Office for the Coordination
of Humanitarian Affairs

UNITED NATIONS DISASTER ASSESSMENT AND COORDINATION

—

UNDAC Handbook

United Nations

PREFACE

Foreword

This is the 8th (extensive) edition of the UNDAC Handbook published online in 2024. For a more comprehensive short version/guide of the UNDAC Handbook 2024, refer to the UNDAC Website.

The UNDAC system was originally established in 1993 by the United Nations (UN) and the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (IN-SARAG) to ensure effective coordination between national disaster management agencies and incoming search and rescue teams in sudden-onset, large-scale emergencies. It is managed by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) to provide support to Member States and the UN system in-country.

Over the past three decades, UNDAC has evolved and adapted to the changing requirements of the international humanitarian response system. Today, UNDAC teams are not only deployed in sudden-onset disasters, but also provide valuable support in protracted crises, technological and other types of emergencies, and are playing an increasing role as a tool and service of the UN in supporting Governments in disaster response preparedness activities. UNDAC deploys globally to ensure effective collaboration between national and local disaster management systems, international humanitarian response actors, bilateral responders including the military, national non-government organisations, civil society and the private sector, to name but a few.

Core to UNDAC practices is systematic post-mission evaluation to enable best practices and lessons learned to feed into the continuous development of the UNDAC methodology captured in this updated Handbook. This is, therefore, a living document and, as a reader and user, you should consider yourself a co-creator. Comments or suggestions for further development of the Handbook should be addressed to the Response Support Branch / Emergency Response Section (ERS) in OCHA Geneva.

Introduction to the Handbook

The UNDAC Handbook is intended as an easily accessible reference guide for members of an UNDAC team before and during a mission to a disaster or emergency. The Handbook is not an authoritative instruction, but rather represents an accumulation of institutional memory related to processes and procedures for coordination as seen in the scope of the UNDAC Standard Terms of Reference. Its focus is on both the what and the how of international emergency response and is grounded in the mandate of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) which manages the UNDAC system.

The Handbook is divided into nine main themes that are broadly aligned with the functions of an On-Site Operations Coordination Centre (OSOCC). Each theme is divided into chapters that are written as stand-alone documents, referencing material across all themes.

References

The UNDAC Handbook has been developed by OCHA ERS with support from members of the UNDAC system and partners. Information is drawn from a wide variety of sources:

- UNDAC best practices as captured in mission reports and training materials.
- Various OCHA, UN and Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) guidelines, e.g., Handbook for Resident/Humanitarian Coordinators, INSARAG Guidelines, UN-CMCoord Guidelines, and numerous others.
- World Health Organization (WHO) Emergency Medical Team (EMT) Guidelines
- Publications by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC).
- Publications, technical briefs and training material from the Assessment Capacities Project

How to contact OCHA

In emergencies when an UNDAC team is mobilised by OCHA Geneva, OCHA ERS' emergency number during a mobilisation is as follows. This number is normally manned 24/7 by the Duty Officer of OCHA ERS and will be transferred to the OCHA ERS Mission Focal Point in case of a mobilisation.
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Version control disclaimer

The UNDAC Handbook is regularly reviewed and updated to enhance its graphics, fix typographical errors, and improve the overall layout. These updates may result in changes to the version number of the Handbook. However, please note that the substantive content and guidelines remain consistent across versions. We encourage readers to refer to the latest version for the most visually optimized and error-free experience.

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Acknowledgments

Acronyms

The following table lists some of the most commonly used acronyms associated with UNDAC missions.

ACRONYM	FULL NAME
3W	Who is doing What and Where (information product)
A&A	Assessment and Analysis
AAP	Accountability to Affected People
AAR	After Action Review
ACAPS	Assessment Capacities Project
AHA	ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance
ASC	Area Security Coordinator (UNDSS)
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASG	Assistant Secretary-General
ASR	Assessment, Search and Rescue (Levels)
AST	Americas Support Team
AWG	Assessment Working Group
BoO	Base of Operations
CADRI	Capacity for Disaster Reduction Initiative
CAP	Consolidated Appeals Process
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CBi	Connecting Business initiative
CBPFs	Country-Based Pooled Funds
CCCM	Camp Coordination and Camp Management
CDEMA	Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund
CHAP	Common Humanitarian Action Plan

ACRONYM	FULL NAME
CHS	Core Humanitarian Standards on Quality and Accountability
CLA	Cluster Lead Agency
CMCoord	Civil Military Coordination
CMOC	Civil-Military Operations Centre
CODs	Common Operational Datasets
Covid-19	Coronavirus disease
CSA/SA	Chief Security Advisor/Security Advisor (UNDSS)
CSO	Civil society organisations
CTP	Cash Transfer Programmes/Programming
DACC	Damage Assessment and Coordination Centre
DART	Disaster Assistance Response Team (USA)
DEMA	Danish Emergency Management Agency (Denmark)
DHN	Digital Humanitarian Network
DHS	Demographic and Health Surveys
DO	Designated Official (for United Nations security in-country)
DSA	Daily Subsistence Allowance
DSB	Directorate for Civil Protection (Norway)
DSRSG	Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General
DVI	Disaster Victim Identification
DWM	Disaster Waste Management
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
ECHO	Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EE	Environmental Emergencies

ACRONYM	FULL NAME
EER	(UN Environment/OCHA) Environmental Emergencies Roster
EMT/I-EMT	Emergency Medical Team/International Emergency Medical Team
EoC	Emergency Operations Centre
ERAT	(ASEAN) Emergency Response and Assessment Team
ERC	United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator
ERCC	Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ECHO)
ERP	Emergency Response Preparedness
ERS	Emergency Response Section (OCHA)
ERU	Emergency Response Unit (IFRC)
ETC	Emergency Telecommunications Cluster
EU	European Union
EUCPT	European Union Civil Protection Team (ECHO)
EWS	Early Warning System
FA	Flash Appeal
FACT	Field Assessment and Coordination Team (IFRC)
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organisation (UN)
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (United Kingdom)
FEAT	Flash Environmental Assessment Tool
FIS	(OCHA) Field Information Services (Section)
FMA	Foreign Military Assets
FRF	Fuel Relief Fund
FSC	Food Security Cluster
FSCO	Field Security Coordination Officer (UNDSS)
GA	United Nations General Assembly

ACRONYM	FULL NAME
GBV	Gender-based violence
GCER	Global Cluster for Early Recovery
GCLA	Global Logistics Cluster Lead Agency
GDACS	Global Disaster Alert and Coordination System
GIS	Geospatial Information Services
GLC	Global Logistics Cluster
GPS	Global Positioning System
HAT	Humanitarian Advisory Team
HAZMAT	Hazardous materials
HC	Humanitarian Coordinator
HCT	Humanitarian Country Team
HDX	Humanitarian Data Exchange
HEAT	Hostile Environment Awareness Training
HEOC	Health Emergency Operations Centre
HI	Humanity & Inclusion (previously Handicap International)
HNO	Humanitarian Needs Overview
HNPW	Humanitarian Networks and Partnerships Weeks
HNRP	Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan
HoO	Head of Office
HPC	Humanitarian Programme Cycle
HR.info	www.humanitarianresponse.info
HRP	Humanitarian Response Plan
HuMOCC	Humanitarian-Military Operational Coordination Concept
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee

ACRONYM	FULL NAME
ICC(G)	Inter-Cluster Coordination (Group)
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
ICVA	International Council of Voluntary Agencies
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IEC/IER	INSARAG External Classification/Reclassification
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IHL	International Humanitarian Law
IHP	International Humanitarian Partnership
IHRL	International Human Rights Law
IM	Information Management
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMO	(OCHA) Information Management Officer
IMWG	Information Management Working Group
INSARAG	International Search and Rescue Advisory Group
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ISCG	Inter-Sector Coordination Group
JEU	UN Environment/OCHA Joint Unit
L/NAs	Local and national actors
LCA	Logistics Capacity Assessment (Logistics Cluster)
LEMA	Local Emergency Management Authority
LGBTI+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex
LO	Liaison Officer
LOG	Logistics Operational Guide (Logistics Cluster)

ACRONYM	FULL NAME
LRT	(WFP) Logistics Response Team
MCDA	Military Civil Defence Assets
MDS	EMT Minimum Dataset
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys
MIRA	Multi-Cluster/Sector Initial Rapid Assessment
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPC	Multi-purpose cash
MSB	Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
NARAS	(OCHA) Needs and Response Analysis Section
NDMA	National Disaster Management Authority
NEMA	National Emergency Management Authority
NFI	Non-food items
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OFDA	Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (USA)
OHCHR	United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
OISS	OSOCC Information Support Staff
OPD	Organisations of persons with disabilities (OPD)
OSOCC	On-Site Operations Coordination Centre
P-codes	Place-codes
PHT	Pacific Humanitarian Team
PIO	(OCHA) Public Information Officer

ACRONYM	FULL NAME
PoA	Plan of Action
PSEA	Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
PSEAH	Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment
RC	United Nations Resident Coordinator
RCO	Resident Coordinator's Office
RDC	Reception & Departure Centre
REDLAC	Risk, Emergency and Disaster Network for Latin America and the Caribbean
RFA	Request for Assistance (CMCoord)
ROAP	(OCHA) Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
ROLAC	(OCHA) Regional Office for Latin American and the Caribbean
ROMENA	Regional Office for Middle East and North Africa
ROSEA	Regional Office for Southern and Eastern Africa
ROWCA	Regional Office for West and Central Africa
RSB	Response Support Branch (OCHA)
SA	see CSA
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SADC	South African Development Community
SADD	Sex-, Age- and Disability-disaggregated Data
SCC	Sector Coordination Cell
SDR	Secondary Data Review
SEA	Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
SMCS	(GDACS) Satellite Mapping and Coordination System
SMT	Security Management Team (United Nations in-country)
SOGIESC	People who have diverse "sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics."

