

Good Practices & Guiding Questions

CVA and Partnership Toolkit



OXFAM

This document outlines in detail steps and considerations in Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) programs that are supporting of Local Humanitarian Leadership, align with principled and effective partnerships and follow minimum quality standards for partnerships across each phase of the CVA project cycle.

Note; some of these standards are simply good partnership practices while others are specific to CVA programs. As Oxfam guidance, this document refers to Oxfam as the agency, but any agency can use this guidance to improve practices on equitable partnerships with local partners. Partners in this document refers to LNGO and CSO partners unless otherwise indicated.



Overarching Practices

- Oxfam country offices and leadership teams define and agree to a partnership approach and strategy.
- Oxfam and partners have appointed focal points for CVA (1-2 people).
- Oxfam has an appointed a focal point for partnerships within the country team.
- Wherever feasible and appropriate, CVA programming is partner-led.
- Oxfam and partners systematically discuss and build an awareness of gender as part of the partnership and across the CVA project cycle. Gender assessments, considerations and risks are co-understood and discussed.
- If Oxfam holds the donor contract, financial resources are made available to Partner and support partners to scale capacities during an emergency.
- If Oxfam holds the donor contract, opportunities for partners to directly access donor funding are explored throughout the partnership.
- Joint advocacy (Oxfam and Partner) for CVA programming, as appropriate in the context.
- All documentation, internal and external facing, are co-branded between Oxfam and Partner.
- Existing local capacities are mapped and considered.

Consider:

- How does your CVA program aligned with **Oxfam's Humanitarian Approach**, including enabling of LHL, at all stages of the project cycle? Other areas of the humanitarian approach: Feminist Principles, Community Engagement and Safe Programming.
- Have both Oxfam and Partner organizations committed to **CVA as a primary response modality**? If not, why not? Does the partnership need to include a focus on capacities and advocacy for CVA?
- How can CVA programs be designed and delivered in support of the overall partnership goals and approach of the country office?
- Does the partnership create space for reflection on gender? Are opportunities to improve gender related outcomes explored through the approach to partnership?

Preparedness and Partner Scoping

- ❑ Partner scoping/mapping exercise informs partnerships.
- ❑ Organisational preparedness of Oxfam and partners is part of CVA capacity assessment.
- ❑ Assessments inform a collaborative plan for capacity sharing.
- ❑ A teaming agreement is put in place and clearly states the (complementary) roles and responsibilities in CVA. This agreement is co-created, discussed and agreed.
- ❑ Standardized CVA SOPs are co-created and agreed for both Oxfam and partners. This can be adapted on a project specific basis.
- ❑ Oxfam Partners (co-) lead preparedness activities, including mapping service providers.
- ❑ Risks are assessed jointly incorporating Partner's organization perspectives (capacity and resources) and solutions are jointly defined to co-manage and mitigate risks.
- ❑ Partners (with monetary agreement) have been authorised in the grant management systems and approved to receive response funding.
- ❑ Communities and stakeholders are consulted and have access to information materials and space for feedback.
- ❑ Opportunities are taken for a collective understanding of govt (national and local) programmes, systems and capacity.
- ❑ Oxfam and partners co-sign framework agreement/contracts with key suppliers and CVA partners, such as financial service provider and technology companies.
- ❑ CVA, technology, digital, and financial technologies and terminologies are clear for all involved (digital, financial and technological literacy).

Consider:

- How a partnership can start of with a **collaborative mindset** and foster trust between partners?
- Does the lead team of an awareness of **good partnering skills?** How can these be established?
- Can **existing relations** being built upon?
- How are **partner assessments a two-way process** – which includes and understand needs and expectation from both sides?
- Where and when are there **opportunities to collaborate** on preparedness assessments?
- Which **roles and responsibilities can be defined and clarified** that build on added values of each actor/partner and within relevant operational units?
- For mobile and digital programs, are **CVA profiling tools and equipment available** for partners? Including **securing license** for tech based Operating Systems? What needs to be built into the program to ensure these are available for partners?
- Is the need of **investment in technology/devices/equipment** for CVA delivery discussed and agreed?
- Are **shared terminologies** for CVA established and understood?

Agreeing to Partner (Phase from the partnering cycle)

- ❑ The partnership agreement outlines clear roles and responsibilities including systems for reporting, communication, decision-making, collaboration and safe programming (including safeguarding).
- ❑ Partners clearly understand the source of funding, eligible cost based on donor approved requirements.
- ❑ Include opportunities for LHL for both Oxfam and Partners staffs within partner agreements.

