

**INTER-AGENCY STANDING COMMITTEE
OPERATIONAL POLICY AND ADVOCACY GROUP MEETING**

**BACKGROUND DOCUMENT: UPDATE ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF CENTRALITY OF
PROTECTION IN PRACTICE BENCHMARKS**

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Background

In 2019 the IASC Operational Policy and Advocacy Group (OPAG) tasked IASC Results Group 1 with the development of indicators for the Centrality of Protection. Using the IASC Protection Policy (2016) as a basis, these would serve as a resource for various inter-agency mechanisms – e.g., OPAG, the EDG, Peer-to-Peer, Humanitarian Country Teams, and clusters – individual organizations and senior leaders to monitor and fulfil the Centrality of Protection in practice. The indicators are intended for widespread use by all actors in the humanitarian system and donor entities. In support of this initiative, 10 Humanitarian Country Teams were asked to reflect on their implementation of the IASC Protection Policy. These HCT reflections, alongside other materials, will serve as an initial basis for engagement with key stakeholders in the development of indicators.

Objective

A shared basis for planning and monitoring progress on practical means of fulfilling the Centrality of Protection in practice.

Output

Proposed indicators and/or benchmarks of the Centrality of Protection in practice developed through a consultative process and for use by a diversity of stakeholders across the humanitarian system. These will be process-level indicators, illustrating the necessary steps to work towards protection outcomes and treating protection as central to humanitarian action.

Progress to date

2020

- Consultations with select HCTs on implementation of the IASC Protection Policy. [See Annex 1 below](#).
- Work on the indicators is put on hold and de-prioritised in support of the COVID-19 response

2021

- Initial articulation of envisioned use of indicators, users, structure and approach
- Request for ProCap support to develop the benchmarks in January in light of limited capacity within RG 1 to lead this work. ProCap available to start up in March
- Series of discussions held from April – July with the RG 1 Centrality of Protection subgroup, ProCap roster members and GPC Strategic Advisory Group to feed into a working draft
- Extensive inputs consolidated and discussed between ProCap and CoP subgroup co-chairs, and revised structure proposed and discussed in September
- Given concurrence with IASC Protection Policy review, discussion held with CoP subgroup on a proposal to pause work on benchmarks temporarily, with a view to aligning them with findings and recommendations of the Review

Annex 1 - Highlights of HCT reflections on implementation of the IASC Protection Policy

HCTs in ten countries were requested by IASC Results Group 1 to undertake a reflection on implementation of the IASC Protection Policy and capture this in a brief write up. Key questions for reflection were shared to guide the in-country reflections. Inputs were received from HCTs in Afghanistan, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Colombia, Iraq, Myanmar, and Yemen between February and July 2020. Analysis was undertaken by RG 1 centrality of protection subgroup co-chairs, with support of a small Task Team of the CoP group. The level of detail and type of feedback varied between operations; and overall was more qualitative than quantitative.

The raw data was not circulated widely beyond the CoP group, given the confidential nature of the feedback. An overview of the feedback was shared verbally with OPAG and RG 1. The feedback also fed into the GPC Review of HCT Protection Strategies and its 2020 Review of the Centrality of Protection. The findings are also informing the Key Issues of focus under consideration by the IASC Protection Policy Implementation Review.

Below are **key common trends and feedback** identified across operations:

1. Widespread recognition of the need to invest more in
 - protection analysis, including ensuring systematic collection of information and flow across sectors and actors
 - community self-protection strategies
 - ensuring that HCT Protection Strategies are resourced – budgets and relevant staff capacity – and oversight of their implementation
2. Need for greater clarity on the role of non-protection actors to contribute to protection outcomes
3. Need for more sustained engagement with actors outside the humanitarian system (such as development and peace operations) to contribute to protection outcomes
4. Need for greater clarity on what is a protection outcome and how it should be measured
5. Distinction between the Protection Cluster and HCT roles on protection
6. While there has been widespread adoption of HCT Protection Strategies on paper they have (a) not been outcome-oriented (b) remained unimplemented and (c) lack ownership by HCT members.
7. There have been some good practices identified, for example, useful analysis emerging from concerted deep dive data collection in anticipation of widespread and severe food insecurity – while not sustained, this analysis was illuminating and drove joint programming beyond the needs of Food Security programming. Protection more regularly features as a HCT standing agenda item. Some country level personnel noted the value of undertaking this kind of reflection and said that it prompted some new attention and thinking to what they could be doing.