

Q & A
ON
PRE-CRISIS MARKET MAPPING
AND ANALYSIS

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Contents

Understanding PCMMA and its relevance3
Why do a market analysis?3
How do I choose between a PCMMA and other market analysis tools?4
For what kind of contexts and crises is PCMMA appropriate?4
Is the PCMMA a food security tool, or can it be used in other sectors, too?5
Considering the lack of resources in the humanitarian sector, how relevant was it to develop yet another tool?5
What is the relationship between PCMMA and cash transfer programming?5
Does PCMMA help address the possible negative impacts of in-kind assistance on markets?6
Organizing a PCMMA.....6
How long does a PCMMA exercise take? How much does it cost?6
What is the role of the different departments within a PCMMA exercise?6
Where will the funding to carry these assessments out come from?7
How do I prioritize where to conduct PCMMA? How often do they have to be repeated in the same location?.....7
I have been trained in EMMA, does it mean I can implement a PCMMA?.....7
What kind of support is available to agencies that would like to carry out a PCMMA? ..8
Ensuring a quality assessment.....8
How do you select a “normal” year in contexts of chronic crisis?8
How do you select the right crisis for a PCMMA?.....8
During a PCMMA, how do you account for the market actors, such as opportunistic market players, that engage in the market system differently when a crisis occurs?9
In PCMMA, is there a process of assessing the potential risks and/or benefits to the target population of the different response options proposed?9
How does PCMMA take into account how markets have coped, stretched and been impacted by previous crises, as well as the seasonal variations that may be in effect at the time of the pre-crisis assessment?9
Are there any examples where organizations leading a PCMMA have engaged with market actors beyond just interviewing them in the assessment? 10
Will PCMMA help you identify existing market inefficiencies that contribute to food insecurity in a shock or does it only look at how market systems change when a shock happens? 10
What kind of evidence do we have on the efficiency or impact of using PCMMA? 10
Using the PCMMA guidance document 11
Why is the PCMMA document so long? Is it possible to simplify it/ reduce the number of steps? 11
Will the PCMMA be translated in French and/or Spanish? 11

Understanding PCMMA and its relevance

Why do a market analysis?

Markets are essential for providing people access to basic goods and services, for people's livelihoods and for economic development. This is the case for the majority of people, most of the time. Disrupting or ignoring markets before, during, or after an emergency will potentially weaken people's access to basic goods, services and income generating opportunities and can destroy or delay the ability of people to return to their livelihoods. With the data gathered during market analysis, humanitarian actors can design interventions that support and strengthen markets rather than inadvertently harm them.

What is the Pre-Crisis Market Mapping and Analysis (PCMMA) Guidance?

The PCMMA is a practical, step-by-step resource to guide market analysis practitioners and team leaders to conduct market assessments **before** emergencies happen in contexts that are prone to recurring crises, whether natural or man-made, or where a shock is anticipated. This early analysis helps practitioners and decision makers to anticipate how certain selected 'critical' markets will behave or function if and when a shock occurs.

Where did the Pre-Crisis Market Mapping and Analysis (PCMMA) come from?

The PCMMA was developed by Oxfam GB (from ECHO ERC funding) and IRC (with support from USAID) as a result of acknowledged failures in timely responses to crisis. The 2011 crisis in the Horn of Africa has been recorded as the most severe emergency of its kind this century. In the wake of the drought, several key reports emerged that highlighted some significant weaknesses in the international response. Some of the main issues included problems in *what* and *when* we analyse.

Traditionally, contingency planning and early responses have not been based on clear or predictive livelihood and market analyses. This means that humanitarian agencies don't understand critical components in how people operate and how they access basic goods, services and income. As a result, agencies do not know what responses are appropriate or adequate. Moreover, traditional response analysis begins with a situation analysis soon **after** the 'shock' has occurred. By this time, it is often already too late to conduct a response analysis that enables people to protect their livelihoods.

The Situation and Response Analysis Framework (SRAF) is the key product of the Enhanced Response Capacity (ERC) project and is a response modelling framework and set of tools designed to improve humanitarian actors' capacity to prepare for and respond to slow-onset food crises. It relies on baseline data on both livelihoods and markets in the target area to inform situation and response analysis. It was in this context that the PCMMA was developed. Information gathered during PCMMA serves as the market baseline data for the SRAF, while information from HEA provides the livelihoods baseline data.

