



International Initiative for Impact Evaluation
Improving lives through impact evaluation

3ie Humanitarian Assistance Thematic Window
(Thematic Window Six, TW6.HITW)

Request for Qualifications for Proposal Preparation Grant:
Cash versus e-vouchers in Jordan and Lebanon

Issue date: 3 June 2014

Deadline: 23:59 EST, 27 June 2014

1. Introduction

[The International Initiative for Impact Evaluation \(3ie\)](#) is pleased to announce a request for qualifications (RFQs) from research or evaluation institutions or consortia to be considered for a proposal preparation grant for a programme being implemented by the World Food Programme (WFP) in Jordan and Lebanon. This RFQ will be supported under 3ie's Humanitarian Assistance Thematic Window (Thematic Window Six TW6.HITW) grant programme. 3ie's [Thematic Window](#) grants (Appendix B) are designed to support the generation of rigorous evidence on important issues in international development for which evidence is lacking.

The impact evaluation designs prepared through successful proposals will facilitate generating a critical mass of evidence on how humanitarian assistance programmes affect human and economic welfare in vulnerable countries. Proposal preparation grants will allow teams to engage key stakeholders and undertake preliminary formative research in order to design technically robust impact evaluation proposals that deepen understanding about which kinds of interventions are most effective, in which contexts, and why.

2. Background and key questions

WFP plans to undertake a pilot project comparing the provision of food assistance through cash transfers and electronic vouchers (e-vouchers) in Jordan and Lebanon. More details are provided in the concept note in Appendix A. 3ie will invite one team to conduct a full objective assessment and evaluation of the comparison households that received voucher assistance with those that received cash through the pilot project as well as those that have the choice to access the assistance

through cash transfer or through vouchers (e-vouchers can support both modalities).

The selected team will analyse differences in food consumption patterns, the use of cash for specific commodities, the impact on household food security, and gender and protection issues compared to the currently implemented voucher programme in order to determine which modality is the most efficient and effective in ensuring the food security status of beneficiaries. The study will have these three outcomes:

- (a) Compare food security outcomes between households that receive cash transfers, households that are provided e-vouchers for use at WFP-selected shops and those that have the choice of delivery mechanism.
- (b) Compare the efficiency and effectiveness of the delivery systems and mechanisms.
- (c) Outline a comparison of the impact on local essential food and non-food markets.

Issues and questions listed below will be addressed by comparing these outcomes between the three groups of households. The following are some of the key questions the evaluation will address:

- What is the impact on beneficiary food consumption and dietary diversity as a result of the delivery mechanism?
- What changes in food purchase patterns occur (items bought, quality, quantity and frequency) with the different delivery mechanisms, for example, when cash is used rather than food purchased through vouchers at WFP-selected shops?
- Could cash transfers lead to an increase in food insecurity as a result of the potential diversion of cash to non-food expenditures?
- Which delivery mechanism do households prefer? Why?
 - For households that have access to both delivery mechanisms, what are their utilisation patterns? Why?
 - What are the beneficiary perceptions including the perceived advantages of cash, voucher or combined assistance, for example, related to convenience, choice, access and availability of food?
 - Are these different in regular and inflationary contexts?

- What impact do the different delivery mechanisms have on protection issues such as gender including household control of this food assistance, impact on women, girls, boys and men, gender-based violence etc.
- Efficiency of delivery mechanisms – comparing cash and food vouchers. Which would be easier to mobilise in an emergency, for example?
- Would a cash transfer option be more susceptible to corruption and pilferage than a value-based food transfer option? If so, what could be done to mitigate this? If not, why.
- How do the different modalities impact expenditure on health, education, social protection and other non-food essential items (such as debt repayment)?
- What are the differences in impact on the market of the different delivery mechanisms?
- What is the cost effectiveness (also looking at programming inputs for both modalities)?

These comparisons will be primarily made by comparing data (collected in the baseline, follow-up household and key informant surveys and assessments, as well as monitoring) on differences in outputs and outcomes between groups:

- a) receiving e-vouchers for the purchase of food;
- b) receiving cash transfers; and
- c) having the option of accessing cash transfers or food vouchers.

