

Supporting cash assistance with market monitoring

Introducing the new JMMI guidance

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INTRODUCTION

In today's environment of constrained funding and rising needs, it is more crucial than ever to ensure that humanitarian aid, including cash and voucher assistance (CVA), is as effective and data-driven as possible. The [Joint Market Monitoring Initiative \(JMMI\)](#) is a market monitoring methodology developed by IMPACT, through its initiative REACH, to provide humanitarian and development actors with key data on market prices and functionality needed to design CVA programming.

Centring on two key indicators—the cost of the Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB) and the Market Functionality Score (MFS)—the JMMI brings together cash actors from throughout a response to produce **harmonised, fully comparable market data across an entire country or response area**. To date, JMMIs have been launched in over 20 countries, and REACH's recently published [Global Guidance Note on the JMMI](#) lays the groundwork for this approach to expand even further.

Cash is uniquely suited for today's constrained funding environment

The role and scale of CVA in global humanitarian response [has expanded dramatically over the last 15 years](#), with advocates arguing it offers **greater economic efficiency**, enabling humanitarian actors to do more with less throughout all phases of a crisis, from preparedness to emergency response to recovery.

In addition, **CVA is people-centred**, providing communities with the type of aid [they continually tell us they prefer](#), restoring choice and dignity to people affected by crises. It provides more choice for recipients in meeting their needs, giving them a greater sense of dignity and control over their own lives. The provision of CVA can also have **multiplier effects**, stimulating local economies and providing benefit reaching far beyond the recipients of aid.

For all of these reasons, the Global Donor Cash Forum, through its [Common Donor Approach to Humanitarian Cash Assistance \(May 2025\)](#), reaffirmed its commitment to promote the scale-up of CVA wherever appropriate and feasible.

In the global context of rising needs and declining funding, ensuring that humanitarian assistance is effective and aligned with communities' wishes is crucial, and in many contexts, CVA is a strong way forward.

19.6%

of humanitarian aid distributed as CVA in 2024, with this percentage expected to fall further in 2025 ([CALP Network](#)).

20+

humanitarian and early recovery contexts worldwide where the JMMI has been implemented.

Market monitoring is crucial to support CVA implementation and scale-up

Ensuring CVA is implemented wherever feasible and desired by communities is an important consideration, but monitoring markets on a local level is needed to ensure that the aid remains relevant in each context. Why?



JMMI assessment in Ethiopia

- Market monitoring helps us to ensure that markets in our target areas are *sufficiently functional* and that the basic conditions are in place for CVA to be effective.
- Tracking *item availability* helps us ensure that households have access to the basic goods they need to survive.
- Tracking *prices over time* helps us to quantify household financial burdens, showing us how much aid an average local household needs to survive.
- Understanding these financial burdens enables us to *dynamically update standard multi-purpose cash transfer values*, helping us to insulate households from the economic instability that accompanies many humanitarian crises.

The Joint Market Monitoring Initiative (JMMI) is designed to make CVA possible

The JMMI is a market monitoring system most often run by REACH, but always organised through, and in collaboration with, Cash Working Groups or similar coordinating bodies within a response. The model was first developed and piloted in northern Syria in 2014, but has continued to evolve ever since. To date, JMMIs have been implemented in **over 20 humanitarian and early recovery contexts worldwide**.

At its heart are two main pieces of information, updated in every round in every location covered by the JMMI:

- The cost of the **Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB)** or an equivalent basket, to track evolutions in household financial burdens and enable the calculation of standard cash transfer values.
- The **Market Functionality Score (MFS)**, to track evolutions in market functionality based on five overarching dimensions (accessibility, availability, affordability, resilience, and infrastructure).

The JMMI's data on market prices and MEB costs, combined with income and expenditure data, can be fed directly into trigger mechanisms endorsed by a national Cash Working Group to **enable frequent updates to standard multi-purpose cash transfer values**, ensuring that these transfers are locally informed and highly responsive to changes in local households' economic well-being.

The JMMI can also raise red flags about developing pockets of economic stress, as well as about highly local deteriorations in market functionality and resilience, enabling CVA actors to dynamically adjust their programming to account for these changes.

Although the methodology was first designed to support humanitarian CVA programming, the JMMI is equally useful to inform CVA distributions in early recovery and development contexts.



JMMI assessment in Sudan

The JMMI Global Guidance Note

To provide a **comprehensive overview of the Joint Market Monitoring Initiative approach and methodology for external audiences**, REACH has published a Global Guidance Note bringing together more than 10 years of experience designing, implementing, and refining JMMIs. Providing a comprehensive overview of all stages of the JMMI cycle from assessment and tool design, through data collection and cleaning, all the way through analysis, interpretation, and dissemination of results, the [JMMI Global Guidance Note](#) aims to make the **methodology more transparent and enable Cash Working Groups to launch JMMIs in more diverse contexts**.

How can you use the JMMI Global Guidance Note?

- *As an introduction to the JMMI methodology and its requirements*, either as a new JMMI participant or as a coordinator of CVA programming interested in bringing a JMMI to your context.
- *As a reference guide* for anyone already coordinating or participating in a JMMI, analysing JMMI data, or using or citing JMMI findings in their own work.
- *To guide the launch of JMMIs in new contexts with the support of REACH*—before doing this, please contact REACH to receive further tools and guidance.



[Download the JMMI Global Guidance Note here](#)

ABOUT REACH

REACH facilitates the development of information tools and products that enhance the capacity of aid actors to make evidence-based decisions in emergency, recovery, and development contexts. The methodologies used by REACH include primary data collection and in-depth analysis, and all activities are conducted through inter-agency aid coordination mechanisms. REACH is a joint initiative of IMPACT Initiatives, ACTED, and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNITAR-UNOSAT).