|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 2016  Syria Humanitarian Response Plan | Guidelines |
|  |  |

A humanitarian response plan is prepared for a protracted or sudden onset emergency that requires international humanitarian assistance. The plan articulates the shared vision of how to respond to the assessed and expressed needs of the affected population, on the basis of needs that require a joint response (within and across sectors).

The humanitarian response plan (HRP) for Syria will be a strategic planning tool for humanitarian actors responding inside Syria, operating from the different hubs. Its purpose is to support strategic decision-making on the scope and priorities within the collective response, based on solid analysis of the needs and concerns of the affected people. The HRP also serves as the key response management tool for the humanitarian community, particularly with regards to its provisions on monitoring and response adjustments**.**

The humanitarian response plan has two interlinked parts:

* A country or context strategy, with a narrative, strategic objectives and indicators.
* Sector response plans, with objectives, activities and accompanying projects. This details how the strategy will be implemented and how much funding is required.

The process is sequential – the country strategy guides the sectors’ response plans as part of the ongoing program cycle. It seeks to achieve strategic, coordinated humanitarian action as part of the Transformative Agenda.

Connecting the humanitarian needs overview with the humanitarian response plan

The humanitarian needs overview is the foundation for the humanitarian response plan, as it provides a comprehensive analysis of the magnitude of the crisis and the needs, patterns of humanitarian impact, and culminates in the identification of the most pressing humanitarian needs. These needs are in a sense the key iss ues that the humanitarian response plan addresses. However, the international humanitarian system may not respond to all needs highlighted in the HNO for a wide range of reasons, including that a proportion of humanitarian needs will be addressed by the government or other non-humanitarian actors that there may not be adequate response capacity in-country to address all needs and or that assistance provision in certain areas of the country may not be possible due to a range of constraints including access restrictions and insecurity as laid out in the HNO.

For this reason, the Syria HC and RHC for the Syria crisis, supported by D/RHC and the HCs in the region, in consultation with humanitarian partners define parameters for the response, the focus areas for response and clearly articulate what the international humanitarian community aims to do.[[1]](#footnote-2) This will be articulated through the response analysis, which is perceived as the core of needs-based humanitarian response planning.

Key findings from the humanitarian needs overview process inform the humanitarian response plan. They help set the strategic objectives, define the scope of the response and general implementation parameters, articulate the links between the humanitarian and longer term development response, determine main actions, influence choice of indicators, and coordinate project planning.

Ensuring participation and ownership

As much as possible, representatives of every level of the affected population,[[2]](#footnote-3) national and local authorities as well as civil society and relevant actors should be engaged in the process. Humanitarian partners (UN agencies, IOs, INGOs, NNGOs, CBOs) are engaged through their representation and membership in respective sectors/clusters. However, it is also essential to ensure engagement with the full diversity of NGOs operating in the country, at national and sub-national levels.

In line with the UNHCR-OCHA Note on Mixed Situations: Coordination in practice (2014) and the Joint Note by UNHCR-OCHA on the HNO and HRP (2015), the IASC Guidance (2015) for the HRP will be applied. To ensure that the accountability for the refugee protection and assistance remains clear, activities responding to the needs of refugees will also be reflected in a distinct refugee chapter developed and managed under the leadership and coordination of UNHCR. All population caseloads in the response will be integrated and disaggregated throughtout the HRP document by status (IDPs, Refugees, Migrants, etc) and by gender and age. In addition, the financial requirements pertaining to refugees will be reflected throughout the HRP document.

