

Guidance for National Societies

**Conducting market
assessment and analysis
during COVID-19 –
how to adapt RAM/MAG**



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Background

As the COVID global pandemic continues to spread, huge secondary impacts on economies and livelihoods are growing. Restrictions are being put in place in many contexts to prevent public health outbreaks, which are having negative effects on market systems, on which households and livelihoods depend. Movement restrictions, including lockdowns and quarantines, international border closures, trade control measures and other related security restrictions, are disrupting supply chains and causing increased prices, availability issues, loss of income and damaging livelihoods. The pandemic is highlighting that the urban poor may be more vulnerable than rural communities, due to the economic impact of the disaster. Despite the challenges, many market actors have been able to adapt to changing conditions, which brings opportunities to consider market support interventions and options for market recovery, alongside any Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) programming. At a minimum, National Societies (NS) should ensure they are sensitive to how COVID-19 is affecting markets and the different market actors, if markets are able to support CVA, and that any CVA interventions does no harm.

Each country will have a different set of COVID-19 restrictions and public health measures in place, defined by its government. In terms of markets, movement restrictions in place elsewhere may also affect a country that may be suffering less from COVID-19, as supply lines into the country may get effectively damaged. Despite differing levels of the pandemic and its restrictions in each country, market systems are being significantly affected by the crisis, regardless of how bad the pandemic has spread. Therefore, the need to assess and understand markets in each context, to ensure both proper response analysis and effective and appropriate choice of CVA modality during COVID-19, is key.

This guidance has been written so it can be adapted based on any given NS local context and during any time of the COVID-19 pandemic.



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Relevance/application of RAM and MAG during COVID-19

The **Rapid Assessment for Markets (RAM)** and **Market Analysis Guidelines (MAG)** remain highly relevant and useful RCM tools for NS in assessing, designing and monitoring appropriate CVA and recovery programmes during, or in response to, COVID-19. This guidance provides tips and considerations for adapting and using RAM and MAG during COVID-19, covering best approach and application of tools given the current restrictions, as well as suggestions for adapted COVID-19-relevant content.

Due to the nature of COVID-19, markets are rapidly evolving and behaving in a dynamic manner. This has implications for whether a RAM or MAG would be the most appropriate assessment approach to provide the required analysis. Usually, a RAM provides a snapshot of market functionality at a given time. During COVID-19 however, the need for ongoing monitoring and continual re-assessment of markets is more important than ever. This could be done by reinforcing the market monitoring elements of RAM or may warrant a need for a deeper analysis, through MAG. It may therefore be beneficial to do a light touch RAM assessment (using the COVID-19 RAM adapted questions) and quickly move on to a MAG analysis. Any decision to do either RAM and/or MAG or should be based on the market dynamics in a particular context.

As many National Societies are less experienced in MAG than RAM, support with doing a MAG can be available from the Cash Hub.



Using RAM during COVID-19

The following guidance is organised around the five steps for RAM: i) Defining the scope of assessment, ii) collecting market information, iii) analysing the market information, iv) reporting the findings and v) monitoring market evolution.

Figure 1: The RAM process



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Some considerations

- The purpose of RAM is to enhance response analysis and determine appropriate response options (i.e. cash or in-kind), by providing a quick and basic snapshot of how markets are operating following a shock. Where markets are feasible and safe, CVA can still be provided as an appropriate modality during COVID-19.
- For the purposes of defining a common COVID-19 “shock”, the pandemic has led to significant trade and movement restrictions. A RAM can assess how the “shock” caused by COVID restrictions may affect market functionality in each context.
- “COVID-19 restrictions” imposed include both **movement restrictions** (including a combination of **personal movement and transport restrictions, lockdowns, international border closures**) and **social distancing measures**. The date when “movement restrictions” were put in place (varying per context) is largely the “shock” the RAM should use to assess and determine how COVID-19 has affected market systems.
- Additionally, **public health measures** including the need for **improved and safer hygiene practices**, will also further affect market functionality during COVID-19.
- **A COVID-19 RAM should be done to assess how markets are functioning since any restrictions were put in place (lockdowns, borders were closed and/or movement restrictions, as per context) and how this shock has affected market functionality.**
- The RAM is based on a “good enough” approach. This is more pertinent than usual, due to having to rely more on secondary data and remote data collection/analysis, if movement restrictions are in place.
- Markets are dynamic and evolving during COVID-19, so the need for a RAM to remain iterative or updated through regular monitoring, is key. Keep proactively gathering data to inform your decision on the most appropriate response intervention (i.e. cash or in-kind).
- In contexts with the strictest movement restrictions, if households are unable to access local markets or financial services because of full lockdown/economic shutdown, it may be better to conduct a RAM once markets start to open again. Due to the nature of the crisis, some businesses may not re-open and households may change their consumer practices. **See Tool 5 - Continuing the RAM or not.**
- Due to the current nature of the pandemic, any resulting cash (or in-kind) response will need to be based on “adaptive management”, where possible.
- Involve Logistics staff in your RAM, as per other emergencies, particularly as they may already have an understanding of the market systems and effects of COVID-19, due to existing procurement relationships and contracts.
- Draw upon any markets work undertaken during NS Preparedness work (for instance, existing district level market baselines or pre-crisis market assessments for key commodities) and in particular around FSP mapping.

