

## Guidance for Information Management in Cash and Voucher Assistance Preparedness

CVA Information Management (CVA IM) is a support service for cash practitioners and stakeholders implementing CVA to ensure efficient, quality, and accountable delivery of assistance using data and vital information to make informed, evidence-based, strategic, and operational decisions. CVA IM is an integral focus area for cash preparedness, incorporating the data and information flows and technology systems (e.g., data management) to support the CVA processes safely and effectively handling large amounts of data of affected people. With more and more National Societies providing CVA as a modality for assistance, the need for robust IM tools and systems to deliver effective, timely, scalable, and quality CVA, and competencies to use them, is crucial.

### Incorporating IM capacities into CVA

Some National Societies are already working to optimize IM tools and systems in an effort to more effectively use quality and timely information in humanitarian operations and programs. These investments could be used as the foundation for CVA IM. And vice versa, if investments are made to strengthen CVA IM, they are very well useful for other forms of assistance also. The main differentiating factor is how the methodologies and tools are contextualized in a CVA intervention, and where data products and analysis will touch on the deliverables required in the CVA lifecycle (e.g., preparing a payment file to send to financial service providers or analyzing market data to advise feasibility).

Investment in CVA IM does not require more resources or specializations than investment in standard IM. Rather, it's about leveraging existing IM competencies and systems within your National Society to ensure they meet the demands of a CVA intervention. As your National Society prepares to deliver CVA, here are some considerations that may help you understand your existing IM competencies and resources in relation to the minimum IM needs for a CVA intervention.

### Processes

1. **Understand your National Society's ambition in terms of scale, timeliness, and quality for CVA:** Your National Society should consider their priorities, goals, and expectations for CVA. Does your National Society wish to implement a small scale, one-off CVA intervention to provide relief for those affected by house fires or seasonal flooding, or do you anticipate a large-scale disaster occurring every 3-5 years? The data systems and IM human resource needs for these two situations would be different, so your ambition and goals will inform your CVAP action plan. It is advisable to start small and incrementally build capacities via CVA pilots.
2. **Assess IM competencies, resources, and processes for application in CVA:** Likewise, your National Society should consider your *existing* IM capacities and resources to determine the scale of CVA that is feasible. Your first step may be to undergo the CVAP Self-Assessment. National Societies utilize the CVAP Self-Assessment, promoted by IFRC and the Cash Peer Working Group, to

understand their strengths and limitations on critical areas of cash operations. This assessment can be an opportunity to take a deeper dive into the IM elements that support cash activities, even when they are not explicitly mentioned in the CVAP assessment areas. In the next section of this document, you will find a list of questions related to IM that you can review during the CVAP assessment to ensure that IM needs are being considered.

3. **Analyze existing data flows:** Either as part of a formal CVAP or as a standalone CVAP activity, your National Society is recommended to map the existing data flows and processes, clearly articulating each phase of the CVA lifecycle. If one of these elements is not in place, or does not meet your National Society's needs for CVA, it should be incorporated into your CVAP action plan. If the National Society is already providing other forms of assistance, this process could be used as a baseline to incorporate CVA specific actions. For example, an in-kind relief distribution standard operating procedure (SOP) might produce a list of beneficiaries assessed according to a set of targeting or vulnerability criteria. Such a list can then be extended to also include a reference to the cash entitlements that they are eligible for (cash amounts might differ depending on size of household).
4. **Review the need for digital systems such as a CVA Data Management System:** Your National Society may be at a point where you would like to review options for digital tools that could help improve efficiency particularly when dealing with large scale data. Resources are available to support your National Society to identify an appropriate data system, adapt it to your needs and priorities, pilot it, and institutionalize it for a CVA program. A helpful general resource is the IFRC's Digital Maturity Assessment. This assessment helps map how a National Society utilizes its people, processes, and technology to optimize operations and adapt to humanitarian needs. Although not specific to CVA, this resource can help identify minimum requirements that could enable digital tools. Specifically for selecting CVA data management systems, a *data management tool selection framework* is being developed to help select from a list based on commercially available products, context, and basic requirements for CVA. Examples of data management solutions used for CVA are: RedRose, RC2Relief, 121, and EspoCRM. The Cash IM technical working group<sup>1</sup> can also be consulted for different tools used in the Movement. Additional resources are available including the RedRose [toolkit](#) available on the Cash Hub.

