



Rakhine, Myanmar © Juliana Coelho, 2023

# SHELTER-NFI CASH AND VOUCHER ASSISTANCE INITIAL GUIDANCE

VERSION 1 - December, 2023



**Shelter Cluster Myanmar**  
ShelterCluster.org  
Coordinating Humanitarian Shelter



**CCCM CLUSTER**  
SUPPORTING DISPLACED COMMUNITIES



## Table of contents

1. Introduction .....	03
2. Cash assistance overview: terms and definitions .....	03
3. Essential criteria for cash and voucher assistance .....	04
4. Market Assessment .....	05
5. Risk identification and Mitigation measures .....	06
6. Targeting .....	07
7. Transfer value .....	08
8. Design considerations .....	08
9. Monitoring .....	09
10. Coordination .....	09
11. References .....	10

## Acknowledgements

This document were developed in collaboration with cluster partners and stakeholders, cluster coordinators, and SAG members. We are grateful in particular contributions, insight and feedback received during the process from Dominic Thlaceu, Cin Khan Lian, Frank Lynnpard, Geraud Devred, John Nelson, Marco Sanguineti, Natalia Watanabe and Ralf Huth.

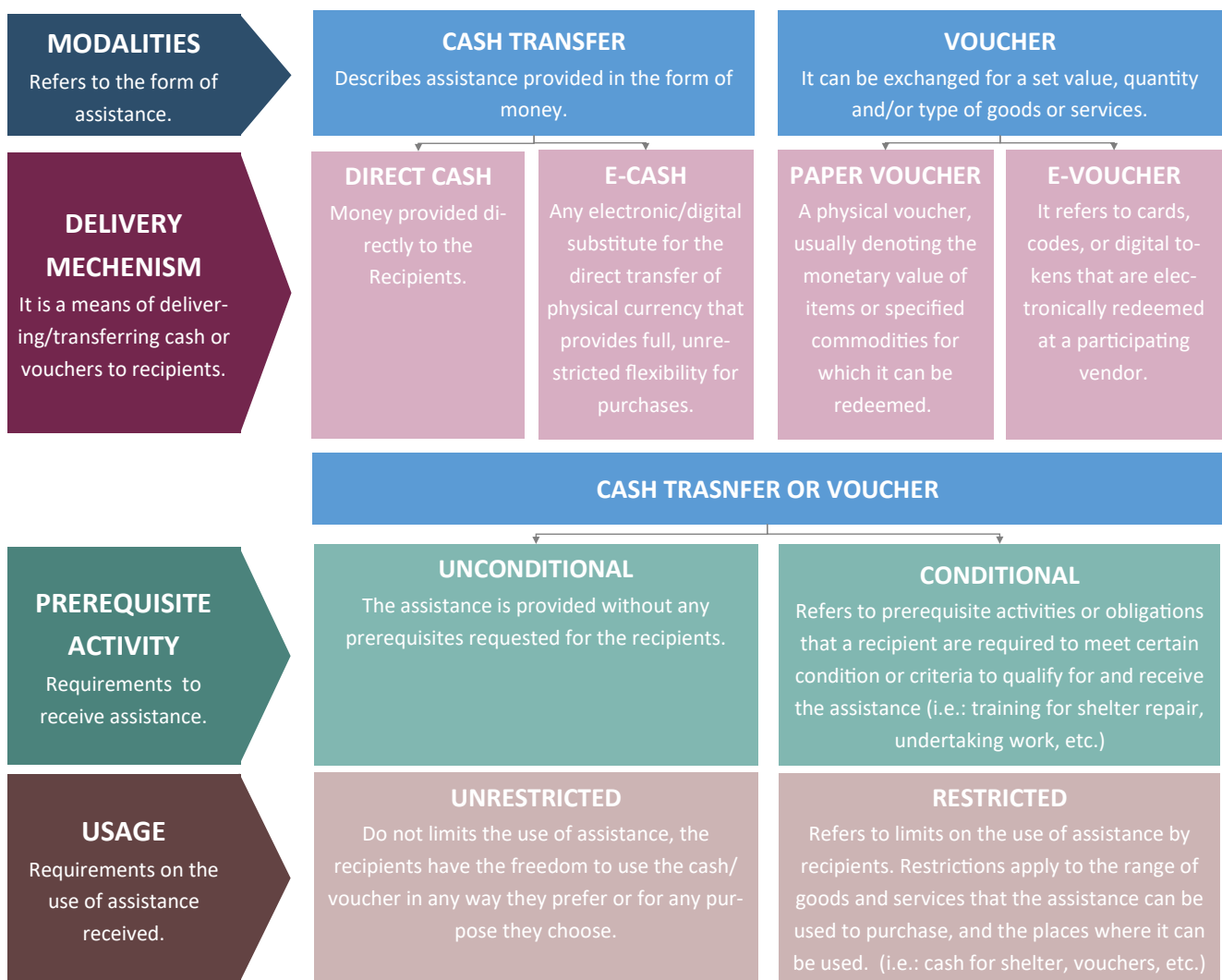
# 1. Introduction

The Myanmar response showed an increase in Cash and Vouchers Assistance (CVA) to support people affected by crisis while in displacement or in the immediate phase following a disaster such as the Mocha Cyclone in May 2023. When cash is feasible following the situation analysis through needs assessment, market functionality, financial service provider and risks, it is often perceived as faster and more cost-effective than in-kind assistance. In programs with shelter focus, CVAs have traditionally been provided to the affected population by staggered payments related to conditions and restrictions to be able to meet sector-specific technical, protection objectives and outcomes. The conditionality and restrictions will often minimize the risk to beneficiaries caused by a very unregulated shelter value chain.

As Shelter-NFI response cover a wide range of interventions, also considering the specificities of each region such as Northeast, Northwest, Rakhine and Southeast, this is an initial guidance shelter cash interventions for further detailed guidance to be incorporated due course of the coming year.

# 2. Cash assistance overview: terms and definitions

Understanding the terms of CVA is fundamental if we are to proceed with it. Hence, let's navigate with terms and definitions below<sup>1</sup>.



1. CALP NETWORK - Glossary of terms

### 3. Essential criteria for cash and voucher assistance

To enhance feasibility of cash and voucher assistance it is crucial to do a brief analysis by answering the nine core criteria below<sup>2</sup> as well as the use of cash must ensure protection principles and avoid exposing people to further harm as a result of your actions.

CORE CRITERIA 1: MARKET		YES	NO
