Guidance for Mainstreaming Cash and Voucher Assistance
Cash Preparedness for Effective Response

Version 1 - February 2021

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Contents

Acronyms and abbreviations

AAP	Accountability to affected people
AAR	After-action review
CaLP	The Cash Learning Partnership
CEA	Community engagement and accountability
CiE	Cash in Emergencies (Toolkit)
CPWG	Cash Peer Working Group
CVA	Cash and voucher assistance
CVAP	Cash and voucher assistance preparedness
DREF	Disaster Relief Emergency Fund
FAQs	Frequently asked questions
FbF	Forecast-based financing
FSP	Financial service provider
HR	Human Resources
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IM	Information management
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
JDs	Job Descriptions
KYC	"Know-your customer"
MAAT	Market assessment and analysis training
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
NDRT	National Disaster Response Teams
NHQ	National Headquarters
NS	National Society (Red Cross or Red Crescent)
PDM	Post-distribution monitoring

PECT	Practical Emergency Cash Transfer Training
PER	Preparedness for an effective response
PMER	Planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting
PNS	Participating National Society
MOVEMENT	International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement
RAM	Rapid Assessment for Markets
RDRT	Regional Disaster Response Teams
SOPs	Standard Operating Procedures
ToR	Terms of Reference
TWG	Technical Working Group
VCA	Vulnerability and capacity assessment
WG	Working Group

The Movement uses the glossary developed by the Cash Learning Partnership (CaLP) which is available via their website in five different languages available at www.cashlearning.org/resources/glossary.

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Introduction

Supporting crisis-affected populations with Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) has been recognised by the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (Movement) as a successful and valuable way to effectively meet people's humanitarian needs in a dignified manner. Along with other humanitarian actors, the Movement continues to build its experience and expertise in the use of CVA in emergency response as well as in longer-term recovery contexts and as a means to build resilience.

The benefits of CVA have been well studied and documented in a range of different contexts, and a growing number of donors and Movement National Societies (NSs) support the use of CVA as an assistance modality.

The UN Secretary-General's report for the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit called for CVA to become a default delivery mode for humanitarian assistance and through the Grand Bargain aid organisations, including the Movement, have committed to invest in new CVA delivery approaches allowing for programming at scale.

In order to be able to deliver CVA rapidly and at scale in any response, there is a need for the Movement to invest in Cash Preparedness for effective response (CVAP) and mainstreaming. In the last decade, significant investments have been made in this area through the development of CVA procedures, systems and tools both at global and country levels, integrating broader preparedness activities with the objective of ensuring that the Movement is more ready and able to consider responding with CVA when and where appropriate. Effort has been made to strengthen the institutionalisation of CVA within the different components of the Movement and to build NSs capacity where required. This work is supported through the Movement's Cash Hub, a collaborative central point through which learning and knowledge is shared. Access the Cash Hub[1] platform and CVA specific tools in the Cash in Emergencies Toolkit[2] developed for the Movement. This guidance aims to support NSs to be better prepared to design and implement CVA in all their responses.

CVAP is an essential part of setting up early actions, and being institutionally ready to implement Preparedness for Effective Response (PER) in response to any trigger as outlined in any Early Action Protocol or Plan. There are an increasing number of initiatives under way within the Movement that are encouraging better preparedness, such as NS Preparedness for an Effective Response, and triggers for the release of funds for early action in DREFs from Forecast-based Financing and finance development approaches. This guidance contributes to promoting timely investments at the NS level to ensure a better quality and timely response.

Who is this guidance for?

This guidance has been written with NSs at the country level in mind but can also be used by other components of the Movement. A separate chapter has been written for ICRC, which provides adaptations to the guidance for ICRC delegations who may also wish to invest in CVAP. See Chapter 2 – ICRC CVAP Guidance.

How should this guidance be used?

This guidance has been structured around **five key CVAP Areas**. Readers are guided through the components of each CVAP Area with suggestions on what actions or domains are required under each. All five CVAP Areas described in this guidance are considered to be essential.

Area One – Leadership Commitment – is considered to be the cornerstone of CVAP as it includes components that require strategic buy-in from leadership and are linked to the NS vision and strategy for CVA, and level of financial and human resource investment that can be allocated to CVAP. Experience has shown that a NS is more likely to have a successful CVAP trajectory when there is leadership commitment early on in the process. **Area Two** focuses on the NS processes, systems and tools and how to adapt them to include CVA. **Area Three** focuses on the NS financial and human resource capacities for CVA implementation. **Area Four** focuses on Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA), as well as coordination and partnerships. **Area Five** focuses on implementing and learning to feedback into CVAP planning and investment.

What does CVAP aim to achieve?

The ultimate goal of CVAP is to increase Movement actors' capacity to implement scalable, better quality and timely CVA to ensure that crisis-affected populations meet their needs in a dignified, appropriate and effective manner.

As shown in the CVAP Theory of Change diagram below, NSs engaging in CVAP will need to invest in the five key CVAP Areas and their related activities to build and sustain their CVA organisational capacity. In combination with these investments, NSs will need to apply this capacity through implementing CVA in their responses, when appropriate. As a result, and over time, NSs will progress the scale, quality and timeliness of their CVA (operational capacity) in response to crises or as part of longer-term responses.

Figure 1: CVAP Theory of Change

A NS is CVA prepared when it is able and likely to deliver appropriate assistance in th

CVAP Activities	CVA NS Organisational Capacity

CVAP is an ongoing NS development initiative to build capacity in the 5 key areas below.

Area 1

- Vision and Strategy
- Leadership-led advocacy and communication
- CVAP Capacity Assessment and Gap Analysis
- Organisational Structure
- Operational Plans and CVAP PoA

Leadership commitment

Area 2

- Roles and Responsibilities
- Infrastructure, equipment and technology
- Incorporating CVA in systems
- CVA technical tools and guidance

Processes, systems and tools

Area 3

- Funding availability, release and replenishment
- CVA human resource capacity analysis
- CVA skills and capacity

Financial and human resources and capacities

Area 4

- Community engagement and accountability
- Internal Coordination
- External Coordination
- Internal Partnerships
- External Partnerships

Community engagement and accountability, coordination and partnership

Area 5

- Testing CVA capacity
- CVA knowledge management
- Reassessing CVA capacity

Test, learn and improve

he form of scalable, timely and accountable CVA

CVA Operational Capacity

Impact

NS CVA operational capacity and CVA delivery

NSs are successfully applying and using capacity to deliver CVA in their responses

