



**REGIONAL ROADMAP  
FOR CASH AND  
VOUCHER ASSISTANCE  
LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**

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**Regional roadmap for cash and voucher assistance**

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## Acronyms and abbreviations

**ARO:** Americas Regional Office

**CPWG:** Cash Peer Working Group

**CVA:** Cash and Voucher Assistance

**DDR:** Disaster Risk Reduction

**IFRC:** International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

**NS:** National Societies

## Acknowledgements

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## Executive summary

Since 2016, the Americas Regional Office of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) has been working hard to provide procedures and tools to enable National Societies to achieve preparedness, in a harmonized and coherent way, so as to effectively respond to disasters and crises in the region, contributing to the global response system. Cash and voucher assistance (CVA) have become increasingly relevant in emergency response given its flexibility in terms of cash transfer mechanisms and modalities that empower affected communities, giving them decision-making power in their recovery and increasing the cost-efficiency of our operations.

The purpose of this Roadmap is to establish priorities and targets for 2021 to enable National Societies in the Americas to become preferred local partners for implementation of CVA.

To ensure that the Roadmap fulfils this purpose, a consultation and analysis

process was carried out with the disaster risk management, livelihoods and CVA technical focal points from ten National Societies in the Americas. In addition, secondary data regarding CVA from existing documentation at the Movement level was consulted to ensure alignment and coherence with global frameworks. Finally, personnel from other technical sector leads at the IFRC Americas Regional Office units and programmatic areas were involved.

The Roadmap complements objectives contained in IFRC's Cash Transfer Programming Strategic Framework and the Global Roadmap towards Increased and Improved Cash Transfer Programming.

It is also aligned with the Buenos Aires Commitment that accompanies the 2023 Red Cross Inter-American Framework for Action, which includes emerging trends and issues that will affect and influence the work of National Societies in the region in coming years and is consistent with the IFRC's 2030 Strategy.





Vulnerability to natural phenomena, the effects of climate change, significant increase in migration, rapidly increasing urbanization processes than in other regions of the world, a context of widespread violence and insecurity, along with new needs created by the trend towards an aging population and new technologies that quickly alter the fabric of societies require adapting to the new employment dynamics, challenges and trends facing the region.

National Societies in the Americas face these challenges and respond to their impacts through their emergency programmes and operations. In recent years, these have increasingly included CVA as a multi-sector response tool because of its cost-efficiency and flexibility, empowering those affected by disasters or crises, promoting their dignity, recovering their livelihoods and boosting recovery of local economies in affected communities.

Aiming to identify opportunities and synergies to make National Societies more and better prepared to achieve the aforementioned purpose, the Roadmap establishes a number of milestones and action points and actions to be implemented by 2021, focusing on four regional priorities:

**Priority 1.** Internal/external awareness for the appropriation of cash and voucher assistance in the strategic and operational planning of National Societies.

**Priority 2.** National Society institutional preparedness for CVA implementation.

**Priority 3.** Coordination, partnerships and networks to ensure complementarity and information-sharing.

**Priority 4.** Visibility and reporting for systematization of results and impact measurement, efficiently and transparently.