a	Are traders able and willing to adapt to an increased demand? <i>(Consider restocking capacity)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b	Are Shelter and/or NFI items available in sufficient quantity and at acceptable prices in the local markets? <i>(Consider stocks available against the identified needs)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c	Is the economy monetized and people are used to handling money?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d	Does the population usually use market to meet its needs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e	Are markets physically, socially and financially accessible to all people affected after the emergency?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
CORE CRITERIA 2: RISK		YES	NO
a	Are the risks associated with CVA acceptable or possible to mitigate? <i>(Consider beneficiary/staff security, corruption issues, community/HH dynamics, shelter quality &amp; reach objective project)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
CORE CRITERIA 3: GOVERNMENT POLICIES			
a	Is CVA in accordance with national and local government policies? <i>(Ensure that there is no prohibition)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
CORE CRITERIA 4: FUNDING		YES	NO
a	Is CVA within donor's funding policies and framework?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
CORE CRITERIA 5: ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY		YES	NO
a	Does the agency have the internal capacity (programmatic, financial, logistic) to implement a CVA intervention? <i>(Consider previous experience and potential partnerships)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
CORE CRITERIA 6: INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES		YES	NO
a	Are the infrastructure and services needed to transfer cash/voucher to beneficiaries available?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
CORE CRITERIA 7: NEEDS TO MET BY INTERVENTION		YES	NO
a	Can the needs be met through specific commodities/services?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
CORE CRITERIA 8: BENEFICIARY PREFERENCES		YES	NO
a	Is CVA a preferred option for the beneficiaries?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
CORE CRITERIA 9: TIMELINESS		YES	NO
a	Is it possible to set up and implement a CVA with the necessary speed and at the intended scale?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**CVA is a feasible option if:**  
- All answers are YES  
- Any answers are NO but have sufficient mitigation measures in place

**CVA is NOT a feasible option if:**  
Any answers are NO and do not have possible mitigation measures in place

## 4. Market Assessment

The Market Assessment is an evaluation and analysis conducted to understand key market aspects. The market systems interact with almost all aspects of shelter assistances, consequently it is crucial that shelter actors have a good understanding to be able to decide more precisely what forms or combination of assistance (cash/voucher, in-kind or both) is suitable to meet the needs of affected population across timeframes.

