**Cash-based Intervention Technical Working Group**

CBI TWG Monthly Meeting Minutes

Gaziantep

**31 May 2016**

Chaired by: WFP, UNHCR and CARE

Hosted by: WFP

(A full list of attendees can be found at the end of this document)

Agenda:

1. Welcome and round the table introductions
2. Follow-up discussion to the ESSN information communicated through the ECHO partner and NGO meetings
3. Discussion on Voucher Value Options – NGOs and IOM to increase their voucher values in line with WFP’s increase or maintain the harmonized 50TL amount for current caseloads
4. Presentation/Discussion on the ToRs for the Cash Consultant funded by CARE
5. Overview of existing partner accountability approaches & introduction to *Review of Beneficiary Feedback on E-Voucher Mechanisms*
6. Presentation on the methodological approach to conducting the Multi-Sector Household Survey in Urfa and Gaziantep & key findings
7. AOB – Agency Updates & Closing Remarks

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| **Summary of Action Points**   * **Action Point #1:** CBI-TWG to take on the responsibility of mapping CBI interventions for cash-based basic needs and food interventions and then feeding relevant information into sectoral working groups (the format for data collection should preferably be harmonised across the groups). * **Action Point #2:** Partners to provide comments on the 4W Framework and submit the completed matrix by COB 15 June. * **Action Point #3:** Partners to provide disseminate the Cash Consultant Vacancy Announcement to their respective networks: <http://reliefweb.int/job/1556966/cash-transfer-consultant> * **Action Point #4:** Partners to clarify preferred Training dates (i.e. first or second week of August) by COB 15 June. * **Action Point #5:** WFP to share its monitoring reports as of July to inform whether an increase in partner voucher values is what is most appropriate at this stage. * **Action Point #6:** Partners to input into the following mapping exercises by COB 20 June:   **-** Mapping of current voucher values and future plans for increase, including logic/sectors of intervention  **-** Mapping of % of unregistered refugees (both Syrian and non-Syrian) in operation areas  **-** Information on non-Syrian refugee presence in operation areas  **-** Mapping of % of households with multiple family ID numbers based on partner data.  **-** Partners to submit their AAP Approaches by COB 15 June. |

1. Welcome and round the table introductions

*Co-chairs introduction*

* The Co-Chairs calrifed that the reason for the overwhelming WFP presence in the meeting was due to the fact that a number of programming discussions had taken place on the previous day, hence WFP programming staff felt it was important to also attend the CBI-TWG. A number of new colleagues joined the team and therefore wanted to become more familiar with current cash based interventions in Turkey.
* The Co-Chairs introduced the agenda items to be discussed stressing the importance of agreeing on monthly reporting requirements and data to be collected for cash-based interventions.
* Special thanks to WFP for hosting this meeting.

