



# PRACTICAL GUIDE: CHOOSING THE MODALITY OF HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE / SUPPORT IN UKRAINE

Step-by-step guide  
to decision-making in crisis situations

# WHY THIS CHOICE IS CRITICALLY IMPORTANT



**The choice of modality** is not a technical but a strategic decision.

It determines the speed of response, the efficient use of resources, the impact on the local economy and, preserving people's **livelihoods** and dignity.



## SPEED:

Meeting basic needs without delay.



## SUSTAINABILITY:

Support for people, the local economy and communities.



## EFFICIENCY:

Maximum impact from each intervention.



## DIGNITY:

Empowering people to cover their own priorities.

# BASIC MODALITIES: THREE TYPES OF ASSISTANCE



## IN-KIND ASSISTANCE (in-kind)



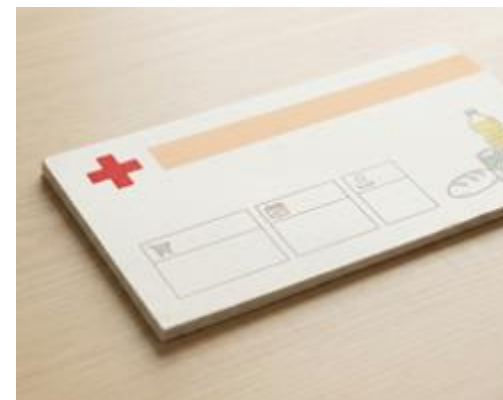
**1. Direct provision of goods and items:** food, hygiene kits, medicines.

## CASH ASSISTANCE (cash)



**2. Financial payments** which people spend on their own needs & priorities.

## VOUCHER ASSISTANCE (voucher)



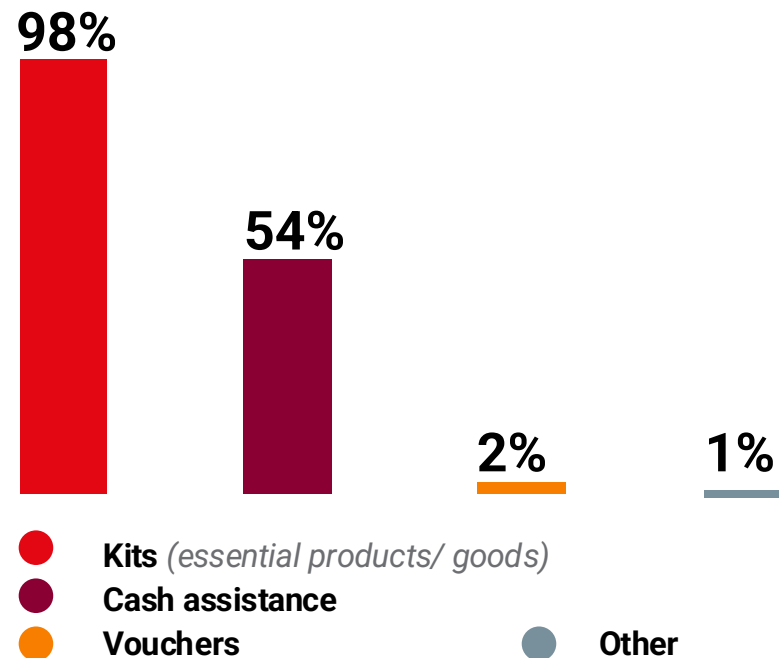
**3. Certificates for exchange for certain goods or services** from specific suppliers.

## BASIC MODALITIES: WHICH FORMATS ARE ALREADY FAMILIAR TO UKRAINIANS?



Results of a survey of 200 residents of Kharkiv region who received assistance from URCS in December 2025.

Multiple answers were allowed: one participant could indicate several types of assistance at the same time if they had experience of receiving each of them.



# COMPARISON OF MODALITIES: ADVANTAGES AND LIMITATIONS



## IN-KIND ASSISTANCE (in-kind)

### Advantages

- Quality control of goods and items;
- Guarantee to receive basic goods and items.

