



Research to Identify the Optimal Operational Set-up for Multi-Actor Provision
of Unconditional Cash Grants to Syrian Refugees in Lebanon.

Final Report and Recommendation

Date of Submission: 29th April 2014

Version 1.3

Table of Contents	page
<i>Contents</i>	(i)
<i>List of Tables</i>	(ii)
<i>List of Appendices</i>	(ii)
 INTRODUCTION	 1
 1. THE SCOPE AND USE OF UNCONDITIONAL CASH GRANTS	 2
1.1 Planned Needs and Assistance	2
1.2 The Role of Unconditional Cash Grants	3
1.3 Likely Utilisation of Unconditional Cash Grants	3
 2. THE CURRENT OPERATIONAL SET-UP	 4
2.1 Description of the Current Operational Set-up	4
2.2 Projected CTP Initiatives	4
 3. CRITICAL AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT	 5
3.1 Strengths, Constraints and Risks of the Current Operational Set-up	5
3.2 Analysis of Critical Areas	6
 4. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OPTIMISING THE OPERATIONAL SET-UP	 7
4.1 Recommendations	7
 5. ACTIONS TO IMPLEMENT THE RECOMMENDED OPERATIONAL SET-UP	 12
5.1 Short and Medium Term Actions	12
5.2 Management of Activities to Complete Actions	14

List of Tables and Appendices

TABLES	page
1. Table 1 - Caseload of People of Concern	2
2. Table 2 - Position of Unconditional Cash Transfers in the MEB	3
3. Table 3 - Projected CTP in 2014	4
4. Table 4 - Analysis of the Current Operational Set Up	5
5. Table 5 - Analysis of the Critical Areas	7
6. Table 6 - Short and Medium Term Action Plan	13

List of Appendices

1. Appendix 1 – Study Methodology
2. Appendix 2 – Description of the Current Operational Set-up
3. Appendix 3 – Analysis of the Current Operational Set-up
4. Appendix 4 – Analysis of Critical Areas in the Operational Set-up
5. Appendix 5 – Outline Approach for Using a Cash Competency Framework

INTRODUCTION

This report contains the findings and recommendations from a 30 day research project commissioned by the cash working group (CWG) based in Lebanon, and more specifically the team tasked with the operational set-up¹. The Avenir research project team was engaged to identify the optimal operational set-up for multi-actor provision of unconditional cash grants to Syrian refugees in Lebanon.

The aim of the project is to produce practical, operational recommendations for future adjustments and actions that can be used by agencies who will be involved in cash transfer programming (CTP) for unconditional cash assistance². Operational set-up in this case has been defined as “the management, financial, administrative, data management and data interaction processes, standard operating procedures and the necessary support systems to run a CTP.”³

It should be noted at this point that the situation in Lebanon and response initiatives are constantly evolving. The cut of date for research information used in the report was the 15th April 2014.

In essence the report is a focused summary of research information, findings and analysis that answer the five main research questions agreed with the operational set-up task team. The detailed information that supports these findings and recommendations is contained in the following five sections.

The first of these sections looks at the likely scope and use of unconditional cash grants in Lebanon in the future. In section two the operational set-up currently in place to deliver the projected CTP is described, and the quality, and risks are highlighted.

Analysis of the findings from section two are presented as the key areas for improvement in section three. The results of further scrutiny to establish which of the areas is possible to change, the likely effort required and impact of any possible changes are also presented.

Section four provides a model of the recommended optimised operational set up. This includes a description of the likely benefits, risks and resource requirements.

Finally section five is a set of recommendations for what actions should be taken in the short and medium term to develop the recommended set-up. It also includes a suggested method for managing the development activities.

The report is supplemented by a number of appendices that provide more in depth supporting information. The first of these, *Appendix 1*, outlines the methodology used for the study.

¹ The CWG has established 6 multi-agency task teams to focus on key initiatives for CTP. The operational task team consists of members from WVI, UNHCR, SCI and ECHO.

² The DfID definition for unconditional grants has been used for this study. That is ‘an unconditional cash grant is defined as cash given to beneficiaries or households without the recipient having to do anything in return. They can be provided to meet immediate needs and/or build assets to protect themselves and increase resilience against future shocks and stresses’

³ As described in the CWG TOR - *Operational Set-up, 2014-02-28 [Draft 2]*.

THE SCOPE AND USE OF UNCONDITIONAL CASH GRANTS

This section shows the projected use and size of unconditional cash grants in the Lebanon response. The outputs are used to guide the design of the recommended operational set-up, ensuring the delivery mechanism is aligned to the context, and investment levels for any change are appropriate for the scale of intervention.

