

1. Background:

This overview was created by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) with input by the Ethiopia Cash Working Group (ECWG) and as such is part of the overall effort to create an evidence base of the feasibility and appropriateness to use and scale-up cash transfer programming (CTP) in order to address humanitarian needs in Ethiopia. Over the last years, Ethiopia has repeatedly faced natural and man-made hazards such as severe droughts and sporadic conflict related to regional boundaries. These have led to a high presence of food insecurity and malnutrition among the population, to disease outbreaks, as well as to a considerable number of (internally) displaced people. Consequently, over 7 million people in Ethiopia were estimated to be in need of humanitarian assistance in 2017, demanding financial requirements of \$1,42 billion¹. Due to continuing conflicts and natural hazards, it is estimated that some 7.9 million people in Ethiopia will continue to face crisis situations that require humanitarian assistance worth approximately \$1,7 billion in 2018².

As a potentially effective and efficient means to respond to emergencies and address humanitarian needs, governmental, humanitarian and development actors worldwide are increasingly using CTP across different sectors³. However, its appropriateness is highly context specific and varies largely depending on its acceptance by important stakeholders and the specific safety and security (S&S) issues it might evoke. In general, delivering humanitarian assistance in situations of crisis can be risky. Thus, considering acceptance and S&S concerns for beneficiaries, local communities and implementing teams and partners should always be a top priority. Even though the use of cash is not necessarily more risky than traditional in-kind assistance, those concerns seem especially relevant in the case of CTP. After all, cash-based modalities do entail distinct risks and face particular acceptance patterns which might, to an extent, vary from other modalities. Moreover, the use of and experiences with CTP in responding to humanitarian needs in the Ethiopia context is so far limited⁴ - a reason why only few assessments and literature exist and inherent acceptance and S&S issues remain insufficiently known⁵.

This overview was created to address this current gap and elaborate on the applicability of CTP in the Ethiopian context by providing an overview on the acceptance of CTP by different stakeholders and by displaying existing safety and security concerns inherent to its use. The broader aim is to inform strategic level decision making and thus to enable decisions on most appropriate response modalities that implicitly consider specific local contexts and take into account the different realities that exist therein.

The findings are based on data sources that illustrate previous experiences with the implementation of cash-based humanitarian/development interventions in Ethiopia. These include monitoring, evaluation and assessment reports, operational manuals, needs and market assessments, response modality mappings, and journal papers - as well as information based on workshops and presentations shared by the Ethiopia Cash Working Group (ECWG). Drawing upon this data, the overview is addressing 1) the general attitude of the government towards the application of CTP as modality of assistance in emergencies, 2) prevailing patterns of the acceptance of CTP amongst beneficiaries prior and past to its use, as well as 3) possible safety and security issues arising from CTP implementation that might put certain individuals or groups at risk and ways to possibly mitigate these.

¹ UNOCHA 2018a

² Government of Ethiopia et al. 2018

³ ECWG 2017

⁴ Ibid

⁵ ECWG 2017; USAID & World Visions 2017

Limitations to the survey should be noted. First, the overview is far from being all-embracing. Due to time and resource limitations a comprehensive research could not be carried out. Thus, rather than constituting an all-inclusive overview, the information given should be taken as initial insights to build upon.

Despite these limitations, this overview grants decision-makers an initial insight into existing S&S concerns and attitudes towards the implementation of CTP in Ethiopia. By doing so, the document pinpoints to issues that are crucial to address when considering the use of cash-based interventions by decision-makers. Further, the overview exemplifies possible mitigation measures that successfully implemented in previous operations. This sensitization and knowledge sharing may promote an enhanced collective understanding of CTP implications at hand and thus accelerate informed decision-making and joint efforts to deal with prevalent challenges.

Finally, it should be noted that this survey is one part of an overall cash feasibility assessment. To meaningfully provide a comprehensive overview on the appropriateness of CTP as emergency response in Ethiopia, it must be combined with other criteria assessments that include factors such as market functioning, as well as existing capacities of implementing partners, financial service providers and government agencies to implement cash programs. Also, this overview must always be combined with case specific assessments that enable measures that are tailored to and thus appropriate for the local context.

2. Government acceptance and support of CTP as modality of emergency assistance

General attitude towards CTP: Within the last years, the Government of Ethiopia has generally expressed a positive attitude/ openness towards the application of cash-based interventions to respond to humanitarian and development needs in the country. At the same time, a growing interest in using CTP at scale has become apparent and current programs illustrate that cash as transfer modality is already embedded in larger governmental strategies and programs and used by a variety of different governmental actors⁶.

