

# Using the Conflict Sensitive Market Analysis Tool (CoSMAT): Pilots in Afghanistan and Colombia

## Introduction

The humanitarian community using market-based and Cash Voucher Assistance (CVA), has designed many field-focused tools, including a variety of (rapid) market analysis tools. However, aspects of “do no harm” and conflict-sensitivity, especially in fragile contexts, have not yet been standardised in a specific set of tools. World Vision has sound expertise in conflict sensitivity and works with partners that have significant expertise in rapid market analysis. As such, this initiative is very relevant for World Vision’s operations in fragile contexts, and also helps other agencies approach context and market analysis, design, response option analysis and implementation as well as monitoring (of context and market dynamics) for effective, needs-tailored delivery mechanisms.

The interaction between conflict and market dynamics can significantly undermine programme outcomes, but this could be mitigated by providing early warning indications. Acknowledging that there is currently no tool that enables a robust rapid trend analysis for both local conflict dynamics and market dynamics and how they influence each other, World Vision has developed CoSMAT to help align market performance indicators within a broader context and conflict analysis approach.

This tool enables humanitarian agencies and partners to:

- rapidly analyse and reflect on the existing risks related to ongoing conflict and markets, and how risks are likely to impact programming;
- use the identified risks to determine conflict sensitive cash and voucher interventions. This tool contributes to the Response Option Analysis (decision on modality and delivery of assistance either via cash, voucher, in-kind or service-provision) process, which should happen prior to finalising the intervention design for a market-based and/or CVAssistance or during the early stages of implementation; and
- regularly monitor and determine local context indicators to trigger changes to the response

## Overview of the pilots

The pilot countries of Afghanistan and Colombia were identified based on the complexity of the two contexts, which are heavily impacted by mixed factors of chronic instability, displacement, conflict, and violence. Importantly, both countries have significant experience using CVA as modalities to meet basic needs and empower communities to address their own priorities in a dignified way, and a strong history of working closely with local communities to ensure buy-in from the people World Vision serves. Given the aspects of fragility that impact these two contexts, the CoSMAT - which has been designed to help field teams better understand and monitor key contextual risks that could impact or be impacted by relationships between and amongst communities, market stakeholders and response teams - was deemed highly relevant to ensure an accountable and safe market-based response.

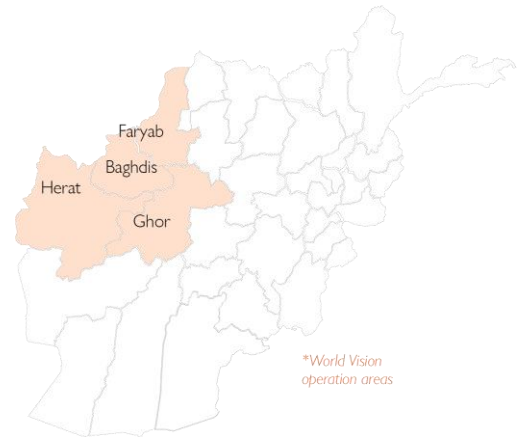
It was also important to acknowledge the many differences in the two contexts and how the tool would need to be adapted to be suitable for the different field realities. A key aim of the tool is to ensure teams of different sizes, with different levels of resources could use the 4-step process in way that make sense for them, whether using a lighter-touch approach with programme workshops and qualitative data collection, or more comprehensive approaches that enable larger-scale data collection processes. Regardless of the selected approaches used, it was critical in both contexts to ensure a variety of voices were heard, from vulnerable groups of the community to market stakeholders and civil society representatives.

This case study briefing explores the experiences of both World Vision Afghanistan and World Vision Colombia in using the CoSMAT and outlines the approaches used, lessons learned and takeaway action points that have contributed to safer, more accountable and conflict-sensitive Cash Voucher Assistance (CVA).

## Cash and Voucher Assistance: Experience in Afghanistan

### Background

The province of Badghis has a population of approximately 550,000, mainly Tajiks, Pashtuns, Uzbeks, and Turkmens. It is situated in western Afghanistan and borders Herat, Faryab and Ghor, and shares an international border with Turkmenistan. It is divided into seven districts with Qala-I-Naw being its major center. Badghis is one of the areas continually affected by natural disasters (floods and droughts) and was once on the highly contested provinces. The impacts of the disasters and conflict resulted in the displacement of 29,000 people in 2020 alone. (<https://euaa.europa.eu/country-guidance-afghanistan-2020/badghis>)



World Vision Afghanistan has maintained its operational presence in the province since 2001 and has over the years providing life-saving humanitarian assistance as well resilience building programmes to over than 6 million Afghans. Humanitarian assistance have been provided in Health and Nutrition; Food Security and Livelihoods; Education; Child Protection; and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene sectors.