CVA delivery

NS CVA operational capacity

Needs met

Crisis affected and vulnerable populations meet their needs in a dignified, appropriate and effective manner
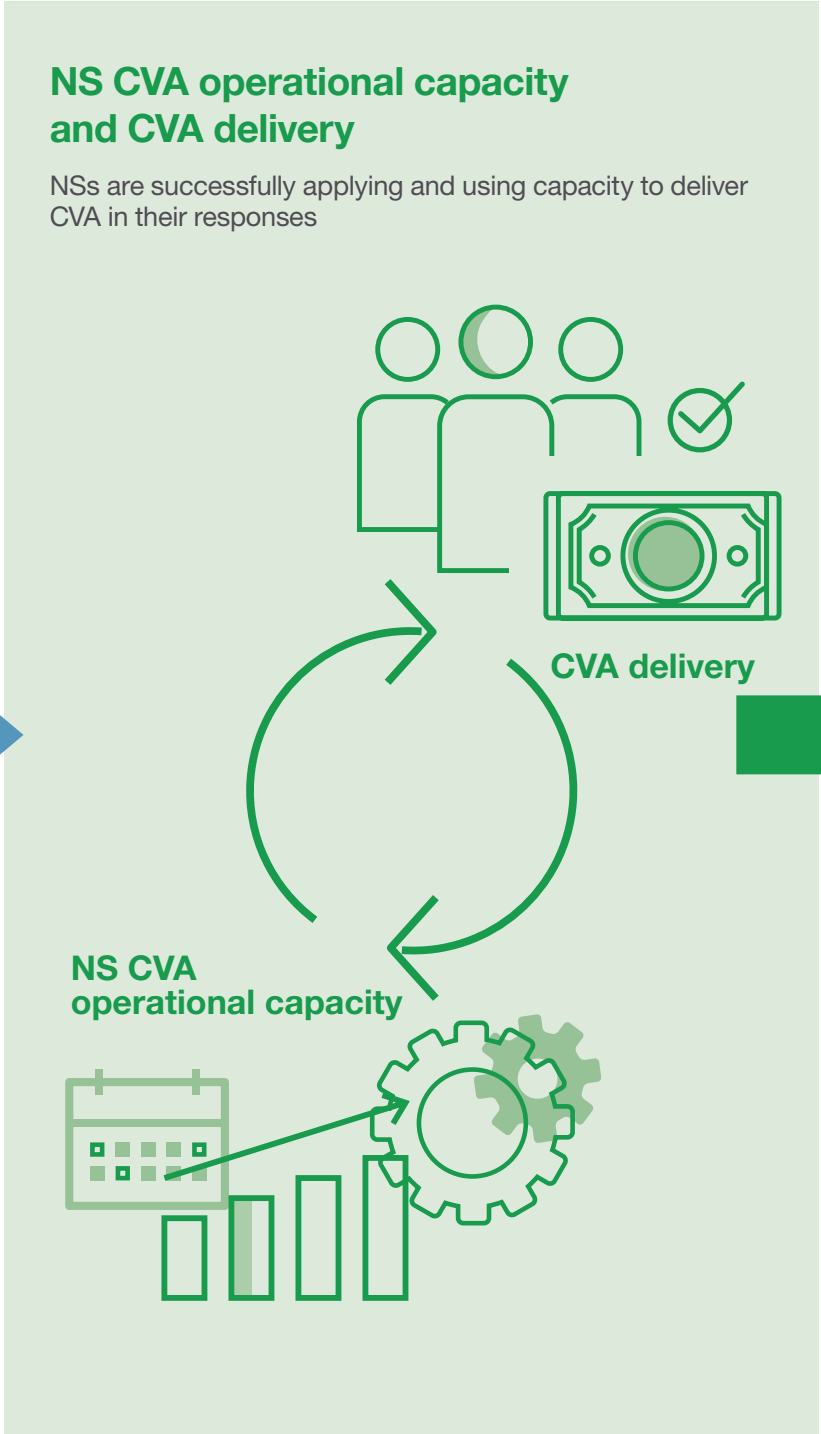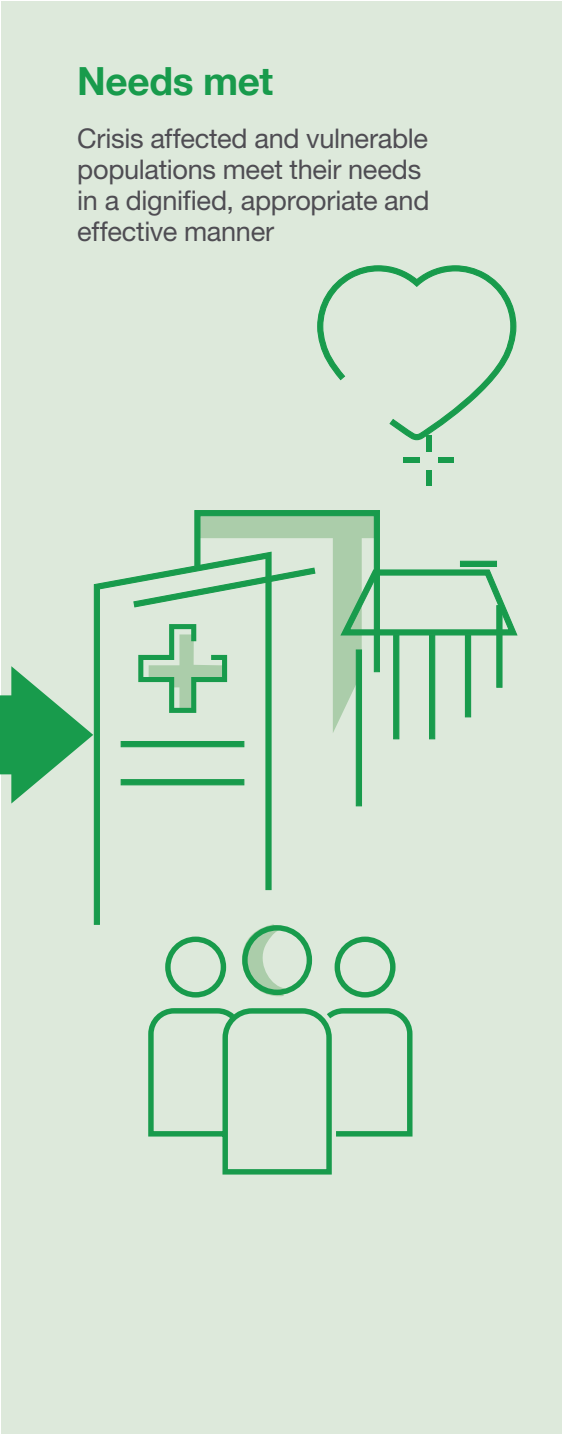
For the purpose of this guidance, the definition of a NS that is CVA prepared is as follows:

A NS is CVA prepared when it is able and likely to deliver appropriate assistance, in the form of scalable, timely and accountable CVA.

CVAP is an ongoing NS development initiative that aims to increase the state of preparedness by integrating CVA into the organisation's tools, systems, procedures and staff capacity, as well as strengthening active leadership support for CVA, coordination and communication.

These definitions clearly show that the ultimate goal of CVAP is to implement better quality, scalable and timely CVA. NSs who are able and likely to implement CVA in response to crisis or as part of a longer-term response will demonstrate that not only do they have the sustainable systems, processes, tools and skills in place for CVA implementation, but that they are likely to deliver CVA because their NS consider CVA alongside in-kind and service delivery as appropriate response options. The ability and the likelihood of implementing CVA are further enhanced by the speed and quality by which a NS is able to deliver CVA as part of their disaster management response.

NSs that are investing in CVAP should measure both the NS CVA organisational capacity in key function areas as well as their CVA operational capacity but also into increasingly accountable and timely operations.

The following Movement CVA Operational Levels describe requirements in terms of organisational capacity (systems, structures, processes and resources) in order to be able to deliver scalable, timely and accountable CVA.

Further details are provided in Chapter 3.

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 3+
Almost nothing in place to support CVA implementation. NS is only able to deliver scalable, timely and accountable CVA with significant external support.	Basic systems, structures, processes and resources to implement CVA are all in place but require improvement. NS is able to deliver scalable, timely and accountable CVA with limited external support.	All systems, structures, processes and resources to implement CVA are in place at sufficient quality and standard. NS is able and likely to deliver scalable, timely and accountable CVA without external support.	All systems, structures, processes and resources to implement CVA are in place at extraordinary quality and standard. NS plays a key role in influencing external environment. NS is able and likely to deliver scalable, timely and accountable CVA without external support and is able to provide CVA support to other organisations and Movement partners.

Figure 2: Movement CVA Operational Levels

Chapter 1
CVAP Areas

Area 1 – Leadership Commitment

Area Overview

Leadership commitment is essential for CVAP to make all other CVA-related investments more successful. Leadership commitment consists of five main components: having a vision and strategy for CVA (1.1); investing in the NS organisational structure to support CVA (1.2); assess current CA capacity and gaps (1.3); from this gap analysis develop a CVA Plan of Action (PoA) to strengthen capacity (1.4); and engage in CVA advocacy (1.5).

Area 1 centres on senior-level buy-in and commitment in relation to CVA. This includes ensuring clarity around NS ambitions in relation to CVA (e.g. which forms of response will consider CVA and whether there are specific locations where CVA is/is not an option) and capturing this in a vision and strategy document for CVA.

Area 1 also includes the identification of a dedicated CVA focal point and creation of a cross-departmental CVA Working Group (CVA WG) to manage CVAP activities. The focal point and CVA WG will need to engage with leadership to maintain buy-in, resourcing and commitment.

Area 1 includes a commitment to carrying out an in-depth CVA capacity assessment that helps the NS gauge its capacity strengths and gaps as a way of identifying what level of investment might be required over what timeframe to build CVA capacity.

Area 1 includes mainstreaming of CVA into preparedness and response plans as well as developing a specific CVAP PoA based on the capacity assessment. The multi-year CVAP PoA details the levels of investment required to achieve the CVA capacity level outlined in the NS vision and strategy for CVA. The PoA must include a budget.

Area 1 also includes development of internal and external advocacy strategies overseen, supported and implemented by NS leadership – an important measure to ensure the mainstreaming of CVAP and CVA in general.

Area 1 Components

Area 1 Leadership Commitment CVAP aims and deliverables

Area 1 Main Aims:

Leadership commitment to CVA is essential for CVAP to make all other CVA-related investments more successful. To ensure leadership actively supports CVA as a response option and supports the mainstreaming of CVA, based on a realistic understanding of levels of current and updated NS CVA capacity and the likely financial and human resource investment and time required for CVAP.

Area 1 Components				
Component 1.1 Vision and strategy	**Component 1.2 Organisational Structure**	**Component 1.3 CVA Capacity Assessment and Gap Analysis**	**Component 1.4 Operational Plans and CVA**	**Component 1.5 Leadership-led advocacy**
- The governing board - Senior leadership - Vision - Strategic plans	- Change management - NHQ support to Branches for CVAP - NHQ support to branches for CVA implementation - CVA Focal point and CVA WG	- CVA capacity assessment and gap analysis	- Preparedness/ contingency/ PER - Response and/or Recovery Plans - Budgeted multi-year CVAP PoA - Two-year funding availability for CVAP	- Internal advocacy and communication - External advocacy and communication
Area 1 CVAP deliverables				
- Documented CVA vision and strategy	- A structure for NHQ to provide support to branches in relation to CVA - A CVA focal point and CVA WG endorsed	- A CVA organisational capacity self-assessment to identify capacity gaps along the 5 CVAP Areas	- Operational preparedness and response plans include CVA - Budgeted multi-year CVAP PoA	- CVA stakeholder mapping - Internal and external advocacy strategy and materials

Component 1.1 Vision and Strategy

Leadership support and buy-in has been found to be the single most effective enabler for CVAP investments, including the release of funding and staff to support CVAP and implementation. Therefore, securing active leadership support for the mainstreaming of CVAP and ensuring that CVA is consistently considered as a response option is a key foundation of CVAP. Achieving the endorsement of leadership itself can take from one week to over a year, but if this is not obtained from the start, the NS is likely to face a number of blockages in the CVAP process.