### Limitations

- Complicated logistics processes;
- Does not take individual needs into account.

## VOUCHER ASSISTANCE (voucher)

### Advantages

- Targeted support for specific needs;
- Partial flexibility of choice.

### Limitations

- Limited choice;
- Limited partners' stock;
- Dependence on partners' stock.

## CASH ASSISTANCE (cash)

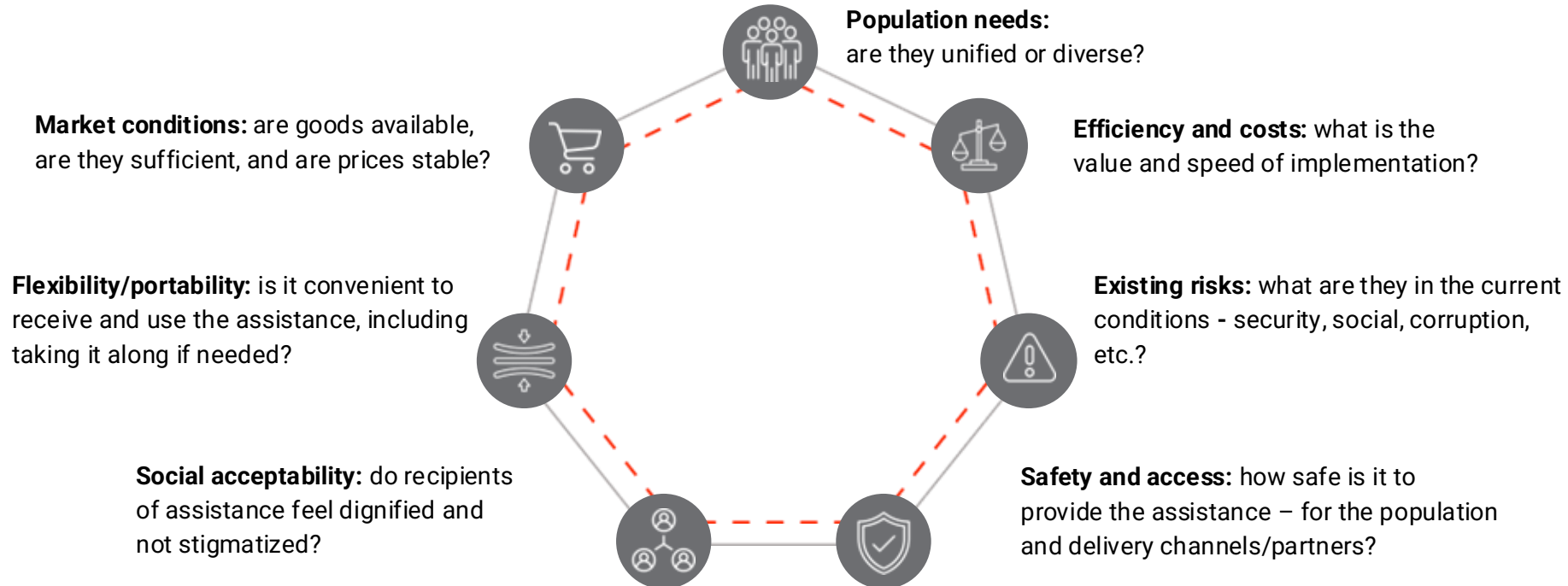
### Advantages

- Flexibility and dignity;
- Stimulus for the local economy;
- **Ukrainian context:** safer in case of shelling.

### Limitations

- Requires functioning markets;
- Vulnerability to inflation;
- **Ukrainian context:** more difficult in blackouts, airstrikes, etc.

