Basic Needs Assessment and Response Analysis Framework & Toolkit

OVERVIEW OF THE TOOL

The Basic Needs and Response Analysis Framework and Toolkit (known as the Framework & Toolkit) is part of the ECHO ERC funded project to increase the uptake of multi-purpose cash grants (MPGs) in emergency responses for more efficient and effective humanitarian action. MPGs are a powerful aid modality because of their efficiency and effectiveness. They can be combined with other assistance modalities to maximize the benefit for affected communities.

Although the Framework & Toolkit initiative sits within an MPG-focused Consortium, the outputs aim to support emergency responses more broadly. Specifically, the Framework and Toolkit enables humanitarian actors to **assess the basic needs of affected communities** and to make preliminary recommendations around the most appropriate **response options**, according to beneficiaries' preferences and access to commodities and services. These preliminary options, validated by collecting complementary information through other assessments, may include cash transfer/vouchers, in-kind aid, services or a mix of those.

WHY A NEW TOOL?

There is currently no agreed-upon methodology that allows humanitarian actors to jointly assess, compare/analyse delivery modality options and select the best (combination) of these, based on the affected communities' perspective. The MIRA is a multi-sectoral needs assessment tool but it does not factor in the possibility of cash transfers (CT) as a response option, alone or in combination with other modalities. This is a major impediment to designing CT programmes that are integrated into broader responses.

In addition, many tools supporting CT programming are used by multiple organisations, but thus far they have not been systematically adapted for inter-agency, multi-sector, and multipurpose use. More importantly, no tools exist to inform mixed-modalities emergency responses (i.e. in-kind with cash and/or other inputs), which may be more relevant than single-modality responses.

Finally, "basic needs" encompasses both food and non-food needs; therefore, the scope of a basic needs Framework and Toolkit is broader than what is generally covered by the Food Security (and Livelihoods) clusters/sectors.

The Framework & Toolkit will attempt to fill these gaps, and when used as a compliment to existing tools such as the MIRA, will allow actors to draw on both the opinions of the affected communities and functioning and accessibility of markets. It ultimately attempts to address the demand from the World Humanitarian Summit, the Grand Bargain and humanitarian across to improve evidence-based decision making; this includes the crucial stage of response analysis.

WHAT IS IT FOR?

The ultimate purpose of the Framework & Toolkit is to support joint decision making around: priority geographic and population groups; the composition of the basket of assistance; critical markets and systems of service provision, the most relevant (mix of) assistance modalities; if CT, which Cash modality and what amount.

More specifically, the Framework & Toolkit will be used to:

- Generate a better understanding of changes since the beginning of the crisis, priority needs, capacities and preferences of affected people, and constraints faced by people in securing what they need from the local retailers and service providers.
- Strengthen the response options analysis by integrating beneficiaries' perspectives and identifying the most appropriate assistance modality (or mix of modalities). Should MPG be an appropriate response, either alone or alongside others, the Framework & Toolkit should support the subsequent design of such a grant.
- Complement existing guidance through making explicit and designing processes to address the links between needs identification and response design, especially under time pressure and in a collaborative setting.
- Suggest modalities for collaborative analysis and propose roles and responsibilities in initiating, planning and carrying out the needs assessment and response analysis.

WHO IS IT FOR?

The users of the prototype Framework & Toolkit will be the members of the ERC Consortium in the two pilot countries, i.e. Nigeria and a rapid-onset context yet to be selected. Other users who may want to participate in the pilots include the members of the IASC Cluster/Sectors, the Cash Working Groups, the Cash Consortia (if any) or other technical assessment working groups. Assessment and response-analysis findings will be disseminated to these groups even if they do not participate in the pilots. Roles and responsibilities in the roll-out of the Framework & Toolkit will be discussed with the Consortium members in the two pilot countries and the above-mentioned stakeholders, as part of the pilot planning process.

