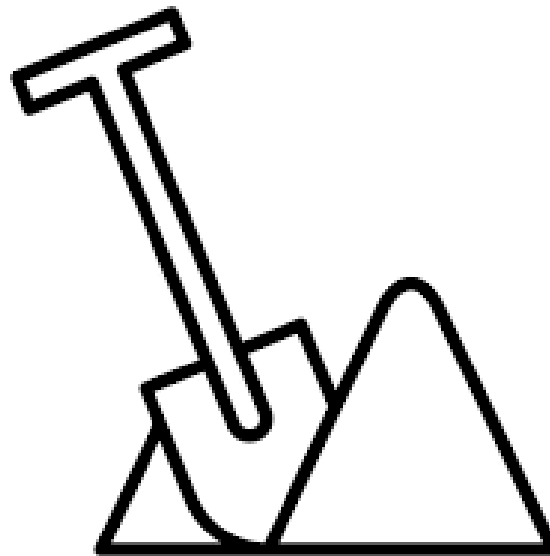


INTER-AGENCY CVWG	CASH & VOUCHER WORKING GROUP
Afghanistan	

# Inter-Agency Humanitarian Cash for Work Guidelines Afghanistan



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*“One of the advantages of Cash for Work is stimulating the recovery of the local economy by creating short-term work, reintroducing income flow, and supporting local businesses through the purchase of construction materials.”*

## Acknowledgements

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## Context & Introduction

Forty years of war, recurrent natural disasters, chronic poverty, drought, and the COVID-19 pandemic have left more than 24 million people in Afghanistan in need of humanitarian assistance<sup>1</sup>. Over the years Afghanistan has experienced massive destruction of basic infrastructure, health and educational facilities, commercial buildings, private houses, and agricultural assets. Several assessments including a recent 2022 [Mid-Year Whole of Afghanistan Assessment](#)<sup>2</sup> (MY-WoAA) by [REACH](#) indicate that most Afghans lack the minimum income and financial resources to meet most urgent needs. Lack of employment and low economic participation by both urban and rural dwellers is one of the major impediments for people to meet basic needs, embark on livelihoods recovery and generally to consider investing in household (HH) level livelihoods activities<sup>3</sup>. Given the scale and diversity of needs at the HH and community levels, amongst all vulnerable populations<sup>4</sup>, [Cash and Voucher Assistance \(CVA\)](#) activities including Cash for Work (CfW) have the potential to address the humanitarian and recovery responses in an effective and cost-efficient manner, while addressing a range of unmet needs.

## Objectives of the guideline

These CfW Guidelines for humanitarian and early recovery phases have the following objectives:

- To provide harmonized approaches to CfW including guidance and resources (annexes and other tools) to CVA actors implementing CfW for humanitarian and recovery activities in Afghanistan,
- To provide CVA actors in Afghanistan with a framework for the design, implementation, and monitoring of CfW activities,
- To provide guidance to CVA actors on how to implement the much-needed humanitarian assistance that allows able-bodied vulnerable communities to make meaningful contributions to their societies,

## Defining Cash for Work

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.unocha.org/afghanistan>

<sup>2</sup> Evolving Humanitarian Needs – Key Findings Mid-Year Whole of Afghanistan Assessment 2022; [https://www.impact-repository.org/document/reach/71cb0cab/REACH\\_Evolution-Needs-Article\\_Mid-year-WoAA\\_April-2022\\_ToShare.pdf](https://www.impact-repository.org/document/reach/71cb0cab/REACH_Evolution-Needs-Article_Mid-year-WoAA_April-2022_ToShare.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Evolving Drivers and Needs in Afghanistan Whole of Afghanistan (WoAA) Mid-Year 2022 Key Findings In coordination with OCHA and the Afghanistan ICCT; [https://www.impact-repository.org/document/reach/36a27d95/REACH\\_AFG\\_Key-Findings-Presentation-to-ICCT\\_Mid-year-WoAA-2022\\_Share.pdf](https://www.impact-repository.org/document/reach/36a27d95/REACH_AFG_Key-Findings-Presentation-to-ICCT_Mid-year-WoAA-2022_Share.pdf);

<sup>4</sup> Ibid,

The [CaLP glossary of terms](#) defines CfW which can be used inter-changeably with [Cash for Assets \(CfA\)](#) as 'Cash payments provided on the condition of undertaking designated work. This is generally paid according to time worked (e.g., number of days, daily rate), but may also be quantified in terms of outputs (e.g., number of items produced, cubic meters dug). CfW interventions are usually in public or community work programs but can also include home-based and other forms of work'<sup>5</sup>. The focus of CfW is to enable HHs to engage in pre-identified activities as a precondition to avoid blanket [unconditional provision of cash](#) and hence avoid dependency on humanitarian aid. **It should not be considered or classified as salary or remuneration**, as the cash transfer is meant to cover specific assistance needs of the participants during their participation (e.g., food consumption gap). CfW through community level activities provides employment to unskilled and semi-skilled workers on labor-intensive projects such as rehabilitation of basic infrastructures, irrigation systems, soil conservation, and road maintenance.

Within the CfW framework, it is possible to differentiate between standard (or more development oriented) CfW and humanitarian CfW, based on the scope of the activities the CfW intends to achieve.

- *Standard CfW*: projects aiming to rehabilitate infrastructures for better reach and access to services (e.g., schools in a set area, roads, etc.).
- *Humanitarian CfW*: projects aiming to rehabilitate infrastructures that are core to live in dignity and to ensure access to basic needs (e.g., shelter rehabilitation after an earthquake, rehabilitation of the only school in a set area, hospitals or clinics, clearing debris on feeder roads to allow smooth access to markets, debris clearing from community infrastructure during a mudslide/earthquake, removing carcasses (e.g., of animals, etc.,) after an earthquake/a flood, etc.,).

Indeed, the lines are fairly blurred in a context like Afghanistan, but the difference between the two remains noticeable in the intents and purposes (objectives) of the activities. This guideline, contextualized to the Afghanistan environment, is grounded in the reality of the country and its socio-economic and infrastructure conditions. Thus, while it may refer specifically to humanitarian CfW, standard practices and recommendations may be applicable to the more development oriented CfW activities too.