The PCMMA guides practitioners in using existing market analysis methodologies to define how critical markets work, to understand key linkages and functions within these markets, to understand what elements of the market may need support before or after a crisis and highlights what the key factors are that need monitoring as a crisis unfolds and/or identify indicators of a crisis.

For more information on the SRAF, please see: <http://www.sraf-guidelines.org/>

How do I choose between a PCMMA and other market analysis tools?

The PCMMA was designed to guide practitioners in applying existing market analysis tools prior to the onset of emergencies. Previously-existing market analysis tools, like MIFIRA, RAM/MAG and EMMA, are all designed to be used shortly *after* emergencies happen. The PCMMA is not a tool itself, but rather a method of taking these existing toolkits and applying them in *pre-crisis* contexts. The designers and authors of PCMMA have more experience in EMMA than with the other assessment approaches, so the structure of PCMMA does mirror that of EMMA to some extent. However, it is intended to be used as a guide for applying market analysis, regardless of which tool you are using. PCMMA also addresses a gap in other market analysis tools and provides guidance on how to involve senior management in order to ensure that assessment findings are actually put to use within your organization.

In terms of its use, PCMMA guides users in developing programming recommendations for DRR (better access to markets for goods, services and/or income through strengthening weak parts of the market system), supports preparedness planning (what types of market-based programs may be appropriate in a crisis), and assists with early warning (what to watch for to indicate markets are weakening or that a crisis is coming). In contrast, MIFIRA/EMMA/RAM/MAG generally focus on making recommendations only for response programs. Applying PCMMA before crises occur, in relatively relaxed contexts, is also a particularly good opportunity to build the capacity of humanitarian actors in market analysis.

After an emergency happens, MIFIRA/EMMA/RAM/MAG will generally still be needed to confirm that the markets are operating as anticipated from the PCMMA assessment, but hopefully the time and effort required to do these post-emergency assessments will be much less, in effect speeding up the response timeline.

For what kind of contexts and crises is PCMMA appropriate?

In theory, PCMMA is appropriate in any context that it is prone to recurring crises or where a shock is anticipated. Contexts can be urban or rural, and crises can include slow onset events, like droughts, or rapid onset crises, like typhoons. Both natural and man-made disasters recur in certain contexts and are fairly predictable, and thus both types of crises can be considered in PCMMA. PCMMA is intended to be conducted *before* a crisis starts, so for slow-onset crises in particular, it is crucial to pay attention to timing. If a crisis has already begun to unfold, it's probably better to utilize one of the post-emergency assessment tools, such as EMMA. To conduct a PCMMA, you need a good idea of what types of crises are likely to happen over the next few years in a given location

(one of which will be chosen as the *crisis scenario*); thus, it is not intended for unpredictable crises.

PCMMA may or may not be applicable in refugee contexts. It might be relevant, for example, where populations are regularly displaced due to some kind of disaster or conflict, or where refugee camps are well established and have well developed markets but can be facing other short-term crisis (like flooding or escalation of conflict situation).

Because PCMMA is a relatively new approach, we don't have a lot of practical examples of its use in different contexts. There may be different considerations, for example, for conducting PCMMA in urban and rural contexts, and this could be reflected in a revised version of the PCMMA guidance document. Also, PCMMA was conceived to be used within a specific region of a single country, but the approach could potentially be applied at a larger scale; at this point there is still a lot that we don't know. This is another reason to share your learning from implementing PCMMA with the [Markets in Crises community](#).

Is the PCMMA a food security tool, or can it be used in other sectors, too?

PCMMA, and emergency market assessments more generally, can theoretically be done in any sector where markets are involved. Historically, much of the work on emergency markets assessments has been led by food security and livelihoods people; however, this does not mean that it is an FSL-specific tool. Market assessments are becoming more widespread in other sectors, like WaSH and shelter, and are likely to expand to other sectors in years to come.

Considering the lack of resources in the humanitarian sector, how relevant was it to develop yet another tool?

The idea behind the PCMMA is to help us apply *existing* tools in a different and more efficient manner. We're not trying to re-create the wheel with market analysis, rather providing guidance on how to use existing tools in a different way, which will hopefully make our emergency responses more rapid, better planned and coordinated, and ultimately more effective.