ACRONYM	FULL NAME
SOPs	Standard Operating Procedures
SRSG	Special Representative of the Secretary-General
SSAFE	Safe and Secure Approaches in Field Environment (training course)
ToR	Terms of Reference
TSF	Télécoms Sans Frontières
UCC	USAR Coordination Cell
UCPM	European Union Civil Protection Mechanism (ECHO)
UMS	UNDAC Mission Software
UN SPM	(UN) Security Policy Manual (UNDSS)
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDAC	United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (OCHA)
UNDMT	United Nations Disaster Management Team
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDS	United Nations Development System
UNDSS	United Nations Department of Safety and Security
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHAS	United Nations Humanitarian Air Service
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNITAR	United Nations Institute for Training and Research
UNOG	United Nations Office in Geneva
UNOSAT	UNITAR's Operational Satellite Applications Programme
UNSDCF	UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework

ACRONYM	FULL NAME
UNSM	UN Security Management System
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USAR	Urban Search and Rescue
USG	Under Secretary General
VOSOCC	Virtual OSOCC
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
WHS	World Humanitarian Summit
WLO	Women-led organisation
WRO	Women's rights organisation

Note that acronyms which are specific to a particular organization (e.g., regional organizations) or field (e.g., first aid, telecommunications) and which appear only once or twice in the same section are not included in the acronym list and/or are spelled out in full each time in the text.

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A.
THE INTERNATIONAL EMERGENCY ENVIRONMENT

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A. THE INTERNATIONAL EMERGENCY ENVIRONMENT

Before deploying on a UNDAC mission, it is essential to understand fundamental aspects of international emergency response, including its underlying principles and the role of the UNDAC concept within the broader framework. This chapter offers a broad overview of international humanitarian assistance during disasters, humanitarian response mechanisms and coordination structures, and the key stakeholders involved.

A.1 Introduction

A sudden-onset emergency situation is often characterised by overwhelming needs, competing priorities, destroyed or damaged communication and transportation infrastructure, a rapid influx of providers of humanitarian assistance coupled with an outburst of mutual aid from local communities, as well as overwhelmed and highly stressed officials from governmental and non-governmental institutions. Given this view of an emergency, an image of chaos quickly springs to mind.

The opposing view would be one of coordinated activities and structures that bring order to the chaos. At its best, coordination contributes to humane, neutral, impartial, timely and relevant assistance, increased management effectiveness, a shared vision of the best possible outcomes from a given situation, a seamless approach to service delivery and donor confidence resulting in sufficient resources to achieve the desired outcomes, i.e., the least possible amount of human suffering and material damage, seamless recovery and a rapid return to normal living conditions and the ongoing progress of development.

There are some fundamental tenets that define the framework of international emergency response and influence coordination of humanitarian assistance. This chapter provides UNDAC members with an introduction to principles, authorities, frameworks and the general context which govern international humanitarian response.

A.1.1 Tenets of international emergency response

International emergency response is humanitarian assistance to a crisis-affected population that seeks, as its primary purpose, to save lives and alleviate suffering. Humanitarian assistance is deeply rooted in history and culture, from ethno-religious beginnings and post-war interventions to the 'modern' era of humanitarianism. Considered as the desire to lend assistance to others, humanitarian action is as old as humanity itself.

The UN was established on 24 October 1945 by 51 countries committed to preserving peace through international cooperation and collective security. Today, nearly every nation in the world belongs to the UN and membership totals 193 countries. When States become members of the United Nations, they agree to accept the obligations of the UN Charter, an international treaty that sets out basic principles of international relations. According to the Charter, the UN has four purposes: to maintain international peace and security; to develop friendly relations among nations; to cooperate in solving international problems and in promoting respect for human rights; and to be a centre for harmonising the actions of nations. The UN Charter, Article 1.3, mentions humanitarian assistance, in particular, where it defines that one of the UN's purposes is "to achieve international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion".

In **December 1991**, the UN General Assembly (GA) adopted the ground-breaking [Resolution 46/182](#) **"Strengthening of the coordination of emergency**

humanitarian assistance of the United Nations", which is the foundation of the international humanitarian system as we know it today. It laid down the key principles for humanitarian action as well as the 'architecture' of international humanitarian assistance. Along with the humanitarian principles set forth in the Geneva Conventions and other international legal frameworks, GA Resolution 46/182 continues to shape how humanitarian work is conducted and organised.

GA Resolution 46/182 agreed on **guiding principles for the Member States and the UN and the establishment of coordination mechanisms.** The Resolution determined the following:

- Humanitarian assistance must be provided in accordance with **basic humanitarian principles** that provide the fundamental foundations for humanitarian action. Humanitarian principles are central to establishing and maintaining access to affected populations whether in the context of a sudden-onset disaster, an armed conflict, or a protracted humanitarian crisis that occurs in a context where there is a total or considerable breakdown of authority resulting from civil conflict and/or foreign aggression.

Promoting compliance with humanitarian principles in humanitarian response is an essential element of effective humanitarian coordination.

- **Humanity –** Human suffering must be addressed wherever it is found. The purpose of humanitarian action is to protect life and health and ensure respect for human beings.

- **Impartiality –** Humanitarian action must be carried out on the basis of need alone, giving priority to the most urgent cases of distress and making no distinctions on the basis of nationality, race, gender, religious belief, class or political opinions.

- **Neutrality –** Humanitarian actors must not take sides in hostilities or engage in controversies of political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

- **Independence –** Humanitarian action must be autonomous from the political, economic, military or other objectives that any actor may hold with regard to areas where humanitarian action is being implemented.

- The **sovereignty, territorial integrity and national unity** of countries must be respected, and international assistance can only be provided with the consent of the affected country. The UN Charter, Article 1.3 (see quotation above), describes the overarching UN mandate for humanitarian coordination. Another fundamental principle is, however, defined in the UN Charter, Article 2, which states that no international organisation or country can intervene in another country without consent. The national Government is the absolute authority within the borders of its own territory. As such, the responsibility and authority to assist and meet the needs of a society lies with its own Government. A Government can ask or welcome assistance from other States or organisations, but assistance cannot be forced upon them unless a majority of the members of the UN Security Council can agree that the matter is of such importance that humanitarian assistance must be imposed. To deploy to another country without being requested and without being welcomed or in other ways invited, can, regardless of intentions, be considered an act of force similar to an invasion and will be considered a violation of international conventions. Consequently, all international assistance is conducted in support of national authorities and upon request, irrespective of the desire of international organisations to respond immediately.

- The **affected country has the primary lead role** in the initiation, organisation, coordination and implementation of humanitarian assistance within its territory. For most disasters caused by natural and anthropogenic hazards, the affected State is a willing and legitimate partner and does request (or 'welcome') international assistance. In more complex emergencies, however, the legitimacy and territory of the State may be in violent dispute. In some situations, a legitimate Government may not exist and, even if it does, it may have limited authority and capability. This situation makes adherence to the above principles problematic in complex emergencies. In these cases, the commitment to the victims may supersede the commitment to the State. More likely, however, coordination efforts will need to acknowledge the legitimacy of competing authorities and humanitarian advocacy will become a strong focus. Thus, one may need

to develop and maintain effective relationships not only with the State but also with the antagonists, political opposition and in some situations, non-state actors.

- At the same time, sovereign States are called upon to facilitate the implementation of humanitarian assistance by intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations, particularly when capacity is lacking.

- The UN play a central and singular role in providing leadership and coordinating the efforts of the international community in support of the affected countries.

In line with these principles, no international organisation has the authority to tell another organisation what to do. The UN is an organisation of Member States that works through consensus. It is not a world government, and it does not make laws. It does, however, provide the means to help resolve international conflicts and formulate policies on matters affecting the whole world. Within the UN, all Member States, regardless of size, political views or social systems, have a voice and a vote in this process. As a result, **several UN bodies**, i.e., departments and offices of the UN Secretariat, specialised agencies, funds and programmes, **have been given a mandate to provide or coordinate international assistance** within their field but without any authority to command, direct or order. This is a privilege that remains with State authorities only.

Aligned with humanitarian principles, the **'do no harm' principle**, rooted in medical ethics, underscores the obligation of humanitarian organisations to strive to minimise the harm they may inadvertently cause through their presence in providing assistance. This requires vigilance to prevent aid provision and assistance from reinforcing nepotism, corruption, or negative power structures, or from becoming entangled in the dynamics of a context, which may create dependency or diminish the state's responsibility for social welfare through job creation, tax income, and other means. Such unintended negative consequences may be wide-ranging and extremely complex. To minimise potential longer-term harm, humanitarian organisations should provide assistance in ways that support recovery and long-term development while prioritising localization, community engagement, and accountability.