Data will be collected before, during and after the project implementation period. A quantitative evaluation of the differences in food and essential non-food expenditures, resource allocation decisions, and WFP food security indicators will be supplemented and further informed by qualitative assessments.

The proposed comparative project will be monitored closely through regular field visits from the external agency, supported by both cooperating partners and WFP staff. The findings from the WFP or partner monitoring (including distribution and beneficiary contact monitoring, shop monitoring and price monitoring) can be used to triangulate and cross reference conclusions from the external evaluation. It is expected that the following participatory tools and methodologies will be used: pre- and post-distribution monitoring through household and phone interviews, beneficiary contact monitoring at the shop level, focus group discussions to receive

qualitative information, retailer and other key informant interviews, shop price monitoring and on-site distribution monitoring.

3. Details of proposal preparation grant and timeline

Thematic window preparation grants allow the recipient to collaborate with researchers in relevant countries on the design of one or more impact evaluations of the participating implementing agencies' development interventions. This grant will cover costs associated with these activities, which include engagement with the relevant implementing agency, site visits, formative data collection and analysis, preliminary checking of administrative data and piloting surveys. The preparatory phase also needs to ensure buy-in and support for the study by in-country programme staff of the implementing agency. Study team is expected to provide up to two capacity-building seminars for the implementing agency staff during the preparatory phase. Qualifications submitted in response to the RFQ will be reviewed and scored according to criteria in Table 2. The timeline is provided below:

Action	Date
1. RFQ phase	
Submission of qualifications	27 June (23:59 EST) 2014
Contract signed with selected team	21 July
2. Preparation phase	
Secondary data review (reading and preparing)	21 – 31 July
Proposed dates for travel to field sites in Jordan and Lebanon for formative work including interviews and additional qualitative work.	1 August – 15 August
Submission of mission report	15 August
Post-mission field work	18 – 29 August
Submit technical proposal to 3ie	1 September
Finalisation of technical proposal	15 September

The selected team will be expected to submit a technical proposal at the end of the preparatory phase by the end of September 2014. The proposal will be reviewed and scored by at least one internal and two external reviewers. External reviewers will include staff from 3ie and international experts in evaluation design and in food security and humanitarian assistance. If the proposal meets 3ie's standards on technical quality and financial value for money, the contract for the full impact evaluation will be signed by 30 September 2014. The full impact evaluation study report is expected by the end of May 2015. A timeline for this is provided in Appendix B.

Table 2 Criteria for scoring RFQ responses

Criteria	Weight
Credentials of principal investigators (PIs) and proposed staff including impact evaluation experience	40%
Involvement of in-country researchers and institutions in the team and proposed work	20%
Institutional capabilities to undertake impact evaluation work in humanitarian contexts	10%
Sector and country experience of the study team and involvement and experience of working with low- and middle-income country researchers	25%
Associate membership of 3ie	5%

The preparation phase will start 21 July 2014 and allow teams approximately two- and- a-half months to prepare impact evaluation designs and submit them to 3ie.

4. Instructions for applicants

a. Eligibility

Only institutions may apply. Involvement of in-country researchers and in-country institutions is desirable. Please also note that PIs, study teams or institutions submitting applications must be in a position to start and carry out the preparatory phase starting 21 July 2014.

b. Requirements

Research teams should preferably include nationals from Jordan or Lebanon but having a lead PI from these countries is not a requirement. Study teams should initiate collaborations with an institution in Jordan or Lebanon prior to engaging in substantive evaluation design.

c. Questions

Please direct any questions related to this RFQ to dhoundolo@3ieimpact.org and tw6@3ieimpact.org with the subject line 'Jordan and Lebanon PG' by 13 June 2014. All questions and answers will be made publicly available in a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document on the 3ie website within three working days of that date.

d. Application components

Responses to this RFQ shall comprise the following five components:

