IASC Inter-Agency Standing Committee

INTER-AGENCY STANDING COMMITTEE
OPERATIONAL POLICY AND ADVOCACY GROUP MEETING

BACKGROUND DOCUMENT: IAHE SG ROLLING WORKPLAN FOR 2022-25
AND 2022-23 PRIORITIES, DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION
Prepared by: IAHE SG

Geneva, 23 November 2021

Background

The Inter Agency Humanitarian Evaluation Steering Group (IAHE SG), formed by the independent evaluation function representatives of IASC members, is an IASC-associated body that manages and provides strategic guidance for Inter Agency Humanitarian Evaluations, which are launched by the ERC. The IAHE SG undertakes its activities based on a rolling four-year workplan, which outlines the planned level of collective effort and annual priorities for crises-specific and thematic evaluations. Crisis-specific priorities are determined based on a mapping of ongoing emergencies against jointly agreed criteria,[1] as well as consideration of the automatic trigger for all Scale-Up responses, as per IASC protocols. Thematic evaluations are typically conducted every second year; and have ultimately been decided upon by the IAHE SG based on a selectivity analysis [2] of themes, that are based on consideration of the ERC and IASC Principal priorities, as well as topics proposed by the members of the group.

Purpose

The purpose of this note is to seek feedback from OPAG regarding its evidence needs, in order to inform the IAHE SG workplan for 2020-2025, in specific for the next two years.

IAHE SG rolling workplan for 2022-25

The plan is based on the following agreed **planning assumptions:**

- The pandemic-related **constraints and restrictions on evaluative activities will be largely mitigated** due to the waning of the problems it created; or through adaptation of evaluation methods and practices to these constraints.

- IAHE SG financial resources and human capacities will remain relatively constant and the IAHE SG will maintain **the same level of funding as in 2019-21.**

- The IAHE SG remains committed to meeting the automatic requirement for IAHEs for all system-wide Scale-Up declarations.

- Unless already launched, **automatically triggered IAHEs take precedence** over any crises specific IAHE included in the annual workplan.

- As recommended by the 2020 IAHE on GEEWG, the group agrees to conduct **another IAHE of GEEWG in 2025,** to review the progress made in this area.

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[1] These include: 1) the number of people in need in the year preceding the analysis; 2) CERF Risk and Vulnerability index ranking; 3) the level of response funding; and 4) the presence of a multi-agency, multi-sector programme. Countries or crises with multi-agency, multi-sector responses are ranked against the first three criteria. Countries that appear in the top-10 on all three measures are considered as priority crises for an IAHE, except those where an IAHE has already been conducted in the last ten years.

[2] Analysis is based on application of the following criteria: 1) strategic relevance of the subject; 2) risk associated with the subject; 3) significant programme investment; 4) potential for replication and scaling -up; 5) knowledge gap; 6) timeliness; 7) potential for evaluation collaboration; 8) feasibility to initiate and carry out the evaluation; 9) specific expected uses as expressed by stakeholders; and 10) potential buy-in and high-level support.

Proposed level of effort for 2022-2025

On 11 November 2022, the IAHE SG committed to the following level of effort, which is the same as the previous 4-year period.

	2022	2023	2024	2025	Total
Crisis-specific evaluations	2	1	2	1	6
Thematic evaluations	-	1	-	1	2
IAHE Syntheses	-	1	-	-	1
Total	**2**	**3**	**2**	**2**	**9**

Priorities for the year 2022

Carry-over activities from 2021 will include completing the Yemen IAHE in the first quarter, as well as conducting the COVID-19 IAHE throughout the year.

In addition, two country specific IAHEs are planned.

Given the recently declared system-wide activation of the Scale-Up mechanism in Northern Ethiopia and Afghanistan, IAHEs for both take precedence, as per the IASC protocols. The latter require that an IAHE be triggered within nine to 12 months of a declaration, as follows:

Northern Ethiopia   May 2022
Afghanistan   September 2022

Priority back-up options --for instance, in the event that either is delayed due to access and logistical challenges -- would be **Sudan and DRC.**[3]

Meanwhile, the IAHE SG will begin preparations for both, with the aim of better coordinating with other ongoing or soon to be undertaken organization-specific evaluations; assessing the data environment; and exploring the best approach to each given the complexities currently being faced on the ground.

Priorities for the year 2023

In addition to undertaking country-specific IAHEs, the group planned in 2023 to conduct a synthesis, which is subject to continuing discussion. There is high demand for a synthesis of findings and conclusions of the multitude of evaluations of HDP Nexus collaboration and approaches, such as OECD DAC review of progress implementing nexus approach as well as a number of individual UN agency evaluations of their contribution to the Nexus. Alternatively, a synthesis of the recent evaluations of Scaled-Up response under the new protocols might be undertaken.

A second **thematic** IAHE is expected to be launched in 2023. The below suggestions were based on a review of the ERC and IASC Principal priorities; a sampling of the agencies' new four-year strategies and inputs from IAHE SG members. These represent a menu of options that continue to be discussed. As per its standard practice, the IAHE SG will itself undertake a selectivity analysis, against pre-agreed measures, to help identify the top thematic choice for the next IAHE.

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[3]   Countries that make the top-10 on all three measures outlined in footnote 1 are Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Yemen, Syria, and Sudan. Yemen (ongoing IAHE), Afghanistan (planned scale up), Syria (Coordinated Accountability and Lesson Learning exercises in 2016) are excluded since they have been recently or are soon to be evaluated.

Theme	Rational
Localization	This IAHE would consider the IASC's commitment and effort to operationalize the localization of humanitarian response efforts. The IASC identified localization as major priority/ workstream for IASC Result Group #1 over 2019-21 period. As a WHS theme, it translated into several initiatives that helped it to stay in the center of humanitarian agenda e.g., the Grand Bargain, the Charter for Change, and the Network for Empowered Aid Response (NEAR), among others. As one of the new ERC stated priorities, the IAHE findings and recommendations will provide timely input into the IASC's strategy in this area.
Accountability to affected people	The IAHE would review the progress of the operationalization of the five Commitments to Accountability to Affected Populations by IASC (2011, revised 2017). AAP was one of five priority areas for IASC in the 2019-20 period (Result Group #2) and will remain as a priority "enabling" theme for the 2022-23 period. Over the last five years, the IASC has produced many policies and technical guidance for HC/HCTs on integrating AAP/PSEA approaches into HPC planning coordination processes, etc. AAP is also among the ERC's priorities, and an IAHE could help to assess the effectiveness of IASC's AAP operationalization across different humanitarian contexts. Given the recent IASC proposal for an action plan to strengthen system-wide AAP, this IAHE might be best undertaken in 2023 to fulfill IASC's potential interest in assessing progress against the plan.
Inclusion of persons with disabilities into humanitarian action	The IAHE would assess progress since adopting a Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action as part of the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016 and the IASC's Guidelines on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action adopted in 2019. Despite some progress, several recent studies and evaluation reports (e.g ODI, GEEWG IAHE) concluded that the voices of persons with disabilities are still largely absent from decision-making on humanitarian response. As a cross-cutting issue, the inclusion of persons with disabilities is increasingly gaining political attention and the support of many Member States and donors, as well as those in the NGO sector.
Preparedness	The IAHE would assess IASC's progress implementing Emergency Response Preparedness approach adopted in 2015. While some evidence suggests that preparedness for natural disasters at the country level has improved, preparedness for conflict and communicable disease events has not. Despite preparedness being a critical element of effective collective humanitarian response, there is a lack of understanding of the current state of collective preparedness. The IAHE could also examine financing mechanisms for preparedness and early response.