



Market Information Framework

PURPOSE AND INTENDED USERS OF THE FRAMEWORK

This framework aims to demystify and streamline emergency-focused market analysis by (1) clearly spelling out the most common questions related to humanitarian programming for which market information is needed; (2) indicating what types of market-related data are needed to answer each of these questions, and why; and (3) pointing users towards tools that will help them to gather this information. Although it does reference some of the more commonly used toolkits for humanitarian market analysis, this resource is actually intended to help humanitarian practitioners *step away from* prescriptive tools and approaches and reconsider the scope and breadth of information that should be gathered about markets in a given context, regardless of what tool or approach is being used, as well as the most efficient and effective ways of gathering that information.

The framework is mainly intended for use by **field-focused humanitarian staff**, such as program managers/coordinators, technical advisors and others who may be responsible for conducting market analysis in emergency contexts. It can help practitioners to define the objectives/scope of a market assessment; understand which tools are most appropriate for a specific objective; design or refine assessment questionnaires; and analyze market-related data. On a smaller scale, this framework can help support **technical market specialists** to design further guidance/tools for humanitarian market analysis, by offering a comprehensive picture of the kinds of questions and data that should be considered.

This is a revision of the [original version](#) of this framework, which was released in May 2017. Based on feedback, it has been made more user-friendly, accessible and practical for field practitioners.¹

COMPONENTS OF THE FRAMEWORK

This framework consists of two parts, described below.²

1. **Guidance document and summary spreadsheet:** This guidance document provides some background on the framework and information on how to use it. The summary spreadsheet,

¹ Version 1 of the framework can be accessed at <https://rescue.box.com/s/vezlr1oj4bnx7gpwcnwmyuji77gykoug>.

² Version 1 of this framework also included an excel file with all of the same information contained in the detailed data lists. This file is no longer an official part of this framework, but it may still be accessed at <https://rescue.app.box.com/file/167021526137>.



which is contained within the guidance document, presents the six key programmatic questions covered by the framework (organized according to programming phase), the types of market-related information that are needed to answer each question and some guidance on which common market analysis tools can help to gather each type of information. For many users, this table may provide sufficient guidance in and of itself; however, users who wish to do so may access the detailed data lists for each question by clicking on the embedded hyperlinks.

- 2. Detailed data lists:** As explained above, hyperlinks within the summary spreadsheet link to detailed data lists that provide all of the data points needed to answer each key question, organized by the key sub-topics that inform the key question.³ The detailed data lists are available in this [folder \(https://rescue.app.box.com/s/tgnat6l0bhzkfc2gc2hco6ipi65x47tw\)](https://rescue.app.box.com/s/tgnat6l0bhzkfc2gc2hco6ipi65x47tw). These lists may help practitioners to get a better sense of the types of data that they should be gathering through whatever means (such as desk review, key informant interviews, vendor surveys, etc.) and can potentially be used to develop new or flesh out existing questionnaires.

SCOPE OF THE FRAMEWORK

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.⁴
- **emergency interventions**, in both pre- and post-disaster contexts. It does not address interventions that are focused on longer-term development.

This framework focuses on the **most common programmatic questions** for which humanitarian actors should be considering market information. These questions center on which type of assistance is appropriate (cash-based or in-kind) and what type of market support could help to support market function, as well as on the value, frequency and payment mechanism of cash assistance. Table 1 presents the questions that this framework considers, organized by phase of the program cycle. It is worth noting

³ Nearly all of the data 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 in shorthand (see Explanation of Key Terms and Acronyms Used in the Framework for more information).

⁴ This framework does not address the specific market information that is needed to help inform the labor aspects of Cash-for-Work programs (such as data needed to set wage rates). For more information on Cash-for-Work program design, please refer to specific guidance, such as Mercy Corps' [Guide to Cash-for-Work Programming](#).



that the key questions raised during the Program Implementation phase are actually the same as those asked during the Assessment and Program Design phases, revisited in order to verify that nothing significant has changed throughout program implementation that might require a shift in the program design. In order to avoid duplication, the summary spreadsheet and detailed data lists present only the market-related information needed for the Program Assessment and Program Design phases; they do not separately present the information needed for the Program Implementation phase.