1.1 Planned Needs and Assistance

Table 1 provides a snapshot of the planned caseloads of people of concern (PoC) as at March 2014⁴

Regional Response Plan Number 6 (RRP6) sector updates indicate there is a total number of 220,000 refugee households. This number includes both registered and those awaiting registration. WFP is assisting 700,000 individuals, which is roughly, 140,000 households and 70% of the registered refugee population.

Table 1: Caseload of People of Concern.

Category	Households	MEB Monthly (\$)
<i>Vulnerability</i>		
Registered	220,000	
Low	82,000	600
Mild	35,000	600
Moderate	70,000	600
Severe	35,000	600
Unregistered	22,000	
Low	7,700	600
Mild to Severe	14,300	600
Newcomers (month)	10,000	
All Categories	10,000	600

It is estimated that 25% of the households have severe vulnerability, 50% have moderate vulnerability and the last 25% of the 140,000 households are mildly vulnerable⁵.

There are no official numbers of unregistered refugees. Key informants indicate that this may be up to 10% of the population, around 22,000 households. It is estimated that 65% of that number (14,300) require some form of assistance⁶.

Data available for newcomers indicates new registrations of 50,000 individuals (10,000 households) a month and is estimated to continue at this rate.

The estimated population that needs some form of assistance each month is some 164,300 households.

The assistance required has been identified by the CWG task team set up to identify the minimum expenditure basket (MEB). This is set at 600 USD⁷ per month and includes food to meet 2,100 KCAL/day and nutrients needed⁸, household items, rent, water supply and an allowance for communication, transport and clothes. Over 50% of the MEB is allocated to food and shelter. The MEB calculation excludes debt repayment, protection, legal costs, and one off 'critical events'.

⁴ Information was collected through available registration data from UNHCR, key informant interviews and validated by the cash working group core group presentation of 8th April.

⁵ Numbers are from the calculated 'burden index' in use by the whole operation. Please note though that these categories are not used by WFP; they are still assisting 70% of the indicated population in the table using their own classification to meet food security objectives.

⁶ Information on percentage needing assistance is taken from the CWG proposal on working with unregistered refugees.

⁷ The exact figure is 608 USD. It has been rounded to 600 USD throughout this paper for ease of reading.

⁸ This is above the current WFP assistance as it includes the nutrients needed.

1.2 The Role of Unconditional Cash Grants

The table below is a consolidation of the PoC to be assisted, MEB required and the planned assistance by input⁹.

Table 2: Position of Unconditional Cash Transfers in the MEB.

Category	Households	MEB Monthly (\$)	MEB Monthly Planned Coverage (\$)					Monthly Deficit (\$)
			Health Wash / Education	Food	NFI	Fungible Inputs	Total Covered	
Vulnerability								
Registered	220,000							
Low	82,000	600	0	0	0	0	0	600
Mild	35,000	600	90	150	32	0	272	328
Moderate	70,000	600	90	150	32	150	422	178
Severe	35,000	600	90	150	32	250	522	78
Unregistered	22,000							
Low	7,700	600	0	0	0	0	0	600
Mild to Severe	14,300	600	0	120	0	0	120	480
Newcomers (month)	10,000							
All Categories	10,000	600	0	105	215	0	320	280

UCT as a delivery mechanism has a major role in delivery of assistance. The main UCT assistance inputs considered in this study are the fungible inputs. It is noted that NFI¹⁰, health and other inputs may be monetized and distributed as cash or vouchers in some cases, and that WFP distribute food assistance using an e-voucher scheme.

1.3 Likely Utilisation of Unconditional Cash Grants

The CWG advocates for transfers of 250 USD/month to severely vulnerable populations and 150 USD/month to moderately affected households¹¹. Additionally, the task team within the CWG is advocating for 120 USD for unregistered households for food as cash support¹². Newcomers are currently not being supported with cash transfers¹³.

As evidenced by the right most column and the amounts in red, even with assistance planned, households will still have a deficit to bridge in order to meet MEB requirements.

⁹ Figures are from the MEB task team, presented to the CWG on 4th April 2014.

¹⁰ Please note that NFIs will no longer be covered starting July. This means the deficit each household is required to cover will increase with 32 USD.

¹¹ This is the proposed number by the CWG and used here indicatively. It is noted and understood that discussions are ongoing with MoSA and UNHCR for clarity on agreed UCT amounts and the final assistance will rely in Government agreements and donor funding capacity.

