



Market Information Framework

Note: This is “version one” of the market information framework. It is an informed effort to spell out what market information is needed to make key decisions in humanitarian programming, but it is not a final product and as such should not be treated as a definitive resource. It is being circulated as a working resource so that those interested, especially field-level practitioners, can review it and/or apply it to their programming on a trial basis. Feedback on the format, content and utility of this resource would be very welcome and will be considered in a revised version, which is scheduled to be produced in late 2017. Please send any feedback to emily.sloane@rescue.org by no later than November 15th, 2017.

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This resource was produced by Emily Sloane, Market Specialist at the IRC, with contributions from a reference group that included Megan Bassford (British Red Cross), Dina Brick (CRS), Roger Dean (NRC), Daniella DeFranco (IRC), Geraud Devred (ICRC), Alison Hemberger (Mercy Corps), H  l  ne Juillard (independent), Ricardo Lobo (ACF), Jackie MacLeod (IRC), Greg Matthews (IRC), Jonathan Parkinson (Oxfam) and Leonie Tax (ACAPS). The IRC is extremely grateful to reference group members for providing valuable feedback on a resource that was not straightforward to review.

PURPOSE AND INTENDED USERS OF THE FRAMEWORK

This framework aims to demystify and streamline emergency-focused market analysis by clearly spelling out (1) the most common decisions related to humanitarian programming for which market information is needed; and (2) the pieces of market-related data that are needed to make each of those decisions. It is intended to help humanitarians step away from prescriptive tools and approaches and reconsider the scope and breadth of information that should be gathered about markets, regardless of what tool or approach is being used, as well as the most efficient and effective ways of gathering that information.

The framework may be useful for the following groups of humanitarian practitioners:

- *High-level decision makers, donors:* To help make decisions about if and when market information should be gathered.
- *Technical advisors, field-level coordinators/program managers, assessment leads:* To help define the objectives/scope of a market assessment; provide guidance on what tools and guidance are most appropriate for a specific objective; design assessment questionnaires; and guide data analysis.



METHODOLOGY

An initial version of this framework was produced following a review of the existing guidance on the main programming decisions that market-related data can contribute to, and on the specific market-related data needed for each of these decisions. The most relevant information on this came from existing market assessment tools, especially RAM and MAG, MARKit, the Remote Cash Toolkit, the EMMA Toolkit and the 48-Hour Tool. Two non-tool guidance documents, CaLP's Minimum Standards for Market Assessments and UNHCR's Emergency Handbook, also contained some useful guidance and were reviewed.

Based on this desk review, key decisions for which market-related data is necessary were identified and divided into three categories (assessment, program design and program implementation), based on the phase of the project cycle when they are normally made. Key questions that help to inform each key decision were identified. All of this information was organized within a spreadsheet, and then the market-related data needed to respond to the individual sub-questions was identified. This guidance note was also drafted.

The IRC assembled a small reference group to engage in the framework development process, including representatives from all of the agencies that led the production of the humanitarian market analysis tools used in the desk review and members with experience in food security and livelihoods, gender, NFI and logistics work. The group provided feedback on two versions of the framework between December 2016 and March 2017; this feedback has been integrated into this polished draft.

COMPONENTS OF THE FRAMEWORK

This framework consists of three parts, described below.

- 1. Guidance document and summary spreadsheet:** This is the most concise version of all of the information contained in this framework, and it is recommended that users start with this resource. The guidance document provides a bit of background on the framework and some information on how to use it. The summary spreadsheet, which follows the guidance document, includes all of the programmatic decisions covered by the framework (presented according to programming phase), questions that help to inform each key decision and a brief description of the complementary information (aside from market information) that is needed to make each decision. Clicking on a key decision will bring the user to an external document that provides a list of all of the data points needed to fully make that key decision.
- 2. Detailed data lists:** As explained above, the summary spreadsheet links to detailed data lists that provide all of the data points needed to fully make each key decision, presented both as a full data list and organized by the key questions that inform the key decision. The detailed data lists



are available in this [folder](#). It may be useful to download this folder to have on hand if connectivity may be an issue.

- 3. Excel version of the framework:** The [Excel file](#) contains all of the same information contained in the detailed data lists, but in Excel format. It is more difficult to view in this format, but users may find Excel's filter function to be useful, for example to determine if a data point is relevant for more than one key decision, and if so, for which decisions it is relevant. This is especially important for those who are using this resource to prepare questionnaires for a market assessment. The spreadsheet includes two sheets, one with data organized by key decision, and one with data organized by key question that informs that key decision.

