**Piloting the IASC “Accountability to Affected Populations” Operational Framework**

**Background**

At the December 2011 Meeting, the IASC Principals endorsed five Commitments to Accountability to Affected Populations (CAAP)[[1]](#footnote-1) and, with the exception of ICRC and IFRC, which have their own accountability mechanisms, agreed to incorporate the CAAP into the policies and operational guidelines of their organizations and promote them with operational partners, within Humanitarian Country Teams (HCTs) and amongst cluster members. The commitments are related to leadership/governance, transparency, feedback and complaints, participation, and design, monitoring and evaluation (see Annex 1).

The Principals also agreed that a draft Operational Framework should be piloted by the Sub-Group with relevant inter-agency feedback and complaints mechanisms in up to three countries in the course of 2012. The intention is that, by the end of 2012, the IASC Working Group will review the results of the pilots and make necessary refinements with a view to endorsing the Operational Framework so that it can be used by relevant IASC organizations and promoted to the wider humanitarian community.

**Piloting the Operational Framework**

The piloting of the operational framework will involve the humanitarian system as a whole in three specific contexts. Although piloting by individual clusters and/or sectors will provide essential insight and analysis, it is also important to look at accountability across clusters/sectors and how the HCT or other coordination fora can contribute to increased accountability to beneficiaries. It is envisaged that these pilots, with a focus on the overall system in specific locations, will also aim to link together with accountability initiatives of individual agencies in that area.

Therefore, the overall vision for the proposed approach to the system pilots is to perform a coordination and enhancement function across the pilot country contexts, ensuring that all current and relevant accountability activities are connected, gaps are addressed where possible, resources and knowledge shared when feasible, and that there are accountability activities and examples occurring at each level of the response including at a cluster and interagency level, involving all relevant stakeholders.

The proposed structure is of a Global Coordinator based at a headquarters location, over a 9 month period, and 3 field level coordinators, each posted for 6 months to a separate pilot location (see Annexes 3 and 4 for the Terms of Reference, and Annex 5 for proposed budget).

The Global Coordinator would:

* Ensure lessons learned are fed back into the broader operational framework and the guidance being developed through the IASC Transformative Agenda.
* Backstop the field-based Coordinators and liaise with Accountability Focal Points at Headquarters
* Report to the IASC Sub-Group to ensure coherence and common approaches.
* Provide support and supervision to the field coordinators
* Ensure strong cohesion and linkages between the work of the Protection against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) pilot studies (ideally having at least one area of overlap), the proposed Communication with Disaster Affected Communities Network pilots, and the ECB pilot project, to assist in magnifying the impact and reach of these pilots.

The Field Coordinators would:

* Be placed within the offices of the HC
* Make recommendations on how to improve accountability throughout the operation, liaising with UN and non-government agencies as relevant.
* Work towards building linkages between individual and consortium accountability activities and consider how incorporate these as part of a broader framework for the system as a whole.
* Offer capacity building and consultation / support
* Maintain a focus on the specific operational context to ensure relevance to the field and avoid creating parallel systems.

**Outputs**

Once piloted and the information collected, recommendations of how the humanitarian system as a whole can be made more accountable will be made to the IASC Principals. In addition, the system pilots will:

* Ensure that the three countries have established systems that strengthen accountability to affected populations;
* Produce best practice examples that are field based on how to strengthen AAP;
* Develop a clear operational framework for AAP that is endorsed by relevant partners;
* Link up existing AAP initiatives to increase coherence and efficiency;
* Identify challenges/ opportunities in the current response system and clear recommendations on how they can be addressed/ replicated;
* Advocate and disseminate thinking about AAP;
* Ensure that AAP is mainstreamed throughout the Transformative Agenda and IASC guidance

**Annex 1**

**IASC Commitments on Accountability to Affected Populations**

1. LEADERSHIP/GOVERNANCE: Demonstrate their commitment to accountability to affected populations by ensuring feedback and accountability mechanisms are integrated into country strategies, programme proposals, monitoring and evaluations, recruitment, staff inductions, trainings and performance management, partnership agreements, and highlighted in reporting.
2. TRANSPARENCY: Provide accessible and timely information to affected populations on organizational procedures, structures and processes that affect them to ensure that they can make informed decisions and choices, and facilitate a dialogue between an organisation and its affected populations over information provision.
3. FEEDBACK and COMPLAINTS: Actively seek the views of affected populations to improve policy and practice in programming, ensuring that feedback and complaints mechanisms are streamlined, appropriate and robust enough to deal with (communicate, receive, process, respond to and learn from) complaints about breaches in policy and stakeholder dissatisfaction[[2]](#footnote-2).
4. PARTICIPATION: Enable affected populations to play an active role in the decision-making processes that affect them through the establishment of clear guidelines and practice s to engage them appropriately and ensure that the most marginalised and affected are represented and have influence.
5. DESIGN, MONITORING AND EVALUATION: Design, monitor and evaluate the goals and objectives of programmes with the involvement of affected populations, feeding learning back into the organisation on an ongoing basis and reporting on the results of the process.