1. **Covering letter.** The message should state the main country or countries of expertise. This letter should also briefly highlight relevant team experience with impact evaluation in areas relevant to this call.
2. **Completed organisation information form.** The form can be found on the 3ie website.
(http://www.3ieimpact.org/media/filer_public/2014/06/02/3ie_organisation_information_form.docx)
3. **Curriculum vitae and signed letter.** The *curriculum vitae* (CV) should not exceed three pages for each PI. CVs may be submitted for up to four PIs and researchers, including one or more developing-country PIs. Ideally, each PI should highlight elements of the CV particularly relevant to conducting impact evaluation on humanitarian assistance. There should be a signed letter from each PI, indicating the share of working time during the four months of the preparation grant s/he expects to be spent on the proposal preparation work and confirming availability for that expected share of working time. 3ie expects that these PIs will participate substantively in the proposed impact evaluation.
4. **Three relevant studies carried out by the institution and/or proposed PIs as named authors.**
5. **Proposed budget.** The preparation grant proposed budget cannot be more than US\$20,000. As indicated under section 3, the grant will cover costs associated with necessary activities for producing impact evaluation research questions, a technical evaluation proposal using 3ie's technical proposal template and for collecting baseline data. Eligible activities include a short and relevant literature review, formative field research, researcher time and travel to meet with implementing partners and staff in Lebanon and Jordan.

The preparation grant budget will be paid in two tranches. The first tranche will be US\$10,000, paid upon contract signing. The second tranche will pay the balance of costs on a reimbursable basis up to the maximum total budget of US\$10,000.

6. **Submission.** Please attach all required components to a single email message, not to exceed 5MB, and submit it to dhoundolo@3ieimpact.org and tw6@3ieimpact.org no later than 23:59 EST, 27 June 2014. Application components should be submitted in a single Microsoft Word file with font sizes greater than or equal to 11 points. The signed letters from PIs and sample impact evaluation studies may be attached as separate .pdf files.

Incomplete submissions will be considered ineligible. **Please submit all files attached to a single email message, not to exceed 5MB, with the subject line 'Jordan and Lebanon PG' to dhoundolo@3ieimpact.org and tw6@3ieimpact.org no later than 23:59 EST, 27 June 2014.**

This RFQ does not constitute a guarantee of award.

Appendix A: Draft concept note

WFP food assistance through cash transfer pilot project

This concept note aims to provide the required inputs for the WFP pilot project on comparing food assistance provided through cash and voucher transfers. This will be jointly implemented by WFP in Jordan and Lebanon under EMOP 200433 with external monitoring and verification to be done by a contracted third party and is in compliance with the *Operations and finance procedures for the use of cash and voucher transfers to beneficiaries under the operations services and resource management & accountability departments joint directive issued on 2 September 2013*.

1. Background

Since the uprising against the Syrian regime started in March 2011, the situation in Syria has deteriorated and turned into a violent protracted conflict. Millions of Syrians have fled, and continue fleeing, to the neighbouring countries of Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq and Turkey. Inside Syria, the insecurity and volatile situation on the ground are preventing the delivery of aid at times of intense fighting.

As of October 2013, UNHCR estimates the number of Syrians seeking refuge in neighbouring countries is 2,180,952, of which, 94 per cent are registered as refugees. Currently, there are 794,450 Syrian refugees in Lebanon and 544,392 Syrian refugees in Jordan.¹

The deterioration in Syria has also accelerated the exit of over 90,000 Palestinian refugees (PRS) in Lebanon², more than 33,000 Iraqi refugees returning to Iraq, and over 20,000 Lebanese returning to Lebanon³.

Following WFP market surveys in Jordan and Lebanon, the WFP Emergency Operations for the Syrian crisis are currently implementing food assistance through value-based voucher transfers. This system is regarded as the most effective way to ensure food security given that markets are fully integrated and both countries have an advanced cash economy. It also gives beneficiaries freedom of choice and dignity compared to general food distribution.

As of October 2013, WFP has distributed cash vouchers valued at 24 JOD per person (33.84 USD per person per month) to 384,716 refugees in Jordanian communities and vouchers valued at USD27 per person per month to 615,000 refugees in Lebanon. This approach is now being adopted in the refugee camps in Jordan, where the value-based vouchers are gradually replacing dry food rations. As of October 2013, more than 105,000 refugees in Za'atari camp received vouchers valued at 12 JOD (USD16.92) per person per month, an amount equivalent to 50 per cent of the food basket.