# GENERAL COMPASS: 7 CRITERIA FOR DECISION-MAKING



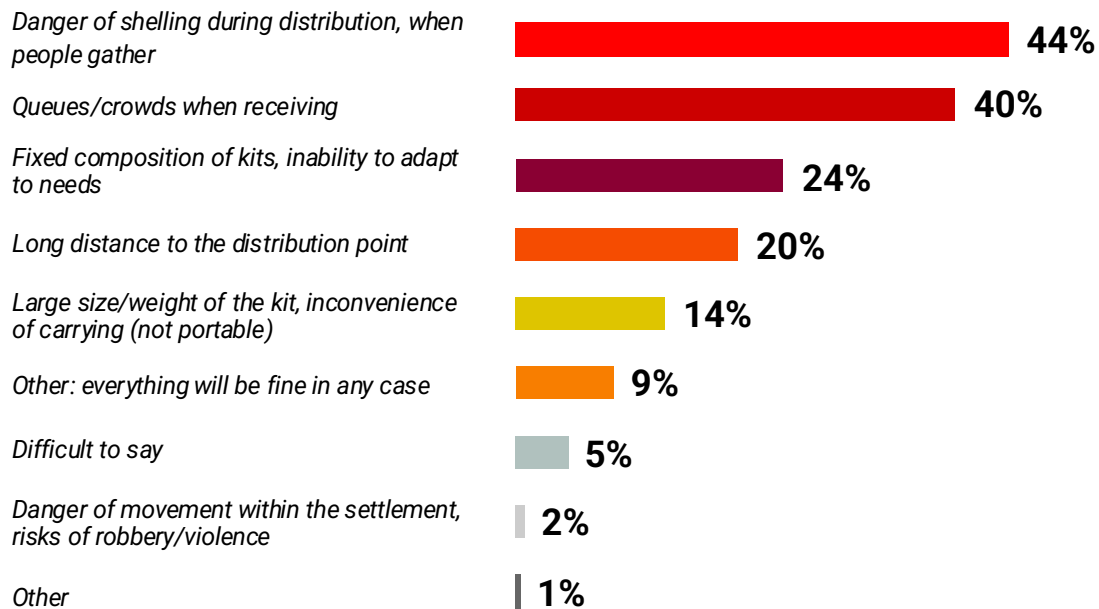
# DECISION MATRIX: WHEN TO USE EACH TOOL?



*The criteria of "safety and access" and "associated risks" depend more on context than on the type of assistance*

Criterion	 In-kind	 Voucher	 Cash
Market functioning	<span style="color: red;">●</span> Markets / logistics chains are destroyed	<span style="color: orange;">●</span> Markets are partially functioning	<span style="color: teal;">●</span> Markets are stable
Beneficiaries' needs	<span style="color: teal;">●</span> Unified	<span style="color: orange;">●</span> Specific	<span style="color: red;">●</span> Diverse
Effectiveness / cost-effectiveness	<span style="color: red;">●</span> Higher logistics costs	<span style="color: orange;">●</span> Average costs	<span style="color: teal;">●</span> Lowest administrative costs
Social acceptability	<span style="color: red;">●</span> Low	<span style="color: orange;">●</span> Higher, but depends on context <span style="color: teal;">●</span>	<span style="color: teal;">●</span> Higher, but context-dependent <span style="color: orange;">●</span>
Flexibility / portability	<span style="color: red;">●</span> Low	<span style="color: orange;">●</span> Average	<span style="color: teal;">●</span> High

