



Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, 23rd November 2021

Regional Agency for Agriculture and Food

Page 1/2

#Press Release No8#

Targeting Beneficiaries for Social safety Nets for Food and Nutrition in West Africa

Social safety nets are non-contributory transfer programs that target poor or vulnerable populations. Such programs target populations who cannot meet their basic needs or who are at risk of falling into poverty due to a combination of exogenous shocks or socioeconomic problems such as age, illness, or disability. With the complexity of food and nutrition crises heightened by civil and health insecurity, inequalities persist, vulnerable groups are growing, and targeting the most vulnerable households is therefore increasingly difficult in a context where demand far exceeds supply.

1. ECOWAS Response and Leadership

As part of its program to support national social safety nets, through the implementation of 19 pilot projects in Member States, the ECOWAS Commission, with a 5 million euro grant from the Spanish Cooperation, has experimented over the past six years selection methods to better target very poor households, with special attention to women and children.

Specifically, these are pregnant and breastfeeding women, children suffering from acute or severe malnutrition, internally displaced persons, and children affected by emerging diseases. To these groups should be added the elderly, small-scale producers without access to markets, schoolchildren, people with disabilities, livestock breeders' and agropastoral households in a deficit situation, and young people.

2. Lessons Learned

Four lessons learned emerged from the experimentation of the various targeting methods.

- One: the choice of beneficiaries depends on context, budget, and technical capacity,
- Two: a combination of selection approaches and control mechanisms can reduce exclusion and inclusion errors,
- Three: involving community leaders, local authorities, and national deconcentrated services in the selection process of beneficiaries facilitates ownership of targeting and data collection at the national level,
- Four: efforts to harmonize targeting methods at the national level must be encouraged and continued.

3. Way Forward

The reliability and relevance of beneficiary selection methods at both national and regional levels is a MUST for achieving the objectives of social safety nets.



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Page 2/2

The ECOWAS Commission will continue to promote consensual methods for the selection of beneficiaries on the one hand, and to encourage the implementation of innovative approaches to adapt to the pastoral realities of the Sahel's fragile zones on the other hand.

In this context, the Spanish cooperation wishes to continue its collaboration with ECOWAS in supporting the most vulnerable households in West Africa. Other technical and financial partners are also called upon.

As a reminder and for information purposes, here is the link to the video on targeting beneficiaries:
<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1bF3EevBMpMLyyvjs7DHR91LV8hgv-9wB>

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