

JEOP Market Cash and Market Assistance Feasibility Assessment

Consultancy Title	Market Baseline and Cash Feasibility Assessment
RFP Number	ET4113
Location	Ethiopia
Contract Duration and LOE	75 billable days during the period of August 2022 through October 2022
Clarification Questions Due Date	August 3, 2022
Proposal Deadline	August 10, 2022
Contact Person	Bryan James Bryan.james@crs.org

Background

The Joint Emergency Operation (JEOP) is an emergency food security program targeting transitory food insecure households (HHs) in 128 USAID approved woredas through a beneficiary targeting process in collaboration with the Government of Ethiopia (GoE). JEOP has continued to provide commodity food items and cash support to people affected by drought, flood and displacement as identified in the mid-year review of the 2021 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) in Amhara, Oromia, Sidama, SNNPR, Tigray regions, and Dire Dawa Administration. The JEOP consortium is led by Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and includes CARE Ethiopia, Food for the Hungry Ethiopia (FHE), Organization for Rehabilitation and Development in Amhara (ORDA), Relief Society of Tigray (REST), and World Vision Ethiopia (WVE). Hararghe Catholic Secretariat (HCS), Meki Catholic Secretariat (MCS) are implementing partner for CRS. The JEOP serves as a food pipeline covering up to 33% of the emergency food needs in Ethiopia with a portion delivered through cash assistance and with the rest mainly covered by both WFP and the Government of Ethiopia (EDRMC).

JEOP's principal objective is to ensure that targeted communities in need of emergency food assistance have access to sufficient and appropriate food in a timely manner. This is done primarily through round-based distributions of in-kind food commodities and cash assistance programming to targeted project participants, in identified woredas. The JEOP consortium has, over the years, scaled up cash assistance in support of household choice of staple cereal purchase and transportation of food commodities due to the distance to recipient homes from the distribution points (FDPs).

Since 2011, Cash and voucher assistance (CVA) has grown to become an important tool for drought response in the region. One of the merits of using CVA is the reduced lead time of response where

appropriate and when compared to in-kind assistance, once systems have been established. In Ethiopia, even with the governments' "cash first principle" as implemented through the U/PSNP, there has been limited use of cash assistance for humanitarian emergency response in different contexts such as conflict, drought among others, however, this is changing slowly with improving infrastructure and engagement with the financial service providers on cash transfer systems/mechanisms.

The JEOP cash assistance was introduced in 2019 as a flexible resource transfer option for households targeted in areas where it deemed both feasible (with access to functional markets and high production that leads to sufficient supply of food in the local markets) and appropriate. This is an additional modality for providing food assistance along with funds to cover transportation top-ups to support transportation costs for project participants who live long distance from the FDPs.

- The **cash transfer value** per household is determined based on the family size of the eligible households which is linked to the amount of food requirement and transportation costs and aligned with the GoE transfer rates. JEOP incorporated cash in lieu of cereals (in-kind wheat grain distributions) in certain operational woredas, in partnership with FHE, HCS and MCS. The cash in lieu of wheat is provided to all households targeted for food assistance in selected kebeles. The cash in lieu of wheat is seasonal for up to 2 distribution rounds immediately following the harvest period when staple cereals are available on local market at low prices to allow project participants flexibility to use the cash for the type of cereals they choose.
- For **transportation cost top-ups**, households who incur significant cost of transportation and who sometimes opted to sell a portion of their food ration to cover the transportation costs were considered as eligible and targeted for the cash top-up. The cash for transportation top-up is integrated into programming as a means to protect families. This mechanism protects recipient households from selling their food rations after distribution and remaining food insecure or having members plunge into malnutrition. The project participants are determined by assessments in specific locations (woreda and kebeles eligible for cash assistance). All households targeted for the food assistance in selected kebeles are eligible for the transportation top-up for durations coinciding with food distribution rounds.

JEOP will continue providing cash to project participants in woredas selected in alignment with the food-cash integrated plan provided in coordination with the Government of Ethiopia (GoE) and other main food operators, including the World Food Program (WFP) and the GOE led Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP). The cash component will be considered by all JEOP Consortium members and will include both cash to project participants (creating demand) and market support where feasible (supply) hence the need for the assessment.

