



## EVALUATION BRIEF

Experience and Learning from Pilots of Good Practices in Humanitarian Market Analysis

Photo: Rinchin Gaekwad | Uganda



## Overview

Through the *Improving the Uptake of Humanitarian Market Analysis* project, the IRC aimed to help facilitate the systematic use of market information for humanitarian programming across sectors. It did this by attempting to address some of the main barriers to the uptake of market information, namely, the perception and practice of market assessments as time- and resource-intensive undertakings; a lack of in-country ownership and leadership of market assessments; inadequate attention to markets in pre-crisis contexts and the limited knowledge and capacity in market analysis among field level practitioners and beyond the food security and livelihoods sector. The core of this initiative consisted of a series of activities undertaken in collaboration with CRS and Mercy Corps to identify, pilot and evaluate practices that can increase the systematic use of market analysis and the uptake of resulting data. (Table 1<sup>1</sup> presents the most common program-related questions for which market information is needed in humanitarian contexts.)

**Table 1: Most Common Humanitarian Programming Questions that Require Market Information**

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

In early 2017, a review was conducted to identify examples of where humanitarian market analysis had influenced programming and to distill general factors and specific practices that support the uptake of market information from these examples.<sup>2</sup> Then, several of these practices were selected for piloting in three countries: Uganda (hosted by Mercy Corps), Niger (hosted by IRC) and Nigeria (hosted by CRS). Each pilot focused on one primary practice, while the pilots in Niger and Uganda incorporated two secondary practices as well.

<sup>1</sup> Reproduced from the IRC publication, [Revised Market Information Framework](#), (author Emily Sloane), May 2018.

<sup>2</sup> The results of this research are presented in short form in [Taking Market Analysis Beyond Theory: Practices that facilitate the use of market information in humanitarian programming](#), (author Emily Sloane), March 2018; and in the full-length [Improving the Uptake of Humanitarian Market Analysis: Best Practice Report](#), (authors Helene Juillard, Lili Mohiddin and Lauren Weiss), January 2018.

The primary practices piloted were **(1) incorporating non-price indicators into price monitoring efforts**; and **(2) fostering collaboration between humanitarian and development actors to gather and interpret market information**. They were piloted in 2017 for a period of 3-6 months in each country. Each pilot was launched with an in-person visit from a member of an IRC-managed consultant team, who introduced the practice(s) to be piloted and worked with the country staff to develop a detailed implementation plan and supporting tools. The consultants continued to support the country teams remotely throughout the remainder of the pilots, as the practices were implemented. An evaluation visit was conducted to each pilot location in late 2017 to assess the extent to which the practices had contributed to the uptake of market information in programmatic decision making, as well as the efficiency of the practices and blockers and enablers of their uptake.<sup>3</sup>

The market-related information gathered had not overtly influenced any of the pilot country's programming by the time the evaluation took place, for two main reasons: the practices had been implemented more slowly than originally envisioned, and specific opportunities for utilizing the information in new program proposals did not present themselves within the pilot timeframes. Despite this, both primary practices piloted showed significant promise to support the use of market information in programming, largely through their potential to foster an environment that would enable this to happen.

This brief provides a description of the two primary practices and how each was piloted, along with key learning and recommendations for replicating the practices elsewhere. It then presents general reflections on the learning across all three pilots. This brief is intended for humanitarian stakeholders interested in making sure that market information is considered in programming and, more broadly, to anyone interested in how to promote responsiveness to any kind of contextual information among humanitarian actors at the field level.

## Market monitoring beyond price monitoring

### Description of the practice

Typical market monitoring involves the collection of data on the prices of key goods and sometimes on availability as well. Through this practice, other, non-price, indicators are integrated into market monitoring systems in order to help the team to have a more comprehensive understanding of the markets that serve the areas where they are active, of what changes are happening over time, and possibly, why.