## Why implement Humanitarian Cash for Work?



The rationale for choosing CfW over other unconditional cash transfer (UCT) modalities for humanitarian responses assumes that the creation and or rehabilitation of vital community assets provides beneficiaries/communities with better access to basic services and goods. CfW stimulates the recovery of the local economy by creating short-term work, reintroducing income flow, and supporting local businesses through the purchase of construction materials and other goods. CfW can be a flexible and uncomplicated path for attracting long-term unemployed individuals back into the labor market by motivating them to rely on themselves- even more important within/after a humanitarian crisis. In the

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<sup>5</sup> CaLP Glossary of Terms; <https://www.calpnetwork.org/resources/glossary-of-terms/>

aftermath of large-scale humanitarian crises, the implementation of CfW activities at community level may reduce the likelihood of migration to seek job opportunities. In addition, CfW has long term impacts on protection against future shocks which can negatively affect livelihoods<sup>6</sup>. Furthermore, when carefully designed, CfW programmes have the potential to reduce gender inequalities. For the purposes of these guidelines and to maintain a separation between developmental CfW activities and humanitarian CfW activities, these guidelines are limiting the scope of CfW activities in Afghanistan to community level activities that do not replace the functions of government entities and developmental agencies. Implementing humanitarian CfW may help to achieve the following;

- that poor and vulnerable people with no/limited access to income or have low purchasing power have temporary employment that provides them with the means to address critical needs during/ after a crisis,
- an opportunity to encourage/motivate people to participate in critical work that benefits the wider community after a crisis has happened- for instance clearing of debris (from roads after a mudslide) or removal of carcasses after a pandemic.an earthquake,
- humanitarian CfW affords communities an opportunity to establish resilient mechanisms through repairing damaged assets - thereby contributing to disaster risk reduction (DRR) efforts,

## Limitations of Cash for Work programs



*When carefully planned, culturally tailored, and solely monitored, the risks associated with CfW can be easily mitigated*

The Major limitation for humanitarian CfW is funding. There is debate related to humanitarian projects and whether CfW as opposed to UCT should be used after a crisis has happened. On one hand, the issue is related to making a distinction between what communities should do on their own without external/financial motivation, and on the other, if conditions to receive aid should be imposed on a community that has just suffered a catastrophe for example, an earthquake. The unavailability of Global CfW standards/guidelines on this issue means lack of clarity on the limitations of humanitarian CfW. The list below, whilst not

exhaustive, attempts to present some of the limitations that apply to humanitarian CfW activities in the context of Afghanistan.

- Can negatively influence local cultural norms by challenging traditional responses to community needs or volunteerism - especially regarding what people must voluntarily do in the aftermath of a crisis. For instance, questions have been asked about who should clear debris/animal carcasses after an earthquake – should humanitarian Agencies use CfW or not,
- Though it is possible to implement humanitarian CfW activities the thin line that exists with standard/developmental CfW means Agencies and some funders who subscribe to humanitarian responses drag their feet to implement CfW during emergencies.

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<sup>6</sup> Afghanistan Food Security and Agriculture Cluster (FSAC) Cash for Work/ Cash for Creation Guidelines May 2022 Asset s-- FSAC Cash for Work/ Asset Creation Guideline 2022 V1 1; [https://fscluster.org/sites/default/files/documents/cfw\\_fsac-final.pdf](https://fscluster.org/sites/default/files/documents/cfw_fsac-final.pdf)

*Note: It is possible to implement CfW that do not fall under government's/development actors' mandate,*

- In Afghanistan the risk of stepping into/on explosive remnants of war<sup>7</sup> (ERW) makes some Agencies reluctant to engage in humanitarian CfW in some locations,
- The perception by some Agencies and potentially funders (donors) that it is not possible to design gender sensitive/inclusive CfW responses in Afghanistan means they won't attempt to implement it even if all other conditions point to its viability,
- Cultural and gender norms limit the options for women to engage in CfW activities. This means humanitarian CfW projects may not always be appropriate for women. In addition, it may be difficult for women to combine CfW with the care work they may be expected to do (especially during or after a crisis) due to the prevalence of gender norms - especially in Afghanistan if we suggest gender transformative CfW.
- CfW may exclude some vulnerable groups such as the elderly, sick or disabled – in which case UCT will by default, be prioritised.

### Determining the Appropriateness of Cash-for Work in Afghanistan communities



Cash for work programmes can be appropriate to various humanitarian contexts and response phases in Afghanistan. In the acute phase, they can be used for quick action and to meet immediate needs by poor and vulnerable people who have limited/low purchasing power (e.g., during post-flood/earthquake clean-up). In chronic emergencies, CfW

can be orientated towards preparedness as well as resilience/DRR work. It can also be used as a social safety net component (e.g., allocation of X paid working days per month) as a preparedness measure in chronic or slow onset crises. The following tool, (Table 1 below), allows humanitarian staff to identify the most critical needs, available resources, and appropriate interventions- and whether CfW is the right approach.

*Table 1: Checklist to decide on the feasibility/appropriateness of Cash for Work (CfW)*

ISSUE	KEY QUESTIONS	IMPLICATIONS	METHODS
Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What was the impact of the emergency on food and income sources, or other assets essential to community Livelihoods (analyse the needs of both women and men)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determines the degree of damage and needs of the people in the affected area- that can be addressed by CfW,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct observation,</li> <li>• Interviews with a wide range of stakeholders (private, government, NGO, etc.),</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are women and men able to recover their livelihoods</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If yes, people may not require additional assistance through CfW. CfW may also</li> </ul>	

<sup>7</sup> Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) are all explosive ordnance that have been used or fired but have failed to explode as intended (unexploded ordnance or UXO) or that have been abandoned (abandoned unexploded ordnance or AXO).