What is the relationship between PCMMA and cash transfer programming?

PCMMA can help support planning for a potential cash transfer response to some predicted future crisis. During the planning phase of any kind of response - including in-kind and CTP - the local market should be assessed to see to what extent it will be able to supply beneficiaries with key goods and services in the event of a crisis. A PCMMA is appropriate for finding out this information, as long as critical markets are selected appropriately. PCMMA can also identify opportunities for market support, such as improving microfinance services or storage capacity, that could be delivered using cash as a modality. However, PCMMA is only one piece of a broader situation analysis and is not enough on its own to support CTP design. It is also necessary to carry out a cash feasibility study before launching a CTP, to make sure that cash can be delivered and used in a safe and effective manner and to identify the best modalities and service

providers for delivery. A PCMMA is not a full-fledged feasibility study, though it can be used to gather some initial information about common and accepted payment methods in a given market. However, such a study could also be carried out before a crisis in order to increase preparedness and to inform the response recommendations that emerge from a PCMMA.

Does PCMMA help address the possible negative impacts of in-kind assistance on markets?

PCMMA, along with the other key market assessment approaches (like MIFIRA/EMMA/RAM/MAG), was designed to help inform more market-aware programming. This kind of programming helps to reduce humanitarian response's possible negative impacts on markets by using local markets to source and deliver goods and services following an emergency to the extent possible. PCMMA is also intended to identify weaknesses in local markets and opportunities to mitigate them so that markets are better able to reliably supply goods and services even in the face of shocks, potentially reducing the need for humanitarian assistance in the first place. Rather than address the possible negative impacts of in-kind assistance, PCMMA helps to prevent that harmful interventions take place at all.

Organizing a PCMMA

How long does a PCMMA exercise take? How much does it cost?

A PCMMA exercise takes approximately as long as an EMMA exercise: roughly two weeks, including a theoretical and practical training of about 3 days, data collection for 4-6 days (depending on the size and transport conditions of the geographical area you are working in and the number of staff you have), and data analysis for 3 days. The assessment leader will need an additional 3-5 days to produce the report.

Generally it is reasonable to budget \$10,000-20,000 for a PCMMA assessment. Costs vary depending on several factors. If you don't have internal capacity to lead the exercise, hiring an international consultant can add to the cost; this is generally the single most expensive part of any market analysis exercise. Other factors that will influence the cost are the geographic scope of the assessment and whether you will be renting vehicles (normally more expensive) or using your organization's own fleet (normally cheaper).

What is the role of the different departments within a PCMMA exercise?

The ideal PCMMA team will include participants from a number of different departments, including logistics, finance and program staff from the sectors that relate to the critical markets being assessed. Oftentimes non-program people have great knowledge of how different markets and systems function that program staff may not have and that contribute greatly to data collection and analysis.

Where will the funding to carry these assessments out come from?

The most obvious way to fund PCMMAs is to include them in proposals about preparedness and/or disaster risk reduction. OFDA, DFID, ECHO and other donors are becoming more amenable to funding preparedness activities. PCMMAs can be built into organizational preparedness initiatives like contingency planning efforts and/or cash emergency preparedness processes. They could also be financed under learning and evaluation budget lines and could be framed as a learning step *following* emergency response efforts that will help humanitarian actors to be better prepared for the next emergency.

Funding could also be available through coordination mechanisms, which could facilitate linkages between different organizations that have funding as part of cluster emergency response strategy development and planning. Early warning systems may have funding to support PCMMAs.

Since PCMMA is a new approach, its legitimacy still has to be established within the donor community, which should make it easier to get funded in the future. The more that humanitarian actors document and share their experiences using PCMMA, the more donors will recognize their value.

How do I prioritize where to conduct PCMMAs? How often do they have to be repeated in the same location?

As mentioned, PCMMAs should be conducted in places that are prone to recurring crises or where a particular kind of shock is anticipated and where your organization is willing to devote resources to emergency preparedness and DRR activities. You may want to prioritize places where your country teams have strong leadership and analytical capacity and knowledge of the local context, particularly among the national staff. You should also find out whether any other agencies have conducted PCMMAs in the countries where you operate, since the findings from a prior assessment may be sufficient to meet your needs.

