

Grand Bargain annual self-reporting – FINLAND

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Work stream 1 - Transparency

1. Baseline (only in year 1)

Where did your organisation stand on the work stream and its commitments when the Grand Bargain was signed?

Transparency and information sharing are key principles for the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland (MFA), in line with the Act on the Openness of Government Activities. According to the Act, all official documents shall be in the public domain, unless specifically provided otherwise.

2. Progress to date

Which concrete actions have you taken (both internally and in cooperation with other signatories) to implement the commitments of the work stream?

MFA Finland shares information of its humanitarian assistance in an open and promptly manner.

The MFA Humanitarian Policy and Funding Guidelines can be found in the internet, providing information on the principles and objectives of Finnish Humanitarian Assistance. The funding guidelines establishes the methodology, criterion and procedures to be observed in the allocation of Finnish humanitarian funding, with the aim of giving a clear picture of the way in which Finland implements the Good Humanitarian Donorship Principles (GHD) of 2003, adopted by the OECD-DAC and the EU and Grand Bargain (2016).

After a funding allocation is made, a press release is published by the MFA to inform the general public on the context of the crises, countries receiving humanitarian funding, key sectors and partners for each crisis.

The funding agreements in the Ministry include a clause that makes a reference to zero-tolerance against corruption, anti-fraud policy and transparency concerning contracts and procurement.

The Ministry also frequently informs ECHO's Edris and OCHA's Financial Tracking systems about its funding decisions.

Finland promotes the compliance with IATI standards through dialogue at the Executive Boards of UN agencies.

Finland is a member of the DAC working group The Working Party for Development Finance Statistics contributing to the work concerning the improved DAC humanitarian sector codes.

3. Planned next steps

What are the specific next steps which you plan to undertake to implement the commitments (with a focus on the next 2 years)?

Finland will revise its humanitarian policy and funding guidelines in next two years' time. This process provides an opportunity to discuss how to best integrate the core commitments from the World Humanitarian Summit and Grand Bargain, including issues related to transparency.

Finland will dialogue with other donors and partners on how to improve the transparency and accuracy of financial flows of humanitarian aid, and promotes increased openness among partners. Finland would like to see how to support UN agencies to better track and transparently report on the use of core funding. Finland stresses the importance of using gender-disaggregated data by its humanitarian partners.

4. Efficiency gains (optional for year 1)

Please indicate, qualitatively, efficiency gains associated with implementation of GB commitments and how they have benefitted your organisation and beneficiaries.

Finland is currently working to enhance its results-based orientation and communication on the results to a wider public. For this purpose, open and transparent data is crucial.

5. Good practices and lessons learned (optional for year 1)

Which concrete action(s) have had the most success (both internally and in cooperation with other signatories) to implement the commitments of the work stream? And why?

Too early to say.

Work stream 2 - Localization

1. Baseline (only in year 1)

Where did your organisation stand on the work stream and its commitments when the Grand Bargain was signed?

Finland has invested significantly in strengthening the civil society organizations in developing countries through the work by the MFA Civil Society Unit. In addition to the development work of promoting human rights, transparent governance and poverty reduction, some of the NGOs contribute to the humanitarian assistance and receive funding from the MFA for their humanitarian work. The MFA channels humanitarian funding only to those Finnish NGOs who have ECHO partnership status. All of them work closely with local partners. Finland does not support local authorities and organisations directly.

2. Progress to date

Which concrete actions have you taken (both internally and in cooperation with other signatories) to implement the commitments of the work stream?

Finland is a long-time supporter of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement who has a very strong local base and deep field presence in many of the affected communities. Finland has constantly encouraged its humanitarian partners to work in a way that reinforces rather than replaces local and national capacities whenever possible.

Finland has recently carried out an evaluation concerning the NGOs receiving the MFA Programme Based Support and Humanitarian Aid. One of the recommendations of the evaluation was to pay more attention to the quality of the partnerships with local actors, treating them more as equal, not as contracted implementation partners. The evaluation also recommended investing into strengthening of the capacity of local actors. Finland is currently in the process of assessing the recommendations of the evaluation and determining the course of action.

3. Planned next steps

What are the specific next steps which you plan to undertake to implement the commitments (with a focus on the next 2 years)?

Finland will further engage in discussions with the Finnish NGOs on how to best support them to improve the capacity and engagement of local actors in the delivery of humanitarian assistance. The MFA has established a NGO Platform for strengthening the dialogue with the NGOs on different policy issues and topics of common interests and will use this platform for discussion around localization.

