

Cash & Voucher Assistance in the 4Ws for Syria

Guidance on reporting: A Companion Guide to the 2019 4Ws Glossary & Template

1. Objective and intended outcomes

Objective

- Provide a clear guidance on how to report cash and voucher assistance (CVA) into the 4Ws.

Intended outcomes

- Partners have a common understanding of how/where to report different types of cash transfer projects.
- Humanitarian stakeholders have more accurate aggregate data for meta analysis of CVAs, and for strategic coordination towards quality programming.

Notes:

- This is a companion guide to the 2019 Syria 4Ws Glossary & Template released by OCHA.
- It is informed by common issues raised around reporting cash and voucher modalities.
- This a living tool, subject to revision in wide consultation with partners.
- **Page 4 has the list of contacts for any feedback or questions.**

2. Guidance to partners reporting cash and voucher assistance

This section consists of two main guidelines (2.1 and 2.2). Under each guideline are scenarios illustrating common points of confusion in reporting, followed by specific recommendations.

2.1 Sector-based CVA: Submit 4Ws to designated cluster/sector IMO.

Project A: Humanitarian agency X plans to distribute vouchers to subsistent and smallholder farmers to enable them to purchase agricultural inputs from partner vendors. The project's immediate objective is to help the residents of this small farming village—who are hosting IDPs—protect their livelihood, preserve their breeding livestock, and improve their food and financial security.

Project B: Agency X, through a different funding stream, designs a Cash-for-Work (CFW) activity in the same community; specifically targeting IDPs receiving food assistance in-kind on a regular basis and who have expressed intentions to stay in the community indefinitely. The CFW involves cleaning and rehabilitating irrigation canals that is a lifeline to the affected farming village. The stated project objective is to increase the IDP households' income and purchasing power through temporary employment, although social cohesion is an intended consequence, with both host and IDP households receiving aid through Projects A and B.

Project C: Agency Y conducts a needs assessment in the outskirts of this farming community where dozens of IDP families have built makeshift shelters around a water-yielding well. In coordination with another agency providing these IDPs ready-to-eat meals, **agency Y** commits to facilitating the IDPs' access to clean drinking water and adequate number of separate latrines for men and women. **Agency Y** implemented trainings on basic hygiene, latrine construction and maintenance, as well as borehole drilling. Men and women were paid cash to participate in the trainings and were temporarily employed through the completion of several cash-for-work activities.

Question 1:

*Does agency X report both **Projects A and B** to FSL, given that both are agriculture/food security related?*

Recommendations:

- **Report projects, such as *Project A*, to FSL Cluster/Sector IMO at hub level.**
The project objective and targeted participants are clear: to help host community return to their farming livelihood, on which the community's food security depends.
- **Report projects, such as *Project B*, to ERL Cluster/Sector IMO at hub level.**
While it is clear that the agency's regular in-kind food distribution should be reported to FSL, this type of CFW assistance, at times, get reported to FSL due to the agriculture-related activity. However, given that the IDPs participating in the CFW are deemed food secure, the project objective is to supplement the IDP HHS' income through temporary employment. By creating temporary demand for casual labor through the CFW project, the agency is able to help IDP participants earn cash they could use for other non-food household needs, or in pursuit of more sustainable income-generating activities.

Question 2:

*Does agency Y report **Project C** to ERL given that the IDPs get to participate in income-generating, casual labour-type activities?*

Recommendation:

- **Report projects, such as *Project C*, to WASH Cluster/Sector IMO at hub level.**
Even though both training and CFW activities generated income and provided IDPs temporary employment, Project C is primarily designed to help meet the WASH needs of these IDP families. This is not to say that such projects contribute only to achieving WASH objectives. Well-designed projects informed by coordination with other sectors tend to achieve multi-sectoral objectives. This is a good outcome, but should not lead to confusion over where to report. To reiterate: the primary objective of the project is the guiding principle.

2.2 Multipurpose cash transfers (MPC)¹: Submit 4Ws to the Cash Working Group (CWG).

This is a type of assistance “explicitly designed to address multiple needs on a cross-sectoral basis through a cash transfer” (Cash Learning Partnership Glossary, Dec. 2018). Cash transfers are inherently unrestricted, meaning each transfer can be spent as recipients choose; and potentially address multiple needs, or from a humanitarian agency's perspective, achieve multiple programme objectives. As such, MPC does not neatly fit in one sector. MPC has been implemented across the response hubs for Syria in the past several years. It has been used to assist Syrian families undergoing multiple displacements, as well as households dealing with high health expenditures due to members with disability or chronic diseases.