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Tips for remote data collection

- Remote data collection can be done in the following ways:
 - ① Telephone surveys (most typical, as interviewers should ideally be RAM trained)
 - ② Using local RC volunteers or committee members, if movement restrictions allow, rather than sending staff out.
 - ③ Identifying a focal point at each market, who could conduct interviews or price data on NS. Focal points would need to be trusted individuals, who can accurately and regularly report findings.
- Telephone surveys may mean the RAM may have to be limited to larger traders and urban areas only, due to mobile connectivity.
- Quality can be lost with remote data collection, so consider ways to ensure data validity, such as ad-hoc spot checks.
- If movement restrictions are in place, not all markets of direct interest may be possible to monitor. Allow for alternative market place selection, but that are still indicative of trends.

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STEP 1

Defining scope and options for assessment

This section broadly refers to **RAM Tools 1-6** found under **Step 1 – Defining scope and options for assessment**.

Relevant tools

Tool 1 - Gathering secondary information; **Tool 2** – Key markets and commodities needed by the shock affected population; **Tool 3** – What financial services are available and accessible; **Tool 4** – Drawing markets maps; **Tool 5** – Continuing the RAM or not; **Tool 6** – Key markets the assessment should focus on.

All links to specific RAM tools can be found [here](#)

Most of the RAM tools can be used as per any other emergency, with some small adaptations. However, if movement restrictions are in place, a **COVID-19 RAM will likely need to be conducted through secondary data and remote data collection only**, rather than physically visiting marketplaces.

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A further consideration is whether to do a **full RAM assessment (with COVID-19 adaptations) vs conducting rapid and ongoing market monitoring**, as the COVID-19 pandemic progresses. A RAM is only valid for a limited period (4-6 weeks after a shock) and given the fluid situation of COVID-19, findings may go quickly out of date. An ongoing understanding of market dynamics and how it continues to affect cash feasibility will therefore be key.

How to conduct or update your RAM during COVID-19?

If a RAM has already been done, this needs to be re-assessed and adapted based on new COVID-19 situation. Where an NS is planning a new CVA, a RAM combined with the COVID-19 adaptations should ideally be conducted. RAM can be light touch, but enhanced through ongoing monitoring and possibly further analysis through MAG.

- **Remote data collection** should be used in contexts with movement restrictions or if needing to limit physical proximity and person-to-person contact. (See also Assessment step 'Plan and Prepare' in **Guidance for National Societies on COVID Sensitive CVA Across the Project Cycle** on remote data considerations).
- The most common way to conduct remote data collection is through phone surveys. This could be triangulated with satellite imagery of marketplaces, to give an indication of number of stalls/shops.
- Consider how to include **informants who may not have access to mobile phones** (e.g. **smaller, informal traders** and more vulnerable households), to ensure findings are not biased.
- Depending on NS capacities and movement restrictions, consider training and using **local RC volunteers or committee members** to collect data, rather than sending out project staff in person. This could be done in combination with phone surveys.
- Where available, **secondary data** should be used as much as possible. A list of useful resources can be found in **Tool 1 – Gathering secondary information**. Also consider the following:
 - Findings from any existing market assessments conducted through national level Cash Working Group (CWG) or other agencies, such as REACH, where available.
 - Opportunities to collaborate with CWG agencies or other humanitarian actors to conduct a joint market assessment.
 - Data or analysis from any government ministry websites; particularly relevant in many middle-income countries.
 - Price data from market actor websites, such as supermarkets.

