# **Background**

The Red Cross Red Crescent (RCRC) has been working in rental assistance programming for a number of years and in different regions across the globe. These Standard Operating Procedures (SoPs) were initially developed in 2023 to capitalise on the guidance, process and tools developed to date, with a stronger focus on the experience of delivering Rental Assistance in the Bahamas (Hurricane Dorian 2019 response), St Vincent and the Grenadines (La Soufriere volcanic eruption 2021) and Slovakia and Poland (2022-2023 Ukraine population movement response). Documents have been gathered and organised to assist RCRC staff and volunteers to increase the speed of implementation and timeliness of support, and to assist with the delivery of rental assistance at scale (as appropriate).

# **Audience**

The audience of these documents are the staff and volunteers of RCRC who are developing, implementing, or modifying a rental assistance programme. This includes those who should be involved in a successful rental assistance programme, including Shelter and Settlements; Migration and Displacement (M&D); Protection, Gender and Inclusion (PGI) including Safeguarding; Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA); Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA); Livelihoods; Information Management; Logistics, Finance and Operational management colleagues.

# **Definition of Rental Assistance Programming**

The following is extracted with small modifications from the definition provided in the [IFRC (2020) Step-by-step guide for rental assistance to people affected by crisis](https://cash-hub.org/resource/step-by-step-guide-for-rental-assistance-to-people-affected-by-crisis/).

Rental assistance programmes provide support to people in need[[1]](#footnote-2) of shelter and protection and uses or develops[[2]](#footnote-3) the rental housing market to meet this need. This is delivered through a number of assistance components including providing information on the housing rental market, technical support and legal advice on agreements and payments, economic support to cover its cost, and advocacy on securing access for those in need. Programmes may have a range of components and assistance can be at different levels depending on the approach adopted.

Rental payments can be provided as cash and voucher assistance (CVA) directly to the people in need of accommodation, or as a payment to property owners or service providers to enable access to rental accommodation for those in need. As such, rental payments are considered as a market-based intervention, with the programme helping the target population access accommodation through the local market provision. Rental assistance also contributes to achieving protection, inclusion, social-economic integration and empowerment outcomes.

# **Documents already developed**

There are a range of documents and resources already developed. This includes:

* [IFRC (2020) Step-by-step guide for rental assistance to people affected by crisis](https://cash-hub.org/resource/step-by-step-guide-for-rental-assistance-to-people-affected-by-crisis/), available in Spanish, Arabic and English. This is an 80 page guide which gives comprehensive guidance on key considerations in rental assistance programming as a response option. Part 1 defines a rental assistance programme in different contexts and described the advantages and disadvantages and different approaches. Part 2 is guidance for each step in a programme organised around the humanitarian programme cycle.
* [Cash Hub (2021) A tip sheet for rental assistance programming](https://cash-hub.org/resource/tip-sheet-for-rental-assistance-programming/), available in English, Arabic, French, Spanish, and Russian. This tip sheet was focused on some elements of CVA related to rental assistance.
* [IFRC (2021) Introduction to Rental Assistance Programming](https://ifrc.csod.com/ui/lms-learning-details/app/course/940e74be-62f9-4e72-bf49-9f15723a13b8?utm_source=Online%20training) – a 1hr self-guided online introductory course, available in English, Spanish, French and Arabic, available through the IFRC learning platform. An RCRC email account is not required to login to this resource, any email account allows people to establish a profile and access all available free courses.
* The [Global Shelter Cluster Rental Market Interventions Page](https://cash-hub.org/resources/cash-and-shelter/cash-and-rental-assistance/) has a range of resources collected from many programmes in many regions.

# **Structure of these Standard Operating Procedures (SoPs) and associated documents**

The rental assistance toolkit is organised in 2 parts, to be broadly reflective of how the [IFRC (2020) Step-by-step guide for rental assistance to people affected by crisis](https://cash-hub.org/resource/step-by-step-guide-for-rental-assistance-to-people-affected-by-crisis/) is organised. Part I includes the important general items that relate to every step in the programme cycle and the introductory items. Part II includes the steps needed to establish and implement a rental assistance programme organised in relation to the humanitarian programme cycle.