A.1.2 Recent developments

The **World Humanitarian Summit (WHS),** held in Istanbul in May 2016, was an important moment for the global humanitarian agenda, aimed at fundamentally reforming the humanitarian aid community to react more effectively to today's many crises. It generated a global momentum and political determination to do more for people worldwide and resulted in global change initiatives, which have shaped the humanitarian system moving forward. The WHS resulted in about 1,500 commitments from 400 UN Member States and other organisations. One of the Summit's main achievements was **'The Grand Bargain,'** a set of 51 'commitments' to enhance the efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability of the humanitarian system, with a renewed focus on serving affected populations more directly. Major global change initiatives alongside the 'Grand Bargain' were the 'Agenda for Humanity' and the 'Humanitarian-Development-Peace' Collaboration (the HDP Nexus).

'The Grand Bargain 2.0' was endorsed in June 2021, with a redefined focus on greater transparency, the use of cash-based programming, quality funding and localisation (more support and funding tools for local and national responders). While considerable strides have been made in fulfilling several commitments since 2016, substantial challenges still exist. **'The Grand Bargain 3.0'** started in 2023 and centres on enhancing funding mechanisms, empowering local entities, and integrating affected communities into decision-making processes.

Following these updates, there has been a notable escalation in humanitarian needs, driven and exacerbated by emerging crises, conflicts, the impacts of climate change, as well as public health emergencies such as the Covid-19 pandemic. A fragmented and fiercely competitive geopolitical scenario worsens these challenges, undermining collaborative global endeavours to tackle them. Simultaneously, the existing system is strained due to limitations in available resources. It is anticipated that the operating environment will grow more complex over the coming decade.

In line with this, **OCHA's Strategic Plan 2023-2026 'Transforming Humanitarian Coordination'** outlines six transformational priorities to address the challenges of this rapidly changing landscape:

- A coherent humanitarian response that is people centred, context specific, contributes to community resilience and promotes concrete protection outcomes.
- Systematic and predictable leadership on access.
- Durable solutions to protracted internal displacement.
- Humanitarian response that is inclusive and leaves no one behind.
- Catalytic humanitarian financing that delivers impact in people's lives.
- Strategic analysis of risks and trends to adapt to an evolving landscape.

These priorities address the most critical areas where transformation is needed, adaptation is possible and OCHA has a key leadership role.

In 2023, OCHA further launched the **Flagship Initiative** which represents a radical shift in humanitarian coordination and response. It aims to deliver solutions and build resilience by ensuring the priorities of crisis-affected communities drive humanitarian assistance. The initiative seeks to systematically engage communities in decision-making, empower local partners, and put community priorities – and not sectors – at the heart of humanitarian programming, while creating the space for a more holistic, community-driven, and sustainable humanitarian system, one that is ready to face a new reality of increasingly complex challenges.

The Flagship Initiative stems from the need to reshape humanitarian response as we know it. Humanitarian emergencies are more frequent, complex, and protracted, but the operating environment is becoming more resource-constrained, uncertain, and complex. At the same time, the current standardised approach to coordination and response often does not give sufficient space to empowering local actors, systems, and people, and this in turn does not foster the long-term resilience of crisis-affected communities nor help communities move beyond dependence on humanitarian assistance.

And yet, in times of increased humanitarian need and reduced humanitarian resources, resilient communities, better prepared to overcome crises, will be essential to sustaining humanitarian response in the future.

Therefore, at the heart of the Flagship Initiative lies systematic and participatory community engagement, alongside area-based, decentralised humanitarian coordination, empowerment of local initiatives, direct funding, and rethinking planning and programming - as illustrated in **Figure A.1**.

Colombia, Niger, the Philippines, and South Sudan were chosen to pilot this initiative.

A.2 Humanitarian response mechanisms

In all disasters requiring international assistance, a range of organisations or entities will provide relief. These range from national and local authorities, through UN agencies, to international and national response organisations. Again, GA Resolution 46/182 provides the basic architecture for the international humanitarian system. In addition to the above-mentioned principles, the resolution established the following entities:

Figure A.1: The Approach of the Flagship Initiative

- The position of an **Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC),** at Under-Secretary-General (USG) level, to coordinate and facilitate humanitarian assistance.
- The **Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC)** as the primary mechanism to coordinate the assistance of UN and non-UN humanitarian partners. Under the leadership of the ERC, the IASC develops humanitarian policies, agrees on a clear division of responsibility for the various aspects of humanitarian assistance, identifies and addresses gaps in response and advocates for effective application of humanitarian principles.
- The establishment of the **consolidated appeal process (today's Humanitarian Response Plans) and the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF)** which could disburse swiftly up to $450 million per year for sudden-onset emergencies, rapidly deteriorating situations and protracted crises that fail to attract sufficient resources (while today, CERF has a funding target of $1 billion per year].
- The establishment of the **Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA),** called the **Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA)** until 1998, with offices in Geneva and New York to provide institutional support to the ERC/USG.

The following sections provide an overview of the primary actors involved in coordination of international emergency response.

A.2.1 The Government

As per GA Resolution 46/182, the Government of a disaster-affected country bears the primary responsibility for humanitarian assistance and coordination. Structures that allow Governments to manage, prevent and respond to disasters have become increasingly sophisticated and are founded typically upon a civil protection approach with operations using an incident management system. Most countries have a National Disaster/Emergency Management Authority or Civil Protection Agency to oversee and coordinate risk analysis, preparedness and response, but capacities and capabilities of these agencies may vary.

A general framework for coordination within the Government at the capital level is headed by a Minister/Secretary of State and supported by disaster/emergency management resources. The disaster management structure will typically include all the different sectors of humanitarian activity like health, water, sanitation, education, agriculture/food security, infrastructure and logistics, security, etc., headed by relevant ministry officials. The structures are further reflected at provincial, district, municipal and village levels with the relevant heads of office in these areas.

At the regional level, the affected Government could reach out to inter-governmental bodies to provide assistance and support. In some regions, there are established humanitarian assistance and coordination mechanisms that are rapidly deployable and work with Member States to coordinate relief supplies, military asset deployment and assessment teams, e.g., the European Union (EU), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA). Response teams of these regional intergovernmental organisations are increasingly becoming a first point of call due to their proximity and membership of the affected Government. See also **Chapter G.13** for regional approaches to coordination.

A.2.2 The Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) and OCHA

The Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) oversees all emergencies requiring humanitarian assistance, coordinating and facilitating the UN system's response to emergencies that demand a coordinated response. As the most senior UN staff for humanitarian crises, the ERC advises the Secretary-General, mobilises and coordinates international collective efforts to meet the humanitarian needs of people in emergencies in a coherent and timely manner, and ensures the coordinated assistance and protection of internally displaced persons. Additionally, the ERC facilitates, including through negotiation if needed, access by the operational organisations to emergency areas for the rapid provision of emergency assistance by obtaining the consent of all parties concerned. The ERC also acts as the central point for governmental, intergovernmental, and non-governmental relief activities. The ERC is supported by OCHA and also serves as the Under-Secretary-General (USG) for Humanitarian Affairs (i.e., the head of OCHA).

OCHA is part of the United Nations Secretariat and is responsible for bringing humanitarian actors together to ensure a coherent response to emergencies. OCHA also ensures there is a framework within which each actor can contribute to the overall response effort, one that places people at the centre and ensures full respect for the rights of all individuals through inclusive strategies in protection and gender equality (see also **Chapter G.2**). OCHA has various resources and tools to support humanitarian action worldwide, of which the UNDAC team is one. Consequently, UNDAC teams deployed in sudden-onset disasters work towards the same overarching mission objectives as OCHA.

The OCHA mandate stems from [General Assembly resolution 46/182 of December 1991](), which, in its annex, states: "The leadership role of the Secretary-General is critical and must be strengthened to ensure better preparation for, as well as rapid and coherent response to, natural disasters and other emergencies." To this end, it also establishes the

ERC, who works with the Secretary General and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), in leading, coordinating and facilitating humanitarian assistance.

OCHA's mission is to coordinate the global emergency response to save lives and protect people in humanitarian crises and to advocate for effective and principled humanitarian action by all, for all. It operates through a network of offices in the field which support Member States and Humanitarian Country Teams (HCT) and facilitates the work of operational agencies that deliver humanitarian assistance to populations and communities in need.

OCHA's activities are focused around five core functions:

- **Coordination –** OCHA coordinates humanitarian response to expand the reach of humanitarian action, improve prioritisation and reduce duplication, ensuring that assistance and protection reach the people who need it most. Through critical situational and gender-responsive analysis, OCHA provides a comprehensive picture of overall needs and helps a diverse set of actors achieve a common understanding of the humanitarian context and a collective plan for the response.
- **Advocacy –** OCHA raises awareness of forgotten crises. Promotes respect for international humanitarian law (IHL), brings the voices of crisis-affected people to the forefront and helps people obtain access to humanitarian assistance.
- **Policy –** OCHA helps set the agenda for humanitarian sector reform and effectiveness in response and promotes the normative framework for international humanitarian action.
- **Humanitarian financing –** OCHA mobilises financing mechanisms to ensure that humanitarian needs are met, and coordination mechanisms are promoted.
- **Information Management –** OCHA provides information management services to the humanitarian community to inform a rapid, effective and principled response.

