

## Overview

### Donor Cash Forum (DCF)

#### Introduction

The Donor Cash Forum (DCF) is an informal body for donors to discuss and develop shared positions that will advance and improve humanitarian cash programming.

The DCF currently comprises representatives from Canada, DG ECHO, Finland, Germany, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the UK, and the US (BHA and BPRM).

#### Vision

The DCF aims to improve the coherence, efficiency and effectiveness of the humanitarian cash assistance received by people affected by crises. It focuses on maximising gains in effectiveness and efficiency by promoting complementarity and reducing duplication through improvements in humanitarian programming.

The cash [Common Donor Approach \(CDA\)](#) was developed in recognition that Grand Bargain commitments to promote greater consideration, use and coordination of cash modalities to meet basic needs would require a coordinated vision from donors to collectively support ways of working. The CDA enshrines the principles of accountability, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, and localisation, but recognises that country-specific plans will be required to determine meaningful actions in different contexts.

The [Joint Donor Statement \(JDS\) on Humanitarian Cash Transfers](#) built on the CDA by identifying priorities, including: collaboration across sectors; the use of single payments to meet different needs where conditions allow; greater access to accountability mechanisms and responsiveness; protection mainstreaming; data interoperability; and linkages with social protection systems.

The DCF emerged from the Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD) initiative and is guided by the [24 Principles and Good Practice of Humanitarian Donorship](#). The DCF, like the GHD, recognises that by working together, donors can more effectively encourage and stimulate principled donor behaviour and, by extension, improved humanitarian action.

#### DCF aims and objectives

The overall objective of the DCF is to advance and improve humanitarian cash programming, as laid out in the Joint Donor Statement. The specific objectives of the group are to:

1. Serve as a forum for technical exchange where donors can discuss pending or recent developments in the field of humanitarian cash programming. This includes serving as a forum to discuss areas of difference, resolve dilemmas, or come to joint positions as appropriate.
2. Improve policy and decision-making exchanges between donors at the global and country levels on humanitarian cash programming, either through:
  - a. Supporting and engaging with donor counterparts in focus countries, or

- b. Identifying specific strategic/thematic issues at country level that the DCF will commit to collectively addressing.
3. Advance global strategic priorities, which donors are uniquely placed to drive forward, including through developing joint position papers and/or principles/statements.
4. Facilitate collective engagement with partners (in line with DCF strategic priorities) and vis-à-vis key policy processes (e.g. executive board meetings, Grand Bargain), and develop joint positioning wherever possible/appropriate.

## History

Established in 2019, some of the DCF's key achievements to date are:

- [Humanitarian Cash Transfers in the Response to COVID-19](#)
- [Good Practice Review on Cash Assistance in Contexts of Inflation and Depreciation](#)
- [DCF Statement and Guiding Principles on Interoperability of Data Systems in Humanitarian Cash Programming](#)
- Collective positioning and representation in the cash coordination caucus under the Grand Bargain 2.0. – see [CALP Cash Coordination timeline](#)
- Collective contributions to the Grand Bargain Cash Workstream:
  - [Tracking Cash and Voucher Assistance: Agreements, Recommendations and Minimum Requirements from the Grand Bargain Cash Workstream](#)
  - [Multipurpose Cash Outcome Indicators and Guidance](#).
- Actively supported donor cash coordination at country level in Ethiopia, Lebanon, Nigeria, Somalia, Sudan, Syria/Turkey Earthquake and Ukraine.
  - [Common Donor Messaging on Humanitarian Cash Programs in the Response in Ukraine](#).

### Humanitarian Cash!

DCF members acknowledge the benefits of cash as an effective and people-centred modality. Cash can help people affected by conflict or disaster to regain a sense of normalcy, interact as equals in the marketplace, engage productively with host communities, and support local economies.

When conditions allow, cash promotes flexibility, empowerment and a sense of dignity for those who are in need of humanitarian assistance, enabling people to best tailor the assistance to their individual needs.

Cash transfers can also lay the foundations for recovery by promoting social and economic integration and bolstering local markets.

DCF members recognise that cash is by nature cross-sectoral and should be evaluated across sectors. Cash should complement, and be complemented by, other interventions and modalities where specific needs cannot be met by cash alone, building on synergies to optimise outcomes.

## Current priorities

The DCF work plan currently focuses on six themes. Each theme is approached differently based on a mapping of DCF member initiatives and opportunities for the DCF to support complementary activity in the wider cash ecosystem. The six themes are:

1. Anticipatory action
2. Challenging environments
3. Coordination
4. Interoperability
5. Localisation
6. Social protection linkages

In addition, DCF has three general priorities:

- A. Operationalising the JDS
- B. Supporting country operations\*
- C. Engaging with policy efforts

*\*The DCF has not pre-identified specific countries to engage with in 2023. Rather, country-level engagement is driven by humanitarian donor representatives approaching the DCF for support and/or the DCF workstreams identifying specific operations to contextualise the thematic roadmaps.*

The DCF is constantly responding to unforeseen priorities and adapting to new opportunities to operationalise the joint donor statement. As such, detailed plans of action are developed each trimester to guide the focus for the coming months.

## Ways of working

- The DCF is an informal body. Chairmanship is rotational, with two co-chairs elected every 12 months.
- The group meets monthly online, organising additional meetings on the thematic workstreams and ad-hoc meetings on other specific topics as required.
- In-person meetings are ad-hoc, typically on the margins of relevant events.
- Working groups are formed to advance specific topics, and outputs from these groups are endorsed by the wider group.
- Members seek to have appropriate technical- or policy-level participation, and to maintain consistency in representation. Flexibility and collegiality are paramount.
- At the end of every calendar year, the group will assess its experience to date, evaluate its value added, and determine any next steps.
- DCF membership is contingent on signing up to the principles in the joint donor statement on humanitarian cash transfers.

### How to join

If you are a donor cash focal point who has signed or is interested in signing the Joint Donor Statement on Humanitarian Cash Transfers, please get in touch with the co-chairs using the contact details below.

## Co-chair contacts

- John Lamm, USAID Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance, [jlamm@usaid.gov](mailto:jlamm@usaid.gov)
- Laura Meissner, USAID Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (Univ. of Arizona), [lmeissner@usaid.gov](mailto:lmeissner@usaid.gov)
- Ellen Lee, U.S. State Department, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, [LeeEK3@state.gov](mailto:LeeEK3@state.gov)

## CashCap technical support

In 2023, the DCF is supported by an independent team of technical experts engaged through [CashCap/NORCAP](#).

As an independent collaboration [the Zebs](#) use their own expertise (and engage others where needed) to provide strategic, technical and administrative support to DCF members.



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*“Achieving the DCF outcomes requires engaging with the DCF as an entity (particularly the co-chairs), but more than this, it requires engaging with individual DCF representatives and their institutions, to fulfil the JDS commitments, particularly at country level.”*

DCF member commenting on the importance of the Zebs