¹² This is a proposed number by the CWG and used here indicatively. It is noted and understood that discussions are ongoing on what support to unregistered will look like. These figures of proposed coverage are correct as of April 15 2014, the end of the data collection period. The end result will remain the same regardless of what assistance looks like: the MEB that needs to be covered for any category is 600 USD/per month/HH.

¹³ The newcomers WG, as part of the NFI WG, currently provides an in-kind assistance package to newcomers including a food parcel from WFP. ECHO was supporting newcomers with a one off grant for winter.

2. THE CURRENT OPERATIONAL SET-UP

This section first looks at the kinds of CTP being delivered and the set-up, as countrywide system. The information is based on current interventions and captures CTP type, scale, actors involved and the delivery mechanisms. The output is an overview of what can be critically analysed to identify areas for improvement.

2.1 Description of the Current Operational Set-up

There are currently four main operational mechanisms used to deliver CTP. These are:

1. UNHCR programmes using implementing partners to deliver monetised inputs to registered refugees.
2. WFP programmes using implementing partners to deliver food assistance to registered refugees using conditional cash.
3. NGO programmes delivering ad hoc cash inputs for registered refugees (including excluded but registered).
4. NGO programmes delivering ad hoc cash inputs for unregistered refugees and host communities.

Appendix 2 provides a summarized snapshot of each mechanism, specifying the main components.

2.2 Projected CTP Initiatives

The table below provides an overview of the current **projected** CTP in Lebanon.¹⁴

Table 3: Projected CTP in 2014¹⁵.

Projected (refugees group)	UNHCR (registered)	WFP (registered)	NGO's (registered)	NGO's (un-registered)
Overview	UCT plus NFI, CSC cards, 9 IPs	Cash for food, BLF e-cards, 6 IPs	Support to living costs, differing modalities, discrete projects	Support to living costs, differing modalities, discrete projects
Target (\$ - 6 months)	up to 75,000 HH (\$83 million)	up to 140,000 HH (\$126 million)	apx 30,000 HH (\$32 million)	apx 14,300 HH (\$10.3 million)
Main Donors	EU, USA, UK, Japan, Canada, Saudi Arabia, Germany	EU, USA, UK, Japan, Canada, Saudi Arabia, Germany	Canada, EU, Sweden, UK, USA	Canada, EU, Germany, UK
Actors in Beirut & Mount Lebanon	ACTED, MAKHZOUMI	PU-AMI	AMURT, CARE, CARITAS, SIF	IOM, CARE
Actors in North Lebanon	DRC	SCI, DRC	CARITAS, DRC, HI, IRC, NRC, Oxfam, PCPM, SCI	IOM, IRC, NRC, Oxfam, PCPM, SCI
Actors in Bekaa	DRC, WVI, SCI	DRC, WVI, INTEROS	CARITAS, HI, NRC, Oxfam, SCI	IOM, Mercy Corps, SCI
Actors in South Lebanon	SHIELD, CARITAS, CISP, Solidar Suisse	ACF	ACF, CARITAS, WVI	CARITAS

¹⁴ 90% of NGO's working in these areas have been identified. We are awaiting feedback on the final list.

¹⁵ This is a 6 month projection from June-Nov 2014.

It is important to understand where the scale will be for CTP initiatives as any set up needs to take investment levels into account. Based on the projection of CTP, it is clear that the WFP cash for food project has the largest scale, followed by the unconditional cash transfer programme led by UNHCR.

3. CRITICAL AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

This section looks at how the current CTP operational set-up works as a system and identifies areas of strengths, constraints and risks. It then provides an analysis of these areas to identify the levels of constraint in the current system, the level of effort required to make changes and the impact of the changes. The output is used to inform the recommendations for optimizing the operational set-up.

3.1 Strengths, Constraints and Risks of the Current Operational Set-up

The operational set up has been analysed, as a system, using seven categories: programme design, targeting, delivery mechanism, implementation, monitoring, communication and data management. These are studied to identify strengths, constraints and identifiable risks. A summary is shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Analysis of the Current Operational Set Up.

