



Improving the Uptake of Humanitarian Market Analysis



The *Improving the Uptake of Humanitarian Market Analysis* program will promote the consistent collection and use of market data in the design, implementation and adaptation of preparedness, response and recovery programming across all sectors.

Introduction

Market assessments and market-based programming are now widely considered best practice in humanitarian programming, especially among food security and livelihoods actors. They are embedded in various standard-bearing initiatives, and there are a number of tools for emergency market analysis and monitoring aimed at non-specialist practitioners, including the well-known Emergency Market Mapping and Analysis (EMMA) Toolkit, and the Pre-Crisis Market Analysis (PCMA) guidance. Nonetheless, in reality, market analysis is conducted inconsistently, and even when it does happen, it does not always result in the uptake of market information and recommendations into actual program design or modification. The persistent gap between standards and actual practice requires a reevaluation of how market analysis is conducted, and how the data from assessments is managed and put to use, in order for market-based programming to be consistently applied across humanitarian sectors.

Project Purpose

The “Improving the Uptake of Humanitarian Market Analysis” project seeks to address the main barriers to greater uptake of market analysis and the use of market data in program-related decision making. These barriers include prohibitively time- and resource-intensive market assessments; 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.

With funding from USAID/OFDA, the IRC will lead three-interlinked initiatives intended to facilitate the systematic use of market information in the design of humanitarian programs across sectors:

- Develop a framework to clearly define the market information required for specific program decisions.
- Identify, test and evaluate new approaches for collecting and managing market information for program design and adaptation.
- Strengthen field-level use of market analysis techniques through the organization of learning exchanges and the translation of important market assessment resources.

Developing a market information framework

To improve the linkage between programmatic decision-making and market analysis, the IRC will produce a framework to complement existing market analysis tools that will identify some of the key programmatic decisions for which market information is required along with the specific pieces of data that are needed to make those decisions. The framework will assist organizations in deciding when and for what purposes to conduct market analyses and in identifying the type and depth of data that should be gathered for specific programmatic decisions, so that regardless of which market assessment tool is being used, the data being collected can be directly linked to programming actions.

Piloting new approaches for collecting and managing market information in field programs

The IRC will partner with CRS and Mercy Corps to identify potential approaches to ensuring the consistent use and uptake of market analysis in program design and adaptation and will test and evaluate these new approaches to check that they are effective and scalable across organizations. As a starting point, several potential solutions have already been identified, based on principles of best practice that have limited field application to date. These solutions include (1) broadening the practice of market monitoring beyond price data collection and designing tools to support translation of monitoring data into actions; (2) enhancing collaboration between humanitarian and development actors to better understand baseline contexts and/or share information when emergencies happen; (3) replacing agency-led assessments with further engagement with private sector actors or other types of specialists to get market information; (4) more explicitly delegating responsibility for market analysis to non-program-related organizational departments at field level, such as supply chain teams. Together, the partners will pilot innovative practices in three countries and measure their efficiency and effectiveness in capturing and applying market information. A lessons learned series, including guidance, case studies, recommendations for good practice and any tools produced, will be published. These pilots will produce two different models for how market analysis can be more consistently applied in field programs, which, along with resulting recommendations for good practice, will be promoted to relevant actors across organizations to enable better use of market data in program activities.

Strengthening field-level use of market analysis

Recognizing that market analysis skills, experience and knowledge need to take root across sectors and at the field staff level in order to be widely utilized, the IRC will prioritize producing resources and learning events for national staff audiences. Three experience-sharing events will focus on exchanging learning among field staff as well as non-FSL specialists, particularly those from the shelter, WASH, health and/or nutrition sectors who are traditionally less served by market trainings. Additionally, the IRC will translate the market assessment e-learning courses it released in early 2016 into Arabic and the PCMA guidance into French, Arabic and potentially Spanish. The new resources produced under this grant will also be published in French and Arabic.

How to get involved

As the purpose of the project is to support *all* agencies (and individuals) to use market analysis in their work, input from the global community of practitioners will be critical in the design and roll-out of all project activities. If you are interested in contributing guidance, ideas or effort to any of the activities within this project, please contact:

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