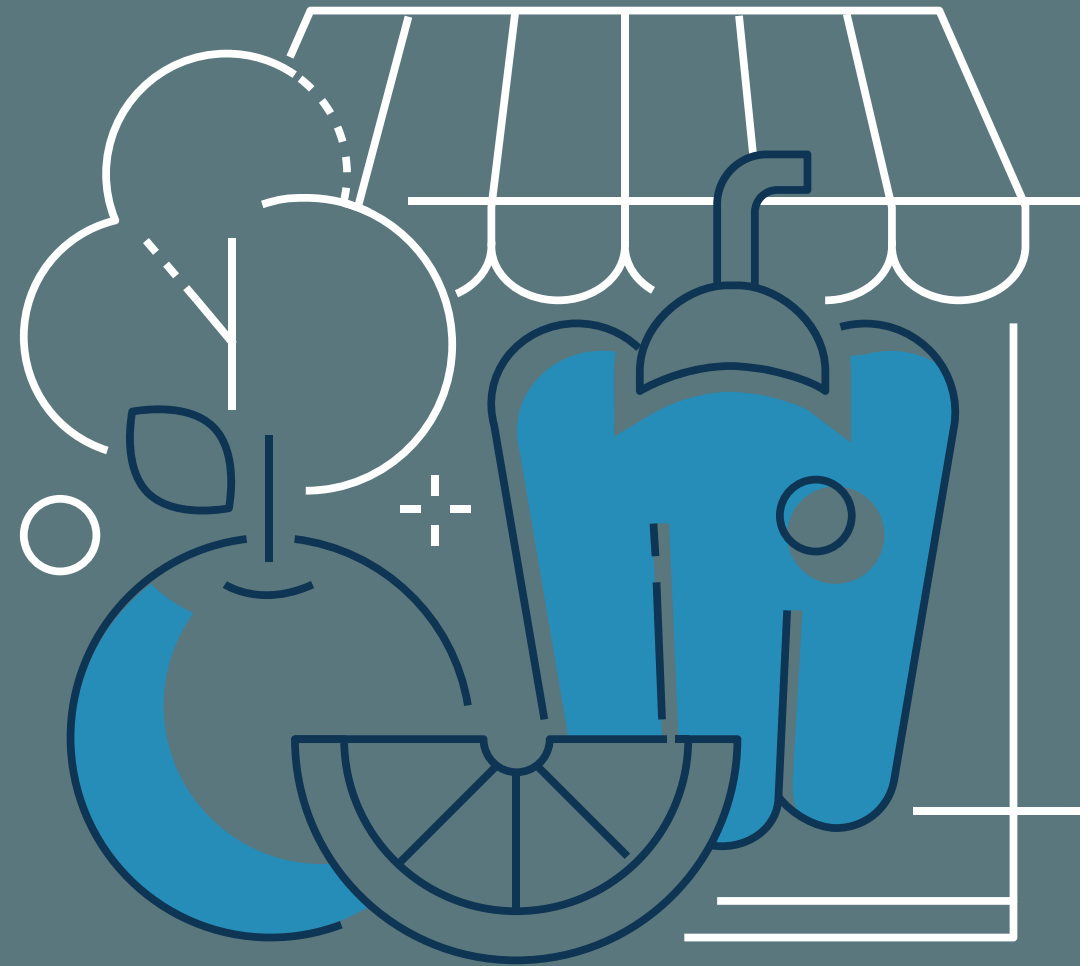


**Guidance for Advocating  
Safer Market Access  
during COVID-19**



## Guidance for Advocating

### Safer Market Access during COVID-19



## Background

As lockdowns and quarantines start to ease in many contexts, market places are re-opening and resuming trade and local populations are starting to visit markets for purchasing essential goods and services. However, the health risks associated with the COVID-19 pandemic remain for the foreseeable future, even though many businesses are seeking to return to normal. Governments may find themselves under pressure to re-open market places, or in many contexts, may not decide to close them at all, despite the risk of COVID-19 transmission. The only way to ensure safe market access, for all users of markets – traders, suppliers, transport drivers, consumers - is for governments and local authorities to ensure appropriate COVID-19 hygiene and safety measures are in place, based on globally recommended public health measures and risk prevention.

As part of its CVA work which supports market-based approaches, safe market access and market recovery, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (the Movement), should strive to promote a Do No Harm approach within markets, for all actors indirectly or directly involved. Specifically, people receiving CVA will also be using markets for purchasing goods with their cash transfers or vouchers. National Societies (NS), as auxiliaries to governments, are well positioned to advocate to their local authorities about the COVID-19 measures and activities that should be in place, to ensure safer market access, during COVID-19.