Purpose

The assessment itself will be designed to review secondary data and collect the necessary wide-ranging data/components to meet the JEOP needs. The secondary data review may include but is not limited to data/reports collected by the JEOP MEAL teams, market and price monitoring, government crop production assessments, government Central Statistics Agency of Ethiopia (CSA) data, cash working group joint assessments and JEOP cash assistance PDMs among others. The assessment will aim to collect market baseline data exploring market systems of specifically essential identified food commodities, transport systems, communities' access to markets, seasonal trends, infrastructure and perception of cash based interventions mechanism and determine modalities appropriate to deliver humanitarian food assistance in areas of JEOP operations. In order to ensure "do no harm" through the program, the assessment will additionally identify any risks to working with markets, the use of cash as a

modality of emergency humanitarian food assistance and propose mitigation measures while making recommendations for the most appropriate resource transfer modality, delivery mechanism for effective food assistance programming.

The main objectives of the cash and market appropriateness assessment including national marketing systems in the selected areas are as follows:

1. Establish a baseline for market functionality across JEOP operational areas for a) critical food commodities and b) transportation markets
2. Identify feasible and appropriate modality (ies) in JEOP operational areas (in-kind, cash, mix) for food and transportation assistance under the JEOP
3. Identify the most feasible and appropriate delivery mechanisms for cash assistance
4. Identify market support activities that the JEOP consortium could implement to strengthen market functionality to facilitate a gradual switch to market-based food assistance modalities
5. Based on the assessment findings and recommendations, establish a market monitoring plan that will support data-driven/evidence based JEOP project adaptations (e.g. Establish key indicators and triggers to monitor that would entail a switch in modality)

Main Tasks

As part of the consultancy proposal submission, the consultant is expected to;

1. Review secondary data and submit an inception report to CRS, specifying the cash and markets assistance study methodology, including plans for secondary data review, meetings, focus group discussion (FGDs) and key informant interviews (KIIs) checklist, the assessment tools and timeline. The inception report will be reviewed and approved by CRS prior to commencement of the consultancy tasks.
2. Propose the market baseline and cash feasibility assessment methodology.
3. Involve the government of Ethiopia (GoE) through direct consultation with the JEOP Consortium partners in all stages of developing and planning the assessment.
4. Collaborate with the JEOP Consortium members in validating the assessment proposal, mapped locations, tools, and methodology.
5. Carry out a field assessment, to gather both primary and secondary data to meet the objectives outlined above and to analyze the data collected and prepare assessment summary of findings report.
6. Make presentation to CRS/JEOP consortium partners to share key findings and recommendations of the analysis and consider suggestion from participants to supplement recommendations of the analysis.
7. Present findings and engage JEOP consortium members validating the assessment findings and decision-making process to determine the cash transfer modalities and market support activities in the short and medium term. Coordinate with other actors and analyse all other approaches in use (e.g., WFP, PSNP) to provide quality data to design and/or scale up the next phase of JEOP programmes and implemented to strengthen market functionality, supply, and ultimately a shift to more market-based food assistance under the JEOP.
8. Assessment Report; Prepare and submit a consultancy report to CRS within 20 days upon completion of data review and comments from the meeting with CRS/JEOP consortium partners. Report to consider recommendations on what to monitor and risk mitigation measures during the implementation of the identified response.

The report is expected to clearly outline strategic and operational actions for effective cash and market response activities by JEOP with no harm. The report should be written in English language and the length of the report excluding annexes should not exceed 50 pages.

The report should consist of cover page, table of contents, list of abbreviations or acronyms used, list of tables and graphs, summary of key findings and recommendations, introduction and clear objectives, situation analysis, description of JEOP, cash and market assessment methodology, findings, analysis, conclusions, and clear recommendations for cash assistance, modalities, and monitoring activities. The annexes which include collected primary and secondary data, detailed description of the methodology with data collection tools, list of interviewees, checklist, and consultant's brief biography. The report should be submitted electronically in a MS-Word document.

Assessment Questions

Market:

Are key markets functioning, flexible and with the capacity to adequately avail quality critical food commodities to project participants? What opportunities exist for market-based initiatives that can be implemented to strengthen markets functionality and facilitate a gradual switch to market-based food assistance modalities. What risks are identified related to specific groups of people and market-based programming and can they be mitigated?