A.2.3 The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC)

An important function of the ERC is to lead the IASC which is the primary mechanism for inter-agency coordination relating to humanitarian assistance. It is a unique inter-agency forum for coordination, policy development and decision-making involving the key UN and non-UN humanitarian partners. The IASC was established in June 1992 by GA Resolution 46/182 and is thus the longest-standing and highest-level humanitarian coordination forum.

The IASC Principals meet to address urgent operational issues that require system-wide collaboration. In addition to coordinating emergency response efforts (including deciding on whether to activate emergency system-wide procedures, "Scale-Up"), the IASC convenes to coordinate critical advocacy efforts in support of operations (including on access negotiations, protection of civilians, and resource mobilisation), and leads system-wide efforts in the formulation of humanitarian policies.

The IASC has the following objectives:

- To develop and agree on system-wide humanitarian policies.
- To allocate responsibilities among agencies in humanitarian programmes.
- To develop and agree on a common ethical framework for all humanitarian activities.
- To advocate for common humanitarian principles to parties outside the IASC.
- To identify areas where gaps in mandates or lack of operational capacity exist.
- To resolve disputes or disagreement about and between humanitarian agencies on system-wide humanitarian issues.

The IASC is composed of heads or designated representatives of UN operational agencies and a number of standing invitees from outside the UN system. In practice, no distinction is made between 'Members' and 'Standing Invitees' and the number of participating agencies has expanded since the inception of the IASC in 1992 (to 18 organisations/ bodies as of November 2023).

In fact, the strength and added value of the IASC lies in its broad membership, bringing together UN agencies, international organisations, the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement and non-governmental organisation (NGO) networks.

A.2.4 The UN Resident Coordinator (RC) and the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC)

Depending on the country's context, different leadership functions and coordination structures are operational to deliver on the mandates and functions of the UN system. The same individual may perform different functions, 'wear different hats', supported by different coordination mechanisms for decision-making, along with offices and departments offering advisory and substantive support in executing these functions.

The **UN Country Team (UNCT)** is the main mechanism in-country for inter-agency coordination, coherence and decision-making. The UNCT exists in 130 countries, covering all of the 162 countries where there are United Nations programmes. The UNCT includes all the UN entities working on sustainable development, emergency, recovery and transition in programme countries - regardless of if they have a physical presence or not. The UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), agreed with the Government, is the most important instrument for the planning and implementation of UN development activities in each country. The UN Cooperation Framework is the point of departure in defining the activities and composition of each UNCT and the specific focus of respective country programmes of each agency.

The UNCT is led by the **UN Resident Coordinator (RC),** who is the representative of the UN Secretary-General in a given country and the highest-ranking representative of the United Nations Development System (UNDS) at the country level (see **Figure A.2**). The roles and responsibilities of the RC and UNCT members are outlined in the Management and Accountability Framework.

In case of an emergency and/or where an existing humanitarian situation worsens in scale or

complexity, the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) may appoint a **Humanitarian Coordinator (HC)**. The functions of an HC are separate from an RC, but these positions are often combined in one person – the RC/HC. In a limited number of situations where the Resident Coordinator is not considered to have the necessary humanitarian profile, the Emergency Relief Coordinator may, following consultations with the IASC, choose to appoint a separate person as HC.

The HC is accountable to the ERC and has overall responsibility for ensuring that humanitarian response efforts are well organised. The HC leads the **Humanitarian Country Team (HCT)** which is a strategic and operational decision-making forum for humanitarian coordination in a country. Contrary to the UNCT which is for UN entities only, the HCT is composed of representatives from NGOs and the Red Cross/Red Crescent movement in addition to UN agencies (see **Figure A.2** and **Section A.3.1** below for more information on the HCT).

As part of preparedness efforts, the RC(/HC) and the UNCT coordinate disaster preparedness and mitigation activities, monitor and provide early warning of potential emergency situations, and lead contingency planning. The HC function and the HCT may phase out once the emergency subsides or may continue focussing on preparedness in countries that are regularly struck by hazards, while the UNCT is maintained in all cases.

In contexts where integrated peacekeeping or special political missions are deployed, the RC also fulfils the function as the **Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General (DSRSG)**, see **Figure A.2**. As DRSG, they contribute to the formulation of the integrated strategic framework with the peacekeeping and/or political missions, and facilitate the complementarity of the UNCT's work with UN peacekeeping or political missions to fully contribute to prevention, building resilience, sustaining peace and to transition planning and management.

As the highest-level official, the RC normally also performs the function of the **Designated Official (DO)**, see Figure 2. The DO is accountable for the safety and security of all individuals covered by the UN Security Management System (UNSM) in a specific area, called the Designated Area. The DO is supported by the Security Management Team and UNDSS.

Figure A.2: The multiple functions across one individual – RC, HC, DO and DSRSG

Function	Management Structure	Support/ advisory structure
RESIDENT COORDINATOR (RC)	**UN COUNTY TEAM (UNCT)** Composed by heads of UNSDG entities that are signature to the UNSDCF and carry out development in country regardless of physical presence.	**RESIDENT COORDINATORS OFFICE (RCO)**
DESIGNATED OFFICIAL (DO)	**SECURITY MANAGEMENT TEAM (SMT)** Composed by the heads of all UNSMS entities/organizations present in the Designated Area.	**UN DEPARTMENT OF SAFETY AND SECURITY (UNDSS)**
HUMANITARIAN COORDINATOR (HC)	**HUMANITARIAN COUNTRY TEAM (HCT)** Composed by (a selection of) the heads of humanitarian organizations UN and NGOs, can also include donors.	**OFFICE OF COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS (OCHA)**
DEPUTY SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SG (DSRSG)		**DEPARTMENT OF PEACE OPERATIONS (DPO) & DEPARTMENT OF PEACEBUILDING AND POLITICAL AFFAIRS (DDPA)**

ONLY PRESENT WHERE SPECIFICALLY DESIGNATED

A.3
Humanitarian coordination

In collaboration with national authorities and humanitarian actors, and considering the context, available resources, and existing capacities and mechanisms, the RC is responsible for determining the most adequate and efficient coordination 'architecture'. The aim is to ensure that (i) all stakeholders involved in the emergency response collaborate towards shared, strategic objectives, and (ii) humanitarian initiatives are devised and implemented in a principled, efficient, and complementary manner. Effective coordination is vital to prevent a disorganised and fragmented response. Understanding the mandates of various actors engaged in the response—such as community-based organisations, faith-based organisations, national and foreign military forces, local and international NGOs, the private sector, the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, UN entities, and neighbouring states—is crucial for the RC. Despite their diverse mandates, accountabilities, and cultures, the RC must strive for coordination among them.

The types, duration, and locations (national or subnational) of coordination mechanisms depend on the scale and complexity of the crisis. Emphasising the value added by coordination is important to ensure buy-in. Overall, coordination structures should be light and streamlined to improve how humanitarian actors collectively meet the priority needs of affected people, without duplication or gaps. The coordination framework for international responders should complement existing national and local mechanisms rather than creating separate structures. Flexible approaches allow for adaptation over time, potentially increasing the involvement of local actors, national authorities, or development partners as the situation transitions from emergency to recovery.

Dialogue with national counterparts is essential for establishing the humanitarian architecture, ensuring their support for international preparedness and response mechanisms, and clarifying how international roles complement national efforts. Transparency is crucial for maintaining effective coordination and collaboration with national counterparts leading response efforts.

The humanitarian architecture typically includes one or more of the following components:

- **Humanitarian Country Team (HCT):** chaired by the RC, responsible for strategically coordinating the international response and preparedness.
- **Clusters or Government-led sectors:** comprising operational UN agencies/NGOs, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, and often government actors, responsible for coordinating service delivery and identifying gaps in designated sectoral priorities.
- **Inter-Cluster or Inter-Sector Coordination Group (ICCG/ISCG):** comprising sector/cluster coordinators, ensuring coordination among sectors for a coherent response and supporting the HCT by addressing key operational concerns.
- **Information Management Working Group (IMWG):** comprising OCHA, sector/cluster, agency, and occasionally government IM officers, tasked with harmonising IM activities and achieving consensus on common data sets.

Additionally, alongside the HCT, ICCG/ISCG, and clusters (that will be described in more detail below), the RC, in collaboration with the HCT, may establish other coordination groups to support activities such as IM, needs assessment and analysis, cash and voucher assistance (CVA), risk management, administration of country-based pooled funds (CBPFs), humanitarian access, and humanitarian civil-military coordination.

In initiating humanitarian coordination in a new emergency, it is crucial that all UNCT/HCT members understand the rationale behind it and the steps being taken to establish it, ensuring consistent messaging on the issue. Likewise, incoming UNDAC teams need to understand that they collaborate with different counterparts of the HCT or distinct UNCT-specific bodies like the Emergency Response Preparedness Working Group.

