

Guidance

MULTIPURPOSE (MPC) SECTION AND CASH AND VOUCHER ASSISTANCE (CVA) OVERVIEW IN HUMANITARIAN NEEDS AND RESPONSE PLANS (HNRPs)

IASC Cash Advisory Group

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Endorsed by IASC OPAG

- 1. Background** Since the optional *consolidated overview on the use of multipurpose cash (MPC)* was introduced in Humanitarian Planning Cycle (HPC) *facilitation package* in 2019, its use in HNRPs has been ad-hoc. After consulting key stakeholders¹ in 2024, the [global Cash Advisory Group \(CAG\)](#) developed this guidance on a *MPC Section and CVA Overview*. This section replaces the previous designated section and focuses explicitly on reflecting MPC in HNRPs, as part of a broader overview of the use of CVA in the wider response.
- 2. Purpose:** This guidance supersedes those previously existing² to reflect the coherent use of CVA, including MPC, in IASC contexts³. It describes the minimum standards to plan, report and monitor MPC and reflect sector specific CVA to minimize potential duplications in an HNRP. The document assumes reader familiarity with basic cash transfers concepts and refers to existing definitions and resources in the footnotes and annexes. This is a living document that will be adjusted⁴ based on the application of this guidance.
- 3. Introduction:** Cash and voucher assistance (CVA) is an effective people-centred modality that provides choice and restores agency to affected populations. CVA⁵, including MPC⁶, must be considered at the early stage of any response, and ideally prior to the start of the HNRP process. MPC is a *basic need*⁷ intervention, a multi-sectoral tool and a dignified assistance approach. It is one of the few types of aid that helps meet multiple needs of people in crisis and that enables actors to work collectively across the response. MPC is an intentionally defined and carefully designed 'package' of unrestricted and unconditional cash assistance aimed at addressing an individual or a household's basic or recovery needs⁸, whereas sector CVA is conditional/unconditional and restricted/unrestricted cash assistance used to achieve a single sector specific objective and outcome. Hence MPC planning, reporting, and monitoring requires heightened coordination and collaboration with relevant clusters⁹. This is an integral part of the HPC cycle and should be considered throughout the planning with the Inter-Cluster Coordination Group (ICCG). Cash Working Group (CWG) co-chairs are responsible¹⁰ for developing the *MPC Section and CVA Overview in the HNRP*. Where MPC is delivered, CWGs are expected to develop an MPC target and budget (see details below) by compiling the information, addressing any potential risks of duplication, and sharing the figures with the ICCG for agreement. In cases where the ICCG is unable to agree on those, the

¹ Independent consultations with stakeholders including clusters, donors and CWGs took place in Q1 2024 for this guidance.

² <https://kmp.hpc.tools/2023/06/05/hrp-annotated-template/> and <https://www.calpnetwork.org/publication/ocha-internal-guidance-cash-in-hrps/>

³ This guidance is only for HNRPs in IASC settings and do not include refugee contexts or their response plans. Refugee chapters in HNRPs follow the Joint UNHCR-OCHA Note on Mixed Situations, and associated RCM/RRP guidance. CVA including MPC for refugees should be included in accordance with this guidance".

⁴ The CAG will conduct an annual review of this guidance as required.

⁵ CVA is a broad term that refers to the provision of cash transfers and/or vouchers for goods or services [Glossary of Terms - The CALP Network](#).

⁶ MPC comprises cash transfers (periodic or one-off) equivalent to the amount of money required to cover (fully or partially) a household's basic and/ or recovery needs that can be monetized and purchased (CALP).

⁷ The concept of basic or essential needs refers to the essential goods, utilities, services, and/or resources required on a regular or seasonal basis by households to ensure their long-term survival and minimum living standards, without resorting to negative coping mechanisms or compromising their health, dignity, and essential livelihood assets.(See full definition here [Glossary of Terms - The CALP Network](#)).

⁸ These needs usually include more than one sector and may cover items not formally part of a sector, such as e.g. debt repayment, among others. MPC to meet basic needs for individuals can be complemented by sectoral cash to meet an individual's protection, health or other sectoral needs.

⁹ With all clusters that may form part of a Minimum or Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (S/MEB), in particular food security given the frequent and/ or proportional use of MPC on food as an essential need. Guidance on developing an MEB or SMEB can be found in [Calculating the Minimum Expenditure Basket \(MEB\): A guide to Best Practice \(2022\)](#). The coordination and collaboration with clusters can also identify opportunities for complementary sectoral CVA and other activities in support of MPC.

¹⁰ See Annex 2 – Roles and Responsibilities.