If a PCMMA is good enough and representative of the most recurrent and typical crisis, a PCMMA's findings should remain valid for several years or more. This is explained in further detail in the Step 15 of the guidance. However, your organization should still carry out regular market monitoring, as explained in Step 13 of the PCMMA guidance document.

I have been trained in EMMA, does it mean I can implement a PCMMA?

If you are an experienced EMMA leader, there is a big chance you can go out and lead a PCMMA. If you have just been "EMMA trained" and have not conducted an EMMA, you might want to participate in a PCMMA exercise before leading one, but remember it follows the same basic methodology as EMMA, and the main differences relate to the timing and the objectives. For someone with practical experience in market assessments, the guidance document should be fairly straightforward to pick up and apply. PCMMA may be different from other types of market assessment in terms of practical concerns like team structure, timing and scenario definition, but most of the basic theory, concepts and analytical processes are the same as those in other market assessments.

What kind of support is available to agencies that would like to carry out a PCMMA? Do you have some PCMMA trainers you could recommend? Do you have some PCMMA training material/resources?

The PCMMA guidance document is publicly available in several places online, including the [EMMA website](#). If your agency does not yet have the capacity to conduct an assessment with the support of the guidance document, we would suggest starting to build internal capacity by having qualified staff volunteer themselves as team members in other agencies' PCMMAs. Once they are comfortable with the PCMMA process, they can then take on responsibility for training other staff. We encourage agencies to announce their plans for PCMMA activities through the [MiC dgroup](#) and their relevant country coordination groups.

At the moment, there are very few people who have led PCMMA trainings and exercises, and there is no official PCMMA training curriculum, though some training materials are under development. However, people with strong experience leading other emergency market assessments, like EMMA, are likely to be comfortable taking on a PCMMA with a little extra preparatory work. We suggest announcing PCMMA leadership opportunities through the [MiC dgroup](#) and, as always, encourage you to use the same forum to share training materials and learning from trainings.

Ensuring a quality assessment

How do you select a “normal” year in contexts of chronic crisis?

First, it's important to define the crisis you want to analyze and identify the defining factors of that crisis. A “normal” year is one when those defining factors are not present. To be more precise, we actually shouldn't talk about normal “years;” rather, you need a snapshot of a particular *period* of the year. “Normal” is very relative and context dependent; you'll need to figure out what it means in your assessment by discussing the question in depth with training participants and/or people who have strong local knowledge.

How do you select the right crisis for a PCMMA?

A number of commonly available internal and external resources can help you decide what crisis to use as the basis for your PCMMA. These include PCVA, vulnerability and risk analysis, contingency planning documents, SRAF and ACAPs briefing documents, among others. Also, you will want to consider the objective of the assessment, your agency's mandate and expertise and therefore the crisis you are likely to respond to in the future. Finally, make sure that this crisis is something that market actors are aware of and that manifested itself in the not-too-distant past - if not, it will be difficult to get data on how market actors are likely to adapt or cope in case the scenario unfolds.

Don't panic! Even if the crisis you select does not unfold, a PCMMA will still provide a valuable baseline of the selected critical market(s). The assessment process will have helped to build your team's capacity in market analysis. Also, much of the information you gather during a PCMMA - about how markets function and relationships between market actors - will help you quickly assess the impact of an unforeseen crisis on the market.

During a PCMMA, how do you account for the market actors, such as opportunistic market players, that engage in the market system differently when a crisis occurs?

If you only do a baseline market map (based on the pre-crisis scenario), you may not pick up these opportunistic market actors. However, for a PCMMA you should also map out what the market will look like if the chosen crisis should occur. You do this by asking market actors how markets have behaved in previous similar emergencies. If you do this well, you will get data on how the market changes during emergencies, and this may include changes in the numbers and types of different market actors. This will be reflected in the post-crisis market map, which is one of the key outputs of a PCMMA exercise.

In PCMMA, is there a process of assessing the potential risks and/or benefits to the target population of the different response options proposed?

PCMMA is not a stand-alone exercise that will allow you to design response options from scratch. You will need to rely on other approaches and data sets (e.g., from HEA and needs assessments) to capture more comprehensive information.