A.3.1 The Humanitarian Country Team (HCT)

A Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) is established in all countries where a Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) position exists. In countries without an HC, the HCT is formed in response to humanitarian crises, significant deterioration in chronic vulnerability, or sudden-onset emergencies, bringing together relevant actors in humanitarian response. Additionally, the HCT may be convened for preparedness activities if no other suitable coordination mechanism exists. The decision to establish an HCT in countries without an HC position is made by the Resident Coordinator (RC) in consultation with operational agencies and the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC).

Chaired by the HC, the HCT serves as the highest-level international humanitarian body in the country, functioning as a strategic and operational decision-making and oversight forum. Comprising a select group of country directors from relevant UN agencies, NGOs, and the Red Cross/Red Crescent movement, the HCT has broader membership compared to the UN Country Team (UNCT), which includes only UN agencies, see **Figure A.3** below. Organisations designated as Cluster Leads should represent their respective clusters and organisations within the HCT.

The HCT is primarily responsible for strategic decision-making, such as agreeing on common strategic issues related to humanitarian action and providing guidance to the Inter-Cluster Coordination Group, clusters, and other established structures. It should be a forum which mirror-images the IASC at the country level. However, it may not only consist of the standard IASC member organisations but should also bring together representation from other organisations that undertake humanitarian action in-country and commit to participate in

coordination arrangements. Some HCTs have also decided to include representatives of key assisting Governments and/or donors in their membership or as observers. The size of the HCT should be limited, however, to allow for effective decision-making, with the main criteria being operational relevance. The HCT's membership is governed by the IASC Standard Terms of Reference.

The HCT's objective is to provide strategic direction for a collective inter-agency humanitarian response, i.e., to ensure that the activities of participating organisations are coordinated, and that humanitarian action in-country is principled, timely, efficient and effective, and contributes to longer-term recovery. Upon its establishment, the HCT promptly addresses pressing operational humanitarian issues. The HC and HCT must swiftly determine the necessity for additional coordination structures and expertise to support the response, potentially through sector-specific coordination mechanisms such as clusters (detailed below).

OCHA supports the HC in establishing an appropriate coordination framework consistent with the guidelines and procedures of the IASC. As the secretariat to the HCT, OCHA further aids the HC in fulfilling their coordination role by facilitating effective connections with other coordination entities, including the Inter-Cluster Coordination Group (ICCG) or the Inter-Sector Coordination Group (ISCG).

It is important to note that the UNCT and HCT operate concurrently and serve distinct purposes without replacing each other. It falls under the responsibility of the RC, RC/HC, or HC to ensure synergy between these entities. Additionally, the HC may choose to establish a separate platform to facilitate information exchange either with the broader humanitarian community or with donors.

Figure A.3: Humanitarian Coordination Structure

Humanitarian Coordination at the Country Level
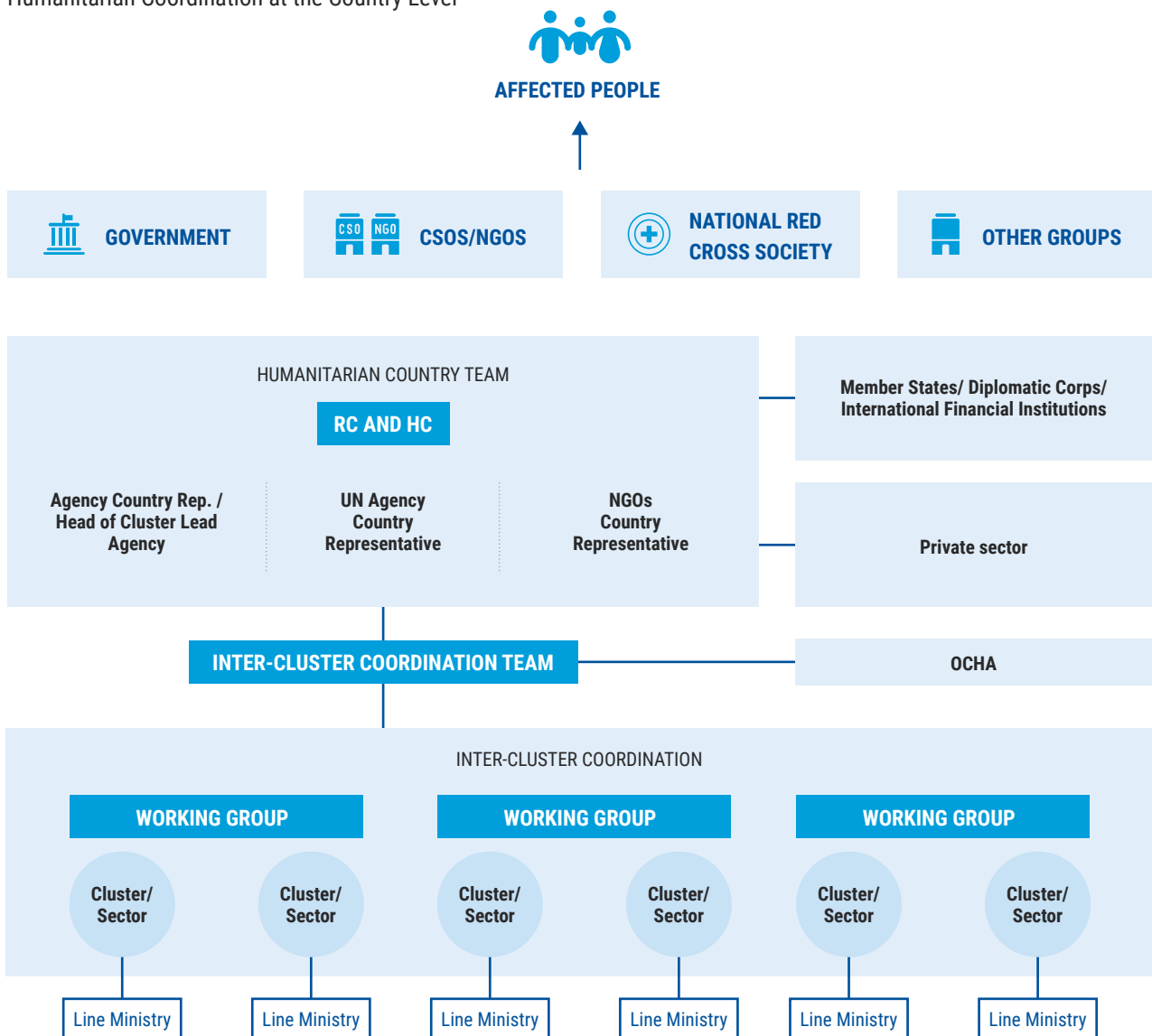
A.3.2 Humanitarian coordination structures and the Cluster Approach

The needs of a disaster-affected population are commonly identified by sectors of humanitarian response, e.g., health, food, shelter, etc. Such sectors have been historically recognized as a common modality of organising disaster response and organisations (e.g., government agencies, NGOs, UN agencies) have traditionally specialised themselves in working in one or more sectors.

Generic structures for coordinating humanitarian operations exist. However, whether they are applicable is dependent on the affected Government's wishes, the particular needs of the situation, available resources and what is culturally, contextually and politically pertinent. In situations where a resourceful and effective governmental structure for disaster response exists, incoming international organisations should adopt a model that supports this. Nevertheless, in situations where the coordination needs overwhelm national capacities, additional structures may be required for the international response.

In 2005, a major reform of humanitarian coordination, known as the Humanitarian Reform Agenda, introduced a number of new elements to enhance predictability, accountability, partnership, and leadership, including the Cluster Approach. Clusters are groups of humanitarian organisations, both UN and non-UN, working in each of the main sectors of humanitarian action. The aim of the Cluster Approach is to strengthen system-wide preparedness and technical capacity to respond, and to provide leadership and accountability. Global Cluster Leads are designated by the IASC in eleven sectors of humanitarian activity, with clear responsibilities for coordination and ensuring a sufficient level of preparedness within their cluster.

The Global Cluster Leads provide the following types of support to strengthen field response:

- Technical surge capacity.
- Trained experts to lead cluster coordination at the field level.
- Increased stockpiles, some pre-positioned within regions.
- Standardised technical tools, including for information management.
- Agreement on common methods and formats for needs assessments, monitoring and benchmarking.
- Best practices and lessons learned from field-tests.

The Cluster Approach also provides a structure which can facilitate partnerships with host Governments, local authorities and local civil society.

