously excluded groups: Iraqi refugees who arrived before 2003,

single and able-bodied yet still vulnerable Iraqi males between 18 and 50 years of age (as recommended by the JAM), approximately 1,000 Palestinians from Iraq and a small group of non-Iraqi refugees.

The EMOP will provide assistance through both in-kind food distribution and vouchers. WFP Syria has been piloting and testing an Electronic Voucher System (EVS) since October 2009, which has since been expanded to cover a total of 2,000 households as of January 2010. Under the EVS, beneficiaries will be able to select their food rations from a list of seven items and 11 varieties at any time and at the closest available point of sale, up to a pre-determined voucher value.

The in-kind food basket has also been adjusted to provide a more diversified ration in quantities and varieties of commodities that better meet the needs of beneficiaries, as established during the RAP consultative process with stakeholders. The operation is designed to maintain daily nutritional requirements and dietary needs during the different climatic seasons by including animal protein and an increased oil ration during the winter months. UNHCR's complementary food items will be integrated into WFP's food basket, which will provide a 2,085 kcal average ration.

Given the legal context, self-reliance activities cannot be promoted as a recovery strategy. A phasing out of assistance to the targeted population will only be possible once the political and security situation in Iraq improves and the refugees can return home and/or when viable, legal livelihood opportunities can be pursued in Syria.

SITUATION ANALYSIS AND SCENARIO(S)

Overall context

1. Since the onset of the Iraqi crisis in 2003, the Syrian Arab Republic continues to host the largest population of refugees displaced by the conflict in Iraq, estimated by the Government of Syria to be around 1.2 million.¹ In addition to Iraqis, smaller groups of non-Iraqis have also found refuge in Syria, mainly in the capital city of Damascus.
2. While there are indications of some refugees returning to Iraq, the number of voluntary returnees is negligible - the majority of registered Iraqis (85 percent) have expressed an unwillingness to return to their country (mostly to the central region), including those who have been the longest in Syria and those who are in dire financial straits² - due to the continuing political instability in Iraq. Moreover, the 2010 elections have renewed uncertainty among the 168,000 Iraqi refugees registered with UNHCR in Syria about returning to their home country.
3. Many of the Iraqi refugees remaining in Syria are families and individuals who have been made extremely vulnerable not only by the traumatic experience of conflict and insecurity in Iraq but also by the extended duration of their displacement. These families are the core group of those who regularly collect their food and non-food assistance every two months.
4. Refugees and asylum seekers in Syria have no formal permission to work and lack access to many social services. They are banned from obtaining legal employment and income, owning property and obtaining licenses to operate businesses. These constraints lead Iraqi refugees to draw on and deplete their savings, or force them into situations that raise a number of protection concerns, such as detention, deportation, child labour,⁴ and forced exploitation of adolescent/young girls and women.⁵
5. According to UNHCR,⁶ the consequences of the lack of livelihood opportunities vary according to age and gender. Women and girls are affected differently than men: they are at much higher risk of being forced into prostitution or early marriages to secure an income for their family. Children are also at risk of child trafficking and abuse. Single females and female-headed households are especially vulnerable and at risk.
6. The ongoing uncertainty in Iraq, the extended duration of displacement and the hardship experienced in Syria make refugees extremely vulnerable, and place them in a situation where they are fully reliant on external support⁷ and humanitarian assistance.
7. WFP's current operation (Regional EMOP 10717), which provides food assistance to Iraqi refugees in Syria, ends on 30 April 2010. In order to review the assistance

¹ This is the number officially declared by the Government of Syria. There is uncertainty on the criteria used for the counting of this movement

² Response Analysis Project (RAP), July 2009.

⁴ UNHCR Regional Response Plan for Iraqi Refugees 2010 (p.19).

⁵ UNHCR Regional Response Plan for Iraqi Refugees 2010 (p.24).

⁶ UNHCR Regional Response Plan for Iraqi Refugees 2010 (p.31).

⁷ External support includes remittances, retirement salaries and income from rented properties in Iraq for an estimated 10 percent of the assisted Iraqi population. These incomes are collected by family members in Iraq and sent to the refugees in Syria (JAM 2009).

provided in light of operational needs, assess the vulnerability of the refugees and identify the types of assistance required, WFP embarked on a series of actions in 2009. A review of lessons learnt from the ongoing EMOP, a Joint Assessment Mission (JAM) of June 2009 with UNHCR and other partners on the status of refugees in the country⁸ which included household surveys of 200 households, and a consultative exercise that included a meeting with all stakeholders in July 2009 (Response Analysis Project - RAP) were the main elements of this review and assessment process.

