IASC Inter-Agency Standing Committee

KEY OPERATIONAL IASC GUIDANCE

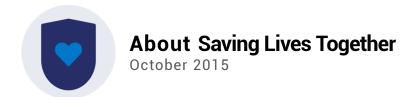# Executive and Operational Summaries

November, 2022

Table of Contents

- ➤ **IASC Protocols, Standard Operating Procedures, and Terms of Reference**

- ➤ **Inclusion**

- ➤ **Accountability to Affected People and Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse**

- ➤ **Humanitarian Access**

- ➤ **Humanitarian Development Collaboration and linkages to Peace**

- ➤ **Other must-read guidance**

IASC Protocols, Standard Operating Procedures, and Terms of Reference

About Saving Lives Together
October 2015

The Saving Lives Together (SLT) initiative was created in recognition of the fact that the organisations of the United Nations Security Management System (UNSMS), International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs) and Intergovernmental Organisations (IOs) face similar security challenges when operating in volatile environments. SLT was established to provide a framework to improve collaboration on common security concerns and enhance the safe delivery of humanitarian and development assistance.

SLT is a series of recommendations aimed at enhancing security collaboration between the UNSMS organisations, INGOs and IOs. It recognises the collectively experienced security threats and the importance of collaboration to support the safe delivery of humanitarian and development assistance.

The objective of SLT is to enhance the ability of partner organisations to make informed decisions, manage risks and implement effective security arrangements that enable delivery of assistance and improve the security of personnel and continuity of operations.

Although SLT is a voluntary engagement by partner organisations, the success and effectiveness of the initiative are dependent on the commitment of all participating organisations to work collectively towards the mutual goal of improving the security of personnel and operations. Accordingly, organisations that wish to become SLT partner organisations must commit to the adoption and effective implementation of the principles, objectives and arrangements in the SLT Framework.

To this end, SLT partner organisations commit to:

- Establish security collaboration arrangements;
- Share relevant security information
- Cooperate on security training
- Cooperate on security operational and logistics arrangements, where feasible
- Identify resource requirements for enhancing security coordination between the UN, INGOs, and IOs, and advocate for their funding
- Consult on common ground rules for humanitarian action

It is recognised that SLT partner organisations perceive and assess threats and vulnerabilities differently, accept different levels of risk and implement security arrangements which they consider suitable for their organisation and operational conditions. SLT is designed to enhance and complement security risk management systems of SLT partner organisations, not substitute these systems and related arrangements.

The full SLT Framework and Guidance is available at https://iasc.ch/saving-lives-together-2015

Executive Summary:
Humanitarian System-wide Scale-Up Activation Protocol for the Control of Infectious Disease Events
4 April 2019

At a glance

The IASC Humanitarian System-Wide Scale-Up Protocols are a set of measures designed to enhance the humanitarian response in view of increasing humanitarian needs and ensure that IASC member organizations and partners can rapidly mobilize the necessary capacity and resource to respond to humanitarian needs. These activation procedures set out how the humanitarian system will respond for infectious disease events, reflecting the potential evolution of an infectious event, the roles of the World Health Organization (WHO) and Member States under the International Health Regulations (IHR) (2005), and the importance of non-IASC organizations in responding to infectious disease events.

Key information for field leaders

1. **The designation of a Scale-Up response to an infectious disease event will be issued by the Emergency Relief Coordinator in collaboration with WHO**, in consultation with IASC Principals, amongst others. Activation should be based on WHO's risk assessment plus an analysis of scale, urgency, complexity, capacity, and risk of failure to deliver.

2. Activation commits IASC members to rapidly put in place systems, capacities, and resources to contribute to an effective response given their mandates, Cluster Lead Agency responsibilities, and commitments made in the Statement of Key Strategic Priorities. In addition, **an infectious disease Scale-Up automatically triggers the following actions** (as appropriate to the context and pathogen):

Immediately	Within 5 days	Later
• Activation of the empowered leadership model. • Establishment of an HCT and designation of a Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) and, if appropriate, appoint a WHO official as Deputy HC a.i.. • Deployment of supplies and logistics, ideally sufficient for the activation period. • Establishment of sub-national hubs/coordination mechanisms as required. • IASC member organizations deploy surge capacity. • WHO establish an inter-agency epidemiology and response Situation Report to be updated at least weekly.	• (Within 48 hrs) Designation of a Senior Emergency HC to lead the response in support of national authorities and a WHO Incident Manager to direct technical human health aspects of the event. • (Within 4 days) Development of a *Statement of Key Strategic Priorities* by the HC/HCT with the technical direction of WHO to set out priorities, a common strategic approach, and serve as a basis for the Flash Appeal and monitoring. • (Within 72 hrs) Announcement of Central Emergency Response Fund and Country-Based Pooled Fund (CBPF) if available, to be issued by the ERC (or HC for CBPFs). • (Within 5 days) Launch Flash Appeal.	• (Within 14 days) Complete a Multi-Cluster Rapid Assessment (or similar). • (Within 21 days) Launch full Strategic/ Humanitarian Response Plan and revised Appeal. • (within 3-6 months) Conduct an Operational Peer Review. • (within 9-12 months) Conduct an Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation (IAHE), if in line with the IAHE Steering Group Terms of Reference.

3. The initial duration of the activation (maximum 6 months) is defined by the IASC Principals during their first meeting. A transition plan is drawn up by the HCT, in consultation with the Emergency Directors Group, in the 3 weeks after activation. **The IASC Principals convene at the end of the activation period to formally deactivate the Scale-Up or, if deemed appropriate, extend it.**

The full IASC product is available at https://iasc.ch/infectious-disease-scale-up-2019
For support using this product, or to provide feedback on the product or this summary, contact the IASC secretariat at: iasccorrespondence@un.org.
Summary drafted by: IASC secretariat

Note: in the case of any differences to this summary, the full product is the authoritative version

Executive Summary:
Civil-Military Relationship in Complex Emergencies – An IASC Reference Paper

Endorsed June 2004

At a glance

The paper serves as a non-binding reference for humanitarian practitioners to formulate country-specific operational guidelines on civil-military relations for particular complex emergencies.

Four guiding principles

1. The guiding principles of impartiality, neutrality, humanity and independence from political considerations are the same as those governing humanitarian action in general.
2. The military nature of the assets may, however, require increased attention to be paid to the need to ensure that humanitarian action is not only neutral and impartial in intent but also perceived to be so by the parties directly concerned.
3. Particular caution should be exercised in circumstances where there is a risk that either the motivation for the use of military or civil defence assets or its consequences may be perceived as reflecting political rather than humanitarian considerations.
4. This risk is likely to be greatest in humanitarian actions in countries where military forces are operating under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, even if the operations are not considered integrated.

Six operating principles

1. Decisions to accept military assets must be made by humanitarian organizations, not political authorities, and based solely on humanitarian criteria.
2. Military assets should be requested only where there is no comparable civilian alternative and only the use of military assets can meet a critical humanitarian need. The military asset must therefore be unique in nature or timeliness of deployment, and its use should be a last resort.
3. A humanitarian operation using military assets must retain its civilian nature and character. The operation must remain under the overall authority and control of the humanitarian organization responsible for that operation, whatever the specific command arrangements for the military asset itself. As far as possible, the military asset should operate unarmed and be civilian in appearance.
4. Countries providing military personnel to support humanitarian operations should ensure that they respect the code of conduct and principles of the humanitarian organization responsible for that deployment.
5. The large-scale involvement of military personnel in the direct delivery of humanitarian assistance should be avoided.
6. Any use of military assets should ensure that the humanitarian operation retains its international and multilateral character.