# Introduction

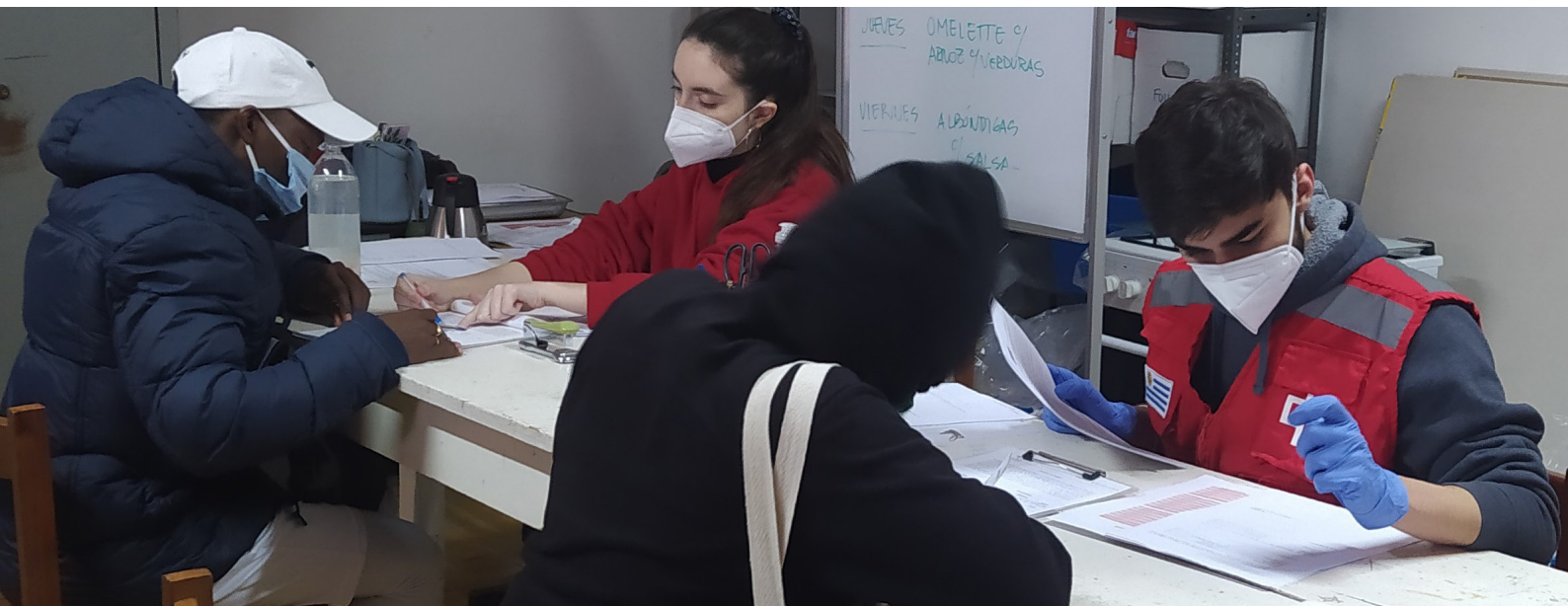
Since 2016, the Americas Regional Office (ARO) has been working hard to provide procedures and tools to enable National Societies to achieve preparedness, in a harmonized and coherent way, so as to effectively respond to disasters and crises in the region, contributing to the global response system. CVA has become increasingly relevant in emergency response given its flexibility in terms of cash transfer mechanisms and modalities that empower affected communities, giving them decision-making power during their recovery and increasing the cost-efficiency of our operations.

The following regional roadmap stems from and is informed by a consultation and analysis process carried out with the disaster risk management, livelihoods and CVA technical focal points from ten National Societies in the Americas; secondary data regarding CVA drawn from existing documentation at the Movement level, ensuring alignment with global frameworks; and interviews with and

advice from staff from other ARO units and programmatic areas.

The purpose of this Roadmap is **to establish priorities and targets for 2021 to enable National Societies in the Americas to become preferred local partners for the implementation of CVA.** For ARO, this Roadmap is a means to identify opportunities and synergies for National Societies to be more and better prepared to achieve the aforementioned purpose.

Given that CVA is an effective and flexible way of providing assistance to those affected by disasters or crises, as it promotes their dignity while boosting local economies in communities, in recent decades the humanitarian environment has been moving towards and increasingly using cash transfer in emergencies as a multi-sector response tool, as well as a strategy to recover beneficiaries' livelihoods and facilitate their transition to an early recovery.





## Regional context

America is a culturally diverse, geographically extensive and socially and economically complex continent covering an area of more than 43,316,000 km<sup>2</sup> and home to around 12 per cent of the world's population. The Movement's presence in the continent is based on 35 National Societies with more than 519,700 volunteers. Issues like income distribution inequality, migration, morbidity and disability by chronic or non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and different contexts of vulnerability should be highlighted in regional context.

The region's vulnerability to climate change is one of the factors driving migration. According to a World Bank report, by 2050 more than 140 million people in Africa, the southern Sahara, South Asia and Latin America may be forced to move within their countries to escape the slow onset impacts of climate change<sup>1</sup>. **Migration** has been a constant throughout the region's history,

currently housing some 68 million migrants - almost 30 per cent of international migration worldwide.

Population growth in urban areas, the trend towards an aging population and new technologies quickly alter the fabric of societies and create new needs that require an adaptation to **employment** dynamics. The **future of jobs** will require new types of learning, social programmes, and services in all countries regardless of their level of development<sup>2</sup>.

National Societies in the Americas are faced with these challenges. More than 100 operations have been carried out in the region in the last five years, of which at least 43 have required livelihoods-related actions and 23 have implemented CVA programs to meet the basic needs of disaster-affected populations.