Humanitarian Country Team (HCT)¹¹ should discuss and decide on the way forward. Where the HCT is unable to reach agreement, the HC should take a final decision.

4. **The MPC section and CVA Overview:** The *MPC section and CVA overview* is fundamental, when CVA, including MPC, is a feasible response option. When CVA is not feasible, this section can be used to explain the challenges¹² and to outline preparedness activities to support a transition to CVA and/ or MPC¹³. The *MPC section and CVA Overview* should provide a summary of a) MPC activities, including a target and budget to enhance reporting, ensure accountability and facilitate the scale-up of MPC and a b) summary of sectoral CVA per cluster. The *MPC section and CVA Overview* target and budget should include the MPC target and budget only. This excludes any costs related to CWG resourcing. Details of sector CVA targets and budgets should also not be included in this *Overview*, but respective cluster chapters are encouraged to include an overview of activities planned by transfer modalities and reflect MPC plans, including how MPC contributes to relevant sector objectives. The details of the section are included in *Annex 1 – Template*. The narrative should outline the context in which CVA, including MPC, is being delivered, including, but not limited to enabling and inhibiting factors, assistance modality, delivery mechanism preferences, feasibility assessments¹⁴, and use of sector CVA. It should describe the complementarities between MPC and other sector responses and explain how unintended duplications will be reduced and avoided. It should define cash coordination arrangements and, where relevant, outline links with national social protection systems.
 - **Generating an MPC target** – An MPC target should be based on inter-sectoral and sectoral analysis in coordination with clusters. MPC interventions should have a target figure. There is no requirement for a separate people in need (PiN) estimate for MPC¹⁵. The MPC target is different from the programmatic MPC targeting methodology¹⁶ and should reflect a sum of all planned MPC, in agreement with relevant clusters and the ICCG. Since MPC supports elements of the sectors' specific objectives¹⁷, relevant clusters are encouraged to refer to the MPC target in their chapters; however, clusters should avoid adding that target to their respective sector's target (and budget) figures to reduce risks of duplication.
 - **Preparing an MPC budget** – The total MPC financial requirement should be calculated by multiplying the total MPC target, MPC transfer value¹⁸ (TV), the expected MPC frequency and the planned duration of assistance. The transfer value, frequency and duration of MPC in the HNRP should be developed in coordination with relevant clusters and CWG members and agreed in the ICCG. The total MPC budget should include any variation of TVs that consider different

¹¹ Since the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) endorses overall HNRP figures.

¹² Reasons can include government restrictions, currency devaluation, sudden onset or limited CWG capacity and resources.

¹³ This guidance encourages early planning and designing of CVA and MPC activities, including in emergency preparedness. Programmatic support on this can be found on the [Operational Guidance and Toolkit for Multipurpose Cash Grants \(2015\)](#).

¹⁴ It is recommended that CVA feasibility should also be highlighted as part of the overall response analysis on top of being featured in the *MPC section and CVA Overview*. This will ensure CVA is streamlined across the HNRP.

¹⁵ HNRP PiN calculations are important to advocate for the overall need and vulnerability in a context and serve as the basis for establishing the PT figure through response analysis. The HNRP PiN is based on cluster figures. PiN developed by the various clusters/sectors also includes those people whose needs could be addressed with MPC. In some contexts, the HCT may expressly request a separate MPC PiN which should be discussed and agreed on a context-by-context basis.

¹⁶ Programmatic MPC targeting methodology and prioritization approaches are developed in close coordination between the relevant clusters/sectors included in the MEB, the CWG members and the ICCG to avoid overlaps and duplications. Programmatic guidance on this can be found in the [Operational Guidance and Toolkit for Multipurpose Cash Grants \(2015\)](#).

¹⁷ Particularly food (which is the assistance most inter-changeable with MPC than other sector's) and shelter to name a few.

¹⁸ Transfer value (TV) is the amount (usually a currency value) provided directly to a recipient and are calculated based on the intervention's objectives, often using tools such as a Minimum Expenditure Baskets (MEB) and gap analysis. Programmatic support to develop MPC TV and MEB can be found on the [Operational Guidance and Toolkit for Multipurpose Cash Grants \(2015\)](#) and in the [Calculating the Minimum Expenditure Basket \(MEB\): A guide to Best Practice \(2022\)](#).

geographical locations¹⁹ or population groups²⁰. As with the MPC target, the MPC financial requirement will be total cost of the MPC interventions. This will be calculated by developing the sum of the budgets or activities of MPC interventions submitted by partners in addition to any other costs²¹. The MPC budget reflected in this section will be included in the overall HNRP funding requirement.