What does the full paper offer?

Part 1 of the paper reviews, in a generic manner, the nature and character of civil-military relations in complex emergencies. Part 2 lists the fundamental humanitarian principles and concepts that must be upheld when coordinating with the military. Part 3 proposes practical considerations for humanitarian workers engaged in civil-military coordination.

Inclusion

IASC Inter-Agency Standing Committee

Executive Summary:
IASC Guidelines on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action

Endorsed: July 2019

At a glance

These guidelines set out actions that humanitarian actors must take to effectively identify and respond to the needs and rights of persons with disabilities in humanitarian settings. Each chapter includes recommended actions to place persons with disabilities at the centre of humanitarian action, both as actors and as affected people. While specific to persons with disabilities in the context of humanitarian action, they build on more general standards and best practices. The guidelines are designed primarily for use in policymaking, coordination, programming, and funding including governments, humanitarian leaders, Cluster/Sector leads, programmers in humanitarian and development organizations, donors, as well as local, national and international organizations of persons with disabilities.

Five key messages for field leaders

1. Persons with disabilities are estimated to represent 15% of the world's population,[1] likely higher in humanitarian settings. They are among the most marginalized people in crisis-affected communities[2] and are disproportionately affected by conflict and other crises. In disasters, two to four times as many persons with disabilities die than persons without disabilities.[3]

2. The guidelines aim to ensure that all phases of humanitarian action are disability inclusive. It emphasizes that persons with disabilities should not only be recipients of humanitarian assistance, rather they should be included as actors in humanitarian response.

3. The guidelines build on legal and policy frameworks as well as other instruments that address disability inclusion in humanitarian contexts, including the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, the Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action, the Sendai Framework, as well as the Global Compact on Refugees and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration.

4. The factors placing persons with disabilities at heightened risk in emergencies situations may be exacerbated by other factors, e.g., age, gender, location, and economic status. It is important to consider the multi-faceted marginalization that this may cause.

5. The guidelines provide a rights-based framework to approach the inclusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian contexts, specifically through the of analysis of risks and systemic barriers faced by persons with disabilities, as well as 'must do' actions that are required if persons with disabilities are to be included in all phases of humanitarian action. The document could be used by all humanitarian actors – no background in disability inclusion is required.

Four essential actions to ensure the inclusion of persons with disabilities

The guidelines offer four 'must do' actions that should be applied to sector-specific actions:

1. promote meaningful participation of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations
2. remove barriers
3. empower persons with disabilities and support them to develop their capacities
4. disaggregate data for monitoring inclusion

[1] WHO and World Bank, World Report on Disability (2011).
[2] Report of the United Nations Secretary-General for the World Humanitarian Summit, One Humanity, Shared Responsibility.
[3] Katsunori Fujii, 'The Great East Japan Earthquake and Disabled Persons', in Disability Information Resources, Japan.

The full IASC product is available at https://iasc.ch/iasc-disability-guidelines

For support using this product, or to provide feedback on the product or this summary, contact the IASC secretariat at: iasccorrespondence@un.org.

Summary drafted by: IASC Reference Group for MHPSS in Emergency Settings

Note: in the case of any differences to this summary, the full product is the authoritative version

Operational Summary:
IASC Guidelines on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action

Endorsed: July 2019

At a glance

The IASC guidelines on Inclusion of Persons with disabilities set out essential actions that humanitarian actors must take to effectively identify and respond to the needs and rights of persons with disabilities in humanitarian settings. The recommended actions in each chapter place persons with disabilities at the centre of humanitarian action, both as actors and as members of affected populations. They are specific to persons with disabilities and to the context of humanitarian action and build on existing and more general standards and guidelines. The guidelines were designed primarily for use by national, regional, and international humanitarian actors who are involved in policymaking, coordination, programming, and funding. More specifically this includes, governments, humanitarian leadership, clusters/sector leads, programmers in humanitarian and development organizations, donors, as well as local, national, and international organizations of persons with disabilities.

Key guidance for operational humanitarians

1. The guidelines provide a rights-based framework to approach the inclusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian action, specifically through the of analysis of risks and systemic barriers faced by persons with disabilities, as well as 'must do' actions that are required if persons with disabilities are to be included in all phases of humanitarian action.

2. The guidelines discuss approaches to analysing risks and barriers to the inclusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian action. Barriers faced by persons with disabilities are categorized under attitudinal, environmental and institutional. The guidelines offer general and sector-specific examples of barriers as well enablers to promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities.

3. Using a rights-based approach, the guidelines offer 'must do' actions that are required if persons with disabilities are to be included successfully in all phases of humanitarian action and need to be taken by every stakeholder in every sector and all contexts. The actions are broadly categorized as follows: (a) promote meaningful participation of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations, (b) remove barriers, (c) empower persons with disabilities and support them develop their capacities, and (d) disaggregate data for monitoring inclusion. Sector-specific guidance elaborates on how these actions can be implemented.

4. Each sector chapter includes key terms relevant to disability inclusion, standards and guidelines, 'must-do' actions, recommended actions and tools and resources to help stakeholder practically include persons with disabilities in humanitarian responses.

What does the full Framework offer?

The opening chapters of the guidelines provide an explanation of a rights-based approach to the inclusion of people with disabilities. There are chapters that discuss cross-cutting topics and approaches to programming, as well as the roles and responsibilities of different humanitarian stakeholders across all stages, including preparedness, needs assessment, strategic response planning, resource mobilization, implementation and monitoring, evaluation, coordination, and information management. The sector-specific chapters provides practical solutions on the application of principles and cross-cutting topics, with a focus on 'must-do' actions.

The full IASC product is available at https://iasc.ch/iasc-disability-guidelines

For support using this product, or to provide feedback on the product or this summary, contact the IASC secretariat at: iasccorrespondence@un.org.

Summary drafted by the Reference Group on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action

Note: in the case of any differences to this summary, the full product is the authoritative version

Executive Summary:
IASC Gender Handbook for Humanitarian Action
Endorsed February 2018

At a glance

Building on from the 2006 first edition, the *2018 IASC Gender Handbook for Humanitarian Action* (the Gender Handbook) is a concise, sector-specific guide informed by lessons learned by the humanitarian community and reflects the main challenges and practical ways for humanitarian practitioners to take into account the experiences, and priorities of women, girls, boys and men in all their diversities throughout the assessment, planning, resource mobilization, implementation, and monitoring stages of the humanitarian programme cycle. The Gender Handbook reflects commitments pertaining to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, from the World Humanitarian Summit, the Grand Bargain, and the Sendai Framework Agreement.

The review of the handbook was undertaken by the IASC Gender Reference Group, under the leadership of UN Women and Oxfam, and endorsed by the Emergency Relief Coordinator in February 2018. An online, fully navigable, and searchable version in Arabic, English, French and Spanish is available at www.gihahandbook.org.

Five key pieces of guidance for field leaders

1. Organised into three key parts, the Gender Handbook contains (A) a section on why gender matters in humanitarian action (B) Integrating Gender into the Humanitarian Programme Cycle and (C) a section on Gender Equality in each specific Sector.