Food security initiatives are designed toward lifesaving emergency food assistance (cash or in kind), improving agricultural production through input support, farmers' capacity building, market development and natural resources management.

### Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) in Afghanistan

Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) in Afghanistan provides a lifeline to vulnerable families who have unmet basic needs, for example those who are acutely food insecure on the verge of starvation. In line with World Vision's promise to deliver 50% of humanitarian aid through cash and vouchers to 4 million of the most vulnerable children in fragile contexts by 2022, World Vision provided CVA to 120,000 people last year, enabling families to buy food and address their nutritional gaps, leveraging the power of local markets and strengthening local community traders and vendors, as well as addressing urgent humanitarian needs of most vulnerable communities.

CVA, as well as in-kind or any other modality, comes with associated risks including diversion or theft of funds, corruption, selection of beneficiaries and in transfer of cash, collusion in corruption by aid agency staff and/or money transfer staff, fraud, security risks to staff and beneficiaries and protection risks (Gender-Based Violence/ GBV) amongst others. Additionally, the humanitarian community has designed many field-focused tools, including a variety of (rapid) market analysis tools. However, aspects of "do no harm" and conflict-sensitivity, especially in fragile contexts, have not yet been standardised in a specific set of tools.

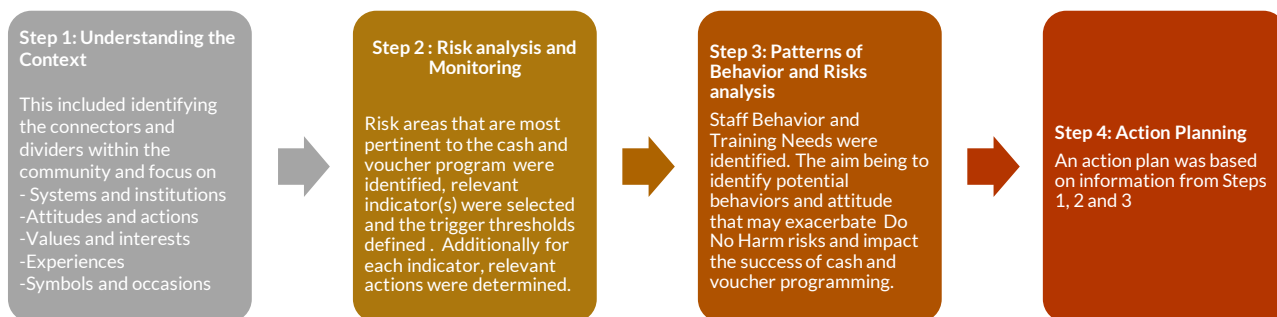
The fragility and volatility of Afghanistan makes it one of the most difficult places to implement effective cash transfer programming, To address challenges faced above, World Vision piloted the application tool, namely CoSMAT (Conflict Sensitive Market Analysis Tool), in Badghis province to a) rapidly analyse and reflect on the existing risks related to ongoing conflict and markets, and how risks are likely to impact programming; b) Use the identified risks to determine conflict sensitive CVA interventions; and c) Regularly monitor and determine local context indicators to trigger changes to the response.

# Cash and Voucher Assistance : Experience in Afghanistan

## Activities – What Was Done

Focus group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews (KIIs) were held with community members in December 2020 (disaggregated into male and female), as well local stakeholders from government, and local leadership in Qala I Naw and Abkammari districts.

Discussions looked at common concerns, shared institutions, decision making processes, issues around corruption, fraud, triggers for community tensions as well identifying key risks affecting men and women in the communities. Below is a diagram illustrating the steps taken:



## Results and Analysis

CoSMAT allowed World Vision to have a deeper understanding of the intra-relational dynamics that contribute to the basis for CVA project design; for example: issues around access to markets which were perceived as a limiting factor for women. Inclusion and exclusion errors brought on by nepotism or coercion then can be rectified through rigorous verification processes which World Vision has included in their Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

A risk analysis was conducted to identify and prioritise risks, identify relevant indicator(s) and define trigger thresholds. After which, the relevant actions for each risk identified were developed for implementation should any trigger threshold be reached

The risks raised by interviewees have changed significantly with the drastic changes that have taken place in 2021.

These include increase in food prices, hyperinflation, loss of job opportunities, general economic decline, transition in government, drought, cash liquidity problems which brought a new dimension to the overall CVA.

