

Afghanistan

mVAM Methodology



WFP Afghanistan conducts mobile (mVAM) surveys at three different levels:

- **Community level**, mostly for emergency and rapid market assessments where key informants such as traders, tribal elders, and community development council leaders provide information to mVAM operators in the Country Office.
- **Household level**, mostly focused on Post Distribution Monitoring (PDMs) from WFP beneficiaries, and
- **Individual level**, collecting dietary diversity data from women participating in WFP-supported nutrition programmes.

Community level (key informant) assessments:

WFP Afghanistan conducts different types of key informant assessments such as emergency assessments in the areas with limited or no access, market assessments, assessments of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and returnees and its impact on markets, locust infestation assessments, and refugees' assessments. Below are details for each type of key informant assessment.

Emergency assessments

WFP conducts mVAM emergency assessment in areas with no or very limited physical access. The information and questions included in this assessment are mainly related to the impact of insecurity on markets, displacement, availability of casual labour, and supply of food commodities to the markets. A total of 5-10 interviews are conducted per district with key informants. The number of interviews also depends on the availability of mobile contacts for key informants.

Market assessments

WFP conducts mobile markets assessments in areas that are not accessible, areas of concern, areas with lack of market information, and areas of interest where WFP and other humanitarian agencies are planning to provide cash interventions. The market assessment is focused in collecting information about food prices, supply and market feasibility, and functionality-related information, which are important to understand if a market is feasible for CBT interventions or not. A total of 5-10 interviews are conducted per market with traders.

Assessment of IDPs and returnees and its impact on markets

Thousands of Afghans are returning from Pakistan and Iran to Afghanistan, and these returning

Afghans are setting in different locations of the country, mainly in the eastern region. In Afghanistan, the number of IDPs is also significant, and both of the mentioned types (IDPs and returnees) need some type of humanitarian assistance. To better understand the food security and livelihood situation of returnees and IDPs, WFP conducts mobile assessments to understand their food security situation, their priority needs, and their impact on food prices and demand. A total of 5-10 interviews are conducted per district, with key informants including the community development councils, elders, etc.

Refugee assessments

Mobile assessments are also conducted in areas with high numbers of Pakistani refugees. These surveys aim to understand the food security situation, income sources, and priority needs of the refugee households. As humanitarian agencies are lacking up-to-date information on refugees, one of the objectives of this assessment was to provide such updates. A total of 5-10 key informant interviews were conducted per district.

Locust infestation assessment

WFP Afghanistan was involved in the locust infestation assessment in the past year (2016), for which the information was collected through face-to-face interviews. This year (2017), a similar assessment is planned in order to get a snapshot of the locust infestation and its impact on crops. A total of 5-10 interviews are conducted with farmers for the locust assessment.

Household level data collection:

The pilot and first round of the household level Post-Distribution Monitoring data collection started in the month of May 2017 in one district (Jalalabad) of Nangarhar Province, which is covered under EMOP. A total of 58 interviews were conducted with both men and women-headed households, and the report was finalized and published in early June 2017. The PDM questionnaire was improved and revised based on the experience from Jalalabad, and the revised questionnaire was used to collect PDM information in two other districts (Batakot and Rodat) of Nangarhar Province. A total of 80 interviews were conducted in the two mentioned districts from which 30 interviews were with women-headed households and 50 were with male-headed households.

The sample size depends on the number of beneficiaries with mobile phones and accurate contacts. The households are randomly selected from a long list and are contacted for the interviews.

The household-level PDM questionnaire includes questions related to the Food Consumption Score (FCS), household expenditure, household income sources, demographic information, etc. Also, some protection information that can be found in the PDM questionnaire.

Individual-level data collection:

The pilot and first round of the data collection started on October 2017 in four provinces (Herat, Kandahar, Khost and Nangarhar) where nutrition programmes are being implemented. A total of 134 phone interviews were conducted with women of reproductive age (15 - 49 years) receiving nutrition assistance from WFP.

Given the lack of mobile access among women in rural Afghanistan, the mVAM team collected the mobile phone numbers of staff members at eight health centres where WFP already provides nutrition assistance. The mVAM female operators in the Country Office called the staff at the clinics during weekly distribution times, so staff could pass their mobile phones to the women visiting the centres, allowing operators to interview them on Minimum Dietary Diversity for Women (MDD-W) tool, along with other questions on the Targeted Supplementary Feeding Programme (TSFP) activity implementation.

The next step is to scale up the collection of MDD-W indicator using this method on a regular basis, expanding to other provinces where WFP is providing nutrition assistance, and interviewing a larger number of women. In order to facilitate the data collection, WFP will be distributing mobile phones to relevant staff at the health clinics, specifically for the purpose of collecting nutrition data from women.

Minimum Dietary Diversity - Women (MDD-W)

MDD-W is a dichotomous indicator of whether or not women 15 - 49 years of age have consumed at least five out of ten defined food groups the previous day or night. The proportion of women 15 -49 years of age who reach this minimum in a population can be used as a proxy indicator for higher micronutrient adequacy, an important dimension of diet quality. (www.fao.org/3/a-i5486e.pdf)

The Food Consumption Score (FCS):

The Food Consumption score (FCS) is a composite score based on dietary diversity, food frequency, and relative nutritional importance of different food groups. The information is collected from a country-specific list of food groups. The FCS is collected using the frequency of consumption (in days) over a recall period of the past 7 days multiplied by an assigned weight that is based on its nutrient content. Those values are then summed, obtaining the FCS, which then classifies a household as having 'poor', 'borderline' or 'acceptable' food consumption. The FCS results in Afghanistan are calculated using the universal adjusted set of thresholds (poor \leq 28, 28<borderline \leq 42, acceptable $>$ 42).

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