The following steps are suggested to achieve leadership buy-in and commitment.

- **Hold a CVAP meeting** with leadership and governance to raise awareness of CVA and explore constraints and opportunities for CVA. This could be done in a stand-alone meeting or could form a module of a broader advocacy-focused workshop (see Component 1.3 below).
- **Define and document a clear vision for CVA**, including the identification of where CVAP fits within the organisation and what the organisation's CVA ambition is in the short, medium and long-term as part of the disaster management strategy and related plans.
- **Decide whether to incorporate CVA in the NS strategy or develop a separate CVA strategy document** highlighting that CVA has implications for all departments and services, stresses the need to routinely consider CVA as a response option, and promotes the NS use of CVA (ideally with CVA being the default response option).

Component 1.2 Organisational Structure

In this guidance, CVAP structure concerns the structuring of human, financial and logistical resources at HQ and branch levels in order to support CVAP and CVA implementation. It also includes systems and processes for providing support for the implementation of CVA, based on clear policies that include CVA as a response option.

The CVAP structure thus includes both the NS headquarters and branches. While it is recognised that some NSs have gained CVA implementation capacity at branch level in response to a crisis, the strengthening of processes between NHQ and branches is a key component of NS CVAP development. Setting up the necessary structure is likely to take several months as individuals will need to be identified, appointed and trained at NHQ and branch level to carry out their specific CVAP-related tasks.

The following elements are suggested for creating a CVA structure:

- Ensure that appropriate human, financial and logistical resources are in place at HQ and branch levels (including the CVA focal point and CVA WG). This is covered in Area 3, Component 3.3 below.
- Ensure that NHQ can provide systematic support to branches during CVA implementation through deployment of staff with CVA experience.
- Ensure NHQ support to branches for the use of CVA-related systems for targeting, registration, delivery mechanisms, reconciliation and monitoring.

- Clearly defining the roles and responsibilities of each department involved in CVA at NHQ and branch levels and including these in CVA standard operating procedures (SOPs) that are known to all relevant staff and volunteers.

- Develop a clear policy that defines when situational and response options analyses, design and implementation actions and monitoring and evaluation actions should be carried out in response to a well-defined trigger or in advance of a crisis on the basis of anticipatory action such as Forecast-based financing (FbF).

- Ensure there is a system in place to regularly review CVAP and implementation to assess relevance, compliance and effectiveness.

Component 1.3 CVA Organisational Capacity Self-Assessment and Gap Analysis

Identifying gaps in CVAP involves carrying out an in-depth CVA organisational capacity assessment and identifying current CVA capacity gaps. Sufficient time should be allocated to this as it is an important activity that will define what CVA investments are prioritised in the other CVAP Areas.

The CVA Organisational Capacity Self-Assessment Tool is a comprehensive list of every aspect of CVAP, structured according to the five CVAP Areas and components. It has been designed to inform a NS of all the various CVAP Areas and components listed in this guidance in detail. The NS can assess its level of capacity for each of the CVA domains included in the self-assessment tool to enable the identification of the specific areas of CVA capacity that are strong and those that are weak, through a set of CVAP organisational indicators that are tiered across four Levels (1-3+).

The following steps are suggested to carry out a CVA Organisational Capacity Self-Assessment and Gap Analysis:

- **The NS CVA WG and the CVA Focal Point apply** the CVA Organisational Capacity Self-Assessment Tool and discuss whether it is a true reflection of the NS CVA capacity.

- **Present the CVA capacity assessment** results to a broader internal stakeholder group and generate discussion on strengths and gaps.

- **Conduct a detailed CVAP gap analysis** and identify priority areas for development. This is likely to take two days and will require in-depth study of existing NSs structures, systems, procedures, people, equipment and agreements, and an assessment of how appropriate they are to CVA implementation.

- **Use the results of the CVAP gap analysis** by Area to feed into the CVAP PoA under 1.4 below.

- Re-apply the CVA organisational capacity self-assessment process to measure NS progress in specific domains over time, especially after CVA implementation.

Component 1.4 Operational Plans and CVAP Plan of Action

The **CVAP PoA** is developed from the findings and recommendations identified through the CVA capacity self-assessment and preparedness gap analysis. The CVA WG is responsible for developing the PoA in consultation with managers and departments. Experience shows that the CVAP PoA should include the objectives, inputs and outputs to be able to deliver CVA in different crisis or recovery response scenarios.

The suggested actions for developing a CVAP PoA include:

- Convening a CVA WG meeting to develop the PoA along the five CVAP Areas. Start by identifying the components that need strengthening and the relevant domains under each component.

- Identify activities that are realistic and achievable and help the NS deliver rapid CVA responses in emergency and development contexts. Align these activities to existing contingency and preparedness/PER plans.

- Cost the activities using NS budgeting experience. Costing works best if it is based on real costs and not available funds. This gives the NS a realistic overview of the level of financial investment required. It will be important to align the CVAP PoA to the CVA vision and strategy and timeline.

- Once the initial costed CVA PoA is elaborated, decide which activities to prioritise and how to sequence the activities – this will influence the resource mobilisation and partnership strategies to be adopted by the NS to fund its CVAP PoA, and also identify the level of technical support required for the implementation of the plan.

- Experience has shown that there needs to be a minimum level of financial stability for CVAP investments into the NS if these are to bring results and for those results to be sustainable. It is recommended that a NS has at least two years commitment to staff time and financial resources to complete activities to achieve this.

- Present the draft PoA to the NS leadership for approval within an agreed timeframe (for example, within four weeks of the initial consultation workshop).

- The CVA focal point will manage and coordinate the whole process and report to senior management.

- Update the PoA over time, especially if the NS responds to crises using CVA.

Box 1. Elements of a CVAP PoA

- Summary of the preparedness gap analysis, as a justification for the plan and priority levels of CVAP investment.

- Logical framework with CVAP activities, outputs and outcomes, risks and assumptions.

- Gantt chart with the activity plan and timeframe, including durations, milestones and individual or departmental responsibilities.

- Activity-level budget with resource planning and inputs per activity (human and financial resources).

- Monitoring plan and an evaluation framework.

During the elaboration of the CVA PoA, the NS should consult and be guided by existing contingency and preparedness plans that describe likely emergency scenarios and identify which of these may warrant CVA responses. Ideally, the NS should mainstream CVA into existing preparedness plans but having a separate standalone CVAP PoA has been seen to be useful for NS embarking on CVAP.

The same level of guidance and mainstreaming is required from the NS response plans for emergency response and recovery. CVA should be mainstreamed into these.

Component 1.5 Leadership-led advocacy and communication

Advocacy is particularly important for CVA as there are still concerns in the public domain and within NSs about misuse of CVA, which presents a reputational risk for the NS. These attitudes can form critical blockages to scaling up CVA in emergencies, but they can be addressed through advocacy messaging at both global and national levels, and also internally. Much advocacy work is about demonstrating the advantages and disadvantages of CVA and showing risk mitigation measures to alleviate specific fears.

The following steps are suggested for developing robust advocacy and communication materials:

- **Carry out a mapping of CVA external and internal stakeholders** that are relevant for CVA.
- **Include crisis-affected populations as a key stakeholder** in line with community engagement and accountability (CEA) principles. At this stage it is good practice to develop CVA FAQs with the affected populations in mind.
- **Develop a CVA Frequently Asked Questions** (FAQs), which can provide short answers to typical questions about CVA and be disseminated widely.
- **Create advocacy and communication messages to address the blockages identified for each stakeholder.** Use operational experience, context and situational analysis and further consultation to identify CVA-related communications messages for each external and internal stakeholder, and ways of working.
- **Organise CVA awareness-raising meetings** to disseminate CVAP messages and seek additional support from those attending to convey messages further.
- **Seek support from other in-country, regional and global Movement partners to help develop advocacy materials and CVA messages for different audiences**. The Movement's Cash Peer Working group (CPWG) has developed CVA advocacy materials, as well as a number of case studies, documents and audio-visual materials available on the Cash Hub platform[3] or upon request.

Overall, Area 1 is likely to be an iterative process whereby leadership commitment and buy-in will be required at various stages of a NS CVAP investment journey. As the NS invests in other CVAP Areas, leadership will need to be informed on progress to make decisions on next steps. This is particularly the case each time the NS is able to implement CVA and takes stock of changes in its CVAP capacity.

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[3] Cash Hub platform: www.cash-hub.org

Area 1 completion checklist

- NS leadership meeting organised to mobilise support for CVA as a response option and support the mainstreaming of CVAP

- NS leadership vision for CVA articulated and documented

- NS CVA stand-alone or mainstreamed strategy developed and aligned within strategic plans

- NS change management approval for adjusting the organisational structure that can support CVAP and implementation at NHQ and branch level

- NS internal decision-makers workshop organised to raise awareness of levels of CVA engagement required by all departments

- CVA focal point ToR developed and approved

- CVA focal point identified and appointed with minimum 24-month funding, but preferably for 3 years

- CVA WG formed with representatives of NS departments dedicating at least 10-15% of their time to the role

- CVA WG ToR developed

- CVA focal point and CVA WG supported by NS leadership

- CVA organisational capacity self-assessment completed for all domains with broad consultation

- CVA capacity gap analysis completed and agreed to by key stakeholders

- CVAP PoA workshop organised by CVA WG

- CVAP PoA workshop

- CVAP budgeted multi-year PoA approved

- External CVA stakeholder mapping carried out to identify all stakeholders and potential enablers and blockages for CVA implementation and buy-in

- Advocacy and communications messages developed to address identified external stakeholder concerns, including appropriate CEA

- Advocacy and communications messages developed to address identified internal NS stakeholder blockages

- Internal and external CVA advocacy strategy activities identified

Photo © IFRC/Corrie Butler

Area 2 – Processes, Systems and Tools

Area Overview

Area 2 focuses on systems and procedures that support CVA responses that are similar in scale, timeliness and effectiveness to other response options such as more traditional in-kind distributions. This includes developing CVA Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), which set out clear CVA-related roles and responsibilities.