Market monitoring is in many ways an appropriate entry point for addressing many of the barriers to consistent and useful market analysis. Whereas market assessments tend to be fairly resource intensive, market monitoring is relatively light and so represents a fairly minor burden on field teams. In addition, market monitoring is very commonplace and is something that many field teams do as part of their regular activities; in this sense, there is already considerable buy-in for

<sup>3</sup> For the full report that resulted from these evaluation visits, please see "[Improving the Uptake of Market Analysis: Final Evaluation of Piloted Best Practices](#)" (authors Helene Juillard and Rinchin Gaekwad), May 2018.

it. Because it involves recurring visits to local markets and frequent interaction between field staff and local market actors, market monitoring represents a clear opportunity to build staff members' awareness and knowledge of markets and to help them develop a more holistic, ongoing understanding of market trends than market assessments – which essentially provide a snapshot of market function in a specific moment – typically provide. Potentially, this practice could

- Build staff's capacity to gather, interpret and apply market information without external technical support.
- Provide a basis for more informed adjustments to ongoing programs.
- Reduce or possibly eliminate the need for standalone market assessments in the future.

This was the main practice explored in the pilots in Niger and Nigeria, which took place in the Diffa region and Yobe and Borno States, respectively. In both contexts, the host agencies were actively supporting vulnerable displaced and host community households via extended programs<sup>4</sup> that provided e-vouchers for food items. Both organizations had already been collecting price data in the program areas, ostensibly to ensure that the value of the vouchers being distributed was appropriate.

As envisioned by the consultant team, carrying out the practice involved the following key steps:

1. Review and modification of existing market monitoring processes and tools, incorporating selected non-price indicators
2. Regular monitoring/analysis using the updated data collection forms and analysis tools
3. When appropriate, modification of existing project activities and/or design of new programs based on the analysis of market monitoring data

The process of identifying non-price indicators is obviously key to this practice. The teams in both Niger and Nigeria went through a similar process to accomplish this during the consultant-led workshop (see Figure 1). Through this process, the Niger team identified six main non-price indicators, and the Nigeria team seven; a selection of these is presented in Table 2.

*Figure 1: Process of identifying non-price market monitoring indicators<sup>5</sup>*

**Activity 1: Brainstorm of potential indicators that would be useful in current and future programs.** Participants (working in two groups) developed a long list of 21 market-monitoring indicators. The list was shared in plenary and then reduced to 9 indicators by asking participants to vote for the indicators they felt were most suitable to their programs.

**Activity 2: Identification of ranking criteria and associated scores.** In two groups, participants listed 5 criteria that could be used to prioritize the identified indicators using a ranking table. In plenary and following a review of the criteria, consensus was reached regarding the selected criteria and their respected weights, resulting with the following:

1. *Applicability of the indicator: how easy it would be to collect the data: Weighted score: 4*
2. *Relevance of the data to programming: in the short and long terms: Weighted score: 5*
3. *Internal capacity: resources and ability to analyze the collected data: Weighted score: 3*

**Activity 3: Ranking of indicators to develop a short list.** In two groups, participants were asked to undertake a ranking exercise for the selected indicators. They had to consider the criteria and give each of the indicators a score based on the extent to which the indicator met the criteria.

<sup>4</sup> 12 months in duration or longer

<sup>5</sup> Taken from "Nigeria Trip Report" (author Lili Mohiddin), October 2017. (unpublished)

*Table 2: Selected non-price market monitoring indicators identified in Niger and Nigeria*

	Indicator	Rationale for selection
Niger	Origin of staple foods sold at the market (local, regional (within Niger), imported)	Monitoring of the vulnerability of certain geographical zones in terms of agricultural production
	Quality of goods sold by contracted vendors	Monitoring of vendor contracts (ensuring that vendors are supplying goods of the stipulated quality)
	Cost of accessing markets for beneficiary households	Monitoring of the relevance of cash transfers and the value of the assistance provided; triangulation of price monitoring
Nigeria	Arrival of supplies (delivery trucks) when needed	Supply chain reliability can be affected by the security situation and can influence prices.
	Type and number of traders (for services and commodities of interest) in markets	Measure of market competition, changes in types of traders and emerging businesses - a reflection on the overall business environment and of cash feasibility.
	Value (volume*prices) of sales before and now by vendors	Quantitative measure of secondary impacts of cash based programming

The non-price indicators identified were integrated into existing monitoring systems in both Niger and Nigeria. Most questions related to the indicators were woven into vendor surveys, though those requiring beneficiary input were integrated into post-distribution monitoring surveys. In Niger, additional modifications were made to the country's price monitoring activities, with the number of commodity prices to be monitored reduced by about two-thirds, and the data collection forms transitioned to a new mobile data collection and management system – CommCare – intended to support more efficient data collection and analysis. One round of data collection using the new indicators was subsequently completed in each country. Despite a delayed start to the pilot in Nigeria, one round of data analysis was completed there, while this did not happen in Niger.