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- When **selecting key markets and commodities to assess**, as needed by the shock-affected population, consider including any priority market places and commodities that have been significantly affected by the crisis, such as items experiencing unexpected or unusual supply challenges.
- It is likely **availability and access to financial service providers** may be different following the easing of movement restrictions. Consider to what extent **digital services** being offered, are accessible and appropriate for households. See **Tool 3 - What financial services are available and accessible** and **Guidance Note for National Societies Working with FSPs During COVID-19**.
- As remote data collection will likely be more challenging, take time to formulate good preliminary market maps (through secondary data and discussion) in RAM teams, before starting the interviews. See **Tool 4 – Drawing market maps**.
- If restrictions allow, ensure key informants can join the mapping activity. Potentially they can be telephone or Skype called, to help triangulate a team mapping exercise.
- Secondary data will be very helpful in understanding relevant supply chains at international and national level.
- For countries reliant on supplies from outside the country (where import trade is likely to be significantly affected by COVID-19), consider doing a **Production Flow Map** (found within **Tool 4**) per key commodity, to provide an understanding of the supply chain before it reaches the country.

Tool 4 Drawing Market Maps

- COVID-19 considerations

The below questions are intended to help steer initial drawing of **Tool 4 - Market Maps** and can be built on iteratively throughout the RAM process:

- Is there a **dependency on supplies from other countries** that may stop or have issues with production due to the pandemic?
- Are **logistics companies** still working or likely to stop working, either in-country or cross border?
- How are any restrictions on both **cross-border and internal movements** affecting markets (e.g. short-term availability issues and price increases)?
- In contexts of strict movement restrictions (i.e. full lockdown, with no access to markets), are **alternative systems** emerging? (e.g. home delivery services, community shopping or support groups)
- Are **alternative supply lines** being created? (e.g. by Government)
- Specifically consider any differences between **urban vs rural areas**

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STEP 2

Collecting market information

This section relates to RAM Tools 7-10 found under Step 2 – Collecting market information.

Relevant tools

Tool 7 - Recommendations for conducting interviews; **Tool 8** – Discussion with market representatives or key informants; **Tool 9** – Discussions with traders (wholesalers/retailers); **Tool 10** – Summary of findings per market.

All links to specific RAM tools can be found [here](#)

- **If movement restrictions are in place, allow for remote interviews being the main approach for RAM interviews with key informants and traders.** As per the usual RAM, these should be through structured questionnaires. See **Tool 8 - Discussion with market representatives or key informants** and **Tool 9 – Discussions with traders (wholesalers/retailers)**.
- **Bear in mind that remote interviews may potentially be more difficult for traders,** who may need to conduct business at the same time. Consider pre-arranging the calls with the key informant, so the the call can happen at a convenient time for them (i.e. less busy hours or when they can have additional support in the shop, to cover trade).
- **Use existing key informants and networks** to seek out ways to reach and interview smaller and informal traders, if mobile phone access is an issue.
- Consider also gathering price information from **market actors' websites**, such as supermarkets.

The following are small adaptations required to the RAM during COVID-19:

- For **Tool 8** instead of assessing the physical impact of a shock on the market, substitute with **assessing how COVID-19 restrictions have affected market trade**.
- For fully verified market maps, when drawing and mapping commodity flows and market system maps during remote trader surveys, **consider asking informants to draw maps ahead of the interview and send ahead, and/or also the option to as video calling**. Consider engaging Branch staff or volunteers to also verify maps.

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Tools 8 & 9 Discussions with market representatives or key informants and traders (wholesalers/retailers) – COVID 19 considerations

Consider adding the following questions to RAM Tools 8 – Discussions with market representatives/key informants and Tool 9 – Discussions with traders (wholesalers/retailers), to assess how COVID-19 has affected market functionality and supply chains. Alternatively, these could be used as standalone COVID-19 specific questions to update an existing RAM (for re-assessing or adapting existing cash programming). It may be more relevant to supplement Tool 8, rather than Tool 9, but will depend on the trader's capacity if they can answer the questions.