This Area covers all relevant NS systems that enable CVA implementation, including finance, accounting, information management (including data protection), HR, logistics and procurement, security and monitoring. It also includes the identification and selection of appropriate CVA delivery or payment mechanisms to facilitate the rapid and secure distribution of CVA.

This Area also involves adapting existing NS disaster response tools throughout the preparedness and emergency response cycle (e.g. in assessment, programme design and implementation and monitoring) to include the necessary CVA elements such as market feasibility and risk analysis. In some cases, new specific CVA-related tools will need to be developed, such as affected population preferences, and financial service provider (FSP) mapping.

It is vital that standard business processes and tools are discussed, and set up in advance and are ready to be adapted to different emergency contexts.

Area 2 Components

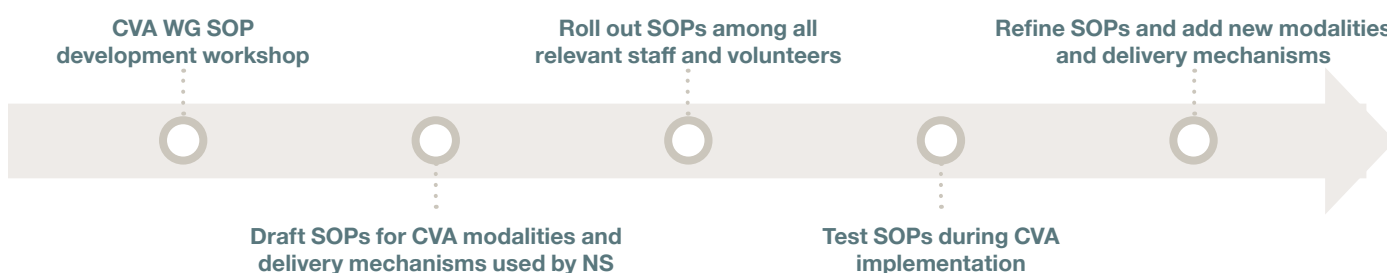Area 2 Processes, Systems and Tools CVAP aims and deliverables

Area 2 Main Aims

To ensure NS CVA implementation is guided by up-to-date CVA Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and to mainstream CVA into all disaster management cycle processes, systems and tools.

Area 2 Components			
Component 2.1 **Roles and Responsibilities**	**Component 2.2** **Incorporating CVA in systems**	**Component 2.3** **Infrastructure, equipment and technology**	**Component 2.4** **CVA technical tools and guidance**
- Processes: Roles and responsibilities/ segregation of duties (SOPs)	- Financial systems - Accounting systems - Financial resource mobilisation systems (including replenishment systems) - Logistics and procurement systems - HR systems - Delivery mechanisms - Security - Information management systems - Knowledge management systems	- Technical infrastructure and equipment - Information technology tools and systems	- Integrating CVA into existing programme cycle tools - Development of standalone CVA programme cycle tools
Area 2 CVAP Deliverables			
- CVA SOPs - Roles and responsibilities in CVA implementation reflected in SOPs and job descriptions	- CVA integrated within existing support service systems (finance, HR, information management, logistics and procurement, resource mobilisation, security, monitoring, and knowledge management platforms)	- NS has appropriate equipment and IT systems for CVA implementation	- Standalone CVA tools developed and disseminated - CVA tools integrated into existing disaster response cycle tools - Updated CVAP SOPs, tools and systems

Component 2.1 Roles and Responsibilities

Experience has shown that developing high-quality CVA SOPs requires the engagement of all NS departments involved in CVA-related decision-making processes and systems. The NS CVA WG is therefore best placed to lead on this process and secure the necessary leadership support. Producing draft SOPs is not a lengthy process, however securing inputs from all relevant departments and adjusting SOPs in line with implementation experience is an ongoing process from drafting to rolling out among staff and volunteers.

Figure 3. Phased approach for CVA SOP development and roll out

CVA WG SOP development workshop

Roll out SOPs among all relevant staff and volunteers

Refine SOPs and add new modalities and delivery mechanisms

Draft SOPs for CVA modalities and delivery mechanisms used by NS

Test SOPs during CVA implementation

The development of SOP goes hand in hand with the mainstreaming of CVA in systems and tools. In addition to developing the SOPs, there will be a need to roll these out across NS branches. It is recommended that specific SOP awareness sessions and trainings are developed and rolled out in order to ensure maximum understanding by NS staff and volunteers to better prepare them for CVA implementation.

Component 2.2 Incorporating CVA in systems

Experience has shown that it is best to start incorporating CVA-specific aspects into existing systems early on as part of CVAP and not wait until CVA implementation itself to discover what is missing, as this slows down responses. This is an iterative process and NSs who revisit and revise their systems as needed, after testing them during CVA implementation, are able to use CVA more systematically in their responses. CVA SOPs should reflect the roles and responsibilities of all support service functions.

Finance and accounting systems

In order to deliver CVA, NS finance and accounting systems may need adapting to ensure financial control procedures remain robust and do not restrict CVA implementation.

The following actions are suggested:

- Review authorisation levels for sign-off and delegation of authority to avoid bottlenecks in implementation.
- Ensure appropriate segregation of duties along the entire process, including security of assets and beneficiary data.
- Maintain adequate documentation and records.
- Improve the accounting system to track CVA-specific entries and other analytical structures to monitor and report on CVA (See Chapter 3).
- Establish CVA reconciliation systems.
- Develop and disseminate clear SOPs for the delivery mechanisms to be implemented.
- Engage finance staff in FSP mapping, procurement and contracting (covered in the guidance for FSPs).

Box 2. Characteristics of an effective finance system that supports CVA

- Legal, financial and audit requirements on programming within the NS are identified in the NS CVA SOPs.
- The level of internal controls for approval and segregation of duties is clear and understood.
- Financial systems are based on appropriate risk management approaches, and not just risk aversion.
- Accounting coding systems are in place and known by relevant staff.
- Finance teams provide solutions for different cash and voucher modalities and different delivery mechanisms and do not apply a one-size-fits-all approach.
- FSP assessments are timely and updated by finance, programmes and logistics.
- Electronic, not paper-based, finance systems.

Human Resources systems

In order to deliver CVA, the following actions are suggested with regard to NS Human Resources (HR) systems:

- Integrate CVA skills and experience into existing programme and support service HR profiles.

- Identify and recruit staff with the required CVA experience and skills.

- Ensure efficient deployment systems to get the right staff and volunteers in place to design and implement CVA.

- Have capacity development systems that enhance the CVA skillset of staff and volunteers.

- Maintain effective staff and volunteer retention practices so that those with CVA skills and experience remain within the NS and are available.

HR identification and recruitment processes will be similar to those for recruiting and deploying all staff and volunteers, but job descriptions and recruitment processes must highlight CVA skills. Typical CVA competencies can be found in the CiE CVA Competency Framework[4].

Finally, and importantly, using and retaining staff and volunteers with CVA experience must be prioritised so that the NS does not lose CVA capacity. Good practice includes not overworking the strongest staff, establishing compensation schemes, and having a graduated, performance-based skills development programme. Each NS should identify the retention methods suited to their context, whilst acknowledging that CVA expertise is highly sought-after by many humanitarian actors.

Information Management

NS Information Management (IM) systems must be able to collect and manage CVA-specific data and ensure that it is used in a timely and safe way. The following actions are suggested:

- Adapt NS IM systems to ensure that recipient registration database systems include the necessary details of the intended recipient in line with Know Your Customer (KYC) regulations.

- Ensure the necessary data protection levels for all information collected and managed (for more information consult the ICRC Handbook on data protection in humanitarian action[5]).

- Establish data sharing agreements with private-sector and other humanitarian partners (such as the inclusion of data protection clauses with third parties).

- Password protect sensitive data (for more information consult the ICRC Handbook on data protection in humanitarian action[5]).

- Match the level of technology for data management systems to the response, rather than chose complex technological systems.

> **Box 3. Characteristics of an effective CVA IM system include the following:**
>
> - **Data Literacy**
>   Understanding the benefits of data use, applying good data practices and building a data-driven culture to CVA implementation. The skills, knowledge, attitudes and social structures required for different populations to use data. Data literacy includes data culture, data literacy and data ecosystems.
>
> - **Data preparedness**
>   Data preparedness is the ability to responsibly and effectively use and manage data-related tools, methods and strategies. It includes data governance (data responsibility and management), secondary data collection and a range of data collection methodologies, data storage and infrastructure as well as data sharing and dissemination to support all phases of a CVA response.
>
> - **Data-driven decision-making**
>   This is the ability to use data for decisions, having reliably integrated analytic thinking into both design and implementation. This includes primary data collection, ongoing monitoring, evaluation and improvement through learning as well as data analysis and visualisation, which turns data into information (sometimes represented visually) to improve understanding of a situation and support decision-making and reporting related to CVA.