Modality:

Which modalities are appropriate and feasible for food commodities and transportation markets (in-kind, cash, mix)? Do people prefer these modalities? Does the government support the use of these modalities to deliver humanitarian aid?

Delivery Mechanism:

What financial services are available, accessible and commonly used by the communities? What is the FSPs acceptability by the local community? What are the most feasible and appropriate delivery mechanisms for cash assistance?

Monitoring:

Based on the assessment findings, what market monitoring is required in order to support data-driven and evidence based JEOP project adaptations (e.g. Establish key indicators and triggers to monitor that would entail a switch in modality), where (geographic scope), and on what frequency? Can these indicators be monitored using existing (secondary) partner resources or will CRS need to engage in regular data collection? Assessment Questions

Methodology

Several sampling techniques will be used to draw a sample size and gather information for the subject topics being investigated. The consultant will propose the sampling strategy (the potential sources of data/information and how they would be selected) for example, the assessment employs qualitative methods including review of secondary documents, key informant interview, focus group discussion and observations. Purposive sampling of geographic location and informants will be made in discussion with the JEOP based on predetermined criteria for inclusion of geographic location (JEOP woredas) and identification of the potential sources of information (vendors, local government stakeholders, transporters, partner staff, staff of peer organizations and others).

Assessment Team

Enumerator selection and Training in readiness for the assessment

The consultant is responsible for identifying an appropriate team to lead the assessment, including identification of individuals who are knowledgeable and have good understanding of the local context in order to ensure good coverage and, quality data collected. Joint interviews will be implemented and close collaborations with local government established for future engagements. The enumerators will be expected to conduct systematic data-based inquiries, practice within the limits of their professional training and competence and decline to conduct any activities that fall substantially outside those limits. They should demonstrate cultural sensitivity and competence.

Risk Mitigation and Adaptive Measures

Security:

Security situation in the North is improving but cannot be ignored. The consultant and their team to receive security briefing prior to beginning the assessment. Areas that have experienced conflict such as the Tigray Region are included in the assessment however, the consultant in discussion with the CRS security Team and upon receiving security advisory will evaluate security situation in the areas to be visited for the assessment.

Adaptive Measures for Covid-19:

JEOP and the consultancy firm will use the standard operating procedures (SOPs) for Covid-19 risk mitigation applied during food distribution, other programmatic and the routine monitoring activities since the start of COVID-19 in Ethiopia. The adaptive procedures support prevention, mitigation, and control of COVID-19 and ensure the evaluation activities continue in a safe manner. SOPs informed by the WHO, the Ministry of Health and CRS global guidance to safeguard all individuals involved in the assessment activities (informants, facilitators, and data collectors). The consultant and those interacting with JEOP and communities must be vaccinated and should adhere to the following procedures and consistently applied during the assessment:

1. Stay home when unwell and seek medical advice
2. Ensure those with symptoms self-quarantine
3. Maintain physical distancing
4. Follow recommended hygiene practices
5. Wear nonmedical masks all the time
6. Give special consideration to people who are most at risk of developing severe illness
7. Follow GoE restrictions and request authorization for essential services.
8. Engage in constant open communication with informants
9. Limit group size in the focus group discussion to maximum of 10 people

10. Conduct focus group discussion in well ventilated room or open areas

Intellectual Property and Data Protection

CRS, JEOP Partners and consultant hold the rights to intellectual property produced under the cash and market feasibility assessment. CRS will retain the rights, title, and interest to data that is gathered/collected or produced under the JEOP. USAID reserves a royalty-free, worldwide, nonexclusive, and irrevocable right to use, disclose, reproduce, prepare derivative works, distribute copies to the public, and perform publicly and display publicly, in any manner and for any purpose, and to have or permit others to do so.

It is unethical for any member of the consultancy or assessment team to use information gathered from project participants during this assignment for anything other than the JEOP work (assessment, presentation to JEOP Consortium and report). Should viable reason present itself for using the information obtained for other purposes, then, CRS must be consulted, and prior approval in writing secured. This must be adhered to, especially when the material is of a controversial nature and exclusively involves the private lives of the target population.

The ultimate responsibility for gathering and disseminating information lies with CRS JEOP Consortium. Therefore, the Consultant and the assessment teams is expected to turn in to CRS all data and other information that is used as the basis of the team's final inferences.