Based on the evaluation mentioned previously, Finland will revise the principles of its support to the NGOs and better integrate the need to support local actors.

Finland has contributed to and been engaged with OCHA through the Connecting Business Initiative to see how to best support and engage with the local private sector in the humanitarian response.

4. Efficiency gains (optional for year 1)

Please indicate, qualitatively, efficiency gains associated with implementation of GB commitments and how they have benefitted your organisation and beneficiaries.

More time is needed to assess this.

5. Good practices and lessons learned (optional for year 1)

Which concrete action(s) have had the most success (both internally and in cooperation with other signatories) to implement the commitments of the work stream? And why?

It is important to seek effective and innovative ways to support local actors. However, there is a need to further strategize around this commitment. It seems that in near future the key international humanitarian actors such as the UN agencies and the ICRC and Red will mostly likely continue playing a vital role in many crisis situations.

Work stream 3 - Cash

1. Baseline (only in year 1)

Where did your organisation stand on the work stream and its commitments when the Grand Bargain was signed?

Finland has actively promoted the shift from in-kind of humanitarian aid towards cash and voucher based assistance. The importance and value of cash-based assistance is recognised by the Finnish Humanitarian Policy (2012).

2. Progress to date

Which concrete actions have you taken (both internally and in cooperation with other signatories) to implement the commitments of the work stream?

Finland has promoted this approach through dialogue at the UN Executive Boards, especially in WFP. Finland has encouraged its NGO partners to systematically consider cash as an important modality from the outset of the emergency and provided funding to the cash based programmes of Finnish NGOs. For example, the Finnish Red Cross has been very active and implemented several cash programmes, and is currently exploring the use of cash in the health sector. The MFA staff has participated in the Red Cross cash training programmes organised by CaLP (Cash Learning Partnership).

3. Planned next steps

What are the specific next steps which you plan to undertake to implement the commitments (with a focus on the next 2 years)?

Finland will remain committed to the use of cash in emergencies and continue to engage with different partners to further scale-up the use of cash assistance in all the projects supported by Finnish funding. We will organise training to the MFA staff on the importance of using cash and the way of linking it to broader social protection schemes.

Finland provides a significant part of its funding as un-earmarked or softly earmarked funds, which enables humanitarian agencies to allocate resources in an efficient way and have flexible funding available for cash transfer programming.

4. Efficiency gains (optional for year 1)

Please indicate, qualitatively, efficiency gains associated with implementation of GB commitments and how they have benefitted your organisation and beneficiaries.

N/A

5. Good practices and lessons learned (optional for year 1)

Which concrete action(s) have had the most success (both internally and in cooperation with other signatories) to implement the commitments of the work stream? And why?

N/A

In recent years, many international actors including the Finnish NGOs working on humanitarian assistance have increased the use of cash or voucher-based assistance. In addition, in the international debates, the use of multipurpose cash assistance has become an important topic. Finland supports this trend and sees the use of multipurpose cash as an important means to modernize and rationalise humanitarian assistance.

Work stream 4 – Management costs

1. Baseline (only in year 1)

Where did your organisation stand on the work stream and its commitments when the Grand Bargain was signed?

Finland is a flexible donor providing more than 30 percent of its funding as core support and rest as softly earmarked funds. Finland is also a long-time supporter of UN CERF. The allocation of Finnish humanitarian funds is based on the OCHA coordinated global Appeals and Humanitarian Response Plans and on the ICRC's Annual Appeals. From UN agencies and ICRC Finland accepts harmonised report. This way Finland aims to reduce management costs and supports the increase of overall efficiency of agencies.

The MFA guidelines highlight that in implementation and financial management of the operation, the partner organisation must strive for cost-efficiency and effectiveness. In procurement and other actions, partners must observe the principles of good governance and anti-corruption. In terms of evaluations and multilateral partners' organizational capacity, Finland does not carry out its own performance assessments, but uses the finding from the MOPAN network. Cost-efficiency is one of the important topics that the MFA pays constantly attention to when analysing appeals and funding proposals.

2. Progress to date

Which concrete actions have you taken (both internally and in cooperation with other signatories) to implement the commitments of the work stream?

Finland has consistently raised the follow-up of the Grand Bargain in meetings with the main humanitarian partners. Finland has also advocated for core funding and harmonised reporting among the donors and at the Executive Boards of different UN agencies.

3. Planned next steps

What are the specific next steps which you plan to undertake to implement the commitments (with a focus on the next 2 years)?