Logistics and procurement

In order for NS logistics and procurement systems to be able to support CVA, the following actions are recommended:

- Ensure support for market assessments (which may already be in place for in-kind distribution but will now need to be broadened to cover CVA).

- Support trader mapping exercises with third parties such as telecommunications companies and FSPs such as banks, financial institutions, remittance agencies, mobile phone companies and traders.

- Support CVA FSP identification, selection and contracting jointly with finance staff.

- If relevant, ensure the ability to procure both electronic and paper vouchers through NS procurement processes and identify timelines associated with each.

- Pre-position contingency stocks that include CVA options by investing in voucher design and processing systems, ready-made payment cards and technical kits for identified CVA recipient registration and distribution management.

While pre-agreement processes will speed up CVA implementation during a response, they may still need to be adapted to ensure they can be applied to the geographical area of operation at the scale and speed required.

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[4] CVA Competency Framework: www.cash-hub.org/-/media/cashhub-documents/training-and-development/learning-resources/2-cash-and-vouchers-technical-competency-framework-for-surge-deploymentsaw.pdf
[5] ICRC Handbook on data protection in humanitarian action: www.icrc.org/en/data-protection-humanitarian-action-handbook

Resource mobilisation systems

The mobilisation of funds keeps the CVAP PoA realistic and in line with potential funding sources. Experience has shown that earmarking some of the NS annual budget for CVA resource mobilisation is a strong CVAP measure that is encouraged.

> **Box 4. Characteristics of an effective resource mobilisation system that supports CVA:**
>
> - Updated in-country mapping of external donors and Movement actors to identify and approach those who may be supportive of CVA.
> - Using the multi-year budgeted CVA PoA to identify specific funding components that may be of interest to a specific donor, such as training, piloting or supporting CVA advocacy.
> - NSs understanding of existing CVA funding streams (e.g. ECHO, USAID, FCDO) to promote NS CVA responses and assessment of the potential for receiving CVA funding.
> - Systematically including CVA in Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) and Emergency Appeals during a specific response when appropriate.
> - Systematically including CVA in new funding proposals in line with the NS CVA vision and strategy.
> - Availability of ready-to-use documentation for dissemination about the NS rationale for increasing CVA capacity with reference to past experience, to response options analysis and to national, regional or global CVA initiatives such as the Grand Bargain.
> - Advocating for CVA-specific contingency funds to be allocated to CVAP such as CVA fund prepositioning, e.g. FbF facilities or anticipatory actions.
> - Exploring potential partnerships with the private sector that might contribute to resource mobilisation or reduce fees on CVA transfer services, e.g. FSPs or telecommunications companies that can match donations or provide connectivity to branches free of charge.
>
> Many of these activities can be undertaken at no additional cost but do require the engagement of existing staff.

Security

NSs should update their security protocols and procedures in line with their operational context. CVA-specific components on managing the security of NS staff and volunteers, and the security of the affected population must be included in SOPs. Sufficient funds to ensure security risks are minimised throughout the disaster management cycle must also be allocated. Risk management processes for CVA should be included in SOPs.

Monitoring systems

Monitoring and reporting mechanisms and systems of NSs must incorporate CVA to provide data on the context, processes and results of a CVA response, which then enables decision makers to make appropriate programmatic adjustments during implementation. Generic monitoring tools can be found in the CiE toolkit[6] dedicated to M&E and will need adapting.

Box 5. Types of CVA related monitoring

- **Context monitoring** will help identify the operational context and associated risks for CVA implementation as well as any changes in context during the response timeframe. This helps identify any changes over time that may result in the need to amend CVA implementation approaches. Monitoring of population movement and market prices of goods and services are typical examples of context monitoring.

- **Programme monitoring** will help identify if NS SOPs allow for all department systems to perform their CVA-related functions to ensure an effective response. This helps early identification of bottlenecks in internal CVA systems that may be hindering implementation. Monthly monitoring reports, that draw information from implementation and financial information and feedback and complaints mechanisms, are the most typical examples of programme monitoring. Programme monitoring will also help identify timeliness and accuracy of the intended CVA disbursements and provide inputs for any impact monitoring and evaluations.

- **CVA Operational Indicator monitoring** will help measure CVA performance. These operational indicators are based on CVA implementation and can also be used as proxy indicators for CVAP. This is covered in further detail in Chapter 3.

A key element of monitoring will be to focus on user engagement strategies that capture affected populations' views, feedback and complaints must be sought and influence programme design and ongoing implementation.

Evaluations have a different purpose to monitoring and can range from light internal after-action reviews (AAR) or mid-term reviews to more formal external evaluation processes. Evaluations can also be CVA-specific or relate to the whole response. All evaluations should capture elements of performance and learning specific to CVA.

Experience has shown that monitoring and evaluation must be high on the agenda of NSs investing in CVAP as findings about performance and learning can be directly used to revise and improve existing NS CVA tools and systems, and thereby increase the NS level of CVAP. Furthermore, inconsistent or poorly-designed CVA monitoring data will impact the ability to measure CVA operational indicators as a proxy indicator for CVAP. Having robust monitoring data can also help better position a NS as a key partner of choice both within the Movement and with non-Movement actors such as government and other humanitarian agencies.

Component 2.3 Infrastructure, equipment and technology

NSs investing in CVAP are encouraged to shift from paper-based systems to electronic options. This requires setting up information technology systems that can handle registration, payment, reconciliation and reporting of CVA distributions. The databases for CVA recipients must be managed safely and may require investment in new equipment and telecommunications infrastructure.

Experience has shown that this can be done gradually, and that some CVA-specific IT tools and systems can be bought in (e.g. Red Rose) and may not require an overhaul of NSs' implementation systems. However, it is likely that support service functions will need to be increasingly digitalised if speed and scale of CVA is to be achieved.

Component 2.4 CVA technical tools and guidance

Integrating and mainstreaming CVA tools

Experience shows that when NSs incorporate CVA tools into existing programme cycle tools and processes, they are much easier to roll out and be used. While some degree of CVA-specific tool development is required, many of these can be integrated into existing tools. This requires the contributions of CVA WG members and NS staff with knowledge of the tools, systems and processes used in disaster management response and also in longer-term sectoral programming.

Suggested priority programme cycle tools into which CVA should be mainstreamed:

- Needs assessment tools.

- Situation analysis tools.

- Response options analysis.

- Risk management tools.

- PoA and budget templates.

- Contingency plans and processes e.g. PER.

- Contingency Planning Tools.

- Monitoring tools e.g. Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM).

- CEA/Accountability to affected people (AAP)/Communication and feedback tools.

- Knowledge and information management tools.

Experience shows that delegating the task of developing CVA tools to one person is less valuable to a NS than adopting a process whereby NS staff and volunteers engage collaboratively, pooling their expertise, led by the CVA focal point.

Developing CVA-specific tools

Using the CiE Toolkit[7] as a starting point, the NS must **adapt the stand-alone CVA tools from the CiE Toolkit** (not necessarily all of these, but those that are considered most important and relevant) to ensure that they are well suited to the local context. This may include amending the tools to ensure that they are culturally appropriate. This has already been done for the CVA focal point and WG ToRs, the NS CVAP PoA and the CVA SOPs.

The CiE Toolkit contains a large number of tools. It will be the responsibility of the CVA focal point and CVA WG to familiarise themselves with the tools and decide which ones need developing for the NS.

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[7] CiE toolkit: www.cash-hub.org/guidance-and-tools/cash-in-emergencies-toolkit

Suggested priority CVA specific tools for development:

- Early action protocols or pre-disaster agreements within the NS and with Movement and non-Movement partners.

- CVA feasibility tools (market systems analysis, affected populations preference, FSP mapping, CVA risks).

- Targeting approaches for CVA that might focus on geographical areas most impacted by a sudden-onset shock and/or certain vulnerability, and coping capacity criteria supported by an understanding of hazard and seasonality mapping.

- User engagement and feedback mechanisms (CEA/AAP) and CVA two-way communication tools.

- M&E tools such as PDM and Encashment exit surveys.

- Mapping of CVA delivery mechanisms and potential partners including shock-responsive social protection.

- Pre-agreements with delivery mechanism FSP.

- CVA-integrated information management systems such as registration, data protection and recipient payment and reconciliation systems.

- CVA FAQs for NS actors and for external actors.

In addition, it may be necessary to translate some of the tools from the CiE Toolkit into the local language(s) so that they are easier for staff and volunteers to use.

Overall, Area 2 is likely to require considerable investment as all processes, systems and tools are mainstreamed to include the relevant CVA elements. This should be done in line with the multi-year CVAP PoA and where additional resources are required than initially planned, this should be highlighted to decision makers in order not to slow down the CVAP investments.

NSs can ask for Movement technical support with this process and remember that all actions that require financial support should be included in the costed multi-year CVAP PoA.