CTP Element	Strength	Constraint	Risk	Implication
Programme Design	CTP is designated for a purpose and is based on objectives.	Different objectives for CTP. Different populations being reached through multiple and overlapping actors with varying standards on what is quality programming.	Multiple programmes increase risk of duplication for both resources and target population. No method of overseeing or making decisions on programme quality.	Less impact of available resources. Limited accountability on programme. Inefficient system will not encourage additional funding.
Targeting	proGres is in place and has base functionality.	No endorsed targeting approach that can be used as a basis for equal programming or to adequately address whose needs and which ones need to be met.	Duplication or gaps in response. Not cost efficient as multiple rounds of verification take place.	Duplication and waste of resources. PoC needs remain unmet. Lack of transparency and therefore trust of affected population as criteria cannot be explained or justified appropriately.
Delivery Mechanism	Strong financial systems for secure e-transfers.	Though the delivery mechanism is strong, there is little coordination between the financial institutions and agencies. ATM's run out of cash.	Multiple cards for primarily the same function creates duplication. No good solution as yet for inaccessible places.	Waste of resources. Failing to meet mandate of protection of PoC.
Implementation	Distribution of cards and pins (and other mechanisms) and use of cards has occurred with a less than 10% margin error.	The mix of actors for distribution and implementation is an issue as it leads to mixed communication and wasted resources.	Limited coordination with card providers leads to inefficient implementation and creates confusion for partners and PoC.	Wasted resources in an environment of limited funding. View of CTP as chaotic, and unorganized which can limit willingness to fund it.

Table 4: Analysis of the Current Operational Set up – continued.

CTP Element	Strength	Constraint	Risk	Implication
Monitoring	ODK as a tool for monitoring is strong and is being used. PDM has been carried out.	Limited joint monitoring or standards on monitoring means lack of information to improve programs or to measure impact over the whole operation.	Limited quality monitoring. Time is spent on data collection with data not used effectively.	Programme quality is compromised. Failure to meet protection objectives.
Communication	Free SMS platform exists and is used for communications. Hotlines have been set up.	Two-way communication is a critical issue as there is currently no standard and agreed plan or strategy on how to roll this out.	Over reliance on SMS for outward communication. No real exploration on other methods. Confusion on how to communicate programmes or to feedback.	Aid effort is undermined through negative image seen of aid effort and agencies.
Data Management	WFP has a strong data management system that is systematic and secure (FTP used for transfer of data). Wide spread recognition for the need for better data management system for other agencies.	Limited standards set or followed on data flows, protection or privacy.	Multiple data flows that are disconnected to each other and all at varying quality. Lack of understanding on what needs to be done with data.	No way to measure the aid impact. Inability to meet assistance objectives.

Appendix 3 contains an explanation of the categories and the full analysis. The main constraints highlighted in this analysis are the ‘critical areas’ of the current operational set-up which have to be addressed for improvement of the system.

3.2 Analysis Of Critical Areas

Three aspects of the critical areas have been analysed to evaluate their effect on the current operating set up, and the value in addressing their underlying problem. These are (i) how problematic will it be to work with the current constraint in an optimised system, (ii) what effort of change in terms of resources and change management is likely to be required and (iii) what is the estimated impact of addressing the identified problem. The aspects are measured as follows;

- Current State – Workable (1), Problematic (2), Very difficult (3)
- Effort of Change – High (1), Medium (2), Low (3)
- Impact – Low (1), Medium (2), High (3)

These scores of each critical area are then multiplied and the critical areas ranked to show where the biggest impact of change will be and is most likely to be achieved. The information behind the scoring is provided in Appendix 4.

Table 5 below summarizes the analysis and provides an indication of the order in which the areas of concern should be tackled.

Table 5: Analysis of the Critical Areas

CTP Element	Constraint	Current State	Effort of Change	Likely Impact	Rank
Targeting	No endorsed targeting approach.	3	3	3	27
Data Management	Limited standards set or followed.	3	2	3	18
Monitoring	Limited joint monitoring or standards.	3	2	3	18
Programme Design	Different objectives for CTP.	2	2	3	12
Communication	No standard and agreed plan or strategy.	3	1	3	9
Delivery Mechanism	Coordination between agencies & financial institutions.	2	2	2	8
Implementation	The mix of actors.	2	2	2	8

4. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OPTIMISING THE OPERATIONAL SET-UP

This section proposes the recommendations for optimising the operational set-up taking into account the planned scope and use of unconditional cash, and the areas of concern. The outputs are used to identify the actions for change.

The recommendations take into account the current operational set up and pieces of ongoing work. Recommendations have been deliberately designed to be practical and feasible options that are implementable. Some of the recommendations have been discussed with the main actors in bilateral meetings in order to determine the feasibility and importantly, what actions and decisions (and by whom) would need to be taken in order for the changes to take place.