Since August 2012, WFP vouchers alone have injected some USD 80 million and USD 95.5 million into the local economies of Jordan and Lebanon respectively⁴, working through more

¹ <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php> 23 October 2013

² <http://www.unrwa.org/> 23 October 2013

³ <http://www.iom.int/> 23 October 2013

than 300 cooperating shops and retailers. In both countries, the paper vouchers will eventually be replaced by electronic vouchers using electronic cards (e-cards) that can be used through point-of-sale merchants.

2. Needs assessment

In Jordan, various assessments conducted in 2013 showed that Syrian refugees are in need of emergency humanitarian support, including food and cash assistance. The findings of the assessments confirmed that families arrived with few assets and little cash, and have now depleted their resources. Their food security status is highly jeopardised by a lack of resources and employment opportunities. Refugees living in urban communities have relied mainly on WFP vouchers, UNHCR cash assistance (made to some 12,000 households only), personal savings and remittances⁵. A very small proportion of households (10 per cent) have at least one employed family member⁶. Various assessments also pointed out that some refugees are selling their assistance as a means to attain cash for other needs such as rent.

For the few Syrian refugees that have been able to find more frequent casual work, these opportunities tend to be illegal, scarce, exploitative and insufficient to support their livelihood since Syrians are not allowed to work without a valid work permit⁷. In many cases, families need to rely on their children, particularly boys, working to either supplement or provide income. Therefore, the reliance on cash assistance through UN agencies, NGOs and local communities is very high.

In Lebanon where there are no official refugee camps, most of the needs assessments conducted by various agencies confirmed that the main need is cash to be used for rent and other basic food and non-food items; rent for shelter remains the overarching need and concern for majority of Syrian refugees. Due to the high cost of renting normal rooms or apartments, refugees prefer to rent garages, storage rooms, unused shops, small attics and unfinished buildings which are rented at lower prices. Most of these rooms have poor living conditions (no windows, water-leaks, lack of sanitation, no partitions) in addition to being extremely cold during the winter season⁸.

In June 2013, an inter-agency Vulnerability Assessment for Syrian Refugees (led by WFP, UNHCR and UNICEF) was conducted in Lebanon. It found that more than half of the refugee population surveyed (57 per cent) have relied on informal employment as their primary source of income. Nearly 30 per cent of the households surveyed depended on some type of assistance as their main source of income, mainly food vouchers (24 per cent) but also including gifts, remittances, and cash from humanitarian actors⁹.

A joint needs assessment of Lebanese returnees is currently underway with the International Organisation for Migration and the Lebanese High Relief Commission. A multi-

⁴ End October 2013

⁵ Oxfam, *Integrated assessment of Syrian refugees in host communities in Jordan*, March 2013.

⁶ UNHCR, *Syrian refugees in Jordan: Needs, targets, gaps*, September 2013 (based on ACTED/REACH household assessment: <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/country.php?id=107>)

⁷ UNHCR & WFP, *Joint assessment mission of Syrian refugees in Jordan*, June 2013.

⁸ Oxfam, *Joint rapid needs assessment of Syrian refugees in host communities in Lebanon*, February 2013.

⁹ WFP, UNHCR, UNICEF. *Vulnerability assessment of Syrian refugees in Lebanon*, June 2013.

sectoral vulnerability assessment is also being undertaken for Palestinian Refugees from Syria (PRS) in conjunction with UNRWA. It is expected that these joint needs assessments will show similar levels of vulnerability to the Syrian refugees. A similar multi-sectoral assessment is under way for the Syrian refugees living in Jordanian communities which, combined with other assessments, will inform the profiling and targeting exercises planned for the first quarter of 2014.

3. The rationale for piloting food assistance through cash transfers

Based on WFP's experience in Jordan and Lebanon, the use of voucher is still an appropriate modality of food assistance as it ensures that the assistance is actually used to access food. However, various studies and experiences showed that direct cash transfer is also feasible, in addition to being more flexible, potentially more cost-effective and perhaps more culturally appropriate.