- **Using the MPC Section and CVA Overview to enhance operational coordination and avoid duplication between MPC and sector-specific CVA** – Developing the *MPC Section and CVA Overview* among CWGs, clusters and ICCG strengthens collaboration and coordination at national and/or sub-national levels. This includes ensuring de- duplication approaches and defining platforms for MPC and sector specific CVA in an HNRP²².
5. **Reporting and monitoring** - Data on people assisted and amounts delivered with MPC should be reported to the CWG, while sectoral CVA should be reported to respective clusters. The CWG should agree with MPC partners and clusters²³ on the data fields to be collected for reporting. The CWG should share information on MPC planning and reporting with clusters and can provide analysis on CVA and develop relevant infographics²⁴. When MPC is reported, clusters and CWG should cross-check figures to avoid double counting. The CWG should agree with relevant implementing actors and clusters on minimum indicators to be collected for MPC, which can include:
- # of households that received MPC,
 - amount of MPC delivered,
 - # of households reporting accessing basic needs after receiving MPC.

Sector-specific and inter-sectoral **MPC monitoring indicators**²⁵ are key to measuring MPC outcomes, outputs, and its impact on sector objectives. MPC monitoring is done at organizational level using harmonized MPC post-distribution monitoring forms and should be agreed by the CWG and clusters. The CWG should analyse MPC monitoring, whereas clusters should analyse sector CVA. Monitoring analysis should be shared among the CWG, clusters and ICCG to enhance understanding of the impact of MPC on sector objectives.

¹⁹ To reflect diverging cost and/ or prices at sub-national level for example.

²⁰ Refugees would either be included in a refugee chapter of the HNRP and/ or in the UNHCR refugee response plan.

²¹ Costing will be developed in line with the agreed country costing approach and should include all costs related to the delivery of MPC interventions.

²² This includes creating an MEB, agreeing on targeting methodology, engaging and communicating with communities, targeting population groups, identifying geographic areas and determining referral pathways, among other elements.

²³ For example through an Information Management Working Group (IMWG).

²⁴ See attached excel spreadsheet for guidance on developing the infographics for this section.

²⁵ This guidance encourages agencies delivering MPC to consider using increased monitoring indicators to monitor impact.

ANNEX 1 – Template for Multipurpose Cash Section and Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) Overview

1. **Context** - background to CVA in country, enabling and inhibiting factors, CVA feasibility analysis, people's preferences and/ or spending patterns, government CVA policy, benefits, and risks as relevant to the response.
2. **Multipurpose cash (MPC)** - to be adapted to context.
 - Rationale, purpose, and objective: e.g., to meet basic needs.
 - Targeting methodology or eligibility criteria: e.g., groups of people targeted and/or eligible for MPC.
 - Geographical coverage: e.g., country locations prioritized and justification.
 - Survival/ Minimum Expenditure Basket (S/MEB) Calculations: see table.
 - Transfer value (TV): e.g., amounts aligned with social benefits, wages rates, etc.
 - Frequency: e.g., provided once/ twice a month or once every X month.
 - Duration: e.g., delivery for a maximum of up to X months.
 - Referral pathways: e.g., to clusters/ sector CVA, any other type of sectoral assistance (irrespective of modality and/ or outside of HNRP) and/ or government systems.
 - People targeted: e.g., number of people to receive MPC.
 - Cost: overall budget.

Table 1 (Optional): MPC S/MEB and TV (to be adapted to context): HNRPs may choose to reflect this information in an infographic or a table to demonstrate how the TV was arrived at, or to provide more detail on the elements making up the MEB. This should reference that the S/MEB could be revised at any time during the year. References can be made to the respective CWG's dashboard (if link is available) for more real-time information.

Needs	e.g., Food	e.g., Utilities/ NFIs	e.g., Shelter (Rent)	e.g., Health	e.g., Education	e.g., Transport	e.g., Communications/ Other	Total
S/MEB (USD)								
TV amounts (USD)								
- Individual								
- HH up to X members								

3. **CVA Overview** - X USD is planned to be delivered as CVA or MPC to X number of people in 20XX. Include here an overview of the objectives and activities e.g., of clusters delivering sector CVA to meet sector objectives or one-off assistance and of MPC to meet basic needs. See attached/ annexed excel guidance for more information on ways to visualize data and develop the possible CVA overview infographics. These infographics will serve to outline how CVA (including MPC) will be used in the response. **NB: The table below is for demonstration purposes only (to outline the type of information required) and will not appear in the document as a table but rather as an infographic. An excel spreadsheet will be attached to and accompany the guidance to support the development of this infographic.**

It is strongly encouraged that these infographics in the MPC section and CVA Overview are complemented with a breakdown of sector planned activities by transfer modality in individual cluster chapters, including sector CVA and MPC targets and budgets, to clearly demonstrate sector activities using CVA.

