HPC Information Services

OCHA logo

Blueprint for new information services supporting the HPC

1 March 2015

OVERVIEW

THE HUMANITARIAN PROGRAMME CYCLE
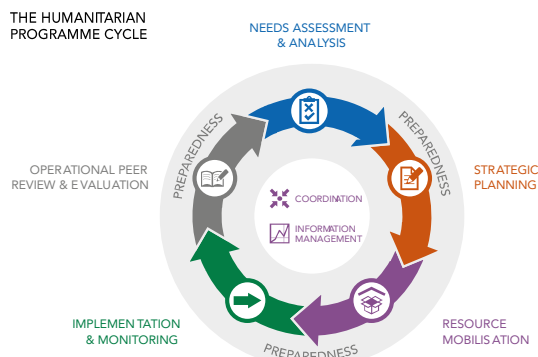
During 2015 and 2016, OCHA is developing a new suite of flexible and adaptive information services to support the humanitarian programme cycle (HPC), which is better adapted to the complex and inter-related information needs around the whole HPC, and which is adequately and sustainably supported over the long term with appropriate deployment of human and technical resources.

AREAS OF WORK

Work is being undertaken in four main areas: (1) Overhauling older systems such as FTS or OPS; (2) Integrating new solutions from field best practice or developed from scratch; (3) Leveraging existing external systems of donors, agencies, clusters, pooled funds etc.; and (4) Improving workflows and resourcing, including development of common standards.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

OCHA has entered into a strategic partnership with Phase2 Technology, who is responsible for technical design and implementation. The project is following a staged approach, with work divided into three development streams: (a) Financial Tracking; (b) Response Planning; and (c) Assessment and Monitoring.

During 2015, The FTS front-end website will be redeveloped and an initial planning module will be piloted to support the 2016 planning cycle. **During 2016**, the financial tracking database will be redeveloped, a full planning module will be launched to support the 2017 cycle, and monitoring and indicator modules will be released, with the full suite of services in place by the end of the year.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

Unlike some previous initiatives, this project places the user at the centre of its design, with solutions designed to meet **evolving user needs** as identified through continuous stakeholder consultations. The solutions will be **flexible** to fit to different scenarios, country contexts and resource availability, and **adaptable** to future changes in user needs. **Modular design** ensures that they can co-exist with, rather than replace, other platforms. The design will build upon current **best practice**. All modules will be **open source**. The new services will form part of a larger **harmonized** humanitarian 'business information platform' with HDX, ReliefWeb and humanitarianresponse.info.

HOW WILL YOU BENEFIT?

The HPC improves humanitarian response by formalising the linkages between different activities such as assessment, planning and monitoring, so that each can build on preceding actions and contribute more effectively to the next. The envisaged suite of information services takes the same transformative step, underpinning the cycle with **accurate, reliable and actionable information**. For example:

- **Donors** can better visualise funding flows and how they are being used, and measure their impact;
- **Country Teams** can better manage and monitor their response plans, associated financial requirements and humanitarian caseloads;
- **Clusters** can track needs, output and outcome indicators and monitor progress towards their agreed objectives;
- **Implementing partners** can publicise their proposed projects, track activities and see who is doing what where;
- **The public** can easily access data in standard formats, explore it through interactive reports and visualisations, increasing **transparency and accountability**, including to affected communities.

Automated data interchange between systems, intuitive user interfaces, workflow support and in-depth training mean that HQ and field staff can work more effectively, reducing manual data entry and duplication. This will incentivise greater participation, allow resources to be shifted from data management to analysis, and improve the quality and quantity of available information.
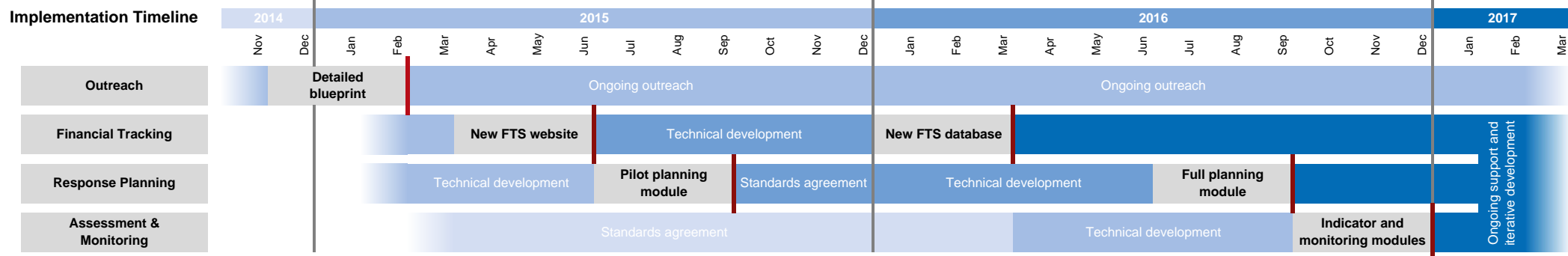
HOW CAN YOU ENGAGE?