Figure A.4: Global Clusters and their Cluster Leads
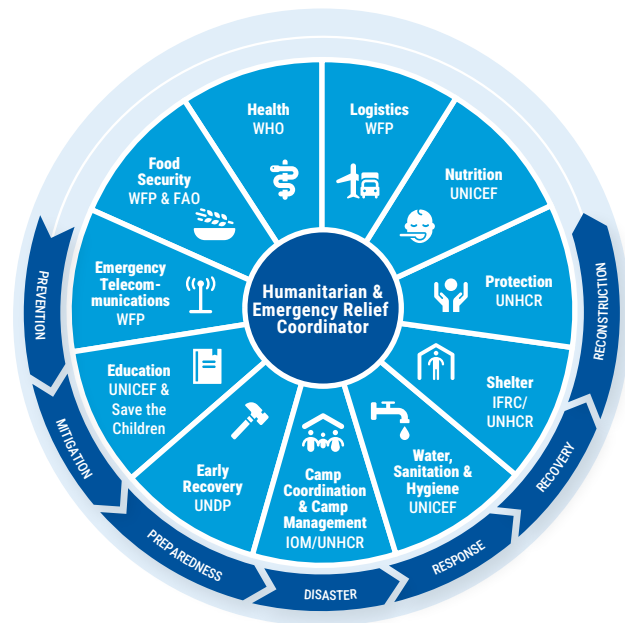
At the country level, cluster leadership should be assigned to the organisation best suited for the role, which may not necessarily be a UN agency or the Global Cluster Lead agency. Clusters are typically 'activated' in response to a new large-scale emergency, significant deterioration in an existing humanitarian situation, or the emergence of coordination gaps. Activation of clusters is based on specific needs, meaning that not all clusters need to be activated depending on the circumstances. The decision to activate clusters is made as part of the international emergency response, following analysis of humanitarian needs and coordination capacity by the HCT and in consultation with national partners. The RC/HC recommends cluster activation only when there is an identified need that is not being adequately addressed.

A.3.3 The Inter-Cluster Coordination Group

The Inter-Cluster Coordination Group is chaired by OCHA and brings together all clusters active in a given country to collaborate on operational response.

The group focuses on closing delivery gaps, eliminating duplication, and ensuring an impartial, people-centric response. This is done by reaching a shared understanding of needs, informed by a robust protection and gender analysis, and agreeing on a joint strategy to meet the needs. The Inter-Cluster Coordination Group both facilitates communication and serves as a conduit for cross-cutting technical and strategic issues from the clusters to the humanitarian country team and vice versa.

When two or more clusters are activated, the RC/HC and HCT are responsible for establishing an inter-cluster (or inter-sector) coordination group (ICCG). The ICCG is composed of each cluster's co-ordinator (and co-coordinator, if applicable). OCHA is responsible for the functioning, including secretariat, and chairing of the ICCG. In cases where clusters are not officially activated, coordination may take place within sectors, usually co-led by UN agencies and government line ministries.

A.3.4 Field-level coordination structures

The key objective of international humanitarian action is to support national efforts in meeting the needs of a disaster-affected population. It is important to remember that when governments request international humanitarian support to respond to disasters, national legal systems are the main regulatory frameworks for all response, relief and recovery activities.

To activate one or more clusters, the RC/HC agrees with the HCT which should be activated based on contingency plans or the type and scale of the emergency, and with a clear rationale that takes into account national capacity and needs. The selection of a Cluster Lead Agency (CLA) ideally

mirrors the global-level arrangements, but this is not always possible and, in some cases, other organisations may be better placed to take the lead. Upon agreement within the HCT, the RC/HC sends a letter to the ERC outlining the recommended cluster arrangements. The ERC transmits the proposal to IASC Principals and Global Cluster Leads for approval within 24 hours and informs the RC/HC accordingly.

Any decision on **cluster activation** should be taken in consultation with the affected Government who should, as far as possible, co-chair the clusters at different levels, from capital to field locations.

At the strategic level, inter-cluster coordination takes place within the HCT under the leadership of the HC. The HCT comprises the CLAs (at Country Representative/Director level) and selected operational partners involved in the response, and it is within the framework of this strategic decision-making forum that the overall humanitarian response operation is guided and led.

The designated CLA leads and manages the cluster. Where possible, it does so in co-leadership with Government bodies and NGOs. At country level, heads of Cluster Lead Agencies are accountable to the HC for:

- Ensuring that coordination mechanisms are established and properly supported.
- Serving as a first point of call for the Government and the HC.
- Acting as a provider of last resort in their respective sector.

The RC/HC will lead the international humanitarian response in consultation with national authorities and the HCT. While the style of leadership exercised is consultative, in the first three months of a large-scale emergency crisis the RC/HC will need to exercise considerable judgement to enable swift decision-making. This decision-making ability will be supported through enhanced accountability to the ERC, who will require more regular briefings from the HC during this period. The RC/HC will be accountable to the ERC for the management of an effective and well-prioritised response.

In certain large-scale emergencies, the RC/HC will be empowered to lead the response to the crisis for an initial period of three months. Speed in decision-making is essential. To be effective, the RC/HC must be empowered to make timely decisions in strategic key areas, such as setting of overall priorities, allocating resources, monitoring performance and dealing with underperformance.

At a programmatic level, inter-cluster coordination generally takes place within the framework of an Inter-Cluster Coordination Group (ICCG) or Inter-Sector Coordination Group, formed by cluster coordinators from each cluster. The cluster coordinator for each individual cluster provides leadership and works on behalf of the cluster, facilitating coordination at an operational level within the cluster, while maintaining a strategic vision and developing an operational response plan. They also ensure coordination with other clusters in relation to inter-cluster activities and quality response issues. The cluster coordinators are responsible for ensuring that cluster-specific concerns and challenges that cannot be solved within the cluster are raised and properly discussed at the HCT, and that ensuing strategic decisions are shared and acted upon at operational level.

Cluster members should adhere to the **minimum commitments** that set out what all local, national or international organisations undertake to contribute. They include:

- A common commitment to humanitarian principles and the Principles of Partnership.
- Commitment to mainstream protection in programme delivery.
- Readiness to participate in actions that specifically improve accountability to affected populations.
- Understand duties and responsibilities associated with membership of a cluster and commit to consistently engage in the cluster's collective work as well as cluster's plan and activities.
- Commitment to ensure optimal use of resources and sharing information on organisational resources.

- Commitment to mainstream key programmatic cross-cutting issues.
- Willingness to take on leadership responsibilities as needed and as capacity and mandates allow.
- Contribute to developing and disseminating advocacy and messaging for relevant audiences.
- Ensure that the cluster provides interpretation so that all cluster partners are able to participate.

OCHA/UNDAC provides guidance and support to the HC and HCT and facilitates inter-cluster coordination. OCHA/UNDAC also helps ensure coordination between clusters at all phases of the response, including needs assessments, joint planning, and monitoring and evaluation.

Even if coordination of international humanitarian response is not hierarchical, the generic humanitarian coordination model may be depicted by the illustration on the following page.

However, whilst one may strive to accomplish a given structure, in reality, it often has to be adapted to situational needs. Given the special nature of international relief, the particulars of the disaster-affected country, the policy of donor Governments, and a multitude of other factors, there is no set answer to how disaster relief may be coordinated. Every disaster has its own dynamics and, thus, its own solutions to coordination.

The **key objective of the Cluster Approach** is to ensure a coordinated approach with agreed leadership of international assistance in support of the Government lead role. This approach is not the only humanitarian coordination solution. In some cases, the Cluster Approach may coexist with other, non-cluster coordination solutions – whether national or international – or an alternative sectoral approach may be preferable. An indiscriminate application of all clusters, in every emergency, at every location/level, may waste resources and reduce opportunities for Governments to exercise their primary responsibility to provide humanitarian assistance to people in need. Coordination should have a clear objective and be result- and action-driven, rather than process-driven. See also **Chapter G.6** for more information on inter-cluster coordination.

Area-based coordination

Area-based coordination (refer to **Section A.1.2**) brings coordination and decision making closer to affected communities and prioritises genuine community engagement and centres coordination and action around the needs and priorities of affected populations. It involves organising coordination efforts at the subnational level while ensuring active participation and input from local communities. This approach emphasises collaborative decision-making processes with affected communities and involves a wide range of stakeholders beyond traditional clusters and sectors.

Below are ten evolving observations on area-based coordination from the Flagship Initiative (see also **Section A.1.2**):

- Area-based coordination needs to be organised around **genuine community engagement and people's priorities.** Area-based coordination encompasses, not only deploying staff to the subnational level, but ensuring that coordination is based around listening to communities and acting upon their priorities. Area-based coordination and programming will not be effective unless it is underpinned by communities' priorities.

- The area-based approach should ensure that **community engagement** is carried out **in a coordinated and collaborative manner.** With area-based coordination platforms, actors should coordinate how, when and with whom consultations take place, share results and analyse relevant information from such engagements and make decisions upon them. There must be a collaborative mindset of all actors on the ground beyond mandates, clusters and sectors.

- **Coordination and decision-making** (including planning and program design) should be **decentralised and take place at sub-national levels, in close collaboration with communities.** Subnational coordination platforms should be empowered to discuss and design holistic programs around people's priorities – which might diverge from the usual siloed cluster planning and convene a broad spectrum of actors around this.

- Area-based planning should be **outcome oriented,** outlining the humanitarian contribution towards identified priorities. Priorities will often be forward looking, with solutions that may at times fall outside of the humanitarian mandate. However, area-based coordination offers a platform for best-placed actors to collectively work towards that outcome, while clearly pinpointing how humanitarian programming supports those ambitions.

