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1. MPC response overview

The data below correspond to **emergency MPC one-off** for EQ survivors, as reported by partners to the [FSL EQ Response Tracker](#) (last accessed 24 Feb.)

Totals (cumulative)

of implementing partners: **11** (5 Syrian NGOs and 6 international NGOs)

of households assisted: **41,841**

of individuals benefiting from this assistance (indicative): **190,224**

Total value distributed (in USD): **\$6 million**

By governorate

Aleppo

Total # of HHs assisted: **13,665**

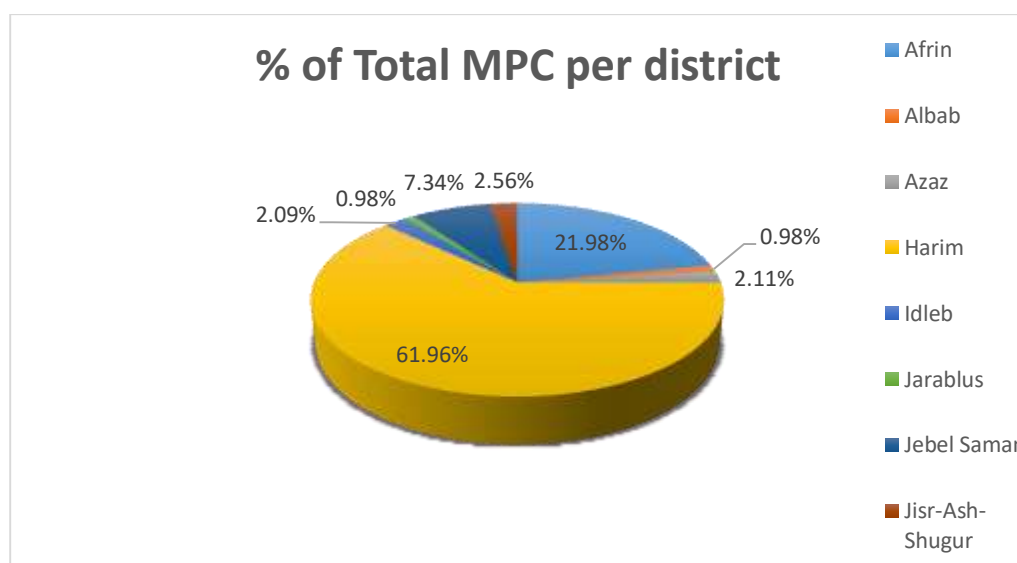
Total value distributed (in USD): **\$2 million**

Idleb

Total # of HHs assisted: **28,176**

Total value distributed (in USD): **\$4 million**

MPC coverage of worst-affected districts: Harim and Afrin



2. Key recommendations on emergency Multipurpose Cash (MPC)¹

2.1 Priority distribution areas:²

- Districts worst-affected by the EQ:³ Harim, Afrin, Jisr ash-Shugur
- Cities/towns most heavily affected: Harim, Afrin, Jisr-Ash-Shugur, Al Bab, Idlib, Jebel Saman (with an estimated combined population of more than 374,500; across NWS, an estimated 2.9 million people were affected across 137 cities and towns).
- Reception/collective centers established for the displaced in the affected sub-districts of origin and arrival; and designated areas in pre-existing camps as identified by the CCCM Cluster

2.2 Registration and distribution

- Conduct registration and distribution on the same day. Emergency MPC one-off as a rapid response at displacement sites should not entail prolonged processes that may just lead to unnecessary burden and unmet expectations from people in need.