8. Both the JAM and RAP missions confirmed the need to continue with food assistance to all categories of registered refugees using in-kind food assistance and voucher transfer modalities.
9. The results of the JAM showed how expenses for food, rent and health care are exhausting the scarce resources of the Iraqis refugees, leading to an overall increase in vulnerability.¹⁰ Results also showed the vulnerability of those Iraqi refugees who were not included in the current EMOP, i.e. able-bodied and single males between 18-50 years of age and Iraqi refugees living in Syria prior to 2003. Both these groups were found to have the poorest food consumption amongst all those interviewed, due to the constraints on economic opportunities available to them in Syria. Beneficiaries from these groups of refugees who were found to be working in informal jobs had been deported. The JAM results also underlined the vulnerability of a small group of non-Iraqi refugees in Syria.
10. In light of these findings, the RAP mission concluded that there was a need for WFP to expand its food assistance to include targeted individuals and households from within all groups identified as being among the most vulnerable people, including Iraqi refugees who arrived before 2003, single and able-bodied Iraqi males between 18 and 50 years of age, the approximately 1,000 Palestinians ex-Iraq and the small group of non-Iraqi refugees. These groups had previously been excluded from receiving WFP food assistance, despite high levels of vulnerability within them. Among this last group, the 3,500 non-Iraqi refugees mainly Somali, Sudanese and Afghan nationals, there are high rates of women-at-risk, unaccompanied children and adolescents, as well as torture victims. Most are refugees without prospects for local integration and for whom resettlement is currently the only possible durable solution.
11. The JAM also found that parts of the food ration were sold or bartered by nearly half of the beneficiary households, particularly rice and pulses and to a lesser extent oil. The primary reason for the sale or barter of food was to obtain cash to pay rent, followed by the preference for other food items, excess rations of rice or the preference for items of differing quality (pulses). The JAM also found that up to 40 percent of the total food consumed in the household was purchased on local markets, which indicates and confirms that in-kind food rations were not fully meeting the preferences and/or nutritional requirements of the Iraqi refugees.
12. The RAP recommended diversifying the food basket to include preferred food varieties and reduced quantities of some items, and to look for alternative methods of

⁸ Participants in the Joint Assessment mission represented WFP, UNHCR, SARC, and SPC

¹⁰ In particular, this is leading to an increased number of children dropping out of school in search of informal employment. They are exploited as cheap labour, working long hours for meagre wages and (b) a greater number of adolescent/young girls and women being exploited in the absence of any other assistance.

distribution, including a voucher-transfer system. EMOP 200040 addresses all RAP recommendations and:

- (a) diversifies the in-kind food basket;
 - (b) adjusts the food ration by halving the quantity of the main staple food item (rice), and introducing more preferred varieties of pulses;
 - (c) provides only one food basket (average 2,085 kcal/person/day) by integrating UNHCR's complementary food rations;¹¹ and
 - (d) introduces food vouchers through an innovative Electronic Voucher System (EVS).
13. The country office has been piloting and testing the EVS since 2009, which has included a gradual scaling-up of the system.¹² The EVS, which provides a monthly electronic transfer through selected shops, allows freedom of choice for beneficiaries to purchase from a pre-determined list of food items, thus:
- (a) Better addressing beneficiary needs and giving them greater flexibility and choice over the content and quantity of their food basket, as well as the time and location for the collection of food entitlements;
 - (b) Reducing the risk of beneficiaries selling/bartering food to meet other critical unmet needs; and
 - (c) potentially exerting a positive effect on the local economy by boosting demand for locally produced food commodities.
14. From the start of the voucher pilot, the country office has implemented a parallel monitoring and evaluation (M&E) exercise that has identified the strengths and weaknesses of the pilot exercise and allowed the country office to resolve any unforeseen issues. The country office also conducted an in-depth assessment of the new EVS components, its partners (GESMAAP, MTN, UNHCR), the administrative arrangements for the pilot within the country office, and the software application. A monitoring toolkit containing a tailor-made logical framework was also prepared. The EVS component of this EMOP is based on the conclusions, recommendations and lessons learnt from the pilot exercise.

The food security and nutrition situation

15. As part of its safety net, the Government of Syria subsidizes bread for all residents while subsidies for sugar and fuel are rationed to selected vulnerable citizens, which do not include refugees. Fuel prices, however, have also seen a seven-fold increase in March 2008, causing a tremendous impact on the local economy and vulnerable groups, exacerbating the effects of the drought and the hike in world food prices.
16. Food insecurity faced by refugees in Syria is generally a problem of economic access, as most of the refugees live in urban areas where markets are functioning well throughout the year. The June 2009 JAM highlighted the deteriorating economic situation of refugee households due to the continued depletion of resources and savings. It also showed that one-third of refugee households were affected by a

¹¹ The current UNHCR complementary food ration consists of pasta, tomato paste, tea and sugar, amounting to 380 Kcal in total.

¹² 1,000 households have been part of this pilot from October to December 2009. Since January 2010, the number of households benefiting from this new modality has increased to 2,000.

reduction of remittances, their major source of income, and, devoid of any realistic prospects of generating adequate legal income in Syria, were expected to become more vulnerable.

17. According to JAM findings, accommodation poses the main challenge for most refugees, with impacts on their food security. Average rents are currently around US\$ 200 a month and continue to rise even for small apartments with basic utilities. On average, housing costs, including utilities, amount to more than 70 percent of a household's total non-food expenditure; 43 percent of households are in debt for rent payments. UNHCR has started cash distributions to some refugees, and also supports a small number of refugees with cash for university fees. Other major financial difficulties reported are high food prices and spending on health care. The share of food expenditure out of total household expenditure stands at 38 percent, even though most households receive regular food assistance.¹³
18. The JAM demonstrated the positive effects of continued food assistance. The majority of the surveyed refugee population (74 percent) had reached an acceptable level of food consumption in light of food assistance, while 20 percent had borderline food consumption and 6 percent had poor food consumption. While refugees with borderline or poor food consumption have sufficient access to carbohydrates due to the subsidized cost of bread (made from non-fortified wheat flour), their diet is deficient in proteins and micronutrients.
19. Households with borderline or poor food consumption are often one-person households, with a disabled member or households composed of able-bodied males aged between 18 and 52. The share of households that have been in Syria for a longer time is greater in these categories, and these families are now often in debt for rent payments. In order to make ends meet, 60 percent of these households are coping by reducing the number of meals consumed each day, reducing expenditures on health care, borrowing food or relying on money lenders. The majority of these people are refugees who were excluded from food assistance in the current Regional EMOP 10717. Their inclusion in this EMOP Syria 200040 was strongly recommended by all stakeholders during the RAP mission.
20. The refugee population has access to the public health system in Syria through the Ministry of Health, SARC and non-governmental organization (NGO) clinics. A harmonized referral service for secondary and tertiary health care services is implemented for refugees living in Damascus and other governorates. A standardized overall monitoring system was initiated in SARC clinics. It is planned that eventually this system will be integrated in public hospitals to enhance the overall monitoring of the refugees' health status. Nutritional surveillance began in Damascus and was expanded to the north-east, significantly bolstering the health response in the most deprived parts of the country. According to baseline figures from 2009, nutritional indicators such as acute malnutrition and underweight are 4.7 percent and 4.4 percent respectively, among children under 5,¹⁴ stunting is 9.5 percent, and anaemia among children between 6-59 months is 30 percent.