Table 1: Key Programmatic Questions for which Market Information is Needed

Programmatic Phase	Key Programmatic Questions
Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the market have the capacity to deliver part or all of the needed assistance (e.g. through a cash-based modality)? • What else might determine the appropriateness of delivering the response through the market? • What kind of support could increase the feasibility and appropriateness of a market-based response?
Project Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is an appropriate value for the cash transfer? (for CTPs) • What is an appropriate frequency for delivering the cash transfer? (for CTPs) • (for CTPs) What payment mechanism should be used to deliver cash to the crisis-affected people? (mobile money, cash in envelope, etc.)
Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [Should the value, frequency, and/or payment mechanism of the cash transfer be changed, and how? (for CTPs)] • [Should the modality(ies) of the existing assistance be changed, and if so, how?] • [What kind of support could increase the feasibility and appropriateness of a market-based response?]

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 contextual risks and financial service providers) should also be considered when making these programming decisions; however, this framework does not provide a detailed list of the non-market-related information that is needed. An exception is made in the case of information on the needs of the crisis-affected population; while this is technically not market information, it is absolutely essential in order to help guide what information is gathered about markets, and therefore it *is* included in the framework.



HOW MUCH DATA TO GATHER

The full range of data that *can* be gathered about markets is extremely broad and can easily be overwhelming. Humanitarians face the challenge of determining how much market-related information is sufficient for their purposes. On the one hand, lighter data collection processes are obviously less of a burden on field teams and are therefore more feasible to carry out in the context of limited time and resources. On the other hand, lighter market analysis runs the risk of overlooking other important factors that influence how markets function, potentially leading to responses that inadvertently do harm and/or that neglect relatively straightforward opportunities to improve overall market function.

Though this is not universally agreed upon, it may be more appropriate to conduct a “light” market analysis if

- the intervention being planned is relatively small in scale and/or short in duration;
- the key good(s) to be delivered to the crisis-affected population is/are already known to be widely available in local market places; and/or
- 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)

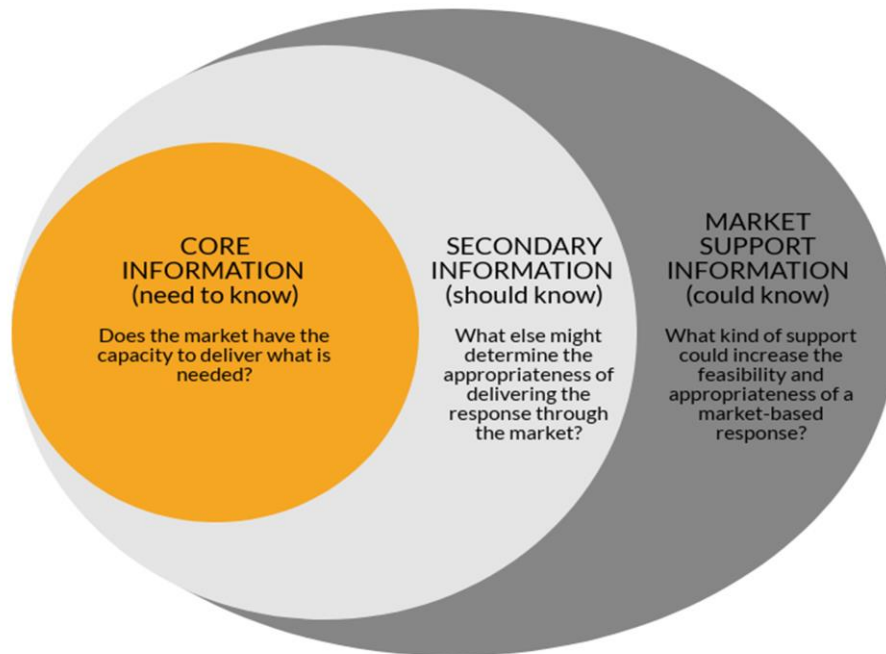
Assessment Phase: As illustrated in Figure 1, all humanitarian actors intending to help crisis-affected people access goods that are typically available for purchase in market places must consider a minimum set of “core” market-related information related to the market’s capacity to deliver the needed items. As explained above, in some cases, this core information, equivalent to a relatively light market assessment, may be sufficient. However, as much as time and resources allow, practitioners should aim to also gather at least some of the types of secondary information mentioned in the diagram as well, such as information about power dynamics within the market system. This will provide a much richer picture of the market’s capacity to support long-term, large-scale humanitarian interventions and of the factors that influence the market system’s function, which may be impacted by humanitarian activity. Finally, agencies that are considering some sort of market support intervention,⁵ either as a complement to direct humanitarian assistance or in lieu of it, should gather the types of data needed to answer the question at the far right