2. Regarded as the most comprehensive information on gender in humanitarian action, the Gender Handbook provides normative framework for gender equality, and provides case studies and evidence base for advocacy as well as programming.

3. The Gender Handbook is a resource and tool that helps humanitarian practitioners to implement the IASC Gender Policy and meet the requirements of the Gender Accountability Framework. It should be promoted to all humanitarians.

4. An online course based on the Handbook is hosted by UN Women's Learning Centre and is freely available to all interested parties looking for a practical introduction to gender in humanitarian action. UN Women country offices regularly conduct in-person trainings for humanitarian frontline workers.

5. For leaders, understanding that crises can exacerbate pre-existing gender inequalities, and that women, girls and boys and men have different needs, risks and capacities before, during and after an emergency that must be taken into account, and advocating for the consideration of these distinct needs and capacities as well as women and girls' participation in strategic planning, decision making and programming, is critical. Leaders could promote the Gender Handbook to humanitarians to ensure they take into account gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls throughout the humanitarian program cycle.

What does the full handbook offer?

Specific Sector specific practical guidance on how to integrate gender equality matters at various parts of programming.

Executive Summary:
IASC Policy on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls in Humanitarian Action 2017

Endorsed November 2017

At a glance

This IASC product ('the Gender Policy') is the key guiding document outlining the IASC's commitments to make gender equality and empowerment of women and girls (GEEWG) central to all aspects of its work. It sets out principles, standards, and actions that IASC bodies, members and standing invitees should abide by at global, regional and country level to integrate GEEWG in humanitarian crises, including preparedness, response and recovery efforts. The Gender Policy is intended to be reviewed and updated as appropriate every five years.

An accountability framework was developed to monitor implementation of the commitments in the Gender Policy to ensure that the Gender Policy is translated into action. It contains clear indicators to help the IASC hold itself accountable, focusing on the collective actions, as set out in the Gender Policy.

Guidance and four key actions for field leaders

The Gender Policy helps humanitarian leaders have visibility of progress, and gaps for prioritized action. The accountability framework promotes collective system wide responsibility and accountability for advancing GEEWG in humanitarian action. The IASC Gender Reference Group, an associated body of the IASC, with the support of UN WOMEN, is responsible for drafting an annual *Gender Accountability Framework Report* to document achievements, challenges and documenting good practices, with inputs from humanitarian coordinators (HCs) and country teams (HCTs).

Humanitarian Coordinators should:

1. Be familiar with the roles and responsibilities prescribed in the Gender Policy including:
   - Demonstrate leadership on GEEWG in all aspects of humanitarian action, in cluster and HCT activities, including job descriptions, TORs, performance evaluations, and funding allocation.
   - Establish and support a Gender Reference/Working Group, with sufficient expertise and resources, to promote mutual learning and collaboration across HCTs and clusters.
   - Allocate a gender advisor or appoint a senior gender focal point to support and enhance HCT capacity.
   - Establish gender parity targets for HCTs and operational teams, especially surge teams.
   - Consistently raise awareness of this Policy and encourage ownership and coordinated action among all actors.
2. Be aware of the annual gender accountability framework report, engage in tracking progress and promote the outcomes and the report, using it to inform future actions.
3. Ensure local women's meaningful participation and engagement in humanitarian decision making, a key commitment, as well as shortcoming of humanitarian decision making.
4. Ensure gender equality is prioritized, including in advocacy and resource allocations, as well as ensuring gender expertise and capacities exist to support strategic and technical programming.

What does the full policy offer?

The full policy provides an opportunity to track progress as well as to identify areas for strengthened focus and prioritisation.

The full IASC product is available at https://iasc.ch/gender-equality-empowerment-2017
For support using this product, or to provide feedback on the product or this summary, contact the IASC Gender Reference Group through the IASC secretariat at: iasccorrespondence@un.org.
Summary drafted by: IASC Gender Reference Group

Executive Summary:
IASC Gender Accountability Framework Report
2019

The 2019 Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Gender Accountability Framework (AF) report marks the second monitoring cycle of the IASC's 2017 Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls in Humanitarian Actin Policy. It provides a snapshot of the IASC's output in the calendar year 2019 and allows for cross comparison with the baseline established with the 2018 AF report.

The 2019 report shows some progress and some remaining inconsistencies in the application of the 2017 Gender Policy. At the global level, gender was designated as a strategic priority for the allocation of CERF funding by the Emergency Response Coordinator and the first thematic evaluation by the IASC internal evaluation mechanism – the IAHE – was set as delivery on the gender policy. Both initiatives signifying commitment of the IASC management to address gender in humanitarian action.

Progress on the recommendations from the 2018 report has been limited, indicating the need for strengthened ownership of the recommendations by all stakeholders in the process. Across all levels of the IASC, more effort is needed to translate the recommendations into action, with the GRG taking a more active role in their dissemination.

At the field level, the analysis shows consistent consideration of protection and GBV for women and girls and the provision of maternal-child health services in all of the Humanitarian Needs Overview documents for the 2020 Humanitarian Program Cycle that were reviewed.

However, there was a drop in the extent of gender analysis that took a more comprehensive view of the impact on women, girls, men and boys, beyond just protection and maternal health. A comprehensive gender analysis beyond protection is particularly valuable given that the majority of crises are now protracted, multi-year contexts, and as such it is important to consider what the longer-term needs are, especially with regards to addressing livelihoods and education needs. Utilizing this metric, the report notes that percentage of HNOs employing gender analysis has remained the same (90% in 2018 compared to 89% in 2019).

This aligns with findings from the annual Humanitarian Programme Cycle Quality Scoring exercise led by OCHA which also assesses HNOs and HRPs with a different set of indicators, which states specifically that "Gender concerns overall and, notably, an understanding of the risks, vulnerabilities, and coping mechanisms along with causes of inequity – the analysis required for effective programming – continues to be found in only a few HNOs." [1] Analysis of the accountability framework's indicator results demonstrate how the provision of gender capacity and facilitation of women's voices contribute to better process results. For example, in the country contexts where local women were consulted 92% of them demonstrated the inclusion of a comprehensive gender analysis. Similarly, in the countries that consulted local women, 70% included provisions for the key service lines – GBV mitigation and response, women's livelihoods and sexual and reproductive health. Where there was no formal consultation with local women, these services were only prioritized in 55% of the context countries. Further research on how these this causality is caused through these process relationships is warranted.

In addition, where the country contexts indicated that they had gender in humanitarian action capacity, 100% utilized gender analysis in HNOs, compared to the 89% average and 73% had the key service lines - GBV mitigation and response, women's livelihoods and sexual and reproductive health – compared to the 55% average in HRPs.

The recommendations from the 2018 report still stand and are included as an annex to this report. A number of additional recommendations for the different strata of the IASC and its field representation are laid out in the relevant sections below and are compiled here for ease of reference:

---

[1] The enhanced HPC was introduced in 2019 and applied to the 2020 HPC cycle documents. It was piloted during the reporting timeline in 2019. One of its central elements is ensuring inclusivity through disaggregation and analysis of the differential impacts of the crisis and associated needs for diverse groups of people (i.e. gender, age, disability and other diversity characteristics).