Each country will have different set of COVID-19 restrictions and measures in place defined by its government. Similarly, each country may be experiencing a different level of threat or intensity of the pandemic and its impact, at any given time. Therefore, the contents of this guidance can be adapted based on local context.

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#### Who is this guidance note for?

This guidance is written for NS in helping them advocate to local authorities to ensure safe market access for all actors, during COVID-19. In some contexts, government advice and endorsing of measures and restrictions to prevent the virus transmission and spread may be less proactive, and NS therefore can encourage clarification and promotion of good practice, through this guidance note.

The tips and guidance can be provided to local authorities when organizing market place set-up and managing activities, that will encourage safe market access, either during COVID-19, or when opening after restrictions ease. It provides considerations and recommendation that local authorities should endeavour to put in place.

This guidance accompanies the **Guidance for National Societies on COVID-19 Sensitive Cash and Voucher (CVA) Programming Across the Project Cycle** and **Guidance for National Societies on Adapting RAM and MAG During COVID-19**.

All COVID 19 guidance notes are also intended to be used alongside other Movement tools: the **Cash in Emergencies Toolkit**, **Rapid Assessment of Markets Guidelines**, and **Market Analysis Guidance**.

This guidance does not duplicate existing tools and guidance, but provides but provides tips and considerations, for COVID-19 sensitive market engagement through a set of advocacy recommendations

# 1

## Preparing or re-starting market activity

- **The size of market places should be extended where possible**, in order to physically separate shops and stalls. **This will allow greater room for vendors and shoppers to circulate, while maintaining the necessary social distancing.** N.B This may be more feasible in open marketplace and rural areas, than urban markets which have fixed structures
- At a minimum, **one metre or two metres should be in place between stalls, as per local distancing measures.** If the overall market size cannot be extended, it may be necessary to cut back on number of shops and stalls to ensure safe distances, and open alternate ones.
- Consider **extending market opening hours** in order to avoid peak traffic.
- In contexts where certain businesses have been designated non-essential and are prohibited during times of COVID-19 restrictions, **ensure and verify that only authorized and essential businesses and trade (e.g. food items) are operating.**
- Customers should be advised to **wear non-medical masks or face coverings**, in contexts where Ministry of Health has provided this guidance.
- Ensure the **access of water and soap/alcohol-based hand rub**, for free, for customers and all users of market places.
- In high risk contexts, **conduct screening and allocate staff** to conduct this activity.

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- **Limit market attendance within households** to members only required for shopping and transporting goods.
- Consider dedicating **specific shopping time slots for the elderly** (as a high-risk population group) to attend markets before, and/or after, general population entry.

The council, mayors, district administrators, village chiefs are responsible for ensuring information on COVID-19 restrictions and public measures is disseminated within the local population, in line with WHO public health recommendations. Channels such as local newspapers, internet, and local radio, etc. can be used as much as possible.

The National Society is **not** directly responsible for ensuring messages are disseminated but can promote and share good practice around aspects of safer market access, where required. As such, NS should also advocate to their authorities and remind them, where necessary, about the importance of their role and responsibility for public health information dissemination, in their context.

## 2

### Establishing safe layout and movement flow in markets

#### Queuing

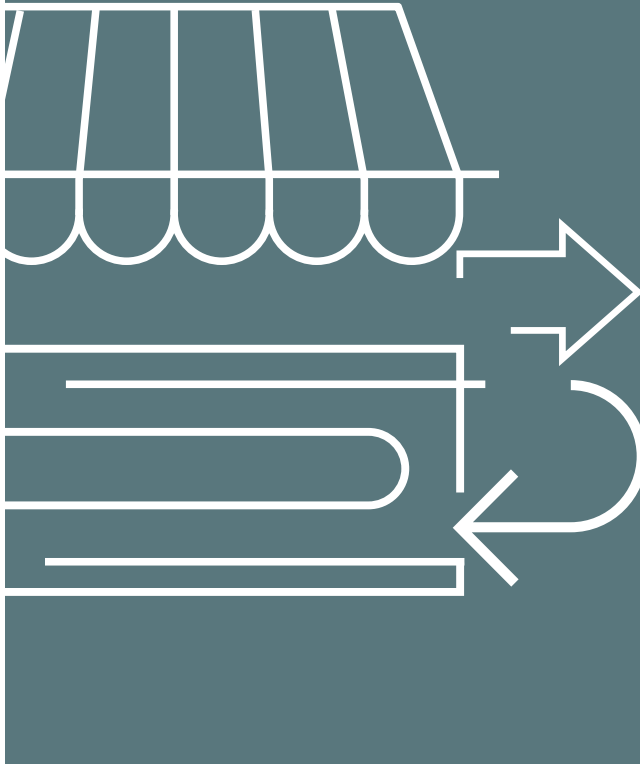
- Due to the need to maintain social distancing, it may not be possible to allow the usual number of customers into a market at once. Queuing may be required, and measures should be in place to ensure **distances of at least one, or ideally two, metres between customers**. **Distances should be mapped on the floor** (either drawn or with adhesive tape), to separate people in the queue.
- **Encourage and allow the vulnerable to be first in the queue** (e.g. elderly, people with underlying medical conditions, pregnant women).