Therefore prior to initiating Cash and Voucher Assistance programmes for shelter, market assessments must be carried out by shelter experts in order to understand whether the reliance on local markets is sufficient to achieve the required level of shelter response as the main points related below:

- a. According to the shelter/NFI programme be able to define what shelter or NFI items and services can be purchased locally by beneficiaries and if is needed to combine with in-kind to respond to the needs in the most adequate and efficient way.
- b. If target beneficiaries have access to shelter/NFI marketplaces.
- c. Forecast the supply of materials and services in the coming weeks and assess whether the local market can be replenished to meet the increase in demand, if there are shelter items and NFIs stocks in terms of quantity and quality, if there are alternative suppliers.
- d. Select measures which may have an immediate and substantial effect on the market. It involves a sudden increase of demand resulting from specific shelter projects, as well as interruptions in supplies caused by damage to warehouses or production, infrastructure, fuel crisis impacting the supply chain and so on.
- e. In the operating context identify and assess financial services providers, as well as infrastructure environments and regulatory considerations (*Consider consultation with Area-base CWG*).
- f. If the event/crisis has affected the market. Look at whether the crisis has caused price increases or restrictions on access to credit by merchants, or forced a shortage of workers.

The level of details collected during the assessment will depends on the programme and the stress it may cause in the market. The Myanmar national Cash Working Group worked on the Myanmar Market Assessment Stoplight that count with Myanmar translation with the link below.

Market Assessment tools are available here:

- [Myanmar Market Assessment Stoplight - MC & DRC](#)
- [Cash in Emergencies Toolkit - IFRC](#)
- [RAM Rapid Assessment for Markets tool](#)
- [Minimum Requirements for Market Analysis in Emergencies](#)
- [Market Analysis Guidance](#)

Another source is the [Myanmar Market Analysis Unit](#) that provide regular updates with the Market snapshot, Market Price Report, Commercial Transport report and so on. Currently the Market Price Report is on the process to update the basic Shelter-NFI items recommended by the Cluster.

## 5. Risk identification and Mitigation measures

Shelter and NFI Cash and Voucher Assistance as well as in-kind assistance involves a number of risks and liabilities which should be identified and analyzed to ensure effectiveness. Thus, it is crucial to consider the risks related with the type of assistance and develop appropriate mitigation measures ensuring the protection principles of humanitarian actors are integrated into the programme.

The aspects below should be considered for the Risk Assessment:

Risks	Mitigation measures
Limited <b>access</b> to markets, Financial Service Providers, beneficiaries and communication technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Market assessment</li> <li>• Appropriate delivery mechanism</li> </ul>
Target areas become <b>inaccessible</b> due to conflict and violence or blocked infrastructure due to natural disaster	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flexibility approach to the programme such as shift activities to another geographic location until the target area became safe</li> </ul>
<b>Security</b> risks to access the communities due to fighting and exposure to unexploded ordnance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Security assessments as part of the operational plans</li> <li>• Developed risk mitigation plan, checklist, contacting with the local actors or volunteers before travelling</li> <li>• Follow safety and security procedure of the respective organization carefully</li> </ul>
<b>Technical concerns</b> regarding construction phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote construction/repair technical hands on training to beneficiaries (include local language printed to participants)</li> <li>• Regular monitoring by partners engineers for quality verification and construction advise</li> </ul>
<b>Safety</b> and security risks due to theft, bribery, extortion and/or robbery exposure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen staff safety and awareness of humanitarian principles</li> <li>• Well designed program</li> <li>• Appropriate delivery mechanism (consider options to decrease the distance among delivers and recipients)</li> <li>• To limit the amount of cash being transported by staff in higher risk areas</li> </ul>
Impact on <b>commodity price</b> through inflation and exchange rate fluctuation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Market monitoring</li> <li>• Estimate inflation range triggering the revision of grant</li> </ul>
<b>Community dynamics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure the selection criteria are met</li> <li>• Harmonization approach by all partners</li> </ul>
Tension among <b>vendors / stock capacity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear communication with all vendors about selection criteria</li> <li>• Market assessments covering stock capacity/ restocking (consider selection of more than one vendor to ensure supply options to beneficiaries for voucher)</li> </ul>
<b>Fraud</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capacity building to staff and Financial Service Providers</li> <li>• Monitoring, complaint and feedback mechanism in place</li> </ul>
<b>Data Protection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct cash distributed by humanitarian partners</li> <li>• Contracts with service providers including data protection policy</li> </ul>
<b>Operational</b> risk analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risk matrix locally contextualized updates by Area-base Cash Working Group - CWG (NE, SE, NW and Rakhine hubs)</li> </ul>
Beneficiaries using cash to buy <b>non-shelter related items</b> such as pharmaceuticals, food, alcohol, tobacco/ betel quid chewing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Market assessments and community consultation to define appropriate response strategy in coordination with cross-cutting cluster if applicable.</li> <li>• Programme design considering phased payments by applying conditionalities such as first % of the payment received after attend shelter training.</li> <li>• Provide orientation to beneficiaries on the intended proposed of cash grants and provide a list of items the project did not support or discourage purchases</li> </ul>
Specific vulnerable households <b>not able to build/repair</b> their own shelter or participate in construction/repairs trainings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Labor cost factored in for each shelter unit is concluded/repair</li> </ul>