Ongoing pieces of work in the CWG that directly affect the optimization of the operational set-up for unconditional cash to registered Syrian refugees are targeting, monitoring, and communications. It is noted (and lauded) that the task teams within the CWG are coordinating across the sectoral working groups to harmonize approaches.

4.1 Recommendations

There are 7 recommendations. Each corresponds to an operational critical area. The recommendation is first outlined, then the rationale of the recommendation, the benefits, the risks and indicative resource requirements are provided.

Recommendation one — Targeting

Agencies agree to use VaSyr findings and recommendation of the Targeting Task Force on targeting criteria¹⁶. Agencies working with unregistered refugees develop a system that mirrors proGres and one that can be shared. It is recommended that this is done through the use of volunteer technology networks¹⁷. Those working with registered but excluded refugees should still use proGres number for tracking and RAIS for inputting assistance given. UNHCR becomes service provider for eligibility lists. Data sharing agreements must include data sharing both ways and a clause stipulating any assistance provided must be entered into RAIS.

Rationale: There must be agreed targeting and eligibility lists. VaSyr 2014 has been consultative and results will be out in July. A special targeting task force has been set up to ensure this problem can be solved. In order for duplication and exclusion to decrease, agencies have to start sharing data with UNHCR on a regular basis and use RAIS to input assistance. There is currently a weak tracking system and a robust system is needed to be efficient on costs and to meet humanitarian imperatives.

Benefits: Decreased duplication of lists and people being assisted. Data begins to be centralized. Creation of a plan that allows tracking and pledging of funds.

Risks: VaSyr or targeting recommendation will not be endorsed and there is no move forward to solving the targeting problem and therefore waste of limited resources and lost credibility with donors and refugees. UNHCR does not provide eligibility lists.

Resource inputs: No cost put forward. Cost savings on less of a waste of resources because of duplication or time spent verifying, cross checking, triangulating and re-verifying lists.

Recommendation two — Data management

Use WFP as a service provider with cost recovery for card management. Include specific data sharing clauses in IP agreements and any OPs who also use the system. Data sharing agreements should stipulate that agencies need to share data that can feed into RAIS in order to keep records updated. All agencies engaging in CTP hire data managers and develop internal guidelines for adherence to CaLP data privacy standards.

Rationale: WFP has a protected data transfer system that works with a card that does not need to be reconfigured. As they are meeting 70% of the population needs, there is a high likelihood that new cards will not need to be issued. UNHCR has data management systems to track and update data (proGres, RAIS, cash database). NGOs should sign agreements that will ensure the data is fed back to UNHCR. Data must be centralized with UNHCR who is the mandated agency for refugees. UNHCR will continue to provide services to refugees till there is a durable solution. Data privacy and protection are important elements in the environment of electronic transfer of information and full time data officers are needed to ensure data is treated confidentially. All actors need to comply with basic standards around data privacy (for any assistance) and agencies should have guidelines to ensure they are fit for purpose in this environment of assistance.

¹⁶ The Targeting Task Force (TTF) is to make a recommendation on targeting on 2 May.

¹⁷ Volunteer Technology networks that are suitable for this are GISCorps and GNUCoop. The Digital Humanitarian Network (DHN), is a platform from which to start discussion on project needs and they will link up agencies with relevant actors within the network to support work.

Benefits: Data transfers to third parties are secure. Appropriate structures/people in place to support data management systems. Card management structures are clear. Agencies are fit for purpose to engage in an aid environment that uses technology.

Risks: NGOs do not want to share data with UNHCR. NGOs do not want to use WFP as a service provider of cards.

Resource inputs: Hiring of data managers. Staff time on setting standards of data protection and privacy. WFP cost recovery charges for service provision.

Recommendation three — Monitoring

Simplify monitoring to three streams: Process¹⁸. Programme¹⁹. Protection. Each level of monitoring should have a responsible agency: Process monitoring to one IP in a geographical area. Programme and protection can be combined to another IP in each geographical area. Monitoring should have a clear purpose in how the data will be analyzed and used²⁰. Develop survey forms that can be used with ODK or other systems that are RAIS compliant and can be bulk uploaded automatically.

Rationale: Monitoring is being done in an ad hoc way with different requirements from everyone. The segregation in duties of monitoring are required for accountability. Clarifying what the monitoring is for, who will do it, what is the purpose and how the results will be used will simplify the process and ensure that the PDM that takes places feeds into programme improvement.