Finland is currently in the process of assessing the recommendations of the evaluation concerning the NGOs receiving the MFA Programme Based Support and Humanitarian Aid. This included assessing the possibility to move from project-based humanitarian financing towards financing that better support the efficiency gains.

Finland will continue to actively advocate for flexible core funding and further harmonization of reporting and procedures, in close collaboration with other like-minded donors.

4. Efficiency gains (optional for year 1)

Please indicate, qualitatively, efficiency gains associated with implementation of GB commitments and how they have benefitted your organisation and beneficiaries.

N/A

5. Good practices and lessons learned (optional for year 1)

Which concrete action(s) have had the most success (both internally and in cooperation with other signatories) to implement the commitments of the work stream? And why?

N/A

Work stream 5 – Needs Assessment

1. Baseline (only in year 1)

Where did your organisation stand on the work stream and its commitments when the Grand Bargain was signed?

Humanitarian activities supported by the MFA and carried out by aid organisations must be compatible with Finland's Humanitarian Policy and adhere to the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence in the implementation of humanitarian assistance. The Finnish Humanitarian Policy underscores that humanitarian assistance should be given solely based on need.

Finland does not carry out needs assessments of its own, but applies the assessments made by UN agencies, Red Cross and Red Crescent movement, NGO community, ECHO, FEWSNET and other reliable partners to build a solid picture of the global humanitarian needs. The Global Humanitarian Overview and the Humanitarian Response Plans coordinated by OCHA and the ICRC appeals are used as a basis to determine the allocation of Finnish humanitarian funding, in particular in protracted crises. It is expected that the Finnish NGOs ensure to the extent possible that their operations are included into the Country Response Plan.

2. Progress to date

Which concrete actions have you taken (both internally and in cooperation with other signatories) to implement the commitments of the work stream?

The most important principle of humanitarian assistance for Finland is that funding is based on verified and quantified needs. Finland has developed funding guidelines that indicate the criterion and procedure to determine the countries and sectors to be prioritised for assistance in a given situation.

Finland has actively promoted well-coordinated and common needs assessments between different humanitarian actors at the Executive Boards of UN agencies.

3. Planned next steps

What are the specific next steps which you plan to undertake to implement the commitments (with a focus on the next 2 years)?

Finland will continue to advocate for common needs assessments and also for joined analysis and joined-up approaches between humanitarian and development actors in protracted crises.

4. Efficiency gains (optional for year 1)

Please indicate, qualitatively, efficiency gains associated with implementation of GB commitments and how they have benefitted your organisation and beneficiaries.

Over the years, need assessments have improved significantly. The Dashboards used by OCHA provide a useful snapshot of the situation.

5. Good practices and lessons learned (optional for year 1) Which concrete action(s) have had the most success (both internally and in cooperation with other rief) to implement the commitments of the work stream? And why?

Finland is interested to see how the separation of need assessments from implementation/delivery of assistance (as suggested by the ECHO Cash Guidelines) will influence the efficiency and transparency of aid.

Work stream 6 – Participation Revolution

1. Baseline (only in year 1)

Where did your organisation stand on the work stream and its commitments when the Grand Bargain was signed?

Promoting gender equality is a long-standing priority for Finland. It is a key issue in the Finnish development cooperation as well as in our humanitarian assistance. Finland has actively promoted the needs and rights and active participation of women and girls in the planning and decision making over humanitarian assistance.

With the spirit of leaving no one behind Finland has promoted the situation of persons with disabilities in humanitarian crises and raised the importance of addressing their humanitarian and protection needs and active involvement in all assistance efforts.

Finland requires that humanitarian organizations supported by the Finnish funding incorporate gender equality and disability issues into their policies and operations. Finland actively advocates and uses its leverage in in the Executive Boards of UN Funds and Programmes as well as in the international financing institutions and other multilateral fora to this end.

2. Progress to date

Which concrete actions have you taken (both internally and in cooperation with other signatories) to implement the commitments of the work stream?

In order to highlight the needs and rights of persons with disabilities and to transform humanitarian practises in this regard, Finland and Australia, together with a coalition of Member States, UN agencies, International Organizations and Civil Society Organizations launched a Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities into Humanitarian Action, at the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul. The Charter was considered as one of the key outcomes of the Summit.