Consider:

- Does the partnership agreement reflect **principles of equitable partnerships?** ([View](#))

Situation & Response Analysis



(If not already done as part of preparedness)

- Partners (co-) create and co-lead assessments and are involved throughout the situation and response analysis.
- Needs assessment includes an overview of existing local response capacities, including details of the local social protection systems and partnership opportunities .
- Needs assessment includes statement of complementarity amongst actors, including Oxfam’s potential added value vis-a-vis partners.
- Risks on program delivery, implementation, and, monitoring are assessed jointly, and solutions are defined to co-manage them.
- Partners (co-) create and lead consultations and work to build strong connections with local stakeholders and communities.
- Oxfam and Partner consider complementary partnering with community-based stakeholders and other local actors.
- Market assessment and feasibility studies are (co-) created, implemented and jointly and shared with relevant stakeholders.
- Financial Service Provider mapping and assessments incorporates an overview Oxfam and partner capacities to easily and effectively use the financial service platforms, technology and considers capacity enhancement options.
- Co-development and analysis of feasibility studies enables assessments to be understood by a range of stakeholders, including community-based groups.

Consider:

- How are Oxfam and partners **reinforcing, supporting and complementing** the knowledge, resources and connections of local actors and communities and assets, capacity and skills that are already there?
- How do we establish linkage and support long term **social protection systems**? What role do partners play in establishing and supporting sustainable links to social protection?
- How has **partners skills, experience, contextual knowledge and connections** to communities and stakeholders been used to define the role of partners in situation and response analysis? Does it **allow for partners to lead and/or co-lead** specific activities within situation and response analysis?
- In what ways can the role of partners in market and feasibility assessments **align with their current capacities and learning needs**? How can ownership of these assessments be collectively shared?
- Are there **risks that can be mitigated through the partnership**? Without transferring additional risks to partners?
- Has a **joint response analysis and program design workshop** with partners been planned for or done? What aspects of situation and response analysis can be done jointly (co-created and lead)?

Program Design



- Oxfam and partners have discussed the partnership and expectations before the project design and implementation. This is used to inform roles and expectations, including opportunities for capacity strengthening and local humanitarian leadership, in the program design.
- Oxfam and partners discussed and agree on roles and responsibilities across program implementation, including on community mobilisation, consultations and engagement, and selection of delivery mechanism.
- Points of reflection on the partnership itself are built into the program implementation workplan.
- Capacity sharing is budgeted (resources and time) for and included in the programme design and workplans.
- Budget (including core cost contributions) and staffing equally represents Oxfam and partners and is transparently shared.
- Donor requirements are shared and understood among all partners and no additional constraints are added by the contract holder.
- The equal partnership between Oxfam and partners and the roles of each are clearly discussed with donors and facilitate direct discussions between donors and partners.

Consider:

- How can **partners and Oxfam collaborate** on program design?
- Are **(financial and non-financial) resources** for partners sufficiently considered and budgeted?
- Are we considering resources (costs and staffing) to **support and maintain the partnership itself?** Monitoring, reflections, revisions?
- How is Oxfam supporting partner organisations' **core costs**?
- Are opportunities to **link partners to direct funding** opportunities and to **engage in donor relationships** maximized in the program design?
- Are we considering space and **budget for innovation and learning** (from partners, community, FSPs) and driving them forward?

PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION



Working in Partnership

- Data sharing agreement is signed between Oxfam and partners.
- Partnership documents are co-designed, clearly understood and include defined roles and responsibilities.
- Joint operational plans are developed ensuring space on partner engagement and reflection and are followed.

Consider:

- In what way does the partnership embrace an **inclusive decision-making process** and recognise **contributions from all partners**?
- How is the **partnering cycle integrated** in the CVA workplan and project cycle?

Accountability

- Accountability and complaint mechanisms are (co-) designed, established and managed.
- Joint key messages about Oxfam and partners about our work are available to all staff and (community) volunteers in the appropriate language.
- All Oxfam and partner staff are training on accountability and the tools and guidance available.
- Budgets, including expenditure and reconciliation reports, are open and transparently developed and shared between partners.

Consider:

- Are **accountability mechanisms** being set up jointly? How are these understood in the partnership?
- Are we considering **translations for all program tools and accountability systems**?

