

DISTRIBUTION OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE/TOOLKIT: 6. Beneficiary selection, verification, and registration

Overview

Staff working on assessment, beneficiary selection/verification/validation

Field staff working on assessment, beneficiary selection, verification, and validation should have strong communication skills, as well as a clear understanding of the humanitarian principles to enable a dialogue with communities and avoid potential tensions and conflicts within communities. These staff should receive PSEA training and work closely with the Protection team to identify possible protection concerns within the community.

Read more about staff induction and trainings in [Build a distribution team](#) entry.

How to communicate with beneficiaries

When approaching a community or an individual, communicate clearly:

- **Who you are** (present ID) and the purpose of the visit
- **Who the organization you work for is**, and what they do
- When relevant: **why you are speaking to men and women separately** or setting up focus group discussions

Consider the following points when conducting interviews or focus group discussions:

- People/groups are consulted separately based on their gender, ethnicity, and religion. Whenever possible, assign staff who can communicate in a way that they would feel comfortable, for example, include female staff for interviewing female groups
- Seek out the perspectives of people with a range of different impairments
- Make sure people from marginalized groups participate

Explain the distribution programme whenever possible:

- Who will be receiving assistance and why, and what criteria will be used in the selection process
- What assistance they will receive, and if there will be additional rounds of distribution(s)
- What they need to bring with them to the distribution

Key considerations for beneficiary selection, verification, and validation

- Factors such as scale of damage, number of affected populations, and available resources will determine if distributions provide blanket or targeted coverage. **Blanket coverage** refers to the delivery the assistance to all households in a selected affected community – often used at the onset of a crisis. **Targeted coverage** refers to the delivery of assistance only to a select group, e.g. the most vulnerable households.
- Based on the number of families that can be reached with the available resources, IOM defines its target groups and areas of intervention and develops the [beneficiary selection criteria/Vulnerability index](#) to address needs of most vulnerable affected populations.
- When planning a targeted distribution, a system to select beneficiaries will enhance effectiveness and promote an equitable and impartial response. Beneficiary selection can be sensitive and can result in creating tensions within the community, so it is important that it is transparent and clearly communicated.
- The selection of beneficiaries requires close coordination with local authorities and should reflect the guidance and recommendations provided by relevant clusters/sector/working group namely Shelter, CCCM, Protection, Cash Working Group, etc.
- Lack of official documentation is one of the biggest protection issues that may occur during beneficiary selection/registration. When necessary, work with the protection team and coordinate with the Protection Cluster to resolve the issues. If documentation is required, provide several options depending on the context, e.g. photo ID (passport, military ID, drivers 'license, etc.), birth certificate, family book, etc.

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- Average family size and composition of the families may vary. Based on the specific needs assessed, consider allocating additional items. For example, in a context where a standard kit is designed for households with five family members, for beneficiaries with more than seven family members, 2 x NFI kits or 2 x tents can be distributed.
- To avoid inequalities and tensions, above variations should be explained to **ALL** beneficiaries before the distribution. On the other hand, **DO NOT exclude** families with less than five family members.

Resources	File Format	Language
<p>Sample Vulnerability index</p> <p>NOTE: This document include most commonly used vulnerability indicators, and the format enables scoring vulnerability of each beneficiary household. Modify the indicators and the scoring weight based on actual programme context. (Modified from the document developed by IOM Philippines in 2016)</p>	Word	EN
<p>Beneficiary Registration - Verification Form</p> <p>NOTE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This tool can be used to register the beneficiaries into IOM database. Collected data should be verified according to the eligibility criteria and/or beneficiary selection criteria. Modify the questionnaires as per actual contexts and requirement for the programme. • Same sets of questionnaires are available in EXCEL (human readable excel sheet) and KOBO XLSForm (can be directly imported to and edited by KOBO form designer). <p>(Modified from documents developed in IOM Afghanistan in 2023, IOM Argentina, IOM Ethiopia, IOM Guyana, IOM Trinidad and Tobago, and IOM Yemen)</p>	<p>Excel</p> <p>KOBO XLSForm</p>	EN

Data protection

Be aware that any personal Identifiable Information collected can be sensitive. If it falls into the wrong hands, it can threaten the safety of those that you aim to assist. Training on data protection for staff and data protection clauses should be in the contracts of any service provider and there should be measures in place to limit the access to data.

Collect as little data as necessary and make sure that any data collected is necessary, useful and used only for its intended purpose.

Resources	File Format	Language
IOM data protection principal	PDF	EN
IOM Data Protection Manual	PDF	EN/FR/Armenian

Accessing KOBO

The IOM Enterprise Kobo can be accessed via:

- <https://kf.kobo.iom.int> for the Form designer and project management
- <https://kc.kobo.iom.int> for the mobile data collection (Android only - download the KoboCollect app from Google Play)
- <https://ee.kobo.iom.int> for web-based data collection (including iOS tablets and phones).

You can refer to the [Kobo user guide](#) for a more detailed “how-to” guide.