2. Follow-up discussions to the ESSN information communicated through the ECHO partner and NGO meetings

* Chloe Day, CARE NGO Co-Chair, debriefed actors on information shared through a meeting of ECHO with NGOs on 18 May and, to a lesser extent, the ECHO Partners’ Meeting that took place on 16 May. The meeting on 18 May was held in response to NGOs and IOM expressing concern at the partners’ meeting regarding the lack of any consultation with NGO cash-based actors regarding the design of the planned Emergency Social Safety Net System (ESSN). It was deemed important for partners to understand what will happen to their CBI programs once the ESSN is introduced, how they might be asked to support its implementation and how best to prepare for this transition.
* The purpose of the meeting on 18 May was to ensure that partners have a common understanding of how the ESSN will work as this will serve as the framework for all future discussions with the humanitarian community moving forward.
* A summary of the discussion that took place in this second meeting was provided at the TWG meeting, with the framework for discussion being a paper that was prepared, outlining the key concerns and queries of NGOs and IOM.
* ***The following overview of the nation-wide ESSN was provided:***
* **Transfer Modalities & Selection Criteria:**
  + A single-card system used for unrestricted multi-sector monthly transfers of cash.
  + The transfer amount will be defined in terms of average household expenditures, with the intention of covering 60%-80% of household needs. ECHO is interested in using the MEB calculations and data that will be developed by the TWG in summer 2016 to inform transfer value.
  + The system should be needs based covering the most vulnerable households based on socio-economic demographic vulnerability proxy indicators.
  + In terms of value transfers, ECHO will fund a contracted-partner because it cannot pass cash directly to a quasi-government entity, i.e. TRC. This partner will be selected through the June Turkey HIP call.
* **Partnerships:**
  + This system will be aligned with the Ministry of Family and Social Policy (MoFSP) and will contribute to more harmonized assistance transfers as opposed to a multitude of different transfer values, as is currently the case.
  + The ESSN will be rolled out by the Turkish Red Crescent in partnership with an ECHO-funded partner, which will be determined through a bidding process.
  + The system will stem directly from the SSAF-model, used for vulnerable Turkish people but will be adapted to ensure relevance to the refugee community.
  + The system is designed with the option of providing top-up allowances at certain times of the year (i.e. during winter; cash for education etc.) so that it would not be a one-size-fits-all approach.
  + ECHO feels that as a result of their leading this process, the ESSN will maintain its humanitarian focus and recognizes that maintaining a principles accountable system is important.
  + ECHO also believes that it is establishing a system which other donors will be able to contribute to following its creation.
* **Business Model & Contractual Arrangements:**
  + ECHO clarified that there will be room for other actors aside from TRC and the contracted ECHO-partner to support the ESSN.
  + There will be opportunities for NGOs to be involved in the system in such areas as sensitization, community engagement, online referrals for other needs and household verification exercises.
  + The idea is for implementing actors to be contracted through the ECHO-HIP (Humanitarian Implementation Plan) which will be released this week.
  + In terms of the design of the ESSN, call centres for beneficiary feedback and complaints will be implemented for assessment and monitoring. Data from household samples will only be collected as part of the verification exercise.
  + The system will be quite different from the current door-to-door approach as a result of the scale at which the ESSN will work (i.e. 1 million individuals to be reached by Q1 of 2017).
* **The Role of NGOs in Complementary Programming:**
  + Until the ECHO-contracted actor is revealed in July 2016, discussions are unlikely to take place regarding the design of ESSN complementary programming from other actors.
  + It is anticipated that there will be a need for complementary programming particularly on protection in the framework of a nation-wide approach.
  + A referral system will be part of the ESSN, however it is not yet clear whether the system will focus on internal and/or external referrals for assessments and/or monitoring.
* ***The following points of concern were raised by partners, particularly NGOs:*** 
  + **Data Analysis -** The question was raised of where data would come from in order to define household needs. It is likely that information available through the DGMM registration database will be utilized for selection. ECHO would appreciate the support of the CBI-TWG as a technical forum which can inform the Minimum Expenditure Basket and therefore transfer values. The Consultant Terms of Reference designed by CARE aims to provide this information.
  + **Quality Programming -** NGOs expressed concern that the large-scale/nation-wide and single implementing agency approach of the ESSN would compromise the quality and accountability of programming.
  + **Nation-Wide v. Phased Approach -** Capacity of actors and scale of capacity in Turkey was also raised as an issue, particularly as concerns the long-term sustainability of the ESSN at large and the ability of actors to go nation-wide from day 1 rather than adopt a more phased approach.
  + **Language Barriers** in Syrian refugee programming were also deemed an issue. ECHO, in turn resolves to support MoFSP in recruiting Syrian staff to counter this issue.