**Annex 2**

**Ongoing Initiatives that can Contribute and/ or are Components of the Three Pilots**

The pilot initiatives are to test the draft operational framework, in particular its programmatic approach and how this can be integrated into operational planning at a cluster or an inter-organizational level. To be as practical as possible, the aim is to build on and link existing initiatives to look at how the humanitarian system (HC, HCT, Clusters etc) as a whole can be more accountable to affected populations. The following initiatives have been identified in this regard:

* The **Emergency Capacity Building** project, with funding, is planning pilots to look at how the shelter Cluster (IFRC-led) and the WASH cluster can strengthen their accountability.
* The **global Food Security Cluster** (gFSC)has agreed to collaborate on at least two of the three pilots that will be undertaken based on the operational framework. In March, the gFSC will be carrying out scoping missions in the Sahel. Amongst other issues, the support team members undertaking this work in the “pre-assessment phase” would raise questions, based on the CAAPs, about what already exists and who is working on what amongst partners.
* **FAO Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) Project** – As of December 2011, FAO has commenced an in-house project on AAP, with intended outcomes including: a baseline analysis of FAO against current industry standards on AAP, a number of pilot projects in the field, with a cross section of sole agency, interagency, and cluster level accountability activities; development of a range of accountability analysis, planning and self assessment tools to be used both internally and offered for piloting and use across the AAP sub group agencies and initiatives; inclusion of AAP across relevant policy and standard operating procedures, and; development of a work plan for the mainstreaming of ongoing activities and accountability improvements.
* **WFP Protection Unit Guidance to Country Offices on Feedback and Complaints Mechanisms** – WFP is devoting resources to the development of guidance on complaints and feedback mechanisms and will establish a number of pilots in addition to working with country offices where such mechanisms already exist. Discussions are underway between WFP and FAO to collaborate in at least one pilot country.
* **PSEA joint community-based complaint mechanisms pilots** – as of November 2011, UNHCR agreed to be the fiscal agent for the ECHO funding proposal with IOM and World Vision International as sub-grantees. It was agreed that UNHCR would implement the project in Kenya/Kakuma, IOM in Haiti/Port au Prince and WVI in Sri Lanka/Northern district. Needs assessments were carried out in each pilot location by the Consortium (UNHCR/IOM/WVI). Currently the Task Force is awaiting a revised version of the Letter of Intent before we officially agree to support the project.
* **An ALNAP-CDA** project is currently being defined in terms of scope and research questions, but is aimed at looking at to what degree do beneficiary feedback mechanisms work in humanitarian settings. In addition, it will examine the features characterizing those feedback mechanisms that seem to work most successfully.
* The proposal is to build on the WASH, Shelter, Food Security and PSEA pilots and provide additional resources to those countries so that the HC, HCT and other clusters would have the opportunity to engage at a broader level in the pilot countries.

**Annex 3**

**Terms of Reference – Country-level Coordinators:**

* Develop a baseline and scope existing practice for accountability initiatives already in place in-country.
* Utilizing the baseline and operational framework, develop an action plan with HC/HCT and clusters/sectors for enhancing AAP across the humanitarian architecture in-country.
* Assist in coordinating the implementation of the action plan, including training and capacity building where necessary.
* Backstop and provide advice to clusters in improving their operational strategies.
* Provide an opportunity for further consultation on the Operational Framework from a field practitioner perspective.
* To make recommendations to the Global Coordinator for revisions to the Operational Framework.

**Annex 4**

**Terms of Reference –Global Coordinator**

* Backstop and provide advice to Field Coordinators in adapting the operational framework based on field level practices.
* Manage the coordination between accountability focal points within humanitarian organizations.
* Keep the IASC Sub-Group informed of progress at the field level and draft any required IASC documentation.
* Promote coherence amongst practitioners on implementation of the CAAP.
* Advocacy and dissemination of the operational framework.

**Annex 5**

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| **Proposed Budget** |
|  | **USD** |
| Global Coordinator (please note that the coordinator will be hosted in a UN agency in Geneva) – 9 months | **90,000** |
| Three Field Coordinators (hosted in the RC/HC office in country) – 6 months | **180,000** |
| Travel | **20,000** |
| **TOTAL** | **290,000** |

1. The December 2011 IASC Principals meeting also acknowledged that the primary responsibility for accountability to people affected by emergencies was the State and that the IASC’s collective efforts on accountability to affected populations should not substitute or erode national lines and mechanisms of accountability. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Specific issues raised by affected individuals regarding violations and/or physical abuse that may have human rights and legal, psychological or other implications should have the same entry point as programme-type complaints, but procedures for handling these should be adapted accordingly. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)