PART 5

Coordination

What needs to be coordinated at an inter-agency and inter-sector level to maximise the benefits and effectiveness of MPGs, alongside complementary interventions?

Note: Defining coordination arrangements for cash-based programming is work in progress, and MPGs are part of the broader discussion. Guidance in this section is non-prescriptive and likely to evolve, as cash coordination is further developed.
What It Is

Coordination is the systematic utilisation of policy instruments to deliver humanitarian assistance in a cohesive and effective manner. Such instruments include:

- Strategic planning.
- Gathering data and managing information.
- Mobilising resources and assuring accountability.
- Orchestrating a functional division of labour in the field.
- Negotiating and maintaining a serviceable framework with host political authorities.
- Providing leadership.

Sensibly and sensitively employed, such instruments inject an element of discipline without unduly constraining action.41

MPGs necessarily require cross-sector coordination. This is challenging – but not impossible.

Essential Checklist

There are different types of coordination: technical, strategic, and operational. For any given emergency context, a mix of MPGs, other CBIs and in-kind goods and services will be utilised to reach sector-specific and multi-sectoral objectives. Where these overlap, there will be efficiency and effectiveness gains to be made through coordination (Figure 10). For example:

- Technical: Financial services assessments are relevant to all CBIs regardless of type. Market assessments are relevant to both CBIs and in-kind interventions. Determining an appropriate Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB) requires inputs from all sectors.
- Strategic: Advocacy with government may be relevant for all CBIs, including MPGs. Monitoring the use of MPGs by recipients can provide insights into needs and priorities that are multi-sectoral, influencing humanitarian strategies and approaches.
- Operational: Common delivery mechanisms can be used for MPGs, one-off or regular cash distributions, or even mixed modalities that use point-of-sale devices and ATMs.

**FIGURE 10.** Coordination Overlap

**Strategic coordination can include:**

- Ensuring a systematic, evidence-based and coherent approach to SRA.
- Where the SRA deems unrestricted cash to be an appropriate and feasible means of meeting humanitarian needs, ensuring an MPG is considered.
- Defining the specific objective of an MPG programme, including complementary interventions.
- Ensuring that MPGs, CBIs and in-kind approaches are complementary and there are no duplication or gaps.
- Deciding, based on technical inputs, whether or not an MPG programme should be targeted “wide and shallow” or “narrow and deep”.
- Prioritisation of assistance and activities for cost-efficiency and -effectiveness purposes when resources are scarce.

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Rationalising different approaches and looking for gains in efficiency and effectiveness, such as the use of MPGs or common delivery mechanisms.

Ensuring MPGs are integrated into mainstream information management systems.

Raising awareness of the benefits and risks of CBIs/MPGs with governments (national and international).

Making links between relief, recovery and development interventions, including alignment with national safety net programmes.

Rationalising who is responsible for the technical and operational coordination of MPGs.

**Technical coordination can include:**

- Collecting and analysing information to inform a Situation and Response Analysis (SRA).
- Undertaking a Multi-Sector Market Assessment (MSMA).
- Determining if a CBI, or an MPG, is an appropriate and feasible way to meet multi-sectoral objectives; this includes analysis of complementary sector-specific initiatives if relevant.
- Understanding need from an income and expenditures perspective including the MEB, Vulnerability Assessment and Gaps Analysis.
- Determining a recommended MPG transfer value to encourage harmonisation, particularly if complementary to sector-specific initiatives.
- Defining a common targeting strategy, including criteria and processes.
- Designing a common delivery mechanism.
- Designing a common monitoring and evaluation strategy, including indicators and processes, to ascertain multi-sectoral impacts and overall effectiveness, not least “value for money”.
- Developing appropriate information management systems that provide essential information on benefits received to relevant stakeholders, including sector-specific actors.

**Operational coordination can include:**

- Who will do what and where? With MPGs, key considerations include target populations, transfer values and delivery mechanisms, to ensure consistency and complementarity as well as minimise confusion or burden on beneficiaries.
- Who will lead on different aspects of programme design and implementation particularly where common approaches will be used, e.g. common targeting, common delivery, etc.