Learning from the pilots will provide indications of who is best placed to use the Framework & Toolkit. However, it is expected that, the end users will be groups of humanitarian organisations within affected countries who engage into coordinated assessments (joint or harmonized) and intend to make their basic needs and response analysis more transparent and people-centred, and inclusive of multiple or mixed modalities. In the long-run, the methodology should eventually be owned and adapted for strategic decision making purposes by the Global Cluster Coordination Group, and be available to all Clusters/Sectors in country
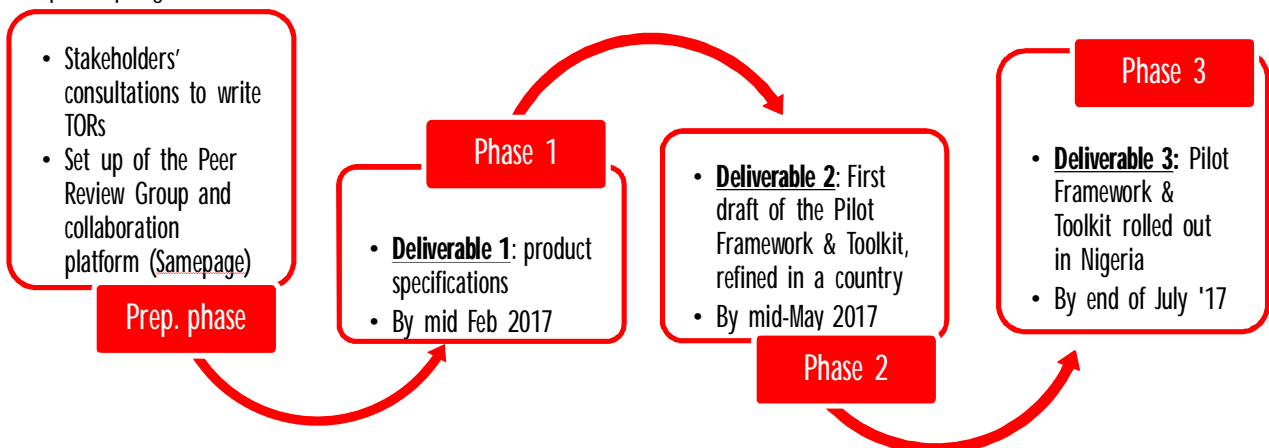
HOW ARE WE GOING ABOUT IT?

The development of the Framework & Toolkit is led by Save the Children and experts from Okular Analytics are carrying out the work.

As the initiative's success will be determined by its integration in the humanitarian programme cycle it is critical that key stakeholders across all clusters/sectors are involved. As such, a peer review group has been established to oversee and advise on the development and trialling of the Framework and Toolkit. This group includes representative from all the members of the ERC Consortium; the Consortium's donor (ECHO); several United Nations bodies including the World Health Organisation, the Food and Agricultural Organisation, the World Food Programme, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and the United Nations Children Fund; several branches of the Red Cross; the US Agency for International Development's Office of Food for Peace and the Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance; CashCap; World Vision International; ACAPS and IMPACT-REACH.

It is also crucial that relevant methodologies and tools are considered to avoid duplication of efforts and ensure complementarities. Okular Analytics have therefore reviewed 145 documents, including: needs assessment guidance (37); guidance documents referring to both needs and response analysis (8); analysis frameworks (11); response frameworks (13); targeting approaches (7); documents on the basic needs concept (10); documents on cash transfer programming (33); documents on market assessment and analysis (25).

The timeline below outlines the project phases. However, times are flexible as the exact timing depends on how the pilots progress.

Prep. phase
- Stakeholders' consultations to write TORs
- Set up of the Peer Review Group and collaboration platform (Samepage)

Phase 1
- **Deliverable 1**: product specifications
- By mid Feb 2017

Phase 2
- **Deliverable 2**: First draft of the Pilot Framework & Toolkit, refined in a country
- By mid-May 2017

Phase 3
- **Deliverable 3**: Pilot Framework & Toolkit rolled out in Nigeria
- By end of July '17

CONTACT

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