This package of documents has been structured in the following way:

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| **Item** | **Description** |
| **Part I** | **Defining the rental assistance programme** |
| Introduction | This document. Describes the audience of this package of SoP documents, how the documents fit together, and key resources already available. |
| Approaches and Components  | Describes the different types of rental programme and components that make up rental assistance. |
| Process charts | High-level process charts for the different approaches |
| **Part II** | **SOPs and tools for each of the steps and sub-steps in the Programme (Context Analysis, Planning for Implementation, Implementation & Monitoring, Reporting & Evaluation)** |
| Standard Operating Procedures (SoPs) | Guidance on what to do for each step related to designing or implementing the programme. This may include sign-posts to other resources. |
| Tools and examples | Provides example tools (which need to be contextualised) and examples to support humanitarian Shelter and Settlement practitioners. |

# **Contents List at December 2023**

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| **Part I:** **Defining the rental assistance programme** |
| 01 Introduction to IFRC Rental Assistance Standard Operating Procedures |
| 02 Approaches and Components of Rental Assistance Programming |
| 03 Rental Assistance Process Charts |

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| **Part II: SOPs and tools for each of the steps and sub-steps in the Programme (Context Analysis, Design & Planning, Implementation & Monitoring, Reporting & Evaluation)** |
| 0 Initial Advocacy and Coordination | SoP 0.1 – Advocacy & Coordination - “Winning Space” for Rental Assistance |
| 1 Context Analysis | SoP 1.1 – Assessment of the Context (for Rental Assistance)SoP 1.2 – Response Option AnalysisSoP 1.3 – Go/no-go Decision Tree for Rental AssistanceSoP 1.4A – Vulnerabilities, Needs and CapacitiesSoP 1.4B – National Society Capacities for Rental AssistanceSoP 1.5 – Cash and Voucher Assistance Feasibility AssessmentSoP 1.6 – Rental Housing Market AssessmentSoP 1.7 – Security of Tenure AssessmentSoP 1.8 – Initial Risk Assessment for Rental Assistance |
| 2 Design and Planning | SoP 2.1.1 to 2.1.3 – Initial Programme DesignSoP 2.1.4 – Targeting and SelectionSoP 2.1.5 – Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) Strategy for Rental AssistanceSoP 2.1.6– Planning the Rental PaymentsSoP 2.1.7 – Rental Housing Minimum StandardsSoP 2.1.8 – Security of TenureSoP 2.1.9 – Risk Analysis and MitigationSoP 2.1.10 – Humanitarian Diplomacy & Advocacy for Rental AssistanceSoP 2.2.1 – Programme Management Planning for Rental AssistanceSoP 2.2.2 – Information Management System Design for Rental AssistanceSoP 2.2.3 – Human Resource Planning |
| 3 Implementation and Monitoring | SoP 3.1.2 – Programme Agreements for Rental AssistanceSoP 3.1.3 – Occupancy and Eviction MonitoringSoP 3.2 – Monitoring and Setting Indicators for Rental AssistanceSoP 3.4 – Integration and Exit SupportSoP 3.5 – Information Assistance for Rental AssistanceSoP 3.6 – Rent GuaranteesSoP 3.7 – Technical Advice as part of Rental Assistance |
| 4 Reporting and Evaluation | SoP 4.1 – 4.3 – Reporting, Evaluation and Case Studies - Rental Assistance |

1. This could be displaced people (cross-border or internally displaced) whether this be because of disasters, conflict or persecution, or non-displaced people struggling to afford their accommodation because of a health or economic crises for example. Those in need could also be those at risk of becoming or who are homeless because of stigma, addiction, mental health or domestic violence. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Definition change from IFRC (2020) Step-by-Step Guide for Rental Assistance to People Affected by Crisis to Include “develop” [the rental housing market] and removal of the word “existing”, which implied only the use of the rental housing market pre-crisis. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)