Governmental use of cash-based solutions (CBI): With the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP), the Ministry of Agriculture of Ethiopia (MoA) and its related structures are currently employing cash-based interventions on a large scale⁷. Established in 2005 and now in its fourth phase, this federal social security program targets food insecure households by delivering annual predictable transfers of food, cash, or a combination of both to tackle chronic food insecurity, as well as rural poverty and vulnerability. Based on two cash components, either direct support through unconditional cash payments or cash for public work (CfW), the program is estimated to reach between seven and eight million beneficiaries every year⁸. Additionally, the PSNP Risk Finance Mechanism enables the scaling-up of the PSNP in times of transitory crisis to benefit additional food-insecure people or extend the payment period to already embraced beneficiaries when necessary⁹.

Next to the application of CBI in PSNP activities by the MoA, cash is also used by the Federal Disaster Risk Management Commission in emergency response, recovery and risk reduction activities across the country¹⁰. This is especially true in case of emergency relief to meet transitory or acute food insecurity needs. Overall, the

⁶ USAID & World Visions 2017

⁷ USAID & World Visions 2017

⁸ Government of Ethiopia et al. 2018; Sabates-Wheeler and Devereux 2012; Shigute et al. 2017; UNICEF 2014

⁹ Venton 2015

¹⁰ USAID & World Visions 2017

employment of CBI can be seen as a common component within efforts towards an integrated system for the delivery of social protection, access to basic social services and disaster risk management¹¹.

Cash first preference: The federal PSNP policies, and above all its cash first principle, are widely regarded as expression of governmental preferences for cash-based solutions. Accordingly, the cash first principle determines cash to be the primary form of transfer whenever possible because of its associated benefits in terms of stimulating local markets and supporting a move away from food aid¹². In this context, cash transfers are tested and applied in specific areas and potentially scaled-up on the basis of collected experiences and assessments. Emerging results do indicate that in-kind food assistance will remain the most appropriate response in certain circumstances and areas, above all in parts of the Ethiopian lowlands. However, existing market conditions, the availability of service providers and additional enabling conditions in many other cases and areas give little reason to continue with in-kind assistance but rather point to a shift towards the employment of cash, electronic payments and vouchers¹³.

Box 1: The PSNP cash first principle

“The PSNP is committed to the cash first principle which is that cash should be the primary form of transfer unless market conditions significantly reduce the value to clients. As appropriate, transfers will include both cash and food. The mix of cash and food transfers will be used strategically as a risk management tool in response to area specific or seasonal food price rises, market conditions and available resources.”

(Memorandum of Understanding for the PSNP (2010–14, In: Van Domelen et al. 2012)

Use of cash by other stakeholders: Next to the implementation of CTP by the government, a growing use of cash as a tool to deliver humanitarian and development assistance by other actors in Ethiopia can be noted¹⁴. An internal partner capacity survey by UN OCHA in collaboration with the ECWG found at least 23 actors that were implementing cash based interventions in 2017 or earlier¹⁵. The implemented programs were targeting various sectors, including agriculture/ livelihoods, food, WASH, shelter/ non-food items, nutrition, protection, multisector and health¹⁶.

Government acceptance and support of CTP by other stakeholders: An effective use of CPT is inherently linked to a functioning collaboration with the Ethiopian government. Literature illustrates a general willingness of the Ethiopian government to allow and support the increased use of CTP by external stakeholders¹⁷. In this regard, existing governmental policies and programs, such as the PSNP, which adopt CTP are seen as conducive to an increased use of CTP by positively influencing the development of necessary knowledge, capacities and infrastructure¹⁸. Furthermore, many examples of governmental support for and cooperation with implementing partners can be found. A project on WASH assistance to Sudanese refugees in a refugee camp in Ethiopia that included the provision of e-vouchers to beneficiaries is only one of many examples in which governmental agencies were reported to be supportive to cash-based interventions¹⁹.

Box 2: Importance of collaboration

“Implementing cash at scale requires working through the government”¹.- (CaLP 2017)

¹¹ UNICEF 2014

¹² Van Domelen et al. 2012

¹³ USAID & World Visions 2017

¹⁴ Government of Ethiopia et al. 2018

¹⁵ UNOCHA 2018b

¹⁶ Ibid

¹⁷ NCA 2018; NCA & LWF 2018; USAID & World Visions 2017

¹⁸ CaLP 2017

¹⁹ NCA 2018; NCA & LWF 2018

Policy related challenges for the use of CTP: Even though the aforementioned policies foster an enabling