2019 Accountability Framework Recommendations

Principals:
- The Gender Accountability Report for 2019 should be tabled for discussion at the Principal's level to reinforce the collective leadership and accountability required to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in humanitarian action.
- Future iterations of the IASC Workplan should ensure gender equality and the empowerment of women is prioritized as a cross-cutting issue across all strategic priorities.
- Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls must be an imperative cross-cutting theme across all IASC structures at the global level (IASC Principals, OPAG, EDG, RGs and Entities Associated with IASC, and field support structures; HCTs, ICCGs and clusters.

OPAG and Results Groups:
- The Gender Reference Group takes the initiative to strengthen collaboration with the IASC Results Groups to further mainstream gender across Results Groups outputs.
- GRG to work closely with the OPAG to support in implementation of the Gender Accountability Framework Report's recommendations, where appropriate.

Gender Reference Group:
- The GRG, on behalf of the IASC, should be designated its own standing side-event slot at ECOSOC HAS to facilitate presentation and debate on key gender equality and the empowerment of women and girl's issues.
- The GRG should establish a working group to review and undertake future Gender Accountability Framework reports, taking into account the findings and recommendations of the IAHE on GEEWG.
- GRG to collaborate with the RGs and ensure that they participate in RG discussions and contribute to policies and normative work produced by the RGs.
- The GRG should support OCHA to further mainstream gender into Emergency Response Plans. The criteria required to endorse an Emergency Preparedness Plan should include minimum standards for ensuring adequate gender considerations in assessment, consultation, inclusion, planning, implementation and M&E.

HPC Steering Group:
- OCHA in collaboration with IASC members critically explore systems and ways to more accurately and timely track funding for all gender equality programming, including pooled funding mechanisms.

Global Clusters:
- The GCCG should encourage all global clusters to nominate a gender focal point internally as a first step towards ensuring that gender is consistently mainstreamed in the work of the field clusters.
- Strengthen engagement and collaboration between Global Clusters and GRG with regular information sharing, briefings, and exchange regarding obligations and commitments contained in the IASC Gender Policy and Accountability Framework.
- OCHA, Cluster Lead Agencies, GCCG should promote the application of the IASC Gender Age Marker (GAM) as a mandatory project design and monitoring tool for all humanitarian interventions.
- Cluster lead agencies and global clusters should explore options to provide and/or facilitate access to resources and funding for sustainable technical gender expertise to support with integrating gender in responses.

HCs, HCTs and Clusters:
- Clusters should make efforts to promote more robust gender analysis including impacts on marginalized groups such as adolescent girls, persons with disabilities, in particular women and girls, and ensure consistency between identified needs and response plans.
- HCTs and Country Based Pooled Funds Advisory Groups at country level should facilitate access to humanitarian funds to local women's organizations to build capacity and to enable engagement with the processes of humanitarian coordination and planning.
- HCTs and ICCG should develop a framework/process to ensure sustained engagement of women's organization within the planning process and coordination architecture, in particular women's meaningful participation in decision making.
- HCs and HCTs should ensure consistency between needs identified in the gender analysis findings outlined in the HNO with the final prioritized response plans. This includes issues such as added care burden and the means to alleviate.

The full IASC product is available at https://iasc.ch/gender-report-2019
This executive summary was included in the original IASC product, endorsed by the IASC.

Accountability to Affected People and Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

IASC Commitments on Accountability to Affected People and Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
2017

The IASC Principals commit to:

1. **Leadership**
Demonstrate their commitment to Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) and Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) by enforcing, institutionalising and integrating AAP approaches in the Humanitarian Program Cycle and strategic planning processes, at country level and by establishing appropriate management systems to solicit, hear and act upon the voices and priorities of affected people in a coordinated manner, including for SEA, before, during and after an emergency.

2. **Participation and Partnership**
Adopt agency mechanisms that feed into and support collective/coordinated people-centred approaches that enable women, girls, boys, men, including the most marginalised and at-risk people among affected communities, to participate in and play an active role in decisions that will impact their lives, well-being, dignity and protection. Adopt and sustain equitable partnerships with local actors to build upon their long-term relationships and trust with communities.

3. **Information, Feedback and Action**
Adopt agency mechanisms that feed into and support collective and participatory approaches that inform and listen to communities, address feedback and lead to corrective action. Establish and support the implementation of appropriate mechanisms for reporting and handling of SEA-related complaints. Plan, design and manage protection and assistance programmes that are responsive to the diversity and expressed views of affected communities.

4. **Results**
Measure AAP and PSEA related results at the agency and collective level, including through standards such as the Core Humanitarian Standard and the Minimum Operating Standards on PSEA; the Best Practice Guide to establish Inter-Agency Community-Based Complaint Mechanisms (CBCM) and its accompanying Standard Operating Procedures.

The IASC Principals agree to be held accountable for the progress on fulfilling these commitments.

Background

In 2011, the IASC principals agreed to five Commitments on Accountability to Affected Populations (CAAP) as part of a framework for engagement with communities. The revised version was developed and endorsed by the IASC Principals on the 20th of November 2017 to reflect essential developments such as the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS), the work done by the IASC on Inter-Agency community based complaints mechanisms including PSEA and the importance of meaningful collaboration with local stakeholders, which came out as a priority recommendation from the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit and in the Grand Bargain.

The full IASC product is available at https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/iasc-revised-aap-commitments-2017-including-guidance-note-and-resource-list
For support using this product, or to provide feedback on the product or this summary, contact the IASC secretariat at: iasccorrespondence@un.org.

IASC Inter-Agency Standing Committee

IASC Six Core Principles Relating to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
September 2019

1. "Sexual exploitation and abuse by humanitarian workers constitute acts of gross misconduct and are therefore grounds for termination of employment.

2. Sexual activity with children (persons under the age of 18) is prohibited regardless of the age of majority or age of consent locally. Mistaken belief regarding the age of a child is not a defence.

3. Exchange of money, employment, goods, or services for sex, including sexual favours or other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behaviour is prohibited. This includes exchange of assistance that is due to beneficiaries.

4. Any sexual relationship between those providing humanitarian assistance and protection and a person benefitting from such humanitarian assistance and protection that involves improper use of rank or position is prohibited. Such relationships undermine the credibility and integrity of humanitarian aid work.

5. Where a humanitarian worker develops concerns or suspicions regarding sexual abuse or exploitation by a fellow worker, whether in the same agency or not, he or she must report such concerns via established agency reporting mechanisms.

6. Humanitarian workers are obliged to create and maintain an environment which prevents sexual exploitation and abuse and promotes the implementation of their code of conduct. Managers at all levels have particular responsibilities to support and develop systems which maintain this environment."

The full IASC product is available at https://iasc.ch/six-core-principles
For support using this product, or to provide feedback on the product or this summary, contact the IASC secretariat at: iasccorrespondence@un.org.

Note: in the case of any differences to this summary, the full product is the authoritative version

Executive Summary:
IASC Vision and Strategy: Protection from sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment (PSEAH) 2022-2026
13 May 2022

At a glance

The IASC Vision is of a humanitarian environment in which people caught up in crises feel safe, respected, and can access needed protection and assistance without fear of sexual exploitation or abuse (SEA) by any aid worker and in which aid workers themselves feel supported, respected and empowered to deliver assistance free from sexual harassment. This five-year Strategy identifies commitments and time bound targets to embed sustainable and accountable PSEAH actions within all humanitarian contexts and transformative culture change across the sector. It is informed by the 2021 IASC external PSEAH Review. The IASC Champion on PSEAH provides leadership and political support to advocate for the Strategy and implementation is supported by the IASC Technical Advisory Group (TAG) on PSEAH.