## Resources

**Human Resources:** Staff/volunteers involved in CVA activities must have a foundational level knowledge of data collection and management to ensure responsible handling of data. Select individuals should also have more advanced technical knowledge on operating a data management system, interacting with financial service provider data systems, and performing data quality checks to identify duplicate or fraudulent cases and ensure timely delivery of CVA to eligible people. These human resources can help to put in place a clear flow of information during an emergency operation, including documentation for audit purposes. IM considerations related to CVAP could include:

- Providing foundational level knowledge of data responsibility relevant to data collection and data management to ensure that data

---

<sup>1</sup> Co-Chairs: Joseph Oliveros ([joseph.oliveros@ifrc.org](mailto:joseph.oliveros@ifrc.org)) and Ashley Schmeltzer ([ashley.schmeltzer@redcross.org](mailto:ashley.schmeltzer@redcross.org))

- particularly of affected people is secure and handled responsibly
- In cases where needed, ensuring at least one person within the National Society has advanced technical knowledge on operating a data management system. Where possible, a person with IT proficiency should be responsible for setting up and operating the data management system, while a separate IM profile would be responsible for data processes.
- Providing other targeted trainings based on IM needs identified by the National Society (ex. Systems interoperability with FSP, data cleaning and quality checks, etc.)

To review your National Society’s CVA IM human resource capacity, consider the following questions. If you check the box for “no”, refer to the column which links you with resources to learn more, and suggested activities that could be included in your CVAP Plan of Action. You can also contact the CVA IM Technical Working Group for additional technical support.

CVAP IM Question	Check if element is in place		Resource	Suggested activities if element is not in place
	Yes	No		
<b>CVAP Assessment Area 1. Leadership Commitment</b>				
Is leadership willing to dedicate sufficient staff time and/or financial resources to address CVA data needs highlighted by programmatic staff?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<a href="#">IFRC Data Playbook: Module 2: Nurturing a Data Culture</a>  <a href="#">Data Readiness Toolkit</a> <sup>2</sup>	Suggest that CVA focal points complete a CVA Data Management training to understand the critical data management elements needed for a successful program. This would bring higher quality data management skills into the CVA program without having to hire an additional IM focal point or data manager. Contact the CVA IM Technical Working for more information on upcoming trainings.
<b>CVAP Assessment Area 2. Processes, Systems, and Tools</b>				
Is there a plan or process in place to collect and use secondary data in real-time for a CVA program?  <i>Examples: market assessments, 4Ws, damage data</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Minimum Standards for Using Excel for Data Management, American Red Cross	The following learning topics could be incorporated into a coaching plan for CVA and/or data or IM focal points in order to improve availability of and access to high quality data that can be used to inform decisions: - Digital storage of CVA program documents
Is there a standardized, documented process for cleaning data from the affected population with proper	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<a href="#">IFRC Data Playbook</a>	

<sup>2</sup> As part of the Data Readiness Toolkit, there are [guidelines](#) to help a National Society understand the IM elements that, if strengthened, could also support more efficient and effective cash operations.

tracking of any changes?			<a href="#">Practical Guidance for Data Protection in Cash and Voucher Assistance (Cash Hub)</a>  <a href="#">CaLP Data Responsibility Toolkit: A Guide for Cash and Voucher Practitioners</a>  <a href="#">Cash Hub Recommended Trainings</a> (Organized by topic)  <a href="#">SIMS Learning Platform</a> (for IM topics such as mobile data collection, mapping, and visualization)  <a href="#">Fundamentals of Field Surveys (IFRC Learning Platform)</a>  <a href="#">Deep.io</a> for secondary data collection and analysis  <a href="#">Introduction to the Data Entry and Exploration Platform (DEEP)</a>  <a href="#">Secondary Data Review and Analysis</a> (IFRC Learning Platform)	and data - A standardized, documented process for cleaning data with proper tracking of any changes -Incorporating regular data backup into data management SOPs -Proper protections and protocols in place for protecting sensitive CVA data -Creating visual representations of programmatic data (using PowerBI, QGIS, or other relevant tool) - Secondary data management and analysis using DEEP (free course available on Kaya called Introduction to the Data Entry and Exploration Platform)
Does the CVA program have any stored secondary data sets that would assist with more rapid planning during an emergency?  <i>Examples: household income data, vulnerability data, population data, market prices, social protection scheme information</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Is it clear which CVA activities require primary data to be collected, and the method in which to do so?  <i>For example, what are the protocols for collecting exit survey data (tools, standard questions, sampling etc)?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Does the CVA program provide any visual representations of programmatic data (ie charts, graphs, maps)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Are visual representations of CVA programmatic data created within 1 week of the data being collected?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<b>CVAP Assessment Area 3. Financial and Human Resources and Capacities</b>				
Do CVA staff make use of organizational IM and/or IT staff expertise that is available?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<a href="#">Data Readiness Toolkit</a> <sup>1</sup>  <a href="#">SIMS Learning Platform</a> (for IM topics such as mobile data collection, mapping, and visualization)  <a href="#">Data and Digital Literacy</a>	Skills mapping to identify the technical capacities and program skills of existing staff and match them up with data roles during a CVA operation. For example, who will be responsible for developing/adapting the survey form? Who will be responsible for identifying the targeted population and ensuring appropriate representation of
Is there at least one staff member or dedicated volunteer tasked with supporting the collection and management of CVA data?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Are the needs, market, vulnerability, geographic and	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		