N.B. The results of your RAM may lead to the same answers. However, the following will ensure a COVID-19 sensitive lens is applied and also allow opportunity for triangulation or follow-up.

- To what extent has **market operations and functionality** changed since COVID-19 restrictions were put in place? (Key informants only)
- How have public health restrictions related to COVID-19 (i.e social distancing, improved hygiene measures) affected **market traders' internal operations** (i.e. items they choose to carry, payment modalities willing to accept, etc.)?
- Have **supply chains for any key commodities** been disrupted since COVID-19 restrictions were put in place?
- How have **public health restrictions related to COVID-19** (i.e social distancing, improved hygiene measures) affected the willingness and ability of both customers and traders to continue buying and selling?



STEP 3 & 4

Analysing market information and reporting findings

This section relates to **RAM Tools 11-12** found under **Step 3 - Analysing market information and Step 4 – Reporting the findings.**

Relevant tools

Tool 11 - Conclusion tree to assess market response capacity; **Tool 12** – Reporting format.

All links to specific RAM tools can be found [here](#)

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- Final analysis to assess market response capacity should be conducted in the same way as a normal RAM. See **Tool 11 – Conclusion Tree to assess market response capacity**.
- **When the decision on appropriate response options are made will be critical.** If the RAM has been done during strict movement restrictions, findings are likely to be different compared to once these have eased. Factor in the ideal timing for decision making, based on both NS internal requirements and bigger picture issues (movement restrictions, etc.) affecting market dynamics.
- **Allow for potential adaptations in modality choice,** more than you might in normal emergencies, based on RAM market monitoring or a follow-up MAG assessment
- As markets remain fluid during the COVID-19 crisis and supply chains significantly affected, it is highly likely any decision to do CVA may require **potential for market-based support interventions** (See **Response Analysis** under **MAG section** of this guidance) or a **need for further analysis**.
- In the RAM report, include any summary points of interest from COVID-19 specific questions (**Tools 4, 8 & 9 COVID-19 considerations**) under 'Section 3: Market maps and trader analysis' in **Tool 12 – Reporting Format** if they don't fit under any of the current RAM conclusions. This will ensure they do not get missed and are included in the report.

Interpreting results of a RAM during COVID-19

- If there is uncertainty related to CVA based on likely price increases, due to COVID-19 - **continue with RAM monitoring**, before a final decision is made.
- If there is uncertainty related to CVA based on ability to supply key commodities to meet the demand, due to COVID-19 - **consider supplementing the RAM with relevant COVID-19 MAG tools, to determine options for market-based support**
- As per usual, it may be necessary to combine both cash and in-kind interventions, until markets stabilize, during COVID-19

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STEP 5

Monitoring markets

This section relates to **RAM Tools 13 -15** found under **Step 5 – Monitoring markets**.

Relevant tools

Tool 13 – Retail price collection form; **Tool 14** – Wholesale price collection form; **Tool 15** – Secondary price data collection form.

All links to specific RAM tools can be found [here](#)

- As the pandemic is evolving, **RAM market monitoring is important to provide an ongoing understanding about market functionality** and allow any CVA programme adaptations to be made (e.g. changing modality, increasing transfer value)
- Put **triggers and alternative modality options** in place, in the event markets can no longer support a CVA response.
- Ensure price data graphs **show and represent inflation** (i.e. through Consumer Price Index (CPI), particularly in countries where high inflation is an issue, as COVID-19 is likely to compound this further.

Secondary data and remote data collection

- In contexts with movement restrictions, there are two main options for market monitoring: **secondary data or remote data collection**.
 - Using **secondary data** is easier but may miss smaller markets. Consider a combination of approaches. **Useful sources for secondary price data (RAM page 30)** provide useful resources to check.
 - Ensure **remote data** collection tools are adapted for comparability with secondary data (i.e. same commodity items, unit measurements etc.)

Considerations for remote data collection

- Remote price data collection can be done in the following ways:
 - **Telephone surveys**, with pre-identified traders. See **Tool 13 – Retail price collection form** and **Tool 14 - Wholesale price collection form**.
 - Using **local RC Branch staff, volunteers or committee members** (if movement restrictions allow), rather than sending NS staff out to the field.
 - Identifying a **focal point at each market**, who can send in price data to the NS, gathered from traders. Focal points would need to be trusted individuals, who can accurately and regularly report prices.
- Telephone surveys may mean **monitoring may have to be limited to larger traders and urban areas** only, due to mobile connectivity.
- Quality can be lost with remote data collection, so **consider ways to ensure data validity**, such as ad-hoc spot checks.

