

# CashCap Support to Red Cross/Red Crescent National Societies Pilot Review

Final Report



PART OF NORWEGIAN  
REFUGEE COUNCIL



# CashCap strategy and ongoing pilots

Two distinct workstreams have been established within the localisation framework:

Strengthening  
national  
societies

Supporting  
national  
governments

This review focuses on the first workstream:

1. Strategic capacity-building support in cash coordination, design and implementation
2. **Focus on the Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies**
3. Two pilot programmes are underway for this workstream
4. **CashCap expert is embedded in and collaborating closely with the [Ukraine Red Cross Society \(URCS\)](#) and the [Syrian Arab Red Crescent \(SARC\)](#)**
5. One deployment started in Turkey in November 2023.

# Pilot context and characteristics

## Context

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Deployments

Location	Duration	Start Date	Approach
Ukraine	17 months	June 2022	Contextually sensitive, enabling approach
Syria	15 months	October 2022	Contextually sensitive, enabling approach

Actors

Organization	Role
National Society (NS)	The Syrian Red Crescent (SARC) and The Ukrainian Red Cross Society (UCRS) – embedding the experts into their CVA team
NORCAP/CashCap Teams	Identifying the experts to be deployed in NS
International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and British Red Cross (BRC)	Hosting agencies for the deployed experts

# Review Objectives

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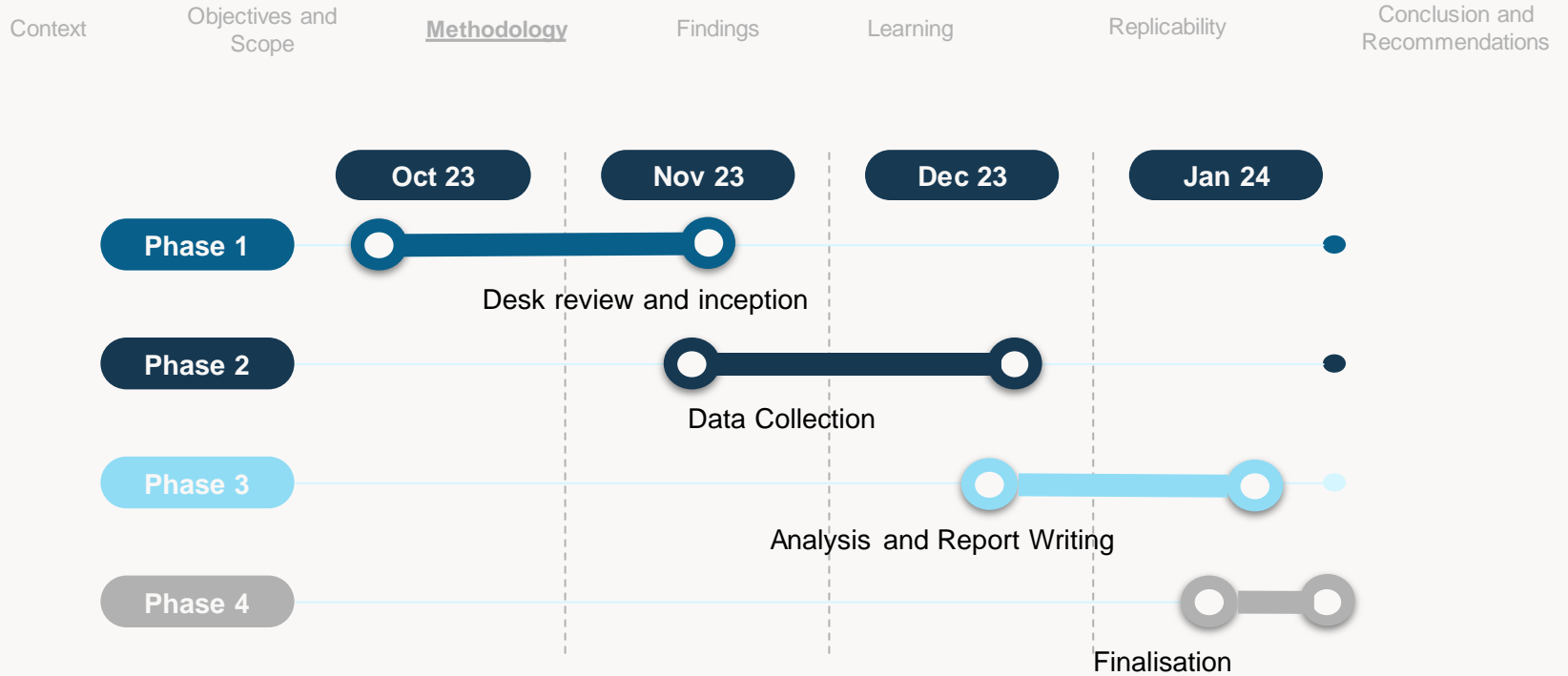