Timeline for the 2016 HRP

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Deadlines | HRP Process |
| 17 September | Endorsement of the 2016 Costing Methodology by the Syria HC and the RHC for the Syria |
| 28 September – 4 October | Hub level review of technical HRP guidelines and incorporation of feedback |
| 1 October | **ISCCG:**   * Discussion of HRP strategic objectives – key messages from ISCCG to SSG * Presentation and discussion of 2016 HRP guidelines   + Implications of costing methodology adopted on HRP process and financial tracking   + Gender   Integrating Iraq and Lebanon based partners in the HRP? Way forward |
| 8 October 2015 | **SSG meeting:**   * Review and endorsement of the 2016 HNO * Setting the parameters and strategic objectives of the 2016 HRP |
| 9 October | Revised2016HRP technical guidelines circulated to ISCCG for review incorporating hub and WOS level feedback  OCHA to disseminate draft project submission template prepared by SIMAWG to ISCCG and hub inter-sector/cluster bodies for technical review |
| 12 October | ISCCG revision and endorsement of HRP technical guidelines and project template (through WEBEX).  WoS coordinators to review options on the project template as produced by the SIMAWG and agree on final template and steps.  OCHA to circulate the project template to sectors and partners tailored to the Syria context as well as the final template HRP for sector response plans. |
| 9 October- 2 November | **Development of operational response plans by WoS sectors and sectors / partners in the hubs**  Sectors will develop one single operational response plan across hubs.  The operational response plan will include:   * Sector strategy, * Sector’s objectives in line with the HRP strategic objectives * Sector’s activities * Indicators (the indicators will be included in a consolidated humanitarian response framework as annex to the HRP) * Projects: sectors to work with partners on projects. * Projects are developed according to an agreed process, criteria and a division of labour as highlighted in the guidelines.   Only for Damascus-based sectors, consultations with line ministries will need to be undertaken if and where applicable.  - OCHA to provide support and technical advice to sectors at WoS and hub levels on all the HRP related aspects.  -OCHA to support sectors to agree on multi-sectoral strategies that aim towards the achievement of the strategic objectives.  - OCHA to provide training in hubs on HRP related aspects. Support from coordinator/INGOs co-lead in hubs as applicable. |
| 13 October- 19 October | Hub-level trainings on HRP process (projects, guidelines) by OCHA and/or NGO Fora for humanitarian actors, with a particular focus on sector members and Syrian and NNGOs |
| 22 October | Opening of OPS for appealing agencies  OCHA/Sectors to provide support for appealing agencies with OPS. |
| 2 November | Draft sector operational response plans developed and disseminated to ISCCG and hub level bodies  Preliminary overarching narrative produced by OCHA and shared with ISCCG and hub level bodies. |
| 5 November | 2016 HRP workshop (representatives of WoS and hub level coordination mechanisms).  Presentation of the overarching issues (strategy, response, constraints) and sector operational response plans. First draft of sectoral sections due (without full project data).  Sectors will need to have preliminary estimates of number of projects/partners.  Preliminary HRP document; agreement on HRP key messages and approach  *After the workshop, the ISCCG will take stock on the HRP: key issues and challenges for sectors, inter-sectoral issues. This will replace the ISCCG VTC already scheduled as ISCCG members will attend, amongst others, the HRP workshop.* |
| 6 November- 13 November | Project vetting (offline) undertaken by sectors and preliminary envelopes developed. |
| 13 - 18 November | Circulation to hub level bodies (HLG, HCT, CBTF) of 2016 draft HRP for consultation and review prior to SSG submission |
| 15 November | Inputs for the Global Humanitarian Overview |
| 18 November | Circulation of final draft to SSG |
| 18 – 25 November | Consultations on 2016 HRP with GoS |
| 22 November | Project vetting on OPS completed (online “yes” on projects)  Approval of projects on OPS will need to be completed. Projects will be migrated to FTS. At this stage no changes to projects can be longer made. However, after the launch of the HRP in December, partners will be able to amend projects on OPS if required. |
| 26 November – 1 December | Circulation to SSG and hub based bodies of final HRP (with an overview of possible changes included following consultations with GOS). |
| December (date to be confirmed) | HRP launch (Launch of Global Humanitarian Overview) |

N.B- With regards to project formulation, training, vetting on the basis of the hybrid approach (ref. to guidelines for details) and the opening and actual closure of OPS, the current timeline foresees from 12 October to 22 November (7 weeks). A timeline of training and steps for coordinators will be included following the ISCCG Webex scheduled on 12 October in which coordinators will endorse the project template and options.

Timeframe for delivery of the response

For the Syria crisis, the timeframe of the humanitarian response plan will be 1 January to 31 December 2016.

Geoprahical scope of response planning

The Syria humanitarian response plan will cover the response inside Syria by actors operating from the different hubs, notably from Syria, Turkey, Jordan, and to the extent possible from Iraq and Lebanon.

Leadership, roles and responsibilities

**The Syria HC and the Regional Humanitarian Coordinator for the Syria Crisis,** supported by the D/RHC and the HCs in the region, provide the overall leadership and guidance for the humanitarian planning process together with humanitarian partners under the Whole-of-Syria approach and define the overall vision and focus for humanitarian action. They are the final arbiters in providing guidance and direction for the HRP, as per globally agreed roles in all humanitarian crises. The UNHCR Representative leads the provision of international protection, humanitarian assistance, and durable solutions for refugees.

The Syria HC and the RHC for the Syria crisis should ensure that the strategy is based on a thorough consultative process, an in-depth protection analysis and reflects the needs and concerns of the affected population.

**OCHA through its function of Chair of the Intersector/cluster coordination group (ISCCG)** and the hub-based intersector/intercluster coordination mechanisms:

* Prepares a draft country strategy (strategic objectives and indicators) for the SSG, on the basis of the consultations and inputs by HLG, HCT, CBTF, WoS sectors.
* Facilitates as needed, bringing together relevant WoS sectors, to ensure a collaborative multi-sectoral approach to the achievement of the strategic objectives, that takes into account cross-cutting issues.
* Supports WoS sectors as requested in identifying sector objectives and activities (and accompanying projects) and in ensuring that they are in line with the overall strategy and strategic objectives.
* Consolidates the humanitarian response plan (country strategy and sectors’ plans) in coordination with WoS sectors.
* Drafts the inter-sectoral sections of the HRP
* Provides strategic advice on multi-sectoral vetting of projects.
* Supports the Syria HC, the RHC for the Syria crisis, the D/RHC and the HCs in the region in the review and endorsement of projects
* Provides trainings in conjunction with NGO Forums on HRP process
* Undertakes financial tracking of the 2016 HRP

**OCHA/ Syria Information Mangement and Assessment working Group (SIMAWG)**

* Maintains a complete and up-to-date WoS 4Ws database to better identify coverage, gaps and overlap based on inputs by sectors;
* Provides technical support on indicator development and data management;
* Facilitates the preparation of a response monitoring framework, for tracking results and measuring progress towards strategic objectives, throughout the year;
* Facilitates processes to refresh the identification of needs on a periodic basis.

**WoS Sector coordinators/focal points and WoS INGOs co-leads/co-focal points**:

WoS sector coordinators/focal points and WoS INGOs co-leads/co-focal points are responsible for providing a single consolidated input for their respective sector at WoS level, in consultation with respective hub-level clusters/sectors. In doing so, they will:

• Play a lead role in facilitating and reaching agreements within their respective sector on the sector response plan, acting as neutral brokers, with a view to ensuring that decisions taken by the sector are strategic, coherent and rise above hub-level interests to reflect the best interests of affected people.