<p>monitoring data collected able to be understood by CVA staff to make programmatic design decisions?</p>			<p><a href="#">Introduction Course</a> (IFRC and 510, hosted by Cruz Roja Española. Sign up for free registration.)</p> <p><a href="#">Excel Learning Courses: Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced</a> (Disaster Ready - sign up for free account)</p>	<p>vulnerable populations? Who will be responsible for creating the XLSForms and configuring mobile devices for data collection? Who will be responsible for live monitoring of data? Who will be responsible for developing data dashboards, maps, and other information products? Following the skills mapping, roles and responsibilities should be clearly defined and communicated. If there are capacity gaps identified during the skills mapping, those skills could be sought through either new staff recruitment, dedicated volunteer recruitment, or external technical support from a partner National Society.</p> <p>Data protection standards should be developed and disseminated to all staff and volunteers working on CVA operations.</p> <p>Data management coaching for relevant staff and volunteers.</p> <p>Conduct review of existing monitoring tools and hold workshop on identifying monitoring criteria. In this workshop identify which monitoring tools/systems need updating and which can be formalized as is. Ensure that up-to-date monitoring tools are stored in a centralized location where CVA program staff have easy access during emergencies.</p>
--	--	--	---	---

**Financial Resources:** There are financial resources associated with establishing a data management system, for example, RedRose. Even open-source data management solutions (like ODK and Kobo) require some financial investment in order to meet technical and data protection standards. Investing in a flexible data management system can also benefit your National Society’s other sectoral activities that generate data. IM considerations related to CVAP could include:

- Understanding cost implications of setting up and maintaining a data system
- Looking for comprehensive systems that could be used not just for CVA but also for in-kind and services provision, in order to fully benefit from the investments

To review your National Society’s CVA IM financial resource capacity, consider the following questions. If you check the box for “no”, refer to the column which links you with resources to learn more, and suggested activities that could be included in your CVAP Plan of Action. You can also contact the CVA IM Working Group for additional technical support.

CVAP IM Question	Check if element is in place		Resource	Suggested activities if element is not in place
	Yes	No		
<b>CVAP Assessment Area 2. Processes, Systems, and Tools</b>				
Does the National Society have funds to invest in establishing an operational data system, if one does not already exist?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	IFRC’s data management tool selection framework ( <i>coming soon</i> )	Review IFRC’s data management tool selection framework to identify some options for a data system that meet the organization’s needs, priorities, and resources. Going through the Digital Maturity Assessment may also provide valuable guidance to the organization about the investment case for an operational data system and what is possible within the organization’s resources.
Does the National Society have funds for the ongoing costs associated with an operational data system, including server and hosting fees, technical support, and maintenance costs, for example?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<a href="#">Digital Maturity Assessment</a>	

**Technology Resources:** CVA activities require an inventory of technical resources that may include mobile devices for data collection, computers and software that meet encryption and security standards, servers, and/or external hard drives. To manage this inventory of IT equipment and computer software necessary for CVA activities, your National Society should have an inventory system. For example, you should be able to track mobile devices that are functional and can be configured rapidly for staff and volunteers to conduct a needs assessment or data collection activity. IM considerations related to CVAP could include:

- Understanding the requirements and specifications for a data management system needed for a CVA program that meets National Society’s priorities
- Establishing an inventory system of IT equipment and computer software necessary for CVA activities

To review your National Society’s CVA IM technology resource capacity, consider the following questions. If you check the box for “no”, refer to the column which links you with resources to learn more. You can also contact the CVA IM Working Group for additional technical support.