Key commitments for field leaders

1. **Commitment 1: Operationalise a Victim and Survivor Centred Approach.** The IASC is committed to deliver a contextualized, sustainable and accountable inter-agency community-based complaint mechanism. The IASC wants to ensure victims and survivors of SEA receive the appropriate, safe, accessible and timely assistance they are entitled to. In the same vein, the IASC is harmonizing investigations standards and collective accountability based on the expertise of an investigation panel as well as enhanced participation in ClearCheck and the Misconduct Disclosure Scheme.

2. **Commitment 2: Promote lasting change in organisational culture, behaviour and attitudes towards all forms of sexual misconduct.** The IASC is shifting its expectations of zero cases of SEA towards deeper organizational changes, including a culture of respect for victims and survivors, complainants, and whistle-blowers, as well as a zero tolerance for inaction on SEAH.

3. **Commitment 3: Provide support to inter-agency PSEA country structures, prioritizing identified high risk contexts.** The IASC is committed to support PSEA efforts at country-level by deploying dedicated inter-agency PSEA Coordinators in identified high-risk contexts. To inform the deployment of capacity, a composite SEA risk overview (SEA-RO) helps identify factors which contribute to increased risk of SEA. The IASC also aims to strengthen the tracking of HCT PSEA Action Plans, prioritize resourcing at the country-level, ensure emerging crisis have immediate surge or scale-up support for PSEA activities, and develop an updated IASC PSEA technical guidance for inter-agency PSEA coordinators and focal points.

What does the full Strategy offer?

The full multi-year strategy describes and contextualises the strategic commitments and articulates the IASC ambition and expected results. It sets out the change required, reaffirms earlier commitments of the IASC, sets targets and determines how results will be monitored and measured. It is a key reference document for all IASC members and is aligned with UN system-wide commitments on PSEA.

The full IASC product is available at https://iasc.ch/psea-strategy-2022-2023
For support using this product, or to provide feedback on the product or this summary, contact the IASC secretariat at: iasccorrespondence@un.org.
Summary drafted by: IASC secretariat

Humanitarian Access

Understanding and Addressing Bureaucratic and Administrative Impediments to Humanitarian action: Framework for a System-Wide Approach

January 2022

Executive summary

This framework has been developed to support Humanitarian Coordinators (HCs) and Humanitarian Country Teams (HCTs) better collectively understand and address Bureaucratic and Administrative Impediments (BAI) to the work of humanitarian actors.

In 2019, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) recognized that Bureaucratic and Administrative Impediments (BAI) were a significant and growing barrier to humanitarian operations. The Operational Policy and Advocacy Group (OPAG) Results Group 1 on Operational Response (RG1) tasked an inter-agency BAI subgroup (co-chaired by InterAction and ICVA with UNHCR, WFP, OCHA, IOM, Save the Children, NRC, UNICEF, IFRC), to carry forward a workplan to collectively examine BAI in more depth, and to generate practical tools and guidance for Humanitarian Coordinators (HCs) and Humanitarian Country Teams (HCTs) in humanitarian settings worldwide.

The RG1 BAI Subgroup outlined the scope and nature of BAI impacting humanitarian action; conducted an indicative mapping exercise of BAI globally; and completed four case studies in Afghanistan, Myanmar, Nigeria and Venezuela, based on consultations with almost 200 operational organizations and coordination bodies in 2020 and 2021.

The global BAI mapping, country case studies, as well as a desk review of public and private research and analysis, form the evidence base for this framework.

How to use this framework

This paper outlines a framework for collective action to understand and address BAI, led by the HC and HCT at country level and with links to global stakeholders to complement and enhance in-country efforts.

This framework should encourage discussion and help HCT members and other stakeholders agree on actions that can be taken at national and subnational levels to understand, address and prevent the negative impacts of BAI on humanitarian action. While the framework primarily addresses HCTs at the national level, sub-national HCTs and relevant task teams can also utilize it to inform their approaches to BAI. Effectively addressing BAI will require actors at all levels to feed into the national HCT consultation and decision-making processes.

The full IASC product is available at https://iasc.ch/understanding-addressing-bai
This summary was included in the full endorsed version of the IASC product.

Note: in the case of any differences to this summary, the full product is the authoritative version

Executive Summary:
Impact of Sanctions and Counterterrorism
Measures on Humanitarian Operations
Endorsed: September 2021

At a glance

This guidance explores the multifaceted impact of sanctions and counterterrorism measures on humanitarian operations and activities; it does not address their potential socioeconomic impact. It provides: 1) key elements for a basic understanding of the issue; 2) advice on how to acquire visibility on the overall impact and the main types of impact experienced in specific contexts; and, 3) advice for engagement towards mitigating measures, ensuring coherent approaches across contexts. Humanitarian Country Teams (HCTs) should provide the humanitarian leadership with pertinent information and analysis. Where the operational impact is significant, Humanitarian Coordinators (HCs) have a responsibility to engage with key interlocutors in-country to address it, with the support of OCHA at field and headquarters levels. HCs also have a responsibility to ensure that humanitarian action remains clearly distinct from sanctions implementation and the counterterrorism agenda.

Five key pieces of guidance for field leaders

1. A range of measures adopted by various actors to prevent resources from being made available to sanctioned individuals, regimes, or armed groups, can generate impediments for humanitarian operations. This includes restrictions on transfers of funds and goods, the intimidation of humanitarian staff and organisations upon accusations of support to 'terrorism', the potential criminalization of humanitarian activities as forms of support to sanctioned entities or individuals, and restrictive donor and bank policies.

2. HCs should encourage HCTs to identify, monitor, and document impediments that sanctions and counterterrorism measures generate. The guidance provides tools and advice to HCTs to that end.

3. Where sanctions and counterterrorism measures generate significant impediments, HCs have a lead role to play in advocating for mitigating measures, seeking support from OCHA at field and headquarters levels.

4. Some governments, donors and other stakeholders consider that humanitarian organisations and programmes should actively contribute to the implementation of sanctions and counterterrorism measures. HCs have a lead role to play in ensuring both strategic coherence across UN pillars in-country and respect for the impartiality and non-politicization of humanitarian assistance.

5. HCT members have a responsibility to ensure that humanitarian assistance goes to those in need and minimize potential diversion of funds or aid in the process and that strong risk mitigation systems are in place and dialogue is welcome on how to improve those. At the same time, sanctions and counterterrorism measures should not directly or indirectly prevent assistance from reaching all those in need in a timely manner.

What does the full guidance offer?

The guidance clarifies the applicability of various types of measures and their differentiated impact on humanitarian organisations and staff based on relevant criteria (UN vs. non-UN, nationality, etc.). To facilitate engagement towards mitigating measures, it identifies the most common issues that have arisen in different contexts, suggests a possible course of action, and provides examples where issues were successfully addressed. An annex contains references for HCs willing to delve deeper into the topic, as well as and generic key messages for engagement with various stakeholders.