• To the extent possible, convene with hub-level sector/cluster coordinators to address issues, or when required engage a broader and/or more representative set of partners in a WoS sector meeting.

• Reach out and incorporate the views of sub-cluster/sector working groups that fall within their remit.

• Adopt an inclusive approach that generates the buy-in of a critical mass of stakeholders within the sector and across hubs, including by hub level consultations of sufficient length and detail.

• Contribute to the definition of inter-sectoral needs and priorities and ensures cross-fertilisation between sectors

• Refer disagreements to the sector/cluster lead agency and, as last resort, to the WoS humanitarian leadership for decision if needed.

Specific responsibilities:

* Collaborates with other sectors and humanitarian actors to ensure a holistic approach, inclusive of regular communication and feedback with all humanitarian partners, to achieving strategic objectives***.***
* Explains the process, and gives and seeks continuous feedback to hub-based coordinators, sector/cluster members throughout the whole process.
* Takes part in the development of the humanitarian response plan (reviews the guidance, adapts templates, agrees to timelines, etc.).
* Provides inputs for the country strategy, as needed, and reviews the overall humanitarian response plan, as required.
* Drafts sector’s objectives and activities to fulfil the sector part of the strategic objectives; ensures cross-sectoral collaboration and the mainstreaming of protection[[3]](#footnote-4) and incorporation of cross-cutting issues.
* Prepares an internal division of labour, oversees the peer-review process for the selection and classification of projects, and supports the Syria HC and the RHC for the Syria crisis in the review and endorsement of projects.
* Update the WoS ‘who does what where, when (4Ws) database to better identify coverage, gaps and overlap on a montly basis.
* Engages with hub-based coordinators to ensure the preparation of the response monitoring framework.
* Reviews the overall vetted project submissions from the hub coordinators, together with respective coordinators in the hubs for consistency; advises on possible gaps and overlaps across hubs and ensures quality issues across hubs.
* Approves the overall consolidated list of sector projects on OPS.
* Report against identified indicators for Periodic Monitoring Reports (PMR).

**Hub-level Sector/Cluster Coordinators**:

* Promote that sector / cluster members undertake appropriate consultations with affected populations during all phases of the programme cycle.
* Engages with sector / cluster members to ensure the preparation of the response monitoring framework and submission of project sheets.
* Works with WoS coordinators to ensure one input and actively participates in the overall sector consolidation
* Vets projects, together with their technical review committee. Ensures quality control, gaps and overlaps are addressed as well as that the overall hub-based project submissions are aligned with the sector’s overall strategy and the humanitarian response plan.
* Supports WoS coordinators in WoS-level deconfliction and review.
* Engages with hub-based coordinators sector / cluster members to ensure the preparation of respective elements of the overall response monitoring framework.
* Update the hub-based ‘who does what where, when 4Ws) database to better identify coverage, gaps and overlap on a monthly basis.
* Report against identified indicators for Periodic Monitoring Reports (PMR) every four months.
* Keeps sector/cluster members at hub level informed of HRP processes and passes on feedback from hub-level sector/cluster members to other hub and WoS entities.

**HLG/HCT/CBTF,** supported by their respective inter-sector / cluster groups, the HLG/HCT/CBTF will ensure hub-level consultations on the overall humanitarian response plan, as well as review the final HRP draft with an overview of possible changes included following consultations with GOS.and advise the SSG on key issues of concern.

**SSG**: Guidance and endorsement of strategic objectives, project submission, review, costing, and tracking processes, anonymization policies, and any other formal process requiring strategic guidance.

Review of the final HRP draft and endorsement with an overview of possible changes included following consultations with GOS of the 2016 HRP document.

**UNHCR**: Leads and coordinates the development of the refugee chapter with actions that include:

* Drafting the protection and assistance strategy;
* Creating response objectives;
* Facilitating coordination among partners factoring in cross-cutting issues;
* Providing strategic advice to partners and vetting projects as needed;
* Supporting effective information management;
* Undertaking financial tracking of the 2016 refugee projects; and,
* Ensuring accountability to populations of concern to UNHCR.

KEY ELEMENTS OF THE 2016 HRP

In line with the latest best practices of consolidated humanitarian response plans, the 2016 HRP will be a short and concise document. While the final template will be circulated to sectors soon after the revision and endorsement of the guidelines by the SSG, the guidelines already identify the key elements that will need to be included in the HRP.

PART I

the humanitarian response plan AT A GLANCE (1 Page- OCHA)

This part will include a summary of key figures of people in need, targeted, overall funding requirement of the HRP and the strategic objectives.

Overview of the crisis (2 pages- OCHA)

This will be a short summary of the main findings of the HNO.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES (2 Pages- All)

This part will include from three up to five (max) strategic objectives for the HRP. These are higher-level, medium-term result or change the humanitarian community aims to achieve over a specific timeframe.

As part of the concept note that will be circulated to SSG, ISCCG and hub-based mechanism, preliminary strategic objectives and outcome-level response indicators will be suggested for revision and endorsement by humanitarian partners.

response strategY (2 pages- OCHA with inputs by ALL)

This section will include an analysis of needs in view of the operational environment, capacities, and indicates the scope of response included in the HRP. Apart from the scope, this section will cover: immediate response priorities, implementation modalities.

OPERATIONAL CAPACITY (2 pages-ocha with inputs by All)

This section will include an analysis of needs in view of the operational environment, capacities, and indicates the scope and the boundaries of response included in the HRP.