Data must be shared with CRS in a usable format and secured using password protected devices at all times. The consultant will be required to submit a detailed data protection plan through the assessment proposal.

Ethical Considerations

State that every member of the assessment team must adhere to the CRS Code of Conduct, CRS MEAL policy. The assessment teams are required to obtain informed consent from its informants during data collection by informing the purpose of data collection, data confidentiality and data protection. Indicate data to be collected comply with the CRS MEAL policy on responsible and open data collected for the purpose of the survey, this will be de-identified. Numeric identification will be used instead of person's names and low-level geographic location information. GPS location, biometric information, and multimedia contents (photo, videos, and audio records) will not be collected and stored

Deliverables and Activities

An inception report to confirm agreement on the proposed methodology, demonstrate a deep understanding of existing resources that can help target/orient the assessment through secondary data review, data collection tools, parameters, analysis plan, planned outputs, options on structure, and workplan. In addition, a validation meeting with power point presentation to the stakeholders capturing the geographical coverage, methodology, tools and workplan for consensus. A detailed briefing on the initial key findings is to be provided at the end of the assessment and includes the challenges faced while conducting the assessment. Detailed activities are highlighted below:

Activities

1. Consultant is engaged and arrives in Ethiopia
2. Meeting with JEOP Consortium Members/teams
3. Desk review documents are identified and gathered
4. Meeting with Government Officials (EDRMC etc.)
5. desk review and summary document produce
6. Inception report shared

7. Review and update assessment proposal
8. Assessment and sampling methodology proposal developed and validated by JEOP Consortium
9. Identification and validation of the market baseline coverage area. Sampled zones/Woredas are mapped
10. Tools are developed, reviewed, and validated
11. Assessment proposal updated, finalized, and presented to the JEOP consortium members
12. Presentation to consortium members and GoE for the validation of sampled areas/key markets and the assessment tools
13. Assessment tools are used to train the data collectors/enumerators
14. Assessment tools are tested, reviewed, and updated
15. Changes are discussed and validated
16. Data Collection in all the sampled and mapped out areas starts and is completed within the 15 days
17. Pre-analysis and data review and any poor-quality data is repeated
18. Finalize analysis and share with JEOP consortium members for review
19. Data validation meeting held presentation of findings by the consultant
20. Final report findings prepared and presented
21. Consultant finalizes report, is reviewed by JEOP and final report shared by end of October 2022

Timeline and Location

The assessment will start with data review in August 2022 and conclude after the data collection, analysis, presentations, and reporting by Mid October 2022. This consultancy is estimated to take 75 days unless there are specific challenges or locations that may not be accessible at the time of the assessment hence reducing the coverage area.

Consultancy location is in Ethiopia.

Payment

The consultant will invoice based on incurred billable days for work completed. Payments will be processed net 30 days after completion of the following four action steps:

1. Submission of deliverable/s from consultant
2. Submission of invoice/s from consultant
3. Approval of deliverable/s by CRS
4. Approval of invoice/s by CRS

Payment will be made in three main tranches:

- Milestone 1 (30% payment) on finalization, agreement with the JEOP and sign-off of the inception report.
- Milestone 2 (50% payment) on finalization and presentation of the initial key findings to JEOP.
- Milestone 3 (15% payment) on finalization and presentation of the final reviewed report and sign-off of the final report

Application Requirements

Applicants must submit the following:

1. Cover letter
2. Compensation rate per day

3. Resume/ CV that demonstrates qualifications and a list of clients/projects that he/she has supported in digital health category.
4. 2–4-page summary of approach for conducting the assignment and completing the deliverables.
5. Three professional references, with the following details about the references: (a) name, (b) position, (c) company, (d) phone number, (e) email address, and (f) city, state, country

Proposal Deadline

All proposals must be received by Bryan James at bryan.james@crs.org no later than August 10, 2022 [11:59 PM EST for electronic submission]. The solicitation name “ET4113: Market Baseline and Cash Feasibility Assessment” must be included in the subject line.

Q&A Opportunity

Prospective bidders may submit any clarification questions to Bryan James at bryan.james@crs.org, by August 3, 2022. Responses will be provided to any known prospective bidders on August 5, 2022.