What has worked well and why  
What has not worked well and why  
What specific learnings can be drawn for the advancement of localisation



Review pilot projects to identify best practices, lessons learned, and recommendations for phase 2 implementation and potential model scale-up  
Assess NORCAP/CashCap's expertise in coordination, capacity-strengthening, and advocacy for CVA to determine its value in supporting ongoing system-wide localisation efforts when strategically placed in a long-term mentoring role within a local actor

# Methodology and Deliverables



# Data Collection

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→ The review utilized a **qualitative approach**, drawing data from **desk reviews** and key informant interviews (**KII**).

→ Key informant interviews were conducted with representatives from **various stakeholders**, including national societies (NS), experts embedded in NS, C Movement partner stakeholders (BRC, IFRC, etc.), Cash Working Group co-chairs and partners, CashCap/NORCAP, and external stakeholders.

→ **Interview questions** were structured based on the team's **review matrix**.

→ The team **surpassed the initial KII target**, conducting 35 interviews instead of the planned 33.



Ukraine	19
Syria	11
Outsiders	5



## Limitations:

- **Measuring Impact:** Difficulty in measuring impact due to the pilots' nature and lack of tangible outcomes. Findings heavily rely on interviewee perceptions.
- **Timing of Review:** Clarity on pilots' contribution to CashCap's localisation objectives will emerge once experts depart their contexts.
- **Differentiating Pilot from Experts:** Key informants struggle to provide unbiased feedback due to personal relationships with experts.



# Findings

# Findings

## How relevant were CashCap's expert deployment and partner selection in pilot countries

### Relevance




- While most interviewees were not aware of the rationale behind the selection in their country for the pilot, all informants in Syria and Ukraine **considered the pilots to be extremely relevant to the contexts** chosen.
- The **interest** in CVA capacity-strengthening and the **willingness** to assume a leadership role in cash delivery was **paramount** for both NS. When coupled with their pivotal roles within their country, these elements underscore the relevance of the selected contexts.
- The missions and **objectives** captured in the ToRs **matched the requirements** on the ground.
- The BRC's established rapport with SARC **positively influenced** the perception of the deployment's **relevance** as well as its **effectiveness**

- The experts deployed successfully adjusted to the NS' needs and priorities throughout their deployment, thus increasing the relevance of the pilots.

Examples of areas of focus not part of the initial ToRs:

**Syria:** Focus on CVA earthquake response and coordination

**Ukraine:** Focus on co-chairing the CWG

- The ToR drafting process appeared to have been relatively opaque. This did not impact the effectiveness of the deployments, nor does it question their relevance per se.
  - Share of KI who know / don't know why their country was selected for the pilot
- 
- A number of factors contributed to the perceived relevance of the deployment: the perceived **neutrality** of the expert, the **length of deployment**, and the interpersonal and technical **skills** of the experts deployed.



### How effective were the pilots in supporting local and national organizations in the two contexts?

#### Overall Effectiveness

- Technical **expertise**, interpersonal **skills**, and deployment **duration** significantly influenced the pilot's effectiveness. Experts' **knowledge** of cash coordination and extensive **experience** in cash and voucher assistance (CVA) **were crucial**. The duration of deployment, typically one to two years, allowed experts to grasp contextual nuances and ensure continuity, especially in Ukraine. Some RCRC interviewees noted experts' superior technical strength in CVA compared to delegates, leading to significant internal coordination roles.

#### Coordination and Advocacy

- Effective deployment positioned both SARC and URCS in external coordination forums, notably Cash Working Groups.
  - In Ukraine, URCS attained co-chair status in the CWG, facilitated by the expert's leadership and training efforts.
  - In Syria, SARC's external coordination strengthened, with increased collaboration within the CWG and improved negotiations with clusters.
  - The expert played a crucial role post-earthquake in Syria, enhancing the NS's visibility and understanding of external coordination mechanisms.
- In turn, this positively contributed to the visibility and empowerment of both NSs, which is a direct outcome of localisation.
  - Both SARC and URCS took on more significant roles in external coordination structures. Interviewees underscored that this enhanced their visibility and empowerment in the NSs.
  - While significant progress has been made in coordination, the extent to which it is sustainable remains to be seen.
  - One of the unintended positive outcomes of the pilot was the contribution to effective internal coordination between the NS and the Partner National Societies.