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- **Increase frequency** of market monitoring - suggest this is **fortnightly, rather than monthly**. Consider **reducing number of traders** surveyed to make monitoring more rapid.
- **Reduce number of commodities** monitored to priority Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB) items. These should be representative of trends in price and availability.
 - **Consider including hygiene items**, even if not part of MEB, as these relate to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- UNICEF suggests monitoring soap, water and bleach (if locally used)
- Not all markets of direct interest may be possible to monitor, due to movement restrictions. **Allow for alternative marketplace selection, but that are still indicative of trends.**
- In addition to prices, monitoring should overall collect information on **availability, restocking timelines and other COVID related indicators for market functionality.**

The following COVID-19 indicators could be collected during RAM fortnightly price monitoring. Consider adding others, based on local context.

- If vendor is having to use different suppliers, compared to two weeks ago.
- If vendor reports a reduction in # of customers, compared to two weeks ago.
- If vendor reports difficulties being able to meet demand for certain items, and why.
- Payment modalities accepted by vendors (e.g. physical bank notes, mobile money, contactless) and if this changes.



Using MAG during COVID-19

The following guidance is organised around the five steps for RAM:



Some considerations

- MAG provides a more detailed analysis to follow-up on a RAM and a basis to consider market related programme decisions. During COVID-19, the need to consider market-based support alongside CVA may be necessary and recommended, due to the huge effect the pandemic is having on markets, which also affects households and livelihoods.

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- The MAG approach of conducting market analysis across the programme cycle, combined with monitoring, will be helpful during COVID-19, due to the evolving nature of the crisis, that may experience than one wave.
- For the purposes of a defining a common COVID-19 “shock”, the pandemic has led to significant trade and movement restrictions. A MAG can assess how the “shock” caused by COVID restrictions may affect market functionality in each context.
- “COVID-19 restrictions” imposed include both **movement restrictions** (including a combination of **personal movement and transport restrictions, lockdowns, international border closures**) and **social distancing measures**. The date when “movement restrictions” were put in place (varying per context) is largely the shock the MAG should use to assess and determine how COVID-19 has affected market systems.
- Additionally, **public health measures** including the need for **improved and safer hygiene practices**, will also further affect market functionality during COVID-19.
- **MAG is based on qualitative information and participatory methodologies, which may be challenging in contexts with movement restrictions or social distancing measures. Therefore, during COVID-19, it may not be possible to do a full MAG.**
- **This guidance recommends a prioritised, streamlined version of MAG is considered to supplement the COVID-19 adapted RAM, with secondary data used as much as possible.**
- If a NS does not wish to attempt a MAG, doing a RAM combined with the COVID-19 adaptations may suffice.
- As with RAM, a MAG is based on a “good enough” approach. Therefore, during COVID-19 this will also be key.
- Ensure use of a gender, livelihoods, urban vs rural, ethnicity and protection lens as much as possible and where relevant, as COVID-19 does not affect everyone in the same way
- Overall, components of MAG that are relevant during COVID-19 to consider prioritising include:
 - **Assessment:** The option to go deeper into market assessment and understand how COVID-19 is also affecting livelihoods and services, as well as the effects of macro-factors on market capacity.
 - **Response Analysis:** Options for identifying and implementing market-based support to strengthen COVID-19 affected markets.
 - **Price Monitoring:** Deeper price monitoring as a minimum, should be considered. The MAG gives good guidance on this.
 - **Contingency Planning:** Once the nature and pattern of the crisis starts to be better understood, it may be useful to conduct a market scenario mapping, for predictive situations. Contingency planning and understanding of market risks will also be key for having adaptive market response and triggers for if the situation unexpectedly changes again.

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STEP 1

Assessment

This section relates to **MAG Tools 1.1 – 1.6** found under **Step 1– Assessment**.

Relevant tools

Tool 1.1 – Secondary data; **Tool 1.2** – Prerequisite information; **Tool 1.3** – Market Selection; **Tool 1.4** – Market mapping; **Tool 1.5** – FGD with target population; **Tool 1.6** – Trader interview; **Tool 1.7** – Interviews with key informants.