WFP and UNHCR's study *Examining Protection and Gender in Cash and Voucher Transfers*¹⁰ pointed out that one of the core advantages of cash is the flexibility it offers, as it does not fit neatly into the sectors by which assistance is organised. According to the study, aid agencies with sector-specific mandates should not be afraid to embrace these advantages out of concern that cash provided to cover needs in one sector may be used by beneficiaries to cover needs in another that they find more important. More effective coordination among assistance actors could mitigate these internal operating limitations and ensure that household needs are covered more comprehensively. While the study suggests that cash and vouchers should be viewed as one tool in a broader assistance strategy in order to enhance the protective impacts of cash and voucher transfers, WFP still needs to ensure that the cash assistance is used for meeting food needs.

Some of the suggested arguments why WFP should contemplate introducing cash transfers, based on overall cost-effectiveness and other programmatic considerations, are:

- **Support to local economy:** Markets in general have always played a vital role in food security and in improving the local economy. Under the current paper voucher scheme in Jordan, many of the 80 retailers are medium-to-large-size stores. This will be the same for the e-vouchers. Some of these shops are owned by commercial chains and wealthy families. Many products sold in these shops are imported. The project therefore largely ignores small market vendors who, particularly in rural areas, are dependent on market sales and often sell more local produce but are often not regulated and difficult to control. Most of these vendors are also poor. In Lebanon, 250 small and medium-sized shops have been targeted throughout the country, and WFP is working intensely on expanding the number of shops to meet the increased caseload. Shops are encouraged to sell local products – including fresh produce, however it is recognised that a deeper analysis of the impact on the local economy is required. While some refugees prefer to buy from small shops as it is more convenient and easier for them to establish personal relationships, others prefer larger shops if there is a greater variety of products. By distributing cash and allowing refugees to buy from markets and a range of shops in the

¹⁰ WFP & UNHCR, *Examining protection and gender in cash and voucher transfers*, September 2013.

communities, this could allow a balanced distribution of humanitarian assistance to both refugees and host communities.

- **Issue of inflation:** Markets in Jordan and Lebanon are well-developed, integrated, and competitive. There has been no evidence to date in both countries that retailers have been unable to respond to WFP food vouchers. Prices in both WFP-partner shops and non-partner shops show similar price trends. Price monitoring during the 2013 voucher project implementation did not indicate any market disruption, and no complaints were received from the beneficiaries or non-beneficiaries, except for isolated cases of price increase by small number of shopkeepers who were subsequently warned or removed from the programme. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that, in the absence of a negative impact on retail sector prices and functionality, cash transfers will be feasible and will have a positive multiplier effect on the local economies.
- **National government challenges:** While cash transfers have been implemented in Jordan and Lebanon, it is very small-scale and sometimes linked with conditionality as unconditional cash transfer is being challenged by the national governments of both countries. In Lebanon, the government has had a negative stance towards cash-based interventions yet recently have 'turned a blind eye' to assistance provided to vulnerable non-Lebanese. An advocacy paper has been submitted by the Cash Transfer Working Group to the Ministry of Social Affairs in Lebanon detailing the merits of unconditional cash transfers and addressing the concerns of the national government on the use of cash for humanitarian assistance to the Syrian refugees. The paper also suggests the commitments of the humanitarian actors to ensure that cash transfers will not do harm to both refugees and local host communities¹¹. In Jordan, the Cash Transfer Working Group is planning to commission a study on the impact of cash transfer in Jordanian communities. The study will establish a baseline and coordinated monitoring activities and will develop a Cash Transfer Strategy for 2014. In both countries, WFP is an active member of the Cash Transfer Working Group and this pilot project will allow WFP to learn and properly position itself to use cash as a modality for food assistance.
- **Food insecurity and consumption score:** In **Lebanon**, nearly 70 per cent of the households were found to be food insecure. According to the Vulnerability Assessment of Syria (VASyR), food insecurity appears to decrease with the length of stay in both countries. Most households showed acceptable food consumption and diet diversity; however, there was a risk of a micronutrient deficiency¹².
- In **Jordan**, a similarly high number of Syrian refugees are food insecure given most come with few liquid assets and the majority come from Dera'a, one of the most impoverished governorates in Syria. WFP monitoring has shown that beneficiaries on voucher assistance consume a more diverse diet than those currently receiving in-kind food assistance in Za'atri refugee camp as they can easily access eggs, dairy, meat and

¹¹ Cash Transfer Working Group, Lebanon. *Achieving successful cash transfer programming in Lebanon*, June 2013.