<sup>1</sup> Groundswell: Preparing for Internal Climate Migration, World Bank, Washington, DC. © World Bank

<sup>2</sup> The future in livelihoods interventions -2030. Livelihood Resource Centre. <https://future-rrcc.com/es/2019/04/11/future-of-livelihoods/>



In this context, Red Cross National Societies have prioritized five humanitarian challenges in the Buenos Aires Commitment, which was signed within the framework of the XXI Inter-American Conference and sets the tone for National Societies' work in the region towards 2023. The identified challenges are aligned with global challenges established in IFRC's 2030 Strategy: 1. Climate and environmental crisis; 2. Evolving crisis and disasters; 3. Growing gaps in health and well-being; 4. Migration and Identity; and 5. Values, Power and Inclusion. These challenges require a commitment to implement comprehensive risk management programmes that promote population and community resilience, capacity building for effective response, scale-up of actions to cope with climate change and the promotion of rights

associated with population movements, with inclusion and protecting the dignity of marginalized groups affected by violence<sup>3</sup>.

Thus, Forecast-based Financing (FbF) opens a window of opportunity to help communities become more prepared by promoting early actions before a disaster strike. This mechanism is rapidly spreading across different countries. In the Americas, a DREF FbF has already been approved for Ecuador to respond to volcanic ash emissions, and two other proposals are under development in Peru - one for floods and another for frost. Forecast-based action will continue to be critical to reducing risks, especially as extreme events become more frequent<sup>4</sup>.



<sup>3</sup> Buenos Aires Commitment. [https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/b2c2ad\\_47a2e563b4364e5e8f63cc7f636f751c.pdf](https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/b2c2ad_47a2e563b4364e5e8f63cc7f636f751c.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> A defining decade for climate action - Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre. <https://future-rrcc.com/2018/11/07/a-defining-decade-for-climate-action/>

# IFRC frameworks and guidelines for cash and voucher assistance

In 2017, the IFRC Secretariat developed a *Global Roadmap towards Increased and Improved Cash Transfer Programming*, establishing a vision for IFRC to support National Societies in making CVA an essential part of their preparedness, response and recovery; promoting its relevance and appropriateness as a response tool to meet needs; and promoting greater efficiency, effectiveness and dignity for populations affected by disasters.

By concentrating its efforts on assisting National Societies in implementing CVA, IFRC will enable disaster-affected populations to receive more appropriate and effective support. It will give people more choices, dignity and control over their lives, allow more people to receive help, and support local markets and economies.

Four main CVA response models were established to fulfil the aforementioned vision:

1. The IFRC provides resource support to National Societies directly implementing **small and medium scale** cash.
2. The IFRC provides resource support which includes surge capacity to National Societies directly implementing **large-scale** cash.
3. Domestic implementation by National Societies with minimal support from IFRC, sometimes as part of coordinated cash responses in partnership with other actors such as UN agencies or consortia.

4. The IFRC supports National Societies to play a clearly mandated role as an auxiliary to government within nationally led cash based responses with clear links to social protection when appropriate<sup>5</sup>.

In 2018, the Movement's Cash Peer Working Group (CPWG) developed a *Cash Transfer Programming Strategic Framework* that was adopted by IFRC's Governing Board. This Strategic Framework recognises that the full potential of cash transfers remains untapped, and aims to ensure that the Movement is in a prominent position to lead in terms of the systematic and effective provision of appropriate cash transfer programs to populations in need.

Four strategic objectives were established to achieve this vision:

- a) Members of the Movement invest in their capacity in order to have the necessary CVA skills, maintaining their relevance in terms of the context and role to be fulfilled, with particular emphasis on National Society local capacity.
- b) The Movement delivers a global CVA model that is predictable, replicable, and applicable to all aspects of disaster and crisis preparedness, response and recovery.
- c) The Movement institutionalizes a CVA programming policy and positively influences humanitarian community dialogue at the global, regional and local levels.

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<sup>5</sup> IFRC - The Road to Increased and Improved Cash Transfer Programming, 2017. Commissioned by the IFRC Secretariat, Disaster and Crisis Prevention, Response & Recovery Department – DCPRR. Written by Paul Harvey, Tracy Reines and Sarah Bailey, March 2017.

- d) Movement members, together with other humanitarian actors, the private sector, and governments, provide innovative, effective and efficient CVA programming at all levels, from local to global<sup>6</sup>.



<sup>6</sup> Cash Transfer Programming Strategic Framework for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. Developed by the RCRM Cash Peer Working Group. Endorsed by the IFRC Governing Board, June 2018.

## Regional priorities

As part of the efforts to produce this Roadmap, a meeting was held in May 2019 at the Americas Regional Office to discuss *CVA and Livelihoods* with the participation of disaster risk management, livelihoods and CVA technical focal points from ten National Societies in the Americas.

Participants identified the challenges and trends facing the region - described within this document - as well as current institutional (internal/external) needs

and gaps that need to be met to have the minimum conditions for effective and timely implementation of CVA.