**“Becoming co-chair gave URCS a push to up their game”**

**“SARC’s interaction with the CWG has changed significantly since the expert was deployed”**

**“SARC is the most active participant in the technical working group under the cluster system”**

**“Being co-chair gave us visibility with donors and international organisations. Combined with the fact that we were a big cash actor, it gave us CVA legitimacy.”**

**“Internal coordination massively improved in 2023 vs. 2022.”**



# Findings

## Effectiveness

### How effective were the pilots in supporting local and national organizations in the two contexts?

#### Quality CVA at scale

NS' ability to implement quality CVA at scale improved in both countries during the deployment period.

Experts significantly contributed to this improvement, particularly in documentation development and information management enhancements. In Ukraine, despite progress, some interviewees feel the NS isn't fully cash ready, citing a gap in understanding at branch level and the absence of sectoral cash for URCS

#### Syria

- Harmonizing CVA tools
- Integrating cash components into sectoral tools used by various departments within SARC
- Supporting CVA and Information Management (IM) departments within SARC in establishing the CVA database
- Contribution to the development of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for CVA and Livelihood activities
- Expert's crucial role during earthquake response, mobilizing full team within days and securing significant funding

#### Ukraine

- Implementation of a no-regret cash in envelope for 270,000 recipients for 2 weeks for the Ministry of Reintegration and Occupied Policy
- 100,000 recipients per month for host community members hosting IDPs between Sept 2022 and December 2023 (start of the program in June 2022)
- URCS as the sole partner of the government since September 2022, handling registration, payment, PDM, and CEA
- Voucher support to 50,000 people with PNS assistance
- Quality and accountable delivery ensured through adequate systems and procedures (verification, monitoring, CEA, reporting, Cash Platform, etc.)
- Transition from blanket approach to vulnerability targeted approach
- MOUs established with government

### Effectiveness

#### CVA skills and Competence

- Experts significantly enhanced CVA skills and competence in both Syria and Ukraine, leading to substantial improvements.
- All interviewees appreciated the experts' soft skills and mentoring approach.
- Majority of interviewees noted the cash team's strong willingness to learn, contributing to positive outcomes.
- Key elements for skill enhancement included daily teaching and mentoring, collective capacity-building activities, and quality feedback and reporting.
- Challenges remain in turnover and sustainability, with staff turnover and "brain drain" common.
- Debate arose regarding the expert's impact on improving capacities and systematic ways of working, particularly in SARC and Ukraine's CVA unit.

#### Evidence of Progress

- Lack of clear objectives for experts before deployment and within host countries.
- Limited awareness of overarching goals, as seen in Syria.
- BRC established a work plan for experts in Syria, but many interviewees were unaware of it.
- In Ukraine, Cash expert reported directly to Deputy Director of Programmes, addressing URCS priorities.
- Despite the cash strategy in URCS One Plan 2023–2025, no detailed work plan was developed.
- Absence of defined outcomes not viewed negatively by most KIs; seen as adaptable.
- Challenges include determining deployment duration and devising exit strategies.
- Missed opportunity in Ukraine to utilize Red Cross' CVA self-assessment tool for tracking progress.



# Learning and Replicability

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### Exit Strategy

- Extension of the pilot is crucial for consolidating capacity-strengthening efforts in Syria and Ukraine, with most interviewees advocating for at least another year, preferably two. Factors influencing duration and exit strategy include internal factors such as cash readiness and expert coaching approach, along with external factors like staff turnover and funding availability.
- Challenges persist without baseline and endline assessments for decision-making. Insights for an effective exit strategy include progressive exit with remote coaching, light-touch reviews for recommendations, and a one-month handover between experts.

### Learning about the pilot

- Interviewees, especially in National Societies (NSs), advocate for structured deployment with clearer objectives and increased involvement in expert selection. While agility in adapting to emerging needs is praised, about half suggest a more structured approach for future deployments.
- Some NS interviewees emphasize the importance of interpersonal skills and seek involvement in setting objectives and expert selection.
- Limited NS involvement was observed in drafting Terms of Reference (ToRs) and expert selection in Syria and Ukraine. In Ukraine, there's a proposal to involve NS and CashCap directly in decision-making and ToRs drafting, with regular partner check-ins.

- Deployment facilitated significant knowledge exchange, benefiting both experts and CashCap. Initially not part of the review matrix, this aspect was added after discussions with Norcap, highlighting its significance in the context of localization. Experts, regardless of prior Red Cross exposure, shared examples of benefits, including enhanced internal coordination within the Movement and a deeper understanding of local actors' challenges in the humanitarian sector and NS role with the government in both countries.
- The pilot design and expert identification provided insights into the importance of selecting experts motivated for long-term roles with national actors and the need to adapt recruitment processes to screen for mentorship and 'leading from behind' qualities.

