
November 16, 2016
SEEP is a global network of practitioner organizations dedicated to combating poverty through promoting inclusive markets and financial systems.
Minimum Economic Recovery Standards (MERS)
What is economic recovery?

Rapid, tailored support for livelihoods, enterprises and economies in the wake of a crisis.

Provides people affected by disaster:

- an opportunity to earn income via employment or operation of a business
- contributes to dignity
- assists people to recover from the crisis and meet their own needs
- avoid undermining local markets and private sector actors with humanitarian aid
**Goal:** To improve the impact of economic recovery programming by building consensus on good practice

**Origin** (2007): Practitioners and donors recognize that there is a need for rapid, tailored support for the livelihoods, enterprises and economies affected in the wake of a crisis, and a need for parallel efforts in an emergency efforts to meet the basic needs of affected populations.

**Focus:** Strategies and interventions designed to improve income, cash flow, asset management, and growth in crisis-affected households and enterprises.

**Outcome:** MERS represents a consensus across agencies engaged in economic recovery on what constitutes an effective and appropriate response to help disaster-affected populations.
MERS Vision
MERS is committed to a world where disaster-affected populations can rebuild their lives and regain their livelihoods to provide for themselves and their families with dignity.

MERS Mission
The mission of MERS is to mainstream early economic recovery programming into humanitarian responses by building consensus on, and promoting adoption of good practices.

Guiding principles
Rights based, do no harm, dignified work, conflict sensitivity, protection from exploitative activities.
MERS - Third Edition

Why do we need a revision of the MERS handbook?

- To capture industry advances over the last six years – MERS is a ‘living document’ that needs to reflect current thinking and practice

- Incorporate recent lessons learned and best practice

- Adapt to changing priorities of donors and implementing agencies

- Update language and terminology

- Reference new tools and latest research
How we got to where we are now

Over the last year, the revision process has engaged more than 150 practitioners and leading experts representing over 60 organizations in revising the six sections of standards in MERS. Some of the contributors have included national and international NGOs, UN agencies, researchers and academics, and other humanitarian actors.

The revision process has included a series of regional consultations. These workshops have taken place in:

- Geneva, Switzerland
- Dakar, Senegal
- Panama City, Panama
- New Delhi, India
- Beirut, Lebanon
- London, United Kingdom
Following the regional consultations:

• The Technical Working Groups developed a First Draft for each of the sections;

• SEEP hosted a mini write-shop convening MERS Steering Committee and various technical experts;

• MERS Steering Committee approved First Draft

• Final round of feedback before publication and dissemination.
Major Revisions to the Standards

• New focus on ‘market systems’ and market facilitation approaches – do not intervene in market directly, instead support existing market actors

• Include guidance on cash transfers and digital payments

• Increased focus on IDPs and Refugee populations

• DRR and Resilience as cross cutting themes

• Many new guides and updated tools and references
Overall Standards Structure

Core Standards

Assessment and Analysis

Enterprise and Market System Development
Productive Assets
Financial Services
Employment
How do you use the standards?

Standards
Qualitative in nature and specify the minimum levels to be attained

Key Actions
Necessary activities and inputs to meet the minimum standards

Key Indicators
Signals whether a minimum standard has been attained

Guidance Notes
Guidance on tackling practical difficulties
Core Standards

Standard 1
Programs are Market Oriented

Standard 2
Efforts are Coordinated to Improve Effectiveness

Standard 3
Staff have Relevant Skills

Standard 4
Do No Harm

Standard 5
Intervention Strategies for Target Populations are Well Defined
Assessment and Analysis Standards

Standard 1 Preparedness for Assessments

Standard 2 Assessments are Well Planned

Standard 3 Fieldwork Processes Ensure High-Quality Data

Standard 4 Analysis is Useful and Relevant

Standard 5 Immediate Use of Results

Standard 6 M&E Occurs Throughout the Program Cycle
Enterprise and Market Systems Development Standards

**Standard 1**
Deploy Market Systems Staff Immediately after Crisis

**Standard 2**
Implement Market System Analyses Early and Adapt Frequently

**Standard 3**
Be Adaptive

**Standard 4**
Work with Existing Market Actors and Use Facilitation Approach

**Standard 5**
Support Viability and Growth of Enterprises and Market Systems
Productive Assets Standards

**Standard 1**
All Asset Programming Responds to Beneficiary Needs

**Standard 2**
All Asset Programming Stimulates Recovery Without Undermining Local Markets

**Standard 3**
Assets are Protected

**Standard 4**
Assets are Replaced

**Standard 5**
Assets Expand, Diversify and Support Adaptative Livelihoods
Standard 1
Demand for Financial Services is Understood

Standard 2
Support Local Supply for Financial Services

Standard 3
Cash Transfers Occur Through Existing Formal Financial Services Providers

Standard 4
Support Functions, Rules, and Norms

Standard 5
Consumer Protection Regulations are Followed
Employment Standards

Standard 1: Decent Employment is Promoted

Standard 2: Interventions are Labor Market-based

Standard 3: Job Sustainability is Supported

First Draft of the MERS 3rd Edition for you to review as we talk together - it is in the chat box.
Key Questions

• What Format would work well for you?
  – Print?
  – App?
  – Website?
  – Wiki?

• How should we get the word out to folks who need to use these?
  – Webinars?
  – Trainings?
  – Meetings?
Key Questions

• Are the Standards Headings Clear?
  – Can you guess what they are about?
  – Are they short and direct?
  – Do you like the graphics? Should we use more?

• Examples
  – Do you have examples you would like to share?
Staying Engaged

• Next Steps:
  – Dissemination
  – Uptake/Push

• User Feedback Loops