### Key findings

- As hoped, **the integration of non-price indicators into market monitoring systems did seem to contribute to a better appreciation for and understanding of market-related data** among participating country program staff, and to field staff's enthusiasm for carrying out market monitoring activities.
- In Niger, the team felt that **the market data** it was gathering **would be robust enough to provide a sense of the market's capacity to support cash or voucher programming in lieu of a separate, standalone market assessment** for future proposal development purposes. That said, this did not actually happen during the pilot period.
- The sets of non-price indicators selected in the two country programs, and the perceptions about how market monitoring data could be used, were completely distinct, a fairly significant finding given the apparent similarity between the two contexts. This implies that relatively minor details about programmatic and geopolitical contexts, along with the perspectives of the individuals involved in identifying non-price indicators, are driving factors behind which non-price indicators are deemed the most relevant in a given context, and that **it is probably not realistic or useful to propose a standard set of non-price market indicators to be monitored** at this point in time.

- Although not directly related to the integration of non-price indicators into monitoring systems, **the process of reviewing and amending existing market monitoring systems had enormous value** of its own. In Niger, the simplified price monitoring system and improved platform for mobile data collection and analysis was hugely appreciated by the team, as it was felt to be more efficient, saving staff time. That said, **analyzing and interpreting data** on the new platform **proved trickier than expected**. These steps were covered quickly during the initial workshop, and the team struggled to put carry them out in the ensuing months with only remote support.
- In both pilots, **errors in data collection and analysis were linked with key stakeholders' absence at the initial kick-off workshop**. In Niger, security and budgetary restrictions meant that the enumerators charged with actually collecting the market data were unable to participate in the workshop. While some of the information covered during the workshop was passed along to them, they did not seem to fully understand the rationale and expectations for or the importance of collecting the data, and the team reported some problems with data quality as a result. Meanwhile, in Nigeria, the workshop took place with very minimal participation of M&E staff, who were later responsible for analyzing the data collected. This led to some errors in the analysis and subsequent delays.
- In Niger, **donor expectations for the frequency of market monitoring proved extremely influential**, with the result that monitoring was not carried out as routinely as would be needed to detect meaningful trends to inform program design and adaptation.
- In Nigeria, the survey team initially encountered some resistance from vendors, who were somewhat mistrustful of the surveyors' motives and felt they should be compensated for their time. **Market monitoring therefore turned into a learning process** for both field staff and vendors, with survey teams taking measures to reduce the burden on respondents (for example, by varying which vendors were to be interviewed each time and by keeping the questionnaires as concise as possible) and finding ways to better communicate the potential value of humanitarian programming to local markets and to individual vendors so as to secure their buy in to the interview process.

#### Recommendations for replicating this practice

- **“Expanded” market monitoring should build off the market monitoring that teams are already doing**. A key first step in adopting this practice is therefore reviewing existing market monitoring systems and tools, and finding ways to address any major inefficiencies, such as the collection of prices for overlong lists of commodities<sup>6</sup> and/or cumbersome and/or illogical data collection methods. Such inefficiencies should be acknowledged and addressed before introducing new non-price indicators into monitoring systems; this should help to simultaneously reduce the burden on the field team and increase acceptance around this new practice.

<sup>6</sup> Section 1.4 of CRS' [MARKit guidance](#) explains how to reduce the number of prices being monitored.

