



This guidance outlines suitable types of emergency Cash-for-Work (CFW), Food-for-Work, Cash-for-Assets, and Food-for-Assets (hereafter, “CFW” or “for-work”) activities for USAID funding in humanitarian contexts. It is a supplement to the forthcoming [FFP Emergency Food Security Program](#) technical reference chapters and the *USAID/OFDA Proposal Guidelines* (see Temporary Employment and Cash-for-Work Keyword sections). Please refer to the [USAID/OFDA Proposal Guidelines](#) for technical requirements regarding the for-work modality (e.g. wages, protection concerns, delivery mechanism, and beneficiary selection). This document is intended to supplement the *Proposal Guidelines* and to provide activity-specific guidance for commonly proposed for-work interventions.

This is not an exhaustive list. All for-work activities are individually reviewed upon proposal submission.

For-work projects are designed to provide short-term income to disaster-affected populations. For-work projects aims to construct or rehabilitate communal infrastructure that can be sustainably maintained after the program ends. USAID-funded for-work projects should (1) benefit the community as a whole; (2) have a demonstrated link to the impact of the disaster; (3) not complete work that people would normally do on their own, such as repair their own shelters; (4) not complete tasks that are recurring responsibilities of the community, such as trash pick-up; and (5) have a realistic plan in place for sustainable maintenance.

In general, USAID/OFDA and USAID/FFP prefer low-cost, simple, and rehabilitation-focused activities over larger, more structurally complex, or new construction activities. Construction/rehabilitation activities need proper engineering oversight from qualified individuals, from design to building.

Examples of for-work activities, and accompanying guidance

Activity	Suitability	Issues to Consider
Animal carcass removal	Generally acceptable; see Issues	If needed; and if design and worker safety/hygiene requirements are met.

Borehole construction or rehabilitation	Not typically acceptable	Not supported through CFW due to technical requirements.
Bridge rehabilitation	Generally acceptable; see Issues	Proper engineering design and oversight must be ensured.
Building land stabilizing structures, e.g. rock filled gabions	Generally acceptable; see Issues	Any gabions proposed to be used along water bodies or river or for flood control purposes must meet technical requirements.
Building new market stalls	Depends heavily on context	Depends on the objective and justification, what percentage of market actors will benefit, and more. Brand-new marketplaces rarely sustain the expected level of economic activity and maintenance. Upgrading existing marketplace infrastructure may be appropriate. If individual vendors will benefit (e.g. by getting their own stall or storage) they should contribute their own, unpaid, labor as well.
Clearing/ preparing private or communal farmland; establishing or maintaining nutrition gardens	Not typically acceptable	Farming yields its own benefit, so CFW is usually unnecessary. However, this may be acceptable under extremely limited circumstances.
Desilting water pans or ponds (water catchment system rehabilitation)	Depends heavily on context	Depends on the reason that desilting is needed, the scope of the work (whether manual labor is appropriate), design requirements, and intended use. USAID/OFDA does not generally support surface water runoff for household water supply. Paying communities every few years to do desilting is unsustainable.
Drainage rehabilitation/ construction	Generally acceptable; see Issues	Requires oversight. Sustainability and appropriate maintenance must be addressed.
Fencing existing structures; rehabilitation of fencing (e.g. water points, schools, communal	Generally acceptable; see Issues	Must be for a genuinely communal asset. For example, CFW to fence a garden that only some people share is not appropriate.

pasture areas)		
Hygiene promotion	Not typically acceptable	While USAID/OFDA supports incentives for volunteers, hygiene promotion is considered a skilled task and the selection criteria for volunteers should be different than those for CFW participants.
Communal latrine construction; handwashing station construction	Depends heavily on context	Only acceptable in managed camps. Depends on context and stage of emergency; requires engineering oversight. Household latrines are not supported by CFW.
Major road rehabilitation	Depends heavily on context	Requires strong justification and professional engineering oversight. Depends on context and objective; cost/scale; possible drainage, watershed, and related environmental impacts; plans for maintenance; and appropriateness of CFW (unskilled labor). Generally not consistent with USAID emergency/humanitarian mandate if project entails paving and other major construction activities.
Minor road rehabilitation (feeder or dirt roads; footpaths)	Generally acceptable; see Issues	Depends on context and objective; cost/scale; possible drainage, watershed, and environmental impacts; and plans for maintenance.
New irrigation systems	Depends heavily on context	Requires strong justification. The provision of irrigation materials and training, if needed, should be enough for farmers to provide unpaid labor, and all construction activities from design to building must be overseen by professional engineers and environmental compliance officers.
Pasture reclamation and greening (bunds, zai holes, demi-lunes, invasive species removal, planting of species for greening, fire lines)	Generally acceptable; see Issues	Must be on communal land. Reseeding is generally acceptable, as long as there is a plan within the community to manage or restrict grazing until the grass establishes itself, and to sustainably manage the land and grazing afterwards. Planting species that require significant follow-on care, such as tree seedlings, is not usually supported through CFW, as it is impossible to ensure appropriate care once the payments end.
Piecework / manufacturing items	Depends heavily	Only when there is an assessed humanitarian need for the items in question, and they will be distributed

(e.g. NFIs)	on context	as part of the project. Not frequently supported.
Plant Nurseries	Not typically acceptable	Plant nurseries should ideally be run as profitable businesses so this is not a good fit for CFW. See “Pasture reclamation and greening” for further detail on tree seedlings.
Rehabilitating existing irrigation systems (e.g. cleaning out canals)	Generally acceptable; see Issues	Only communal parts of canals such as the primary canal, not the tertiary canals that go to individual farms, can be considered for CFW. Depends on the reason the canals need rehabilitation (disaster-related damage or displacement are appropriate; a long-term lack of upkeep is not); plans for future maintenance; and the percentage of the community who benefits (if only the better-off farmers have access to canals, then it does not really benefit the whole community).
Rehabilitating existing market or public infrastructure (e.g. schools; community spaces)	Generally acceptable; see Issues	Major repairs/upgrades require technical engineering oversight and designs. Regular market cleanup is not acceptable.
Riverbank reinforcements, ‘dams,’ flood walls, dikes, levees, river diversion	Depends heavily on context	Please see USAID/OFDA Natural & Technological Risks/Hydrometeorology sector requirements. If done incorrectly, such activities may actually increase risks to people. If the activities are technically sound and done on communal/public land, they may be appropriate for CFW. Dam construction is rarely supported.
Shelter construction or rehabilitation	Not typically acceptable	Generally not supported, whether on one’s own shelter or on someone else’s (as it creates a disincentive for people to repair their own homes, can undermine traditional labor-sharing arrangements, may not provide quality control, etc). As an alternative, vulnerable households with no access to labor can receive cash to hire labor.
Training - vocational	Not typically acceptable	Vocational training typically should target those who wish to practice that vocation for a living; while meals or transport stipends are acceptable, paying ‘attendance/sitting fees’ is generally avoided. However, this is occasionally supported in rare

		contexts.
Trash/garbage removal	Depends heavily on context and duration	Not typically acceptable for ongoing solid waste management but one-time community cleanup may be acceptable post-disaster.
Well construction or rehabilitation (hand-dug)	Generally acceptable; see Issues	Generally acceptable for hand-dug wells, if they are communally used, and if there is adequate oversight. Clarify well purpose(s) and include health design measures as needed.