## 6. Targeting

The selection of beneficiaries for shelter and NFI assistance will follow general criteria as explained below. Beneficiaries must fulfill basic requirements to be eligible for selection at the first stage. By assessing vulnerability at the second stage the extremely vulnerable households according to the People with Specific Needs criteria will be prioritized.

To ensure that all beneficiaries and potential beneficiaries understand the selection process, the selection criteria need to be well communicated among all and feedback mechanism must be in place.

For Cash and Voucher Assistance it is necessary to consider protection-related concerns to ensure beneficiaries are not exposed to additional risks arising from the type of assistance modality.

Basic requirements:

- a. **Crisis affected (conflict and climate):** Household or individual affected by the crisis such as IDPs, returned, resettled, locally integrated, non-displaced stateless, and other crisis-affected people with humanitarian needs.
- b. **Financial position:** Household doesn't have the means of build/rebuilding/repair their shelter by their own.
- c. **Support from other sources:** Households that did not received / are not receiving shelter and/or NFI assistance from another source.
- d. **HLP:** Do check and verify HLP documents to avoid evicton incidents.
- e. **Level of house damage:** Households' conflict or climate affected that have their houses totally destroyed or partial damage. This requires partners to verify case by case the level of damage:

Totally destroyed: more than 50% damage	Partial damage: minor to moderate damage
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Completely burned;</li> <li>2. House leaning unsafe to occupy;</li> <li>3. Collapsed roof;</li> <li>4. Structure mostly missing;</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Safe structure with wall missing or incomplete;</li> <li>2. Safe structure with roof missing or incomplete;</li> <li>3. Roof not protecting from the rain;</li> <li>4. Doors and windows missing;</li> </ol>

Priority Groups<sup>3</sup>:

- a. **Child-headed household:** A household headed by a person below the age of 18 who is left without any adult to care for him/her (i.e. an unaccompanied child) and therefore assumes responsibility of a head of household.
- b. **Child at risk:** A boy or girl below 18 years old who meets any of the following criteria: unaccompanied or separated child; child parent; child carer; early marriage; teenage pregnancy; not attending school; child with special education needs; child in conflict with the law; child associated with armed forces/groups; child at risk of exploitation, abuse and neglect.
- c. **Woman at risk:** Woman of 18 years old or above, who is facing protection risks because of her gender. This code should be used in conjunction with other specific need codes and which includes single women facing protection risks, single mothers or caregivers (SP), elderly women (ER), women with disabilities (DS) etc.
- d. **Older person at risk:** 60 and above: single older person without family; older person unable to care for self on a daily basis and lacks any family/community support; older person who is the sole caregiver of children; etc.
- e. **Single Parent/Caregiver:** Single person of 18 years or above with one or more dependants, including biological or non-biological children, or other dependants (such as an older person). The single parent/caregiver is both the primary income earner and/or caregiver.
- f. **Person with disability:** Persons with disabilities which significantly limits ability to function independently, including physical disabilities, mental disabilities, visual disabilities (including blindness), hearing disabilities (including deafness) and speech impairment.
- g. **Individual with serious medical condition:** Serious medical condition, life-threatening medical conditions that requires life-saving assistance (such as medical referral or provision of nutritional and non-food items) and mental illnesses that significantly limit the ability to function independently.