The approach of these regional priorities comes mainly from the analysis of the results of this meeting, the consultation of secondary data of the Movement regarding cash and voucher assistance, and from interviews with the technical leads of programs and operations related to cash and voucher assistance.



**PRIORITY 1. INTERNAL/EXTERNAL AWARENESS FOR THE APPROPRIATION OF CASH AND VOUCHER ASSISTANCE IN THE STRATEGIC AND OPERATIONAL PLANNING OF NATIONAL SOCIETIES.**

The Grand Bargain is a unique agreement between some of the largest donors and humanitarian organisations who have committed to get more means into the hands of people in need and to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the humanitarian action. This agreement was subscribed at the World Humanitarian Summit (2016) and the IFRC and the ICRC committed that by 2020<sup>8</sup> the use of cash alongside other tools, including in-kind assistance, service delivery (such as health and nutrition) and vouchers will be increased. Also to invest in new delivery models which can be increased in scale while identifying best practice and mitigating risks in each context, building an evidence base to assess the costs, benefits, impacts, and risks of cash and finally to collaborate, share information and develop standards

and guidelines for cash programming in order to better understand its risks and benefits.

It is essential for National Societies to take ownership of this opportunity, advocating for the governance buy-in, as well as the programmatic, operational, technical and support services areas. So that CVA programs are institutionalized as a multi-sectoral response and recovery tool. It is essential to continue fighting the myths that still prevail against this response mechanism, facilitating its understanding and implementation.

Likewise, appropriate key messages must be disseminated to beneficiaries and partners at the local level to understand the fundamental role that National Societies perform as implementors of cash and voucher assistance in compliance to their humanitarian mission and Fundamental Principles, exerting a positive influence to increase its humanitarian space.

Milestone	Action Points
NS implement and promote the use of CVA as a rapid response and early recovery tool.	Dissemination of CVA key messages to the NSs' governing and management bodies, obtaining their buy-in and inclusion at organizational level.
	Dissemination of CVA key messages to the public and private sector, other organizations and community leaders, obtaining their acceptance to the NSs' role as CVA implementors.
	NSs designate CVA technical focal points with defined roles and responsibilities.
	NSs prioritize CVA as a response tool within their structure, contingency plans and strategies.
	IFRC develops CEA materials for effective internal and external awareness by NSs.

<sup>8</sup> <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/increase-the-use-and-coordination-of-cash-based-programming>

**PRIORITY 2. NATIONAL SOCIETY INSTITUTIONAL PREPAREDNESS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CASH AND VOUCHER ASSISTANCE.**

Strengthening of National Societies, their staff and volunteers, structures, policies, and procedures; are fundamental for the delivery of cash and voucher programs, whether small- or large-scale, in a timely and effective way.

On their road to institutional preparedness, National Societies can count on the support of the IFRC, Participating National Societies, ICRC and other partners; which develop and make available guidelines, toolboxes, technical advice, technology platforms, training and financing for capacities' strengthening.

For this purpose, it is critical that National Societies prioritize cash and voucher programs in their planning and develop simple yet effective action plans for institutional preparedness, involving not only the technical and operational areas of response and recovery, but also finance and logistics to support the selection processes for financial service providers, and thus have pre-positioned cash delivery mechanisms and modalities, according to the country's legal, financial and fiscal regulations.

Risk and security analyses must be periodically executed to verify the validity of the established mechanisms and clear control and accountability mechanisms must be adopted and practiced.

Milestone	Action Points
NSs delivery CVA programs in an efficient and timely way.	NSs assess their organizational capabilities for CVA and develop a plan of action to strengthen them.
	IFRC foster training opportunities jointly with NSs for the strengthening of their staff (operational and support services) and volunteers to assess, design, implement and monitor CVA programs and operations.
	NSs periodically assess security risks, restrictions of its local regulatory frameworks, public policies, and social protection systems.
	NSs periodically apply price monitoring to the basic food basket, the fluctuation of inflation and the exchange rate.
	NSs have pre-identified, flexible, reliable payment mechanisms based on agreements signed with financial service providers, for timely delivery of cash or vouchers.
	IFRC accompanies and guides NSs in the performance of feasibility analyses and market assessments and provides available information for the application of this exercises.
	IFRC keeps at least one regional cash delivery mechanism available for rapid implementation by NSs.

**PRIORITY 3. COORDINATION, PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS TO ENSURE COMPLEMENTARITY AND INFORMATION SHARING.**

National Societies’ auxiliary role and their presence before, during and after disasters and crisis position themselves in great advantage as CVA implementers, liaising with existing social protection programmes, fostering the inclusion of vulnerable disaster - or crisis - affected populations in the public schemes or in support to their recovery and reintegration as active contributors to the local economy.