⁵ “Market support programming” aims to indirectly benefit crisis-affected populations by offering direct support to actors, services and/or infrastructure within market systems that are critical for those population’s lives and livelihoods. For more information, see “Tip Sheet: Market Support Programming in Humanitarian Contexts,” draft (2017). [CaLP Tip sheet - Market Support Programming - Nov'17 \(Draft for testing\).docx](#)



of the diagram *in addition to* the information in the other two categories. The data needed to inform market support programming is a relatively minor addition to the other sets of information.

Figure 1: Market information needs for the assessment phase of programming



Program Design Phase: The market-related data required during this phase is relatively straightforward and modest and is intended to determine the appropriate value, frequency and payment mechanism of a cash or voucher transfer. In contexts where an agency has already decided to deliver assistance via cash or vouchers, **all** of this information should be gathered.

Implementation phase: The purpose of gathering market information during the implementation phase is to determine if conditions within local markets have changed enough to warrant changes to program design. This essentially involves revisiting the information gathered during the Assessment and Design phases and evaluating whether there have been any significant changes since the data was previously gathered. Data gathering during this phase is known as market monitoring. It typically involves the collection of price data – since price tends to be an excellent indicator of other changes in markets – but other types of data can be integrated into the market monitoring process, depending on which aspects of the market system are most volatile and/or most likely to influence the appropriateness or design of humanitarian assistance. CRS' [MARKit](#) tool provides thorough, accessible guidance on market monitoring.

Table 2: Market Information Needed for the Assessment Phase of Humanitarian Programming

Key question	Overview of information needed to answer the key question	Why this information matters	Which tools can help you to gather this information? <i>A ✓ symbol indicates that the relevant tool will help users to gather all needed pieces of that type of information, while a (✓) symbol indicates that the toolkit supports the gathering of some, but not all, needed pieces of that type of information.</i>					
			48-Hour Tool	EMMA*	MAG*	RAM	Remote Cash Toolkit	UNHCR MSMA
1. 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)? CORE INFORMATION (need to know)	Target population needs and preferences	Determines which types of goods to focus on during the market assessment and provides an estimate of how much of each good (as well as how often and for what duration of time) the market would be required to supply should humanitarian agencies deliver assistance through cash or vouchers.	(✓)	✓	✓	(✓)**	-	(✓)**
	Target population's access to markets	Helps to determine the feasibility of a market-based intervention and in some cases to indicate the need for special program design features to allow all members of the target population to be able to access assistance.	✓	✓	✓	(✓)**	✓	(✓)
	Availability of key goods	Basic measure of how well markets are functioning as well as of the current demand for a given good.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Restocking capacity	Simple indicator of to what extent, and how quickly, markets can scale up their supply of key goods in response to an increase in demand (i.e. if cash or vouchers were distributed to the crisis-affected population).	✓	✓	✓	✓	(✓)	✓
2. What else might determine the appropriateness of delivering the response through the market? SECONDARY INFORMATION (should know)	Quality of goods	Cross-checks the type/quality of key goods that is or could be available for sale in local markets in relation to the crisis-affected population's preferences and humanitarian standards, and provides a basis for comparing this to what could be procured if assistance were to be delivered in kind. Especially important when there are strict specifications for the quality of items that agencies must provide.	-	✓	✓	✓	-	✓
	Vendor attitudes and capacities	Provides a more rigorous picture of the market's capacity to supply and scale up supply of key goods.	(✓)	(✓)	(✓)	(✓)	-	✓

* While both EMMA and MAG provide comprehensive guidance on how to conduct emergency market analysis, neither provides ready-to-use data collection sheets, and therefore users of these approaches must develop their own.

** This tool asks users to summarize this information, but assumes that secondary data is already available to provide it; it does not actually provide guidance for how to gather this information if primary data collection is required.