## 7. Transfer value and Frequency of payment

Assessment and analysis at local level about essential needs of affected population and local market prices will define the transfer value. The Cluster cannot provide the exact amount, since it depends on a range factors such as region, response phase, type of assistance required, access to markets, local market prices, exchange rates, specific needs and so forth as it must be analyzed case by case. However, bill of quantities are available in the [Myanmar Shelter Design Catalogue](#) and the [Myanmar Basic Shelter-NFI kit Guidance](#) that can be considered when calculating it.

The frequency of payment can be one-off or staggered, its based on the project objective, security (for recipients and for those delivering the transfer), recipient preferences and cost-efficiency.

Due to the currently complexity of rental subsidy in areas of intervention, this version does not focus of rental market.

## 8. Design considerations

By following the information provided on the previous topics and if define CVA is applicable for shelter and/or NFIs to the project, it is necessary to consider a thorough analysis to define the project design. Below you can find a simple table with the options to be consider on the design phase:

Shelter							
Intervention	Transfer modality	Delivery mechanism	Prerequisite	Usage	Transfer value	Frequency of payment	Remarks
Provision of Emergency Shelter support	Cash/ voucher transfer	Direct cash/ E-cash Paper voucher/ E-voucher	Conditional/ Unconditional	Restricted/ Unrestricted	<a href="#">Emergency Shelter Kit BoQ</a> + transportation (consider the kit type adequate to the region)	One-off/ Staggered	Consider acceptability, AAP, quality control, <a href="#">GBV</a> , <a href="#">environmental impact</a> , and disability inclusive. Required monitoring to ensure quality and technical support.
Provision of Shelter Repair	Cash/ voucher transfer	Direct cash/ E-cash Paper voucher/ E-voucher	Conditional/ Unconditional	Restricted/ Unrestricted	Individualized BoQ according to each shelter repair need	One-off/ Staggered	Consider acceptability, AAP, quality control, <a href="#">GBV</a> , <a href="#">environmental impact</a> , and disability inclusive. Required monitoring to ensure quality and technical support.
Provision of Shelter Construction	Cash/ voucher transfer	Direct cash/ E-cash Paper voucher/ E-voucher	Conditional/ Unconditional	Restricted/ Unrestricted	BoQ selected according to the context and region, consult the <a href="#">Shelter Design Catalogue</a>	One-off/ Staggered	Consider acceptability, AAP, quality control, <a href="#">GBV</a> , <a href="#">environmental impact</a> , and disability inclusive. Required monitoring to ensure quality and technical support.
Provision of Shelter Reconstruction	Cash/ voucher transfer	Direct cash/ E-cash Paper voucher/ E-voucher	Conditional/ Unconditional	Restricted/ Unrestricted	Individualized BoQ according to each shelter reconstruction need	One-off/ Staggered	Consider acceptability, AAP, quality control, <a href="#">GBV</a> , <a href="#">environmental impact</a> , and disability inclusive. Required monitoring to ensure quality and technical support.
Non-Food-Items (NFI)							
Provision of Emergency NFI	Cash/ voucher transfer	Direct cash/ E-cash Paper voucher/ E-voucher	Conditional/ Unconditional	Restricted/ Unrestricted	<a href="#">Basic Shelter, NFI kit guidance</a> (consider the kit type adequate to HH needs per region)	One-off/ Staggered	Consider acceptability, AAP, <a href="#">GBV</a> , <a href="#">environmental impact</a> , disability inclusive and monitoring.



## 9. Monitoring

Shelter Cash and Voucher Assistance requires rigorous monitoring and evaluation to ensure project outcomes as well as fathom intended and unintended impacts in market systems and/or social dynamics. During the implementation and monitoring phase, a high level of activity must be undertaken by shelter technical staff to ensure technical aspects are addressed.