In PMMCA, as in EMMA, the different response options identified are evaluated according to a set of criteria, and this evaluation helps to determine which option(s) surfaces as the preferred option. If selected properly, these criteria should capture potential risks and benefits to the population of the various options. For certain options, you may need to do a feasibility study in order to determine whether or not it can be implemented.

How does PCMMA take into account how markets have coped, stretched and been impacted by previous crises, as well as the seasonal variations that may be in effect at the time of the pre-crisis assessment?

PCMMA is based on particular emergency scenario, normally one that has occurred on multiple occasions in the past. For the sake of simplicity during your assessment, you will refer to one specific event (e.g., the 2012 drought or the 2010 cyclone), dubbed the *reference crisis*. The comparison of the 'normal' reference period, with the 'crisis' reference period, will show how the market changed as a result of the crisis. This includes the emergence of new actors, the weakening of certain parts of the market system and provides a picture of overall market functionality.

To predict how markets will behave in response to some similar crisis in the future, you ask market actors how their business was affected and coped during the reference crisis. Seasonal variations are captured by either timing your assessment *for* a particular time of year (e.g., the dry season during a non-drought year) or by asking questions *about* that time of year even if the assessment is done during a different season. In either case, make sure you are comparing the same season of the reference crisis to the same time of year in the 'normal' year.

Are there any examples where organizations leading a PCMMA have engaged with market actors beyond just interviewing them in the assessment?

Yes. The PCMMA guidance outlines some examples of this in its "Tips from the Field" text boxes. Market actors can be consulted during the design and review of market maps, for example, and during the development of response options. PCMMA can also serve to gather a good base of contact information of different markets actors (i.e., names and phone numbers) that NGOs can use to connect with these people periodically in order to get data that can help to support market monitoring and early warning efforts.

Will PCMMA help you identify existing market inefficiencies that contribute to food insecurity in a shock or does it only look at how market systems change when a shock happens?

PCMMA looks at how markets function in a "normal" situation, supported by a needs analysis of the target population. It does indeed help to identify existing market inefficiencies that can contribute to chronic food insecurity and/or worsen the impact of a crisis and therefore can offer guidance on how to intervene *before* a crisis occurs to strengthen and build resilience so that crises won't have such a negative impact.

What kind of evidence do we have on the efficiency or impact of using PCMMA?

PCMMA is a relatively new approach. To date, there isn't strong body of data on this type of assessment. We're trying to improve the situation this year by gathering feedback from initial assessments. It will probably take some time to generate strong evidence on PCMMA, simply because of its pre-crisis nature. To gather evidence of PCMMA's impact, the predicted crisis will need to unfold, and then response programming will need to be implemented *and* evaluated. Further, a truly rigorous evaluation would compare humanitarian responses in two different areas selected by similar crises, where a PCMMA was conducted in only one of those areas. Ideally, this will need to happen in several different contexts, in order to be able to make "systematic comparisons" and strong conclusions about the advantages and/or drawbacks of this approach. As always, some evidence can be captured anecdotally. We strongly encourage organizations with evidence of PCMMA's impact, whether anecdotal or scientific, to share it with the [MiC Community of Practice](#).

Using the PCMMA guidance document

Why is the PCMMA document so long? Is it possible to simplify it/ reduce the number of steps?

The PCMMA is lengthy because it is designed to provide detailed step-by-step guidance to non-technical field staff, who may have limited understanding of market analysis. It is meant to be an "off the shelf" document and incorporates learning from the prior use of different market analysis approaches such as the EMMA and the RAM/MAG. That said, depending on your own level of comfort with market analysis, you may not need to read the whole document. At the beginning of the guidance, there is a summary of the different steps and the key actions that each one involves. You can first go to this summary and then refer to the full guidance document for the steps for which you need more information or feel less comfortable.

As we have tried to emphasize, the PCMMA guidance document in its current form is really a draft. If you have used it and have ideas for simplifying it, please feel free to suggest improvements by contacting Oxfam and/or IRC or by completing this online [feedback form](#).

Will the PCMMA be translated in French and/or Spanish?

Yes, if funds become available we'd love to translate this, particularly the revised version of the PCMMA guidance, which should be produced in late 2015.