# **Introduction**

Meaningful participation throughout the programme cycle will ensure your rental assistance programme has the best chance of meeting needs and minimising risks (including social tension).

IFRC has a range of CEA tools available, this includes a [CEA Guide](https://communityengagementhub.org/resource/cea-guide/) and a [CEA Toolkit](https://communityengagementhub.org/resource/cea-toolkit/). Use the resources available and consult with CEA colleagues. In particular, the draft Tool 24 - CEA checklist for shelter in emergencies, this tool is draft and still to be published on the CEA Hub, however, is included here in draft format.

Tools and examples from the Rental Assistance Toolkit, that may be useful include:

* 2.1.5\_Example\_CEA\_Plan\_RentalAssistance\_2023.docx
* Example of a overview of a CEA plan of activities for a rental assistance programme.
* 2.1.5\_Example\_CEA\_Programme\_Information Sheet\_RentalAssistance\_2023.docx
* Information sheet used for onboarding partners who are involved in referral to the NS rental assistance programme. Used in 2022-2023 Ukraine response in Poland.
* 2.1.5\_Example\_CEA\_HH orientation\_RentalAssistance.ppt
	+ Simple presentation (later translated into Slovak) used in orientating households in the programme prior to application. Used in 2022-2023 Ukraine response in Slovakia.
* 2.1.5\_Example\_CEA\_AdvertSocialMedia\_RentalAssistance\_2023.JPG
* Poster used on Social Media feeds of St Vincent and the Grenadines Red Cross Society in response to La Soufriere Eruption 2021.
* 2.1.5\_Example\_CEA\_Programme\_Eligibility\_Announcement\_RentalAssistance\_2023.pub & .docx
* Poster used in Ukraine 2022 response in Slovakia, includes eligibility criteria.
* 2.1.5\_Example\_CEA\_MessagesProgrammeParticipants\_RentalAssistance.docx
	+ Example of programme messaging used in 2022-2023 Ukraine response in Slovakia as part of communication with property owners and tenants.
* 2.1.5\_Example\_CEA\_MessagesProgrammeParticipants\_NoExtension\_RentalAssistance.xlsx
	+ Example of programme messaging used in 2022-2023 Ukraine response in Slovakia as part of communication with property owners and tenants specifically related to the ending of programme support.
* 2.1.5\_Example\_CEA\_Shelter FAQ payment\_RentalAssistance.docx
	+ Simple FAQ document used in 2022-2023 Ukraine response in Slovakia as part of communication around problems related to payments.
* 2.1.5\_Draft Tool 24. CEA checklist for shelter in emergencies.docx
	+ Draft CEA Checklist for Shelter in Emergencies, not specific to rental assistance.

# **General considerations**

The following should be considered in relation to CEA and rental assistance programming:

1. Ensure data protection principles are followed and that people are given the opportunity to be asked for informed consent when data is requested. See: SoP 2.2 – Information Management System Design for Rental Assistance.
2. All staff and volunteers involved in programme should be trained in CEA, including how to record and handle feedback. It is important to include coordination between Protection Gender and Inclusion and CEA in order to manage sensitive complains.
3. Train teams in how to communicate with specific groups in unbiased ways, such as with marginalised groups (e.g. Roma communities).
4. Aim to ensure gender balance, and that the target population can be communicated in their own language, when interacting with communities. For example, in the 2022-2023 Ukraine response the majority of households wanting to access rental assistance are women and young children, in some situations where home visits are required it can be inappropriate to have lone male staff and volunteers visit the home.

# **Assessment and context analysis**

Although by this stage, this may have already been undertaken, the following suggestions have been included for completeness:

1. A strong context analysis, needs and capacity assessment is at the heart of designing a strong and accountable programme responding to needs.
2. Involve representatives of the target population (prospective tenants) ideally through local NS branches or partner organisations in the assessment where possible to gather information that will be used to design the programme such as, for example:
	1. Discussion with target population to understand rental market information that would be useful to help them access the rental market.
	2. Interviews with target population to understand the barriers to access the rental market.
	3. Interviews with rental agents and property owners to better understand property owner hesitancy to rent to the target population
3. Share back assessment reports whenever possible.
4. Share findings and reports (incl. rental market assessments etc.) with other actors involved in rental assistance, to avoid duplicating efforts and contributing to stakeholder fatigue.