Benefits: Improved programming. Improved process. Able to measure impact. Meet mandate of protection through improved monitoring.

Risks: System is developed in isolation without taking into account all the places it needs to be feeding into. Overly complicated or overly simplistic monitoring. Monitoring is not analyzed to make improvements to programs.

Resource inputs: Agency and IP charges.

Recommendation four — Programme design

Set standards on what constitutes delivery of quality CTP programming. Decide on clear objectives for an unconditional cash transfer programme such as provision of monthly unconditional cash transfers to registered vulnerable Syrian refugees in Lebanon as a contribution to meeting MEB costs. Based on the objectives, develop a project plan with indicators for progress and quality. Decide on number of refugees to be assisted. Designate an overseeing body that is empowered to assess quality of UCT programme and make decisions on changes.

¹⁸ Process monitoring is to ascertain how the money has reached recipients. This includes monitoring at card distributions, shops and at banks to ensure there are no protection risks and identify how the process itself can be improved. The agency distributing the cards cannot be the agency monitoring the process.

¹⁹ Programme monitoring is to ascertain how money is spent on and to assess living conditions which is part of ongoing Post Distribution Monitoring (PDM) forms already. Programme monitoring also includes market monitoring.

²⁰ Analysing monitoring data can potentially be outsourced to volunteer technology networks such as DataKind, Statistics without borders and World Pop. These agencies can be accessed through the Digital Humanitarian Network who can give guidance based on operational needs on which volunteer agency is most appropriate to access.

The overseeing body should be comprised of UNHCR, WFP and the IPs involved. The steering group members must be authorized to make and act on decisions for changes needed.

CWG should advocate for standards on quality of delivery of other CTP by peer agencies (inclusive of unregistered refugees).

Rationale: There is no set standard on what constitutes quality delivery of CTP programming. Setting parameters will ensure agencies involved in CTP are fit for purpose and can deliver appropriately.

An agreed project plan will offer clarity on the operational set-up for UCT to registered refugees, the process involved and what is needed in order to be an IP or part of the system. One process that meets the needs of the majority needs to lead the way and set standards that others (exceptions) can mirror. One standard system will also allow for other CTP to align and anchor itself to clear priorities and ways of working.

Benefits: Clarity and standard on programs to measure progress and delivery goals.

Risks: No consensus on what is good programme quality and design (less for UCT than for the other CTP). Expectations of the system will not match with what it is meant to deliver and can deliver. Unregistered assistance will not match what is set up for registered.

Resource inputs: Hiring of technical CTP staff for agencies that do not have them and want to implement CTP. Cost savings from less duplication of resources being used. Savings on donor side from investing in agencies that can do CTP appropriately.

Recommendation five — Communications

UNHCR to hire a dedicated (CDAC) officer²¹ communicating with disaster affected communities. OCHA to provide candidates for this from their pool of experts. Develop a plan for a central hotline with a 'triage' system that delegates calls to appropriate agencies. Central hotline should have all up to date information that is being developed by the communications task team.

Rationale: Communication is an incredibly important part of the programme. Hiring a dedicated staff member with expertise in how to communicate with communities is necessary for the whole operation to increase transparency of the assistance. Streamlining to one central hotline will enable better tracking of issues and lessen confusion for assisted populations.

Benefits: Transparency and accountability principles upheld. Streamlined process.

Risks: Hotline and communications officer do not perform to the needed standard. Strategy does not address all key issues.

Resource inputs: Cost of hiring an officer. Staff time to input to a communications plan and strategy. Ongoing cost of NGO helplines. Cost of central UNHCR led hotline.

²¹ For the whole operation not just the CTP elements.

Recommendation six — Delivery Mechanism

Use WFP as a service provider with cost recovery for managing card provision and cash transfer. WFP should collate requirements with CWG inputs of a delivery mechanism in order to re-tender for services. Delivery mechanisms should be explored on the basis of cost but equally weighted by reach.

Rationale: WFP BLF cards are already configured to be both PoS cards and ATM cards. There is a cost efficiency here of using one card in that any upload fees can be consolidated and there is no duplication of IP charges for distribution or follow up on cards. The operational set-up has been reactive rather than responsive. By being clear on what is available in terms of delivery, it allows the operational set-up to re-negotiate for better rates, to deal with hard to reach populations, to be responsive if there is a sudden influx or a sudden scale down. It also allows for the operation to respond to changes in the financial systems market: the private sector is adaptable to needs and it is possible that a better, more cost effective and responsive system could exist at a later stage or already does exist and it will take time to set it up.