Key question	Overview of information needed to answer the key question	Why this information matters	Which tools can help you to gather this information?					
			48-Hour Tool	EMMA*	MAG*	RAM	Remote Cash Toolkit	UNHCR MSMA
2. What else might determine the appropriateness of delivering the response through the market? SECONDARY INFORMATION (should know) (continued from previous page)	Market integration	Major factor influencing market capacity and expandability and the stability of prices throughout the course of the year.	-	√	√	(√)	-	√
	Power dynamics	Can help humanitarian actors to avoid doing harm (and possibly to pursue programming that aims to shift power dynamics) by providing an understanding of which group(s) benefits most from market systems, and which group(s) have limited or no access to those systems.	-	√	√	(√)	-	√
	Expected impact of assistance	Can support humanitarian actors to avoid doing harm by estimating the potential impacts of different types of assistance (in kind, vouchers, cash) on different market actors and on the broader population that relies on local markets.	(√)	√	√	(√)	(√)	√
	Projected cost of different modalities	Provides an estimate of the cost of delivering assistance through cash or vouchers that can be compared with the cost of in kind procurement, for another element that can contribute to an organization's decision on whether to deliver a response through local markets.	√	√	√	√	(√)	(√)
3. What kind of support could increase the feasibility and appropriateness of a market-based response? MARKET SUPPORT INFORMATION (could know)	Reasons for gaps in market capacity	Can highlight issues that could potentially be addressed through supply or demand-side market support interventions.	-	√	√	√	(√)	(√)**
	Reasons for gaps in quality of goods	Can highlight issues that could potentially be addressed through supply or demand-side market support interventions.	-	√	√	(√)	-	(√)
	Reasons for gaps in market integration	Can highlight issues that could potentially be addressed through supply-side market support interventions.	-	√	√	(√)	-	√
	Reasons for problems in market access	Can highlight issues that could potentially be addressed through supply or demand-side market support interventions.	-	√	√	√	(√)	√

* While both EMMA and MAG provide comprehensive guidance on how to conduct emergency market analysis, neither provides ready-to-use data collection sheets, and therefore users of these approaches must develop their own.

Table 3: Market Information Needed for the Program Design Phase of Humanitarian Programming

Key question	Overview of information needed to answer the key question	Why this information matters	Which tools can help you to gather this information? <i>A √ symbol indicates that the relevant tool will help users to gather all needed pieces of that type of information, while a (√) symbol indicates that the toolkit supports the gathering of some, but not all, needed pieces of that type of information.</i>					
			48-Hour Tool	EMMA*	MAG*	RAM	Remote Cash Toolkit	UNHCR MSMA
4. What is an appropriate value for the cash transfer?	Cost for target population to access and purchase key goods	Average prices of key goods are the basis for calculating the value of the cash transfer. Price information can also reveal if there are major differences between affected areas that may warrant multiple transfer values. If the cost of traveling to and from markets is significant for the crisis-affected population, it may be appropriate to increase the value of the cash transfer to account for this cost.	√	√	√	√	(√)	(√)
	Projected price trends	If prices are expected to change dramatically throughout the project period, this can influence the value of the transfer and could indicate the need for a flexible program model from the outset where possible.	-	√	√	√	(√)	√
5. What is an appropriate frequency for delivering the cash transfer?	Access and transport considerations	If market access is particularly arduous, costly and/or risky for the crisis-affected population (in general and considering the key good(s) the population will be purchasing), then a relatively infrequent delivery schedule may be more appropriate.	(√)	√	√	(√)	(√)	(√)
	Market schedules	The timing and frequency of distributions should be aligned with the operating schedules of main markets offering the key good(s) so that the target population can promptly use the assistance to purchase what they need.	-	(√)	(√)	(√)	(√)	√
6. What payment mechanism should be used to deliver cash to the crisis-affected people? (mobile money, liquid cash, etc.)	Payment mechanisms	This information helps to determine which payment mechanisms are already familiar to market vendors, the crisis-affected population and the local population more broadly. This is one of several factors that should help to determine the choice of payment mechanism for a cash transfer program.	-	-	(√)	(√)	(√)	-

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 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 [Chapter 2](#) of the EMMA Toolkit.
- **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.⁶
- **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.
- **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 marketed “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.

⁶ Abu, Mike. [Emergency Market Mapping and Analysis Toolkit](#). Oxfam GB, pub, 2010, p. 204.

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