Scenarios

21. This EMOP is based on the two scenarios of limited opportunities for resettlement and continued uncertainty over whether the refugees present in Syria will be able return to

¹³ JAM 2009.

¹⁴ UNHCR Regional Response Plan for Iraqi Refugees 2010 (p.27).

their places of origin. In this context, and for operational issues, the following key assumptions have been considered:

- Legal restrictions on work opportunities continue to apply, thus increasing the dependence of refugees on humanitarian aid;
 - Sources of income support for refugees in the form of external remittances will continue to diminish;
 - Global food prices will continue to remain high, affecting the price of basic food commodities in local markets. The situation is exacerbated by the effects of three years of consecutive drought in northeast Syria.
22. In the event of an unexpected influx of refugees and increased needs due to the 2010 elections in Iraq and any consequent insecurity, the country office would need to consider a budget revision to the EMOP.

POLICIES, CAPACITIES AND ACTIONS OF THE GOVERNMENT AND OTHERS

Policies, capacities and actions of the government and other major actors and their coordination

GOVERNMENT:

23. Syria stands by its commitment to keep its borders with Iraq open and provide refugees with access to health care and education services. The State Planning Commission (SPC) is WFP's government counterpart. It has a coordination role, facilitates logistical activities and is a member of the Refugee Food Aid group chaired by WFP.¹⁵ The Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) is the key partner of UNHCR for food and non-food assistance given to Iraqi refugees as well as to non-Iraqi refugees. In coordination with SPC, GESMAAP is the government entity implementing the EVS through its outlets in Damascus and other governorates, in partnership with WFP.

UN PARTNERSHIPS:

24. UNHCR plays the lead role in ensuring protection and assistance for the refugee populations in Syria. Starting in May 2010, UNHCR will discontinue its distribution of complementary food assistance, but will continue with the provision of non-food items and financial assistance. Besides psychosocial support, UNICEF provides educational and vocational courses as well as recreational activities and empowerment sessions for Iraqi adolescent boys and girls living in Syria. WHO runs projects to improve the access to and quality of the full range of health care services to Iraqi refugees and has established nutritional surveillance systems.
25. The United Nations Country Team (UNCT) is the forum for inter-agency partnership and coordination. Joint planning and activities are also undertaken with UNDP on livelihood studies, with UNICEF on education, with UNFPA on reproductive health, with IOM on the prevention of human trafficking and on safe housing, and with

¹⁵ The Refugee Food Aid group is chaired by WFP and has a membership composed of SPC, UNHCR, SARC and IFRC.

UNRWA on joint planning and programming to progressively ensure similar treatment of Palestinians in Syria and Palestinians who arrived from Iraq.

COORDINATION:

26. Inter-agency coordination mechanisms for the humanitarian response to the needs of Iraqi refugees in Syria were established and further reinforced in 2008 with support from the UNCT. In 2010/2011, five inter-agency thematic working groups will coordinate humanitarian efforts in Syria, including those related to displaced populations: a protection working group chaired by UNHCR, a food assistance working group chaired by WFP with the presence of UNHCR, SARC, SPC and IFRC, an education working group chaired by UNICEF, a health working group co-chaired by WHO and UNHCR, and a Palestinian refugees' working group chaired by UNHCR. Members of the working groups comprise UN agencies, international NGOs, SARC and other local organizations. Syrian Government ministries engaged in the working groups are primarily the ministries of Health and Education.
27. The food assistance working group, composed of the main partners (UNHCR and SARC) as well as the government counterpart (SPC) will be the forum where issues related to implementation will be discussed and agreed upon.

OBJECTIVES OF WFP ASSISTANCE

28. The main objective of this emergency operation is to save lives and protect the livelihoods of Iraqi and non-Iraqi refugees (WFP Strategic Objective 1), by providing sufficient and appropriate food assistance through in-kind food and EVS distributions. The emergency operation also aims to strengthen the capacity of government entities to implement emergency operations through their partnership in the EVS, and enable the gradual takeover of activities to address hunger among the refugee population (WFP Strategic Objective 5).
29. The emergency operation will contribute to the achievement of Millennium Development Goal 1: to eradicate poverty and hunger.