Box 3: Challenges on regional/ local level

“At Federal level, the ‘cash first’ (...) principle is positive and conducive for cash transfer programming (CTP). However, understanding and application of policies is inconsistent at regional and local level - (CaLP 2017)

environment for the use of CTP in emergency response, it is reported that an increase of consistencies in those policies and an enhancement of the understanding of the latter, especially on the local and regional level, are of great importance to successfully support CTP. As well, secondary literature considered it crucial to further strengthen the awareness of CTP on various levels and

to build more capacities of governmental and other actors to implement relevant policies²⁰. Additionally, clarification on the link between CTP and current policies/ programs, such as existing safety nets and humanitarian assistance, seems essential to better align CTP efforts²¹

Moreover, it was noted that the certain legal rules and regulations interfered with the effective use of CTP in specific circumstances and complicated processes of CTP upscaling²². In the example of an emergency project for IDPs, strict regulations on IDP-registration – the registration became necessary given that many IDPs lost their ID cards during displacement or due to the destruction of their property beforehand - led to difficulties of legal registration. This, consequently, impeded the access to service providing institutions, such as banks, and thus interfered with the use of certain cash-based assistance modalities²³.

Collaboration and coordination related obstacles for the use of CTP: Despite the openness of the government towards CTP, secondary information highlights that a stronger collaboration and coordination between cash actors and the government needs to be strengthened as the prerequisite for the successful use and upscaling of CTP in Ethiopia. Accordingly, actors noted some arising difficulties with absence of common platforms where all parties come together to actively share experiences, build consensus and coordinate actions for the use of CTP²⁴. In several examples this led to slow coordination processes, as in the case of project approvals, that impeded quick cash-based emergency responses²⁵.

Doubts and legal restrictions on CTP: Existing reports demonstrate that governmental actors do not always endorse the application of CTP and that legal restrictions on its use are implemented in situations where doubts on the appropriateness are articulated. Common examples illustrate governmental concerns that CBI may lead to price inflations in local markets which negatively affect respective communities, as well as the apprehension that cash provision may create dependencies among beneficiaries²⁶. Other concerns relate to the possibilities that unrestricted CPI may, in certain circumstances, lead to the purchase of substandard or inappropriate goods such as counterfeit medicines or that investments needed in public health or social systems are diverted into cash transfers which are spent in private institutions such as private pharmacies or clinics²⁷. In certain conditions, these apprehensions have led to governmentally implemented restrictions. An example is the limitation of unconditional direct cash transfers and the enforcement to apply the delivery mechanism of cash for work (CFW) instead, in order to reduce the probability of the dependency syndrome²⁸. It has also been noted that

²⁰ CALP 2017; USAID & World Visions 2017

²¹ CALP 2017

²² CALP 2017; IOM 2018a; NRC 2016

²³ IOM 2018a

²⁴ CALP 2017

²⁵ CALP 2017; IOM 2018b; NCA & LWF 2018

²⁶ USAID & World Visions 2017

²⁷ Based on a comment of the Global Health Cluster

²⁸ Ibid

governmental agencies have opposed the application of cash transfers in many refugee settings due to the fear that cash could attract identified terrorists or armed forces and thereby jeopardize local peace and security²⁹.

3. Community acceptance of CTP as modality of emergency assistance

Given that the ultimate aim of every emergency assistance should be to benefit those in need, the beneficiaries must be in focus when considering on appropriate delivery modalities. Accordingly, a prerequisite for assessing cash feasibility in the Ethiopian context are considerations of the overall community acceptance. However, existing reports have not been able to reveal a general attitude of Ethiopian beneficiaries and local communities towards the use of CTP in emergency responses. The differences are too significant in local contexts in which prevailing attitudes do not only vary between communities, but also between and within their respective sub-groups. As a result, a case-study based overview of different sub-components of community acceptance, including communities' familiarity with, preferences, and objections towards cash-based solutions is provided below.

Community familiarity with and knowledge of CTP: As with the overall acceptance, the degree of familiarity with CTP amongst beneficiaries and local communities is highly contextualized. However, it must be noted that the degree of knowledge of and familiarity with cash-based solutions amongst the targeted communities was barely addressed within existing reports and assessments. Among the few that did mention this, the fact that local communities obtained a certain familiarity with cash-based interventions due to experiences with the PSNP was mentioned³⁰. On the other hand, in another context data revealed that the awareness of local actors of CTP was limited and that there was inadequate knowledge at the local level, including among local leaders, implementing bodies and recipients³¹.