- **Promoting the co-creation and integration of local assets, resources, and people's capacities** in humanitarian action is fundamental. Considering communities as active drivers/champions/promoters of change includes building on their existing and potential capacities, as well as their initiatives, livelihoods, and assets.

- Give **greater prominence to local coordination, rethinking the role of different levels of the humanitarian architecture**. With empowered subnational coordination platforms to develop planning and coordinate actors around community priorities.   Clusters and the HCT should shift their work towards providing strategic guidance for alignment with global strategy and focusing on policy and advocacy work at the national level.

- **Foster coordination with development and peacebuilding actors.** Area-based coordination should help better articulate with development and peace actors around community priorities, pull them into communities where they are needed, and involve them in the design of solutions. A successful area-based approach, will offer more granularity and better targeting, including for development efforts.

- Area-based coordination must also **facilitate relations with local state institutions,** encouraging them to listen to their communities, ensuring that they are part of the solutions in community plans, and reaffirming their responsibility towards communities. The Flagship could help boost the social contract between members of the communities, but also between communities and the Government.

- **Promoting bonds between area-based coordination and funding.** Implementing area-based, integrated and multi-year plans requires funding allocated directly to area-based holistic plans. Having financial incentives to push for integrated action - including development resources - would bring about the desired change, while also making funds more accessible to local/national organisations.

Figure A.5: Generic humanitarian coordination model
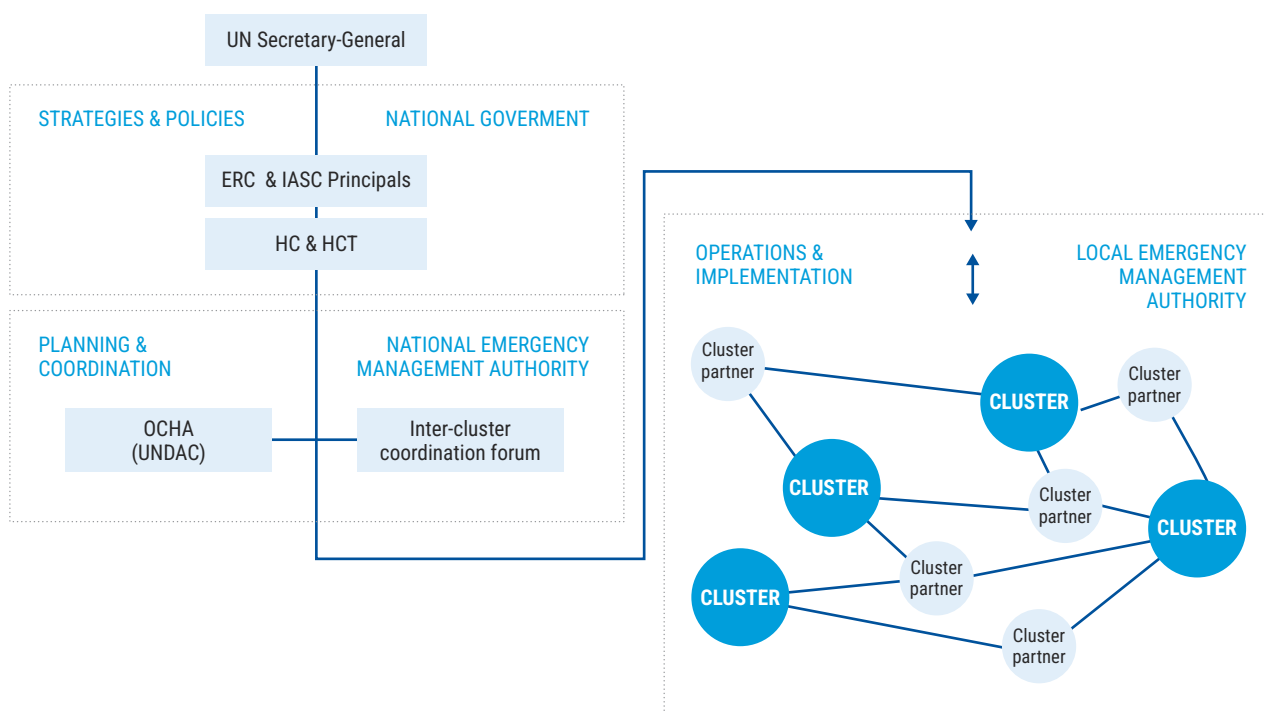
- The **decentralisation of staff** must be done in line with duty of care, including with a gender sensitive lens. Moving staff to subnational levels, including national staff, must be done with care and caution, to not expose colleagues to risks. Furthermore, to arrive at women's and girls' unfiltered priorities, it is important to not only ensure that staff is trained and equipped to handle those engagements, but equally to take gender-parity into consideration. Staff at the subnational level should be specifically dedicated to these efforts and should receive training on how to engage with communities (and their different groups such as women, children, youth), and develop community plans.

A.3.5 Humanitarian Programme Cycle (HPC)

The IASC has agreed that international humanitarian response is delivered following the concept of the Humanitarian Programme Cycle (HPC), which is a coordinated series of actions undertaken to help prepare for, manage and deliver humanitarian response. It is based on a six-step process (analysis, planning, resource mobilisation, implementation,

monitoring & evaluation and reporting), coordinated in a seamless manner, with one step logically building on the previous and leading to the next. It was introduced as a coordinated series of actions to prepare for, manage and deliver an effective humanitarian response. Successful implementation of the humanitarian programme cycle is dependent on effective emergency preparedness, effective

Figure A.6: Overview of the HPC
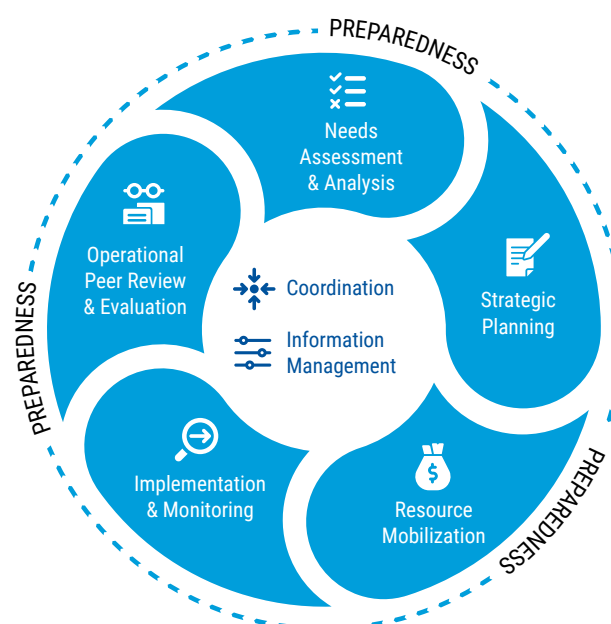
coordination with national and local authorities and humanitarian actors, and information management.

The activities of an UNDAC team, generally deployed for the first three weeks following a disaster, will focus on kickstarting the HPC and support mostly the Needs Assessment and Analysis element of the HPC, thus also Strategic (Response) Planning, Resource Mobilization and Implementation.

If executed effectively, the HPC will achieve:

• Stronger emphasis on inter-sectoral analysis and prioritisation of the needs of affected people.

• Improved targeting of the most vulnerable.

• Consideration of the most appropriate and feasible response modalities.

• Increased funding for humanitarian priorities.

• Greater accountability of humanitarian actors and donors for collective results.

Successful implementation of the HPC is dependent on effective emergency preparedness, effective coordination with national/local authorities and humanitarian actors, and effective information management.

Key documents produced by Humanitarian Country Teams as part of the HPC include the Global Humanitarian Overview (GHO), Humanitarian Needs Overviews (HNOs), Humanitarian Response Plans (HRPs), flash appeals, and periodic monitoring reports. More details on the HPC can be found at https://kmp.hpc.tools/about/.

A.3.6 Flash Appeals, Humanitarian Response Plans (HRPs) and humanitarian funding

Humanitarian Response Plans (HRPs) are required for any humanitarian crisis demanding the collaboration of multiple agencies and are prepared by Humanitarian Country Teams (HCTs) based on a **Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO).** Sometimes, they are presented as a single document known as a **Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan (HNRP).** In sudden-onset emergencies, a **Flash Appeal** is

issued, which is a condensed version of the same plan. Both HRP and Flash Appeal serve as an inter-agency/sector humanitarian overview of priority needs and, ultimately, as response strategy and fundraising tools.

HRPs/Flash Appeals serve as a joint strategic response plan, offering a snapshot of the current overall situation, an overall intersectoral strategy, and sector/cluster-specific response plans and budgets over a defined period. HRPs/Flash Appeals are subject to updates as needed to reflect significant changes in the needs of affected people or the overall situation. Additionally, a request for funding from the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) is made concurrently, with its requirements included in the overall needs of the HRP/Flash Appeal.

A unified strategic approach, formalised within an HRP or Flash Appeal, is vital for an effective response that leverages the strengths of each organisation involved. Joint strategic planning and budgeting bring aid organisations together to jointly plan, coordinate, implement, and monitor their response to both natural-hazard related disasters and complex emergencies. This approach facilitates cohesive fundraising efforts, avoiding competition among organisations for funding.

