



GUIDANCE FOR CASH-BASED TRANSFERS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK

Operational Continuity and Field Support Plan

Objectives

- 1- Provide guidance and advice on operational continuity while reducing the risk of contamination.
- 2- Communicate clear changes/simplification in required procedures for planning, designing, implementing, sustaining and scaling up CBT operations in the field (With a higher-level risk acceptance approach)
- 3- Ensure continued CBT expertise and support for field operations

I. Prevention and Risk Reduction within Operational Continuity

Taking a “Do No Harm” approach, WFP operations need to be aware of COVID-19 and implement general preventive measures to reduce the risks of spreading the virus:

- 1- In coordination with local health authorities and interagency coordination fora, ensure dissemination of preventive guidance and tools. This includes making awareness and prevention guidance available at each of our sites in the field, including Registration, Distribution, CBT cash and/or voucher outlets (Banks, cash out points, Retailers etc.) in local languages.
- 2- Make available handwashing stations and/or hand sanitizer to staff and beneficiaries on those sites and ensure service providers follow this advice. Ensure Staff (WFP, CPs and Service Providers) have access to masks where needed.
- 3- Take measures to reduce crowding in and around WFP sites. This could be achieved by reducing the numbers of mobilized populations for a certain activity on a certain date – acknowledging this may affect productivity; and ensure adequate space is available to keep a 1-meter distance between beneficiaries and between beneficiaries and WFP/CP/Service Provider staff.
- 4- Consider other ways to reduce crowding by avoiding unnecessary groupings, like loading multiple cycles of assistance at one go, staggering of distributions or loading cycles, reducing or cancelling non-critical assessments, focus group discussions (FDG), identity verification and authentication exercises etc.
- 5- Where crowding occurs at redemption sites, consider diversifying transfer mechanisms and contracting additional service providers (Cash and vouchers/food outlets).



- 6- Where not absolutely critical – necessary for operational continuity, in contamination risk contexts, avoid biometric data collection, or, depending on the nature of the context, avoid registration/data collection exercises all together in an active contamination context.
- 7- Where possible, and not absolutely necessary, the biometric authentication function at redemption/transaction point could be abolished or turned off. Contact CBT/TEC HQ for support and advice.

II. Operational continuity and Scale up planning/preparedness

Beyond the “Do No Harm” approach, other ways of reducing risk of contamination while maintaining operational continuity include diversification of assistance modalities, mechanisms and payment instruments for the same target zone and beneficiary groups, and adding new cash and/or voucher assistance outlets:

- 1- Explore the possibility of mixing/diversifying modalities. Where there is high reliance on a single modality, causing overcrowding in distribution and/or redemption sites, consider ways to shift parts of the beneficiaries to another modality where possible and reasonable.
- 2- Assess the potentiality of diversifying transfer mechanisms within the same modality, i.e. if Vouchers are the main transfer mechanism, explore the possibility of shifting part of the beneficiaries to cash assistance if the circumstances allow to reduce pressure from voucher outlets, or vice versa.
- 3- Where contextually feasible, quickly assess and contract additional service providers to allow beneficiaries shorter transit time and more options for locations to redeem their assistance. This includes adding cash out agents, banks, mobile network operator cash points, retailers etc.
- 4- Ensure end to end assessment of Financial Service Providers capacity in terms of networks, cash liquidity pipeline, staff availability, etc. and consider mitigation measures as per the attached Risk Register.

These measures can also help field offices prepare for an eventual scale up of assistance operations. Other ways to be ready for an increase in coverage and caseload can include:

- 1- In coordination with national authorities and interagency structures, consider potential COVID-19 vulnerable zones, demographics, and potential activities that may be requested for WFP support. Refer to WFP general guidance on operational continuity that includes VAM guidelines.
- 2- Identify upcoming potential needs in terms of CO capacity and inform your RB and/or HQ focal points for advice and assistance. Consider recruitment of local expertise where possible and needed.



- 3- Anticipate upcoming potential needs in terms of equipment and tools for CBT activities and scale up (Cards, printers, scanners etc.). Prepositioning and dispatch will be handled on a case by case and based on prioritization on critical needs.
- 4- Keep close coordination between the different activity/modality managers to ensure pipeline reflects complementarities between food in-kind and CBT. Consider shifting between modalities depending on supply chain and market conditions.
- 5- Where possible, remotely conduct/revise market functionality/assessment to make well informed decision on modality and mechanism changes (i.e. mVam, remote market functionality index (MFI) etc. / Contact CBT HQ and VAM for advice). Mainly, review your market assessment and monitoring set up and make sure your latest market information – including prices - is available, updatable remotely, and in sync with national plans if they exist.
- 6- Start identifying actors upstream in the retail supply chain, e.g. distributors, wholesalers that can either maintain the flow of goods or even be used to replace existing retailers in case their operations are disrupted. Ensure solid links and exchange of information with relevant national authorities on Imports, prices, supply chain, etc.

II. Continued CBT field support

- 1- A multifunctional CBT emergency team has been set up in HQ and will be available to support remotely with advice and operational guidance.
- 2- Staff support requests will be difficult to provide from HQ considering the travel restrictions on flights from Italy. HQ is working with RBs on identifying alternative options for cross operational support and other potential solutions. Plan in advance and contact CBT HQ for advice and remote support.
- 3- A general guidance on distribution site set up changes and recommendations on safer distributions and staff and crowd management will be shared with all WFP offices.