Nearly all of the data points should be gathered in a way that permits disaggregation, by geographic area, type of market actor and/or by sub-group of the crisis-affected population. This is noted in the data lists and in the Excel version in shorthand (see Explanation of Key Terms and Acronyms Used in the Framework for more information).

SCOPE OF THE FRAMEWORK

This framework focuses on the **most common decisions** for which humanitarian actors should be considering market information. These decisions center on which type of assistance is appropriate (cash-based or in-kind) and whether and what type of market support is needed, throughout the program cycle. There are likely other programmatic decisions for which humanitarians may want to consider market information, and this framework is not intended to be comprehensive of all possible decisions.

This framework is focused on **market-related information** needed for specific programming decisions **only**. For the purposes of this framework, market-related information includes information about supply (namely the structure and function of markets in and around a crisis-affected area), as well as some information about demand (how the crisis-affected population interacts with local markets). Various other types of information (for example, on beneficiary needs, contextual risks and financial service providers) should also be considered when making these programming decisions; while this framework does summarize complementary information needs, it does not provide a detailed list of what non-market-related information is needed. Information on the needs of the crisis-affected population, while technically not market information, is absolutely essential in order to help guide what information is gathered about markets, and this is noted in the sections on "Other (non-market) information needed."

The framework is **not a tool for humanitarian market analysis**. Many high quality toolkits for humanitarian market analysis, like RAM, EMMA, the 48-Hour tool and others, already exist. *This framework focuses on the information needed to make specific decisions rather than on how to gather or*



analyze that information. This framework does not advocate for specific tools or approaches, recognizing that multiple tools and approaches, including new and innovative approaches, can be used effectively to gather the same information. It is up to the user to determine the most appropriate and effective way for a given context.

The framework is relevant to

- programs in **any humanitarian sector** that aim to **help disaster-affected people access goods** that are typically available for purchase in market places. It was not explicitly designed to encompass programs that help people access *services*; while some of the content is relevant to services, it does not comprehensively address them.
- **both pre-disaster and post-disaster contexts**, as well as **in different types of disaster contexts** (such as rapid onset, slow onset and protracted crises)
- **emergency interventions**. It does not address interventions that are focused on longer-term development.

EXPLANATION OF KEY TERMS & ACRONYMS USED IN THE FRAMEWORK

- **Cash transfer program:** provision of money or vouchers to individuals or households affected by a disaster in order to enable them to achieve a humanitarian outcome. It enables a recipient to purchase goods or services or incentivizes a change in behavior in order to contribute to the desired outcome.
- **DA:** abbreviation for *disaggregated*. Means that the information should be gathered in such a way that permits disaggregation according to the specified criteria. For example, DA: GA means *disaggregated by geographic area*.
- **Key goods:** the items that humanitarian actors hope to help the crisis-affected population access via their response, based on a needs assessment. Data need not be gathered for every single item needed; in many cases it is sufficient to gather data on a representative selection of items. This framework does not explain how to make a representative selection; however, this is covered in numerous market assessment tools, including the EMMA Toolkit (see [Chapter Two](#)).
- **GA:** acronym for *geographic area*. Refers to contextually significant regions of the response area. In most cases this means the geographic areas inhabited by populations/communities that primarily rely on the same market place/commercial area.
- **Integrated markets:** Markets are integrated “when linkages between local, regional and national market actors are working well.” If a local market is well integrated, an increase in demand will be met with “the relatively easy movement of goods from other nearby and regional markets” to meet demand.¹

¹ Albu, Mike. [Emergency Market Mapping and Analysis Toolkit](#). Oxfam GB, pub, 2010, p. 204.



