Roadmap for assessment

## INTRODUCTION

The immediate aftermath of a shock is a critical period, when quick understanding of the strategic humanitarian priorities is needed to support decisions on how to best meet the needs of the affected population. During this period, there is generally limited quality information on the impact, scale and severity of the shock. An emergency assessment is therefore required and should provide an understanding of:

* the general contextual information around the disaster and the affected population, the most affected groups, and the most affected areas
* the essential multi-sector needs of the affected population, in terms of food and non-food items, hygiene, shelter, water and sanitation, health, education, etc.
* the physical disruption and capacity of markets and infrastructure to supply essential goods and services
* whether or not (and how) the affected population can access them
* the gap between the needs and the capacity of the affected population to cover these needs without resorting to negative coping strategies.

An emergency assessment will normally take one week or less, and should be followed by a detailed assessment. The assessment should preferably be inter-sectorial and involve discussion and consensus among the key stakeholders around key findings and decisions. These results will inform the response analysis, which should consider the possibility of a broad range of assistance modalities, including not only in-kind, but also cash, particularly multipurpose grants, from the beginning.

The CiE Toolkit assessment module will focus on helping practitioners to integrate cash-specific issues into their regular emergency assessment processes and tools. The steps and sub-steps suggested are not necessarily sequential, and even can take place simultaneously. Each sub-step is associated with tools, and the outputs produced throughout the process will feed into each other. In particular, market and financial assessment will benefit from information gathered at community level.

Steps, sub-steps and tools can be adapted for use in different types of assessment and contexts, by different organizations. The first step is aimed at supporting the planning and preparation for a cash-sensitive assessment. The second step is aimed at supporting the collection of cash-specific information in shock-affected communities and households. The third step is aimed at supporting a rapid market assessment. The fourth and last step is dedicated to promoting an understanding of the capacities in place to implement cash-based interventions, and the risks associated with this type of response.

When adapting tools to your context and needs, you can access detailed guidance on assessment from the reference documents suggested at both module and step levels.

## MINIMUM STANDARDS

* Cash-specific information must be considered in any emergency assessment.
* Different departments, particularly Logistics and Finance, should collaborate in emergency assessments, as defined in the CTP standard operation procedures (SOPs).
* Decisions on the immediate feasibility of cash post- shock must be taken by staff with technical experience and expertise, and must be confirmed in the subsequent phases of the assessment and in the response analysis.
* Cash-specific information gathered at community and household levels should include: access to and use of cash, markets and financial services; beneficiary preferences; and perceived risks associated with cash.
* Community assessments should look within and beyond the household unit and consider different age, gender and diversity groups.
* The priority needs of the shock-affected population should be identified and quantified in monetary terms, using local prices.
* Market assessment should be focused on commodities, services and marketplaces that are central to households’ priority needs and livelihoods.
* Financial service providers’ capacity assessment should focus on services offered, coverage, accessibility, costs and regulation aspects
* The capacity of National Societies and partners to implement CTP timely and at-scale should be assessed.
* Risk assessment must include at least the identification of context, institutional and programmatic risks associated with a potential cash response

## STEPS AND SUB-STEPS

The CiE Toolkit suggests four steps to incorporate cash-specific issues into the assessment process, making relevant resources available.

### Plan and prepare

Initial decisions on the use of cash can be made immediately after the shock, based on information gathered directly during initial field visits or taken from contingency plans and coordination meetings. However, only a subsequent, more detailed assessment followed by response analysis can confirm what response modality will best meet the needs of the affected population in the next phases of the response.

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| When considering cash, include the possibility of using multipurpose cash grants (MPG) rather than limiting cash assistance to specific sectors (e.g. cash for food, seeds, shelter, rent). The unrestricted nature of MPG allows for meeting beneficiaries’ needs more holistically, as it increases choice and flexibility. |

In order to consider cash among the potential response modalities and mechanisms, you must ensure that your assessment is cash-sensitive. Since most assessment approaches and tools are not cash-sensitive, if you haven’t integrated cash-specific information into them during preparedness, it is likely that you will need to do this while planning and preparing for assessment. When looking for secondary data, make sure that you check which cash-specific secondary data sources are available. Finally, when mapping stakeholders, take into account those that can influence significantly or are important to the success of a potential cash intervention.

### Cash-sensitive community assessment

To make a cash-sensitive assessment, it is necessary to gather cash-specific information at community and household levels. It is particularly important to understand community and household access to and use of cash, markets and financial services, as well as their preferences and the perceived risks associated with this type of assistance. Another important component of a cash-sensitive community assessment is to quantify the priority needs of the shock-affected population in monetary terms using local prices. Quantifying the priority needs identified during the needs assessment will require market price monitoring (following step) and/or community consultation. Eventually, cash-specific community findings will be consolidated and integrated with the standard assessment report.

### Rapid market assessment

A rapid market assessment starts with the identification of key commodities and markets that are important for the affected population. The market information collected should be cross-checked with secondary data gathered during planning and preparation, as well as with information gathered at community and household levels. Market maps are suggested as a good way to represent and understand the structure of a market system. Preliminary market maps can be very helpful for identifying key informants to interview and bottlenecks to be investigated further in the field. Market findings should allow for an understanding of the market capacity to supply the shock-affected population with sufficient quantities of key commodities in a timely manner.

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| |  | | --- | | Remember that in order to consider the appropriateness of multipurpose cash grants, the market assessment should take a multi-sector approach so as to feed into the calculation of a minimum expenditure basket (MEB) and one-off needs of the affected population. | |

### Service providers, organizational capacity and risk analysis

The objective of this step is twofold: gauging the existing capacities to implement cash-based responses in time and at scale, and understanding the risks associated with cash-based responses.

Capacity assessment should focus on both on service providers’ capacity (including mobile phone operators, financial institutions, and traders) and organizational capacity (including National Society and implementing partners).

Risk analysis is a continuous process that starts during preparedness work, is conducted throughout the assessment phase at all levels (community, market, etc.) and will be updated throughout the project cycle. For this reason, the CiE Toolkit suggests the same risk analysis tools for all the different modules. These tools can be completed and updated as you move along the project phases.

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| Risk analysis should consider what are the protection-related risks, how they can be mitigated through programme design, and what are the protection-related benefits associated with CTP. |

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| REFERENCE DOCUMENTS  ICRC/IFRC (2008) Guidelines for assessment in emergencies <http://www.ifrc.org/Global/Publications/disasters/guidelines/guidelines-emergency.pdf>  IFRC (2007) How to do a VCA A practical step-by-step guide for Red Cross Red Crescent staff and volunteers [http://www.ifrc.org/Global/Publications/disasters/vca/how-to-do-vca-en.pdf](http://www.ifrc.org/Global/Publications/disasters/vca/how-to-do-vca-en.pdf )  Good Practice Review: Cash Transfer Programming in Emergencies. Humanitarian Practice Network (2011) <http://www.odihpn.org/documents%2Fgpr11.pdf>  UNHCR (2015) *Operational Guidance and Toolkit for Multipurpose Cash Grants*. <http://www.cashlearning.org/mpg-toolkit/>  ECHO (2015) *Common Principles for Multi-Purpose Cash-Based Assistance*.  <http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/sectoral/concept_paper_common_top_line_principles_en.pdf>  ICRC (2016) *ECOSEC Executive Brief on Multi-Purpose Cash Grants*.  *UNHCR (2015) Guide for Protection in Cash-based Interventions.* <http://www.cashlearning.org/downloads/erc-guide-for-protection-in-cash-based-interventions-web.pdf> |