Restriction of women's participation in economic and social activities is a hindrance to attaining CVA project goals as access to markets for women becomes more difficult.

The tool enables to identify, monitor, mitigate risks & triggers and intentionally adapt programmatic design to absorb related shocks.



## Cash and Voucher Assistance : Experience in Afghanistan

### Results and analysis (continued)

Risks identified in the analysis as well the threshold triggers that required action included the following:

- Conflict and insecurity resulting in theft, diversion and extortion of cash from beneficiaries.
- Sudden shocks such as COVID-19 resulting in increase of market prices for basic commodities.
- External influence on the impartiality of assistance to beneficiaries
- Health risks – COVID-19 pandemic: beneficiaries and WVA staff are at increased risk of contracting the disease during the implementation of activities.

Risk Indicator	Data Source	Frequency	Responsible Party	Baseline	Trigger Threshold	Action(s)
% or proportion of beneficiaries who report experiencing increased exposure to violence, fraud, extortion, other protection threats due to the programme	Media/news, project staff , MEAL reports, partner reports	Monthly	M&E Officer	0	5%	1. Investigate the incidence as well verify case reported , Confirm reports and temporarily suspend programming to understand impact on WV beneficiaries, staff and volunteers and risk for reoccurrence, Advocate and engage with local leadership in addressing the concerns and issues raised. Reassess security conditions in the area. Inform communities on actions taken as well inform the donor . Depending on findings of security assessment , need to revisit the programmatic approach
% of individuals who believe that WV uses a fair selection process to identify beneficiaries	Project beneficiary list Xcheck with monitoring data (spot checks, signed receipts), project staff or partner reports, PDM reports	Monthly	M&E Officer	0	10%	Halt distributions to re-confirm beneficiaries via phone call, follow up home visits/assessments
% of recipients (males and females )who are aware of: a) selection criteria, b) transfer values, and c) duration of project	PDM reports, Random checks on beneficiaries	Monthly	M&E Officer	0	5%	Activities proceed but should they be an indication of recipients not being aware of the aspects mentioned then there is need to review the information dissemination approach and use the best communication channels that reach out to all beneficiaries
% change in prices for basic staple commodities	WFP monthly price monitoring reports , JMMI monthly reports , random maket visits	Monthly	M&E Officer	0	10%	Based on analysis of prices changes : .1.Inform the respective Cluster as well as the Donor on implications of price change, 2: work with clusters in advocacy efforts 3. if prices significantly change then temporary suspend cash activities whilst consultatons with key stakeholders take place as well review on cash distribution modality.

### Challenges

Some questions although relevant, were perceived as very sensitive and had to be adjusted to suit the context.

### The people involved – their views

- The tool generally presents a platform, where community members and market stakeholders can freely talk about intra-community issues that otherwise are not discussed in standard assessments.
- It allows World Vision to better understand the divergent thoughts that exist among different community members, which are often overlooked in conflict zone settings.

## Lessons learnt

The tool is useful for fragile contexts because:

1. It provides us with regular snapshots of current and changing humanitarian conflict contexts /phases of fragility –some of which are often overlooked by normal pre- and post-assessments and evaluations.
2. Intra-community relations and market dynamics are crucial aspects of CVA and may “make/break” intended project outcomes.
3. It also is an easy tool to use, but requires time for the field team to understand its objectives.
4. Allows us to use a holistic approach when analyzing the local conflict dynamics and market dynamics, making our decision processes less cumbersome.
5. The tool brings in a new dimension that enables project teams to have a more in-depth and intrinsic analysis of risks that can arise, triggered by market-based assistance. With the findings informing the risk analysis, the team is more mindful of such risk, develops action and monitoring plans aimed at mitigating the identified risks.

## Glimpse of hope during the pandemic

Payar\*, 45, lost her husband 10 years ago in an accident, leaving her alone to care for their four children. “My husband was a vendor,” she says, “his income was enough for a simple life like most of the people in our area. My children were going to school and I was imagining a good future for them.” She looks down, lost in thought.

Payar, who has never been to school, doesn't have a job to support her kids. She managed to support her family by doing laundry and cracking pistachio for 10 years now. Although Payar struggles with costs of living, education of her children is a priority. “I did not go to school and this is my situation. My children should study and have a better future than I have.”



The worldwide spread of the COVID-19 has led to the quarantine of cities and the closure of many businesses around the world. On 24 February, the first positive case of COVID-19 was registered by Afghan Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) from Herat province. Many people who made a living from daily work lost their income due to the city lockdown and the closure of the market, and soon all their food supplies ran out. Most of them were forced to sell their valuables home appliance or borrow money from neighbors or friends to buy food. Most vulnerable households only had one time meal per day In this situation, it becomes critically important to understand how markets are functioning, who can access them and how people are able to access the basic goods and commodities they need. The CoSMAT can help capture grave risks that may impact certain cohorts of the community disproportionately to others – like female headed households – and help organizations make real-time decisions about necessary adjustments.