	<p>with the assets and income available after the shock?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What strategies are men and women using to cope with food insecurity or income insecurity? What impact do the strategies have on livelihoods and dignity?</li> <li>• Do emergency-affected populations prefer cash or in-kind support?</li> </ul>	<p>risk pulling people away from their traditional livelihoods.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informs the decision whether implementing CfW will improve economic condition of the individuals including mitigating against dangerous copying strategies,</li> <li>• Helps decide appropriateness of CfW - from the perspective of the targeted population,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surveys of existing literature from government agencies and other organizations operating in the field,</li> </ul>
<p><b>Social relations and power within the household and community</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do women and men have different priorities?</li> <li>• How is control over resources managed within HHs?</li> <li>• What are the differences within the community in terms of control over resources?</li> <li>• Can women, men and youths move freely and participate in public works,</li> <li>• Are there any specific restrictions constraining women's movement, either at the community or HH level?</li> <li>• Who in the HH oversees the care work?</li> <li>• Will the assistance received at HH level create any tensions (intimate partner violence, negative coping mechanisms, etc.)?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helps to understand the gender division within HHs,</li> <li>• to determine whether women will be able to retain their income or not,</li> <li>• To assess if women will be able to move freely and attend CfW activities,</li> <li>• To assess whether CfW activities should offer a space for children, to ensure women's participation and perhaps extend the CfW to child carers to be included in the scheme,</li> <li>• To assess if there is a need to establish separate CfW activities for women,</li> <li>• To determine if a thorough gender/risk analysis needs to precede implementation of CfW- and propose clear mitigation measures,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Separate interviews with men and women,</li> <li>• Ensure that the different social, ethnic, political, and socio-economic groups are interviewed,</li> <li>• If men and women focus group discussions (FGDs) or interviews are not possible, consider interviewing community-based organisations (e.g., community health workers, midwives, schoolteachers, etc.),</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What impact will cash distributions have on existing social and political divisions?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If there are existing tribal conflicts, CfW could unintentionally exacerbate hostilities, increase GBV risks and compromise the local perception of programmatic neutrality. This is especially so if the bulk of the programs are implemented in areas controlled by one group while neglecting the other,</li> <li>• Informs the nature of sensitisation messages that need to be put in place prior to CfW implementation,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FGDs with men and women separately,</li> <li>• Interview community leaders and other community-based organisations if existent,</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are markets in the affected area operating and accessible to women and men?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If markets are not accessible, are not well stocked, or if the movement of goods is restricted, CfW may not be appropriate. In-kind distribution may be</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews and FGDs with traders,</li> <li>• Price monitoring in key markets,</li> </ul>

<b>Markets Functionality</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are essential basic items available in enough quantities and at reasonable prices?</li> <li>• Are there any restrictions on the movement of goods?</li> </ul>	more suitable until the markets become functional,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews with moneylenders, debtors, and creditors,</li> <li>• Assess the volume of cash being provided by the project, compared with other inflows such as remittances,</li> <li>• Ensure that remote areas are covered when analysing how markets work,</li> <li>• FGDs with men and women separately to enquire about access and safety to markets,</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the market competitive? Is the number of suppliers large enough in relation to the number of buyers to keep prices balanced?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the market is not competitive, sellers can manipulate prices and cash distributions may not be inappropriate,</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the market integrated? (i.e., are market services functioning and enabling goods to move from areas of surplus to areas of deficit?) Are traders able and willing to respond to an increase in demand?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Without market integration, supply will not meet demand and cash distribution is inappropriate,</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the risks that an injection of cash flow into the economy may cause inflation in prices of key products?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the risks are too high, then CfW may not be appropriate, as it runs the risk of creating price instability in the local market and exacerbating economic insecurity,</li> </ul>	
<b>Security and delivery mechanisms</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the options for distributing cash? Are banking systems or informal financial transfer mechanisms functioning?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allows for the identification of alternative methods of transferring cash to minimize security risks,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mapping of financial transfer mechanisms,</li> <li>• Interviews with banks, remittance companies,</li> <li>• Interviews with potential beneficiaries about perceptions of security and ways of transporting, storing, and spending money safely,</li> <li>• Analysis of the risks of moving or distributing cash,</li> <li>• Ask women about cash delivery mechanism (safety, accessibility, etc.)</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the risks of cash benefits being taxed or seized by or warring parties?</li> <li>• How do these risks compare with the risks posed by in kind alternatives to cash?</li> <li>• Are women able to access cash delivery points? Plan alternative specialized modalities for women enrolled in CfW,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helps to assess the level of security/insecurity in the area and determine whether CfW can be implemented,</li> <li>• Insecurity at the project sites themselves can make implementation and monitoring of the project unfeasible,</li> </ul>	
<b>Corruption (misuse?)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the risks of cash being diverted by local elites or project staff?</li> <li>• What accountability/safeguards systems are available to minimize these risks?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helps to determine the feasibility of implementing successful CfW projects that will benefit the entire community and not be diverted,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment of existing levels of corruption and diversion through interviews and analysis of tracking mechanisms.</li> </ul>

*Adapted from Cash-Transfer Programming in Emergencies, ed. Pantaleo Creti and Susanne Jaspars (London: Oxfam GB 2006) and Mercy Corps.*

## Contextualizing the scope of humanitarian Cash for Work activities in Afghanistan

To delineate between humanitarian and developmental CfW activities, the CVWG is limiting the scope of such humanitarian activities to the following:

- Humanitarian CfW projects should limit intervention periods – i.e, the Afghanistan CVWG proposes a period not longer than 6 months- the assumption is that HHs would have recovered from the dire humanitarian crisis by that time,
- Selection of project activities should be done in consultations with local communities ensuring that each project location only includes direct inhabitants of that community,
- Selected activities should focus on local and community level improvements,
- Household selection should focus on selecting the most vulnerable HHs (with limited/low purchasing power) who still have at least one adult able-bodied member. Administrative CfW activities could be used to include other vulnerable groups,
- The scope of activities should avoid including any provisions offered by the authorities or developmental agencies involving large infrastructure projects,
- The overall objective of the CfW activities should focus on contributing to basic needs of project participants while ensuring the wellbeing of participants,
- Designing female lead, administrated, and monitored CfW activities to alleviate vulnerability of Female headed households (fHH). Such projects are recommended to include an additional CfW participants in the role of child carers who enable other females to also participate in CfW activities,

*Project participants should be enrolled under the scheme for limited time periods (less than 6 months per any specific individual) allowing for new participants to join on a rolling basis.*

## Specific risks of implementing Cash for Work Activities in Afghanistan



Agencies are encouraged to thoroughly observe the risks that surround CfW implementation within their respective target locations. This is important because some tasks are not satiable for unskilled participants under CfW. In addition, it is possible that proper Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and safety equipment should be provided to participants to counter some of the risks. Mitigation measures and severity scales must accompany each of the identified risks. In the meantime, the observed general risks of implementing cash in Afghanistan are in Table 2 below.