  + **Vulnerability Targeting -** NGOs voiced concern regarding the selection process and criteria to be adopted. Given all the time and effort invested in the VSWG in terms of understanding and conducting Syrian vulnerability analysis, it appears to be a contradiction in terms to revert to demographic criteria. ECHO however clarified that the 30% inclusion target based on demographic criteria is drawn from other experiences in the region (Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon) based on household level socio-economic vulnerability studies. The 30% inclusion rate is however much lower with respect to beneficiaries included in all currently active CBI programmes. ECHO in turn noted that the 30% inclusion rate is merely a starting point and that there will be room to adapt the system as deemed fit by all stakeholders. From the meeting on 18 May, ECHO stated that the proposed selection approach had been cross-referenced against more nuanced systems and appeared to have good consistency. It was not clear whether the proposed new system had been cross-referenced against the existing WFP-Kizilay selection system.
  + **Assessments & Verification -** UNICEF felt that there may not be a need for any assessments to take place if the targeting is based on demographic criteria. ECHO clarified that there is currently a small-scale household assessment component in the SSAF. It is however unrealistic and inefficient to conduct assessments when programming nation-wide and at such a large scale. WFP VAM colleagues have used available data to test the demographic indicators using different thresholds which have revealed a 40% to 60% inclusion rate. There has been a WFP request to run the different demographic criteria against the DGMM database for further verification.
  + **Monitoring Functions –** NGOs feel that a strong monitoring and verification system will be essential to systematically inform changes to the system, however roles and responsibilities have yet to be defined and it is unclear who will be undertaking the monitoring functions as part of the ESSN.
  + **Registration Issues & Support to Non-Syrian Refugees –** ECHO has made it clear that only Syrian refugees should be considered for eligibility for the ESSN. NGOs insisted that a significant amount of refugees are not registered and cannot access registration facilities because of their heightened vulnerabilities or because the registration system is not functioning. While a provincial-based registration system (PDMM) is present, significant population movements hinder access to services and assistance. A Pre-Registration Process has moreover been initiated by DGMM which involves a number of security checks which are slowing down the delivery of Family IDs. The Government, supported by UNHCR, has also initiated a Refugee Verification Process due to start on 1 August 2016, which require all currently registered Syrian refugees to have their temporary protection IDs replaced with an updated version. NGOs stressed the need to design alternative assistance schemes for non-registered refugees and those vulnerable families that fall through the cracks in the ESSN system.
  + **The Role of NGOs in providing assistance beyond the ESSN –** NGOs expressed concern regarding lack of clarity as to what role is forseen for NGOs within basic needs assistance in the context of the ESSN, which is challenging in terms of strategy and planning. ECHO clarified that they cannot imagine an assistance model for refugees in Turkey exclusively centred on the ESSN, therefore noting that NGO programmes will continue beyond this new model and may focus more specifically on protection and livelihoods, with the details to be discussed. The added value of the ESSN will be to align transfer modalities and different forms of assistance. NGOs will however have a role to play in assisting beneficiaries excluded from the ESSN in different ways and with different modalities. NGOs have concerns regarding the role for NGOs that may be proposed in support of the ESSN as they believe that they may be put in a position where they are seen by communities as the face of a system over which they have little or no influence, which may lead to reputational, acceptance and security risks if there are challenges with the system.
  + **The ESSN as a Government-led process -** WHH expressed concern that the ESSN is framed as though it were a Government-led safety net and yet no Government representative has introduced this project openly yet. Furthermore, there is an element of uncertainty as to whether the ESSN is meant to be the only system in place or is simply one of many large scale projects (the definition being felt to be important in terms of communication with cash programming donors who are not ECHO and likelihood of NGOs being required to close down other donor-funded cash programs). ECHO in turn clarified that there can be no doubt that the ESSN is a Governement-led process and that if it were not so, ECHO would not be allowed to provide budget support to the ESSN. The strong presence of TRC in this process is due to capacity building efforts encouraged by the humanitarian and donor community in preparation for transition and viable exit strategies. ECHO clarified that there will inevitably be a transition period from existing programs, where discussions will take place regarding caseload transfer/ picking-up exclusion rates and complementary programming.
  + **Lack of communication within humanitarian donor community –** UNICEF highlighted the importance of promoting strong communication ties between different humanitarian donors so as to raise awareness on rapidly changing circumstances and provide budget support to cover existing operational gaps on the ground. ECHO clarified that discussions with other donors are taking place at Brussels and Ankara levels to begin identifying a more longer term strategy for this operation. The ECHO-HIP will be released this week and will form the basis for future discussions with partners and the way proposals are formulated.
  + **Conflict Sensitivity –** The extent to which ECHO expects exacerbated tension in host communities between vulnerable Turkish citizens and refugees, as well as within the refugee community, was raised as a further point of concern. ECHO and TRC confirmed that they are extremely concerned about this possibility but no risk mitigation measures are currently in place and this is still being thought through.

