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Purpose of this guide

1. Using the available Survival Minimum Expenditure (SMEB) data, to help agencies with tips to determine a transfer value for multipurpose cash assistance
2. Reinforce the notion of multipurpose cash assistance as cross-sectoral, in line with basic/essential needs and Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB) methodology

Current SMEB Methodology

1. WFP's standard full ration in-kind food basket of rice (13.5 kg), chickpeas (1.8 kg), cooking oil (1 L), and salt (0.15 kg) per person is the basis for the SMEB calculation. The standard ration cost is calculated based on the average current market prices of those items and quantities. Finally, the cost of the individual food basket is multiplied by 5 (the average Myanmar household size).¹ The current SMEB food calculation using August 2022 food prices is as follows:

¹ Note that the food portion of the MEB utilized a typical diet approach instead of the k/cal approach of the SMEB. The reason for applying a more restricted approach is to focus on energy-only needs which are typically those prioritized under the core humanitarian standards. As a result, the proposed SMEB food portion is significantly less than the MEB food amount.

Standard Food Ration and Nationwide Average Cost of those Commodities

Commodity	Specification	Unit of Measure	Average Nationwide Price as of August 2022
Rice	Low Quality	kg	958 K
Pulses	Chickpeas	kg	2,656 K
Cooking Oil	Palm Oil	liter	5,784 K
Salt		kg	440 K

Commodity	WFP Ration Size (per individual)	Ration cost based on average price
Rice	13.5 kg	12,930 K
Pulses	1.8 kg	4,781 K
Cooking Oil	1 L	5,784 K
Salt	0.15 kg	66 K
Total		23,562 K

Food Cost per person	HH Size	Total SMEB per HH size 5
23,562 K	5	117,809 K

2. Using the SMEB food calculation as the basis, the other MEB consumption sectors are reduced by the same proportion. In complementarity with the Myanmar MEB, the other broad consumption sectors, including shelter, non-food items, and 'other' category, are assigned the same proportion as they were in the full MEB.

Location	Cost of Individual full food ration (August '22) 65% of SMEB	Shelter (recurring not shelter building materials) 10% of SMEB	Non-Food Items including WASH (health not included) 21% of SMEB	Other 4% of SMEB	Total Cost of SMEB per individual	Cost of SMEB for a household of 5
Nationwide	23,562 K	3,625 K	7,612 K	1,450 K	36,249 K	181,245 K

Currently, both the MEB gap analysis and the SMEB are accepted ways of calculating a transfer value. Some organizations are monetizing the food basket in order to provide a transfer value and some organizations are calculating their value based on the SMEB. While each organization is likely to have different purposes behind the transfer value, for MPCA we encourage the transfer values to be as similar as possible, and aligned to the SMEB if appropriate, for the following reasons:

- Beneficiaries will likely know how much each other are receiving and different amounts may cause confusion or conflict
- Similar amounts (accounting for geographical differences, household sizes, etc) may make it easier to explain any increases or decreases of the value

How to calculate the transfer value

It is encouraged to provide immediate relief assistance and unconditional cash transfer values around either the MEB or the SMEB. Based on the needs assessments carried out in the relevant field areas, use the existing MEB or SMEB to determine the gap in needs. Normally this is either the entire gap or a percentage of the gap. This will depend on your programme objectives.

Below are some parameters to consider when setting the transfer value:

- **Resources:** for how long can you guarantee the delivery of the transfers? Should you transfer more to fewer or less to more?

This will likely become more of a concern given the current context and the frequently changing (and increasing) prices. Estimate your pipeline and how many people you can reasonably assist with the available funds you have. It is up to your organization to determine whether to prioritize giving less cash to more people or more cash to fewer people. This situation may also prompt a reassessment of the targeting criteria.

- **Transfer delivery mechanism and operational considerations:** how to transfer can be as important as how much, both on the beneficiaries' impact as well as on the programme's cost

Consider the impact of the recent KYC regulation enforcement and how this influences your organizational policy and ethics. Consider also that some areas may not be accessible with traditional forms of cash such as cash in envelope and may not be appropriate for the profile of programme you are doing.

- **Transfer frequency:** transfer's frequency and timing of the transfer can be adapted to the beneficiaries' preferences

If liquidity is not an issue, consider transferring multiple months' worth of assistance at the same time to provide beneficiaries with additional choice on how to spend their money.

- **Tiered transfers:** 'layering' transfers, with different values for different groups or for different periods of the year
- **Household or individual payments:** although the gap is typically calculated at the household level, the transfer's recipients can be individuals depending on the programme objectives (for example, disability top-ups)

How to review the transfer value

There are three main parameters that affect a household's ability to meet its food needs and that may influence how and when you review your transfer value:

Changes in prices of goods and services for essential needs: If market prices of essential goods and services increase (or decrease) rapidly or much more than usual this will impact the overall cost of covering food needs and thus the minimum food basket value. The quarterly adjustments in the SMEB take note of this.

Changes in households' capacity to cover some of the food needs with their own resources: These changes do not lead to an increase in the food basket value itself but to a change in the calculation of the transfer value. For some temporary vulnerabilities such as an accumulation of debt due to a shock or delayed distributions, a one-time top-up could also be considered.

Changes in households' minimum essential needs: The poorest households often spend 60-70 percent of their income on food, however, the little they have must cover many expenses. A household that receives cash calculated for food items alone may need to use it to also cover other essential requirements. While this can mean that households don't always prioritize their food needs, it should also highlight the importance of viewing poverty as multidimensional.