The full IASC product is available at https://iasc.ch/sanctions-coter-impact-2021
For support using this product, or to provide feedback on the product or this summary, contact OCHA-PAPS (piacibello@un.org) or the IASC secretariat at: iasccorrespondence@un.org.
Summary drafted by: OCHA Policy Advice and Planning Section

Note: in the case of any differences to this summary, the full product is the authoritative version

Operational Summary:
Impact of Sanctions and Counterterrorism Measures on Humanitarian Operations

Endorsed: September 2021

At a glance

This guidance explores the multifaceted impact of sanctions and counterterrorism measures on humanitarian operations and activities; it does not address their potential socioeconomic impact. It provides: 1) key elements for a basic understanding of the issue; 2) advice on how to acquire visibility on the overall impact and the main types of impact experienced in specific contexts; and, 3) advice for engagement towards mitigating measures, ensuring coherent approaches across contexts. Humanitarian Country Teams (HCTs) should provide the humanitarian leadership with pertinent information and analysis. Where the operational impact is significant, Humanitarian Coordinators (HCs) have a responsibility to engage with key interlocutors in-country to address it, with the support of OCHA at field and headquarters levels. HCs also have a responsibility to ensure that humanitarian action remains clearly distinct from sanctions implementation and the counterterrorism agenda.

Five key pieces of guidance for operational humanitarians

1. A range of measures adopted by various actors to prevent resources from being made available to sanctioned individuals, regimes, or armed groups, can generate impediments for humanitarian operations. This includes restrictions on transfers of funds and goods, the intimidation of humanitarian staff and organisations upon accusations of support to 'terrorism', the potential criminalization of humanitarian activities as forms of support to sanctioned entities or individuals, and restrictive donor and bank policies.

2. HCT members should discuss the issue in existing coordination platforms to 1) determine if some organisations are confronted by impediments generated by sanctions or counterterrorism measures, starting with the types of impediments already identified across several contexts, and 2) determine whether is it a significant issue for the humanitarian response overall.

3. If so, HCT members should: 1) identify, monitor, and document the impediments that sanctions and counterterrorism measures generate, 2) share this information in existing coordination platforms, 3) consolidate and analyse this information under OCHA's leadership, and 4) alert the HC through the OCHA office, as well as OCHA and relevant Agencies' headquarters to inform advocacy and policy discussions.

4. Different HCT members are impacted differently, with local partners being the most vulnerable. They are also often the most reluctant to share information as they may be reliant on a single grant or donor and more exposed to security risks. It is critical to engage with all HCT members, demonstrate the added value of information sharing, and offer guarantees in terms of confidentiality.

5. Regular information and analysis sharing with HCs – though and under the leadership of OCHA – is essential to enable common messaging and positioning and to support high-level advocacy with donors and government authorities in-country, Member States' capitals, and the Security Council.

What does the full guidance offer?

To help monitor and document impact, the guidance briefly describes various forms of impact already identified. It also offers examples of lessons learned and best practices from specific contexts. An annex contains references for those who wish to delve deeper into the topic and an impact monitoring template.

The full IASC product is available at https://iasc.ch/sanctions-coter-impact-2021

For support using this product, or to provide feedback on the product or this summary, contact OCHA-PAPS (piacibello@un.org) or the IASC secretariat at: iasccorrespondence@un.org.

Summary drafted by: OCHA Policy Advice and Planning Section

Executive Summary:
Solutions Proposal to Address the Negative Impact of Counterterrorism Measures and Sanctions on Humanitarian Action

Endorsed: April 2021

At a glance

This IASC paper offers an overview and evaluation of specific actions that the UN Security Council, States, and other stakeholders have taken or may consider in the future, to mitigate the impact of sanctions and counterterrorism measures on humanitarian operations. It discusses the merits of these actions from a humanitarian perspective and suggests a collective IASC approach towards each (whether/when to advocate for or explore it further). The objective is to help IASC members identify specific actions to promote at the policy level and in particular contexts. Actions are categorised by whether they pertain to the design, implementation, or monitoring and evaluation of sanctions and counterterrorism measures.

Three key pieces of guidance for field leaders

1. Mitigating the impact of sanctions and counterterrorism measures to the fullest extent possible requires a range of concerted actions by all political, legislative, and administrative bodies involved in designing and implementing such measures, as well as ongoing impact monitoring and evaluation.

2. In practice, sanctions and counterterrorism measures generate various issues often addressed in a case-by-case, context specific manner by States, specific State Agencies, and/or the Security Council. Some of these issues call for legal fixes while others relate to implementation policies or practices (from banks, donors, the host State, counterterrorism bodies, etc.); some affect an entire operation or several operations, others affect some organisations only, in specific contexts. Depending on the case, the solutions put forward and the advocacy strategy may not be the same.

3. There is broad consensus amongst IASC members to advocate for certain measures at the policy level and across contexts, including:

   - The introduction of humanitarian safeguards across sanctions and counterterrorism legislations, excluding the activities of humanitarian organisations and incident transactions from the scope of prohibited acts;
   - Increased, systematic dialogue between States, multilateral organisations, financial institutions, UN Agencies and humanitarian NGOs on counterterrorism and sanctions issues;
   - The provision of guidance and clarifications on the implications of sanctions and counterterrorism measures for humanitarian action and organisations, and of specific reassurances to humanitarian organisations and private companies, by relevant sanctions/ counterterrorism bodies;
   - Mandating relevant sanctions and counterterrorism bodies at UN, regional and national levels, to monitor and report on the humanitarian impact of the measures falling under their competency.

What does the full Solutions Proposal offer?

The paper proposes possible mitigating measures that are not necessarily consensual across contexts but may be advocated for in specific circumstances. It discusses the pros and cons of each mitigating measure in details, provides examples of good practice, and suggests possible formulation for humanitarian safeguards.

The full IASC product is available at https://iasc.ch/coter-solutions-proposal-2021
For support using this product, or to provide feedback on the product or this summary, contact OCHA-PAPS (piacibello@un.org) or the IASC secretariat at: iasccorrespondence@un.org.
Summary drafted by: OCHA-Policy Advice and Planning Section

Humanitarian Development Collaboration and linkages to Peace

Executive Summary:
Issue paper: Exploring peace within the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus
2020

1. Crises require humanitarian, development and peace responses

Crises, whether they manifest as conflicts, disasters or socio-economic shocks often cannot be solved by one set of actions alone. Humanitarian, development and peace actions all have a role to play in many of these crises: humanitarian response to save lives and protect people, development assistance to address multi-dimensional structural challenges, and peace action to ensure that countries can sustain peace, i.e. prevent the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of conflict. That is why in conflict-affected and protracted crisis contexts, ensuring coherence, complementarity, and collaboration across the humanitarian-development-peace Nexus is so important in order to realize rights, reduce needs, vulnerabilities and risks, and address drivers and underlying causes of conflict over the long-term. A sequential approach has shown not to be an adequate solution, and synchronous humanitarian, development and peace actions are generally considered more effective.

In the context of collective outcomes, the IASC has recently used the following to describe the link with the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus (HDPN): [1] "Humanitarian assistance, development cooperation and peacebuilding are not serial processes: they are all needed at the same time in order to reduce needs, risk and vulnerability. Collaboration can be achieved by working towards collective outcomes, over multiple years, based on the comparative advantage of a diverse range of actors. Collective outcomes have emerged as a strategic tool for humanitarians, development and peace actors to agree on a concrete and measurable result that they will jointly achieve in a country with the overall aim of reducing people's needs, risks and vulnerability. This has also been recognized by OECD DAC members in their recommendations."[2]

Collective outcomes are one entry point for collaboration and contributions to peace, and others exist. However, collaboration between humanitarian, development, and peace actors must be context-specific and, particularly in situations of acute armed conflict, may not be possible.