National Societies are called to get involved and even lead the coordination mechanisms of the humanitarian sector, ensuring a sound application of the principles and quality standards in the delivery of humanitarian assistance, reinforcing the localization of aid, empowering communities through CVA.

This leadership will enhance the opportunities for strategic partnerships

between Movement partners and other humanitarian actors, or private/public sector, enhancing their programmatic portfolio and resources mobilization.

This inter-agency coordination must ensure aid complementarity, harmonization of vulnerability criteria so no one is left behind, the promotion of data protection tools, joining efforts for a wider impact in the recovery of communities and its local economies.

The International Movement of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies encourages the development of tools and platforms for the knowledge-sharing between National Societies, the ICRC and the IFRC Secretariat such as the CashHub<sup>9</sup> and the Livelihood Resource Center<sup>10</sup>. Actors external to the Movement such as CaLP<sup>11</sup>, CCD<sup>12</sup> and CashCap<sup>13</sup> (NRC) also produce a wide variety of resources and services for the dissemination of good practices, lessons learned, research and training on CVA.

Milestone	Action Points
NSs’ CVA programs are coordinated and aligned with Movement and other humanitarian actors’ practices.	NSs lead and/or participate in Cash working groups at national level.
	NSs are consulted by public sector or other humanitarian agencies for CVA’ technical assistance.
	NSs partner with humanitarian actors and/or donors to enhance their CVA’ implementing capacities.
	IFRC disseminates and foster information-sharing platforms, webinars, creation of cash regional working groups, and liaises with external resources (CaLP, CashHub, Livelihood Resource Centre).

<sup>9</sup> <https://cash-hub.org/>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.livelihoodscentre.org/es/home>

<sup>11</sup> The Cash Learning Partnership (CaLP) <https://www.calpnetwork.org/>

<sup>12</sup> Collaborative Cash Delivery Network (CCD) <https://www.collaborativecash.org/>

<sup>13</sup> Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) CashCap <https://www.nrc.no/expert-deployment/what-we-do/cashcap/>

**PRIORITY 4. VISIBILITY AND REPORTING FOR THE SYSTEMATIZATION OF RESULTS AND IMPACT MEASUREMENT, EFFICIENTLY AND TRANSPARENTLY.**

Ongoing and unified systematization of the Movement’s CVA impact is crucial for showcasing the achieved results in alleviating and meeting the basic needs of disaster- and crisis-affected persons and households.

There is a wide range of technological tools available to National Societies to help them create a standardized and qualified information management system. Furthermore, IFRC allocates resources

to the constant pursuit and testing of tailored-made/fit-to-purpose’ tools, to meet accountability and data protection requirements.

Establishing and applying a Movement-wide monitoring system and standardized indicators allows us to generate a one single metric for our CVA-related impact. Moreover, documenting information under quality criteria allows us to generate evidence-based reports on community recovery and protection targets achieved as well as support informed decision-making for the implementation of efficient and accountable CVA programs.

Milestone	Action Points
The CVA’ impact is systematized, measured and evaluated as a Movement.	NSs measure and document the impact of their CVA programs.
	IFRC provides a single metric and a standardized platform for the unification of the Movement’s systematization data on CVA.
	IFRC provides technical assistance for the visualization of data of implemented CVA programs and disseminates it through newsletters, GO platform and webinars, among others.



# The Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

**Humanity** The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, born of a desire to bring assistance without discrimination to the wounded on the battlefield, endeavours, in its international and national capacity, to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found. Its purpose is to protect life and health and to ensure respect for the human being. It promotes mutual understanding, friendship, cooperation and lasting peace amongst all peoples.

**Impartiality** It makes no discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions. It endeavours to relieve the suffering of individuals, being guided solely by their needs, and to give priority to the most urgent cases of distress.

**Neutrality** In order to enjoy the confidence of all, the Movement may not take sides in hostilities or engage at any time in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

**Independence** The Movement is independent. The National Societies, while auxiliaries in the humanitarian services of their governments and subject to the laws of their respective countries, must always maintain their autonomy so that they may be able at all times to act in accordance with the principles of the Movement.

**Voluntary service** It is a voluntary relief movement not prompted in any manner by desire for gain.

**Unity** There can be only one Red Cross or Red Crescent Society in any one country. It must be open to all. It must carry on its humanitarian work throughout its territory.

**Universality** The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in which all societies have equal status and share equal responsibilities and duties in helping each other, is worldwide.

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