Humanitarian access (OCHA with inputs by ALL)

This part will include an overview of access challenges and constraints, as well as will depict key elements of the access strategy by humanitarian actors

response monitoring (1 page – OCHA with inputs by All)

This part will include key elements of the HRP response monitoring, the systems that the humanitarian community will use to monitor the implementation of the HRP, including timelines for Perdiodic Monitoring Reports, Dashboard. etc. The SIMAWG and OCHA will make technical, information mangement resources available to sectors to build on the HNO work on indicators and resulting severity scales in addition to clarififying reporting systems related to response monitoring for 2016 HPC.

summary of needs, targets and requirements (OCHA)

An overall snapshot, summarizing sectors’ need, targets and funding requirements will be produced by OCHA.

Part II

Operational response plan (2 pages- WoS sectors)

Each sector will be developing a single response plan across hubs, in line with agreed HRP SOs. The sector response plans will outline: the sector’s strategic objectives (three to five maximum), target beneficiaries, indicators, key activities that fulfill these objectives within the time-frame of the plan. The sector will list and cost activities on the basis of the coordinated project planning.

Inclusion of protection mainstreaming[[4]](#footnote-5)(including highlighting the different needs of different groups), GBV mainstreaming[[5]](#footnote-6) and gender is recommended.

costing methodology for the 2016 hrp

Following the SSG decision on 19 September 2015, it was agreed that the costing methodology for the 2016 HRP will be **PROJECT-BASED COSTING. The Total sector budgets are calculated as the sum of the approved projects budgets. The total budget, as listed in the HRP and Financial Tracking Service (FTS) is the sum of all sector budgets.**

With this approach, the sectors identify humanitarian activities, with indicators and targets, and present them in the WoS sector response plans. Subsequently, all sector members across hubs submit their projects (at hub and/or WoS level), including project budgets, via the online project system (OPS) database. Hub-based coordinators, in consultation with their respective technical review committees, vet projects according to an agreed timeline. The WoS coordinators then receive the vetted projects for each hub and de-conflict or resolve any other issues relating to inconsistencies across hubs, in consultation with the hub coordinators. After this, all projects are submitted to the RHC and HC for final approval. The total sector budgets are calculated as the sum of the approved project budgets.

While public disclosure of projects on FTS is a requirement for this approach to work, it is recognized that in a few exceptional cases, public disclosure may be a legitimate source of concern for partners operating cros-border.

When such partners are able to make a compelling case that they cannot disclose their projects publically but would nonetheless like to be part of the HRP, an exceptional procedure can be established whereby these partners agree to fully disclose their project information confidentially within sectors at their hub and at the WoS level for the purpose of project vetting, monitoring and tracking, and with the OCHA financial tracking focal point (this person will be based in either Gaziantep, Amman, or Geneva) for the purpose of financial tracking on FTS. The humanitarian leadership will have access to this information.

An anonymous project will then be uploaded on OPS with a coding system that will enable linking the anonymous project with the partner for the purpose of financial tracking (see financial tracking section for details).

1. **TO FORMULATE PROJECTS:**
2. **The sector/cluster establishes criteria for the selection and classification of projects**, with guidance provided by the HCs. Establish these criteria in advance to set the direction of the process including the concerns as expressed by the affected population.
3. **Appealing agencies submit project information according to the agreed upon template and select the activities they plan to undertake** for 2016 in line with the HRP scope, boundaries and the sector response plans and include information on the location, duration, number and breakdown of beneficiaries, budget, and sector/cluster objectives. **Organisations design projects based on the assessed needs, HRP strategic objectives and sector objectives/activities**. The projects should be designed according to the expressed needs and concerns of the affected population. Then appealing agencies upload projects on OPS.[[6]](#footnote-7) Projects can have any start or end date within the period covered by the plan.
4. **Allow sufficient time** for partners to submit well-designed projects. National NGOs might need more time and guidance, particularly if they are new to the process.
5. **To Review Projects:**
6. The hub level coordinators with their technical review committee vet the preliminary projects according to the normal process. Ensure fair and transparent representation in the peer review panel. The review committees address gaps and overlap within the hub, ensure quality control, advise on adjustements and consistency across the sector/cluster, and making sure projects relate to cluster objectives. Projects are approved only if they address the identified needs, correspond to the agreed division of labour, and are realistic to implement. Hub level coordinators can request adjustments. Agency field and headquarters staff review the projects and make any necessary adjustments.
7. The hub level coordinators provide the WoS coordinators/focal points with their consolidated vetted list of projects.
8. WoS sector coordinators/focal points review all projects across hubs, in coordination with coordinators from respective hubs,using the established selection criteria as a basis. They de-conflict projects and address gaps, ensure quality and other issues at the WoS level, and recommend any possible changes.
9. WoS sector coordinators/focal points and INGOs co-coordinators/co-focal points approve the final list of projects on OPS. Final budgeting by sector is done by the WoS coordinators/focal points and INGOs WoS co-lead/co-coordinators, in consulation with respective hub-based coordinators, once vetting is completed.
10. The final list of projects will then be submitted to humanitarian leadership for revision/endorsement.

**NOTE:** At this stage the **information is not public** (only sector/cluster coordinators, peer-review committees, and the agency are aware of the information, OCHA).