2. A wide range of peace actions are being delivered in crisis situations

Peace is not only about the absence of violence but also about sustaining peaceful societies - these situations are commonly referred to as negative and positive peace, respectively. We can sometimes distinguish between 'little p' actions focused on building the capacity for peace within societies, and 'Big P' actions that support and sustain political solutions and securitised responses to violent conflict. These actions may take the form of prevention, response or reinforcing peace and may focus on local level drivers and/or the deeper structural causes of conflict over the longer-term. A wide range of actors can be involved, depending on the context. These may include both national and international actors, from civil society to authorities as well as affected communities themselves, to peacekeepers, security sector reform actors, election and human rights advisors and others. Both 'little p' and 'Big P' approaches are relevant and important, but working through a 'little p' approach, in particular at the local level to address key drivers in the short-to-intermediate term, may create more opportunities across the HDPN, and also enables vulnerable populations to be targeted through direct programming.

---

[1] No single agreed definition of the HDPN currently exists, but common tenets are a breadth of scope and a long-term frame of reference. For example, the OECD-DAC's definition of the purpose is: "…to reduce overall vulnerability and the number of unmet needs, strengthen risk management capacities and address root causes of conflict." (OECD DAC 2019). Throughout this paper the terms 'Nexus', 'HDP Nexus', 'HDPN' and 'Triple Nexus' are used interchangeably unless stated otherwise.

[2] IASC. 2020. Light guidance on collective outcomes.

3. **All actions – humanitarian, development and peace – should engage in context and conflict analysis, and conflict-sensitive programming**

Sharing context and conflict analyses and integrating conflict sensitivity approaches into programme and project design across humanitarian, development and peace actions can help avoid inadvertently undermining peace by creating perceptions of "winners" and "losers" among beneficiaries of assistance and resources. This can also help ensure a coherent and complementary approach across the Nexus and, where appropriate, have a positive impact on existing or potential conflict dynamics. The overall objective of collaboration between humanitarian, development and peace actors is to reduce people's needs, risks and vulnerability by sequencing and layering their interventions in all contexts, each in line with their mandates.

4. **Collaboration is not contrary to humanitarian principles**

The humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence ensure that those most in need are assisted, particularly in conflict-affected settings, and that their rights and dignity are respected. 3 Development and (positive) peace actions also share the commitment to humanity and follow complementary principles in terms of 'do no harm' and by integrating conflict-sensitive approaches. Humanitarian principles must be safeguarded, and humanitarian action primary focus is on addressing humanitarian needs. Humanitarians should also engage in conflict analysis, adopt conflict-sensitive programming, and collaborate with peace actors, where appropriate, to inform approaches which may contribute to peace outcomes.

Considering the importance of human rights based and people-centred approaches, and that actions across all pillars have effects on each other, humanitarian, development and peace actors should develop the right level of collaboration required in each context. While in many contexts there are opportunities to advance collaboration between humanitarian, development and peace actors, the scope for collaboration might be limited in acute conflict situations by the need to abide by the principles of neutrality, independence and impartiality, and thus ensure unhindered humanitarian access to people in need. Whatever the context, collaboration must take place in a manner that neither undermines adherence to the humanitarian principles of independence and impartiality nor exposes populations affected or humanitarian workers to greater risks.

5. **Implications for humanitarian programming**

It is important that humanitarian actions are reflective of their impact on and potential contribution to longer-term actions to reduce humanitarian need, and how they link with efforts across the Nexus to forge a sustainable peace. Conflict-sensitivity, localization, context-specificity, rights-based approaches and sustainability, when put into action through targeted and complementary planning and programming across the Nexus, can become the building blocks for sustaining peace. To increase interactions across the HDPN, there are a range of options to consider, including:
- Shared, joint or 'joined-up' context and conflict analyses across the Nexus
- Outcome-based planning, ideally based on collective outcomes44
- Flexible, responsive and agile programming that can adapt to an evolving context
- Increasing understanding of each other's roles and responsibilities, activities and capacities and exchange of expertise by humanitarians, development and peace actors, and vice versa
- Scaling up capacity for context and conflict analysis, and incorporating conflict-sensitivity into programme design
- Advocating for financing across humanitarian, development and peace programming, while safeguarding financing to respond to immediate humanitarian needs as they arise
- Adherence to the 'do no harm' principle as well as Accountability to Affected Populations, the centrality of protection,5 'doing more good' when possible, while responding to the local context and the voices and capacities of local people and communities

---

3 https://www.unocha.org/sites/dms/Documents/OOM-humanitarianprinciples_eng_June12.pdf.
4 Light guidance on collective outcomes, *op. cit*.
5 As set out in the IASC Policy on Protection in Humanitarian Action, 2016.

Other must-read guidance

IASC Inter-Agency Standing Committee

Executive Summary:
Operational Guidance for Coordinated Assessments in Humanitarian Crises
Endorsed: 2012

This guidance is due for revision in 2023. Note that it references out-of-date definitions/documents (i.e., the Humanitarian Dashboard, Preliminary Scenario Definition, and CASPAR secondment mechanism.) The key principles, actors, and approach remain valid and should be reviewed alongside the IASC Humanitarian Programme Cycle Reference Module and corresponding OCHA guidance and templates.

At a glance

The coordination of assessments is crucial to ensuring solid inter-sectoral analysis during humanitarian crises and therefore better decision-making and planning. The IASC Operational Guidance for Coordinated Assessments is both a procedural manual and an IASC policy document. It lays out the broad approach and rationale for preparing for, and implementing, coordinated humanitarian needs assessments and provides an accountability framework for key steps in the process. It promotes a coordinated approach to assessments to address recurring issues during emergencies. The Guidance supports all humanitarian actors but targets decision makers responsible for promoting and ensuring a coordinated assessment approach, including Humanitarian Coordinators/Resident Coordinators (HC/RCs), and entities tasked with its implementation, including OCHA, clusters and cluster lead agencies.

Six key recommendations for field leaders

1. The HC/RC establishes coordination mechanisms for cross-cluster/sector needs assessment and analysis.
2. Country-level cluster/sector leads ensure effective and coherent sectoral needs assessment.
3. Operational agencies have the primary responsibility for undertaking assessments. They do so in a coordinated manner and adhere to the definitions, principles, methodologies, and approaches set out in the Operational Guidance.
4. Plans for implementing coordinated assessments are part of preparedness and contingency planning work.
5. Coordinated assessments are part of ongoing processes guiding operational decision-making and complement monitoring of the overall humanitarian situation and the performance of the humanitarian response.
6. Coordination mechanisms applied to needs assessments differ depending on the phase and nature of a crisis. A multi cluster/sector initial rapid assessment (MIRA) is recommended during the first two weeks following a disaster, followed by joint or harmonized intra-cluster/sector in-depth assessments.

Five key actions to be taken under the assessment framework

1. Initial assessments carried out during Phase 1 (the first 72 hours)
2. Rapid assessments carried out during Phase 2 (the first and second weeks)
3. In-depth assessments carried out during Phase 3 (the third and fourth weeks)
4. In-depth assessments, including on recovery needs, during Phase 4 (week five onwards)
5. While geared towards sudden onset emergencies, the principles laid out in the Operational Guidance are applicable in all large-scale humanitarian crises.