Benefits: Cost efficient (consolidated upload fees, no overlapped IP charges). Better delivery as less confusion. Protection considerations made. Option to have a flexible responsive system rather than an ad hoc reactive one.

Risks: No agreement reached by senior managers on WFP as card service provider. Agencies reluctant to use WFP as card service provider. One card means if it is lost/corrupted a household cannot access either food or cash as they have been able to with two cards.

Resource inputs: Pin issuance cost. Cost of distribution of pin numbers and if additional BLF cards need to be distributed to refugees.

Recommendation seven — Implementation

WFP to continue with the same 6 IPs for implementation. Develop joint WFP/UNHCR and IP 'cells' for central and field coordination between agencies and banks on projected cash flows and people management on payment days.

Rationale: The implementation, which means the distribution of the cards and the money reaching hands of intended recipients, should be less confusing than it currently is. WFP IPs have already distributed BLF cards and have relationships with the refugees and therefore to minimize confusion on the implementation side, as the card provider is not changing, the IPs do not have to change. A structured approach is needed and the one recommended allows for coordination between actors in the field, protection considerations for refugees, dignity of refugees and ease of implementation.

Benefits: Smoother and more efficient programming.

Risks: Banks unable to handle influx of refugees on payment days.

Resource inputs: Current WFP IP charges. Staff time in coordination with banks.

5. ACTIONS TO IMPLEMENT THE RECOMMENDED OPERATIONAL SET-UP

This section recommends the actions and their priority taking into account the impact, effort and logical schedule. The outputs are a set of short and medium term actions along with suggestions on how to manage the implementation.

5.1 Short and Medium Term Actions

Table 6 below shows the short and medium term actions to address each of the identified critical areas.

Table 6: Short and Medium Term Action Plan.

CTP Element	Constraint	Objective	Method	Key Activities	Inputs	Considerations
Targeting	No endorsed targeting approach.	Agreed and endorsed targeting for assistance.	Input into VaSyr to ensure results are robust. TTF makes recommendation on targeting	Endorse VaSyr findings and recommendation on targeting from TTF. Explore use of volunteer technology networks to assist in consolidation and management of unregistered refugee information to mirror that of registered.	VaSyr findings. TTF recommendations. Volunteer technology agency support.	
Data Management	Limited standards set or followed.	Ensure data transfers are secure, data is protected and used appropriately.	Understand data flows. Set standards and adhere to set standards.	Data managers at WFP and UNHCR present data transfer flows and requirements to CWG. CWG task team set standards on data privacy and individual agencies set internal guidelines to adhere to these. Data sharing agreements stipulate that data must be shared not only from UNHCR to agencies but also from agencies to UNHCR. Agencies engaging with CTP hire full time data managers to manage information to an industry standard.	Task team work. Data managers presentation. CaLP privacy standards. DRC example of agency adherence.	Minimum requirements on data needed for transfers is: case number, card number, telephone number and address. Transfer of data must be done at the minimum as an encrypted file and preferably over more secure channels.
Monitoring	Limited joint monitoring or standards.	Improve quality of assistance and meet mandate of protection.	Joint monitoring system. Find appropriate resources for efficient use of data.	Endorse task team plan for monitoring. Hire dedicated data staff for analysis. Explore options on outsourcing data analysis to volunteer organizations for timely input into programme improvement.	Recommendations from task team. Volunteer technology agency support.	Monitoring should be simple with appropriate segregation of duties and a clear understanding on the purpose of data collection. Three levels of monitoring: process, programme, protection. Data analysis must be done on an ongoing basis; results feeding into programme improvement.

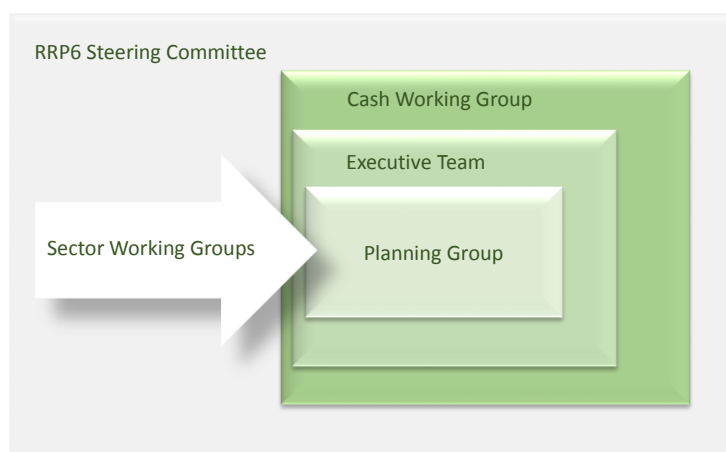
Table 6: Short and Medium Term Action Plan – continued.