Area 2 completion checklist

- CVA SOP development workshop with CVA WG members

- NS CVA SOPs developed, including CVA modalities and delivery mechanisms used by the NS

- NS CVA SOPs disseminated across the NS with relevant NHQ and branch staff and volunteers

- Roles and responsibilities for CVA included in SOPs

- CVA SOP training developed and rolled out

- All NS systems (finance and accounting, human resources, information and data management, logistics and procurement, resource mobilisation, security, and monitoring and evaluation) need to include appropriate CVA elements to enable scalable, accountable and timely CVA

- The NS has appropriate equipment and IT systems for CVA implementation

- NS CVA-specific tools developed using CiE Toolkit

- NS CVA mainstreamed into existing disaster management tools

Photo © IFRC/Raefah Makki

Area 3 – Financial and Human Resources and Capacities

Area Overview

Adequate financial and human resources must be in place to support effective CVA capacity building. In terms of funding, Area 2 covers the systems for processing CVA payments. Area 3 includes financial resources in terms of the capacity to access available funding for CVA implementation, including the appropriate funding release processes and funding replenishment that can respond to emergencies and development contexts.

In terms of human resources, Area 1 identified the need to have a dedicated NS CVA Focal Point and a CVA WG appointed and financed to lead the CVAP processes. Additional human resource capacity investments will be required. Area 2 has identified the need to clarify roles and responsibilities for CVA in SOPs, which must be reflected in job descriptions and in the rolling out of SOPs.

Area 3 therefore involves identifying current staff and volunteer capacity and identifying the additional investments required for CVAP. Mapping of CVA competencies of programme and support service staff and volunteers helps to identify areas that require strengthening through suitable capacity-building plans, which include a combination of on-the-job learning, peer-to-peer learning and training approaches. These must be addressed through in-house skill development approaches and complement the HR systems for recruitment and retention of external CVA expertise covered in Area 2.

Area 3 Components

Area 3 Financial and Human Resources and Capacities aims and deliverables

Area 3 Main Aims:

To ensure NS funding available for CVA is released in a timely manner and that staff and volunteers' CVA capacity development needs are identified and addressed with appropriate levels of funding.

Area 3 Components				
Component 3.1 Funding availability, release and replenishment	**Component 3.2 CVA human resource capacity analysis**	**Component 3.3 CVA skills and capacity – leadership and decision makers**	**Component 3.4 CVA skills and capacity – programme staff**	**Component 3.5 CVA skills and capacity - support services staff**
- CVA-specific funding release and replenishment capacity	- Staff CVA competencies mapping and HR gap analysis and capacity building plans	- CVA knowledge and skills for decision-making	- CVA appropriateness and feasibility capacity - CVA response options and design capacity - CVA implementation capacity - CVA monitoring capacity	- HR CVA scale-up capacity - Finance and cash flow CVA scale-up capacity - Financial resource mobilisation CVA scale-up capacity - Logistics and procurement CVA scale-up capacity - ICT CVA scale-up capacity - Security CVA scale-up capacity
Area 3 Deliverables				
- CVA funding release and replenishment processes established	- CVA competencies mapping and HR gap analysis - Staff and volunteer capacity building plan(s) developed including training and other capacity building approaches applied	- Awareness-raising events and workshops to support leadership to navigate the CVA context and key strategic issues	- Job descriptions for each NS function revised to include CVA-specific tasks - Trainings developed or adapted from Movement standard ones - Trainings conducted - Learning by doing opportunities identified	- Job descriptions for each NS function revised to include CVA-specific tasks - Trainings developed or adapted from Movement standard ones - Trainings conducted - Learning by doing opportunities identified

Area 3 Financial and Human Resources and Capacities aims and deliverables

Component 3.1 CVA funding availability release and replenishment processes

Experience has shown that the timely release of funds for CVA implementation is a key element in a speedy response. Financial systems may be in place for implementing CVA, but the release of these funds is not always as speedy as required, delaying implementation. Earmarking funds for CVA early action and implementation is a good way to ensure speed. For more information please refer to the Cash-based Early Action chapter of the FbF manual[8]. The ability to use these funds and replenish them through additional resource mobilisation systems covered in Area 2 are key.

The following actions are suggested:

- Identify cash transfer values for early action and immediate implementation based on existing information and experience. These can be updated as more information becomes available.

- Identify sign-off and release amounts and timelines for the use of these funds, and simplify the associated processes ensuring funds are pre-positioned as locally as possible.

- Identify replenishment mechanisms that can ensure these funds are readily available for future early action and implementation of CVA.

Photo © George Osodi

Component 3.2 CVA human resource capacity analysis

NSs have vast experience in developing their staff and volunteer capacity in line with their vision and strategy, and should ensure CVA capacity development is identified, financed and implemented as a part of this. Experience has shown that developing a structured CVA human resource capacity building plan that includes a step-by-step approach to investing in NS staff and volunteers is key to mainstreaming CVA capacity in a NS and keeping a realistic overview of what can be achieved. The following actions are suggested:

- Carry out a CVA capacities mapping of all staff and volunteers.

- Identify capacity gaps in CVA skills and competencies.

- Develop a capacity building plan that identifies how in-house skills and competencies will be strengthened.

- Identify which skills must be acquired through external recruitment processes.

- Finance the CVA capacity building plan and roll it out.

The Movement CVA Technical Competency Framework identifies the skills required for NS staff and volunteers to perform tasks along the disaster management cycle.

The CVA Organisational Capacity Self-Assessment in Area 1 can be complemented with a more in-depth CVA capacity building plan for staff and volunteers from the NS departments. The plan should define the best approaches to building capacities, which are likely to include skills training, peer-to-peer learning with colleagues from the NS and potentially from other NS, and coaching and mentoring.

Box 6. Characteristics of an effective NS CVA capacity building plan

- Maintaining updated job descriptions for roles involving CVA based on CVA competencies. Refer to the IFRC surge CVA roles and standard Job Descriptions (JDs) as well as those from other NSs.

- Maintaining an updated database of CVA capacity by NS department and function.

- Identifying NS staff and volunteers who can deliver CVA-related training, act as mentors/coaches and offer on-the-job training opportunities to as many NS staff and volunteers as possible.

- Identifying CVA-related training materials that can be accessed online and making them available in the working language of staff and volunteers.

- Ensuring that CVA-related trainings are tailored for different audiences such as leadership and decision makers, programme staff and volunteers and support services staff and volunteers – for instance, decision makers will need different competencies.

- Rewarding staff and volunteers who actively take online training courses as part of their capacity development.

- Identifying staff and volunteers who can be put forward for Movement CVA-specific trainings such as Practical Emergency Cash Transfer (PECT) training, Market Assessment and Analysis Training (MAAT) or external CVA WG trainings and ensuring they present a small workshop to colleagues around the main training content.

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[8] Cash-based Early Action chapter of the FbF manual: https://manual.forecast-based-financing.org/chapter/cash-based-early-action

The Movement has developed a number of templates included in the CiE Toolkit, as well as specific capacity-building materials, mainly in the form of training materials[9] that the NS can access and adapt. External courses and opportunities also exist through in-country organisations and networks, more information can be found through the Cash Learning Partnership[10].

Further technical support can be requested from the IFRC Region and Geneva and any Movement regional CVA WG.

Once the CVA capacity building plan has been developed, it must be financed and rolled out. Capacity building opportunities must be seized and a systematic rolling out of training and mentoring activities must take place in all relevant NS departments.

Component 3.3 CVA skills and capacity – Leadership and decision makers

Area 1 emphasised the importance of achieving leadership buy-in and commitment for CVAP from the start. Organising awareness-raising events and supporting leadership to navigate the CVA context and key issues is crucial to ensuring the necessary level of understanding for decision-making around CVA. These awareness-raising sessions should provide knowledge for decision-making. The IFRC guidance on engaging leadership[11] on CVA is a good starting point.

Component 3.4 CVA skills and capacity – Programme staff
Component 3.5 CVA skills and capacity – Support services staff and volunteers

Components 3.4 and 3.5 should be approached in similar ways and should be costed and included in the CVAP PoA. The following actions are suggested:

- Develop job descriptions for each NS function that include CVA-specific tasks.
- Ensure CVA SOPs reflect the roles and responsibilities for each function.
- Develop competency assessment frameworks that include CVA-specific competencies.
- Create skills development plans for each NS role with a CVA function that outline potential learning and development options.

Programme staff and volunteers must be upskilled in all programme cycle-related CVA-specific skills. Support service staff and volunteers must be upskilled in the application of systems, tools and processes that support CVA implementation.

NSs must ascertain their in-house training capacity in order to be able to design and roll out these trainings. While material exists within the Movement, it may need to be adapted to the NS context and language.

Overall, Area 3 involves identifying the relevant CVA funding capacities and the human resource capacities required for CVA implementation. Timely funding availability and staff and volunteers with adequate skills and competencies will enable better-quality CVA implementation. The mainstreaming of CVA roles and responsibilities into job descriptions and in staff skills development plans will enable a NS to increase its CVAP in Area 3. Area 5 provides more guidance on how staff and volunteers can learn by doing.

Area 3 completion checklist

- CVA funding release and replenishment processes established to enable CVA early action and implementation.

- CVA competencies mapping and HR gap analysis

- CVA staff and volunteer capacity development plan

- Delivery of CVA trainings tailored to different target groups

- CVA capacity building plan for leadership

- CVA capacity building plan for programme staff and volunteers

- CVA capacity building plan for support services staff and volunteers

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[9] Training materials can be found in the Training and Development section of the Cash Hub platform: www.cash-hub.org/training-and-development
[10] Cash Learning Partnership: www.cashlearning.org
[11] IFRC guidance on engaging leadership: www.cash-hub.org/-/media/cashhub-documents/guidance-and-tools

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Area 4 – Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA), Coordination and Partnership

Area Overview

Area 4 looks at how the National Society engages with internal and external actors in its CVA activities.

Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) is central to CVA implementation and requires the establishing of robust and safe two-way communication mechanisms that can be used to provide information to affected communities as well as gather information from them.

Coordination and partnership is another key element of Area 4 that helps ensure a coherent approach among CVA responders working in the same area, and also minimise security risk and other risks, such as market inflation. Effective coordination with external actors includes taking part in common CVA platforms and coordination structures. Internal coordination and partnerships within the National Society and within the Movement promote a better understanding of the context, unmet needs and CVA-specific delivery options. This maximises resources and promotes shared learning about CVAP and implementation.

The final element in Area 4 is the external partnerships that a National Society develops with non-Movement actors, such as with governments for social protection. These are important to promote sharing of resources and knowledge and to combine the strengths of different partners to support more effective CVA responses.

Area 4 Components

Area 4 Human resources and capacities CVAP aims and deliverables

Area 4 Main Aim

To ensure CVAP and implementation keeps the needs of affected populations at the forefront of the NS response and that the capacity of the multiple CVA stakeholders is maximised through coordination and partnership mechanisms that strengthen the NS CVA response.

Area 4 Components				
Component 4.1 **Two-way communication with affected communities**	**Component 4.2** **Internal Coordination**	**Component 4.3** **Internal Partnerships**	**Component 4.4** **External Coordination**	**Component 4.5** **External Partnerships**
- Communication to affected communities on CVA - Affected community involvement in programme cycle - Feedback and complaint mechanisms	- National coordination - Movement coordination	- Partnerships with Movement Partners	- Local involvement - Regional/global coordination and collaboration - Receptiveness	- Partnerships with external actors - Social protection links with government
Area 4 Deliverables				
- CEA/Two-way communication materials and systems for complaints and feedback mechanisms developed - Documented CVA FAQs sheet	- Contributions to the NS CVAP PoA from all partners noted in one plan - Coordination processes included in CVA SOPs - Internal coordination mechanism established	- Existing and potential CVA partnerships with other Movement components mapped - CVA partners engaged in key CVAP planning and learning activities	- Documented CVA FAQs sheet - Participation in the national CVA WG - Participation in regional and global coordination initiatives	- CVA potential external partnerships mapped and analysed, including potential linkages with social protection - Partnerships with external actors (as appropriate)

Component 4.1 Community engagement and accountability

Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) engages communities in dialogue by managing the information both sent to and received from affected communities and integrating their feedback into programme decision-making processes. Experience has shown that NSs engaged in CVA who establish effective two-way communications systems with affected communities face fewer bottlenecks during CVA implementation and are better placed to address risk management issues. The Movement places an important emphasis on CEA for all its responses (CEA Toolkit[12]).

The following actions are suggested for CVAP to incorporate CEA:

- Establish trust, manage expectations and encourage participation and collaboration by providing clear and timely information about the CVA response, such as who is being targeted and why, transfer timings, and duration of the response.

- Collect information and feedback from recipient communities using different channels.

- Identify robust, safe, user-friendly feedback and complaints systems that are accessible by all members of the community.

- Harness community support by managing expectations (Roadmap for Beneficiary Communication and Accountability[13]).

- Also see Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) documents on the IFRC Community Engagement Hub[14].

Component 4.2 Internal Coordination

It is important that NSs engaging in CVA implementation allocate time and human resources to support internal and external coordination efforts.

National coordination for CVA involves ensuring coordination between relevant departments or between NHQ and branches and between NHQ is in place and effective. Movement coordination for CVA involves maintaining links with NS, IFRC and ICRC in the region as part of CVAP. In addition, the Movement offers CVAP support through the CPWG, which coordinates technical CVA expertise and makes outputs available to all NSs. These should be accessed and used as part of CVAP work. NS CVA focal points should remain mindful of CVA-specific initiatives in the region.

Component 4.3 Internal Partnerships

NS partnerships with Movement partners will be diverse and range from short to longer-term partnerships. Experience has shown that for CVAP, partnerships offering both technical and financial support for CVA should be considered.

Component 4.4 External Coordination

External coordination is required to access and contribute to information sharing around situation and needs assessment and analysis, including CVA feasibility around market function, risk analysis and the preferences of crisis affected communities. CVA coordination, such as through national CVA WGs, is also key to programme design in terms of setting the value of the cash transfer, looking at delivery mechanism options, negotiating with FSPs, and refining targeting and monitoring approaches. Coordination bodies in humanitarian responses will usually be organised by sector, where CVA is a response option modality, and CVA WGs will often be set up for non-sector specific CVA related issues. The NS CVA focal point and other relevant staff should regularly participate in any national and regional CVA coordination meetings when possible and where they exist as part of their CVAP activities and should aspire to take on a coordination or chairing role.

Experience has shown that NSs do not always prioritise external coordination, even when they are implementing CVA and have specific local knowledge that other actors may not have. While in the past this has often been due to lack of human resource capacity, NSs implementing CVA are increasingly aware that participation in these fora also provides solutions to issues faced by all CVA actors. In some conflict situations where intended CVA recipients are located in areas that are not controlled by the government, the NS will have to coordinate all elements of its CVA response with those groups that maintain control.

Component 4.5 External Partnerships

NS external partnerships include not only FSPs and telecommunications companies, but also the private sector. This may include information technology and CVA systems investment. CVA delivery typically allows NSs to buy in technical know-how in areas such as information technology or service provision – e.g. delivery of CVA through FSPs. The NS should include this in their CVAP PoA.

NSs may also engage in partnerships with other humanitarian or development actors such as government line ministries when linking with social protection, local community-based actors or academic and research institutions in line with their context and vision for CVA. One typical example is when a NS is the implementing partner for a United Nations agency. Overall, CVA offers opportunities for new partnerships and the NS to be a clear partner of choice for development and humanitarian actors.

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[12] CEA Toolkit: www.communityengagementhub.org/guides-and-tools/cea-toolkit/

[13] Roadmap for Beneficiary Communication and Accountability: www.cash-hub.org/-/media/ cashhub-documents/guidance-and-tools/cash-in-emergency-toolkit/set-up-and-implementation/ bca/2-roadmap.docx

[14] IFRC Community Engagement Hub: www.communityengagementhub.org

The NS unique in-country role as auxiliary to the government provides significant partnership entry points for working with national and local governments in disaster response as well as with social protection systems. Relevant resources can be found on the Cash and Social Protection web page[15], on the Cash Hub platform.

Overall, Area 4 involves a number of CVAP-related activities around building relationships with internal and external stakeholders to ensure better collaboration and coordinated use of resources and knowledge for CVA implementation. NS partnerships with both internal and external CVA stakeholders can be built over time or can result from a specific CVA implementation in response to a crisis. All NSs should invest in good CEA as part of their CVAP investments in line with best practice.

Area 4 completion checklist

- ☑ Two-way communication systems and tools developed and disseminated

- ☑ Internal coordination systems in place with both National and Movement actors

- ☑ Internal partnerships in place with Movement actors

- ☑ External coordination systems in place with external CVA actors such as national CVA WGs

- ☑ External partnerships, such as CVA-specific government and private sector identified and pursued

Area 5 – Test, Learn and Improve

Area Overview

Area 5 focuses on NS CVA capacity by testing systems, procedures and tools through simulations or pilots, or during a response involving CVA. At an individual staff level, Area 5 promotes peer-to-peer learning exchanges, both in-country as well as with other NSs, and advocates for the deployment of staff as part of National and Regional Disaster Response (NDRT/ RDRT) Teams or via CVA surge.

Internal reviews and external evaluations of CVA responses are also seen as important ways to learn lessons and help improve future CVA. CVA implementation itself is an opportunity for learning and further identifying CVAP investment needs.

All learning must be well documented and shared through the through the knowledge management platform of the NS. Documented learning can then be used to amend CVA SOPs, systems, tools and guidance as well as be shared externally to contribute to learning for CVA practitioners and stakeholders.

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[15] Cash and Social Protection web page: www.cash-hub.org/resources/cash-and-social-protection

Area 5 Components

Area 5 Test, Learn and Improve CVAP aims and deliverables

Area 5 Main Aim

To put CVAP investments to the test and document progress and priority areas for further CVAP investment and to ensure CVA implementation feeds into learning.

Area 5 Components		
Component 5.1 **Testing CVA capacity**	**Component 5.2** **CVA knowledge management**	**Component 5.3** **Reassessing CVA capacity**
- CVA testing design and funding - CVA implementation	- NS CVA peer-to-peer learning - NS CVA learning by doing with NDRT/RDRT/CVA surge - CVA learning documentation and dissemination	- CVA Organisational Capacity Self-Assessment post-testing, implementing or after-action review

Area 5 Deliverables		
- Analysis of previous CVAP and CVA implementation - CVA simulation or pilot - CVA simulation learning outcomes	- Peer-to-peer learning outcomes - CVA surge deployment outcomes - CVAP evaluation - Documented learning - Disseminated learning	- Updated CVA Organisational Capacity Self-Assessment

Component 5.1 CVA testing, design and funding

Testing allows the NS to put all their CVAP investments into practice. CVA capacity can be tested through a simulation or pilot exercise, and/or through a real CVA response. All of these require building in a learning, reviewing and documenting element so that learning is well captured and builds NS CVAP capacity further, supported by NS CVA knowledge management systems.