- **Non-price market indicators should be identified thoughtfully for each context** with the input of program teams. While there is not a fixed set of indicators to choose from, certain guiding principles should help determine which indicators are most relevant for a given context. Individual indicators should either capture the factors that are most likely to influence price changes in that context (so that teams can more easily understand why price changes are happening, when they occur) or represent aspects of markets that are unlikely to be reflected in price changes. In addition, teams wishing to use a specific indicator must be able to explain why it is important to measure it on a regular basis and how the resulting information may be used to help influence programming decisions.
- Although this practice does seem to help build field teams' capacities in market analysis, **technical support from an individual with markets expertise is still quite important during both the initial indicator selection process and – crucially – during initial data analysis and interpretation**, to ensure that teams have the skills and confidence needed to actually put the data that has been gathered to use.
- It is important to **engage the right people in the indicator selection process** so that there is collective buy in for the practice of expanded market monitoring along with a shared understanding of what data is being collected and why. The “right people” includes the individuals responsible for data collection and analysis along with those charged with making decisions about current and future programming, such as program managers and coordinators.
- While mobile data collection and data management platforms have enormous potential to simplify the process of market monitoring, the monitoring team must be comfortable using all aspects of the technology in order for this potential to be realized. To this end, **teams wishing to adopt data collection and management platforms must ensure that adequate time and resources are budgeted for capable staff as well as training and ongoing technical support.**
- Expanded **market monitoring systems and tools should be designed to minimize the burden on vendors and staff.** Surveys should be kept as brief as possible, and teams should explore other ways to secure vendor buy in, such as varying which vendors are surveyed each time and/or conducting interviews during days and times when business is relatively slow. Field staff should transparently communicate what they are doing and why.
- **Field teams should review their market monitoring indicators and protocols periodically** (perhaps on an annual basis) **and modify them as needed to ensure their ongoing relevance.**
- **Donors should emphasize the importance of regular market monitoring and market-responsive programming**, and where appropriate, require that market monitoring plans and reports be included in programmatic proposals and reports. Further, they should offer implementing organizations the flexibility to adapt programming mid-project if warranted by changing market conditions. Finally, they should offer funding to cover the material, technological and staffing resources needed to collect, analyze and apply market-related data.

# Humanitarian-Development Collaboration on Market Analysis

## Description of the practice

Crises often occur in contexts where development actors are present, in some cases where they have been for many years. Historically, responses to these crises have usually been led by humanitarian-focused actors, usually with little to no consultation with their development-focused counterparts. To the extent that humanitarian actors have sought out market information to inform their responses, they have generally gathered this information via their own rapid assessments, which mainly involve collecting data directly from vendors in local markets and focus somewhat narrowly on the market's capacity to deliver urgently-needed assistance. More robust assessments are sometimes possible but can be time and cost-prohibitive and tend to be a bit intimidating for field-facing staff, who may have limited expertise and experience with market analysis.

Meanwhile, the development actors already on the ground when crises occur often have an in-depth knowledge of market systems that could potentially help to inform emergency responses, thereby

- Increasing the quality and depth of information available to humanitarian actors.
- Reducing the need for humanitarians to conduct detailed vendor surveys.
- Strengthening relationships between the two groups of actors, possibly even leading to development programming that is more responsive to emergency needs and humanitarian programming implemented in such a way as to not only maximize benefit for the local market system but also to foster market recovery and development.

This practice sought to deliberately foster this kind of collaboration between humanitarian and development actors, specifically by creating a forum through which they could share existing knowledge and information and collectively plan for and conduct an assessment to inform an emergency response.

This practice was piloted by Mercy Corps in northern Uganda. As an actor with a longstanding presence in this region – which had been relatively stable for about a decade – Mercy Corps was focused on longer-term economic programming, involving employment and agricultural market systems development. Various other NGOs, along with government and private sector actors, were engaged in similar work in the region. Meanwhile, the worsening conflict in South Sudan, Uganda's northern neighbor, had led to a massive influx of South Sudanese refugees into northern Uganda, with a new camp forming within Mercy Corps' operating area. Mercy Corps, whose global expertise spans both emergency and long-term development programming, was considering launching an emergency response to support the refugees in this camp, potentially addressing basic needs, livelihoods and protection concerns. Although several other humanitarian actors were already offering in-kind support within the camp, few assessments of any kind had carried out to date.

As envisioned by the consultant team, carrying out the practice involved the following key steps:

1. Consultative workshop for stakeholders representing multiple agencies and types of actors, with the objective of identifying potential humanitarian activities using market information from market development programs and considering humanitarian needs
2. Creation of a Technical Working Group on markets, to include development, private sector, humanitarian and government actors

3. Market and response analysis carried out by Working Group members
4. Members agencies use findings from market analysis to shape program design focused on the emergency response

The first three steps of the process were realized within the project period, with the market assessment taking place at the time of the pilot evaluation. The guiding questions used during the initial kick-off workshop are presented in Figure 2, while selections from the TOR that was created for the Market Development Working Group appear in Figure 3.

