ABILITY TO COVER BASIC NEEDS

Outcome indicator

Indicator Phrasing

English: number or % of households who are able to meet the Minimum Expenditure Basket

French: nombre ou % de ménages ayant un revenu couvrant le panier de dépenses minimum

Spanish: número o % de hogares que pueden cumplir con la Canasta de Gastos Mínimos

Portuguese: número ou % de agregados familiares que conseguem adquirir a Cesta Básica

Czech: počet nebo % domácností s příjmem dosahujícím hodnoty Minimálního spotřebního koše

What is its purpose?

This indicator assesses the effectiveness of the provided cash-based assistance (CBA). It assesses whether the household income, including the assistance, is sufficient to meet basic needs. The "basic needs" are defined by the Minimum Expenditure Basket whose value estimates the cost of the key food, shelter, and other "basic needs" of disaster-affected communities, such as health and education.

How to Collect and Analyse the Required Data

To determine the indicator's value, use the following methodology:

1) First, **identify the most recent value of the Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB**; see explanation at the bottom of this page).

   - During a humanitarian response, the MEB's content (and sometimes its value) is based upon joint needs assessments and the calculations shared via aid coordination mechanisms (usually the Cash Working Group).

   - In non-crisis periods, the equivalent minimum subsistence income or poverty line is usually published by the State.

If no such recommendation is available, is not up-to-date (e.g. due to high inflation), or might not be relevant to your area of operation, liaise with the Cash Working Group to revise the transfer value (or the MEB composition). If there is no Cash Working Group operating and no other credible actor sets the transfer value, determine it by calculating the average costs of the items included in the MEB on the local market.

2) If possible, **conduct a pre-assistance baseline survey**, using a [representative sample](#) of the intended beneficiaries, to assess household **income** before assistance (take advantage of [IndiKit's](#)

guidance). In some contexts, a **consumption**-based survey might be more appropriate in order to determine the vulnerability of the target group against the MEB (see IndiKit's guidance). This enables you to set the amount of assistance accurately based on specific data for the target group at the given time, and further enables you to observe changes over time when you analyse the corresponding post-distribution monitoring survey data.

3) After the cash-based assistance was provided, assess, as a part of your **post-distribution monitoring** survey among a representative sample of the target households, their average monthly income from the time the assistance was provided (take advantage of IndiKit's guidance). Decide whether you will:

   - ask the beneficiaries about their income including the provided assistance; or

   - ask only about income that is not coming from the provided assistance and then add the amount they received from your organization

4) **Calculate the number and percentage of households** whose previous reported monthly income (inclusive of provided assistance) meets or exceeds the MEB value.

Disaggregate by

Disaggregate the data by female-headed households / single parent households, and other vulnerability criteria.

Collecting for each household **data about the gender and age group of its members** will enable you to analyse household profiles more precisely, helping to identify key determinants of vulnerability within the target population – which enables you to sharpen the beneficiary targeting approach over time.

Important Comments

1) The vast majority of **people are uncomfortable telling others about their real income**. Respondents may evade questions or give inaccurate answers (for various reasons, such as lack of trust or fear of being excluded from receiving external assistance). Before an enumerator starts an interview, s/he needs to **gain the respondent's trust**. Ensure that the enumerators explain carefully why your agency needs the data, that it will not have any impact on whether the household receives assistance or not (if this is true), how the data will (not) be used, and why it is important that the information the respondent provides is correct. Alternatively, **mitigate this risk by conducting a consumption-based survey** (see IndiKit's guidance).

2) It is important that you also explore the **gender dimension of cash or voucher's use**. This can be done by conducting in-depth interviews with the key informants (e.g. informal female authorities, male and female beneficiaries), focus group discussions with women, and other methods. Focus on:

  - who within the household decided what the cash will be used for (see also a separate indicator on this)

  - additional burdens on women related to them or their husbands being engaged in cash for work

- any tensions / violence resulting from acquired cash (see also a [separate indicator](#) on this)

- accessibility of needed gender-specific items on the local market

- any negative impact related to the cash and voucher assistance or the way it was provided

3) To ensure that the MEB value remains adequate and that the provision of cash assistance does not contribute to inflated market prices, it is essential that you:

- **monitor the average prices and availability** of pre-selected MEB items on the local market;

- assess the reasons for significant changes; and

- **use the findings** for adjusting your programming.

4) **Consider also integrating the following complementary indicators in your M&E system**:

  - *% of beneficiaries not using the full value of the provided cash-based assistance*

  - *% of cash recipients who spent at least* [specify the percentage] *of the provided cash on meeting their basic needs*

  - *average proportion of the* [specify: cash transfer / voucher] *spent on* [specify the types of goods, e.g. "food items"]

5) For restricted cash assistance, or if there is a need to identify specific sectoral outcomes of the cash and voucher assistance, **the indicator can be rephrased to reflect the specific sectoral or other restriction**, such as the following indicators from the 2018 USAID Proposal Guidelines (see at the bottom of this page; these are mandatory for OFDA funded multi-purpose cash assistance).

  - *% of beneficiary households reporting adequate access to water, as defined by Sphere or national standards* (see [guidance on](#) a similar indicator)

  - *% of beneficiary households reporting adequate access to basic WASH non-food items (NFIs), as defined by Sphere or national standards* (see [guidance](#) on a similar indicator)

  - *% of beneficiary households whose shelter solutions meet agreed technical and performance standards* (see [guidance](#) on a similar indicator)

  - *% of beneficiary households reporting adequate access to non-food items*

  - *% of beneficiary households with "acceptable" food consumption as measured by the [Food Consumption Score](#)*

6) Additional **indicators for cash assistance focusing on improving the nutritional quality of the target groups' diet** can include:

  - *the average number of different food groups consumed by* [specify the target group] *the previous day and night* (see [guidance](#))

  - *% of children 6 - 23 months of age who received a Minimum Acceptable Diet the previous day and night* (see [guidance](#))

- % of women of reproductive age (15 - 49 years) who ate foods from ≥ 5 food groups the previous day or night (see guidance)

7) The phrasing of the indicator may be changed in order to reflect the minimum income standard relevant in your context, e.g. Poverty Line, Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB), Survival Threshold, Livelihood Protection Threshold, etc.

Access Additional Guidance

- CaLP (2015) [The Minimum Expenditure Basket: What It Is](#)

- CaLP (2015) [Operational Guidance and Toolkit for Multipurpose Cash Grants](#)

- CaLP (2017) [Monitoring Guidance for CTP in Emergencies](#)

- OFDA (2018) [Proposal Guidelines](#)