2.3 Transfer value and priority household profiles

- Distribute **\$150** one-off first – some families may need only one round to organize departure from collective/reception centers.
- Distribute two (2) succeeding rounds at **\$100** to households who remain after receiving the one-off. The **\$150-\$100-\$100** sequence intends to support the most urgent needs for a period of 3 months, including the need for cash to afford better shelter arrangements than last-resort sites.
- Prioritize families with injured and deceased members, as well as those with categorical/observable vulnerabilities: e.g. pregnant lactating women, elderly, members with disability, or chronic illness.
- **Consider distributing the 2nd and 3rd rounds into one lumpsum distribution of \$200**, if preferred by recipients. This could facilitate better access to services, including healthcare, transportation, telecommunications, which are critical needs especially for those with health and mobility issues.
- **Key takeaways:** While by design, MPC's transfer value is calculated using the price of basic food and non-food commodities as proxy (SMEB), the earthquake response has highlighted the following:
 - **MPC is sector neutral.** There has been a widely accepted assumption that MPC is spent mostly on food and therefore, if markets for goods are not functional, MPC should not be considered. This is proving to be a narrow appreciation of the broader utility of cash from the perspective of EQ survivors.
 - **The versatility of cash is giving MPC/MPCA a new meaning.** MPC will be used for critical needs and services, as defined by the survivors receiving the cash. For some, it would facilitate travel out of collective centers and off to places where they have relatives, or where they would feel safe from predicted tremors and aftershocks, or where they could find healthcare facilities that are not overburdened. For others, as rubble removal progresses, the cash could help pay for timely, proper burial rites for deceased loved ones --a minor consolation for people who have undergone tragedy upon tragedy since the start of the civil war 12 years ago. As such, MPCA could also stand for "most people-centered assistance".

2.4 Currency of distribution:

Consider shifting to TRY and communicate the rationale clearly to EQ survivors.

Pre-EQ: USD was the recommended currency of distribution for MPC. The CWG advocated for the shift to USD to preserve the value of the assistance and people's purchasing power, given the socio-economic impact of the protracted conflict and displacement, the Covid crisis, and the subsequent collapse of the SYP. It was in this

¹ MPC defined as a rapid, no-regrets, first-line response. These recommendations may change as the EQ response progresses.

² per OCHA Sitrep (25 Feb.); and DEEP Update #10 (24 Feb.)

³ Districts with the highest # of deaths and injuries from the EQ, per OCHA Sitrep (25 Feb.); and DEEP Update #10 (24 Feb.)

context and from the perspective of recipients of the cash assistance (AAP principle) that the CWG recommended USD as the transfer currency for MPC.

Post-EQ:

Large-scale displacement from a sudden-onset emergency creates a completely different operational environment that requires adaptability and flexibility on the part of humanitarian organisations. Even as we recommend TRY as the currency, at least for this emergency phase (3-6 months), the CWG is basing this on the same AAP principle that underpinned the recommended shift to USD from SYP a few years ago. In this case, which currency can facilitate faster delivery time; and which currency can recipients use more immediately to meet their needs?

Rationale for recommending TRY

- **Convenience and less risky for vulnerable groups.** Enables recipients to spend the cash immediately upon receipt, without the extra step of finding and exchange shop.
 - Scenario: For the elderly, or persons with disability, or pregnant and lactating women with young children, it would be inconvenient to leave the collective center or informal camps to find a currency exchange shop to exchange the USD to TRY. If they need to rely on strangers in the center to exchange the dollar for them, there's a risk of exploitation or even theft.
- **Cost_efficiency/cost-effectiveness.** By delivering the TRY equivalent of the recommended transfer values, humanitarian organizations could use any savings from not having to pay exchange/service fees to then increase the number of families they can help.
- **USD challenges.** In the last CWG 2-minute survey, 63% of participants (16) cited the ff. USD-related issues, which could get exacerbated in the short to medium term as cash and voucher assistance (CVA) gets scaled up for the EQ response:
 - Scarcity of good quality lower dollar denominations (REACH monthly market assessments pre-EQ). In recent months, some partners have reported shortage in \$50 dollar bills.
 - PTT's USD liquidity. In a scale-up scenario in NWS, functioning branches of PTT may not always have adequate dollar reserves and this would likely result in delays.
 - USD puts an additional burden on beneficiaries.

Key messages to beneficiaries:

- The value of the assistance remains the same as the USD equivalent.
- Currency exchange shops may not be accessible to the location of reception collective centers and informal displacement sites. You may end up spending money on transportation just to exchange the USD to TRY.
- When you receive the cash in TRY, you can spend it immediately on your most urgent needs.
- Consider how burdensome and risky it could be for the more vulnerable groups, i.e. the elderly, people with disability or illness, or pregnant women when they receive cash in USD.

Key recommendations to Finance/Procurement teams of humanitarian organisations:

- Amend contractual agreements with Financial Service Providers (FSPs) to include currency flexibility.
- Include a provision that sets the currency exchange rate per Türkiye Central Bank's published rates the day before the cash transfer to minimize losses for beneficiaries.