BENEFICIARIES AND TARGETING

30. Beneficiaries entitled to food assistance are all registered refugees, both Iraqis and non-Iraqis, in Syria. The entitlement to food distributions will continue to be based on the UNHCR-managed database. In principle, all registered refugees are entitled to food assistance, with the exception of those who have not presented themselves at a distribution site for more than two consecutive cycles (four months).
31. WFP has followed the recommendations of the RAP mission by fixing the caseload at 150,000 beneficiaries as of May 2010.¹⁶ This number is based on the consolidated core group of refugees who regularly receive food assistance along with the previously excluded refugee categories, of pre-2003 arrivals, single-male households,

¹⁶ UNHCR figures of registered refugees entitled to food assistance is 168,000,

Palestinians ex-Iraq¹⁷ and refugees from Somalia, Sudan and Afghanistan (see Table 1).

Table 1: Planned beneficiary numbers

Beneficiaries	Number
Iraqi*	145,500
Palestinian	1,000
Non-Iraqi	3,500
Total	150,000

*Average actual distribution caseload, including arrivals before 2003 and single males

32. Table 2 below shows that female beneficiaries make up 48.5 percent of the caseload. Women in the roles of beneficiaries and implementers (within SARC) are present at all stages of registration, verification and distribution. Monitoring activities and household visits performed under the EVS pilot project showed that women are the planners and decision makers when selecting the EVS food basket based on family members', preference and price.

Table 2: Beneficiaries by distribution modality

Activity	Beneficiaries				
	Male		Female		Total
	Under 5	5 years - 60+	Under 5	5 years - 60+	
GFD: Iraqis	5,835	62,896	5,610	59,209	133,550
EVS: Iraqis	566	6,099	544	5,741	12,950
Non-Iraqis	152	1,648	147	1,553	3,500
Total	6,553	70,643	6,301	66,503	150,000

In-kind distribution beneficiaries:

33. At the start of the project, the in-kind food distribution will target about 137,050 beneficiaries. This caseload will be reduced commensurate with the increase in the EVS caseload. By the end of the operation, the in-kind assistance will cover 109,300 people (see Table 3).

Electronic Voucher System (EVS) beneficiaries:

34. Following suggestions made by all stakeholders during the RAP mission, the new EVS modality of distribution will be increased gradually in order to allow WFP to strictly monitor and evaluate the activity. The EVS caseload at the first distribution in May will be composed of approximately 12,950 people, comprising 3,500 households (1,500 additional households on top of the existing caseload of 2,000 households from

¹⁷ This group of Palestinians ex-Iraq is not included in UNRWA's programming and activities for Palestinians in Syria.

the pilot exercise). This number will be scaled up gradually to reach 40,700 beneficiaries by the end of the operation, as shown in Table 3 below.

35. EVS beneficiaries will be selected through UNHCR's database of those refugees entitled to food assistance. Priority will be given to single women and men as well as female-headed households and/or households with disabled members living in the geographical areas where the EVS modality is operating. The EVS will be implemented in Damascus and Aleppo where there are the highest concentration of Iraqi refugees. Depending on EVS implementation capacity, WFP may also consider adding additional locations.

Table 3: Planned number of beneficiaries by distribution modality.

Month	Number of beneficiaries		
	In-kind distribution	Voucher distribution	TOTAL
May 2010	137,050	12,950	150,000
Jun 2010	137,050	12,950	150,000
Jul 2010	131,500	18,500	150,000
Aug 2010	131,500	18,500	150,000
Sep 2010	125,950	24,050	150,000
Oct 2010	125,950	24,050	150,000
Nov 2010	120,400	29,600	150,000
Dec 2010	120,400	29,600	150,000
Jan 2011	114,850	35,150	150,000
Feb 2011	114,850	35,150	150,000
Mar 2011	109,300	40,700	150,000
Apr 2011	109,300	40,700	150,000

NUTRITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS AND RATIONS / VALUE OF VOUCHER TRANSFERS

36. Under Regional EMOP 10717, a WFP food ration of 2,047 kcal was distributed along with UNHCR's complementary food ration of 380 kcals. Based on RAP recommendations, WFP and UNHCR agreed that, starting from May 2010, UNHCR will discontinue its complementary food distribution and the UNHCR food requirements will be integrated into the WFP food basket. The WFP food basket will therefore be the only source of food assistance to refugees, and will consist of a 2,085 kcal average ration.
37. As per JAM and RAP recommendations, the cereal and pulse rations are diversified, increasing the ration of preferred pulses (and adding additional varieties such as lentils, white beans, chickpeas) and halving the ration of rice. During the winter months from November to February, animal protein in the form of canned meat is also included in the food basket and the oil ration is increased (see Table 4). Dates and fortified biscuits will also be provided on top of the normal food basket, subject to the

availability of ad-hoc in-kind donations. These will be distributed to all refugee groups during festive seasons such as the Ramadan period.

Table 4: Daily food ration/transfer by activity

DAILY FOOD RATION/ TRANSFER BY ACTIVITY (g/person/day)		
Commodity type/ Cash & voucher	General Food Distribution	
	Regular food basket	Winter food basket
Cereals/Rice	200	200
Cereals/Pasta	170	170
Pulses	100	50
Vegetable oil	33	45
Sugar	25	25
Salt	5	5
Canned Meat		50
Total	533	545
Total Kcal/day	2,045	2,101
% of energy supplied by protein	10.4%	10.4%
% of energy supplied by fat	18.8%	25.5%
Cash/voucher (US\$/person/day)	0.59	

38. The EVS will provide a diversified list of food items (seven items and 11 varieties in total), which have been chosen on the basis of their acceptability by the beneficiaries in terms of variety, local preference and quantity. They are rice, pulses (red split lentils, chickpeas and white beans), vegetable oil, wheat flour, canned fish, cheese and eggs.
39. The monetary value of the voucher¹⁸ is calculated on the basis of the local value of the in-kind food ration at government-run GESMAAP stores. This value will be reviewed every two cycles (four months) during the project's implementation and revised if needed to keep the in-kind food ration value in line with the entitlement for EVS beneficiaries, and any adjustments may affect the overall cost of the voucher component.

IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

¹⁸ For budget purposes, the monetary value of the voucher has been calculated at SYP 1,613/person/cycle based on the value of the in-kind ration at project design date.

40. Registration and verification of Iraqi refugees is undertaken by UNHCR (and their partner SARC) either at their main distribution centres in Douma and Sayyida Zeinab (Damascus) or through mobile teams deployed in the governorates. UNHCR/SARC have the capacity to register from 8,000 to 12,000 refugees per month. Through the registration and verification exercise, UNHCR is able to collect relevant information such as protection, community services, health, educational records in addition to food entitlements. All collected data is recorded in an electronic database. The UNHCR verification exercise ensures that all registered beneficiaries are kept informed about verification and distribution dates. WFP also contacts those beneficiaries who are on the EVS registration master list and who do not present themselves during the verification and information sessions prior to each distribution cycle.
41. Before each in-kind food distribution, refugees whose names have been provided by UNHCR are given information on the distribution dates and locations through Short Messaging Service (SMS) messages sent to mobile phones by WFP. At the distribution/verification posts, beneficiaries submit their documents and passports of their family members and advise of any changes in their social status.
42. UNHCR will complement WFP food distribution with non-food items, which include sanitary items and baby diapers. UNHCR will also provide cash to selected vulnerable households to help cover rental costs, and to some identified students to cover university fees.
43. In addition to the Syria country office in Damascus, WFP will operate through sub-offices in Deir Ezzor, Tartous and Aleppo, to implement and monitor EMOP activities.

In-kind food distribution:

44. On completion of the verification process, refugees will be provided with a receipt note specifying their entitlement of in-kind food and non-food rations to be collected from the nearby warehouse.
45. For each household, the complete ration will be packed based on bimonthly entitlements and distributed by UNHCR/SARC in the presence of WFP staff. In Damascus, UNHCR will cover the cost of transport for the refugees to return to their homes upon collection of their rations. The main distribution centre in Douma is located about 20 km away from most areas where refugees have settled; the centre has the capacity to process 1,200 beneficiaries a day. The other centre in Damascus is Sayyida Zeinab, which can process 700 persons a day. In other governorates, households will receive their packed ration based on the distribution plan for each cycle but do not receive any provision for transport.
46. Subject to the availability of resources, WFP will make arrangements for food procurement through regional and international purchase. Local procurement will be used as a last resort option to avoid pipeline breaks taking into consideration cost-effectiveness.
47. WFP will notify UNHCR and its cooperating partners of the receipt of commodities in- country, on the agreed allocation and movement of commodities by WFP from ports or warehouses. The information will include the type and amount of commodities transported, the means of transportation and the estimated time of arrival of commodities at the mutually agreed delivery points.

48. WFP will make all necessary arrangements for adequate insurance of all shipments and will be responsible for customs clearance, discharge of vessels and/or containers, dispatch of primary land transport from port(s) of entry (Tartous and/or Lattakia) or points of entry at the Syrian border to the WFP warehouse in Damascus or Extended Delivery Points (EDPs).
49. WFP will handle all EDP operations, which include warehousing and inventory management, loading/off-loading, fumigation, stocktaking and reporting through its Commodity Tracking and Accounting System (COMPAS).
50. WFP will handle all dispatch operations or secondary transportation from EDP warehouses to Final Delivery Points (FDPs) at pre-packing centres in Harasta and/or the Cargo Village in Damascus for those commodities that need to be pre-packed or re-bagged. Those commodities that do not require pre-packing or re-bagging will be delivered from either the ports or EDPs to FDPs in all governorates.
51. Any secondary transportation beyond pre-packing/re-bagging centres (i.e. Harasta and/or the Cargo Village) will be the administrative and financial responsibility of UNHCR.
52. Any commodity losses occurring at pre-packing/re-bagging centres (i.e. Harasta and/or the Cargo Village) and other FDPs at governorates due to mishandling, theft, pilferage, unauthorized release and distribution, will be under the sole responsibility of UNHCR and its cooperating partners¹⁹. These losses will be reimbursed with commodities of the same quantity and quality.
53. The flow of commodity information will be handled mainly through COMPAS. This will include reporting of all downstream logistics activities from the ports/border points of entries to EDPs, in addition to reporting on distributions.
54. Any remaining food stock balances at pre-packing/re-bagging centres and other FDPs at governorates will be reported to WFP on a monthly basis.
55. Logistics activities (LTSH) including port operations, primary transportation, EDP operations and secondary transportation (secondary transportation from EDPs to either repackaging centres in Harasta and the Cargo Village, or other FDPs at Governorates for commodities that do not require pre-packing/re-bagging) will be the responsibility of WFP. These costs are estimated at US\$ 71 per metric ton.
56. All logistics operations at pre-packing/re-bagging centres, FDPs, warehouses and distribution costs will be the responsibility of UNHCR.