*Table 2: Observed risks of implementing Cash for Work in Afghanistan*

Potential Risk (Observed)	Suggested Mitigation (Preventive Measures)
Restricted inclusion of women into public CfW activities due to cultural dynamics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sensitize community leaders and men in the community and get their buy-in to allow women to participate in Micro-projects (CfW activities). In some provinces women can work outside and this should be built upon. In some provinces extra effort is required to advocate for women's participation,</li> <li>• Ensure CfW activities are undertaken in a place that is safe and accessible for women, same goes for cash delivery modality,</li> </ul>

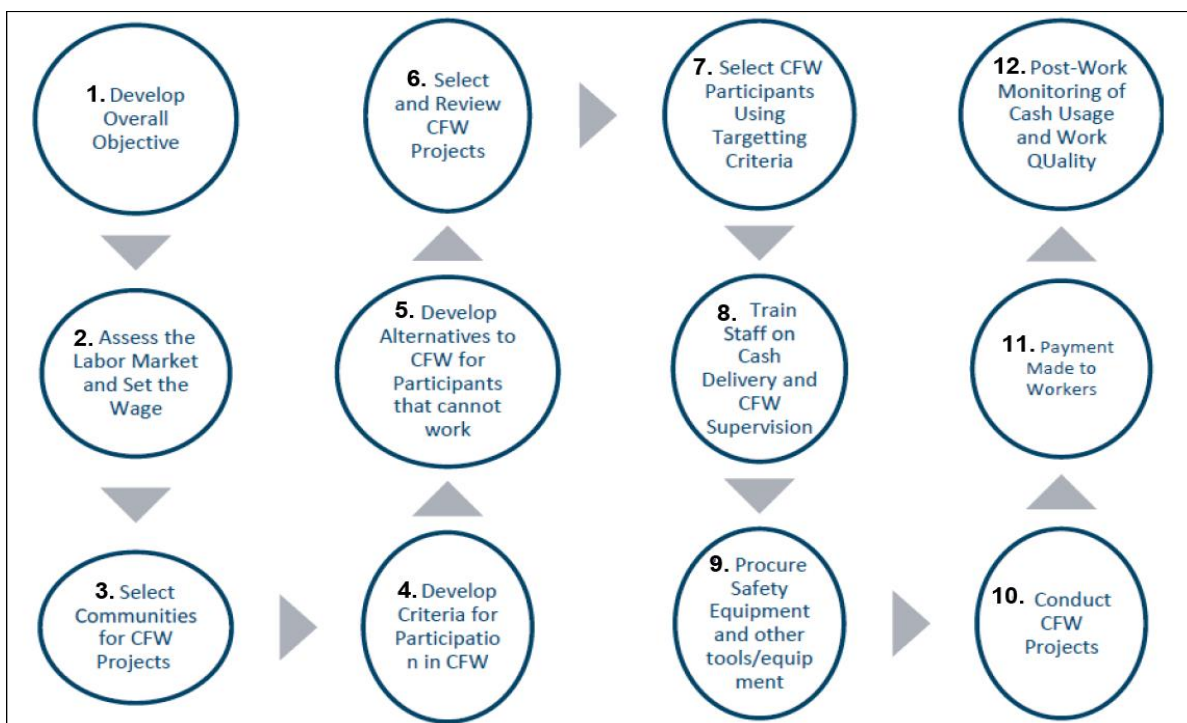


	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure availability of child-care facilities to enable women to bring their children to CfW activities,</li> <li>• Consider CfW Micro-projects that women can comfortably do in the confines of their homes or as women groups- e.g., nursing tree nurseries, art, and craft (mats, carpets, etc.), home gardens, processing of vegetables and fruits, poultry rearing, etc.,</li> <li>• Do provide a strong report mechanism available for women (social workers’ network, hotline, etc.) and ensure its link with protection/GBV partners on the ground,</li> </ul>
<b>Limited or none - inclusion of disabled or elderly people</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For humanitarian CfW responses that are meant to address basic needs, consider enrolling labor constrained families into unconditional cash grants. Sections below explain this approach,</li> </ul>
<b>Child labor</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider unconditional cash grants to ensure child headed families are included for CfW responses meant to cover basic needs,</li> </ul>
<b>Mine fields</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinate with <a href="#">Mine Action</a> and <a href="#">United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA)</a> to ensure that locations targeted for CfW are clean and do not pose the risk of participants stepping into red zones. This is important because some tasks are not satiable for unskilled participants under CfW,</li> </ul>
<b>Mudslides - people clearing flooded areas can get trapped in a flash flood, etc.,</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thorough risk and environmental analysis are required before people engage in risky activities. Involve specialized people like engineers and environmental experts during the assessments and planning phases of debris, rubble, or mud-clearing.</li> </ul>

**Implementation of Cash for Work Programs**

This section outlines the necessary steps for implementing CfW programming once assessments have deemed it appropriate. The steps are arranged chronologically, and while the approach to the program may differ according to the individual context. The graphic below outlines the general steps followed in CfW programming cycle.