**c. OPTIONS FOR THE PROJECT TEMPLATE**

On the basis of the draft guidelines circulated on 29 September, the ISCCG meeting held on 1 October, a policy note was circulated to sectors across hubs with regards to options for the project templates. Following consultation at hub levels and across sectors, during the ISCCG webex meeting on 12 October, the great majority of sectors confirmed that the project template to use should be the OPS Template, with recommendations to include geographical fields at sub-district level (as preferable option for partners to fill in) and adjust the disaggregation of beneficiairies. The off-line version of the template (excel sheet) is annexed to the guidelines.

**d. TO UPLOAD PROJECTS ON OPS:**

Appealing agencies, coordinators and OCHA will be able to upload projects on OPS.

**NOTE:** At this stage the **information is not public** (only sector/cluster coordinators, peer-review committees, and the agency are aware of the information, OCHA).

e. **TO PUBLISH PROJECTS**

1. **OCHA Geneva publishes the approved projects** electronically on the FTS websites on the basis of the description provided.

**Note:** At this stage, the information is public**.**

Full information on public projects is visible to all. For the exceptional cases in which projects will need to be anonymised, hub and WoS coordinators and the OCHA financial tracking focal point have access to project information. Sector/Cluster members and the inter-sector/cluster hub-based mechanisms may have access to the information for operational purposes as per info-sharing protocols of these bodies.

For anonymized projects, agency names will be coded or uploaded under a general title (eg. ‘NGOs (details not yet provided).

**FINANCIAL TRACKING**

**Public projects:**

1. **Traditional financial tracking is used**. When a donor bi-laterally funds a project, they or the agency finds that agency’s proposal on FTS and certifies that it has been funded, including the amount.
2. OCHA Geneva **cross-checks the information** to make sure it is not already uploaded, contains all necessary information, etc.
3. **Total funding can be viewed on FTS**, including for the whole appeal and by sector, agency, donor, and so on.

For the exceptional cases where partners have legitimate reasons not to disclose all the details of the projects on FTS, project tracking will be done as follows:

* OCHA and coordinators would have to receive from partners and sectors a full overview of projects (non-anonymized) funded by sector / organization, and cross reference this with information from donors and FTS.
* FTS will then update the financial status of the HRP in the concerned sector without disclosing the name of the organization.

It is to be noted that as per procedures agreed with donors and as part of its accountability framework, FTS will not and cannot upload financial information unless it has sufficient non-anonymized information. This information would remain with FTS and not be publicized

Annex i. qUICK GUIDE for sectors on key issues and possible q&A from partners

What is the humanitarian response plan?

The humanitarian response plan is a planning and response management tool for ensuring that independent humanitarian actors are working towards the same goals; for assessing and adjusting the humanitarian community’s course of action when responding in a volatile environment. It addresses the situation at the highest level of action through the highest level of coordination. The sections below elaborate on these steps.

How do you frame the strategy?

To help set the parameters of the strategy, consider the following steps:

**Review the issues of concern** of the affected population and the inter-sectoral analysis in the final humanitarian needs overview. These will determine the course of response operations.

**List planning assumptions** Unexpected events or external factors—such as an economic recession, fast-breaking health crisis (like cholera) or a flare-up of armed conflict—may impact humanitarian operations and subsequently necessitate revision of the plan. Consider how to adopt a robust yet flexible approach, which can be adapted following significant unforeseen events. List the major variables or factors and outline any key projections about the needs and concerns of the affected population. For example, the number of people affected by food insecurity might increase at mid-year, judging by historical patterns, or the number of refugees might decrease.

**Establish the scope or boundaries** of the collective humanitarian response. This is essential as humanitarian actors cannot cover all the needs in country, particularly in contexts with chronic vulnerability and poor social services. Boundaries can be geographic, demographic, sectoral, temporal, or other measures of vulnerability to draw the line between what humanitarian partners must achieve (which is included in the strategy) and what is achieved at a later stage or by others. Previous funding coverage or future funding forecasts and capacity are not factored into the scope of the strategy. In other words, it is not trimmed to match expected funding.

**Take into account the needs being addressed by government, other humanitarian actors not part of the humanitarian response plan and non-humanitarian actors**.

**Establish intervention criteria** which will help determine when and where to intervene. Vulnerability, analysis, threshholds, the combination of crisis factors and cost efficiency all come under this category.

Establish start up times, including capacity requirements, planning and funding, for response interventions.

**Determine the target population[[7]](#footnote-8)** (number, type and location of people to be helped, perhaps broken down by sector/cluster/sector). Remember that people in need are identified earlier in the process – therefore planning assumptions might vary.

**Examine cross-sectoral opportunties** and ensure that the strategy enables cross-sector/cluster collaboration on targeting criteria or response modality where appropriate.

Resilience focuses on the ability of households, communities and systems to with stand, adapt and recover from stresses and shocks. Communities and households are resilient when they are able to meet their basic needs in a sustainable way and without reliance on external assistance. Resilience can be strengthened by the use of empowering approaches such as cash transfers, emergency employment schemes and supporting national service providers to get back on their feet. Disaster risk management, conflict-sensitive programing, peacebuilding and climate change adaptation are also recognized by many governments and partners as key strategies to build resilience. Strengthening the resilience of communities and households can boost social cohesion between people and increase the impact and cost effectiveness of humanitarian aid.

**Describe the classification within the response** – it can be time-bound [example: now vs later], geographical [example: east vs west], seasonal [example: before planting season vs after], a specific group of population, or whatever criteria is most relevant within the context.

**Make sure the discussion does not become sector/cluster-centric and that due visibility is given to to protection and other cross-cutting issues** and concerns, environment, disability, HIV/AIDS and mental health, among other issues relevant to the context.