*“Families who I have worked with for 10 years do not let me go their home for work due to fear from COVID-19. The markets are closed and no one even gives me pistachios to break, and this source of income shut down. For a while, with a little money saved, I was able to afford for my family, but it did not last long. I had to sell some house appliance items such as carpet, television, fan and even my children's winter clothes, to make some money,”* said Payar. *“Conditions are getting worse every day. If this situation persists and I cannot have an income, we will starve to death,”* added her.

The World Vision survey team came to her home to verify and select the most vulnerable households affected by COVID-19. Payar met the criteria and was selected for unconditional cash distribution, aiming to improve the socio-economic situation and the integration of internally-displaced people (IDPs) and vulnerable host communities. For women like Payar, the cash meant being independent and getting back on her feet again, *“World Vision gave me 20,700 Afghani (\$270). This was a great support in the right time. With this money, I can provide the basic needs for my children. I can buy food such as rice, flour and oil during the pandemic.”* (\*not real name; WVA-COMMS)

## Cash and Voucher Assistance : Experience in Colombia

### Background

The Venezuelan exodus, which began approximately in 2015<sup>1</sup>, has had important consequences for the South America region. Colombia is the main recipient of Venezuelan migrants in South America with 1.8 million<sup>2</sup> people. Norte de Santander is a department located in Western Colombia, bordering Venezuela. It ranks third in the number of migrant population (164,229<sup>3</sup> representing 9% of the total population in Colombia), only surpassed by Bogotá and Antioquia, the largest cities of the country. The department capital, Cucuta, has 711,715 inhabitants<sup>4</sup>, added to the 98,680<sup>5</sup> migrants that according to official figures live in the city. The unplanned population growth, linked with the previous economic dependence on trade with Venezuela, has generated a humanitarian crisis with economic, social, environmental and political effects in Cucuta and the surrounding municipalities of the department in Colombia.



In 2021, Cucuta ranked as the third city with the highest poverty in Colombia and in just one year (from 2020 to 2021) the rate of extreme poverty doubled<sup>6</sup>. This, in addition to the presence of organized armed groups that dispute territorial control, especially over drug trafficking routes, and the quarantine measures generated by the pandemic, has made Cucuta and its surrounding municipalities a city with a severe, complex crisis that has raised alarms in various sectors of the country.

### Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) in Colombia

Since 2015, World Vision, with its emergency declaration due to the migration crisis, began humanitarian work in this area, especially with projects to care for migrant children. In 2018, the first CVA was provided in form of food vouchers, and later changed to multipurpose cash in 2019. In 2021, approximately 5,000 USD were distributed to 145,780 people in the department (75% of recipients were migrants and the rest vulnerable families from the host community). In 2022, World Vision has three ongoing CVA projects in the area and is implementing a unique "Cash for Education" project in Colombia.

The coordinated work with other actors has been essential for the implementation of these projects. World Vision is a member of the Interagency Coordination Group of Mixed Migratory Flows, as well as a network of Faith-Based Organizations, working in response to the crisis in the area.

<sup>1</sup> So far, up to 6 million migrants have been registered in the country (<https://www.r4v.info/>)

<sup>2</sup> Migración Colombia, 2021. Distribución de Venezolanos en Colombia. Available at: <https://migracioncolombia.gov.co/infografias/distribucion-de-venezolanos-en-colombia-corte-31-de-agosto-de-2021>

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Departamento Administrativo de Planeación Nacional, 2018. Censo Nacional de Población y Vivienda. Available at: <https://www.dane.gov.co/index.php/estadisticas-por-tema/demografia-y-poblacion/censo-nacional-de-poblacion-y-vivienda-2018/cuantos-somos>

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> La Opinión, 2021. En Cúcuta La tasa de pobreza sigue en ascenso. Available at: <https://www2.laopinion.com.co/economia/en-cucuta-la-tasa-de-pobreza-sigue-en-ascenso-204129>

# Using the CoSMAT: Experience in Colombia

## How has the Conflict Sensitive Market Analysis Tool (CoSMAT) helped in the crisis?

As mentioned, Norte de Santander is a complex social, economic and political area, and there are large numbers of stakeholders in the territory with different interests and objectives. In this context, there have been significant efforts of public and private institutions to understand the situation using various manuals and assessment methodologies. However, existing manuals and methodologies were insufficient to undertake a deeper analysis into the market dynamics and their relationship with and influence on existing social conflicts, local economics and family livelihoods, and the interaction of all three. This was the main information gap that CoSMAT managed to close.

