

Kerosene for Cooking and Heating in Iraq Shelter & NFI Cluster Position Paper Revision based on the current COVID19 pandemic (v8)

October, 2020



As the cold season is approaching in Iraq, humanitarian actors are extremely concerned about the potential increase in respiratory diseases, and especially in COVID 19 whose symptoms are very similar to those of the seasonal flu.

COVID-19 has also posed additional risks of social isolation, stigma and exacerbated economic vulnerabilities: the continuous restrictions imposed during the COVID-19 pandemic had resulted in job loss and forced households to sell items and/or spiral further into negative coping

mechanisms and debt. This exacerbated pre-existing housing challenges, which have particularly affected people who could not afford adequate living conditions and are expected to “stay at home”. Adequate kerosene provision for heating can provide better conditions, helping to keep away flu like infections.

Without adequate housing, it is impossible to carry out physical distancing, proper health-related living practices (such as enhance ventilation and maintain thermal comfort) and safely take care of those who must quarantine and/or isolate. This is even more important for those individuals who are at heightened risk of severe symptoms of COVID 19, particularly older persons, including persons with chronic, cardiovascular and lung diseases, cancer. Thus kerosene for cooking and heating during the winter period is a crucial “life saving” support to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

This paper presents the position of the Shelter Cluster regarding the provision of kerosene for cooking and heating for People in Need¹ in Iraq. It has not changed compared to previous years, but during the current pandemic it is become even more urgent to ensure vulnerable people will not be exposed to further health risks due to poor living conditions.

REQUIREMENTS FOR KEROSENE

Winter in Iraq is harsh, and temperatures can often drop below zero at the higher altitudes. During winter a family of 6 requires an average of 100 litres per month² for cooking and heating, compared to 40 litres per month for the remaining eight months of the year.

Spring, Summer & Autumn								Winter				Total
MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	
320 litres								400 litres				720 litres

¹ Definition of People in Needs, as per HRP 2020.

² Based upon a heater with fuel consumption of 0.25L/hr, 8 hours per day and 30 days per month.

GOVERNMENT POSITION

Since 1996, the Government of Iraq (GoI) has provided subsidised kerosene through coupons issued by the Ministry of Oil and linked to the Public Distribution System (PDS). Each coupon allowed the recipient (family) to collect 50L per month of kerosene at discounted rate³. Since 2014, the GoI has committed to providing kerosene to people in need, based upon notes from the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Iraq - Higher Committee for Relief and Sheltering IDPs in Geneva on the 15th December 2016 and from the General Secretariat for the Council of Ministers on the 12th November 2017. The distribution system, especially during winter, has become strained, resulting in variable volumes per family at Governorate level, distribution points difficult to access due to distance and limitations on the number of trucks allocated to distributions. In support of the GoI response, the UN and NGO partners identified and filled gaps until the 2017/18 winter, when responsibility for distribution was handed back to the GoI through the Kerosene Position Paper v4 issued by the Cluster, after consultation within the humanitarian community.

SHELTER CLUSTER POSITION

The Cluster supports the position of the GoI in highlighting the importance of kerosene supply throughout the year, especially during winter. The responsibility of supply remains with the GoI, allowing the humanitarian community to support other, non-kerosene based, complementary interventions for highly vulnerable families in and out of camp. The following strategy, led by the Cluster, and agreed by the humanitarian community, is proposed to support the GoI and People in Need:

1. Working with all branches and levels of the GoI to support equitable distribution through the analysis of data, forecasting of need, creation of distribution plans and the identification of barriers and gaps. The objective remains for the GoI to share with humanitarian partners a distribution plan meeting the needs of all groups before the start of winter in November of each year.
2. Together with donors, the UN and NGOs, the Cluster will advocate that the GoI meets its commitments for an equitable distribution of kerosene to all families in need. Additionally, the Cluster supports the Protection Cluster and local authorities to ensure families who lack documentation (such as PDS cards) are still able to access kerosene distributions.
3. This position paper applies to provision of kerosene at the household level by the humanitarian community. Other sectors may elect to pursue a different advocacy position on kerosene use.

ADDITIONAL NOTES

Through the [Climatisation Guidance Iraq v7.1](#) the Cluster provides information on assistance in advance of winter. As related to kerosene the following additional notes are made:

1. In advance of winter, the Cluster will prepare a national winter needs analysis and advocate with donors for funding. The Cluster will prioritise filling critical gaps through the provision of minimum standard shelter and NFI, including heaters and fuel storage.

³ Also reiterated by the Ministry of Oil [on 16.01.2019](#) (Ar)

2. The GoI remains responsible for complementing such assistance with the distribution of recommended volumes of kerosene and further NFI.
3. In support of the CCCM Cluster and Civil Defence, the Cluster will promote fire prevention activities including the installation and maintenance of physical measures and training.
4. In the case of a family being displaced and remaining in displacement during winter, the provision of storage capacity at household level through the distribution of an empty 200L barrel or equivalent number of jerry cans, can be important to ensure the ability of the family to receive kerosene.