



Instituto de Estudios sobre Conflictos y Acción Humanitaria  
Institute of Studies on Conflicts and Humanitarian Action

## **CONSULTATION ON CASH AND VOUCHER ASSISTANCE**

### **TO THE MAIN SPANISH NGOS FUNDED BY AECID**

#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Report prepared by the Institute of Studies on Conflicts and Humanitarian Action (IECAH) for the Humanitarian Action Office of the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID).

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## ACRONYMS

The following acronyms are used in the text and/or the accompanying graphs and figures in this report.

|                   |  |
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| <b>AAH</b>        | Action Against Hunger  |
| <b>AEA</b>        | <i>Ayuda En Acción</i>   |
| <b>AECID</b>      | Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation                             |
| <b>APS</b>        | <i>Alianza Por la Solidaridad</i>  |
| <b>CaLP</b>       | Cash Learning Partnership  |
| <b>CVA</b>        | Cash and Voucher Assistance  |
| <b>DFID</b>       | Department for International Development   |
| <b>ECHO</b>       | European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations                            |
| <b>IECAH</b>      | Institute of Studies on Conflicts and Humanitarian Action                            |
| <b>IFRC</b>       | International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies                     |
| <b>NGO</b>        | Non-governmental organization  |
| <b>OI</b>         | Oxfam Intermón   |
| <b>PI</b>         | Plan International   |
| <b>SCE</b>        | Save the Children Spain  |
| <b>SRC</b>        | Spanish Red Cross  |
| <b>UN</b>         | United Nations   |
| <b>UNHCR</b>      | United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees  |
| <b>USAID/OFDA</b> | U.S. Agency for International Development/Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance |
| <b>WFP</b>        | World Food Programme   |

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report summarizes the results obtained from a study of the cash and voucher assistance (CVA) practices of eight Spanish NGOs<sup>1</sup> in the field of humanitarian assistance. The data were obtained by means of a survey and complementary interviews. The data obtained do not allow for generalized conclusions, but point to a possible global trend among Spanish NGOs funded by AECID.

All the NGOs that took part in this consultation are currently engaged in CVA projects. Half of them have less than four years' experience with these instruments, and their projects are limited in scope (with budgets of 100,000-200,000 euros). On the other hand, two have been implementing CVA projects for over ten years, some of which have a budget in excess of one million euros.

The ECHO/Europeaid donor represents a very significant part ( $\pm 40\%$ ) of CVA funding for NGOs, followed by USAID/OFDA ( $\pm 20\%$ ). AECID provides a substantial part of the funding for these NGOs ( $\pm 15\%$ ), although the lack of specific, fit-for-purpose rules in this respect makes it difficult to apply for greater funding, as several NGOs have commented.

The vast majority of these CVA projects are implemented in the immediate response or early recovery phase, and there is little experience in development phases (the protection of livelihoods or links to social protection). Few organizations conduct CVA programmes related to disaster preparedness, a characteristic that was mentioned as a weakness by several interviewees. In this respect, AECID could play a very important role.

Most CVA projects ( $\pm 40\%$ ) take place in Africa, followed by the Americas ( $\pm 35\%$ ). The areas most commonly addressed using CVA are still Food Security and Livelihoods. However, a small number of promising projects have also been undertaken in areas such as Water, Sanitation and Hygiene, Health, and Shelter.

Approximately two thirds of all CVA is provided in cash, usually without conditions. Six NGOs use the multipurpose cash transfer approach, which seems to be well received, although it can sometimes be complex. The same can be said of electronic transfers, which are used by at least three NGOs.

In the remaining cases—about one third of the CVA programmes—vouchers are used. According to the NGOs' analysis of the contexts or aims of their projects, this restricted form of assistance is usually employed

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<sup>1</sup> The following NGOs took part in this consultation: Action Against Hunger, *Alianza Por la Solidaridad*, *Ayuda En Acción*, *Cáritas*, Spanish Red Cross, Plan International, Save the Children Spain, and Oxfam Intermón.

when the goal is to achieve a specific outcome. Numerous mechanisms are available to ensure the accountability of CVA use, but the processes and sources of verification are fundamentally the same as those used in more traditional projects involving the delivery of inputs or services.

All the NGOs consulted incorporate CVA, in one form or another, in their operational plan or development strategy, although sometimes this is not done in a very formal way, and the financial objectives of the CVA may not be specifically defined. Five of these NGOs present guidelines/policies on CVA that might usefully be shared. Furthermore, many of them observe there is a need for basic, introductory training in monetary transfers, for operational and support staff.

The data presented in this Executive Summary highlight the considerable interest in CVA and the good use made of it by Spanish NGOs. However, further work is needed in areas such as training and defining specific objectives for the use of this instrument. AECID can assist NGOs in these tasks by adapting its own regulations and instruments, by adopting clear strategic positions, and by providing appropriate training in the use of CVA.