1. **Give us your support**. Wide buy-in and commitment to using and contributing information to the new services is essential. They are being created to serve the community and facilitate collective engagement in the HPC.
2. **Contribute and share your data**. Provide resources to contribute regularly and consistently; encourage mandatory participation; allow automated data interchange with your systems.
3. **Commit to common standards**. Participate in standards-setting working groups; seek consensus; adapt existing processes to agreed standards; advocate for their use.
4. **Participate in testing**. Create opportunities for piloting new services; provide regular feedback; engage constructively to support iterative development.

WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT?

Continuous stakeholder engagement and outreach is a core part of the project. We aim to regularly provide progress updates, seek comments and feedback, and always remain responsive to user needs. For more information, or to arrange a bilateral briefing or consultation, please contact:

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Implementation Timeline

	2014		2015												2016												2017	
	Nov Dec	Jan Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	

Outreach — Detailed blueprint — Ongoing outreach — Ongoing outreach

Financial Tracking — New FTS website — Technical development — New FTS database

Response Planning — Technical development — Pilot planning module — Standards agreement — Technical development — Full planning module

Assessment & Monitoring — Standards agreement — Technical development — Indicator and monitoring modules

Ongoing support and iterative development

Areas of work

1. Overhaul older systems
New functionalities to manage new workflows
Improved user-friendliness and ease of use
Better data analytics and visualisations

2. Integrate new solutions
Make field best practice globally relevant
Bring offline solutions online
Develop new solutions for missing components

3. Leverage external systems
Automated or facilitated data exchange
Limit duplication of effort and of data
Harmonization of platforms

4. Improve workflows and resourcing
Development of common standards
Optimisation of workflows
Efficient allocation of human resources

Financial Tracking

FTS website
Completely new user experience: simplified access to data, improved navigation, interactive reports and visualisations; customised portals and easier contribution reporting; regularly updated high-value analytical content

FTS database
Redesigned data architecture: mirrors real world complexities, improves data usability, enables advanced data reporting and integration of new data sources (eg off-HRP funding, contributions from government or private sector, resilience or development funds)

Data inflows
Automated or facilitated integration of financial data from external sources: donor systems, agency systems, CERF, pooled funds etc.

Data outflows
API* provides automatic feeds of raw data, reports and visualisations to other sites such as HDX and ReliefWeb, research institutions such as GHA, media etc.

Standards
IATI aid transparency standard is extended for humanitarian use; new FTS provides native support and preferred data interchange methods

Workflows
Facilitated 'matching' of contributions to projects/activities, change tracking, user and access management, improved quality control; content management system

Resourcing
Guidelines for distributed resources to improve breadth, accuracy and timeliness of reporting; comprehensive training programmes

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Response Planning

OPS (Online projects system)
[In full planning module] New integrated proposal & project tool replaces OPS; flexible and multi-purpose to allow (but not require): proposal creation, approval, management and publication; project-based costing; tracking and management of real projects with links to planning & monitoring frameworks and contribution data; 3W reporting

Response planning tool
[In pilot planning module] New tool allows creation, management and publication of HRP logframe: strategic & cluster objectives, associated indicators and activities as required

Alternative costing and caseloads
Attachment of costing and caseload information to logframe components; customised categorisation and disaggregation

Data inflows
Integration with Indicator Registry for indicator selection; automated or facilitated integration of up-to-date real project data from agency systems

Data outflows
API provides logframe elements to external (cluster/agency) planning & monitoring tools

Standards
Supports HXL; leverages inter-agency caseload, costing and project standards as they are agreed

Workflows
Supports collaborative planning, adapts to different crisis scenarios and scales, maximises transparency & oversight of agreed HRP structure; simplifies HRP document creation; permits continuous/flexible HRP review and republication

Resourcing
Guidelines for appropriate resourcing to support planning scope and scale; training programmes

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Assessment & Monitoring

Assessment
Integration of HNO needs comparison tool (and possibly of InFoRM risk management index): tracking of needs, baseline and outcome indicators and associated data; creation, management and visualisation of indicator indexes

Monitoring
Storage, reporting and visualisation of data associated with strategic and cluster-level indicators within HRP logframe; based on field best practice from Sahel Online Reporting System (ORS); indicator tracking user interface for use where no cluster alternatives are provided

Data inflows
Automated integration of data from KoBoToolbox and other mobile data collection platforms; automated data exchange with cluster and agency monitoring tools such as ActivityInfo or FoodSec IM tool

Data outflows
API provides automatic feeds of indicator definitions, datasets, reports and visualisations to other sites such as HDX, hr.info and ReliefWeb

Standards
Inter-agency agreement on monitoring standards for indicator data interchange; continued development of field data standards for KoBoToolbox; Support for HXL and standard data component definitions (geo areas, organizations, content taxonomies etc.)

Workflows
Support collaborative assessment and monitoring, adapts to different crisis scenarios and scales, facilitates HNO and PMR creation and management

Resourcing
Guidelines for appropriate resourcing to support monitoring scope and scale; training programmes

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*API: An 'Application Programming Interface' allows computer systems to talk to each other and exchange data automatically