What It Is

A Situation and Response Analysis (SRA) is the link between Situational Analysis (broadly speaking, Needs Assessment and other contextual information) and Response Design. The SRA is used to determine humanitarian objectives, response options (provision of goods and services, capacity building, advocacy, etc.) and the modality (providing access to goods and services through cash, voucher or directly through in-kind interventions). The SRA is guided by considerations of context-specific appropriateness and feasibility, analysing and minimising potential harmful – and maximising potential positive – side-effects of any humanitarian intervention. Finally, the SRA also contributes to defining the target group based on understanding general and sector-specific vulnerabilities where the underlying cause is socio-economic.

SRA is often used for sector-specific objectives, e.g. the best way to meet food, shelter or non-food item needs. Increasingly SRA is used in water and sanitation, and should be used equally in health, education and other humanitarian interventions. In this toolkit, the SRA is structured to allow use across sectors. The starting point focuses on what goods and services people need, and if they are able to acquire their needs through purchase. Through multi-faceted analysis, the SRA leads to the decision as to whether multi-sector needs can be met with one cash grant – a multipurpose grant – alone or in combination with other sector-specific interventions.

In this toolkit, the SRA is divided into Needs Assessment and Operational Feasibility, consistent with approaches being promoted elsewhere. The Needs Assessment stage includes an initial look at people’s use of markets and general market functionality, done in week one after an emergency. This is followed by a more detailed look at specific goods and services markets as part of Operational Feasibility. The SRA includes Vulnerability Analysis (Part 1.1), i.e. who is likely to benefit most from an MPG. It also includes prioritisation and quantification of people’s needs from an economic or market perspective, often called the Minimum Expenditure Basket (Part 1.2) – ultimately informing the MPG Transfer Design, which is described in Part 2.

Principles of the SRA:

- **Collaborate across sectors and agencies** for needs and capacities assessments, vulnerability and markets assessments. Inter-cluster or inter-sector coordination is a good place to centralise analysis, identify gaps and duplications in information collection, and draw out conclusions or inconsistencies in information.

- **Be pragmatic.** While SRA will aid understanding of households’ priority needs, their likely use of a cash transfer and how this translates to demand for goods and services, these are often based on imperfect assumptions. A “good enough” approach is recommended to ensure rapid and effective response.

- **Iterate.** As the crisis evolves, more information will become available, and assumptions can be verified. If necessary, change the response modality, transfer rate or targeting criteria, or introduce complementary programmes as required.

**RESOURCES**

See the detailed Multi-Sector Situation and Response Analysis developed for this toolkit.

- **The Humanitarian Programme Cycle** (IASC)
- **A Situation and Response Analysis Framework for Slow Onset Emergencies** (Save the Children UK, Oxfam and Concern)
- **Guidelines for Cash-Based Interventions in Displacement Settings** (UNHCR)
- **Cash in Emergencies Toolkit** (IFRC)
- **Cash and Voucher Manual** (WFP)
- **A Response Analysis Framework for food and nutrition security interventions** (FAO)
- **Response analysis and response choice in food security crisis: a road map** (Maxwell et al)