

# OVERVIEW

## The ERC-funded Consortium for the uptake of multi-purpose grants

### *An overview of the Consortium and tools*

The ECHO ERC-funded Consortium for the uptake of quality, collaborative, multi-purpose grants (MPGs) built on the UNHCR-led ERC project that released the MPG Guidance & Toolkit in 2015. The Consortium designed processes and tools to enhance inter-agency capacity to design emergency responses that take MPGs to scale. It sought to address inefficiencies related to the multitude of assessment efforts and response option designs produced by multiple actors, which limit both the quality and scale of the responses.

The Consortium built on existing approaches, improving them by ensuring a more structured and logical flow between the identification of needs and the most feasible and desirable responses. Ultimately, the Consortium's approach aimed to produce analysis of humanitarian response options that are better structured, more robust, transparent, and people-centred, and that make more effective and wider use of MPGs, if and when appropriate and feasible.

This is in line with the Grand Bargain commitments (on increased collaborative cash-based programming, improved joint needs assessments, and creating a participation revolution) and the remarks of the High Level Panel on Humanitarian Cash Transfers.

The Consortium was led by Save the Children and consists of the Cash Learning Platform (CaLP), the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), Mercy Corps, and the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

## How the Consortium supported humanitarian responses at global and country levels

Whilst the Consortium was not conceived to provide direct assistance to crisis-affected populations, it was intended to have an indirect, positive impact on their lives, by influencing humanitarian actors to design better quality, more collaborative MPG programmes. The tools, trainings, and approaches were designed to be used across a wide range of contexts and different humanitarian actors.

To test the tools and approaches, the Consortium conducted two pilots. The first of these took place in Borno State, Nigeria, between February and September 2017, and the second in the Somali Region of Ethiopia between November 2017 and March 2018.

This enabled the Consortium to test their approach in different contexts and identify some key lessons. For more information on the learning from these pilots please see the summary of the Lessons Learned.

## Through an 'MPG Toolkit' the Consortium...

### Created an enabling environment:

Provided strategic leadership at country level to facilitate MPG feasibility and appropriateness assessments, integration of MPG programming into the humanitarian programme cycle and coordination platforms, and consideration of MPGs in strategic preparedness and response discussions.

*Responsibility of OCHA and CaLP*

### Provided timely technical support to facilitate harmonised design of MPGs:

Developed and adapted tools to benefit global development of MPG programmes.

*Responsibility of DRC, Mercy Corps and Save the Children*

### Evaluated efficiency and effectiveness of MPGs to meet humanitarian needs:

Developed an overarching framework for Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL); examined the catalysts and barriers to increasing the efficient and effective use of MPGs at scale.

*Responsibility of CaLP and DRC*

## The Consortium's tools and approaches

The Consortium developed and tested a range of tools in the two pilots. All the tools and resources that the Consortium has developed are available for download on the Multipurpose Cash Grants section of the CaLP website, under 'Resources' on the right-hand side.

Visit: <http://www.cashlearning.org/ctp-and-multi-sector-programming/multipurpose-cash-grants>

### Basic Needs Assessment

The Basic Needs Assessment (BNA) is a multi-sector needs assessment methodology. It produces a ranking of priorities for assistance as perceived by the population. It provides information on the access, availability, and quality constraints people face in securing what they need from local service providers and markets, and the perceived severity of related humanitarian consequences. The BNA can inform response programmes in all humanitarian sectors; however, its findings are best complemented through local experts' knowledge of the context and in-depth assessments that sectors may require. The BNA uses both secondary and primary data; the latter is collected in the field using two main data collection techniques, Community Group Discussions (CGDs) and Household interviews (HHIs). Key lessons emerged from the pilots, and further pilots are needed to test the tool in sudden onset emergencies.

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### Assessment of available cash delivery mechanisms and consolidated technical requirements for cash delivery mechanisms

Mercy Corps has developed a Delivery Guide (FSP Assessment Tool) that helps humanitarian workers identify appropriate delivery mechanisms for cash transfer programming, particularly multipurpose cash grants (MPGs).