For assistance on account creation or validation of KOBO Forms, contact DTM coordinator in country or contact:

dtmsupportservices@iom.int

Standard procedure for beneficiary selection and verification

Below steps are examples of the beneficiary selection process, and need to be adapted to the context before deploying the team to the field.

Step 1. Identify target areas of intervention

- Establish clear selection criteria for geographical target areas based on the need assessment, Shelter/NFI Cluster's data/gap analysis, DTM data, and other field reports. It is at this stage that the biggest errors in targeting are often made.
- Coordinate with local authorities, the Shelter/NFI Cluster, and humanitarian agencies active in the target areas to avoid duplications and address eventual gaps.

Step 2. Clarify beneficiary selection criteria

Beneficiary selection should be based and conducted applying a [selection criteria/vulnerability index](#). Where possible and appropriate, communicate with the target community to clarify the selection criteria considering following points:

- Hold **focus group discussions** to explain the beneficiary selection criteria and the type of assistance to be distributed. **The selection criteria may vary in each community**. Modify the selection criteria based on the type of vulnerabilities in the target community
- When distributing with blanket approach or to population on the move/in transit, **eligibility criteria** can be used instead of selection criteria. Eligibility criteria can include **status criteria** such as whether the family is new arrival, if received NFI assistance previously or not, shelter damage conditions, migration status, and socioeconomic vulnerabilities
- **Use different media** (posters, radios, etc.), ensure that all community members have the information, including people with disabilities and people from other marginalized groups.
- Provide information on where beneficiaries can report if they have any **complaints or feedbacks** on the selection criteria and the process

Step 3. Compile an initial list of beneficiaries

- Introduce the programme, including:
 - Objectives and activities
 - Contents of items, type of assistance
 - Number of target beneficiaries
 - A detailed process of selecting beneficiaries
- Explain the beneficiary selection criteria, clarify the roles and responsibilities of both IOM and the local authorities in the selection/verification process.
- Register affected populations in the database by using the [Beneficiary Registration - Verification Form](#). In some contexts, beneficiaries' lists are provided by the local authorities, community representatives, or camp managers. Depending on the context, IOM should conduct verification of each or a sample of beneficiaries according to the final list to ensure the set vulnerability criteria are followed.
- A list received from the complaints and feedback mechanisms can be reached, verified and added to the initial list, if appropriate.
- Based on field observations, supplemental lists can be collected from local organizations, societies, or charities that support the most vulnerable people such as orphans or widows.
- If there are more beneficiaries than the project allows, follow vulnerability scoring and severity scales to select beneficiaries.
- Combine all these lists and produce an initial beneficiary list.

Step 4. Verify the initial list

- The beneficiaries list should be verified against the selection criteria before being finalized. When feasible it is recommended to form a beneficiary selection committee with members from local authorities, camp management, community leaders, and IOM staff. Ensure that the assistance is free and will not promote political gain.
- Register verified families in the updated list.

Step 5. Field validation

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- House-to-house assessment: Field teams assess the households on the updated beneficiary list and validate if the vulnerabilities of the households including damage level of their houses fulfill the selection criteria.
- Field validation may not require assessing 100% of the list but rather **only a sample of the list** (work with your information management teams to determine the most relevant sampling methodology).
- In a case where the verification exercise identified a certain percentage (such as 10%) of the households as invalid, the selection itself should be questioned. The next step is to either verify all the HH in the list or the field team should re-select beneficiaries.
- When interviewing the households, respondents must sign a household consent / confidentiality clause.

Step 6. Finalize and share the beneficiary list with complaints and feedback mechanisms

- Draft the final beneficiary list, ensuring that the number of beneficiaries matches the total amount of kits that were agreed to distribute in each location, and share it with the local authorities and/or community leaders.
- In contexts where displacements are protracted and IDP movements are very frequent, leading to many cases where a verified HH is not present during a distribution. Prepare an additional “waiting list” of beneficiaries that could take their place.
- Hanging the beneficiary list in a public venue may make the beneficiaries feel humiliated. Consult with the community on whether the final list should be posted in public. If it is agreed that it should not be posted publicly, make sure that the complaints and feedback mechanisms are in place and shared as to keep accountability for the selection process.
- Discuss received feedback if it is relevant, and reflect on the final beneficiary list.
- Issue the final beneficiary list signed by relevant stakeholders, including the implementing organization staff who is accountable for validation.

Links

- [IOM data protection principal](#)
- [IOM Data Protection Manual](#)
- [KOBO SOP](#)
- [IOM KOBO for the Form designer and Project Management](#)

References and Tools

- [Sample Vulnerability index](#)
- [Beneficiary Registration - Verification Form](#)
- [Beneficiaries Registration - Verification Form_XLSForm](#)

Contacts

For more information, please contact the Shelter and Settlements Unit in Geneva: ShelterSupport@iom.int.

Please also find the contact information to the IOM Shelter Reference Group: ShelterReferenceGroup@iom.int.

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