**Types of Monitoring**

1. Monitoring the actual **distribution process** is important to verify recipient eligibility and ensure recipients are receiving the planned quantity and quality of commodity (their entitlement or ration). Using a standardized questionnaire (such as the TOOL: *On-Site Distribution Monitoring Questionnaire Template*) at each selected distribution site, food monitors:

* Visually inspect commodity quantity and quality, the site itself, the distribution equipment, and the distribution activities.
* Weigh a sample of the commodity bags/tins received at site.
* Weigh a sample of the distributed commodity rations.
* Conduct exit interviews as recipients leave the site. These interviews focus on whether recipients received what they expected.

1. Distribution **site storage** monitoring assesses the adequacy of storage facilities, inventory management, and recordkeeping. It may be conducted concurrently with the distribution process monitoring, or as a separate activity. The TOOL: *Distribution Site Storage Monitoring Questionnaire Template* illustrates the recommended content of this monitoring activity.
2. The purpose of **post-distribution** monitoring (PDM) is to verify that the correct recipients received the correct rations, and all eligible recipients can get (access) their rations. This form of monitoring can also capture more detailed feedback on the use, storage, preparation, and appropriateness of commodities distributed. (Data on the impact of the distribution on recipients’ lives or livelihoods should be obtained through normal program monitoring activities.) PDM should take place within two weeks after a distribution. PDM is generally conducted via a recipient household survey, preferably following a pre-determined questionnaire (such as the TOOL: *Post-Distribution Monitoring Questionnaire Template*).

**Minimum Components of All Distribution Monitoring Systems**

1. A documented **method of objectively selecting a particular distribution site or recipient** for monitoring. Discuss with USAID the desired method of sampling (or how to determine which sites to monitor at a specific point in time) and the required confidence level for selecting sample sizes. If you do not have adequate resources to monitor the sample size required to ensure a specific confidence level, negotiate (and document) a lower confidence level. Priority may be assigned to, for example, sites with large numbers of recipients or sites where significant issues have been previously noted.

|  |
| --- |
| For a complete discussion on determining sample size requirements, selecting the sample, and analyzing the data, refer to ***A Practical Guide to Sampling***, available at <http://www.fsnnetwork.org/sites/default/files/samplingguide.pdf> or  Module 3, Session 4: Statistical Concepts and Data Analysis in the ***Monitoring and Evaluation Facilitator’s Guide***, available at<http://www.fsnnetwork.org/monitoring-and-evaluation-facilitators-guide> |
| A “good enough” random sample size is 20 percent of households for distributions smaller than 200 households; 10 percent for distributions of 200-750 households; and 5 percent for distributions greater than 750 households. The sample size should be larger than “good enough” if the population is more diverse than usual, or the actual quantities distributed varied from those approved or planned. |

1. **Monthly monitoring plans** detailing resources (people and time) and coverage (specific sites, recipients, or, if applicable, site storage facilities)
2. **Standardized formats** to capture and report all necessary information (e.g., *Post-Distribution Monitoring Questionnaire Template*)
3. A **system to track which locations have been monitored**, and to ensure completeness of monitoring coverage
4. **Information technology** to use in capturing and processing data
5. Specific **procedures on how the monitoring data will be analyzed, interpreted, and used**. Remember, the overall goal of monitoring is to enable management to take necessary and timely action to ensure eligible recipients receive their intended commodity rations.
6. Supervisory or **independent re-performance of monitoring**, such as re-performing calculations in the distribution site reports, or re-interviewing recipients and confirming their responses.
7. **Review of recipient feedback and complaints** and steps taken to address them
8. Documented food distribution **monitoring information flow** that details who is responsible for each of the activities illustrated below

**Pointers on involving all stakeholders in the process:**

* Develop simple monitoring report formats adapted to the local context to provide concise summaries of key conclusions.
* Allow stakeholders to make recommendations–or raise objections, if reported information is not accurate.
* Use local media and community structures to disseminate relevant information to recipients (including illiterate audiences).
* Give regular updates, and take a sensitive approach that encourages people to ask questions and speak out.

**Food Monitors**

The primary role of a food monitor is to verify compliance with the Awardee and FFP program requirements and accountability standards.

1. To ensure segregation of duties, food monitors must **not** be the same staff responsible for selecting or registering recipients, or for managing or supervising the receipt, storage, or dispatch of commodity. Food monitoring should be a part of the program M & E Unit (or equivalent).
2. Assign food monitors to particular regions or sets of distribution sites, yet **periodically rotate monitor assignments** across regions or sites. This will reduce the potential for corruption.
3. Both male and female food monitors should be available to ensure that interviews are conducted by members of the same sex as recipients, if appropriate.
4. Ensure food monitors are trained in:

* Principles of internal control
* Basic inventory accounting
* Community-level store management practices
* Physical counts of inventory
* Recipient registration procedures
* Methods of detecting risk and theft
* Sampling of commodity to assess quality
* Sampling of documentation for review
* Commodity distribution procedures, such as scooping and weighing
* Reporting procedures