In past responses, organisations have faced challenges in understanding and assessing how regulations will affect cash programming. The Delivery Guide takes users through a two-step process: first, an initial landscaping and scoping process to understand viable cash delivery options and potential obstacles, followed by a process to compare and select a financial service provider (FSP). The guide includes these tools:

1. Desk review questions and sources,
2. Stakeholder matrix,
3. Key informant interview questions (for regulators, FSPs and their field agents, community representatives, affected communities, other implementing agencies and cash coordinators),
4. Template for a delivery mechanism assessment report,
5. Tips on when to use a providers' meeting and requests for information,
6. Program requirements to consider, and
7. Tools to prioritise requirements to prepare for a procurement process.

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### Standard Operating Procedures for setting up and implementing MPGs

DRC developed Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to guide implementing agencies through the project cycle of a collaborative multipurpose programme, from assessment to evaluation, on the basis of best practices (notably the MPG Toolkit developed by an earlier ERC project), and other products and tools from this Consortium.

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### Creating an enabling environment for the uptake of MPGs

OCHA supported the creation of an enabling environment, including facilitating inter-cluster/sector engagement in relevant consortium tools and processes at both field and global levels. Provision of complementary information on cash feasibility, including crisis-wide overviews of partner capacity to implement cash programmes and the acceptance, security and safety of cash interventions.

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### Response Options Analysis and Planning

The Response Options Analysis and Planning (ROAP) is a structured process that brings together sector, protection, and cash experts to review humanitarian analyses (people's needs and operational environment), to feed into programmatic decisions. The first stage of the ROAP is undertaken at the sector level and results in the identification of population groups to be prioritised; the definition of response objectives; and the selection of the most appropriate response option for the selected groups and geographic areas.

The second stage of the ROAP involves sectors getting together to create an integrated inter-sector response plan. This step will provide recommendations to plan for the response, including the sequencing and frequency of transfers (regardless of their nature), the type and amount of sector assistance to be provided, and the cumulative effect that this may have on recipients.

Jointly, the BNA and the ROAP enable Clusters/Sectors in a humanitarian response to assess the basic needs of affected communities and to make recommendations around the most appropriate and operationally feasible response options, according to beneficiaries' preferences, and availability and access to commodities and services.

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## Monitoring and evaluation for MPGs

DRC partnered with graduate students from the Fletcher School at Tufts University, to design three quantitative and qualitative monitoring tools to gauge the effect of MPGs at household and community levels (namely household survey, key informant interview and community group discussion templates). This was in line with this Consortium's Basic Needs Approach and CaLP's Monitoring4CTP guidance. The purpose of the data collection was to test the tools by monitoring existing MPGs implemented by other agencies (outside of the consortium). The pilot reports provide analysis and utilisation guidance specific to the pilot countries to support programme decision making, and the final report summarises and reflects on aggregated learning and recommended processes from a MEAL perspective.

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## Training

Four training courses have been developed.

**Monitoring 4 CTP:** A 1-day course, targeted at MEAL staff and technical staff. This course is based on CaLP's Monitoring 4 CTP guidance, and integrates multi-sectoral approaches to monitoring, developed and tested by DRC through the ERC grant.

**Response Analysis:** A 3-day course, targeted at sector specialists engaged in response analysis. The course has been revised to incorporate multi-sectoral perspectives on response analysis and integrate Save the Children's Basic Needs Assessment (BNA) framework, and Response Options Analysis Process (ROAP).

**Market Assessment Tools Training:** A 5-day course, targeted at anyone designed for anyone who may participate in a market assessment with a humanitarian objective. The course has been revised to integrate multi-sectoral approaches to market assessment including UNHCR's Multi-Sector Market Assessment tool.

**Training of Trainers (ToT) course on Monitoring 4 CTP and Response Analysis:** A 3-day ToT course, targeted at prospective trainers, to familiarise them with CaLP's approach to training delivery, and with the course materials.

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## A learning report

CaLP conducted reviews of the two pilots, focusing on the relevance of the consortium operational model to influence the quality of CTP at preparedness, situation analysis and response analysis stages, and producing lessons learned to inform the design of MPGs in other contexts.

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*The Consortium also deployed two tools developed by other agencies but relevant to this project: the Multi-sector Market Assessment Companion Guide & Toolkit developed by UNHCR, and the feasibility assessment tools developed by the DfID-funded Cash-Feasibility Consortium.*

## Contact

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