Figure 1: Steps to implementing Cash for Work



## Develop an Overall Objective

Once an assessment has ascertained that CfW is an appropriate intervention, the first step is to develop an overall programmatic objective. This will define and prioritize the purpose and scope of CfW, while facilitating monitoring, clarifying intended results, and developing effect and impact indicators. There are four general objectives underpinning CfW programs, and any or all may apply to humanitarian CfW:

- **Basic Needs** – The goal is to supply people with cash, when necessary, HH goods are readily available in the markets, but people do not have the necessary income to obtain them,
- **Improvement of Assets or Community Projects** after a crisis has happened– The goal is to repair damaged community assets. In the event of recovery, this might be to improve basic assets or to accomplish a community defined project. Possible projects include clearing irrigation canals, repairing schools, repairing/fixing damaged water and sanitation systems, or repairing damaged feeder roads (small roads that lead to markets, school, health facilities, etc. within communities),
- **Jumpstarting Economic Development**– after an emergency the goal is to reintroduce cash flows into beneficiary communities, revitalize local markets, and restore basic economic functions. The availability of short-term work helps to prevent selling off fundamental assets, such as livestock, equipment, or land,
- **Stability**– After a large-scale emergency, CfW programming may be desired by communities to perform basic tasks to enable a transition to a recovery phase. An employed population is also less likely to experience higher levels of crime.

## Setting the Cash for Work daily rates

The priority in setting a daily rate is to meet the basic needs of the targeted population. However, the payment can be output-based i.e., a quantifiable amount of work that was produced by participants so they can leave once they have completed the task; or it can be based on period of attendance. Output based



calculations are depended on groups of CfW laborers sharing the same amount of quantifiable work. This has the advantage that instead of monitoring everyone, a group of people is given a task to achieve together. This simplifies administration and supervision and gives the group a certain flexibility. The commonly used method is usually a daily rate. This is usually fixed at an amount lower than the market rate to ensure that CfW projects attract the most economically disadvantaged individuals and to avoid disrupting the local labor market<sup>8</sup>. The work norms and wage rate should be

calculated in a way that allows participants time to pursue other productive endeavors during the project period. The daily rates may be more useful, especially for jobs which do not have a quantifiable output. In setting the rate, Agencies should take the following aspects into account:

- Prevailing minimum daily rates within the local context. Rates should at most be equal to or preferably less than the prevailing local market rates for similar activities. In drafting these CfW guidelines, partners consistently requested guidance on setting the daily rates. Consultations with active CfW agencies and ad-hoc collected rates indicate a wide range between 3-4 USD per day for unskilled labour - translated into the Afghani equivalent using the prevailing exchange rate [here](#). The determining factor remains setting a rate at 5% less than the local labour market in the direct vicinity of the intervention hence its vital for agencies to conduct labour market research before specifying an exact daily rate. The values given here are non-prescriptive but are shared for general guidance.
- Careful consideration must be taken in setting the rate, as it is the predetermining factor for beneficiaries to self-nominate and participate - rates below unskilled labor market rates are more likely to attract the neediest segment of the population,
- In humanitarian CfW programmes, it is not recommended to have rates for technical and non-technical (skilled/unskilled) beneficiaries as this can easily turn Agencies to be viewed as employers by authorities. If a skilled individual, e.g., local Engineer/Agriculturalist/carpenter/plumber chooses to participate in CfW activities and has offered his/her skills it is fine. However, they should be made aware that they will receive the same wage as everyone else. If there is a need for specialized technical skills, these should be contracted out. For instance, an Agency can contract a builder to construct classrooms. Poor and vulnerable people from the area can be engaged in CfW activities to support the builder/contractor in clearing the land, bringing materials (e.g., stones, bricks, and water, etc. to the site).

Conduct  
Labour Market  
Research before  
specifying an  
exact daily  
rate

Ongoing monitoring of the local economy, including the availability of employment, should be performed on a regular basis throughout the project lifetime to ensure that CfW rates stay at the appropriate level. In

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<sup>8</sup> Some countries set the rate at 10% below the casual labour rate. In cases where there are not many casual labour opportunities, the CFW wage can be equal to the casual labour rate.

instances where local businesses report facing difficulties hiring sufficient laborers because of competition with CfW programs, Agencies should restrict the number of participants, decrease the number of days worked, or reduce daily rates and eventually consider using other assistance modalities.

### Select Communities for Micro-Projects (Cash for Work activities)



The process of choosing communities for Micro-projects (CfW activities) relies largely on the initial assessment, the Agency's target area and existing activities in the region. The initial appraisal ideally involves discussions with local authorities, community structures, religious entities, elders, and local NGOs. For instance, communities where public infrastructure has been destroyed by years of conflict, or communities with vulnerable poor people relying mostly on daily work and where the opportunities have dropped due to the economic crisis. In addition, communities that are exposed to natural hazards and there is need to create assets that reduce the risks can be prioritized.

Other issues to consider when selecting communities include interest and receptivity, commitment, level of infrastructure damage, labor availability and community responsibilities. Agencies should avoid duplication of effort in the same communities. However, if possible, they can complement each other either by extending the duration of CfW activities on key infrastructure development or by providing additional activities that support already running initiatives. In locations where UCT is being implemented it is sensible to wait until such activities have been completed. We recommend this because humanitarian CfW activities might target the same population group(s).

### Selecting CfW Participants



Targeting criteria will depend on the overall project goal and the primary assessment of the social/religious/ethnic composition of the community. As per Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) guidelines, the selection process must be community-based, and Agencies must ensure that communities are consulted. [Participatory approaches](#)<sup>9;10</sup> that allow working through community structures should be considered. To ensure that the most vulnerable groups are reached it is important to consider the following:

- Vulnerable groups including female-headed households (fHH), elderly and people living with disabilities should be provided with specific CfW activities adapted to them,
- Untargeted individuals may be referred to other Agencies that can include them in other activities,

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<sup>9</sup> Introducing Participatory Approaches, Methods and Tools

<https://www.fao.org/3/ad424e/ad424e03.htm>;

<sup>10</sup> Participatory Methods; <https://www.participatorymethods.org/page/about-participatory-methods>

- Set age limits for individuals participating in the activities- anyone below 18 years will not be allowed to participate. Upper age limit shall be defined as the ability of work. Agencies must be committed to child labor prevention and should ensure that local leaders and families are also committed. Periodic monitoring will be necessary to ensure that communities are not breaking rules related to age limits. Child-headed households (cHH) must be referred to specialized partners to be provided with other forms of support,
- Sometimes it is recommended to have at least 5% of the target population receiving [unconditional cash support](#) equivalent to the total amount of a CfW laborer who worked the full cycle. This is to allow labor constrained families including the elderly, children, and the disabled to be included in the project. Annex 2 is a sample of the CfW beneficiary registration form which can be digitized,
- Ensure that community-based committees that lead/participate in the beneficiary selection process include women and all minority groups that include disabled people and other marginalised groups,

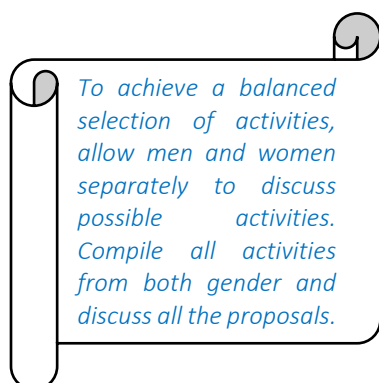
During community consultations, Agencies must ensure that all the community groups are represented: women, men, people with disabilities, elders and youth, all ethnicities/religion, all status (IDPs, returnees, local population, etc.)

