Project Preparedness Plan

This document tracks a structured project design process, recording information gathered and decisions taken. It is based on Section 1 of the Remote Cash Project (RCP) guidelines, but at the outset there is *no presumption for or against the use of cash* as a modality. Rather the document seeks to support quick, sound and accountable design decisions, including whether or not cash modalities are appropriate for this project.

This document should be ‘owned’ by the senior programme staff member designing the project, updated as the process completes, and shared regularly with key colleagues and partners as appropriate. The document should be completed in order – resist the temptation to decide ‘cash or no-cash’ until the context, needs and market analyses are complete. And of course this process should happen *before* funding applications are written.

Print out the ‘Remote CTP Decision Tree’ annex and stick it on the wall by your desk. This document follows that flowchart. [ ]  Make sure you also have your agency’s Project Cycle Management guidance and the RCP guidelines and annexes handy. [ ]

## PREPARING AND COMMUNICATING

Have you read and thought through your agency’s global and local strategy documents? Discussed the idea with the relevant technical advisers? Then tick this box [ ]

What formal or informal conversations have you, your Country Director or others had with donors that may be relevant to this project idea (including the possible use of cash)? Which donors are likely? Have you been open with them about our aspirations and limitations? Are we building trust? What more can we do?

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Have you checked the likely donors’ programme and operational policies? Would they permit this project idea, in principle? [ ]

Have you connected with the relevant sectoral and cash working groups? What did you learn, relevant to this project idea? Were you as open as was reasonable with your counterparts about how your agency wants to work?

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## FIELD STAFF / PARTNER SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT

Working remotely, with staff or partners, takes a particular set of skills for managers. Interest in and aptitude for remote capacity building is crucial to the success of a project. Do you have, or can you get, those skills on the team? What’s the plan?

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Have you found, or can you find, a team of remote staff or partners who have the soft skills and technical skills to get the job done? Are you satisfied that your agency can find ways to avoid transferring unacceptable risk to the remote staff/partners?

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Is the project idea realistic for the staff/partners? Remote programming is harder and takes longer than ‘normal’ programming. Reduce the complexity if you can. Allow more time or scale down the outputs if necessary. [ ]

## CONTEXT ANALYSIS

Now write a paragraph of context analysis. Don’t copy from the last proposal, but refer to the 12 guiding questions in the RCP guidelines. Draw on the experience of staff and partners, and write it collaboratively with them if possible. Seek the support of a conflict analyst if available. You can re-use this text for the proposal later.

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## NEEDS ANALYSIS

What do we know about the needs of the specific group we are hoping to assist? If an assessment has already been done by another organisation, use that. If access to information is difficult, think about alternative methodologies such as Area of Origin.

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What 3 key goods or services do people most need, or what 3 goods or services would be good indicative ‘samples’ for the market analysis?

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How do people currently get the goods and services they need?

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How would people prefer assistance to be provided. Cash, voucher, in-kind or what?

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What negative coping mechanisms are most prevalent, and how might CTP affect this?

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Do household members have equitable access to resources? To whom should cash be given to support this? Consider the distinct needs of polygamous households, if appropriate to the context

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What ID do people have, and are there risks associated with using it?

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How might targeted CTP affect social cohesion and potentially cause conflict?

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## MARKET ANALYSIS

A good market analysis is *essential*. The standard tool for a remote emergency is IFRC’s RAM. In situations where lack of access means a RAM is absolutely impossible, the shorter Emergency Market Assessment in the RCP guidelines may be used. But ‘not having time to train staff’ is not a good enough reason for this. Which assessment tool will you use and why? Do you need technical support from your agency resource to decide?

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So, what were the findings from the market assessment? Is the market functioning? Are shops generally open most days? Has this changed due to the crisis?

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Can all groups of people get to and use market? Where do they come from? Is it risky? Who can't use the market and why? How does it differ by gender, age, political or religious affiliation?

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Can traders get items from outside the local area? What restrictions and risks are there?

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Are the key goods or services available in the market?

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Are prices of these goods or services higher than before the crisis? Estimate the % change. Do we think prices are going to be reasonably stable?

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Could vendors increase supply of these goods or services if demand were to increase? Do they have enough money?

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How do people transfer money here? What ID is needed? Who cannot use these services and why? How does it differ by gender, age, political or religious affiliation?

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## RESPONSE ANALYSIS

What lessons have been learned from previous projects by your agency or anyone else? What mistakes are we not going to repeat? What best practice do we want to emulate?

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What assistance does the target group tell you they need and prefer? Can all groups take part in the project? Think about women and men, elderly people, disabled people and people from various political, religious or other sub-groups. Who is excluded? And what could be done to support them too? Think about who cares for children and looks after the home – they are busy people. Are men or women particularly vulnerable? What risks might the project be encouraging them to take?

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So, should it be cash-based [ ]  or in-kind [ ]  or a combination of the two? [ ]  Or something else? [ ]  Justify the decision. If not cash, why not?

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If cash-based, what transfer mechanism would be best? Working with your colleagues from Logistics, Finance and Security, use the Mechanism Selection Annex from the RCP guidelines to help you decide and justify your decision. What ID do people need to use it? Do they have and are they safe using this ID?

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How to make this cash transfer mechanism practical? Think about the time it will take to train all the links in the chain, including remote staff/partners, traders and any financial service providers required. Think about procurement needs. Think about the time needed for beneficiaries to fulfil any conditionalities the project requires. What’s the plan?

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How will we monitor both the process (i.e. the distribution) and the outcomes (i.e. what the cash does for people)? What sources of information are possible? We don’t need to have all the details worked out at this stage but initial ideas may show quickly if this is going to be straightforward or difficult.

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## RISK ANALYSIS

It’s time to do the risk analysis, perhaps the most critical stage. Use the Risk Matrix tool from the RCP guidelines. Get all the support you can from remote staff/partners and from finance, logistics and safety colleagues. Remember that the risk analysis process does two things – it helps you make the project as successful as possible, and it documents the remaining risks that your agency (and later your donor) agrees to accept.

Do it thoroughly, copy and paste the table and chart in the space below, and get it signed off and filed. [ ]

## NEXT STEPS

Ideally this will be the point at which the proposal to the donor is written, although in practice these often exist prior to the full preparedness process. If the proposal has already been submitted, check it for consistency with the findings and decisions above, and communicate with the donor on any necessary changes.

Now move on to *Section 2: Implementation* in the Remote Cash Project guidelines.