- **Light versus in-depth assessment:** The idea here is that the scope and breadth of data needed to determine if local markets have the capacity to provide needed goods (i.e. through a cash or voucher program) may vary depending on contextual factors. Though this is not universally agreed upon, in general, it may be appropriate to conduct a light assessment if the intervention being planned is relatively small in scale and/or short in duration; if the key good(s) to be delivered to the crisis-affected population are known to be widely available in local market places; and/or if markets in the area of intervention are known to be robust and functioning well (for example, in a bustling urban center or in a middle income country).
- **Local versus supply markets:** Local markets (sometimes referred to as Intervention Markets) are the market places/commercial areas that are most accessible to the crisis-affected population. Meanwhile, for the purposes of this framework, supply markets are those market places/commercial areas that supply key goods to local markets.
- **Modality:** Form of transfer (cash, vouchers, in-kind). Modalities may be used in combination. Though cash-for-work is a type of cash-based intervention, *this framework does not look at specific data needs for cash-for-work programming.*
- **Payment mechanism (also referred to as *Delivery mechanism*):** Means of delivering a cash or voucher transfer (e.g. smart card, mobile money transfers, cash in envelopes, mobile voucher, etc.).
- **SG:** acronym for *sub-group*. Refers to contextually significant sub-groups of the disaster-affected population (such women, men, elderly people or members of a particular ethnic or religious group) that may experience distinct challenges, advantages and/or risks in interactions with market places and market systems. At a minimum, data labelled “DA: SG” should be disaggregated by gender, and depending on the context, additional disaggregation by others sub-groups may be important as well.
- **TA:** acronym for *type of (market) actor*. For the purposes of this framework, the two main types of market actors are retailers and wholesalers.

MARKET-RELATED DATA NEEDED TO MAKE KEY DECISIONS IN HUMANITARIAN PROGRAMMING

Programming phase	Key decision	Key questions (informing the key decision)	Other (non-market) information needed to make this decision	
Assessment	<p>1. Does the market need support in order to be able to supply key goods to the crisis-affected population? If so, what kind of support is needed?</p>	To what extent are local market actors willing and able to provide key goods in the quantity/volume necessary to meet the needs of the crisis-affected population? What are the reasons for any gaps in capacity? How is this expected to change over the next few months, and why?	<p>The specific good(s) or category(ies) of goods that you want to help the crisis-population access must be identified <i>before</i> gathering market information. Complementary information is needed on the capacity, limitations and mandate of the implementing agency; humanitarian standards for assistance for the sector(s) relevant to the intervention; the needs of the crisis-affected population; agencies' operational constraints; and funding available for market support activities.</p>	
		Are the key goods that are available in local markets of sufficient quality to meet the preferences of the crisis-affected population? If not, why not? Are goods of sufficient quality available in any supply markets, and if so, are local traders willing and able to stock them? How is this expected to change over the next few months, and why?		
		Are the key goods that are available in local markets of sufficient quality to meet humanitarian standards? If not, why not? Are goods of sufficient quality available in any supply markets, and if so, are local traders willing and able to stock them? How is this expected to change over the next few months, and why?		
		Is the crisis-affected population able to physically and safely reach the market places where key goods are being sold? If not, why not? How is this expected to change over the next few months, and why?		
		Are markets well integrated? If not, why not? How is this expected to change over the next few months, and why?		
	<p>2a. Does the market have the capacity to deliver part or all of the needed assistance (e.g. through a cash-based modality or local procurement)?</p> <p>(Light assessment)²</p>	Are key goods available in markets/shops near the crisis-affected population? How is this expected to change over the next few months?		<p>This decision is only relevant if you have established that the crisis-affected population requires direct assistance in order to obtain key goods. You must identify the specific good(s) or category(ies) of goods that you want the population to access throughout the expected project period <i>before</i> gathering market information. Complementary information is also needed on beneficiary needs and preferences; financial service providers; donor regulations; agencies' operational constraints; and contextual risks.</p>
		Are vendors of the key goods in markets/shops near the crisis-affected population able to restock quickly? How is this expected to change over the next few months?		
		Is the crisis-affected population able to physically and safely reach the market places where the key goods are being sold? How is this expected to change over the next few months?		

² See "Explanation of Key Terms and Acronyms used in the Market Information Framework" in the accompanying guidance document for information on when a light versus an in-depth assessment may be appropriate.