The full IASC product is available at https://iasc.ch/coordinated-humanitarian-assessments-2012
For support using this product, or to provide feedback on the product or this summary, contact IASC secretariat at: iasccorrespondence@un.org.
Summary drafted by: UNOCHA Assessment, Planning and Monitoring Branch

Executive Summary:
The Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings – with means of verification (Version 2.0)
Endorsed: 2021

At a glance

This document provides guidance on the assessment, research, design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) programmes in emergency settings. Although designed specifically for emergency contexts (including protracted crises), the framework may also be applicable for the transition phases from emergency to development (including disaster risk reduction initiatives).

The common framework is important for any emergency or development personnel who are directly or indirectly engaged in programmes that aim to influence the mental health and psychosocial well-being of others. This may include (but is not limited to) mental health professionals, child protection actors or educators, health providers, nutritionists, faith communities or programme managers and practitioners engaged in initiatives such as peacebuilding, life skills, or vocational learning.

Five key pieces of guidance for field leaders

1. The framework builds on and is aligned with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Guidelines on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings.

2. The wide variation of goals, outcomes, indicators and means of verification used across MHPSS programmes has made it difficult to demonstrate the impact and value of these programmes.

3. In their Joint Interagency Call for Action on MHPSS of December 2020, the IASC Principals emphasized the importance of treating MHPSS as a crosscutting issue across sectors and the importance of reflecting MHPSS indicators in relevant planning documents. This framework includes standard data collection tools that will enable, for the first time, a common approach for the measurement of collective impact of MHPSS programmes through standardized indicators, outcomes and goals, across sectors at country-level.

4. The common framework may also supplement approaches to achieving global goals, such as the Sustainable Development Goals and/or those of the Comprehensive Mental Health Action plan 2013-2030.

5. The document could usefully be shared with programme teams involved in activities to strengthen the mental health and psychosocial well-being of affected populations. No background in MHPSS is required.

What does the full Framework offer?

The document outlines the processes involved in MHPSS M&E, and gives practical guidance for using the common framework, conducting ethical data collection, selecting, or adapting means of verification and on many other aspects of M&E. It also includes details about the common goal and recommended outcomes and indicators for MHPSS programmes and provides detailed guidance on using a set of quantitative and qualitative means of verification tools and approaches, with links to an online 'toolkit' where further information on each of these can be found.

Operational Summary:
The Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings – with means of verification (Version 2.0)

Endorsed: 2021

At a glance

This document provides guidance on the assessment, research, design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) programmes in emergency settings. Although designed specifically for emergency contexts (including protracted crises), the framework may also be applicable for the transition phases from emergency to development (including disaster risk reduction initiatives). The common framework is important for any emergency or development personnel who are directly or indirectly engaged in programmes that aim to influence the mental health and psychosocial well-being of others. This may include (but is not limited to) mental health professionals, child protection actors or educators, health providers, nutritionists, faith communities, or programme managers and practitioners engaged in initiatives such as peacebuilding, life skills, or vocational learning.

Three key pieces of guidance for operational humanitarians

1. The framework builds on and is aligned with the [Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Guidelines on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings](#).

2. The wide variation of goals, outcomes, indicators, and means of verification used across MHPSS programmes has made it difficult to demonstrate the impact and value of these programmes. The purpose of the common framework is to encourage the use of a select number of outcomes and indicators and the use of common tools as means of verification to build the MHPSS evidence base, promote quality in MHPSS programming, and provide MHPSS actors with an approach for monitoring and evaluating their work.

3. The common M&E framework offers a goal statement and five outcomes, plus a selection of goal and outcome indicators and recommended means of verification identified based on their empirical evidence and acceptability in diverse settings. In using the common framework, it is recommended that each MHPSS programme use:
   - The overall goal of the framework.
   - At least **one** goal impact indicator.
   - Plus at least **one** recommended means of verification related to that goal impact indicator.
   - Plus at least **one** outcome indicator from the common framework.

What does the full Framework offer?

The document outlines the processes involved in MHPSS M&E, and gives practical guidance for using the common framework, conducting ethical data collection, selecting or adapting means of verification and on many other aspects of M&E. It also includes details about the common goal and recommended outcomes and indicators for MHPSS programmes and provides detailed guidance on using a set of quantitative and qualitative means of verification tools and approaches, with links to an online '[toolkit](#)' where further information on each of these can be found.

Note: in the case of any differences to this summary, the full product is the authoritative version

Executive Summary:
IASC Guidance on the Provision of Overheads to Local and National Partners

October 2022

At a glance

This document provides guidance for international humanitarian organisations (UN agencies and INGOs) who partner with local and national organisations, on the issue of overheads. Overheads, or indirect costs, refer to costs that are not related directly to a specific project, but that support the efficient, effective, and safe running of an organisation. This guidance provides recommendations for how to improve current policy and practice to ensure that local and national partners can access overhead funding.

Five key messages for field and HQ leaders

1. **Overheads are critical for the health of any organisation, including local and national NGOs.** The common practice of not advancing overheads to local and national partners has been increasingly recognized as unfair and at odds with commitments to support institutional development and capacity strengthening. Over the next year, UN agencies, INGOs and donors will be reflecting on their current practice and changing industry standard, with the Grand Bargain caucus on funding for localisation having also identified the issue of overheads as a priority.

2. **Building on examples of good practice within organisations, UN agencies and INGOs should start to provide or share overheads with local and national partners where possible**. Good practice, as identified by local and national NGOs, includes providing overheads as unrestricted funding, in addition to direct administrative and project support costs. The IASC guidance acknowledges that agencies define, access and manage overheads in different ways and have to comply with their own financial regulations, but also highlights that there are already examples of good practice within organisations that could be standardised, much of which is country-led.

3. **Actors need to adopt a harmonised approach to cost classification**. A key barrier to fairer practice around overheads is the lack of common definition of what types of cost are defined as overheads. The first component of the *Money Where It Counts protocol* on cost classification is an example of a relevant cost-harmonising initiative.

4. There are challenges in changing well-established funding practices. As such, a key recommendation of the guidance is to **prioritise generating cross-organisational buy-in to the issue and develop or revise relevant policies and internal guidance**, including for country offices. International organisations should widely publicise new policies and learning around this issue to promote further change within the sector.

5. The guidance also highlights **key advocacy messages to donors**, recognising the role they play in actively incentivising change. This includes the need for donors to commit to covering the full costs associated with delivering humanitarian programming and the need to communicate directly with local actors to better understand the challenges they face as a result of poor indirect cost coverage.

What does the full guidance offer?

The short guidance document is structured around actions for UN agencies and INGOs, actions for donors and actions for wider systemic change. The accompanying research report provides more detail on the policy context and background, the current practices of individual organisations, and findings from interviews with 26 local and national NGOs and 18 international actors around the barriers and opportunities for change and examples of good practice.

The full IASC product is available at https://iasc.ch/overheads-guidance

For support using this product, or to provide feedback on the product or this summary, contact the IASC secretariat at: iasccorrespondence@un.org.

Summary drafted by: IASC secretariat

Note: in the case of any differences to this summary, the full product is the authoritative version