**Do No Harm/Do More Good**

- MPGs require proactive multi-sector engagement in all stages of the programme cycle, ensuring sectors focus on addressing beneficiary needs collectively.
- With regards to defining the roles and responsibilities for MPG coordination, different models are currently being tested (see Table 7). Regardless of who does what, coordination needs to distinguish between the strategic, technical and operational aspects, not least to avoid conflict of interest.
- Where CBIs, such as conditional CBIs, vouchers, or cash for work, are being used to achieve a specific objective, this remains coordinated within the relevant sector. However, where unrestricted cash or MPGs are used, the risk is that coordination will take place in parallel to more sector-specific approaches to coordination. Rather, the approach proposed by this toolkit is to consider MPGs as a foundation upon which sector-specific interventions can be built, enabling crisis-affected populations to use in-kind assistance and access services as they were intended (Figure 11).
- Regardless of whether the use of MPGs is integrated into mainstream humanitarian strategies and mechanisms, MPGs require coordination. Use all available means possible, e.g. Cash Working Groups, Basic Assistance Working Groups, protection or inter-cluster or sector coordination, while looking for longer-term sustainable solutions.
**FIGURE 11 Strategic coordination of MPGs**

**IN A HURRY!**

To get things moving fast, in coordination fora prioritise the following:

- Determine if a CBI, or an MPG, is an appropriate and feasible way to meet multi-sectoral objectives.
- Understand need including determining the MEB, basic Vulnerability Assessment and Gaps Analysis.
- Determine a recommended MPG transfer value to encourage harmonisation, particularly if complementary to sector-specific initiatives.
- Design a common monitoring and evaluation strategy.
- Ensure MPGs are integrated into mainstream information management systems and develop appropriate systems to manage MPG-specific information.
- Ensure that MPGs, CBIs and in-kind approaches are complementary and there are no duplication or gaps.
- Rationalise different approaches and looking for gains in efficiency and effectiveness, such as common delivery mechanisms.
- Raise awareness of the benefits and risks of CBIs/MPGs with governments (national and international).

**BOX 17. COORDINATION OF MPGS IN NEPAL**

In Nepal the Cash Working Group (CWG) was founded within six days of the initial response. This group was set up by the initial UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) team. The CWG had a dual function: to support a coherent approach to cash and vouchers as they were being used within the response, and to support the operational coordination of MPGs in partnership with clusters whose inputs influenced the MEB and later informed the MPG transfer value. The CWG supported coordinated market assessments within the first week which used a simplified Rapid Assessment for Markets tool to evaluate the functioning of markets across both the food and non-food items clusters. As a result of coordinated Situation and Response Analysis, it was decided that meeting shelter needs through CBIs or an MPG was not going to be appropriate, given early indications of a lack of quality material for temporary shelter needs. Given the regular briefings provided by the CWG through OCHA, the use of MPGs was supported by the Humanitarian Coordinator and raised at Humanitarian Country Team meetings as required. Operational coordination was done through inter-cluster coordination and one on one with those clusters that decided an MPG would be an appropriate way to meet needs, e.g. food security, WASH and non-food items. See Annex 3: Appendix 1 for an example of the Nepal MEB and MPG transfer values.

**RESOURCES**

- [Coordination Toolkit](#) (CaLP)
- [Case Study Lebanon](#) (UNHCR)
- [Case Study Philippines](#) (CaLP)
### TABLE 7. Experience with different MPG coordination approaches
(from the Lebanon and Philippine Cash Coordination Case Studies, UNHCR and CaLP)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approach</th>
<th>Via a separate group or consortium outside of formal coordination systems</th>
<th>Via sub-groups within specific clusters or sectors</th>
<th>Via groups linked to the inter-cluster or inter-sector mechanisms</th>
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<td><strong>Advantages</strong></td>
<td>Operating agencies planning multi-purpose cash programmes have been able to operate and plan easily with a small number of actors; these groups or consortiums have at times been able to support geographically based programming.</td>
<td>Formally linked with coordination systems and planning structures; is represented within formal documents and can be funded.</td>
<td>Working groups are linked to the relevant coordination mechanisms; groups are fully represented to ensure space for both strategic and technical functions.</td>
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<td><strong>Disadvantages</strong></td>
<td>These groups are outside of the formal system and there is a high risk of duplication or overlap with cluster- or sector-based programming; this can impact their sustainability and access to formal funding channels; lessons learned are not widely shared with the formal system; groups have no representation in formal planning documents and no accountability to the wider system.</td>
<td>The learning and focus of the working groups often does not support other sectors, has limited linkages to the strategic decision-making bodies, and is often only represented as a portion of a single sector which is inaccurate if the objectives are broader.</td>
<td>Structure often unclear so groups may have a strong or weak role depending on the understanding at the inter-cluster/sector level.</td>
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