Electronic Voucher System (EVS):

57. The mobile phone/GSM-based Electronic Voucher Transfer Pilot Project system, which began in October 2009, is being implemented in full partnership with WFP's Government counterpart in Syria, the State Planning Commission (SPC), UNHCR and GESMAAP.
58. Implementation of the EVS distribution modality is based on the experience during the pilot phase, including a full-scale assessment of the pilot where implementation and monitoring tools were tested and modified. An assessment of partners, software, counterparts and WFP capacity was also conducted, as was an analysis of risk assumptions.

¹⁹ SARC is currently UNHCR's only implementing partner for this operation, subject to change in the future.

59. Beneficiaries will be selected from UNHCR's database to participate in the EVS under this EMOP. Particularly vulnerable groups, such as single women and men, female-headed households and/or households with handicapped members will be given a priority of selection within the geographic areas where the EVS modality operates (Damascus and Aleppo, with a possible expansion to other locations).
60. On the completion of UNHCR's verification process, each household will be provided with a verification bar code. Subsequently, the WFP server will forward an automated SMS message containing a PIN number to the same household with the amount of the voucher entitlement and the duration of the new distribution cycle.
61. At any participating GESMAAP point of sale (POS), beneficiaries will present the two pieces of information they have been given (a bar code from UNHCR and a PIN number from WFP) to enable the cashier to access the beneficiary's electronic file from the WFP server. Thereafter, beneficiaries will be able to select the food items within their entitlements in their preferred variety and quantity, and they will be able to do this any time during the duration of the cycle.
62. GESMAAP, WFP's main implementing partner for the EVS, will ensure that its POS are adequately staff and supplied with food commodities. GESMAAP's interest and capacity in participating in the EVS will also enable the Government to adopt the EVS as one of the modalities within the national safety net programme.
63. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) will be signed between WFP and GESMAAP, detailing the obligations of each party. It will include the list of food items with fixed prices for two cycles, thus offering some protection for refugees from price increases due to inflation. Under the MOU, GESMAAP will offer WFP its commodities on a credit basis, claiming financial payment based on actual food quantities distributed during each cycle.
64. In accordance with the concept paper, the voucher monetary value is determined based on the local value of the in-kind ration at government-run stores.²⁰ The monetary value of the voucher and the GESMAAP fixed price list will be reviewed every two cycles to determine the need for any revision.
65. A hotline number is established and operated by WFP to receive enquiries or complaints from participating beneficiaries.

PERFORMANCE MONITORING

66. A logical framework was developed for the operation (see Annex II), considering both modalities of distribution (in-kind food distribution and EVS), with indicators related to two outcomes: improved food consumption; and improved government and partners' knowledge and capacity of voucher system implementation. A relevant M&E Plan is being finalized based on the experience obtained through Regional EMOP 10717. Most output indicators are available in the in-kind distribution reports prepared by UNHCR/SARC and the EVS automated transactions by GESMAAP POS'. The EVS enables real-time reporting of electronically processed data.
67. Baseline data is driven by data collected in the 2009 JAM and the voucher pilot assessment, allowing for comparison with the outcome indicators. An evaluation of the operation is planned for March/April 2011, to coincide with the 2011 JAM.

²⁰ Concept Paper, October 2009.

68. For in-kind distributions, the cycle will cover a two-month period starting May 2010. Monitoring will be conducted during distributions in the planned 15 sites across 10 governorates. Post-distribution monitoring will take place two weeks after the distribution through food aid monitors operating from the country office and the sub-offices in Deir Ezzor, Tartous and Aleppo. Monitoring of the EVS will use the same arrangements used during the pilot phase. WFP food aid monitors will monitor GESMAAP's voucher activities on a daily basis and will conduct beneficiary contact monitoring at GESMAAP outlets. This will be followed by post-distribution monitoring.
69. Quantitative and qualitative checklists have been developed to support monitoring based on the experience derived from Regional EMOP 10717. Monitoring data will be collected and monitoring reports produced regularly to inform project management on all aspects of the implementation process and to allow for necessary corrective measures.
70. The country office and its sub-offices have a monitoring team currently composed of 10 members, who have been fully involved in EMOP 10717 and the EVS pilot. This number is expected to expand to 15 monitors as needed to cover the operation in all areas of implementation.

HANDOVER STRATEGY

71. WFP and its partners are working together to ensure the preservation of lives and the nutritional health of the most vulnerable refugee population groups. Given the legal context, self-reliance activities cannot be promoted as a recovery strategy. A phasing out of the operation will only be possible once the political and security situation in Iraq improves and the refugees can return home and/or when viable, legal livelihood opportunities can be pursued in Syria. Food assistance is therefore aimed at ensuring that refugees are able to meet their basic needs, pending a durable solution,
72. It is envisaged that government partnership in the Electronic Voucher System will enhance its capacity to adopt the voucher system for integration within national safety net programmes.

SECURITY CONSIDERATIONS

73. At present, the operation can be carried out without any significant security concerns as the entire country is under UN Security Phase 1. Regional and country office contingency plans are being updated and will provide guidance should the security situation deteriorate in any way. WFP Syria is fully Minimum Operating Security Standards (MOSS)-compliant under UN Security Phase 1 conditions.
74. Insecurity in some areas where the EVS operates may affect the supply and operation of EVS POS'. Contingency measures have been identified, including the use of mobile stores (of which GESMAAP has 62 units), other partners and/or provision of WFP in-kind food distribution.



RECOMMENDATION

75. The Executive Director and Director-General of FAO are requested to approve the proposed Emergency Operation Syria 200040.