¹² WFP, UNHCR, UNICEF. *Vulnerability assessment of Syrian refugees in Lebanon*, June 2013.

fresh products through WFP vouchers¹³. Through direct cash assistance, it is assumed that beneficiaries will be able to make shopping decisions based on price, preference and location and markets in their own locality including informal markets and point of production shops that are often lower in price, thus increasing beneficiaries' purchasing power through the cash modality.

- **Beneficiary preference and dignity:** The post distribution monitoring in Jordan (July 2013) found a significant acceptance of cash and voucher transfers. Those households in Za'atri camp who used to receive in-kind food distribution prefer food vouchers or a mix of cash and vouchers, while those in the communities who received vouchers for long time prefer a mixed of cash and voucher or 100 per cent cash. In Lebanon, the sale of vouchers by beneficiaries who have immediate cash needs represent a loss of up to 20 per cent of the value. Post-distribution monitoring showed that the reason for selling was to have cash to buy fresh foods and bread more regularly from markets where prices and quality are perceived to be higher or from shops closer to their accommodation. It is therefore clear that cash transfers give the beneficiaries greater flexibility and allow them to choose from within a range of commodities to suit their preference and needs.

Moreover, despite having a network of almost 350 shops in Jordan and Lebanon, many refugee-families still live reasonable distances from the nearest partner shop. They therefore spend all of their vouchers at one time so that they only have to pay one taxi fare to take the food home. This is one reason why they want to buy non-food items such as soap powder, so that they stock up on basics during their monthly voucher shop and use other income to top up with fresh food and bread. A cash transfer would allow them to shop locally and avoid transport costs. It would also allow them to purchase fresh products at cheaper prices from markets of their choice, thus spreading the benefit from additional income across more shops.

- **Gender and protection:** A recent global study conducted by WFP and UNHCR, *Examining protection and gender in cash and voucher transfers*, pointed out that a shift in transfer modalities (from in-kind assistance to cash and vouchers) provides more opportunities for agencies to incorporate more protection and gender-sensitive issues into their programming. This comparative study will therefore consider the merits of cash and vouchers as options for those populations (such as religious minorities in Lebanon in particular) who may feel uncomfortable coming forward for e-vouchers linked to particular shops.
- **Operational advantages**
 - **Use of existing pre-paid/e-card system:** The current roll out of electronic cards in Jordan and Lebanon will allow a fast and speedy shift to cash assistance. Even with the planned implementation of vulnerability targeting in Jordan and

¹³ WFP, Jordan. *Monthly monitoring report*, July 2013

- Lebanon, the existing e-cards of the target beneficiaries will be used to obtain cash from ATMs.
- **Syrian beneficiary households are cash literate:** They are all used to shopping in markets/supermarkets for their household needs, managing household budgets to ensure their limited financial resources cover all household outgoings including food, rent, education, healthcare, non-food etc.
 - **High awareness related to nutrition:** Nutrition statistics indicate global acute malnutrition (GAM) rates of 5.9 per cent which also indicates that people make smart decisions and generally understand the importance and priority of a varied diet for their family.

4. Target beneficiaries

The pilot project aims to target 1,000 households affected by the Syria crisis (approx. 5,000 people) in rural and urban communities of Jordan and Lebanon.

500 Syrian households living in three governorates of Jordan

Some 500 Syrian families will be randomly selected from three governorates in Jordan (Mafrq, Aqaba and Amman) that will represent both rural and urban areas. The target group will have different profiles and vulnerability levels to evaluate the impact of cash among all strata of beneficiaries. For this pilot, it is a pre-requisite that the e-cards will already be operational. Cash will be distributed through the e-cards and target beneficiaries will be allowed to withdraw cash from an ATM.

500 Syrian households living in southern governorates of Lebanon

Some 500 Syrian families that are a part of WFP's existing caseloads will be randomly selected from southern governorates of Lebanon. The existing WFP prepaid e-cards will be used as delivery instrument, allowing beneficiaries to withdraw cash from an ATM.