*Figure 2: Guiding questions for consultative workshop for humanitarian and development actors*

1. What existing market development programs are being implemented in the area by private sector, development and local government actors?
2. What market development programs are being implemented by Mercy Corps, and what market information have these programs generated?
3. What are the likely needs of refugee households, and what is the likely impact of refugees on the local context?
4. What key market systems will refugee and host community households rely on for their immediate needs and self-sufficiency?
5. Apart from the Mercy Corps development programs, what other market information is available and relevant to the local context?
6. Broadly speaking, what does the available information tell us about the market context (in local and supply markets) for these key market systems?
7. What does this information tell us about how a humanitarian program should be designed and the activities that it needs to include? I.e.: what elements from the market analysis findings should be taken into consideration when designing program activities?
8. Considering the information available related to the market context, what kind of humanitarian responses are possible?

*Figure 3: Selected text from the TOR for the Market Development Working Group*

The working group is a platform for collaboration among market development practitioners, humanitarian and private sector actors. This group was formed from the basis that humanitarian actions happen in existing market systems and usually in a context where market development actors are already present, making it important for humanitarian actors to understand the market dynamics. Thus, this collaboration seeks to enhance the collection and use of market information in designing humanitarian responses that don't undermine the progress done in the host communities.

**Overall objective:** To improve the use of market analysis information in humanitarian programming (program design and adaptation) in x Settlement

**Specific Objectives:**

1. To improve collaboration and coordination among market development practitioners, humanitarian and private sector actors through information sharing and dissemination activities
2. To harmonize and consolidate market assessment approaches across member organizations
3. To provide technical guidance as regards market analysis and response programming

### Key findings

- **The pilot did seem to build participants' capacity in and appreciation for the value of market analysis as well as their sense of the value of collaborating with different types of actors** to understand markets and design market-based programming.
- **The detailed mapping of key humanitarian, development and private sector stakeholders prior to collaborative meetings provided valuable insight into which stakeholders to include** in preliminary meetings. As Mercy Corps were well acquainted with key actors in the implementation area, they were well-positioned to quickly identify relevant actors.
- Although **engaging private sector actors in market analysis** was not the primary practice being piloted, it **proved to be an important element of the pilot**. Private sector players and implementing agencies reported recognizing new opportunities as part of their newfound relationship. For example, some agricultural input dealers saw opportunities to supply important goods needed by refugees that were not otherwise available in local markets, while agencies hoping to implement livelihoods programs reported that a better understanding of market standards could help them to support refugees to produce more commercially viable agricultural products.
- **Fostering collaboration between humanitarian and development actors proved to be a major task, requiring a dedicated leader** over an extended period of time. In many ways, these two groups exist in separate domains, with unique vocabularies, approaches and perspectives, and it was consistently challenging to get all involved to speak the same language. The Mercy Corps pilot lead, for example, spent considerable time simply ensuring that the various working group members had a shared understanding of the purpose and scope of the market assessment that the group would be conducting.
- While this practice would likely have been challenging to pilot regardless, **the lack of immediate funding opportunities for new emergency work** no doubt **limited the involved agencies' drive to move this initiative forward**, partly explaining why it took so many months to officially establish the working group and execute the market assessment.

### Recommendations for replicating this practice

- **Effective collaboration between humanitarian and development actors requires a strong facilitator who clearly understands the purpose and value of bringing these groups together and ideally who has expertise and experience in both types of programming**. While technically any stakeholder could spearhead humanitarian-development collaboration, **agencies that have expertise and active programming in both the humanitarian and the development sectors are encouraged to play a leading role**, as they are perhaps best placed to keep the effort on track.
- **Agencies** leading this practice **should conduct a detailed mapping of key humanitarian, development and private sector stakeholders** before convening any

actors to ensure that the right people are in the room. The mapping should include lead humanitarian agencies that are planning and/or are currently carrying out an emergency response, lead development agencies likely to have a good understanding of local market systems, major private sector actors representing sectors relevant to the sectors of greatest humanitarian need (in or near the disaster-affected area) and government agencies likely to have market information that is relevant to the sector(s) and geographic areas of interest.