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- There was a **consensus** among interviewees globally, including in Syria and Ukraine, **emphasizing the critical nature of deploying** and embedding a CashCap expert within a National Society (NS), suggesting this model's effectiveness for future implementation in diverse contexts.
- Justification for CashCap's involvement includes the requirement for **local actors** to either **act as or have the potential** to be key cash response entities, with less than a quarter of interviewees in Syria and Ukraine seeing potential for other local actors.

- The **embedding** of an expert offers a **unique value** proposition for NSs, enhancing relevance and **demonstrating replicability potential** through **expertise** in large-scale CVA design and implementation, **in-depth understanding** of expectations and practices of other actors, **neutrality** compared to PNS CVA delegates, and **proficiency** in CVA coordination. While the first characteristic is not exclusive to CashCap experts, the combination of these attributes is deemed unique.
- **Replicability involves prioritizing NSs** where deployment will be most effective, considering factors like large-scale emergencies with extended response durations and preparedness and anticipatory action where NSs play a pivotal role as government auxiliaries.

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**The main limiting factor to replicability is CashCap's ability to deploy the right expert and to commit the expert for a minimum duration of one year**

- Minimum deployment duration favored by most interviewees: One year, allowing for operational readiness. Less than a year raises concerns about deployment value for about half of interviewees.
- Interviewees from NSs and PNSs don't prioritize immediate deployment due to the understanding of time required for expert selection. Strong expectations exist for CashCap to send highly qualified experts

**Mixed views within the Movement about the need for the expert to have experience working with the RC**

- Approximately one-third deem RC experience mandatory, while others prioritize relevant context and crisis experience alongside interpersonal and technical skills.

**Regional Perceptions:**

- Perception consistency across countries despite varying expert RC experience.
- Greater emphasis on RC experience in Ukraine due to crisis novelty and PNS coordination challenges.
- Potential underrating of RC experience need in Syria due to SARC's embedment support from BRC.

**PNS vs. NS Perspective:**

- PNS prioritize movement experience, while NS prioritize knowledge of external actors.
- Suggestions for on-the-job coaching to mitigate lack of RC experience."



“It’s not that someone outside couldn’t bring value to it, but it definitely helps to have lived it.”

“We overstate the importance of having movement experience to understand the movement. It’s much more about effective relationship management than understanding of it.”

“Having Red Cross experience is not needed, but a “Red Cross induction” from the CashCapper to a new one would be useful (3 days training for example).”

“It should be mandatory to send someone with Red Cross experience.”





# Conclusion and Recommendations

# Conclusion

**The review demonstrated the relevance and effectiveness of this pilot and calls for the replication of the scheme in other contexts**

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- Interviewees affirmed the effectiveness of deployment and integration within URCS and SARC, attributing it to expert skills, deployment duration, neutrality, and adaptability
- Embedding a CashCapper presents a unique value proposition for NSs and local actors, showcasing technical expertise, soft skills, and adaptability
- The pilot significantly boosted capacity, particularly in implementing quality CVA at scale and coordinating effectively
- Sustainability challenges, especially in Ukraine, necessitate a gradual exit strategy with at least another year of deployment
- Future replications should clarify CashCap's role with NSs and involve them in needs identification and expert recruitment for effective replication

# Recommendations

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**Determine** CashCap's annual deployment **capacity based on available experts** to prioritize target NSs effectively



**Consider involving more NS/PNS actors** in the expert selection process to **increase accountability** and ensure a **participative approach** in line with localisation principles



**Clarify CashCap's positioning towards NSs at their request:** Is CashCap a partner communicating directly with NSs? Improve communication to ensure NSs are well-informed and create open channels for discussion.



**Utilize self-assessment exercises** by NSs' CVA units, when available, **to measure deployment effectiveness and contribution to localisation**, maintaining deployment adaptability without setting rigid objectives upfront



Consider a model where **NSs contribute financially to deployments**, demonstrating commitment to CVA preparedness and hosting the expert.



**Structure CashCap's support** to NSs, including monitoring, to document **lessons learned and benefits** gained from expert deployments into NSs in future monitoring and evaluation (M&E) efforts.



**Explore a mixed deployment model** spanning three years, with the expert's full-time presence in the first year, followed by shorter-term missions in subsequent years to enhance sustainability and continuity



Explore setting up a system where **NSs can apply for deployments**, ensuring a participative approach. Develop eligibility criteria considering factors like cash readiness and contextual needs.



When deploying an expert without RC experience, **provide support** to ensure a thorough understanding of movement functions for effective deployment.



## Follow up discussion: Q&A