Means of addressing knowledge gaps among local communities: To address existing gaps in information and knowledge of CBI within given communities, cash implementing partners have used different methods and addressed different stakeholders. One example is the implementation of trainings dedicated to local leaders and local implementing partners prior to the employment of CTP, in order to increase the understanding on CTP foundations such as available transfer modalities, as well as to enhance the exchange of experiences, best practices and information³². Another method was the use of beneficiary awareness creation exercises to inform recipients of basic issues relating to planned CTP projects - including proposed delivery modalities, distribution schedule and locations, identification processes of targeted beneficiaries, involved implementing actors and protection and accountability mechanisms³³.

Community preferences on the application of CTP: In line with the above, a prevailing attitude among local communities towards the employment of cash-based assistance was not apparent within the existing reports and assessments. While in some cases an initial reluctance towards planned applications of CTP is reported³⁴, other sources noted a general openness among local stakeholders towards CTP prior to its

²⁹ Ibid

³⁰ Shigute et al. 2017

³¹ CaLP 2017; IOM 2017

³² IOM 2017

³³ Ibid

³⁴ CaLP 2017

use³⁵. Further, data shows different opinions on the use of CTP as compared to in-kind assistance or to a combination of both.

General benefits of CTP in the Ethiopian context: Overall, experienced benefits of CTP in the Ethiopia context are numerous. First and foremost, case studies in Ethiopia illustrate that beneficiaries highly appreciated that CBI granted flexibility and choice to decide on how to use cash based assistance for their own needs and priorities³⁶. This did not only enable the recipients to keep or regain their freedom and dignity, but also to empower them in their conditions³⁷. In addition to the direct benefits to beneficiaries, CBIs in the Ethiopian context were reported to sustain local markets by enhancing their recovery and their development of a broader range of goods and commodities³⁸. Further, CTP programs in Ethiopia were found to promote the implementation of projects in humanitarian and recovery settings by providing a cost-effective solution. Additionally, cash programs are noted to be able to increase project transparency and accountability if applied in the right manner³⁹.

Box 4: Benefits of CTP

“Cash transfers support local economies, increase transparency and accountability, and, more importantly, truly place people at the center of aid. When receiving cash, people make their own decisions on how to use it, based on their own needs and priorities (USAID & World Vision 2017)”

Cash modality specific preferences and benefits: In line with these general advantages of CTP, examples indicated that some benefits tend to weigh more in specific situations. At the same time, some beneficiaries were particularly satisfied with the use of cash in combination with in-kind assistance and/or vouchers⁴⁰. Benefits of this approach included the freedom to choose according to individual preferences, in combination with the grant of specific in-kind items which otherwise were difficult to purchase. For example, post distribution monitoring of beneficiaries of a solely cash-based intervention in an Ethiopian IDP camp found that the additional distribution of plastic sheets would have been beneficial, given that necessary plastic sheets were difficult to purchase and outstandingly expensive⁴¹. In many other circumstance, however, beneficiaries clearly preferred the sole use of direct cash transfers, especially in urban environments. In the case of a project targeting IDPs living in Mekele city, for example, a majority desired direct cash distribution only in order to be able to meet needs as rental costs next to the already required purchase of urgently needed non-food items⁴².

Shift of preferences over time: As another layer of complexity, a study on outcomes of the PSNP pointed to the fact that beneficiary preferences do not only shift among different stakeholders and regions, but also over time. A given case study on the PSNP illustrates that changing circumstances and collected experiences modified prevailing attitudes of recipients towards CTP programs. Accordingly, the preferences of beneficiaries to receive cash only (39%), food only (55%), or a combination of both (36%) shifted between 2006 to 2008 to cash only (9%), food only (84%), or a combination (12%). As the study highlights, this considerable shift was traced back to negative impacts of cash payments on local

³⁵ IOM 2017; Sabates-Wheeler & Devreux 2010

³⁶ IOM 2017

³⁷ CaLP 2017; NCA 2018; NCA & LWF 2018; USAID & World Visions 2017

³⁸ IOM 2017; USAID & World Visions 2017

³⁹ CaLP 2017

⁴⁰ IOM 2017; IOM 2018b; USAID & World Visions 2017

⁴¹ IOM 2018b

⁴² IOM 2018a

beneficiaries in form of price increases on the local market – thus highlighting the importance of taking into account potential negative effects on local communities.

4. CTP-related Safety and Security Concerns

While potentially providing a wide range of benefits, the implementation of CTP may entail significant risks and safety concerns for recipients, as well as for implementing actors and their partners. In order to do no harm to beneficiaries and comply with humanitarian principles, it is crucial to assess and address possible negative impacts of cash-based interventions.

The table below seeks to provide an initial overview of possible safety and security concerns, as well as good practices to mitigate such concerns. While based on limited available secondary data, it illustrates some crucial characteristic of safety and security concerns related to CTP in Ethiopia.