APPROVAL

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Josette Sheeran
Executive Director

Date:

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Jacques Diouf
Director-General of FAO

Date:

ANNEX IA

WFP PROJECT COST BREAKDOWN

	Quantity (mt)	Average cost (US\$) per mt	Value (US\$)
COSTS			
A. Direct operational costs			
Cereals	16,408	511	8,384,495
Pulses	3,730	965	3,598,920
Oil and Fats	1,633	1,400	2,286,200
Canned meat	706	1,600	1,129,600
Sugar	1,109	705	781,845
Iodized salt	222	65	14,430
Voucher Transfer			5,682,400
Total commodities	23,808		21,877,890
External transport			3,329,384
Landside transport			
ITSH			
Total LTSH			1,727,861
Other direct operational costs			391,426
Total direct operational costs			27,326,561
B. Direct support costs (see Annex IB table below for details)			2,637,807
C. Indirect support costs (7 percent of total direct costs)			2,097,506
TOTAL WFP COSTS			32,061,874

ANNEX IB

DIRECT SUPPORT REQUIREMENTS (US\$)	
Staff and Staff Related Costs	
International Professional Staff	838,763
National Professional Officers	132,386
National General Service staff	484,148
Temporary assistance	164,067
Overtime	10,636
Hazard Pay & Hardship Allowance	-
International Consultants	13,500
Local Consultants	-
UNV	-
Commercial Consultancy Services	-
Staff duty travel	356,076
Subtotal	1,999,576
Recurring Expenses	
Rental of Facility	160,080
Utilities General	53,499
Office Supplies and Other Consumables	25,680
Communications and IT Services	74,901
Equipment Repair and Maintenance	3,210
Vehicle Running Cost and Maintenance	93,600
Office Set-up and Repairs	108,701
UN Organization Services	3,500
Subtotal	523,171
Equipment and Capital Costs	
Vehicle leasing	64,260
TC/IT Equipment	50,800
Local Security Costs	-
Subtotal	115,060
TOTAL DIRECT SUPPORT COSTS	2,637,807

ANNEX II - LOGICAL FRAMEWORK

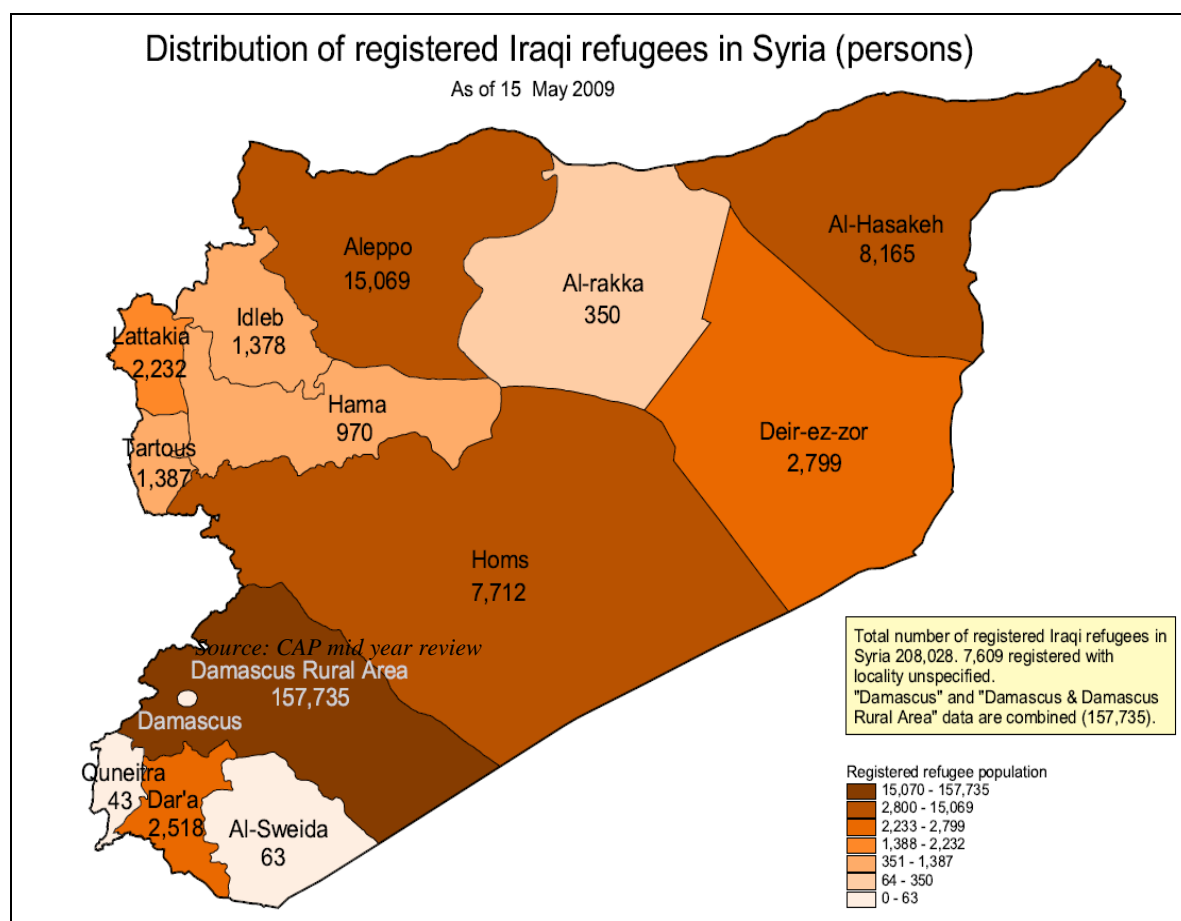
EMOP 200040 “ASSISTANCE TO IRAQI REFUGEES IN SYRIA”