CVA components	Multipurpose Cash Assistance (MPCA)	Sectoral CVA: Cluster
CVA Modality		
CVA Conditionality		
Target Criteria		
Type of Assistance		
Geographical Area		
Transfer Value		
Frequency of assistance		
Delivery mechanism		
Target (total number of people e.g. individuals or households)		
Average household size (if relevant)		
Budget US\$		
Total number of individuals		

4. Complementarity and de-duplication approaches between MPC and other CVA

- a. Describe elements of complementarity.
- b. Explain how unintended duplications will be avoided, platforms used etc.
- c. Justify if and why intentional overlaps are foreseen.

5. Monitoring indicators

- a. Outline selected sector and inter-sector HNRP specific indicators for MPC to be monitored and reported on. The most common examples of those are:
 - ❖ # of HH receiving MPC
 - ❖ # of HH reporting that MPC helped them in accessing basic needs
 - ❖ amount of MPC delivered.
- b. This guidance encourages CWGs and MPC delivering agencies to use additional indicators for monitoring outside of the HNRP to better measure MPC impact. These can include process/output sample indicators (e.g., adequate amounts of MPC received, timeliness of MPC received etc) and outcome inter-sector and sectoral sample indicators (e.g., reduced negative coping strategies, increased food consumption score, etc).

6. Links with Social Protection systems - describe how, in what ways and what elements MPC is aligned with national social protection systems and/ or support shock responsiveness.

7. Cash coordination arrangements - outline existing cash coordination approach in country, how information is collected and coordinated with clusters, how MPC is harmonized among delivery actors, how local actors are included, etc. References and links can be included to the CWG TOR, workplan, dashboard, products etc.

ANNEX 2 – Roles and Responsibilities

During the HNRP process, in addition to the existing [TOR](#), CWG co-chairs should:

- develop the *MPC section and CVA overview* in coordination with CWG members, clusters and MPC delivery actors through the ICCG.
- be integral members of the HNRP involved from an early stage as advisers and convenors on the use of sector CVA and MPC, through the ICCG, throughout the planning process cycle.
- advocate for gaps in funding and resources for the CWG, particularly around information management.
- enhance the capacity around CVA (including MPC) as needed.
- coordinate with cluster coordinators on sector specific CVA and MPC design to avoid duplications and to find complementarities in people targeted assistance overlaps. And collaborate on CVA and MPC delivery data, conduct joint assessments, analysis, and monitoring.
- strengthen partnerships between CWGs and clusters to enhance understanding, monitoring, and reporting of the direct impact of MPC on sectoral outcomes and objectives.
- strengthen the role of the CWG in feasibility decision making, supporting inter-sectoral HNRP response analysis for MPC interventions.

Best practice shows that when CWG co-chairs are involved and brought into the HNRP planning process early on with clusters, through the ICCG, there is enhanced consideration, planning and monitoring of MPC. This helps to seamlessly integrate CVA and MPC and prioritize people's needs first in the response plan. When a common HNRP approach and comprehensive response objective is developed by ICCG and HCT members, that is based on inter-sector needs and response analysis adapted to the context²⁶, good programming considerations are enabled and scale-up of MPC and other CVA modalities are facilitated.

²⁶ Taking into account e.g. national and local government response and/ or existing social benefits etc.

ANNEX 3 – Country Examples

Mali: Defining an MPC target was a consensual activity led by the CWG with the support of the ICCG. The CWG was involved early in the 2024 HRP planning process and held sessions with clusters in the ICCG to (1) determine whether MPC was a feasible/ desirable approach, (2) request for inputs around cluster's plans to deliver MPC and (3) discuss reporting and monitoring mechanisms. The CWG set MPC targets based on cluster's individual MPC target estimates for the HRP. Then, the ICCG IMO removed these targets from the cluster specific chapters and placed them under the *MPC section*. To avoid duplication, each cluster set their own targets dedicated to MPC and removed them from the targets in cluster chapters with support from OCHA/ IM/ HRP focal point. The ICCG platform was essential to build consensus and buy-in from clusters on MPC in the HRP.