In these challenging economic times in Myanmar, it is important to regularly check the cost of the components of the transfer value against what your organization may be providing. The following factors could be useful indicators:

- **Food basket prices:** If the average food basket cost has increased/decreased by over 15% over a two-month period.

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- **Community feedback mechanisms and post-distribution monitoring:** this evidence suggests that the transfer value has become inadequate to meet beneficiaries' needs according to the programme objective
- **Timing:** if the average food basket cost has increased or decreased by over 15% over a two-month period, a transfer value revision process may be triggered (consider whether your transfer value includes a percentage of buffer (i.e., already including a small extra amount that is meant to account for frequently fluctuating prices))

In addition, in periods of severe price fluctuation another option is to observe market prices and trigger a transfer value review if the prices increase over 10% within a consecutive 8-week period or over 20% within a consecutive 4-week period.

**Myanmar Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket
(SMEB)
September 2022 Update**



Annex 1: State Level SMEBs

State	Cost of Individual full food ration (August 2022) ²	Shelter (recurring not shelter building materials) 10% of SMEB	Non-Food Items including WASH (health not included) 21% of SEMB	Other 4% of SMEB	Total Cost of SMEB per individual (August 2022)	Cost of SMEB for a household of 5. (August 2022)
Northern Rakhine	26,028 K	4,004 K	8,409 K	1,602 K	40,042 K	200,212 K
Central Rakhine	22,059 K	3,394 K	7,127 K	1,357 K	33,937 K	169,684 K
Southern Rakhine	22,316 K	3,433 K	7,210 K	1,373 K	34,332 K	171,662 K
Chin	20,558 K	3,163 K	6,642 K	1,265 K	31,628 K	158,138 K
Kachin	22,419 K	3,449 K	7,243 K	1,380 K	34,491 K	172,454 K
Magway	22,164 K	3,410 K	7,161 K	1,364 K	34,099 K	170,493 K
Mandalay	28,548 K	4,392 K	9,223 K	1,757 K	43,920 K	219,600 K
Sagaing North	26,395 K	4,061 K	8,527 K	1,624 K	40,607 K	203,035 K
Shan (North)	25,330 K	3,897 K	8,184 K	1,559 K	38,970 K	194,848 K
Kayah	22,835 K	3,513 K	7,377 K	1,405 K	35,131 K	175,653 K
Kayin	20,799 K	3,200 K	6,720 K	1,280 K	31,998 K	159,990 K
Thanintharyi	21,701 K	3,339 K	7,011 K	1,335 K	33,387 K	166,933 K
Mon	25,025 K	3,850 K	8,085 K	1,540 K	38,500 K	192,500 K
Yangon	23,689 K	3,645 K	7,653 K	1,458 K	36,445 K	182,225 K

² Source: WFP Myanmar monthly market price monitoring.

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Market prices vary between states and regions. The state level SMEBs allow for implementing organizations to better adapt their transfer values based on current market prices. More detailed calculations for each state's food basket can be found in the excel calculations sheet.

Annex 2: Multipurpose Cash Transfer Value Recommendations

Both the SMEB and MEB are tools for developing transfer values. There are also different methods for calculating transfer values using the MEB, which are explained comprehensively in the MEB technical note.³ However humanitarian partners implementing cash in Myanmar often have different transfer values, even in similar geographic areas with similar program participant types. The message from the CWG to implementing partners is to align transfer values where feasible and appropriate. The SMEB helps move towards a standard Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance (MPCA) transfer value overcoming some of the issues faced by the MEB. **The State Level SMEB calculations in annex 1 provides an appropriate transfer value in contexts where the capacity of HHs to meet their needs is severely constrained and is the Myanmar CWG recommended MPCA transfer value.** In some areas partners may agree to provide only a percentage of the SMEB, but this approach should only be taken in locations where data has been collected indicating that program participants do not need the full SMEB to meet their basic needs. This should also be agreed upon by all partners providing MPCA in a given township to avoid any conflict and confusion amongst communities receiving assistance. Furthermore, the CWG will work to track more closely the MPCA transfer values of different partners across Myanmar as well as household expenditure data, and will adapt this annex, if necessary, based on the data available.

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http://themimu.info/sites/themimu.info/files/documents/Summary_Myanmar_Minimum_Expenditure_Basket_MEB_Technical_Note_CWG_24Sep2021.docx

Annex 3: MEB Resources

- Link to MEB Technical Note:
http://themimu.info/sites/themimu.info/files/documents/Summary_Myanmar_Minimum_Expenditure_Basket_MEB_Technical_Note_CWG_24Sep2021.docx
- Link to MEB Calculation Sheet
http://themimu.info/sites/themimu.info/files/documents/Template_Myanmar_Minimum_Expenditure_Basket_MEB_Calculation_CWG_24Sep2021.xlsx
- Link to SMEB Technical Note:
http://themimu.info/sites/themimu.info/files/documents/Myanmar_Survival_Minimum_Expenditure_Basket_SMEB_Technical_Note_V4_CWG_Sep2022.pdf
- Link to SMEB Calculation Sheet:
http://themimu.info/sites/themimu.info/files/documents/Myanmar_Survival_Minimum_Expenditure_Basket_SMEB_Calculation_V4_CWG_Sep2022.xlsx
- Link to WFP Market Price Monitoring Dashboard
https://analytics.wfp.org/t/Public/views/MarketMonitoringDashboardv2/Overview_?%3AshowAppBanner=false&%3Adisplay_count=n&%3AshowVizHome=n&%3Aorigin=viz_share_link&%3AisGuestRedirectFromVizportal=y&%3Aembed=y
- Link to Market Analysis Unit Dashboard
<https://themimu.info/market-analysis-unit>