RESULTS CHAIN (LOGIC MODEL)		PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	RISKS & ASSUMPTIONS
Strategic Objective 1: Save lives and protect livelihoods in emergencies			
1	<u>OUTCOME:</u> Improved food consumption	Household acceptable food consumption score (FCS) >74% Diversified and locally accepted commodities in the food basket	Timely availability of resources Continued interest and acceptance by beneficiaries of food basket and distribution modalities
1.1	<u>OUTPUTS:</u> Food distributed in sufficient quantity and quality	Level of beneficiary acceptability of food basket >50%	Acceptance of government and partners of voucher system Voucher commodities available at all times in GESMAAP POS, in good quality and at the fixed prices agreed upon
1.2	Adequate and timely food distribution in place	Planned and actual food distribution per cycle (mt) Amount of total actual voucher exchanged in each cycle vs. planned (SYP) Actual number of beneficiaries (by sex and age group) who received entitlements, as percentage of planned Time and number of actual distribution cycles vs. planned Percentage of the value of actually exchanged food items vs. total exchanged goods	
1.3	Electronic vouchers distribution in sufficient quantity and on time to targeted beneficiaries under secure conditions	Number of beneficiaries receiving EV as percentage of planned Total voucher amount and number distributed as percentage of planned Vouchers redeemed as percentage of total vouchers distributed per cycle Percentage of shops providing food of planned quantity, type and quality at agreed price	

2..2	OUTCOME: Reduced adoption of negative coping strategies by beneficiaries	Coping Strategy Index (CSI) decreased for 80% of households Diversified food items >3 Diversified cereals (other than rice) and pulses items Acceptable food consumption at household level (>74%) % of food resale vs. baseline (rice 42%, pulses 29% and oil 12%) Average Kcal consumed per person as percentage of 2,100 Kcal Number and size of meals per each food consumption group	
Strategic Objective 5: Strengthen the capacity of countries to reduce hunger, including through hand-over strategies and local purchase			
1.	OUTCOME: Improved Government counterparts' knowledge and capacity of voucher distribution procedures and reporting	Ability to run new voucher POS with trained staff and other resources	Continued Government interest in Voucher Transfer as part of a national safety net strategy
1.1	OUTPUT: Provision of capacity-building assistance to Government entities (SPC and GESMAAP) involved in food assistance and hunger reduction efforts	Type and quantity of WFP-provided equipment for communications, data processing and Internet connectivity (Each POS should be equipped with 1 computer and one printer and at least 2 GESMAAP staff trained on usage of computers, software applications and Voucher management at every POS) Number of designated POS vs. 10 planned Number of actual GESMAAP staff involved in EVS vs. 15 planned 100% Accuracy of financial and inventory reports produced 100% Accuracy of processed electronic invoices with WFP server report Capacity to expand 100% of planned and beyond operations in terms of numbers of beneficiaries, types of assistance and POS.	WFP to continue its support for a time-bound extended period allowing for gradual phasing down of its involvement. Continued GESMAAP interest in the EVS modality, making available POS and designated staff to meet current and expanded needs

1.2	<p><u>OUTPUT:</u> Strengthening partnerships with other entities: UNHCR verification of beneficiary refugees prior to each cycle and sharing electronic updated registration database with WFP</p>	<p>Regularly conducted registration updates/verification (number of verification codes issued per cycle (by sex and age)</p> <p>Distribution of non-food items along with food</p>	<p>Ability of UNHCR to conduct registration updates prior to each cycle.</p> <p>UNHCR continues to provide non-food and cash assistance alongside WFP food aid.</p>
1.3	<p><u>OUTPUT:</u> Developing and handing over software application used in the Electronic Voucher System</p>	<p>MOU with Government to hand over the Electronic Voucher system software, with the capacity to handle:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Large number of beneficiaries (15,000–50,000) - Large number of POS (>6 POS) - Large number of food basket items (>3 items) - Generation of relevant reports 	<p>WFP has ownership of the software application and is able to transfer its rights to the Government</p> <p>The software is reliable for current and potential use and needs</p>

ANNEX III - MAP: Distribution of Registered Iraqi Refugees in Syria



ANNEX IX: LIST OF ACRONYMS

RB	Regional Bureau
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund
DRC	Danish Refugee Council
ECHO	European Commission's Humanitarian Aid Office
EDP	Extended Delivery Point
EMOP	Emergency Operation
EVS	Electronic Voucher System
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization
FDP	Final Delivery/Distribution Point
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GESMAAP	General Establishment for Storing and Marketing of Agricultural and Animal Products
IFRC	International Federation of the Red Cross
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
IP	Implementing Partner
ITSH	Inland Transport, Storage and Handling
JAM	Joint Assessment Mission
LTSH	Logistics, Transport, Storage and Handling
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOH	Ministry of Health
MOSS	Minimum Operating Security Standards
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
POS	Point(s) of Sale
PRM	Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration
RAP	Response Analysis Project
SARC	Syrian Arab Red Crescent
SMS	Short Messaging Service
SPC	State Planning Commission
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDSS	United Nations Department for Safety and Security
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund

UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees
WH	Warehouse
WHO	World Health Organisation