3. Discussion on voucher value options: NGOs and IOM to increase their voucher values in line with WFP’s increase or maintain the TWG harmonized 50TL amount for current caseloads

* WFP noted that as of April 2016 their voucher values increased to 62TL per capita per month to cover beneficiary food assistance needs. This value is equivalent to 100% of the WFP referential food basket.
* An open discussion was held with all partners to determine the course of action and way forward with regards to aligning voucher values for similar programmatic purposes or alternatively maintaining the status quo until the ESSN is introduced. The group could not make a decision during the meeting and it was decided that further mapping should be prepared for a follow-up discussion at the June meeting. However, the challenge remains that reliable MEB and income data for Turkey is not yet felt to be available to inform decision making.
* An initial mapping exercise was undertaken jointly with all partners in the room to understand current voucher values for different ongoing programmes (i.e. basic needs or food or both). A summary of this mapping exercise is provided below and an action was agreed to complete this mapping ASAP to inform discussion at the next meeting:

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| Agency | Vouucher Value | Unit Size | Frequency | Program Area | Comments |
| CARE | 50TL | Individual | Monthly | Basic Needs | Considering increase but want this decision to be taken by the TWG as a group |
| Relief International | 300TL | Household | Monthly | Basic Needs |  |
| Save the Children | 150 USD | Household | Monthly | Basic Needs | Starting in 2017 |
| Mercy Corps | Undertaking market analysis to determine voucher value | | | | |
| ASAM | 300TL  900TL | Household of 3  Household of 6 | One-off | Basic Needs |  |
| Welthungerhilfe | 50TL | Individual | Monthly | Basic Needs | Will increase to 60TL |
| NRC | 900TL | Household | Monthly for 3 months | Basic Needs | Cash will be delivered as of 1 August to 720 households in Ankara via PTT. The voucher value will vary according to household vulnerability. |
| World Vision | Only working cross-border for now | | | | |
| PARCIC | 50TL | Individual | Monthly | Food |  |
| DRC | 50TL | Individual | Monthly | Food & Basic Needs |  |
| Concern | 50TL | Individual | Monthly | Basic Needs |  |

***The following points of concern were raised by partners, particularly NGOs:***

* Concern was raised by partners that if they were to increase their voucher values, this would have repercussions on their caseload management and sustainability of programming for the next few months. One option to counter this issue would be for WFP to absorb partner caseloads, however, this felt by the NGOs to not provide a particularly viable option as it would require WFP to set up contracting of shops for very small caseloads in somewhat randomly dispersed areas and would lead to challenges relating to accountability.
* WHH noted that TRC is running a program in Gaziantep in partnership with WFP for only food with one transfer value and another program in Gaziantep in partnership with WHH for basic needs with a different voucher value.
* Other concerns were that the WFP voucher value increase was not a particularly consultative process, despite its role as TWG Chair, and WFP was driven by its own programmatic requirements to diverge from the TWG harmonized value without group agreement.
* WFP-VAM colleagues also stressed that it may be pointless to harmonize voucher values at this stage when dealing with different programmatic objectives either related to food or basic needs. This is because the 62TL proposed does not cover basic needs.
* CARE raised the issue of lack of sufficient knowledge in regards to the analysis justifying the 62TL value. Lack of information provision and consultation hinders partner programmatic decision-making.
* WFP did however inform the TWG of the voucher value increase in April noting the need to move from 80% to 100% of the referential food basket, supplementing government activities in camps with an additional 35TL bringing in an overall assistance package of 85TL inside camps (where there are no shelter and utility costs). WFP vulnerability analysis also took place for off-camp refugees and resulted in a timely moment to promote this increase in light of political discussions on the ESSN.
* The WFP referential food basket was harmonized in 2014 for the Middle East and the 62TL value is also the result of anlysis of WFP contracted and non-contracted shops.
* WFP clarified that the reason for this sudden voucher value increase is also due to the fact that it could not take place when AFAD was in charge of off-camp management because the humanitarian community could not be seen as providing more assistance to vulnerable Syrians than what was agreed in the Turkish Social Welfare System (i.e. 50TL).
* As a result of recent political shifts whereby DGMM is primarily responsible for off-camp operations and MoFSP for in-camp operations, this transition became feasible.
* Understanding the logic of interventions and harmonizing capping requirements is also key prior to establishing new plans.
* Concern was raised with regards to beneficiary miscommunication and misunderstandings due to E-Card branding issues, in particular the example was raised by WHH who also partner with TRC and hence some TRC branded cards are uploaded with 62TL per month and some with 50TL per month.
* ***A number of different options were proposed:*** 
  + Maintaining similar voucher values (i.e. the existing TWG harmonized value) for a transition period for consistency purposes;
  + Align with WFP if the logic of the intervention makes sense;
  + Align within geographical (probably provincial) areas so as to avoid generating conflicts/resentments between districts where different actors are present;
  + WFP to absorb partner caseloads based on bilateral discussions.
* ***Action Points:***
  + CBI-TWG to collect further data to be able to inform partner voucher-value increase (member value mapping).
  + WFP to share its monitoring reports in two-months time to assess how the increase in voucher value has impacted beneficiaries.
  + CBI-TWG to take on the responsibility of mapping CBI interventions for basic needs and food and then feeding relevant information into sectoral working groups.