**Ensure gender and age-sensitive planning** permeates the strategy. This approach will promote equitable participation and fair distribution of humanitarian benefits.

**Base the strategy on a sound protection analysis** including a disaggregated analysis of risk: what are the threats (their source and how they are manifested), who is vulnerable to these threats and why, what means do people have to mitigate them?

**Make sure the strategy builds resilience**[[8]](#footnote-9) by supporting the coping mechanisms and capacities of affected people. Aim to reduce chronic vulnerability. “Do no harm” considerations should inform the response strategy.

1. Make three to five strategic objectives for the HRP. It is not necessary to choose an indicator per sector to ensure all humanitarian action is covered. A strategic objective is a higher-level, medium-term result or change the humanitarian community aims to achieve over a specific period.
2. Strategic objectives, with indicators and targets to match, are pivotal to planning and programming. Each one provides a strong focus and the means for organisations to measure throughout the period of the plan whether they are achieving their aims.
3. Formulate each objective in a way that indicates:

* What should result from the action
* Who will benefit from it

1. Indicators with appropriate targets will measure progress towards achieving the objectives. Sector activities are there to explain what needs to be done to achieve the objectives.
2. The strategic objectives are higher level than the sector objectives and consequently there should be a strong vertical relationship between the two. A sector objective must contribute to the strategic objectives. Avoid abstract strategic objectives. An example of a poorly formulated objective might be “prepare and respond to emergencies in time”.
3. Tie each strategic objective to three to five indicators, with accompanying targets and relevant baselines. Strategic indicators are **outcome-level indicators,** for example “percentage of global acute malnutrition in [location]. They specify *how* the humanitarian community intends to measure progress towards strategic objectives. It is not necessary to choose an indicator from every sector/cluster or cross-cutting issue in order to represent all humanitarian action.
4. The sector/cluster HNO work on severity scales resulted in high quality indicators per sector/cluster. Selection of the same or similar indicators as used in the severity scale would allow for tracking overtime against the HNO baseline and is preferred when developing indicators for the HRP.

See example of strategic objectives and indicators in annex 2.

What is response analysis?

A response analysis follows the review, validation and analysis of the needs in the HNO. It means deciding what to do, once humanitarian partners have a clear perception of needs and of the operational context. It also requires an analysis of the causes of the problem, in order to decide on an appropriate response.

Maintaining this two-step approach - first) looking exclusively at the needs of the affected population as laid out in the humanitarian needs overview and second) analysing the needs in view of the operational environment, capacities etc – gives the humanitarian community a clearer view of the situation. After this, the potential scope of the response is determined.

A response analysis should also highlight actual and perceived neutrality, impartiality and independence of humanitarian actors in the context; how these may affect the response, and whether any corrective measures are to be considered in this regard. “Do no harm” considerations for the response should also be indicated.

Based upon the response analysis, the scope and top line strategy of the response, which in turn informs inter-sector and sectors’ strategies, will be developed.

How do humanitarian partners endorse the strategy?

The ultimate responsibility for determining the direction of the response lies with the Syria HC and the RHC for the Syria crisis, who, in close consultation with humanitarian partners decide the final country strategy.

Once the strategy has been endorsed by the SSG, it governs the substance of the sector response plan and the stages of coordinated project planning. It is is published, implemented and monitored, and if necessary revised.

Thematic areas: How do we deal with cash assistance?

Cash should be integrated into the response strategy section as a modality if it is being used. This section should discuss how cash is being used as a modality (particularly by the cross-border actors) and outline the types of cash assistance that are being provided (e.g. unconditional cash or vouchers etc).

Where cash is being used to achieve a specific sectoral objective, it continues to be represented within the relevant sector chapter and budgeted as normal.

Based on the Iraq 2015 HRP, there is now the option of a multi-purpose cash page (that is included under the heading of 'operational response plans'). This sits alongside the sector response plans and should be budgeted separately (e.g. not as a fraction or portion of the individual budgets). The inclusion of a page on multi-purpose cash aims to try to avoid further fragmentation and ensure that these projects are accurately represented, tracked and reported against as contributing to the overall response strategy.

In a practical sense, multi-purpose cash should have a value calculation per HHs that is generally agreed by the actors implementing this. This should be based on a 'minimum expenditure basket'. As such, the operational page layout looks similar to a cluster plan with a target number of HHs plus a cost per HH, the list of projects and a funding target.

What is the Online Project System (OPS)?

The ISCCG decides how to group or sort projects (projects can be sorted according to other criteria such as inter-sector/cluster groupings or themes if these are more convenient). Projects on coordination requirements (coordination and information management staff, transport, workshops/training, and sector/cluster functioning costs) may also be submitted.[[9]](#footnote-10)

Projects can be revised on OPS at any time to react to situations evolving and shifts in the division of labour.[[10]](#footnote-11) All organizations are encouraged to reflect funding received against projects in the Financial Tracking Service (FTS).

For more information on OPS, including how to register as a user and how to upload or revise projects please see: *http://ops.unocha.org*.

What is the IASC Gender Marker Coding?

The Gender Marker is a tool that uses a scale of 0-2 to code, whether a humanitarian project is calculated to ensure that women, girls, boys and men will benefit equally from the project or whether the project will advance gender equality in some other way. The Gender Marker also helps donors identify and fund gender-sensitised projects that help ensure that all segments of the affected population have access to an equal quality of services. Sector/cluster coordinators (or project vetting teams) ensure that each project is coded correctly and consistently, and that project designers receive guidance as needed. A gender code is assigned based on three critical components: (i) there is gender analysis in the needs assessment that provides relevant sex and age-disaggregated data and gives insights into local gender issues; (ii) this needs assessment is used to identify activities; and, (iii) gender-related outcomes.