# **Planning and design**

The following are recommended specifically related to rental assistance:

1. Be aware that NS staff and volunteers may have a strong understanding of context but may not be representative of the community you are trying to assist.
2. Discuss plans for rental assistance (e.g. rental payment amounts, duration of support, location of intervention, accommodation minimum standards etc.) with formal and informal community representatives. Ensure marginalised groups are not forgotten about.
3. Ensure some activities are scheduled for co-design, for example vulnerability criteria for being selected for the rental programme. This can involve community meetings and smaller workshops with stakeholders. If people with disabilities or the elderly are unable to access meetings, ensure they are consulted either through organisations of persons with disabilities or interviews in homes.
4. The problem tree and solution tree can also be an excellent sub-step to involve various stakeholders and hear directly from them what components in the rental assistance programme you may need to consider from the solutions they suggest. Always try to allow communities to suggest solutions first to avoid influencing from the NS ‘experts’ first. However, at the start of the workshop, the NS should always frame the conversation and make it clear what is possible and what is not, given potential resources, capacity and duration for example. Support communities in any workshop to prioritise solutions e.g. place stickers on solutions they think are most important).
5. Specifically take time to ask affected communities what changes they would like to see at the end of the programme (this might be undertaken as part of the RC’s broader considerations).
6. Discuss how the community (often through representatives) will work together to modify the rental programme as information from monitoring and feedback becomes available or the context changes. For example, those exiting the rental programme could be invited where they have time to attend workshops to discuss how the programme can be altered to improve it during the life of the rental programme or for improving the next.

# **Implementation and Monitoring**

The following should be considered:

1. Orient key stakeholders in the programme (for example social workers in local authorities or ‘front-line’ civil society groups, may be appropriately able to refer to the NS rental programme). See toolkit: Example\_2.1.5\_CEA\_Information Sheet\_RentalAssistance\_2023.docx
2. Advertise the programme to the target population and property owners
3. Prepare to orient prospective programme applicants in the programme and prepare a FAQ.
4. During the rental programme there must be ways for 2-way communication with stakeholders consulted during the planning phase. This can include with the target population representatives.
5. For the processes related to the programme such as occupancy monitoring, and monitoring the relationship between the tenant and property owner there will need to be communication. Some examples of messages delivered on a rental programme in Slovakia are given here in the toolkit:

2.1.5\_Example\_CEA\_MessagesProgrammeParticipants\_RentalAssistance.docx

2.1.5\_Example\_CEA\_MessagesProgrammeParticipants\_NoExtension\_RentalAssistance.xlsx

2.1.5\_Example\_CEA\_Shelter FAQ payment\_RentalAssistance.docx

1. Feedback mechanisms should be in place and adequately advertised, using the appropriate communication channels and language, identified during the evaluation. This can include hotlines, but most tenants and prospective tenants will most commonly interact with rental programme staff, and therefore training related to taking feedback, as well as the processing of feedback is essential. Ensure that feedback is collected, analysed and shared with the implementing team and that comments are addressed. Inform stakeholders about actions taken based on the feedback collected.
2. There will also be regular monitoring undertaken throughout and at key points in the programme. See SoP 3.1.3 Rental Assistance Monitoring. Both the monitoring and feedback should ideally lead to meaningful improvements to the programme during the duration of the programme when it can have impact.
3. Keep coordinating with other partners and stakeholders, especially as part of referral processes, to understand what improvements can be made for collaboration during the programme.

# **Evaluation and Learning**

1. Exit surveys should be undertaken with tenants and property owners. This can feed into adjustments of the programme, but it can also provide information on where the tenant is moving to, their level of integration (as appropriate) and whether the outcomes of the programme have been met. Also consider other methodologies like focus group discussions (FGDs) or key informant interviews (KIIs) to collect more information about the programme. Include questions about meaningful participation and accountability.
2. Engage with a diverse range of tenants, target population community representatives, property owners, and other stakeholders (referral partners, local authorities, and letting agents even to understand impact on host community rental practices more generally).

# **Making a CEA Plan**

It is recommended that a short 1-2 page CEA plan for the rental assistance programme is created specifically, to ensure that aspects of CEA are not missed or not budgeted for. The plan will undoubtedly evolve as the programme develops. It can start as a list of key CEA activities.

See Example 2.1.5 – Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) Plan for Rental Assistance. See the detailed budget tool from the [CEA Toolkit – Tool 6](https://communityengagementhub.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2021/12/Tool-6.-CEA-budgeting-tool.xlsx).

# **Engagement to overcome property owner hesitancy to rent**

In some cases, especially in the case of the marginalised, or migrant cross-border groups for example, there can be significant property owner hesitancy to rent to the target population. The following are ideas that have been used on some RCRC programmes to address this hesitancy:

* Conducting workshops with groups of property owners who may be interested in the programme to understand their hesitancy to rent to the target population. This should include talks by property owners who have successfully rented to target population. The workshop can also include talks from target households, to show property owners that they are similar in terms of aspiration and face similar challenges to the host population, with the aim to reduce “otherness” and build empathy.
* Identifying “ally” property owners who are willing to rent to the target population and are willing to speak to other property owners in their own network. This can lead to the establishment of a network of property owners where targeted affected people can be referred, to help find adequate rental accommodation.