¹ Also known as MPG (multipurpose grants) or MPCG (multipurpose cash grant). In this context, MPC is understood to mean the same as unconditional cash”.

Project D: Humanitarian agency Z uses part of its emergency funds to distribute a monthly MPC for three months to hundreds of IDP families, who have indicated preference to move out of their temporary camps and head out to the nearby towns closer to markets and livelihood opportunities. The value of the monthly cash transfer is calculated based on the current cost of basic commodities in the [Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket \(SMEB\)](#). The cash transfer covers the most immediate needs of a family of six (6) in terms of food, non-food items, telecommunication (to connect with family), and transportation.

Recommendation:

To avoid instances whereby the same MPC project is reported to more than one sector, and for a simplified flow and processing of information,

- **Report MPCs, such as [Project D](#), to the Cash Working Group (CWG) in your hub.²**

More notes on MPC:

→ **Only MPC 4Ws are submitted to the CWG; all other types of cash assistance with explicit sectoral objectives are reported to sector/cluster IMOs, as stated in 2.1.**

As MPC is by its very nature multi-sectoral: in design, in objective, in intended and actual use by recipients, reporting it to one sector/cluster would not be prudent. Similarly, reporting the same project twice—once to FSL to account for the portion of the transfer calculated to cover for food needs, and a second time to Shelter-NFI for the value of the non-food items in the “basket”—would lead to inaccurate data.

Question 3:

If local authorities perceive the multipurpose cash transfer to be for food security, should it be reported to FSL then?

→ **Irrespective of how the implementing agency has described the MPC objective to local stakeholders, it should still be reported as MPC in the 4Ws and submitted to the CWG at hub level.** Field staff implementing MPCs may have different ways of describing/ explaining this type of modality to local authorities, depending on the local context and acceptability of multipurpose cash transfers.

Question 4:

Does reporting multipurpose cash transfer to the Cash Working Group adversely impact sector information?

→ **If partners consistently and accurately report MPCs to their hub-level Cash Working Group, MPC could be better analyzed** as a multi-sectoral response modality. Such analysis could include processed data that may also be useful to relevant sectors (e.g. FSL, Early Recovery, Shelter-NFI, WASH, and others) in their response analysis and information products.

² Note: The three (3) Cash Working Groups across the Syria response are linked with the inter-sector coordination mechanisms at hub-level, serving as the technical arm of sectors where cash-based modalities are used. The CWGs are supported by information management officers feeding information up to OCHA’s Regional Office for the Syria Crisis.

3. Guiding principles and MPC reporting protocol

Guiding principles

- Multipurpose cash transfers (MPCs) should **NOT** be reported to more than one sector/cluster.
- **Always be guided by your project's primary objective** when determining to which sector should you report your cash-based project.
- **Information sharing is an integral part of coordination.** Donors and funding mechanisms are increasingly including indicators for coordination of cash-based projects. Reporting to the 4Ws could be among a set of measurable coordination indicators.

MPC reporting protocol

- **Every 1st week of the month:** The Cash Working Group lead sends an email reminder to CWG members to submit their MPC information using the 4Ws template, **on or before the 10th day of each month.**
- The CWG coordinator or IMO then submits the completed MPC 4Ws to OCHA at hub level, or, in the case of NES, to the NES NGO Forum IMO.)
- IMOs or CWG coordinators at hub-level then submit the 4Ws to OCHA's Regional Office for the Syria Crisis (ROSC) for processing and analysis.

For further information, please contact the cash focal points in your hub.

Contact Information:

Hub	Contact person/agency	Contact info
NWS-CWG	Muhammad Haddad / CARE (interim) Fe Kagahastian / CashCap WoS (support) Sinan Aldemir / OCHA Turkey XB	cbr.twg@gmail.com and cashcap.syria@gmail.com and aldemir@un.org
IM: reporting to MPC 4Ws	Punya Prasad Sapkota / OCHA IM unit	Altaweel@un.org
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About this Guidance

This guidance is informed by issues around reporting cash and voucher assistance, as shared by field staff across the Syria response. It has been shared with the CWGs based in Damascus; Amuda for northeast Syria (NES); and Gaziantep for northwest Syria (NWS). It is endorsed by the Inter-Sector Group for the Whole of Syria and has been used in trainings for field staff and information management officers. This guidance is developed by the inter-agency CashCap resource, Fe Kagahastian (Aug. 2018-Aug.2019), with support from OCHA's Regional Office for the Syria Crisis based in Jordan.