Assessment	2b. Does the market have the capacity to deliver part or all of the needed assistance (e.g. through a cash-based modality or local procurement)? (In-depth assessment) ³	To what extent are local market actors willing and able to provide key goods in the quantity/volume necessary to meet the needs of the crisis-affected population? How is this expected to change over the next few months?	(repeated from previous page) This decision is only relevant if you have established that the crisis-affected population requires direct assistance in order to obtain key goods. You must identify the specific good(s) or category(ies) of goods that you want the population to access <i>before</i> gathering market information. Complementary information is also needed on beneficiary needs and preferences; financial service providers; donor regulations, agencies’ operational constraints, contextual risks and the costs of in-kind procurement and distribution of assistance.
		Are the key goods that are available in local markets of sufficient quality to meet the preferences of the crisis-affected population? If not, why not? Are goods of sufficient quality available in any supply markets, and if so, are local traders willing and able to stock them? How is this expected to change over the next few months?	
		Are the key goods that are available in local markets of sufficient quality to meet humanitarian standards? If not, why not? Are goods of sufficient quality available in any supply markets, and if so, are local traders willing and able to stock them? How is this expected to change over the next few months?	
		Is the crisis-affected population able to physically and safely reach the market places where the key goods are being sold? How is this expected to change over the next few months?	
		Are markets well integrated? How is this expected to change over the next few months?	
		Are power dynamics in local markets conducive to cash-based assistance? How is this expected to change over the next few months, and why?	
		What is the expected impact of different modalities of assistance on local markets?	
		What is the projected cost associated with procuring and distributing assistance in-kind? Through vouchers? Through cash?	
Program design	(When cash has been deemed the best option):	How much will it cost the crisis-affected population to access and purchase key goods in local markets?	You must identify the specific good(s) or category(ies) of goods that you want the crisis-affected population to access before gathering this information. Complementary information is also needed on the vulnerability of the population (in terms of its income-expenditure gap, if possible); the value of any other complementary assistance being provided by other actors; the availability of funding for emergency responses; contextual risks; and standards for levels of assistance set by coordination bodies, governmental actors or others.
	3. What is an appropriate value for the cash transfer?	To what extent are the prices of key goods expected to fluctuate during the project period (for reasons not related to programming, e.g. inflation)?	
	(When cash has been deemed the best option):	To what extent is the crisis-affected population able to physically, financially and safely travel from the market places where the key goods are being sold to their homes with different quantities/volumes	This decision is only relevant if beneficiaries will be provided with recurring (as opposed to one-time) assistance. You must identify the specific good(s) or category(ies) of goods that you want the

³ See “Explanation of Key Terms and Acronyms used in the Market Information Framework” in the accompanying guidance document for information on when a light versus an in-depth assessment may be appropriate.

	4. What is an appropriate frequency for delivering the cash transfer?	of the key good(s)? How is this expected to change over the next few months, and why?	population to access before gathering this information. Complementary information is also needed on standards for assistance set by coordination bodies, governmental actors or others; contextual risks; agencies' operational constraints; beneficiary needs and preferences and financial service providers.
		When do the local markets/shops providing key goods operate? How is this expected to change over the next few months, and why?	
		To what extent are market actors willing and able to provide the key goods in the quantity/volume necessary to meet the needs of the crisis-affected population? How is this expected to change over the next few months, and why?	
Program design	(When cash has been deemed the best option):	What payment mechanism(s) is/are most accessible to and safe for the crisis-affected population within local markets? How is this expected to change over the next few months, and why?	You must identify the specific good(s) or category(ies) of goods that you want the crisis-affected population to access before gathering this information. Complementary information is also needed on protocols for delivery of assistance set by coordination bodies, governmental actors or others; contextual risks; agencies' operational constraints; data protection considerations, beneficiary preferences and financial service providers.
	5. What payment mechanism(s) (smart card, mobile money transfers, cash in envelopes, etc.) should be used to deliver cash to the crisis-affected population?		
	6. If the market needs support in order to be able to supply key goods to crisis-affected people, what kind of support is needed?		
Program implementation	7. Should the value of the transfer be changed, and if so, how?	How much has the cost for the crisis-affected population to access and purchase key goods in local markets changed during the program implementation process? How is this expected to change over the next few months, and why?	In most cases, you should only consider changing the value of the transfer if there are multiple transfers remaining/ if the project will be continuing for at least several months. Complementary information is needed on how the transfer value was initially set; changes in the vulnerability of the population (in terms of its income-expenditure gap, if possible); changes in the value of any other complementary assistance being provided by other actors; changes in the availability of funding for emergency responses; changes in contextual risks; and changes in standards for levels of assistance set by coordination bodies, governmental actors or others.
		What is the reason for any significant change in prices of key goods in local markets or in the cost of accessing markets during the program implementation process?	
	8. Should the frequency of the transfer be changed, and if so, how?	Has the crisis-affected population's ability to physically, financially and safely travel from the market places where the key goods are being sold to their homes with different quantities/volumes of the key good(s) changed during the program implementation process? How is this expected to change over the next few months, and why?	In most cases, you should only consider changing the frequency of the transfer if there are multiple transfers remaining/ if the project will be continuing for at least several months. Complementary information is also needed on changes in standards for assistance set by coordination bodies, governmental actors or others; changes in contextual risks; changes in agencies' operational constraints; changes in
Has the operating schedule of the local markets/shops providing key goods changed during the program implementation process? How is this expected to change over the next few months, and why?			