The steps to follow during the beneficiary selection process are outlined in Table 3 below:

Table 3: Steps to follow in Beneficiary targeting and Selection

Activity	Description
Step 1: Definition of vulnerability, identification of vulnerability criteria	At a public meeting that is chaired by the local leadership allow people to define vulnerability and selection criteria. Consider conducting separate FGDs for women and men to ensure that people discuss freely,
Step 2: Discussion about targeting specific vulnerable groups	Using participatory approaches, define with the communities how and for what activities some specific groups can be targeted to improve their livelihood: e.g., women, people living with disabilities, youth/elders, etc. Type of alternative CfW activities for these mentioned groups must be discussed at that stage and they have been tailored to each targeted area. Protection issues must also be discussed during this phase: How to ensure the protection of the vulnerable groups who will benefit/participate in the project.
Step 3: Finalization of the vulnerability criteria and pre-selection lists	Based on the two steps mentioned above, the Agency must present to the communities the matrix of the selection and the final selection criteria and the weighting that has been decided. Community Development Councils (CDCs) and/or Shuras will have to share a pre-selected list of HHs that possibly match the selection criteria agreed at community level. These pre-identified lists must be triangulated with other sources to reduce the bias as much as possible.
Step 4: HH registration (house to house methodology)	House-to-house methodology led by the organization is preferred as it reduces as much as possible the bias of the selection of beneficiaries. The organization must have an effective and operational gender sensitive Helpline available at that time for the communities to be able to call during the registration process.
Step 5: Selection of the beneficiaries	The selection will be made based on the selection criteria and weighting agreed with men and women in the community and local leaders.

## Orient Project Staff on CfW delivery and technical supervision



It is important to provide a general orientation and specific CfW program orientation to all new CfW workers, including reviewing the relevant scopes of work. Particularly important is to provide on-the-job mentoring by experienced CfW staff to new team members. To realize the project objective and ensure quality of the assets rehabilitated, the Agency must have technical staff who support supervisors and workers and provide training when needed. Some CfW activities require more technical follow-ups and skills than others, for instance; road cleaning, clearing of irrigation canals/ intakes. For these activities, technical staff must monitor on a regular basis the work achieved.

## Develop Alternatives to CfW Participants that cannot work: Unconditional Cash Support

As Agencies must cover the income needs of labor endowed people with CfW, it must be seen that unconditional cash be given to a fraction of very vulnerable poor people unable to work – i.e., the labor constrained HHs. The maximum target should be 10% or according to Grants agreements. Vulnerability to be discussed with the community for labor constrained HHs will include;

- Chronically ill and or bed ridden,
- Disabled and immobile,
- Heavily pregnant but very poor and vulnerable,
- Vulnerable child headed vis-à-vis child labor,
- Vulnerable poor and elderly,



## Selection of Micro-projects (Cash for Work Activities)

The selection of micro-projects (CfW activities) must be done after the selection of beneficiaries. This will better inform the most vulnerable and guide on the number that are eligible for unconditional cash grant (discussed above). This is so because once an Agency has the beneficiary numbers it will not be easy for local leaders to manipulate. Experienced from the field has shown that different groups or individuals try to select the structures that they can benefit more from. Therefore, the best way is to use participatory systems. One way of doing this can be conducting a vote to select the main activities. The counting of votes should be done by few trusted community members in a visible manner. Based on the results the first, second and third high ranked projects would be selected. This has the advantage of reducing the influence of influential people and also of avoiding tension and conflict. In selecting the CfW activities the following should be considered:

- All activities must be directed at rehabilitating or creation of assets that benefit communities, and rarely towards individuals,
- Involve targeted communities in the identification of the assets to be restored – they know better what would be the most useful at community level to improve their livelihood, mitigate impact of the natural disasters and improve their living conditions,

- Activities must be environmentally sound – they will not affect the environment negatively in any way,
- Preference will be given to activities that communities will not be able to carry out individually, for example structures that may require lots of cement to construct or repair/maintain,
- Activities that use locally available materials will be encouraged,
- Be relatively simple in design and realistic in terms of objectives as well as the time and resources needed,
- Activities that communities are obliged to carry out themselves will not be acceptable. Examples are things like collecting rubbish, which is communities’ responsibility,
- All activities will follow the principle of “Do No Harm”. That is, activities that will lead to harming people or the environment will not be acceptable,

Light CfW tasks to cover a maximum of beneficiaries not able to carry hard work would be discussed at community level as well, depending on their need. However, these activities could be:

- Organic disposal and management to obtain compost,
- Hygiene promotion,
- Looking after children of women engaged during meetings and CfW activities,
- Performing administrative tasks, maintaining timesheets, monitoring etc...,

### Women’s participation in Cash for Work Activities



The capability of CfW programs to empower women is highly contextual. On one hand, the ability to earn income can increase the status of women both within their HHs and the community and can provide greater decision-making authority over HH spending decisions. On the other hand, in some Afghanistan societies where gender roles are strictly defined and enforced, women may not retain control over their incomes so that providing cash directly to them may lead to

disputes or even violence. Agencies should recognize the diversity of contexts in Afghanistan, where in some provinces women may not be able to work outside, while it could be the case in others. Therefore, while encouraging female participation in CfW programs it is essential to understand the relevant cultural context. Women are usually participants in the local market economy and can readily participate in CfW in ways that are consistent with cultural tradition. For example, women may work lighter, socially acceptable tasks such as road clearing, cutting shrubs, cleaning schools, mosques, etc. It is every Agency’s role to (1) ensure that CfW activities do not exacerbate or create risks for women and, (2) have strong mechanisms and policies in place to redress any complaints – such as sexual exploitation and abuse or risk of gender-based violence within CfW activities. In addition, women should be consulted about the types of activities which are appropriate, applicable, and acceptable in their context. Below are some of the CfW activities that women in Afghanistan can take part in.