CTP Element	Constraint	Objective	Method	Key Activities	Inputs	Considerations
Programme Design	Different objectives for CTP.	Ensure quality of delivery of CTP programming in Lebanon.	Set standards and parameters for what constitutes quality delivery of CTP programming. Set CTP objectives for RRP6.	Agree on standard CTP competencies required of an agency using Avenir Cash Competency Framework (Appendix 5) as a basis. Develop a plan for UCT programme. Create a log frame with indicators for progress and performance. Present plan to donors with shortfall in funding clearly marked. Set up operational group for CTP. CWG advocates for quality CTP programming amongst members using agreed framework. Work with sector working groups to set CTP objectives for RRP6	Avenir Cash Competency Framework. Avenir Lebanon CTP report recommendations. Recommendations from on going pieces of work from task teams. Sectoral working group plans with CTP articulated.	Avenir Cash Competency Framework should be adapted for the context. UCT plan can be refined moving forward as pieces of work are completed especially with targeting, monitoring and communications. Minimum requirements for planning group are: UNHCR. WFP and IPs. Ability to make decisions. Ability to hold meetings on a monthly basis. Group has administrator to collect information, take minutes etc.
Communication	No standard and agreed plan or strategy.	Increase transparency of operation.	Find appropriate resourcing	Hire a CDAC Officer with OCHA support. Endorse communications plan and strategy from task team. Have one dedicated UNHCR led central hotline that can triage out to other agencies for specific inquiries.	OCHA roster. Task team work.	The CDAC officer would work across the operation and not just on cash. Minimum requirements for task teams to consider: clear messaging needed on targeting. Use of various methods of communication and not just SMS.
Delivery Mechanism	Coordination between agencies & financial institutions.	Common delivery platform for efficient disbursement and tracking of cash assistance.	WFP is service provider for cards	WFP puts forward plan on service provision with cost recovery options. UNHCR and other agencies agree to use WFP as service provider for cards.	Senior managers agree and sign contracts on WFP service provision agreements.	WFP should have a clear plan that lays out what they will and will not do as part of the service. The plan should clearly state what is required of agencies to sign up to the service including all associated costs. The plan should include a clear schedule of when cards will be uploaded (to combine uploads and save on costs), when reconciliation and reports will be made available.
Implementation	The mix of actors.	Mainstream system for implementation.	WFP is card provider and uses their IPs to distribute any additional new cards/pin numbers.	WFP IPs carry out functions as per IP agreements. WFP/UNHCR lead on coordination with banks at central and local level to ensure scheduling of disbursements is understood and structures in place to accommodate influx.	Agencies to agree and ensure capacity is in place.	

5.2 Management of Activities to Complete Actions

Whilst the programme design is in the middle of priority actions, it provides a good starting point for implementing the recommendations and proposed actions for an optimized operational set-up.

As per the recommendations it is suggested that a dedicated operational group is formed from the existing structure to ensure that activities can be carried out and completed according to a set plan. This group will also form the focal point for engagement with sector working groups for CTP interventions. The structure of this group is shown in the figure above and the elements described in outline below.



Planning group: The role of this group is to lead the development of cash programs in Lebanon. This includes setting objectives for unconditional cash transfers, making decisions on quality of CTP based on set parameters and providing a work plan for tasking and monitoring of the work of the executive team to develop capacity. It will also advocate for funding for CTP programmes and support the CWG. In addition the group will provide a focal point and decision support mechanism for integrating other CTP programmes. This group should consist of one member from UNHCR, WFP and each of the IPs.

Executive Team: The role of this team is to implement the capacity development plan from the planning group. Initially focusing on the recommendations of this report, members of the executive team will work on implementing responsibilities as dedicated resource persons. The team will be made up of assigned members from UNHCR, WFP and the key cash actors. The incoming senior cash advisor would lead the coordination of the pieces of work and ensure quality control on outputs.

Cash Working Group: The cash working group is a forum for sharing and learning. Discussions in the CWG will inform and guide the objective setting of the planning group. Its members can also provide input and resources for the executive team's work. All interested organisations can participate in CWG meetings and use the mechanism to ensure any other CTP initiatives are synchronised with, or utilise the capacity of the central operational set-up.

End.