All links to specific RAM tools can be found [here](#)

- Markets and livelihoods may not return to “normal” following COVID-19, instead adapting to the changes the ongoing pandemic may bring. The MAG approach uses a “reference year” for COVID-19 MAG analysis that may need some adapting. Consider focusing more on Forecast Maps, against projected situations (e.g. second wave, further lockdowns). **See Tool 5.2 Baseline Market Mapping.**
- Critical market selection should be done through secondary data analysis. **See Tool 1.1 – Secondary data for possible resources.**
- The crowd sourced **COVID-19 Related Market Resources** provides updated key market guidance, assessments (globally and by region) and other information to help understand and support markets during COVID-19, that may help complement a MAG.
- Instead of conducting FGDs with different livelihood groups and traders, MAG tools will need to be done as semi-structured interviews, with sampled people from each group. Data collection should also be remote, if movement restrictions are in place.
- Rely on secondary data as much as possible, as it will be difficult to get a representative sample across livelihood groups from semi-structured interviews. As with RAM, also use existing data from Logistics on supply chains if available, for understanding the pre-shock situation.
- As COVID-19 is a complex emergency, mapping tools will be a very effective way to visualise findings about market systems, particularly if relying on secondary data. Innovative ways to conduct mapping exercises at a distance (i.e. video calling where possible) should be considered.
- Macro-factors due to COVID-19 (e.g. global conditions, new government policies such as import/export policies, emerging social and cultural issues and new rules/norms) will play a big part in market analysis. **MAG Tool 1.7 - Interviews with Key Informants** provides helpful questions to ensure these factors are captured. Macro factors can be captured through secondary data.

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COVID-19 considerations to explore in MAG market analysis (mostly related to Tool 1.4 – Market mapping)

The global Food Security Cluster recommends the following market analysis considerations, specifically in relation to COVID-19. These could be used for analyzing macro-factors in the MAG:

- **Impact on critical market system/supply chain.** (Supply/demand for specific items, changes in stakeholders, changes in logistics, national and international exchanges)
- **Impact and change in market actors and stakeholders** (new enterprises, new supply chains, e.g. from global to local, shift from formal to informal)
- **Impact on market support services and infrastructure** (changes in transportation, manufacturing or other services, etc.)
- **Impact on market environment** (changes in policies, laws and regulations, e.g. curfew, lockdown, limitation of customers in markets, etc., security conditions)
- Understand if **informal markets or services** are more, or less, impacted by the crisis (e.g. if the formal market or services shut)
- **Understand changes in capacities, constraints and incentives** (e.g. government support, consistency of new rules, human and resource capacity, etc.)
- **Technology analysis** (new opportunities/gaps, especially digital economy, that affects the functioning of market systems)

- **Analyse the implementation of COVID-19 prevention measures in the marketplace** (existence of hand washing facilities, disinfection of surfaces, control of crowds for social distancing, food safety prevention measures) and **awareness to market actors.**
- In contexts of total movement restrictions, where access to usual markets is not possible, assess if alternative market systems are emerging (home deliveries, community shopping groups, etc.) **and how current market actors are adapting.**

Tool 1.5 Discussions with the Target Population - COVID-19 considerations

Consider adding the following questions to MAG Tool 1.5 - Discussions with the Target Population in order to understand population's current access to market and market behavior, given the effect of the restrictions. As focus groups may not be possible in all contexts, this could be done through engaging with Branch staff and volunteers from within the communities (as semi-structured key informant interviews) or to further validate assessment findings.

- Are you facing new barriers to market access (physical, financial or social) that you did not face before COVID-19 restrictions were put in place?
- Are you having difficulty purchasing key items for your household that you did not face before COVID-19 restrictions were put in place?
- Are you experiencing increased safety or security concerns associated with visiting marketplaces that you did not experienced before COVID-19 restrictions were put in place?

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- Have you voluntarily changed your consumption or purchasing patterns compared to before COVID-19 restrictions were put in place? (e.g. purchasing new items, reducing consumption, avoiding markets)

Results should be disaggregated by vulnerable group, whose access to market has been most severely impacted by COVID-19 restrictions or fear of COVID-19 (i.e. who may be self-isolating), such as elderly, disabled, people with chronic diseases, displaced, women, etc.