## BASIC TOOLS: RESTRICTIONS ON IN-KIND PACKAGES

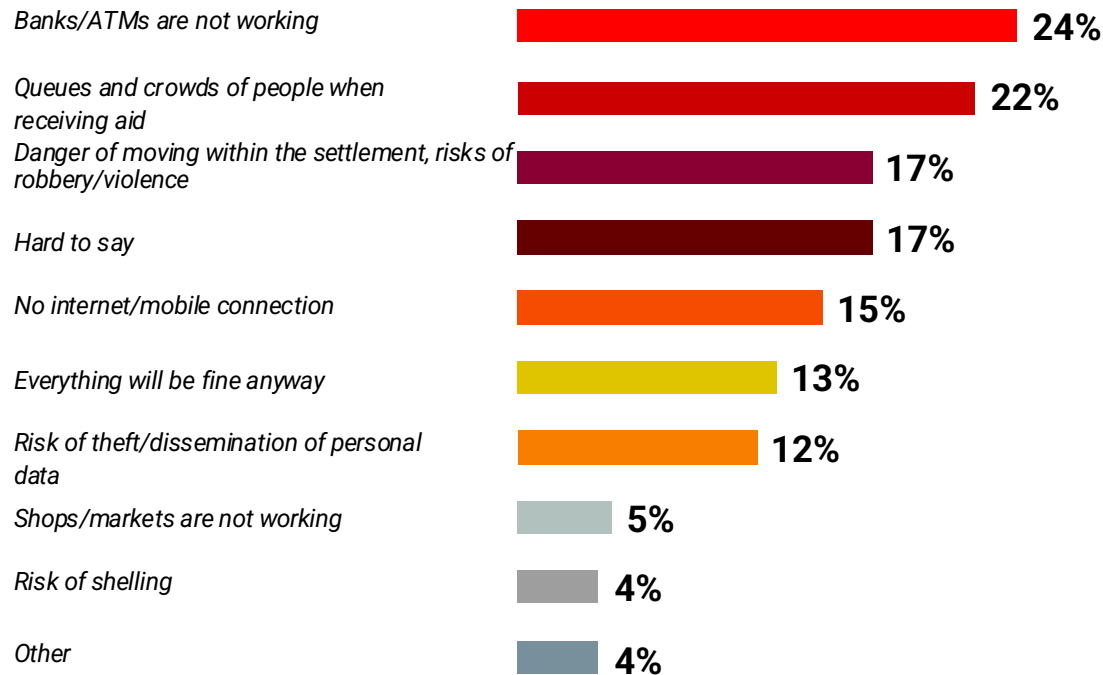


### ***Circumstances that make in-kind assistance inconvenient or risky***

*Results of a survey of 200 residents of Kharkiv region, recipients of URCS assistance, December 2025.*

*Multiple answers were allowed.*

# BASIC TOOLS: RESTRICTIONS ON FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE



## Circumstances that make cash assistance inconvenient or risky

*Results of a survey of 200 residents of Kharkiv region, recipients of URCS assistance, December 2025.*

*Multiple answers were allowed.*

## WHAT ELSE TO CONSIDER: SATISFACTION WITH ASSISTANCE



Assessment category	Financial assistance (n=107)	Kits (n=194)
<b>Satisfied</b> <i>answer options "completely satisfied" &amp; "rather satisfied"</i>	82%	72%
<b>Both satisfied and dissatisfied,</b> <i>answer options "50/50" and "hard to say"</i>	16%	23%
<b>Dissatisfied</b> <i>answer options "rather dissatisfied" &amp; "completely dissatisfied"</i>	2%	5%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Results of a survey of 200 residents of Kharkiv region, recipients of the URCS assistance in communities where it is present, December 2025. Participants in the study assessed their level of satisfaction with each type of assistance received (not only from the URCS, but also in general over the past three years). N - number of responses.

# GENERAL ROADMAP: THREE-STAGE DECISION-MAKING FRAMEWORK



## Emergency response

0-72 hours, sometimes  
up to 5-7 days

STAGE **A**

### Focus

Rapid assessment  
and immediate action.

*"What should be done  
right now?"*

## Operational planning

≈1-12 weeks

STAGE **B**

### Focus

Detailed planning  
and differentiation of approaches.

*"Developing a reliable  
plan"*

## Adaptive recovery

> 12 weeks,  
from 3 months

STAGE **C**

### Focus

Monitoring, adjustment  
and transition to sustainability.