In addition to support provided by the IASC Gender Standby Capacity Project secretariat, by its GenCap advisers or by other gender advisers located at headquarters or in the field, more information on the Gender Marker, including a detailed description of the coding, a guidance note, sector/cluster-specific tip sheets, and other useful tools, can be found on: *http://www.humanitarianresponse.info/themes/gender/the-iasc-gender-marker*

What is response monitoring?

***Humanitarian response monitoring*** is a continuous process that records the aid delivered to an affected population and measures results achieved against objectives set out in the strategic response plan while also tracking the inputs to and the outputs of interventions.

In order to assess the success of the strategy, know whether progress is being made, and whether revisions are needed, it is important to measure quantifiable results and read them against the targets set for strategic objectives, sector objectives, and sector activities.The indicators and targets are set during the planning phase and form the basis of the response monitoring framework. A few definitions are provided below:

An **indicator** is a quantitative or qualitative factor or variable that provides a simple and reliable means to measure achievement, or reflect the changes brought about by an intervention. Whenever relevant, indicators should be disaggregated according to gender and age. The online humanitarian indicators registry(ir.humanitarianresponse.info), developed by the global sector/sectors/clusters, provides a menu of commonly-used indicators corresponding to most humanitarian activities, providing standard definitions, explanations and applications for each one. The humanitarian indicators registry includes specific indicaotrs on feedback, participation and transparency that can be adapted by sector/sectors/clusters. When selecting an indicator, consider the feasibility and the cost of data collection, and foresee who will measure the indicators, how, how often and with what resources. Whenever possible, the indicator should be the same as (or reflect) the indicator that was originally used to assess the needs. The sector/cluster HNO work on severity scales resulted in high quality indicators per sector/cluster. Selection of the same or similar indicators as used in the severity scale would allow for tracking overtime against the HNO baseline and is preferred when developing indicators for the HRP.

A **baseline** is a gauge of a prevailing situation before an activity is implemented. It is expressed by a known value, in reference to an indicator and is not always needed.

A **target** expresses what is considered necessary and realistically achievable by the humanitarian community within the period of the plan if means are provided. In most cases, the target will not cover the overall estimated need, or the total affected population, mainly due to coverage by others, lack of access, boundaries, thresholds of intervention, or cost inefficiency.

**Beneficiaries** are the people targeted for receiving the humanitarian assistance. Defining and counting (and not double counting) beneficiaries is a necessary but difficult exercise, for which specific guidance will be provided.

Successful response monitoring relies on precisely defined indicators, targets and beneficiaries; on clear roles and responsibilities for monitoring tasks and on having the right resources to put it into practice. All this should be described in a document called “[country name] monitoring framework”. Ideally, this is prepared at the same time as the SRP. The monitoring framework document should detail the specifics of the data requirements of each indicator, along with the frequency, responsibilities and methods for data collection, overall analysis and reporting. This document will include a timeline showing when reports will be produced, presenting the monitoring data. See monitoring guidance for more information.

How do you update and revise a humanitarian response plan during the year?

During the year, changes in the humanitarian situation and needs may affect the course of the collective operational response. It may also happen that some actions do not achieve the expected outcome. In such cases, the humanitarian community will need to update or revise its strategy. The Syria HC and the RHC for the Syria crisis, in close consultation with humanitarian partners, should decide if and when this is necessary, and choose one of the following options:

\* **Humanitarian response plan *update***: The situation in-country encountered minor changes. The strategic objectives, the sector/cluster objectives, and the main parameters of the strategy remain unchanged. Activities, targets, projects, and budgets are updated. Financial requirements are updated and accessible on line. Ideally, a humanitarian response plan update will be produced before the release of a periodic monitoring report.

*Example: The IDP population in province YYYY has grown from 50,000 to 100,000 people. In that situation, the targets and requirements need updating, though the strategy remains untouched.*

\* **Humanitarian response plan *revision***: The situation in-country changes significantly. The humanitarian partners and sectors revise the humanitarian needs overview and then the whole humanitarian response plan: strategic objectives, sector objectives, main parameters of the strategy, activities, targets, and budgets. A revised humanitarian response plan is produced. Financial requirements are updated and accessible on FTS and in the revised strategic response plan. A revision might be prompted by a periodic monitoring report.

*Example: The HUMANITARIAN PARTNERS in country Z responds to an IDP situation. However, the food security situation worsens rapidly, and the country team needs to refocus their energy to respond to it, probably having to postpone other planned activities. In this situation, the whole plan must be changed to conform to information in the most recent needs analysisand to reorient scope, strategic objectives and sector/cluster response plans.*