After the launch, Finland has played an active role in terms of advocacy for the Charter. The Minister of Trade and Development of Finland has approached his EU-colleagues and invited them to join the movement through a letter. At the moment, the Charter has endorsement from close to 150 organizations and agencies, demonstrating their willingness to enhance the effective inclusion of persons with disabilities across the humanitarian system. In addition, Finland has promoted the Charter through organising and participating in events on the topic and raising the issues in consultations with its partners.

In January 2017, Finland organised together with UNDOP, OCHA and UNHCR a high-level conference on Syria. One of the key panels was dedicated to gender equality and situation of women and girls in conflict. The panel was co-chaired by UN Women, UNFPA and Finland.

3. Planned next steps

What are the specific next steps which you plan to undertake to implement the commitments (with a focus on the next 2 years)?

As a follow up to the launch of the Charter, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) has established a time-bound Task Team, which will oversee the specific task of developing globally-endorsed Guidelines on the inclusion of persons with disabilities. Finland is considering supporting the work of the Task Team through UNICEF. Finland is committed to playing a leading role in terms of the inclusion of the persons with disabilities into humanitarian action and consistently promoting the issue at board meetings and in negotiations.

Finland will continue to promote gender-responsive humanitarian response and champion universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights for women and adolescent girls through active policy dialogue, funding and advocacy. Also the implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 remains a priority for Finland as we are currently preparing our third national action plan on 1325. Finland promotes the mainstreaming of gender equality in humanitarian assistance also through the implementation of the Grand Bargain.

4. Efficiency gains (optional for year 1)

Please indicate, qualitatively, efficiency gains associated with implementation of GB commitments and how they have benefitted your organisation and beneficiaries.

Gender equality is a key issue for increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian aid. Resources put in the hands of women are well used and meet the needs of the household, according to the research. Targeting assistance to people with disabilities and including them as active agents of change can help the humanitarian system to better fulfil its live saving objectives.

5. Good practices and lessons learned (optional for year 1)

Which concrete action(s) have had the most success (both internally and in cooperation with other signatories) to implement the commitments of the work stream? And why?

It is too early to assess this.

Work stream 7 - Multi-year planning and funding

1. Baseline (only in year 1)

Where did your organisation stand on the work stream and its commitments when the Grand Bargain was signed?

Multi-year core funding is an integral part of Finland's humanitarian policy and practise. The MFA employs multi-year framework agreements with several UN agencies including UNHCR, WFP, ISDR, UNRWA and OCHA, and also with the ICRC. These agreements provide predictable and flexible core funding for the agencies to ensure an effective humanitarian response.

2. Progress to date

Which concrete actions have you taken (both internally and in cooperation with other signatories) to implement the commitments of the work stream?

Finland has further enhanced its multi-year humanitarian commitments in 2017 by increasing the core funding to ICRC. In addition, Finland has granted support to the UNICEF No Lost Generation initiative in Syria through a multi-year funding agreement from development budget.

3. Planned next steps

What are the specific next steps which you plan to undertake to implement the commitments (with a focus on the next 2 years)?

Finland will continue the provision of multi-year core funding through the existing agreements with humanitarian partner organisations. Finland will continue to advocate for the increased core funding among the donor community.

4. Efficiency gains (optional for year 1)

Please indicate, qualitatively, efficiency gains associated with implementation of GB commitments and how they have benefitted your organisation and beneficiaries.

Flexible funding can increase the efficiency gains of agencies, for example WFP is able to buy food with un-earmarked multi-year core funds when the market price is at the lowest level

5. Good practice and lessons learned (optional for year 1)

Which concrete action(s) have had the most success (both internally and in cooperation with other signatories) to implement the commitments of the work stream? And why?

Too early to assess.

Work stream 8 - Earmarking/flexibility

1. Baseline (only in year 1)

Where did your organisation stand on the work stream and its commitments when the Grand Bargain was signed?

Finland has provided non-earmarked and flexible funding to UN agencies for more than a decade, according to the principles of Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD). Finland earmarks the funding to UN agencies, the ICRC and the IFRC funding only by country or region. Otherwise the above-mentioned organisations can independently decide on the use of the funds within operations for humanitarian ends. In addition, part of assistance is granted annually in the form of core funding to several organisations, including ICRC, ISDR, OCHA, UNHCR, UNRWA and WFP. In addition, Finland is a strong supporter of UN CERF.

2. Progress to date

Which concrete actions have you taken (both internally and in cooperation with other signatories) to implement the commitments of the work stream?