- Gabion weaving: it is weaved for building gabion walls to protect houses and land from floods,

- Women can perform socially acceptable works at construction sites (e.g., watering of concrete, collecting waste and cleaning the workspace, cooking in site etc.),
- Designing CfW activities tailored for women such as cash for attending training (topics to be set in consultation with targeted communities),
- During COVID-19 pandemic, women can take part by being involved in producing face masks and PPE,
- Alongside men, women can even dig contour trenches and bunds for rainwater collection and erosion control in some highland communities– including participating in other agricultural related activities,

## Gender considerations for CfW Interventions

Gender issues that Agencies should consider while implementing CfW activities include:

- What are the seasonal labor patterns for men and women? Timing of activities to be adapted to women house and childcare duties,
- Who undertakes the care and childcare duties in HHHs?
- Assessments and consultations with communities to include women and ensure they can voice their preference and concerns about the different CfW activities. In some contexts, this may require having women staff, women leaders or civil society who can engage specifically with women,
- Establish post-activity monitoring to ensure protection concerns are mitigated and women can keep and use the money earned through activities,
- Women and men will be paid equally for agreed units of work,

## The Timing and duration of Cash for Work activities

If input-orientated, the duration of CfW programmes simply involves the time taken to provide financial support to cover immediate needs and asset recovery. If output orientated, CfW programmes will last until the lean or critical season is over, the affected people are able to cover their minimum needs, and/or normal livelihoods are stable or recovered. Table 4 below summarizes some of the seasonal factors to consider when planning to implement CfW activities.



Table 4: Seasonal Factors influencing CfW Scheduling

Key Factors	How it might influence decision making
Agricultural peak times	Will affect availability of HHHs for CfW since they will be busy at various times. This includes land preparation, planting, weeding, and harvest periods. The periods of heaviest workload may fall on woman and men differently. In agricultural areas, for example, women tend to work most during the pre-harvest and harvest periods.
Timing of slack labor period	It is critical that public works be timed to coincide with the slack labor period to ensure minimum disruption to core livelihood activities. Slack labor periods can vary enormously over short distances. For example, the dry season is a period of peak labor in exclusively pastoral populations as HHHs travel long distances in search of pasture; whereas in



	neighboring Agro-pastoral/farmers areas the wet season is an intense labor period as HHs will have to prepare, plant, and weed the land.
Peak lean season	Households should start CfW before or during the period where they experience the most severe lean season. If CfW does not start by this time, HHs may have to sell productive assets to meet immediate food needs,
Timing of Rainy/ Snow season	Inaccessibility during the rainy/snow seasons presents challenges and CfW not to take place during rainy/snow season. In cold climate provinces there are 3-4 months of winter. Typical CfW will not be possible. In such cases UCT should be provided for the most vulnerable.
Heat/Snow	Cash for works should be planned so as not to take place during periods of excessive heat/snow.
Community mobilization	Cash for work schedules and community mobilization schedules should be coordinated.

## Selection of CfW Relief Committee members

The selection of CfW Relief committee (RC) members is important because they are responsible for various roles, including the verification of selected project beneficiaries (ref to Annex 01). Committees can be selected before or after beneficiary selection. To have an effective committee, consider the following:

- CfW, committee membership should be representative, and their role clearly discussed and outlined so that they are able to fully understand their functions,
- The committee should be representative of males and females of most vulnerable or marginalized groups such as persons with disabilities, poorer families and the elderly who are able to fulfill their roles. Similarly, ensure that the different locations/villages/clans are represented within the beneficiaries selecting committee members,
- Establish the voluntary nature of the committee and clarify that members will not receive any incentives (unless it is part of the project),
- Discuss and clarify feedback and reporting mechanisms with the committee members highlighting the complaints and feedback process,

The roles of supervisors include the selection and training of group leaders as well as supervision of CfW activities, marking of registers for the work done and, in some instances, distributing of workload among beneficiaries. Project staff must be able to mediate and defuse any conflicts or issues arising between beneficiaries.

## Selection of supervisors

Workstation supervisors are elected after the registration of beneficiaries and selection of the micro-projects (CfW activities). Supervisors should have a basic education and skills in line with their roles and responsibilities. Each supervisor should be assigned to a group of beneficiaries and assigned to one site of CfW activities. Ideally women should be chosen when supervising a team of women. Before they start the work, supervisors should be asked to sign a contract of service (Annex 07) with the implementing agency.

## Qualities of supervisors

To realize the project objective, the Agency is supposed to have an on-site CfW leader with qualities that are in line with the project goals. A CfW supervisor should have the following qualities:

- Must ascribe to the general leadership ethics and code of conduct,
- Be literate so they can be able to read and write,
- Be acceptable by the group/beneficiaries in the locality,
- Be available and demonstrate commitment towards their role,
- Be influential and trustworthy; not selfish,
- Have good communication skills,
- Be team players and have both leadership skills and the willingness to serve,
- Qualify as beneficiaries,
- Be identified and voted for by community/beneficiaries,
- Must command respect within the affected community,
- Be transparent and able to resolve conflicts in the community.