#### Entry requirements

- **In high risk contexts, set up screening or self-screening for customers on entry to the market.** This could involve temperature screening or asking customers about any symptoms, such as cough or fever. Health information regarding symptoms and screening should be displayed around and at entrances.
- **Compulsory hand washing with soap and water, alcohol-based hand rub or ash should be carried out by all customers and vendors when entering and leaving the market.**

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3

#### Traffic flow and layout

- Once inside, the flow and movement of people around the market, should be regulated in order to comply with any social distancing measures (i.e. at least one metre, and ideally two metres, between customers should be in place at all times).
- Define a compulsory, one-way circulation within the market to facilitate this.
- Position dedicated staff to regulate number of people entering and exiting into the market, to ensuring these distancing measures can take pace. These could be local police, local councilors, ushers, trader association representatives, RCRC staff or volunteers.
- In open market places, consider the opening of one of two stalls alternately, to obtain staggered positioning of the stalls across aisles.
- Install barriers in between stalls to separate traders. This could be using fruit boxes, tape, plastic ribbon, or tarpaulins, etc.
- Map out or draw on the on the ground distances of one to two metres to be respected between each customer, in front of and in between stalls.

#### Organizing sales and interactions with customers

- Only the trader must serve customers, with dedicated multi-purpose utensils.
  - Customers should be prohibited or discouraged to touch products, where possible.
  - Traders should favour contactless payments, where possible, and regularly disinfect and clean payment terminals/Point of Sales (POS) after each use, plus cash registers.
  - Glass/plastic sheets protection should be installed between vendors and customers
- Traders must respect the following hygiene measures:
  - Do not come to work if they are experiencing symptoms (or diagnosed with COVID-19), until they test negative.
  - Regularly disinfect hands by washing with soap and water or applying alcohol-based hand gel. Ash can be used as an alternative where these options are not available.
  - Wear a cloth face cover or non-medical mask, particularly if they sell fresh and consumable food that do not require cooking or washing (e.g. breads, cheeses, etc.)

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- **Display and ensure compliance by posting hygiene measures** on stalls or shops and train all employees.
- If possible, dedicate a **separate employee as cashier**, that does not have food product contact.
- After handling physical cash, **disinfect hands each time or wear plastic gloves**.
- **Consider and promote the establishment of an ordering service with market traders** (e.g. phone, email, online order), with preparation of orders done beforehand, to restrict the time of consumer presence in the market.
- **Encourage good ventilation**, including open windows and doors, fans, and other means where possible.

# 4

### Distribution and posting of safety instructions

- **Display COVID-19 instructions in local language at the entrance and exit of the markets.** These should include at a minimum, barrier measures, maximum number of customers allowed at the same time, movement flow direction, physical distancing measures and a list of symptoms to identify for self-screening).
- Also, **regularly disseminate health promotion messages and reminders on physical distancing by megaphone or pre-recorded message.**

### Instructions could also contain the following content:

- The need to wash fruits and vegetables with water before consumption, for hygiene purposes.
- The need to safely deal with waste including used tissues
- Respecting the safety distances marked on the ground and the positioning of barriers.