Afghanistan: The *MPC section* was developed through a consultative process between CWG, ICCG and clusters. It was based on the consolidation of CWG partner's planned MPC activities. Afghanistan HNRP 2024 did not have an MPC budget and target. However, at least 2% (roughly 42,240 households or 295,680 individuals with just under \$16 million) of the projected CVA response in the country was estimated to be delivered through MPC, based on partner's plans. Since the actual MPC target may likely be higher than plan target, because MPC is delivered in response to onset crises only, there is a need to establish clearer baseline targets for MPC response. The challenge is that, partners have more clarity on planned sectoral CVA, e.g. cash for food (since the HNRP PiN is derived from the [Integrated Food Security Phase Classification IPC 3](#) and IPC 4 population), and less clarity on MPC plans. Since MPC is crisis-dependent, but there is no clearly agreed upon trigger mechanism for when MPC is disbursed in Afghanistan yet, the CWG could aim to support and help to determine which criteria and contexts would necessitate the delivery of MPC in country.

Yemen: Engagement and collaboration between CMWG, MPC delivery actors and clusters occur through the *Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM)* cluster. There are two established pathways for MPC: a rapid pathway tied to recent displacement (*Emergency MPC*) and a regular pathway for those affected by the protracted crisis in country (*Regular MPC*). For the HRP, conversations happened within the CMWG at the early stages of the planning cycle. To establish the MPC target, the *RRRM* cluster conducted needs assessments to come up with its PiN for the year. From this PiN, the target for MPC one-off was calculated. The costing methodology was agreed with the CMWG to ensure harmonization. The lesson learned was that CVA and MPC conversations should happen as early as possible in the HNRP process (before developing the actual plan) to agree on programmatic elements, explore areas of collaboration and ensure collaboration in advance. Clusters are more inclined to deliver sector CVA than MPC, because the impact of MPC on sector outcomes may be less clear.

Syria: In 2024, the Syria HNRP targeting identification and PiN calculation were based on previous year's figures and numbers due to a lack of clearly defined Multi-Sector Needs Assessment/ Analysis (MSNA). Therefore, MPC targets were based on last year's numbers and percentage comparison from the Northeast and North West regions due to the different geographical considerations within the context of the Syria operation in the last 2 years. However, the unavailability of a holistic and multi sectoral needs assessment is a key challenge and hindrance to MPC targets. The lesson learned and best practice would be to have an MSNA so that MPC targets can be based on its results.

ANNEX 4 – Definitions

- [Cash and Voucher Assistance \(CVA\)](#)
- [Multipurpose Cash Assistance \(MPC/MPCA\)](#)
- [Sector-Specific Cash Interventions](#)
 - [Conditionality](#)
 - [Restriction](#)
- [Social Protection](#)

ANNEX 5 – Resources

- [CALP Glossary, CASH101](#)
- [Grand Bargain MPC Outcome Indicators guidance](#)
- [IASC/ CAG New Cash Coordination Model, CWG TOR, CWG Co-Chair TOR](#)
- [Operational Guidance and Toolkit for Multi-Purpose Cash \(2015\)](#)
- [Calculating the Minimum Expenditure Basket \(MEB\): A guide to Best Practice \(2022\)](#)
- [CCD tools: CCD Data Interoperability, CCD Stack Model;](#)
<https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/document/multipurpose-cash-assistance-mpca-monitoring-evaluation-accountability-and-learning-meal-toolkit/>
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- [Cluster Guidance on MPC:](#)
 - [Global Food Security Cluster](#)
 - [Global Shelter Cluster](#)
 - [Global Protection Cluster](#)
 - ❖ [Protection cluster \(Stock taking\)](#)
 - ❖ [Child Protection AoR](#)
 - ❖ [Mine Action AoR](#)
- [Global WASH](#)
 - [CALP State of the World's Cash Report 2024](#)
- [CALP MPC Webpage](#)
 - [CALP Cash Coordination Tipsheet](#)
 - [CALP MEB Decision making tools](#)
 - [CALP Supporting the Linkages between Humanitarian Cash and Voucher Assistance and National Social Protection Systems](#)
 - [WFP VAM, Essential Needs Assessment Guidance](#)
 - [WFP VAM, Minimum Expenditure Baskets Guidance](#)
 - [WFP Cash Policy 2023](#)
 - [UNHCR and WFP Joint Analytical Framework \(JAF\) 2023](#)
 - [UNHCR Basic Needs Approach in the Refugee Response](#)
 - [UNHCR Multi-Purpose Cash and Sectoral Outcomes: A Review of Evidence and Learning \(2018\)](#)
 - [UNHCR CBI and MPC guidance](#)
 - [Donor MPC guidance:](#)
 - [BHA](#)
 - ❖ [MPC and CVA indicators](#)
 - ❖ [Modality Decision Tool for Humanitarian Assistance](#)
 - ❖ [Sector Requirements](#)
 - [ECHO Cash Policy](#)