Before joining the Grand Bargain, the portion of the un-earmarked funding of Finland's humanitarian budget stood at 32 % including the amount allocated to UN CERF. Since then, it has further increased (see response to previous question/reference to increased core funding to ICRC).

3. Planned next steps

What are the specific next steps which you plan to undertake to implement the commitments (with a focus on the next 2 years)?

Finland will continue promoting the good practise of providing un-earmarked funding among other donors.

4. Efficiency gains (optional for year 1)

Please indicate, qualitatively, efficiency gains associated with implementation of GB commitments and how they have benefitted your organisation and beneficiaries.

See the response to the previous question.

5. Good practices and lessons learned (optional for year 1)

Which concrete action(s) have had the most success (both internally and in cooperation with other signatories) to implement the commitments of the work stream? And why?

Work stream 9 – Reporting requirements

1. Baseline (only in year 1)

Where did your organisation stand on the work stream and its commitments when the Grand Bargain was signed?

In terms of UN organisations and ICRC, the MFA does not need any specific report but uses the organisation's annual reports. For the NGOs supported by the Finnish humanitarian funding the MFA has developed reporting templates to clarify the reporting requirements.

In terms of ICRC and UN partners, the MFA does not need an application or proposal, but uses the organization's appeal as basis for funding allocation. In addition, Finland uses the organization's global report for reporting.

2. Progress to date

Which concrete actions have you taken (both internally and in cooperation with other signatories) to implement the commitments of the work stream?

See the response above.

3. Planned next steps

What are the specific next steps which you plan to undertake to implement the commitments (with a focus on the next 2 years)?

Finland will continue to explore ways to simplify, harmonise and reduce the reporting burden by its humanitarian partners. Finland will encourage its partners to further develop the communication on results and outcomes of the assistance, instead of reporting on inputs.

Finland will continue to promote the need to include gender analysis and gender disaggregated data in the global reports, at the UN Executive Board meetings and bilateral consultations.

4. Efficiency gains (optional for year 1)

Please indicate, qualitatively, efficiency gains associated with implementation of GB commitments and how they have benefitted your organisation and beneficiaries.

The annual report on development and humanitarian assistance by the Finnish MFA is very much based on data and information gained through the global reports of the ICRC and the UN agencies.

5. Good practices and lessons learned (optional for year 1)

Which concrete action(s) have had the most success (both internally and in cooperation with other signatories) to implement the commitments of the work stream? And why?

Too soon to report.

Work stream 10 – Humanitarian – Development engagement

1. Baseline (only in year 1)

Where did your organisation stand on the work stream and its commitments when the Grand Bargain was signed?

Finland has promoted effective linking of humanitarian assistance, reconstruction and development cooperation for more than a decade. In the case of Finland, linking is mostly implemented through multilateral collaboration, NGO activities and EU operations. Finland promotes the implementation of humanitarian and development nexus by influencing the policies of the multilateral organizations, developing flexible operating mechanisms and providing funding for the transition.

Finland has also worked to promote disaster risk reduction through the implementation of the Sendai framework and building of resilience through development cooperation with the aim of reducing future humanitarian needs.

2. Progress to date

Which concrete actions have you taken (both internally and in cooperation with other signatories) to implement the commitments of the work stream?

In January 2017, Finland organised a high-level conference on Supporting Syria and the Region including the launch of the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan for 2017. The conference underscored the importance of responding both to immediate acute humanitarian and developments needs of the refugees, IDPs and the host communities. The Regional Response Plan and Refugee Plan launched in the conference were based on the vision that complex situations require a comprehensive response and better alignment of humanitarian and development assistance. Finland has also supported the No Lost Generation initiative.

Finland supports the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework process and is committed to finding durable solutions for refugees and IDPs.

The Unit for Humanitarian Unit and Policy from the MFA participated in the 'New Way of Working' workshop in Copenhagen in March 2017 and is considering how to support further the operationalisation in the field.

3. Planned next steps

What are the specific next steps which you plan to undertake to implement the commitments (with a focus on the next 2 years)?

Finland will revise its humanitarian policy and funding guidelines in next two years' time. This process provides an opportunity to review the current practise and decide how to best move forward in operationalising the new ways of working and the humanitarian and development nexus.

4. Efficiency gains (optional for year 1)

Please indicate, qualitatively, efficiency gains associated with implementation of GB commitments and how they have benefitted your organisation and beneficiaries.

5. Good practices and lessons learned (optional for year 1)

Which concrete action(s) have had the most success (both internally and in cooperation with other signatories) to implement the commitments of the work stream? And why?