Findings could help further determine appropriateness of response option (i.e. cash or in-kind), based on COVID-19 market accessibility indicators. These questions could also be monitored over time, as barriers and behavior may change time, based on the evolving situation.

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STEP 2

Response Analysis

This section relates to **MAG Tools 2.1 – 2.3** found under **Step 2– Response analysis**.

Relevant tools

Tool 2.1 – Long listing response options; **Tool 2.2** – Analysing market related appropriateness criteria; **Tool 2.3** – Analysing market related risks.

[All links to specific RAM tools can be found here](#)

- RAM and MAG findings will help determine whether the market can meet the demand of the affected population since COVID-19 restrictions were put in place, either alone or with external support (i.e. market based support).
- Market support interventions should be considered as they can contribute to limiting the spread of COVID-19 and at a later stage, cushion the impact of the pandemic on affected households and systems.
- Ways to support businesses and traders to innovate on how they can reach their customers, and provide their products and services safely, can be explored through MAG.
- Disrupted markets should not be a reason to assume that in-kind is the only option. Remember no markets are static and are particularly evolving during COVID-19.
- **Tool 2.1 - Long listing response options** can be expanded, to provide different market support intervention examples for COVID-19, per actor and per sector, that could be done alongside any CVA (or in-kind). Different market response options can be gathered from reviewing secondary data, assessment reports and through coordination with the Cash Working Group and relevant clusters (Food Security, WASH, Health etc.) per region/context.

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- See also **Global Food Security Cluster COVID-19 Key Recommendations to Support Food Markets** for a long listing of all food /livelihood market options, per actor. These could be adapted by per context to inform NS response analysis discussions, based on opportunities, risks, capacities, etc. arising from MAG findings.
- Useful topical resources to assist analysis around potential COVID-19 market response options include **Mercy Corps COVID-19 Impact Report** which summarises livelihoods and market systemic issues, per region and
- Determining appropriate response options based on market information and analyzing market related risks would need to be rely less on participatory methodology, than the MAG suggests, if movement restrictions are in place per context.

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STEP 3

Price Monitoring

This section relates to **MAG Tools 3.1 – 3.5** found under **Step 3 – Price Monitoring**.

Relevant tools

Tool 3.1 – Checklist on secondary data; **Tool 3.2** – Checklist for field monitors;

Tool 3.3 – Organizing primary price data; **Tool 3.4** – Analysing price changes; **Tool 3.5** – Responding to price changes.

- As per the RAM, price monitoring during COVID-19 will be essential to inform an appropriate response in the face of evolving dynamics.
- See **Monitoring Markets** under **RAM section** of this guidance on use of secondary data and tips on remote data collection, likely and necessary in contexts with movement restrictions.
- Given a likely reliance on secondary data, **Tool 3.1 - Checklist on Secondary Data** may be helpful during COVID-19. As with RAM, consider also the following:
 - Findings from any existing market assessments conducted through national level Cash Working Group (CWG) or other agencies, such as REACH, where available.
 - Opportunities to collaborate with CWG agencies or other humanitarian actors to conduct a joint market assessment.
 - Data or analysis from any government ministry websites; particularly relevant in many middle-income countries.
 - Price data from market actor websites, such as supermarkets
- During COVID-19 it is highly likely programmes may need to adapt based on market monitoring information. Tool 3.5 - Responding to Price Changes gives useful guidance.

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STEP 4

Evaluation

- It is important to integrate market information into the programme response evaluation.
- Any CVA programming conducted during COVID 19 can also bring opportunities to evaluate the impact of some COVID responses on markets.

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STEP 5

Contingency Planning

- Contingency planning might be a key component of any COVID-19 MAG and corresponding programme response. Over time, likely market scenarios, may be able to be predicted and mapped in advance and feasible response options identified.
- Bear in mind that it can take time for markets to return to “normal” following COVID-19, therefore baselines may need to be adjusted to the “new normal” and scenario planning done in a more iterative and fluid way than a static MAG.
- Baseline market mapping, service provider mapping and partners selection can, and should, all be done through individual interviews, rather than FGDs, in restricted contexts.
- Future contingency plans processes should consider the unique context of COVID-19 markets in the range of potential disasters that feature in NS annual contingency and response planning processes, during pre-disaster preparedness.