*"How to achieve long-term  
effectiveness"*

# STAGE A: ALGORITHM OF ACTIONS IN THE FIRST 0-72 HOURS



## Step A1: Assessment of the security context

Assess market access and risks to staff and beneficiaries



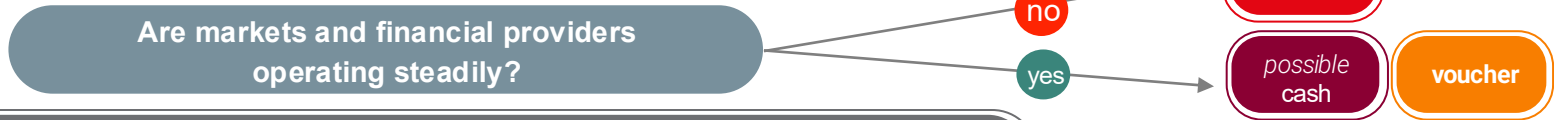
## Step A2: Assess evacuation plans

Assess the proportion of people planning to leave. Are two response models needed?



## Step A3: Assessment of the functioning of markets and financial services

Assess the capacity of markets and financial providers



**Step A4: Monitoring.** Select a baseline modality for 2-4 weeks and establish clear indicators (triggers) for its review



## STAGE B: DIFFERENTIATION OF APPROACHES 1-12 WEEKS



The key idea of this stage is to differentiate approaches depending on whether people plan to **evacuate or remain** in place.