- Where appropriate, **agencies engaged in humanitarian-development collaboration on market analysis should include private sector actors during strategic points in the process**, including initial consultation and response analysis. Private sector engagement can provide access to sources of market information that NGOs may not otherwise know about and valuable perspectives on what types of response might be most effective, particularly as concerns market support activities. However, **agencies should also be deliberate about managing the expectations of private sector actors involved** in the process so that they do not feel they are somehow obligated to financially engage these actors as part of their eventual programmatic interventions. This should be a fairly simple matter of clearly communicating objectives and expectations throughout the process and of limiting private sector engagement to key moments only.
- **Lead agencies (and donors!) must resource this activity sufficiently.** This mainly involves funding the time of a staff person who can provide dedicated leadership to the convening of stakeholders, **with the understanding that it will require extended time, effort and patience to fully realize the practice.** In addition, it is helpful if senior management are also supportive of this activity and can help to ensure that sufficient time is being allocated to forward progress. Agencies should also be prepared to provide some funds or in-kind resources for market assessment, if one is intended; however, this can be a relatively small amount if other agencies who are involved are also able to contribute resources.
- **To streamline the process, it may be helpful to reduce the number of actors who actively engage in all steps of the process after the initial consultation**, perhaps over the course of several meetings. While the full group could be kept informed of overall progress, participation in actual meetings and assessments could be limited to the actors who are key to collaboration, based on the areas of mutual interest that emerge during discussions.
- **More work is needed to explore and articulate the benefits of humanitarian-development collaboration on market analysis** to both parties, especially given the considerable effort required to put it into practice. In addition, **agencies are encouraged to explore different** (and potentially lighter) **ways to pursue this kind of collaboration**, since the approach taken in this pilot is definitely not the only way to do so.

## Overall reflections on the project

The study on good practices in humanitarian market analysis that formed the basis for these pilots named four factors needed to support the uptake of market information in the humanitarian sector: adequate **resources** to collect and analyze information; an understanding of the importance of the information as well as the **capacity** to ensure that it influences decision making processes; the **quality** of the information collected; and strategic **dissemination** of the information gathered. In theory, if these four elements are present, it should be fairly straightforward for humanitarian teams to gather and use market information. The country programs that hosted the pilots were selected partly because they were thought to have all four elements in place.

However, the teams in Niger, Nigeria and Uganda were all working in emergency contexts characterized by incredibly high need, limited resources, extreme demands and stressful, dynamic and insecure environments. As such, it was difficult for field-facing staff and their managers to carve out the time and focus required to adopt the new practices, even in the face of dedicated support and resources. The pilot activities were implemented, but more slowly than envisioned, and because of this they were not able to shed light on how effectively the two primary practices tested can contribute to the use of market information in programming.

At the same time, even in these difficult contexts, both practices clearly succeeded in building appreciation for the relevance of market information to humanitarian programming and staff's capacity to understand market information. Of the four key factors influencing the uptake of market information, capacity is crucial; buy-in for market analysis can mean that more time and resources are allocated to do it and that teams know how to gather quality data and make this a priority. **The piloted practices are promising not because they led to the uptake of market information in programming but because they helped to foster an environment in which this was more likely to happen.**

Further, both of the piloted practices have the potential to be institutionalized. In Niger and Nigeria, adapted tools and approaches are now embedded in the teams' market monitoring practices, while in Uganda, a new markets working group sits within the official NGO coordination structure. Though the pilots are officially over, it will be interesting to see how the activities set in motion evolve over time.

The core of both practices was very basic – humanitarian actors were asked to reflect on *why* market information was needed for their programming, and *what* market information was needed, and they were provided with guidance on how to think this through.<sup>7</sup> This basic yet often elusive knowledge informed all of the activities later carried out during the pilots. It was crucial to keeping data collection processes manageable during market monitoring and to keeping market analysis planning and execution on track during the collaborative market analysis pilot. Ideally, it will also help staff to interpret the market information they gather in terms of its relevance for their programs. Any effective market analysis, regardless of what practice is used to carry it out, must be built on this foundation.

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<sup>7</sup> Including the IRC publication, [Revised Market Information Framework](#), (author Emily Sloane), May 2018.

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## About IRC

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<sup>8</sup> These include "Niger Trip Report" (author Helene Juillard), June 2017. (unpublished); "Uganda Trip Report" (author Lili Mohiddin), June 2017. (unpublished); "Nigeria Trip Report" (author Lili Mohiddin), October 2017. (unpublished)