CVAP IM Question	Check if element is	Resource	Suggested activities if element is
------------------	---------------------	----------	------------------------------------

	in place			not in place
	Yes	No		
<b>CVAP Assessment Area 2. Processes, Systems, and Tools</b>				
Is there a digital solution for storing data from the affected population for use during a CVA program?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<a href="https://cash-hub.org/">RedRose - Cash Hub (cash-hub.org)</a>	<p>Conduct analysis of the existing data management system to determine where components fully meet CVA preparedness and implementation needs versus only partially meet needs. Strengthen areas where gaps are identified. Document what the flow of information during an emergency operation would look like, with focus on ensuring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Digital storage of CVA program documents and data</li> <li>• Incorporating regular data backup into data management SOPs</li> <li>• Proper protections and protocols in place for protecting sensitive CVA data</li> </ul> <p>Develop inventory system of IT equipment and computer software necessary for CVA activities. For example, are there enough mobile devices that are functional and can be configured rapidly for staff and volunteers to conduct a rapid needs assessment or data collection activity? Do all relevant staff have access to the computer programs they need? Do all relevant staff have access to the data management system? The Cash IM Working Group can provide an IT checklist to use for the inventory system and provide guidance on the elements to incorporate in the system.</p> <p>Develop job aids/guidance for common</p>
Is CVA data stored in a manner that is properly backed up, and stored in multiple locations so it is not lost?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<a href="https://cash-hub.org/">Africa CoP recommended training including IM - Cash Hub (cash-hub.org)</a>	
Are there proper protections and protocols in place for protecting sensitive CVA data of affected people?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<a href="#">Digital Maturity Assessment</a>	
Is CVA data from the affected population and/or monitoring data collected through mobile phones?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<a href="#">Practical Guidance for Data Protection in Cash and Voucher Assistance (Cash Hub)</a>  <a href="#">Data responsibility toolkit and case studies - Guidance for cash and voucher practitioners - The CALP Network</a>  <a href="#">Data Responsibility Guidelines: October 2021   OCHA (unocha.org)</a>	

				challenges related to computer programs/software and IT equipment used for CVA so that staff and volunteers understand where to seek technical support for troubleshooting. This technical support could be through a peer mentoring approach if desired.
--	--	--	--	---

**CVA Program Guidance and Learning Resources:** The Cash in Emergencies Toolkit provides minimum standards, guidance and tools for each stage of the CVA activity cycle. These tools, when contextualized for your National Society, enable you to prepare for, assess, design, implement, monitor and evaluate cash programs effectively and to a global standard of quality. Your National Society should have a functioning knowledge management system where relevant CVA standards, guidance, and tools are stored and accessible to CVA staff and volunteers. IM considerations related to CVAP could include:

- Identifying a clear flow of information during an emergency operation, including documentation for audit purposes
- Establishing a functioning knowledge management system where relevant CVA standards, guidance, and tools are stored and accessible to CVA staff and volunteers

To review your National Society’s CVA IM program guidance and learning resource capacity, consider the following questions. If you check the box for “no”, refer to the column which links you with resources to learn more, and suggested activities that could be included in your CVAP Plan of Action. You can also contact the CVA IM Working Group for additional technical support.

CVAP IM Question	Check if element is in place		Resource	Suggested activities if element is not in place
	Yes	No		
<b>CVAP Assessment Area 2. Processes, Systems, and Tools</b>				
Are comprehensive, institutionalized CVA SOPs in place that properly account for all activities, inclusive of data approaches referenced in this document?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<a href="#">Cash in Emergencies Toolkit</a> <a href="#">Data Readiness Toolkit</a>	Develop knowledge management system with clear SOP templates and job aids for: 1) market assessment, 2) needs assessment/affected population preference, 3) risk analysis, 4) secondary data sets (availability,
Are templates to carry out all relevant activities referenced in CVA SOPs available?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<a href="#">Cash Hub Key Documents</a> <a href="#">SIMS Data Collection and</a>	



<p>Are CVA SOPs, programmatic documents and non-sensitive data stored in a centralized place where relevant staff can access them easily?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><a href="#">Survey Design documents</a>, including <a href="#">Example XLS form</a></p>	<p>collection, and analysis), and 5) analysis of information to decide whether or not to move forward with CVA (response analysis).</p>
<p>Are there pre-agreed survey templates for primary data collection activities in CVA programs that have been made available and coded into mobile data collection format, if relevant?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<p>Some of these materials exist from other CVA operations, and they can be adapted for your National Society's context rather than starting from scratch. When new relevant staff/volunteers start, they should be oriented to each one of these SOPs. A point person could be designated to monitor compliance with SOPs and identify when formal trainings need to take place.</p>
<p><b>CVAP Assessment Area 4. Accountability to Affected Populations, Coordination, and Partnerships</b></p>				
<p>Is there an agreed upon report template that is populated for leadership and donors on CVA operations?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>TBD</p>	<p>Discuss with leadership, donors, and other stakeholders the key data points they would each like to see related to the CVA program/operations. Discuss as a team what is feasible to provide and on what basis it is achievable to provide this information consistently. Create a workflow that includes the roles and responsibilities of team members to prepare the report and by what date. The report template can start out in a simple format, and grow in detail once additional details are requested by the various stakeholders.</p>
<p>Is the aforementioned report created for key stakeholders within a timely manner?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		