Most importantly, it illustrates that targeted communities should not be treated as a homogenous group, but that their security risks vary largely and must be addressed accordingly. Moreover, it emphasizes that already vulnerable groups tend to bear a higher number of risks.

In addition, the report highlights the fact that individuals generally face multiple risks due to characteristics such as gender, age, social status or ethnicity and that these risks intersect with and thus influence each other. Accordingly, an older woman does not face the same risks as a young woman or a girl. Thus, it is crucial to acknowledge how the combination of the various characteristics influences the risks that individuals face when planning for CTP. A case study in the Ethiopian context exemplifies this by highlighting that many cash-based projects took age components into account when planning to implement CfW. However, they often failed to consider that older people are not a homogenous group and that older women face other risks than older man – thus, ignoring specific safety concerns that cash-based projects contain in this context. Only by developing a comprehensive understanding of these complex safety and security concerns, negative consequences can be prevented and well-informed decision-making processes enhanced ⁴³.

Box 5: Example of the importance to consider intersectional vulnerabilities

“Most agencies included unconditional cash transfers for population groups who could not participate in the CFW activities, such as pregnant women and elders. It was, however, found out that projects that targeted elderly/old aged people failed to take gender issue seriously with the presumption that there would not be conflict on control over resources given the community’s respect for elderly. (USAID & World Vision 2017)

WHO IS AT RISK?	WHICH RISK?	HOW TO MITIGATE RISK?	SOURCES
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of intracommunity tensions (i.e. mistrust, envy) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community engagement in planning, implementation and evaluation processes Training of implementing partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IOM 2017 Berhane et al., 2012

⁴³ USAID & World Visions 2017

Local community		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transparent selection processes and implementation • Consideration of targeting criteria to also include vulnerable host communities 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of fraud and corruption 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness creation for implementing actors and beneficiaries • Regular monitoring processes • Openly accessible feedback mechanisms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IOM 2017
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Price inflation of local market due to cash influx 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial and regular conduction of risk analysis and market monitoring's 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IOM 2017 • USAID & World Visions 2017
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decrease of local security through armed forces / terrorists attracted by cash 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduction of comprehensive risk analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USAID & World Visions 2017
Beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delay in delivery of emergency assistance due to lack of capacities in CTP implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity building for implementing actors on all levels • Establishment of well-functioning coordination mechanisms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IOM 2018b • USAID & World Visions 2017
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergence of intrahousehold conflicts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community participation and mobilization in project planning, implementation and monitoring to target right beneficiaries and address priority needs • Develop and apply cash recipient protection mechanisms • Targeting women as cash recipients on behalf of the household 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IOM 2018b • USAID & World Visions 2017
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dependency syndrome 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well-informed decision-making based on comprehensive understanding of people's livelihoods and local conditions • Community engagement during project development and implementation • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USAID & World Visions 2017
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Danger on the way to/from cash distribution side 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If context allows preference on use of bank system • Regular revise and update of safety and security principles and measures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USAID & World Visions 2017

Vulnerable groups (i.e. women, IDPs/refugees, elderly, children, single-headed HH, disabled persons, pregnant or lactating women)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exclusion or neglect of certain groups from benefiting of CTP due to specific characteristic (i.e. illiteracy, illegality, disabilities) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community participation and mobilization in project planning, implementation and monitoring to target right beneficiaries and address priority needs Regular feedback and complaints collection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NCA 2018 NCA & LWF 2018 USAID & World Visions 2017
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failure to consider and address intersectional vulnerabilities (i.e. projects that target elderly people but fail to consider gender dimensions given to presumption of absence of conflict due to general respect for elderly) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community engagement and mobilization during the whole course of the project (project planning, implementation and monitoring) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> USAID & World Visions 2017
Esp. Women and girls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Threats on the way towards the distribution side and during distribution, in case of direct cash distribution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access and safety considerations for movements towards and while distribution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NCA 2018 NCA & LWF 2018
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risk of overburdening beneficiaries (i.e. failure to understand and factor women's existing workload and time constraints into decision-making on project planning) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comprehensive risk analysis and community engagement before and during implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> USAID & World Visions 2017
Esp. People working in informal sectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Negative effects of cash implementations on people working in informal markets (i.e. in refugee camps) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comprehensive risk analysis and community engagement before and during implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NCA 2018 NCA & LWF 2018
Implementing actors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Danger during delivery of cash distribution (esp. in remote areas) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If context allows preference on use of bank system Regular revise and update of internal safety and security principles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> USAID & World Visions 2017

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