Note: In Lebanon, UNRWA and WFP have been negotiating the terms of a financial arrangement so that both may jointly fund the food component of UNRWA's unconditional cash assistance for the Palestinian refugees from Syria (PRS) caseload. During 2013, UNRWA has transitioned to providing the PRS with ATM cards so that both their food and non-food needs are met. A technical agreement is also being reached so that WFP may provide guidance, support and training to UNRWA on the on-going multi-sectoral vulnerability assessments as well as the adequate provision and reporting of food assistance. UNRWA would like WFP's continued support to assist some 85,000 PRS by December 2014. The provision of unconditional cash assistance to the PRS will mark another cash pilot for WFP in Lebanon and will ensure that various lessons may be learned to serve as a basis for other cash-based interventions.

5. Project objectives and outputs

To implement food assistance to 1,000 targeted Syrian refugee families in Jordan and Lebanon through direct cash transfer for an initial project period of six months.

Output 1: Targeted households have access to food through cash transfer over the period of six months.

Activity 1.1 Provision of food assistance through cash transfer

The cash will be transferred to the beneficiaries through the existing e-card over the period of four months. The selection of beneficiaries will be done in collaboration with the existing cooperating partners: Save the Children International, Human Relief Foundation UK and Islamic Relief Worldwide in Jordan and Action Contre la Faim in Lebanon. Selected beneficiaries should undergo a series of orientation on the use of the e-card (use for withdrawal of cash from ATM). The beneficiaries will also be highly encouraged to use the money for food. Some key messaging will be included during the orientation covering food diversification, food utilisation and proper food handling.

Activity 1.2 Monitoring and evaluation

An external, third party agency will conduct a full objective assessment and evaluation of the cash pilot comparing control groups of households that received voucher assistance with those that received cash through the pilot project. The third party agency will analyse differences in consumption patterns, the utilisation of cash for specific commodities, the impact on household food security and gender and protection issues compared to the currently implemented voucher programme in order to determine which modality is the most efficient and effective in ensuring the food security status of beneficiaries. WFP monitoring can act as a source of information to triangulate findings, but the third party must be as objective as possible and therefore removed from WFP and its partners while conducting the evaluation. The evaluation will take place in three stages:

- a) A baseline survey will be conducted from a sample of at least 30 per cent of the total beneficiaries to take a 'snapshot' of the current situation for household expenditure patterns and food security.
- b) Monitoring throughout the project period will allow the third party agency to understand the change in dynamics as the families adapt to the cash modality and provide overall improved understanding of the process.
- c) Final evaluation will compare the results of the baseline and post-distribution monitoring (three rounds) to evaluate the impact of the cash transfer, make recommendations for the most successful modality for ensuring refugee household food security and identify potential issues that need further attention if cash is to become a regular WFP assistance modality.

Activity 1.3 Coordination

WFP is already actively involved in a Cash Transfer Working Group in both countries and is working closely with UNCHR and other agencies on joint training on the use of cards, and moving towards streamlining our monitoring to the extent possible. WFP will ensure that the implementation of the cash transfer pilot project is well understood by other agencies to avoid duplication or overlapping.

6. Pilot project implementation strategy

The pilot project will be implemented through three cooperating partners in Jordan and one cooperating partner in Lebanon.

- **Save the Children International:** Save the Children International is one of WFP's partners in Jordan, currently implementing the voucher programme in the communities of Amman and Zarqa covering more than 168,000 refugees along with 120,000 registered refugees in Za'atri Camp.
- **Islamic Relief Worldwide:** Islamic Relief Worldwide is currently implementing the voucher programme in the northern part of Jordan covering more than 182,000 refugees.
- **Humanitarian Relief Foundation - UK:** HRF is currently implementing the voucher programme covering 47,000 refugees in southern Jordan, as well as the transit camps of King Abdullah Park and Cyber City. Although HRF has the smallest caseload among the three WFP partners in Jordan, they are covering a much wider geographical area.
- **Action contre la Faim (ACF):** ACF International is one of WFP's partners, implementing the prepaid electronic voucher in southern Lebanon covering nearly 137,000 refugees.

Partners will be involved in the design and implementation of the pilot project. Partners will be responsible for selecting the beneficiaries based on the agreed targeting criteria and will provide orientation or training to the beneficiaries in close collaboration with WFP staff. Partners will also provide support to the third party who will conduct external monitoring and evaluation of the pilot project.