4. Presentation/Discussion on the ToRs for the Cash Consultant funded by CARE .

* Due to time constraints, it was not possible to address this agenda item. Partners were thanked for their feedback. ECHO also to provide feedback.

5. Overview of existing partner accountability approaches & introduction to *Review of Beneficiary Feedback on E-Voucher Mechanisms*

* Due to time constraints, it was not possible to address this agenda item. It will however be discussed during the next meeting on 28 June.
* Partners are encouraged to share their approaches to Accountability to Affected Populations with Sara Fowler, AAP Advisor at WFP, in an effort to begin designing minimum standards and guidelines on this topic.

6. Presentation on the methodological approach to conducting the Multi-Sector Household Survey in Urfa and Gaziantep & key findings

* For further information on the presentation delievered by Yasemin Sener, Program Advisor at Concern, please visit the following drop-box link: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/6v2by8s3o5ym5mr/AAAVteLjI4iuXWemrI6ipoeda?dl=0> or alternatively the email Annex.

***The following questions were raised by partners:***

* Partners requested further insight into the **verification process** adopted, in light of heightened mobility of refugees. Concern clarified that it conducts regular verification exercises to ensure that families are still present in country. This focuses on presence and checking of ID rather than re-assessment (agencies have different approaches to verification).
* Questions on the **vulnerability targeting criteria** adopted were also raised. Concern uses a weighted scoring selection system which was harmonised between Concern and CARE. The system includes automatic inclusion and exclusion criteria and a scoring system is applied.
* Questions were raised on the significance of the **role of the outreach teams** in identifying vulnerable households. It was noted that field monitors’ judgement is especially important in identifying vulnerable households due to their extensive experience in the field.
* It was noted that the **inclusion rate** for April 2016 was 46% in the seven districts in Urfa where Concern operates. Previously the inclusion rate was higher because of 500 more households in Akcakale from the June/July 2015 Tel Abyad influx who were supported in the truck park which people have now moved away from.
* **Complementary Programming –** ECHO requested further clarity on how Concern coordinates with other actors in the province. Concern specified that it coordinated with CARE, that operates in the remaining two rural districts in Urfa and the selection system for the two organizations is harmonized.
* **Documenting other nationalities and unregistered refugees –** ECHO requested further information in this regard (i.e. which of our operation areas we are aware of non-Syrian refugees residing in) and Concern clarified that it also assisted 1,000 Iraqi refugees in Urfa and takes note of unregistered refugees as well as households with multiple family IDs.

7. AOB – Agency Updates and Closing Remarks

* Agencies were requested by ECHO to begin collecting or to share available data on the following items:
  + % of unregistered refugees (both Syrian and non-Syrian) in operation areas (i.e. data from household survey);
  + % of households with multiple family ID numbers based on partner data.

*Next CBI TWG:* ***Thursday, 28 June 2016****, 11:00 am to 13:00 pm @ UNHCR.*

**ATTENDEES:**

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