# 5

### Monitoring

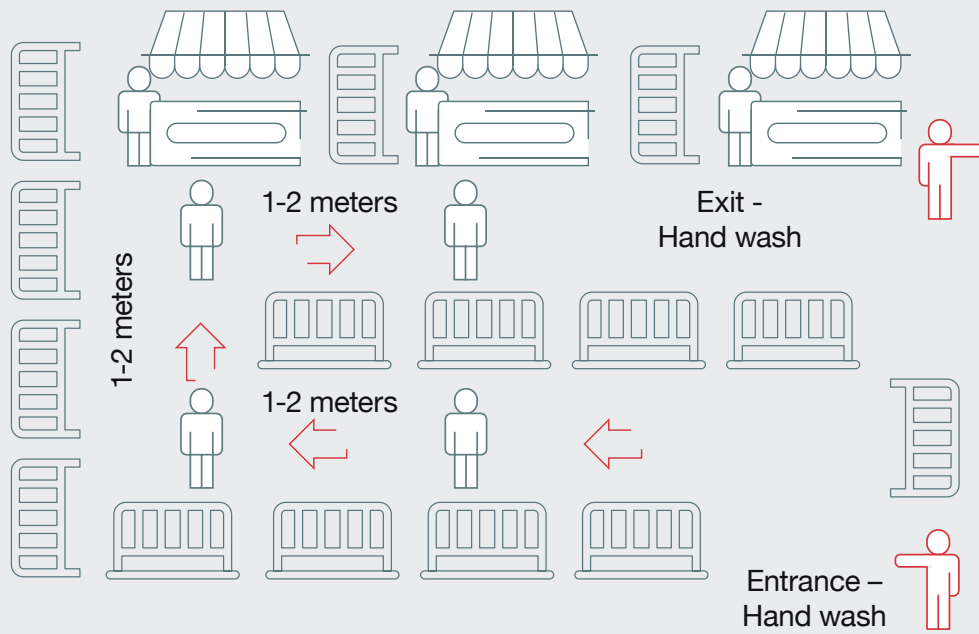
The following monitoring could be done to ensure measures and restrictions are being adhered to:

- Checking **traders have access to water and soap and alcohol-based hand rub** for hand disinfecting.
- **Exit surveys done at market entry or at random**, checking if people understood and followed the measures.

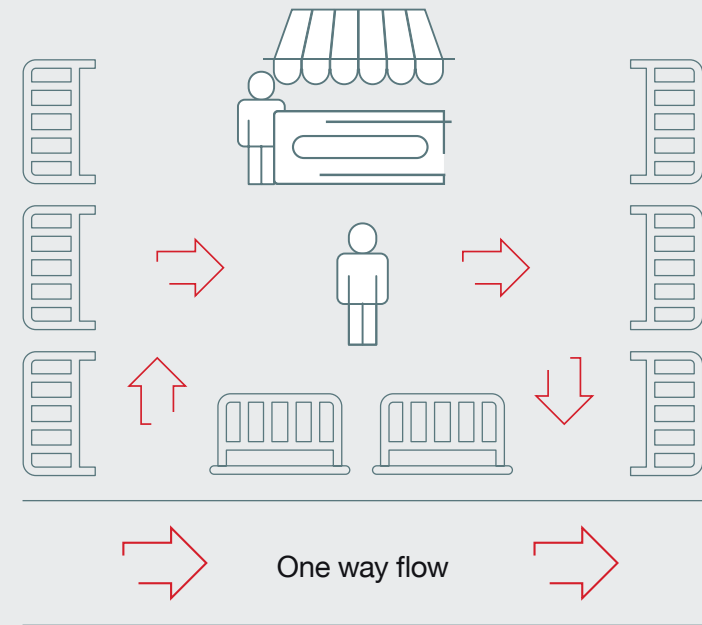
### Relevant links

- IFRC WATSAN Resources COVID-19 - <https://www.cash-hub.org/guidance-and-tools/cash-in-emergencies-toolkit>

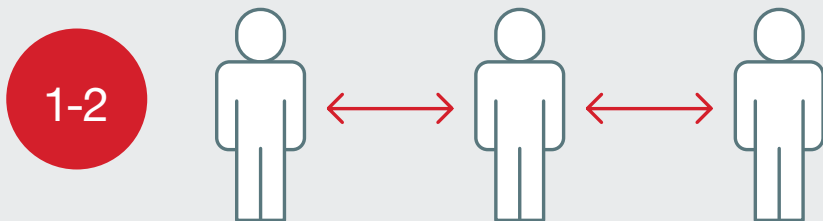
## Example of Organising a Marketplace



## Example of Organising a Stall



1-2 meters distance in the queue



- **Hand Wash** with water and soap or alcohol based hand rub or Ashes
- **At least 1 meter physical distance** between customers and vendors
- Encourage **Health Screening** at the queue