Program implementation	(repeated from the previous page) 8. Should the frequency of the transfer be changed, and if so, how?	Has market actors' ability and willingness to provide the key goods in the quantity/volume necessary to meet the needs of the crisis-affected population changed during the program implementation process? How is this expected to change over the next few months, and why?	beneficiary needs and preferences; and financial service providers.
	9. Should the modality(ies) of the existing assistance be changed, and if so, how?	Has the extent to which different market actors are able and willing to provide the key goods in the quantity/volume necessary to meet the needs of the crisis-affected population changed during the program implementation process? How is this expected to change over the next few months, and why?	In most cases, you should only consider changing the modality of assistance if there are multiple transfers remaining/ if the project will be continuing for at least several months. Complementary information is also needed on any changes in beneficiary needs and preferences; changes in financial service providers; changes in donor regulations; changes in agencies' operational constraints; changes in contextual risks; and changes in the costs of in-kind procurement and distribution of assistance.
		Has the quality of the key goods that are available in local markets in relation to the crisis-affected populations' preferences and humanitarian standards changed during the program implementation process? How is this expected to change over the next few months, and why?	
		Has the crisis-affected population's ability to physically and safely reach the market places where the key goods are being sold changed during the program implementation process? How is this expected to change over the next few months, and why?	
		Has the integration of markets changed during the program implementation process? How is this expected to change over the next few months, and why?	
		Are power dynamics in local markets conducive to cash-based assistance? How is this expected to change over the next few months, and why?	
		What has the impact of the current modality(ies) of assistance been on local markets?	
		What is the projected cost associated with procuring and distributing assistance in-kind? Through vouchers? Through cash?	
	(When a CTP is in progress): 10. Should the payment mechanism(s) of the existing assistance be changed, and if so, how?	Has/have the payment mechanism(s) that is/are most accessible to and safe for the crisis-affected population within local markets changed during the program implementation process, and if so, how? How is this expected to change over the next few months, and why?	In most cases, you should only consider changing the payment mechanism if there are multiple transfers remaining/ if the project will be continuing for at least several months. Complementary information is also needed on any changes in protocols for delivery of assistance set by coordination bodies, governmental actors or others; changes in contextual risks; changes in agencies' operational constraints; changes in data protection considerations; changes in beneficiary preferences and changes in financial service providers.
	11. Does the market need support in order to be able to supply key goods to the	Has the extent to which local market actors are willing and able to provide key goods in the quantity/volume necessary to meet the needs of the crisis-affected population changed during the program	Complementary information is needed on the capacity, limitations and mandate of the implementing agency; humanitarian standards for assistance for the sector(s) relevant

<p>Program implementation</p>	<p>crisis-affected population? If so, what kind of support is needed?</p>	<p>implementation process? Have the reasons for any gaps in capacity changed during the program implementation process? How is this expected to change over the next few months, and why?</p>	<p>to the intervention; the needs of the crisis-affected population; agencies' operational constraints and funding available for market support activities.</p>	
	<p>(repeated from the previous page)</p>	<p>Has the quality of the key goods that are available in local markets in relation to the crisis-affected populations' preferences and humanitarian standards changed during the program implementation process? If so, how? If the preferred quality is not available in local markets, are goods of sufficient quality available in any supply markets? If so, are local traders willing and able to stock them? How is this expected to change over the next few months, and why?</p>		<p>(repeated from the previous page)</p>
	<p>11. Does the market need support in order to be able to supply key goods to the crisis-affected population? If so, what kind of support is needed?</p>	<p>Has the crisis-affected population's ability to physically and safely reach the market places where key goods are being sold changed during the program implementation process? If so, how? How is this expected to change over the next few months, and why?</p>		<p>Complementary information is needed on the capacity, limitations and mandate of the implementing agency; humanitarian standards for assistance for the sector(s) relevant to the intervention; the needs of the crisis-affected population; agencies' operational constraints and funding available for market support activities.</p>
		<p>Has the integration of local markets changed during the program implementation process? If so, how? How is this expected to change over the next few months, and why?</p>		