Working with Financial Service Providers (FSP)

- ❑ Supporting private sector partners capacities on and awareness of humanitarian principles, safe programming, accountability and local humanitarian leadership are included in contracting and private sector partnership planning.
- ❑ Relationships with private sector service providers are considered as partnerships and opportunities beyond project implementation explored.
- ❑ Partners (co-)lead the FSP selection and contracting process.
- ❑ Tri-partite framework agreements and contracts with Oxfam, partners and FSPs are considered.

Consider

- How is project considering partnerships and **opportunities with private sector?** With **government service providers?**
- Are FSPs considered a **humanitarian actor?** In coordination mechanisms?
- Are FSPs involved in discussions around **programme scale-up?**
- Can contracts with FSPs be signed between Oxfam, partners and FSPs?

Targeting and registration of beneficiaries (including communication and data management)

- ❑ Partners (co-)lead community engagement, targeting and (digital) registration
- ❑ Training & awareness on digital registration, data protection, management and consent forms for all partners.
- ❑ Partner's do not face additional risks due to targeting, registration or data privacy processes.
- ❑ Communication messaging, planning and safe programming plan developed jointly by Oxfam and Partners with a focus on communication with communities.

Consider

- Has **joint targeting** and the creation of a joint database been explored? Including data protection implications?
- Has it been clarified who is **managing which relations and communication** (consultations, engagement, mobilisation) with communities?
- Are Oxfam and partners recognising and mitigating the risks related to the role of **being the 'face' of the program** within the community? For targeting and registration?

Distributions

- ❑ Partners are part of (leading or co-leading) the planning and management of distributions, payment processes and reconciliation.
- ❑ Oxfam and partners can collectively ensure safe and efficient and gender aware distribution systems in agreement with the local stakeholders.
- ❑ System for on-site process monitoring are put in place and undertaken jointly with partners.

Consider:

- What partners capacities to **implement CVA programming**, Including tracking distributions, reporting, help desk and technical support and the capacity of finance and case management systems are being complimented by Oxfam systems? How can Oxfam support the partner systems and vice-versa?

Coordination

- ❑ Local actors participate directly in cash coordination mechanisms, discussions with donors and agencies. Oxfam advocates for partner leadership of coordination forums
- ❑ Oxfam and partners ensure the voice and perspectives of community is represented.
- ❑ Oxfam and other contract leads (INGOs, UN, etc) align reporting approaches and templates .

Consider:

- Are Oxfam and partners **mapping the barriers** for local actors (including local government, local market, community groups, private sector) to engage in cash coordination and considering how these can be addressed (in the project)?

MONITORING & EVALUATION



- ❑ MEAL uses tools, approaches and indicators for managing, reviewing, maintaining and improving partnerships .
- ❑ Systematic revisiting & revising the partnership, consider including partnership indicators
- ❑ The MEAL framework is developed jointly and partners lead and/or co-lead MEAL activities.
- ❑ The feedback loop is closed and partners are part of the feedback loop cycle.
- ❑ Co-lead and shared evaluation, sharing knowledge and experiences are standard within the MEAL framework.
- ❑ Reviewing efficiency and value of the partnership.
- ❑ Follow commitments on capacity strengthening and development.

Consider:

- Which indicators will the project establish to **monitor the partnerships**? At what points across the project?
- Has the partnership meet commitments on strengthening both partner and Oxfam capacities?
- When are joint (with various stakeholders including government) **monitoring, learning and reviews planned** and incorporated for program improvement?
- How is learning from MEAL for CVA **applied to both partners and Oxfam**?
- Where and how does the MEAL framework include **reviewing and revising the partnership**? Is this aspect of MEAL understood by Oxfam and partners?

As Part of the Exit Strategy



- ❑ Sustaining the impact of the project is explored through linking to partners' ongoing CVA and other projects.
- ❑ The project includes a joint exit strategy that is linked to ongoing projects, social inclusion, social protection systems and building local response capacity
- ❑ The exit strategy has been developed jointly and addresses the potential risks to partners, including the impact of exit on community relations.
- ❑ Discussions on the exit strategy consider how to move on from the partnership (ex. potential to scale and/or increase partnership opportunities)
- ❑ Consider strategic partnership renewal
- ❑ Sustain partnership gains

Consider:

- Are Oxfam and partners considering and recognising that the 'final stage' of the partnering cycle may refer to **scaling up, scaling down or moving on from the partnerships**?
- How does Oxfam supporting partners with **direct funding** from donors and organizational sustainability as part of the exit strategy?
- In what way are partners building up on the connections and networks that will sustain the gain from the CVA partnership with Oxfam?
- How does the project exit strategy consider how the end of CVA may affect the partner's **relation with the community**?