

## Notes on methodology and data cleaning –mVAM surveys in Syria

### Household survey

The household data presented in the Syria mVAM bulletins has been collected monthly since March 2016 through live telephone interviews conducted by a call centre located outside the country. Call interviews covered all mobile service providers, and telephone numbers were generated using the random-digit dialing (RDD) method.

The questionnaire was comprised of questions on socio-demographic, food consumption, food sources, coping behaviors, assistance, and perceptions of food security.

Responses are likely to be biased towards younger, somewhat better-off households who live in urban areas and have better access to electricity and phone-charging services. As per standard survey procedures, respondents' consent was obtained prior to the interviews. For security and safety measures all respondents were identified with an anonymous ID. Questions were asked in Arabic.

### Key informants survey

WFP is monitoring household food access and market information in besieged and hard-to-reach areas in Syria. Market data is remotely collected by WFP through telephone interviews to key informants. The questionnaire asks questions about market conditions including availability, prices, activity levels, and challenges.

When interpreting results, readers are cautioned to note that sampling was purposive (limited by security conditions) and is not representative. Readers are also cautioned against extrapolating information from small sample sizes.

### Food Consumption Score (FCS)

The food consumption score (FCS) is a proxy indicator for food security that measures the diversity of household diets and how frequently food is consumed. The FCS is calculated using the frequency of consumption of eight food groups by a household during the 7 days before the survey using standardized weights for each of the food groups reflecting its respective nutrient density, and then classifies households as having 'poor', 'borderline' or 'acceptable' food consumption. For more details on the food group composition, weighted values and FCS thresholds, please see the [Food consumption Analysis Technical Guidance Sheet](#).

The FCS results in Syria are calculated using a universal adjusted set of thresholds taking into consideration the high consumption of oil and sugar in the country (see table 1). In May 2017, the food consumption score nutrition (FCS-N) has been introduced to provide information on the main macro-nutrient (carbohydrates, fat, protein) and micronutrient (vitamins and minerals) adequacy.

For more details on the food group composition, weighted values and FCS thresholds, please see the [Food Consumption Score Nutritional Quality Analysis \(FCS-N\)](#).

**Table 1: Food consumption groups and corresponding FCS thresholds**

Food consumption group	FCS thresholds
Poor	$\leq 28$
Borderline	$> 28$ and $\leq 42$
Acceptable	$> 42$

### **Reduced Coping Strategies Index (rCSI)**

The reduced Coping Strategies Index (rCSI) measures the frequency and severity of the behaviours households engage in when faced with shortages of food or financial resources to buy food. It assesses whether there has been a change in the consumption patterns of a given household.

The rCSI is calculated using standard food consumption-based strategies and severity weighting. A higher score indicates that households are employing more frequent and/or extreme negative coping strategies. For the purpose of these bulletins, mVAM calculates the mean rCSI of households.

For more details on the types of coping strategies considered and their respective severity weighting, please see the [Coping Strategies Index Field Methods Manual](#).

### **Livelihood coping strategies**

Livelihood coping strategies measure is a descriptor of a household's coping capacity. Households are categorized based on the severity of livelihood coping strategies employed. Three questions on the most frequently used coping strategies have been included in the questionnaire.

### **Weighting Methodology**

The data was weighted by the number of mobile phones owned by the household.

### **Sampling**

A panel of approximately 2,000 respondents in 18 different strata is currently contacted on a monthly basis, each corresponding to a different geographic area of interest within Syria.

From March 2016 to April 2017, the panel of respondents was stratified in 9 different geographic strata. In May 2017, the geographic strata changed to provide better representation in affected areas. *Considering the unstable situation in the country and the constraints that may arise, the total sample size may differ from 2,000 completes from month to month.*

**Table 2: mVAM target sample size in Syria (starting from May 2017)**

<b>Aggregation</b>	<b>Sample size</b>
Aleppo	200
As-Sweida	100
Damascus	200
Dar'a	100
Hama	100
Homs	100
Rural Damascus	100
Lattakia	100
Tartous	100
Al-Hasakeh HTR	100
Aleppo HTR	100
Idleb HTR	100
Deir-ez-Zor/Raqqa	100
Homs and Hama HTR	100
Damascus/Rural Dam BSG	100
Rural Dam HTR	100
Dar'a HTR	100
Quneitra	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>2000</b>