7. Risk analysis and mitigation measures

Potential risks include:

- General destabilisation of the security conditions in Lebanon, which could affect markets and potentially the financial service infrastructure that cards rely on. Similarly both Lebanon and Jordan have a weak and unpredictable political and policy environment which can impact the humanitarian environment with the consequent impact on project implementation.

- Given the pressure on refugee household budgets to meet the rental and non-food requirements, there is clearly a risk that if WFP provides cash to these households, the money may be used for other purposes than food. A better understanding of the likely use of cash is one of the key reasons for this comparative study and will inform other operations that may potentially consider cash as an appropriate assistance modality.
- There is a risk of tensions between refugees and host communities as a result of humanitarian aid interventions. Both Lebanon and Jordan have seen rising tensions between the communities, though these are mitigated by WFP ensuring all activities are implemented in coordination with local authorities and through cooperating partners with existing development projects serving local communities. These projects have allowed WFP partners to develop a strong relationship with the communities, working through a network of volunteers and community groups. Although host communities are not benefitting directly, the use of cash in the locality will improve the local economy. By providing cash, refugees could be more discrete as people shopping with cash is the norm, whereas vouchers clearly mark them as refugees.
- WFP Lebanon plans to assist poor Lebanese through the voucher programme in partnership with the Ministry of Social Affairs which will reduce tension between host community and refugees. A series of community sensitisation initiatives, involving host community leaders and refugees will be conducted to ensure transparent and accountable programming, thereby mitigating the risk.
- While the Government of Lebanon has been reluctant in the past to support cash only, the ongoing winterisation activities from various organisations through ATM cash cards would indicate their position has evolved throughout the crisis and that any WFP cash programming is likely to find less opposition. Various organisations already have cash assistance programmes for refugees in Jordan.

8. Monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning

Monitoring and evaluation is an integral aspect of all WFP projects and implemented in cooperation with WFP cooperating partners. The proposed pilot project will be monitored closely through regular field visits from the external agency as well as both cooperating partners and WFP staff. The findings from the WFP or partner monitoring can be used to triangulate and cross reference conclusions from the external evaluation. The following participatory tools and methodologies will be used: Pre and Post Distribution Monitoring through household and phone interviews, beneficiary contact monitoring at the shop level, focus group discussions to receive qualitative information, retailer (key informant) interviews, shop price monitoring and on-site distribution monitoring. Reports will be produced by WFP to collate information gathered in the field and present to the management in addition to the final third party agency report to be published at the end of the pilot.

A comprehensive monitoring plan will be developed in order to ensure tools and techniques are incorporated into programming from the start of activities based on pre-defined indicators, to build the capacity of the partners to undertake monitoring and evaluation, set up strong accountability and feedback mechanisms (for example, cash hotline) and facilitate a platform together with the third party agency for sharing lessons learned and determine whether cash assistance is the most efficient and effective mode of assistance to ensure the food security status of Syrian refugees in the region.

Appendix B: Impact evaluation grants under the 3ie Humanitarian Assistance Thematic Window (Thematic Window Six, TW6.HITW)

3ie's Humanitarian Assistance Thematic Window (Thematic Window Six, TW6.HITW) grant programme is designed to support impact evaluations in the field of humanitarian assistance. It is part of 3ie's main thematic window grant-making facility. After the preparation phase, proposals will be reviewed and scored by at least one internal and at least two external reviewers, according to the criteria outlined in A2 Table 1.

A3 Table 1 Criteria for assessing impact evaluation designs

Criteria	Weight
Qualifications of proposed staff	15%
Involvement of in-country researchers	15%
Quality of technical proposal, internal validity	30%
Quality of technical proposal, external validity	15%
Potential policy impact	15%
Cost	10%

A3 Table 2 Timeline for the full evaluation phase**

Finalisation of budget and full technical proposal	30 September 2014**
Training of field teams and finalisation of survey instrument	Till mid- October 2014
Data collection / field work (data collection, process monitoring, endline data collected)	Mid-October 2014 – mid March 2015
Mid-term report	January 2015
Draft final report	Mid- April 2015
Final report	End May 2015

** Subject to approval of full proposal by 3ie