It is recommended integrate CVA monitoring into existing monitoring systems and to consider the following aspects:

**Market** Monitoring as method of understanding the changes in market systems that focuses on key indicators of market functioning and access over time considering prices, services, stock availability. If a major change is identified it could reflect on the assistance outcome and an evaluation is needed to understand whether the transfer still covering the cost of products/services as was designed.

- Are the marketplaces still functioning with available items?
- Do beneficiaries still access marketplaces with available items?
- Are the transportation functioning as anticipated in the project design?
- Is there a relevant impact on market price increase?

The **Quality** verification is to ensure the material and construction process/labour meet the project requirements. When possible compare it with in-kind assistance.

- Adequate construction techniques are been applied?
- Are the material still attending the technical specifications as part of the project design?
- Do beneficiaries have access to related project skill labor?
- Verify the progress, provide technical assistance, clarifications of the activity, participate in inspections.
- Validate the conclusion, ensure the handover, documentation and contracts.
- Apply the post-distribution monitoring and complement with focused group discussion.

Comprehend the **Adequacy** and **Risk** of cash modality during implementation

- Has the beneficiary been consulted or able to provide feedback?
- Were the mitigation risks applied effective?
- Any identified risk during the risk assessment were faced during the implementation?
- Any new or unforeseen risk faced during the implementation? If so, how it was mitigated?

## 10. Coordination

The coordination with Shelter-NFI-CCCM cluster level pay a vital role through technical information and data, identifying the gaps, avoiding duplication, decision making and optimizing organizational resources.

Participation on technical discussions, taskforces, surveys are critical to improve the quality/strategy of the sectorial response, as well as potentialize the use resources and initiatives available for more effectiveness.

Reporting to the cluster is important to enhance the coordination, thus shelter-NFI partners must report the **Cash/Voucher Assistance for Shelter/NFI** to the Shelter-NFI-CCCM cluster through the coordination hubs on the quarterly 5W, the Monthly Humanitarian Update (MHU). Multi-Propose Cash Assistance (MPCA) reporting goes under Cash Working Group (CWG) lead by UNOCHA.

## 11. References

### Myanmar

[Cash-Based Assistance for Individual Shelter Solutions](#) - Myanmar Shelter Cluster, 2015

[Cash transfer programmes review in Kachin/Northern Shan and Rakhine State](#) - HARP-F, 2022

Draft Guidance Note on Disability Inclusive Cash and Voucher Assistance - UNFPA Myanmar, 2023 (waiting for publication)

[Mainstreaming gender-based violence \(GBV\) considerations in CVA: key tips for cash actors engaged in the Myanmar response](#) - Myanmar GBV sub-cluster, 2023

[Myanmar Cash Tools in Emergencies](#) - Myanmar CWG, 2020

### Global

[Basic guidance on cash and voucher for shelter programmes in Northwest Syria](#) - Syria Shelter/NFI Cluster, 2023

[Cluster guidance on cash--based shelter and NFI assistance](#) - Iraq Shelter Cluster, 2015

[Glossary of Terms](#) - CALP Network

[Guidance on the Use of Standardized Specific Needs Codes](#) - UNHCR, 2009

[Implementation Guidelines for light & medium repairs of houses and apartments](#) - Ukraine Cluster, 2023

[Market Analysis Guidance](#) - IFRC, 2020

[Market-Based Programming \(MBP\) and Shelter](#) - Global Shelter Cluster & MiC, 2022

[Minimum Requirements for Market Analysis in Emergencies](#) - CALP Network

[Operational Guidelines for Cash-Based Interventions in Displacement Settings](#) - UNHCR, 2015

[Programme Quality Toolbox](#) - CALP Network

[RAM Rapid Assessment for Markets tool](#) - IFRC, 2015

[Review of environmental impact of Cash Based Interventions and in-kind assistance](#) - UNHCR, 2020

[Shelter and Cash and Voucher Assistance](#) - Global Shelter Cluster & CALP

[Shelters, Settlements and Cash - A manual on Cash and Voucher Assistance](#) - IFRC, 2019

[Using Cash for Shelter: An Overview of CRS Programs](#) - CRS, 2015