Annex 2 Strategic objectives and indicators: some examples[[11]](#footnote-12)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Strategic objective: Reinforce the protection of civilians, including of their fundamental human rights, in particular as it relates to women and children | | |
| **Indicator (outcome)** | **Baseline** | Target |
| 1. % of victims of physical, sexual, and gender-based violence provided with holistic assistance (medical, psycho-social, legal, etc.) | 20% | 35% |
| 1. % of humanitarian organizations and service providers that have in place codes of conduct on prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse by own staff | 10% | 100% |
| 1. % of land cleared of land mines and/or unexploded ordinances | 5% | 15% |
| 1. % of children registered for tracing that have been reunified and stayed with their family for more than six months | 40% | 60% |
| 1. IDP policy issued in accordance with international standards | No | Yes |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Strategic objective: Strengthen local government preparedness and response capacity in affected districts | | |
| **Indicator (outcome)** | **Baseline** | Target |
| 1. Number of updated contingency plans in place in 80 districts at risk | 0 | 45 |
| 1. Early warning systems functioning in all districts at risk | No | yes |
| 1. Local governments in all districts manage the crisis response in an effective, equitable and accountable manner[[12]](#footnote-13) | No | yes |
| 1. Community feedback in all affected districts consolidated and incorporated into the crises response | 0 | 80 |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Strategic objective: Enhance women’s and men’s access to livelihoods, by addressing the underlying causes of vulnerability to regain self-sufficiency and increase resilience | | |
| **Indicator (outcome)** | **Baseline** | Target |
| 1. % of affected vulnerable workers, men and women, in urban/rural areas employed in livelihoods activities (micro businesses, Small to Medium Enterprises, fisheries and farming)\* | 10% women  15% men | 40% women  35% men |
| 1. % of communities without physical access to functioning markets | 60% | 30% |
| 1. % of households owning productive assets\* | 35% | 65% |
| 1. % of affected population in urban and rural areas with access to formal or informal financial services | 30% urban  5% rural | 75% urban  50% rural |
| 1. % of households having lost main source of income \* 2. % average spent on food of overall total expenditure | 75%  65% | <75%  <65% |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Strategic objective: Quick access of affected people of all ages to basic community services including education, health care, social services and public facilities | | |
| **Indicator (outcome)** | **Baseline** | Target |
| 1. % of affected primary schools providing quality education | 30% | 90% |
| 1. Number of affected health facilities fully functioning | 25 | 50 |
| 1. Local government’s department of community services functioning in affected areas | No | yes |
| 1. % of public places (parks, roads, markets) cleared of debris and open for public use | 10% | 50% |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Strategic objective: Immediate improvement of the living conditions of internally displaced people, through provision of essential commodities | | |
| **Indicator (outcome)** | **Baseline** | Target |
| 1. % of target population having access to shelter | 40% | 90% |
| 1. Average number of litres of water per person per day, among the target population | 10 | 15 |
| 1. % of targeted households with reliable and sustainable food sources\* | 30% | 65% |
| 1. Average Dietary Diversity\* | <3 | >6 |
| 1. Affected population’s overall self-assessment of their living conditions, on a scale of 1 (worst) to 5 (best)\* | 2 | 4 |

Each strategic objective is associated with three to five outcome indicators with baselines and targets, to measure whether the collective response is achieving the objective. The set of strategic indicators equips the HUMANITARIAN PARTNERS with an overview of the collective humanitarian response showing the trend towards meeting the strategic objectives.

The strategic indicators and targets are at the outcome level. They should respect the SMART criteria[[13]](#footnote-14), and describe the major changes that need to occur for an objective to be considered reached. Together with objectives they tell what has changed for whom.

Some strategic indicators may be drawn from sector/cluster response plans, to represent the results of a sector/sector/cluster’s cumulative activities (for example: Percentage of households with access to a source of safe drinking-water).

Others may be developed at an inter-sectoral level for a more overarching result (for example: Affected population’s overall self-assessment of their living conditions, on a scale of 1 to 5).

In the attached examples, all baselines and targets are for illustrative purposes only. Countries will determine their own baselines and targets when defining their strategic objectives, indicators and targets.

1. In emergencies involving refugees, the UNHCR Representative has the mandate to prepare for, lead, and coordinate the refugee response in support of host governments. Activities responding to refugee needs in Syria will be reflected in a distinct refugee chapter of the HRP developed and managed under the leadership of UNHCR. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. For further information please refer to IASC Commitments to AAP and the Transformative Agenda Protocol (Operational Framework) on AAP. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. http://www.globalprotectionsector/cluster.org/en/areas-of-responsibility/protection-mainstreaming.html [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. <http://www.globalprotectionsector/cluster.org/en/areas-of-responsibility/protection-mainstreaming.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. <http://gbvguidelines.org/>   [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. For multi-agency projects, each organization should separate out their component and related budget requirements and upload these onto OPS as separate project sheets. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. For some activities (e.g. advocacy), it may be difficult to identify the exact target caseload. The reason for missing figures in these cases should be explained in the strategy. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. Guidance can be found in the IASC Perspective on ‘A resilience Based Approach to Humanitarian Assistance. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. For a more detailed overview of funding sector/cluster coordination costs in protracted emergencies, please see the *Framework on Sector/cluster Coordination Costs and Functions in Humanitarian Emergencies at the Country Level*, May 2011. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. HC approval is needed for a revised project if there is a budget increase or decrease of 50% or more than $1 million. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. Data on IDPs need to be disaggregated by sex, age, location etc. to be meaningful and indicator data with individuals as the unit of measure should, as much as possible, be disaggregated by sex and age. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
12. A country would define in a cross-sectoral manner what effective, equitable and accountable mean and to what degree they need to be performed to report that “yes” they have been achieved.

    \*Denotes indicators that contain concepts, categories and/or thresholds that are context specific and would be defined by the country. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
13. Specify exactly what is being measured and the appropriate level of disaggregation If ***measurable*** it is quantifiable and can be measured. If ***achievable*** there’s arealistic expectation of of data collection with anticipated monitoring resources. If ***relevant*,** itcaptures the essence of the desired results and relates to the overall objective, and if *timely*–t time spent on data collection, considering the required resources, is the measurement applied [↑](#footnote-ref-14)