Experience shows that NSs who dedicate time and resources to simulations and/or pilots as part of their CVAP activities are more able to improve their processes, systems and tools. This involves planning for the simulation/pilot, implementing it and then holding a lessons-learned workshop to capture and document learning. Any planned simulation exercises or pilots should be included in the CVA or contingency planning budget. Leadership buy-in and commitment to this type of reviewing and learning is a key factor for success.

The following actions are suggested to test CVA capacity:

- Carry out simulation exercises to test CVA tools, procedures, systems, guidance, staff and volunteers, partnerships, communications and coordination.

- Invite participants from a range of internal and external stakeholders (e.g. from different departments, branches, communities, local authorities, and other organisations) to participate in simulations.

- Consider using Desktop Simulations using a selected scenario. These involve NS staff and volunteers as well as external actors and are usually carried out in an office environment through group work and discussion.

- Consider using Field Exercise Simulations using a selected scenario. These involve NS staff and volunteers as well as external actors to simulate a response and are usually carried out in a setting more similar to a real response.

- Obtain support from Movement partners and IFRC Region and Geneva by including the drafting of a mock DREF request for IFRC feedback.

- Mainstream CVA into existing simulation tools and approaches. NSs with less experience of this may use existing guidance and request additional support from IFRC/ICRC/NS to carry out simulations.

- Carry out CVA pilots in real or near-real response circumstances with a view to learning successes and areas for improvement, and then adjusting processes, systems and tools for scaling up.

- Use pilot results to transfer knowledge and skills among NHQ and branch staff and volunteers.

- Participate in an inter-agency CVA pilot through the country national CVA WG or other inter-agency joint activities.

CVA implementation

Experience has shown that NS disaster management staff and volunteers value learning by doing in real-life situations. This is most widely seen when NS staff from a different branch or NHQ work with another branch to experience directly their mode of working. This is a standard way for a NS to roll out in-house expertise. This type of learning must be budgeted for in the CVAP PoA and lessons learned must contribute to NS CVAP updates.

The following actions are suggested to test CVA capacity during actual CVA implementation:

- Peer-to-peer learning: exposing NS staff and volunteers to the way their peers work in other NSs is a very practical means of skills development.

- NSs can offer to "host" peers from other NSs and incorporate them into CVAP activities or CVA implementation.

- NSs can send staff to other NSs (usually in the same region) to take part in CVAP activities or implementation.

- CVA surge response: expose NS staff and volunteers to ways of working during a CVA surge response so they work alongside Movement staff with CVA expertise.

- Allocate a dedicated staff member to work alongside the incoming CVA surge member with a specific focus on learning by doing.

- Propose a RDRT/NDRT/CVA-trained staff member to work alongside a CVA expert in the response – also known as shadowing.

Learning through CVA responses has proved to be the most popular and successful approach to capacity building and learning as participants are able to:

- work alongside more experienced CVA practitioners.

- test systems, processes and tools in simulated or real environments.

- discuss what works and what needs improving based on real examples.

This then allows the individual to make concrete recommendations on how to improve, refine and adapt NS CVA tools, procedures and templates to their local context and have a better understanding of the real CVA operational capacity and readiness of the NS.

Box 7. Good opportunities for learning by doing

Integrating CVA into:

- vulnerability capacity assessments.

- risk and hazard mapping.

- market and key commodity mapping.

- assessment of potential cash transfer modalities and delivery mechanisms.

- population preferences.

- CEA in action.

- targeting approaches (geographical/vulnerability based).

- calculating cash grant values per sector.

- encashment planning.

- CVA distributions.

- reconciliation within NS and with partners/FSPs.

- National Society HR capacities database analysis.

- NS and with partners/FSP.

- CVA early action simulations and activities

Component 5.2 CVA Knowledge management

Once implementation of the simulation/pilot is complete, a one-day lessons-learned workshop should be held with all participants and NS decision makers. The workshop will identify successes and challenges seen from the differing viewpoints of staff, volunteers and external actors, and thereby contribute to making recommendations for improvements to NS CVAP processes, systems and tools. Experience shows that these workshops are highly valued by simulation and pilot participants as they allow time for reflection and agreement on ways forward.

The following actions are suggested for CVA knowledge management:

- Hold a workshop to discuss what went well and what could be improved after every CVA implementation.

- Document lessons-learned on CVA implementation.

- Disseminate learning workshop findings and recommendations across the NS in order to promote additional CVA capacity building.

- Consider sharing and promoting good practice and learning from the CVAP experience, both internally to Movement partners and externally to other actors and networks.

- Use the Cash Hub platform to share case studies, webinars and audio-visual materials to disseminate CVA implementation learning (writing to: contact@cash-hub.org).

- Include funding for CVA-specific knowledge management in the CVAP PoA, which should also include resources to translate materials.
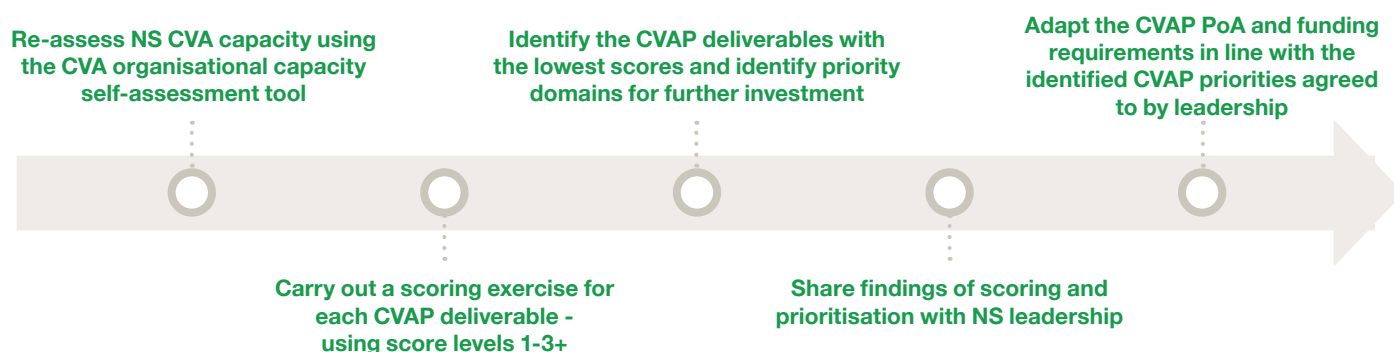
Component 5.3 Re-assessing CVA capacity

NSs should reassess their CVA capacity every time it is tested, especially if a NS is coming to the end of a NS CVAP project, as a way of obtaining a realistic measure of their level of CVAP. The most inclusive approach to internally reviewing NS CVAP is through a participatory lesson-learning workshop led by the NS CVA focal point and CVA WG.

This will allow the NS to:

- Identify areas of CVA-related progress in line with the CVA Organisational Capacity Self-Assessment Tool.

- Identify existing CVA capacity gaps.

- Update the NS CVAP PoA.

- Present findings to NS leadership and decision makers to elicit buy-in for further CVAP investment.

- Use these for resource mobilisation.

Figure 4. Reassessing CVAP organisational capacity – a participatory lessons-learned workshop

Re-assess NS CVA capacity using the CVA organisational capacity self-assessment tool

Identify the CVAP deliverables with the lowest scores and identify priority domains for further investment

Adapt the CVAP PoA and funding requirements in line with the identified CVAP priorities agreed to by leadership

Carry out a scoring exercise for each CVAP deliverable - using score levels 1-3+

Share findings of scoring and prioritisation with NS leadership

This exercise allows the NS to discuss areas for prioritisation in order to progress within a level, to consolidate and sustain capacity at a certain level or move up the Movement CVA Operational Levels in line with the NS CVA vision and strategy. Whilst scale may change from response to response or from year to year, the NS should seek to improve and sustain their results in relation to the quality and timeliness indicators. Further guidance on measuring CVAP and Movement CVA Operational Levels can be found in Chapter Three.

Overall, Area 5 is the practical application of CVAP investments to date with a view to testing and refining. Learning from CVA implementation in a simulation or real implementation context can be maximised if it is documented and disseminated so that further CVAP investments can be prioritised.

Area 5 completion checklist

- ✓ NS CVA simulation or pilot planned, budgeted and implemented

- ✓ NS peer-to-peer learning opportunity in-country/in another country identified, budgeted and complete

- ✓ NS learning-by-doing opportunity during CVA surge response identified, budgeted and complete

- ✓ NS CVA lessons-learned workshop held

- ✓ NS lessons and good practice documented and disseminated internally and externally

- ✓ NS CVA capacity assessment and gap analysis carried out by CVA focal point and CVA WG

- ✓ NS has scored its CVAP deliverables using levels 1-3+

- ✓ NS with CVA implementation experience to measure their operational level using the Movement Operational Indicators and contribute this data to the Movement (See Chapter 3 for more information)

- ✓ NS CVA SOPs, tools, processes and guidance amended based on the recommendations of those involved in peer-to-peer learning and surge responses

- ✓ NS CVA multi-year preparedness PoA updated to incorporate changes in capacity

- ✓ NS leadership is fully updated on the CVAP process to date