In the baseline survey, local civil society and community members as well as market stakeholders and participants from the ongoing humanitarian projects in the area and World Vision staff were engaged. Interviews and focus groups discussions took place that facilitated general mapping of the situation and a report with recommendations for the operational team, in addition to identifying the main risks in the target communities and the indicators that would help World Vision to monitor these risks.

Secondly, with these findings, a risk matrix was generated. The process included the participation of the management team within World Vision and religious leaders, other humanitarian actors and local authorities and market vendors.



## Results and Analysis

The categories of the matrix are: risk, associated factors, current level of the risk, those responsible to take action as well as trigger and process indicators. So far, 31 risks have been identified, most of them derived from the analysis carried out with the CoSMAT. For example, the following are risks identified using the CoSMAT and monitored based on the identified indicators:

Risk	Indicators	Mitigation Strategy
Incidents and complaints are not adequately reported, including the risk of discrimination from market actors towards clients of different nationalities	Percentage of people who say they feel confident that they will receive a response to their comments or complaints  Percentage of protection events and incidents reported in the complaint mechanisms	Set-up of an accountability team in charge of managing the complaint and promoting the use of the mechanisms for all stakeholders Establishment of analysis committee for severe complaints Generate lessons learned reports with social civil organization to learn from them about best practices of working with communities
Vulnerability in the security of the information from beneficiaries, local partners, donors and the organization	Number of reported information security incidents  Percentage of projects implemented by World Vision with information security training.	Definition of information management procedure. Contracting of full-time staff for custody of the information. Staff training on information security. Inform beneficiaries about their data protection rights.

## Using the CoSMAT: Experience in Colombia

### Results and Analysis (continued)

Risk	Indicators	Mitigation Strategy
Violence and discrimination of the host community against migrants benefiting from humanitarian assistance when accessing markets	<p>Number of incidents of violence against migrants (including physical assaults and attacks on property) in a 6-month period</p> <p>Number/frequency of threats or violent incidents affecting certain population groups (for example, female-headed households, people with disabilities)</p>	<p>Campaigns to prevent Xenophobia with social civil organization to promote migrants and refugees' integration.</p> <p>Visibility reduction strategies in cash distributions.</p> <p>Establishment of community integration mechanisms.</p>

Using the matrix and with the support of the indicators identified using the CoSMAT and adapted for the Colombia context, World Vision designed a strategy to measure progress in the risk mitigation plan, including the participation of actors from social civil organizations to ensure different points of views informed analysis.

As a result of the analysis, a CVA Committee was created, including the Directors and Area Leaders with the purpose of socializing advances in performance and challenges in the CVA as well as to involve them in decision making. The key findings from the ongoing monitoring of the CoSMAT indicators are shared and discussed during these committee sessions.

Thanks to the CoSMAT analysis, World Vision has developed a better understanding of the market contexts, and the possible risks generated by their actions on the field. Furthermore, it has helped to inform the needs assessment exercises conducted periodically in the areas of intervention and highlighted key risks and issues that require additional advocacy efforts. Participation of social civil organization actors in the context analysis became a priority for the teams in the field due to their support in identifying relevant warning signs, trigger thresholds and mitigating actions.



### Engaging social civil organizations in the CoSMAT

As mentioned above, for the implementation of the CoSMAT it was important to have the participation of social civil and faith-based organizations. Their participation was particularly essential in four points of the process. First, they participated in the focus groups and key actors' interviews conducted for the context analysis. Secondly, they worked with World Vision in the validation of the definition of the risk matrix and made some observations, especially regarding their participation in their willingness to collaborate to mitigate some of the common risks. For example, regarding the potential violent actions caused by xenophobia, faith-based organization leaders are working closely with other civil society with integration activities that can raise awareness of the situation of migrants and refugees in the country. In addition, they are working with the public sector, World Vision and other humanitarian organizations to coordinate the response by helping migrants and refugees' access to livelihoods assistance, if they wish to stay in Colombia.

Another key point of participation of civil society members was in the monitoring of the indicators generated through the CoSMAT, for which the reporting mechanisms are available both to beneficiaries and to partners, and World Vision received some alerts of possible risks through this system. Finally, World Vision is working closely with civil and faith-based organizations in the continuous analysis of the context and adapting its programming to strengthen markets and social cohesion at community level.