## Determining the roles of supervisors

The following are the roles of supervisors:

- Ensuring that work is done as required,
- Acting as custodians of project assets such as the tools used by the beneficiary community,
- Taking responsibility for keeping records on project activities,
- Reporting to the project officers on the progress of implementation,
- Representing beneficiaries to the project team,
- Collecting feedback from beneficiaries and relaying it to the project officers for follow up,
- Distributing project materials including tools and equipment,
- Maintaining order within the group and resolving conflicts,
- Assisting in the translation and interpretation of project information to the community members and the project team,

## Training of supervisors

Supervisors should be trained in the following areas:

- Communication skills,
- Leadership and responsibilities skills,
- Record keeping,
- Group formation and group dynamics,

- Safety and security,
- Project management,
- All supervisors (and not laborers) are responsible for all the tools and documentation,
- All CfW activities should be completed on time as stipulated in the project implementation time frame. If they are not completed as required, the Agency should obtain a written acceptable explanation for their non-accomplishment. Otherwise, the Agency should discuss with the community and local authorities to reach a reasonable solution,
- No beneficiary should sign any document on behalf of any other beneficiary; however, each case should be reviewed on its own merit,
- Agencies should ensure adherence to work norms and provide support to the supervisors.

### Acquisition of support materials for CFW

Depending on the selection of CfW activities, selected beneficiaries will be provided with adequate equipment such as shovels, seeds, protection clothing etc. As much as possible, materials should be purchased locally if they are available. Depending on the type of CfW activities, appropriate personal safety equipment (face mask, gloves, hat, cloth, etc.) should be provided to the workers and work safety training should be conducted for the workers for their safety. At the end of the CfW project, Agencies are requested not to take back the materials provided to the workers, on an individual or group basis. This will allow the beneficiaries to have a material toolbox that can help them to find more easily other types of daily construction/cleaning work in the future as they would be already equipped.

### Payments for Cash for Work



Cash for Work payments to beneficiaries should be paid quickly because the aim of the intervention is to assist people to access cash to improve their ability to purchase basic needs for their families. Accordingly, depending on the activity and number of people involved a daily, weekly, or monthly payment schedule can be considered. Participants are paid according to the number of days/hours worked as reflected on the attendance sheet (Annex 4). It is also critical to properly select the appropriate delivery mechanism which is preferred by the beneficiaries. A [quick payment mechanism](#) assessment is necessary to inform the best mechanism to use within a given context. Any payment system should be beneficiary centered, efficient, secure and mitigate risks both to the Agency and the beneficiaries. Some of the considerations to make related to the payment system are below.

- Communicating the correct amount of cash – in local money and not in USD – ensures that it may not change just before the payment,
- Timely respect the calendar of payment (monthly, weekly basis, etc.),
- Do not share the distribution date / location too long in advance,
- Distribute small quantities of money,
- When possible, use alternative money transfer (mobile money, etc.) – stick to women preferred modality,
- Annexes 5, 6 and 8 capture essential details for a CfW payment sheet- to ensure accountability.

## Monitoring and Evaluation in CfW

Implementing Agency's field staff will conduct routine monitoring and the supervision of tasks and verify the marking of weekly attendance registers on site. Where projects need technical input from qualified Agency or government departments ensure the inspection is done according to set standards. Written reports for each inspection/monitoring visit must be kept by the implementing Agency for reference.

### Post Distribution Monitoring

Post Distribution Monitoring (PDM) should be conducted in a stage process throughout implementation. In this way, the Agencies will have a lighter version of the baseline, provides immediate feedback on actual choices made on the use of cash, with follow up sampling of market behaviour. Structured FGDs with men and women separately take stock of understanding and adherence to processes including challenges and perceptions of status and progression of the CfW activities. Informal monitoring occurs as a matter of routine through the extensive presence of the Field Monitors and Supervisors (ensure some of them are women to engage with women beneficiaries) and their familiarity with the beneficiaries and location dynamics. Any problems arising are identified and rectified early and on an ongoing basis.



### Complaint mechanisms



To improve programme accountability to beneficiaries, Agencies are encouraged to develop a complaints and redressal mechanism related to the project's workplaces and labor conditions. This can be achieved through:

- Provide a hotline to a person tasked to answer and deal with calls made by CfW workers and other stakeholders,
- Guarantee confidentiality of all complaints about workplaces and/or labor conditions,
- Facilitate FGDs with CfW workers who have completed CfW cycles; this helps to identify any systemic programme quality or/and labor/environmental issues,
- Establish a Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) mechanism in the community where people can access and report safely,
- Ensure channels for complaints are accessible for women beneficiaries (this may include door-to-door channels instead of hotlines) and FGDs specifically for women in the community. Ideally there should be multiple channels in place that are accessible to people. Not all people have access to

the phone to make calls. Agencies should consult with the community on their preferred complaints channels as well.

## Project endline complete (process and impact of cash transfer and community-based assets creation)

This mirrors the baseline and is designed to measure changes (impact) in relation to pre-project conditions and attribution of any changes to the project. This is broadened by FGD discussions and occurs one month after the CfW projects, and the final transfers have been made.



### Reporting

Agencies are encouraged to prepare weekly reports detailing: the number of CfW workers participating in all targeted sites; the total number of cash workdays worked; cumulative numbers of unique workers and workdays, Age, and gender. This list is not exhaustive. Monthly narrative and financial reports should also be provided. They are very useful for monitoring and tracking achievements as well as for addressing any problems and challenges that may occur.

## Phasing Out and Transitioning Cash for Work Programs

To ease the transition of beneficiaries to other sources of income, it is important that the end of CfW programming is conducted as a phase-out rather than an abrupt stoppage. This can be achieved by gradually decreasing the number of workdays or restructuring labor payments based on output-based labor payments with specific deliverables. The decision to end the CfW program depends largely on the overall objective of the project. In most cases, CfW will phase into other types of programming.

## Accountability



As much as possible, Agencies are encouraged to communicate to community members project objectives, the Agency's expectations of workers, the conditions under which people will be working and the payment amount, process, and frequency of payment. From the onset discuss and agree with communities what will happen to any equipment or materials at the end of the project. At project inception, establish CfW village committees for smooth communication with communities and for accountability. A complaints and feedback mechanism should be put in place right from the onset. To avoid potential negative implications of CfW, protection considerations should be incorporated into the programme ensuring appropriate type of work is designed for the target participant group(s), ensuring that vulnerable groups or individuals are not excluded or exploited. Agencies need to organize workers into groups that are small enough to enable supervision. Agencies also need to establish a culturally appropriate work schedule (i.e., considering prayer times, public holidays, etc.).

## References and Cash for Work Resources

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