

Increasing the Uptake of Multi-Purpose Cash Grants in Emergency Responses for a More Efficient and Effective Humanitarian Action

PROJECT CONTEXT

Reduced funding in the humanitarian sector has propelled a new drive for efficient responses, with cash transfer programming (CTP) gaining traction in high-level discussions. Humanitarian actors have made significant use of multipurpose cash grants (MPGs) as the most efficient and effective way of meeting basic needs across traditional sector divides.

However, newly proposed coordination platforms, whether led by the UN or NGOs, are as yet untested and cash initiatives remain largely uncoordinated, with only ad-hoc consideration of harmonised programming and taking cash to scale. Many solid tools exist, but thus far have not been systematically adapted for interagency use. Crucially, there are no interagency models or standards for collaboration in large-scale cash responses.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

This Save the Children-led ERC project builds on the UNHCR-led ERC project that, in 2015, released the multipurpose cash grant Guidance and Toolkit.

It aims to design processes and tools to enhance inter-agency design of MPG responses to take cash to scale, with a view to operationalize the Toolkit. It will address inefficiencies related to the multitude of assessment efforts and MPG designs produced by multiple actors, which limit both the quality and scale of the responses. The consortium will develop and test new models of collaboration and joint action around MPGs, with the goal of ultimately improving the use of MPGs at scale, increasing the efficiency of humanitarian response. The project will also link to CaLP's overall learning agenda and tie into other research initiatives on multipurpose cash.

This Consortium, consisting of CaLP, the Danish Refugee Council, Mercy Corps, OCHA and Save the Children, brings together actors from across the humanitarian system, with specific strengths in cash transfer programming. Together they will:

Create an enabling environment: provide strategic leadership at the country level to facilitate MPG feasibility and appropriateness assessments, the integration of MPG programming into the humanitarian programme cycle and coordination platforms, and its consideration in strategic preparedness and response discussions.

Responsibility of OCHA and CaLP

Provide timely technical support to facilitate harmonised design of MPGs: deploy technical response teams to support programming in two selected responses; develop and adapt tools to benefit global development of MPG programmes.

Responsibility of DRC, Mercy Corps and Save the Children

Evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of MPGs to meet humanitarian needs: develop an overarching framework for Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL); examine the catalysts and barriers to increasing the efficient and effective use of MPGs at scale.

Responsibility of CaLP and DRC

The project will integrate closely with a CaLP-commissioned review of interagency operational delivery models for large-scale CTP (launched September 2016), as a key piece of background research. In order to guide model implementation and support agencies in bringing cash to scale in a systematic way, the consortium is developing a **modular approach to determining the levels of interagency coordination in cash responses**. The matrix (**ANNEX**) will model the various interagency responses across the programme cycle – from situation and response analysis to design and implementation. This grant also provides an opportunity to pilot newly developed approaches to joint cash programming in two different emergency contexts – one chronic emergency and one rapid onset context, where OCHA has a coordination role and where all partners are present or planning to respond. The chronic emergency pilot will be chosen in consultation with partners and their Country offices, and the rapid onset context pilot will be implemented in a future possible emergency in 2017. Consortium members can share the full selection criteria and rationale for pilot countries.

ACTORS AND CONTRIBUTORS

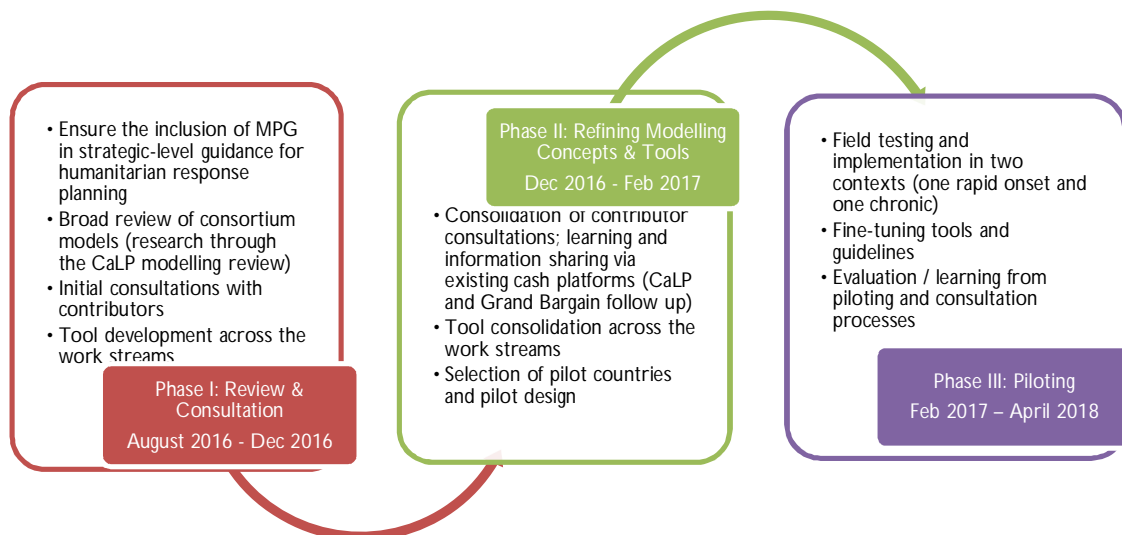
The Consortium members are a small group of humanitarian actors committed to piloting interagency multipurpose cash after the 2015 ERC project. However, the project is designed to encourage the primary users of guidance and tools (cash actors from across the humanitarian spectrum) to actively contribute to resource development and pilot testing of tools in real time, ensuring the tools developed are as useful and relevant as possible. Humanitarian actors will therefore contribute to the achievement of the goals of this project using the information resulting from the assessments to support strategic decision making and integration of MPG in to the HPC and coordination mechanisms.

Project contributors will therefore be drawn from a wide variety of humanitarian stakeholders including existing consortiums and alliances, donors, UN agencies, NGOs, and civil society.

At the time of writing this note, discussions are ongoing for the establishment of an NGO Cash Platform for the coordinated implementation of MPG-based responses. The Consortium is committed to liaise with the group leading this initiative and facilitate the appropriate synergies, with a view to ensure broad-based buy-in of the tools and approaches it is set to develop.

PROJECT TIMELINE

The timeline below outlines the project phases. Ultimately the goal is to pilot the entire programme cycle, as outlined in the ERC 2015 MPG toolkit. However, full CTP implementation is currently outside the scope of this ERC project, which does not include funding to operationalize cash transfer delivery to crisis-affected populations.



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ⁱ MPG initiatives in recent years include: a 2014-5 UNHCR-led, interagency ERC-funded project that produced resources to guide and support quality design of MPG programmes [UNHCR, CaLP, DRC, OCHA, Oxfam, Save the Children and WFP (2015), [Operational Guidance and Toolkit for Multipurpose Cash Grants](#)]; the ODI High-Level Panel's key recommendations on CTP [ODI (2015), [Doing Cash Differently](#); ECHO's [10 common principles](#) for MPG assistance to respond to humanitarian needs [ECHO (2015)]; high-level commitments to increase the use of cash at the World Humanitarian Summit and through the Grand Bargain; a DFID-funded project to pilot UN-led joint feasibility assessments to inform preparedness and response; INGOs initiating an NGO Cash Platform to operationalise coordinated CTP (August 2016).