### MODEL 1:

**Assistance to the population being evacuated.**

**Objective:** To provide portable assistance that can be used in any region of Ukraine.



### MODEL 2:

**Assistance to the population that remains.**

**Objective:** To organise life support and access to basic goods and services locally.

# MODEL 1: SUPPORTING THE PEOPLE DURING EVACUATION



## PHASE I

### DEPARTURE

**Context:**

*Immediate need, high risks.*

**Type of assistance:**

**in-kind** (water, ready-made food, hygiene products, clothing, blankets, and additionally – transport costs.).



## PHASE II

### TRANSIT CENTRES

**Context:**

*Short-term stay.*

**Type of assistance:**

**mix** (hot meals, vouchers, small cash payments).



## PHASE III

### ARRIVAL / ACCOMMODATION

**Context:**

*stabilization of living conditions.*

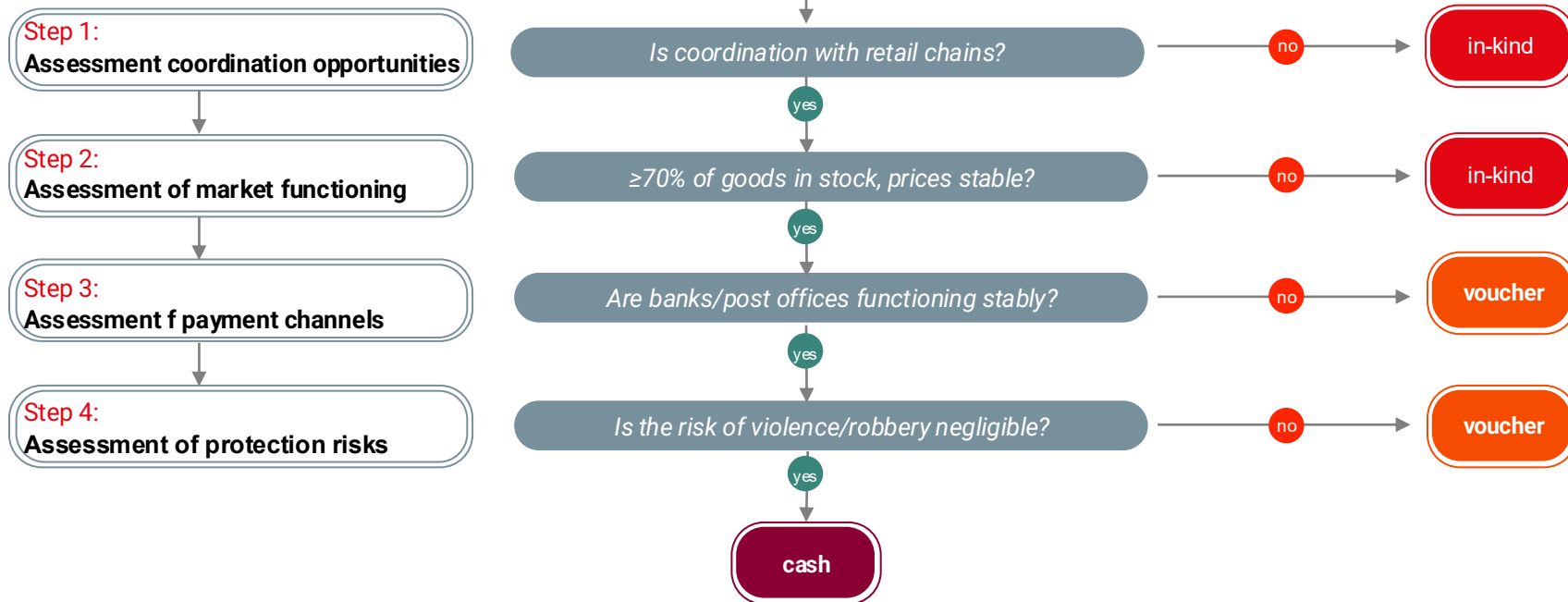
**Type of assistance:**

**cash**, including money for rent, plus targeted vouchers.

# MODEL 1: SUPPORT FOR THE POPULATION REMAINING IN PLACE



## ALGORITHM FOR SELECTING THE TYPE OF ASSISTANCE



# FLEXIBILITY IN ACTION: MONITORING AND SWITCHING TRIGGERS



## TRIGGER # 1

### SECURITY CHANGES

#### Deterioration:

loss of access to markets

→ transition to **in-kind**

#### Improvement:

stabilisation → gradual transition to

**in-kind** → **voucher** → **cash**

## TRIGGER # 2

### ECONOMIC INSTABILITY

#### **Rapid inflation**

(> 10%/week)

transition from **cash**

→ to **voucher**

→ or **in-kind**

## TRIGGER # 3

### MARKET DISRUPTION

#### **Shortages**

(≥ 30% of critical goods)

transition from **cash**

→ to **in-kind**

→ or **voucher**

# STAGE C, FROM 3 MONTHS: FROM RESPONSE TO EARLY RECOVERY



The focus shifts from emergency survival to supporting **resilience** and recovery.



## [C1] Transition to predominantly using **cash**:

Cash assistance becomes a priority for restoring people's well-being and the local economy.



## [C2] Integration with long-term programmes:

Combining assistance with business support and job creation.



## [C3] Defining exit criteria:

Developing a plan for the gradual phasing out of humanitarian intervention.

# BASIC TOOL FOR QUICK ASSESSMENT: COMMUNITY QUESTIONNAIRE



## Purpose Statement:

a practical tool for gathering critical information for making an informed decision:  
can be applied in **Stages A and B**.

## Target audience:

representatives **local authorities**, community leaders.

**This is the main tool for gathering data for decision-making.**

***If contact with local authorities is not possible,  
use an alternative questionnaire!***



# OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLE: FLEXIBILITY, EFFICIENCY AND RESPECT FOR DIGNITY



The most appropriate approach is to use **a combined approach** and flexible choice of modality depending on the specific situation / context.



## **In-kind:**

Indispensable in areas with limited access and disrupted markets.



## **Cash:**

Priority in stabilised areas and to support people who are being evacuated.



## **Voucher:**

An effective transitional tool in partially functioning markets.

***A systematic and adaptive approach allows not only respond to the crisis, but do so as effectively as possible, empowering people to make their own decisions and rebuild their lives.***



**THANK YOU  
FOR YOUR ATTENTION**



**Ukrainian Red Cross Society:**



03150, Kyiv, Dilova St., 3



0 800 332 656



[cash.programmes@redcross.org.ua](mailto:cash.programmes@redcross.org.ua)