2.5 Reporting and Coordination

- Continue reporting your emergency MPC to the [FSL EQ response tracker](#) for now. Many thanks to the FSL Cluster team for hosting MPC information until the CWG gets a dedicated IMO support.
- Please **DO NOT** report MPC to multiple Clusters. Pre-EQ, partners submitted their MPC 4Ws only to the CWG, as the de facto coordination body for this multisectoral modality. Reporting MPC to Clusters would result in duplication and inaccurate information.
- The CWG team will continue finding resourceful ways of carrying out its coordination function without adding to the numerous meetings that take precious time away from partners working day and night on the emergency response. Partners overwhelmingly agree, per our last 2-minute survey, with the CWG's meeting moratorium for now.

3. Financial Service Providers (FSPs): Updates and recommendations

The CWG has been monitoring the transaction fees of FSPs, more commonly referred to as MTAs (money transfer agents) serving the NWS region.

- MTAs requesting increase in transaction fees. While there's a renewed reporting of this development by partners, in reality, this development had already begun pre-EQ, in line with the global inflationary trends, exacerbated by Covid-induced supply chain issues and the Ukraine crisis.
- Rapid mapping of MTA rates. Post EQ, the CWG conducted a quick and dirty mapping of what key partners are paying MTAs in transaction fees. Overall, the rates shared by several partners ranged between 2-5%. However, a few partners reported receiving a rate increase request from their FSP from 5% to up to 10%. All it takes to undermine any bargaining leverage against exorbitant charges is one partner unilaterally agreeing to such terms.

Key recommendations:

- Ensure that your Finance/Procurement teams are already engaged with their counterparts in other CWG member organisations and are exchanging information on rates and experiences with MTAs.
- For well-funded international organisations, please do not take unilateral decisions on MTA rates. Be mindful that not all humanitarian organisations have the budget bandwidth you have. Coordinate to avoid indirectly undermining prevailing market rates and other partners' contractual agreements.
- Continue robust vetting of other MTAs in consultation with your donors to expand the pool of tried and tested FSPs, especially if you have plans to scale up CVA. This could minimize risks and monopoly, increase your scale-up capacity, while promoting healthy market competition.
- Flag FSP issues in real time with the CWG. We will be engaging with you on a more robust FSP mapping in the coming weeks and a safe platform to facilitate harmonized approaches with FSPs.

4. Joint Rapid Assessment of Markets (JRAM)

Key messages from the JRAM conducted by REACH with support from CWG and NGO Forum partners

- Assessed markets across NWS broadly remain open. In the vast majority of assessed communities, Key Informant (KI) vendors reported that either all vendors were operating or only a few shops were closed.
- Financial service providers are reportedly operating in over two thirds of assessed communities. However, in approximately a third of assessed communities KIs reported that these services would have limited or no capacity to meet increased demand.

- KI vendors reported that demand for credit in their stores has increased in more than two thirds of assessed communities since the earthquake. The same communities that reported increased demand for credit also reported reduced capacity to allow purchases on credit.
- The findings indicated market shortages and price increases of items in high demand, and where there is high reliance on imports from Türkiye, including tents, plastic sheets/tarpaulin, blankets, and gas.
- KI vendors reporting barriers to meeting greater demand said that lack of resources in addition to insufficient stock from suppliers and producers prevents them from meeting demand

Click [here](#) to read the full assessment, including the methodology.

5. A brief note on cash-for-work (CFW) activities

- The CWG will coordinate with ERL, FSL, SNFI and other relevant Clusters to come up with a joint set of recommendations for CFW activities as soon as possible.
- Some principles from the [CFW guidance](#) developed jointly by ERL and CWG partners remain relevant, especially the opportunity to leverage the CFW activity to foster social cohesion and solidarity. Consider this in the design and wage rates.
- Rather than setting CFW wage rates way above the prevailing market rates and in the process undermining social solidarity in the aftermath of a tragedy, reflect on how you can integrate your programming, such that the worst-affected EQ survivors are able to augment their income with the help of cash assistance for the next 3-6 months.
- Share your plans with the relevant Clusters and the CWG to facilitate harmonized approaches.