While HRPs/Flash Appeals present the humanitarian strategy, humanitarian funds come from a range of sources. OCHA manages the following **three main funding tools:** i.e. the Emergency Cash Grant, the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), and the Country-Based Pooled Funds (CBPFs).

• **Emergency Cash Grant -** A small grant facility (requests cannot exceed US$100,000) to kick start humanitarian relief and coordination, for procurement and/or transport of relief items. The RC/HC makes a recommendation for funding to OCHA HQ and, if approved, funds can be disbursed within a few days.

• **Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF)**
  - Open only to UN agencies (not NGOs) to promote early action and response to reduce loss of life, enhance response to time-critical requirements and strengthen core elements of humanitarian response in underfunded crises (see also **Section A.3.4.**).

» CERF funded projects must be based on (initial) needs assessments and comply with CERF life-saving criteria, activities that:

» Within a short time span, remedy, mitigate or avert direct loss of life, physical harm or threats to a population.

» Common humanitarian services necessary to enable life-saving activities, such as logistics and support services.

» A CERF request will be developed by the RC/HC's office with OCHA support (country office or regional office) for the CERF Secretariat in New York. If there is no OCHA field presence, UNDAC teams may need to support the CERF request for rapid response submissions, supported by the regional office.

• **Country-Based Pooled Funds (CBPFs) –** These are multi-donor humanitarian funds for protracted crises established by the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC), managed by OCHA at country level under RC/HC leadership. Funds are allocated to partners by the RC/HC through an in-country consultative process (mainly to NGOs), to support both strategic response priorities aligned with the HPC and response to sudden-onset emergencies.

Details on Humanitarian response planning and humanitarian financing can be found in **Subchapter G.8**.

A.4 Stakeholders in international disaster response

UNDAC teams will work with a wide variety of stakeholders during a response. While the specific organisations and structures will vary, the general roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders are fairly consistent. Familiarity with the major actors will enable UNDAC teams to work together with them in an effective manner. The following sections give an overview of the most important stakeholders and bodies in international emergency response.

A.4.1 Civil society and Government

Among the most significant stakeholders are the Government, the affected populations and the civil society. The first responders in any emergency are disaster-affected people and their Governments. Before any international or, in most instances, national response mechanisms kick in, it is people affected by the disaster or conflict, their neighbours and local civil society that are the first on the scene. In the first hours, they use whatever resources are available to them to carry out activities such as search and rescue, providing shelter, distributing food and water, etc. Often this response is supplemented through community-based organisations and networks, including religious groups, unions and even local businesses.

A.4.2 The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is the world's largest humanitarian network, comprising around 80 million members, volunteers and supporters.

Structurally, the Movement is comprised of three core components:

• 191 national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies.

• The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC).

• The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

Together, these components operate worldwide with a mission to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found, to protect life and health, and to ensure respect for the human being, particularly in times of armed conflict and other emergencies.

191 countries in the world have a national Red Cross or Red Crescent society. Those are neither governmental institutions nor wholly separate non-governmental organisations (NGOs). They occupy a unique place as auxiliaries to the public authorities in their countries. The 'auxiliary role' is

a technical term to express the unique partnership a national society has with its Government in providing public humanitarian services. Although national societies work alongside Governments and public authorities, they are independent and their work is not controlled or directed by the national Government. Each Government should recognize its national society as a legal entity and allow it to operate according to the fundamental principles of the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement. National societies provide disaster relief, support health and social programmes, and promote humanitarian values. Together, those 191 national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies form the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC).

During emergencies, the national Red Cross or Red Crescent society in the affected country would normally play an important role (because of their auxiliary function, they can start responding immediately by supplementing or substituting public humanitarian services as pre-agreed in each country). Local Red Cross/Red Crescent societies usually have a large network of volunteers all over the country which are trained in first aid etc. but also in data collection. They will usually be the first actors to respond alongside the communities.

It is important to distinguish between the IFRC and the ICRC.

- **IFRC –** The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is the world's largest humanitarian network. Founded in 1919, the IFRC comprises 191 national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies, a secretariat in Geneva and numerous delegations strategically located to support its activities. The IFRC works with national societies in responding to catastrophes around the world and coordinates and directs international assistance following natural and man-made disasters in non-conflict situations. Its relief operations are combined with development work, including disaster preparedness programmes, health and care activities, and the promotion of humanitarian values.
- **ICRC –** The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) operates in conflict areas. Its mandate stems essentially from the Geneva

Conventions of 1949. It is an independent and neutral organisation whose mission is to help people affected by conflict and armed violence, and promote the laws that protect victims of war. It is based in Geneva and employs over 21,000 people in more than 100 countries. The ICRC is the custodian of the Geneva Conventions and their additional Protocols, which constitute the primary part of International Humanitarian Law and cover the treatment of wounded and sick military personnel, prisoners of war and civilian populations in internal and international conflicts. During situations of conflict, the ICRC is responsible for directing and coordinating the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement's international relief activities. It also promotes International Humanitarian Law and draws attention to universal humanitarian principles. The ICRC only responds to disasters if they occur in a conflict zone.

Both the IFRC and the ICRC are standing invitees (not members, for reasons of independence) of the IASC. The IFRC is the convener of the Global Shelter Cluster in natural-hazard related emergencies, while UNHCR takes the lead in conflict situations.

A.4.3 UN agencies

A number of specialised UN agencies are important in international emergency response.

- **The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) –** UNDP focuses on the development-related aspects of disasters and aims to mainstream disaster risk reduction into national development strategies. It does this through provision of technical assistance and capacity-development to strengthen disaster risk management and establish mechanisms to support post-disaster recovery. UNDP seeks to ensure that disaster risk reduction considerations are factored into national and regional development programmes and that countries use the recovery process following disasters as a window of opportunity to mitigate future risks and vulnerabilities. UNDP has a representation in most developing countries of the world.
UNDP chairs the Global Cluster for Early Recovery (GCER).
- **The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) –** The majority of UNHCR's

programmes begin as a result of a specific type of emergency, i.e., a sudden influx of refugees. UNHCR provides protection to persons of concern and ensures that the necessary assistance reaches them. In terms of material assistance, UNHCR's goal is the survival of refugees through ensuring adequate basic and supplementary food supplies, health care, shelter, water and sanitary facilities, clothing, and essential community services. Much of this assistance is channelled through its implementing partners, i.e., the Government of the asylum country and NGOs. Even if UNHCR's mandate defines a 'refugee' as a person displaced from his or her native country, the organisation also does extensive work with Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), i.e., people who have had to leave their homes following a disaster or conflict, but still reside inside their native country. However, this distinction in their mandate often requires a special request from high level UN bodies or affected Governments before UNHCR can participate fully in a humanitarian operation inside an affected country. UNHCR is the global lead for the Global Protection Cluster and co-chairs the Global Shelter Cluster together with IFRC. The Global Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Cluster is co-led by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) for natural-hazard related disasters and UNHCR in conflict situations.

- **The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)** – UNICEF works towards improving the lives and wellbeing of children and their families. Together with partners, they work in over 190 countries and territories to the benefit of all children, everywhere, focusing special efforts on reaching the most vulnerable and excluded. UNICEF's emergency aid activities target health and immunisation, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), trauma counselling, family reunification, education, and child soldiers.
UNICEF is the global lead for the WASH and Nutrition Clusters and co-lead for the Education Cluster together with Save the Children. UNICEF is also the designated focal point agency for Child Protection within the Global Protection Cluster.

- **World Food Programme (WFP)** – In an emergency and depending on need, WFP may: provide advice and assistance to the Government, other concerned agencies and local authorities in assessing possible requirements for emergency food aid, and in planning and managing appropriate interventions; provide food aid to meet emergency needs, subject to the availability of resources and the assessed need for international food aid; and help to mobilise and ensure coordination in the planning and delivery of food assistance from all sources, and any necessary logistics support and other complementary inputs. Although WFP provides substantial quantities of food and is the source for almost all multilateral food aid, the majority of international food aid is provided bilaterally, i.e., directly from donor to affected state or party. WFP ensures the co-ordination and orderly scheduling of food aid shipments from all sources; seeks ways to expedite deliveries; mobilises and provides logistic support; and advocates appropriate policies and procedures for the use of food aid. WFP also assists donors, upon request, to procure, transport and/or monitor the distribution of certain bilateral food aid consignments.
WFP is the global lead of the Emergency Telecommunications (ETC) and Logistics Clusters and co-leads the Food Security Cluster (FSC) together with the UN Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO).

- **World Health Organization (WHO)** – The WHO is the UN specialised agency for health matters and works in disasters to ensure that health needs are properly assessed and monitored; to provide coordination between national and international health partners; to mobilise national and international expertise and/or supplies to meet specific health threats; and to identify critical gaps in the public health aspects of response that need rapid filling, either by the combined effort of all stakeholders or by WHO itself as provider of last resort.
WHO is the global lead for the Health Cluster and the custodian of the Emergency Medical Team (EMT) coordination concept which is an important part of emergency response. See **Section G.10.2** for more on EMT coordination.

- **International Organization for Migration (IOM)** - IOM joined the UN system in 2016 and is the leading intergovernmental organisation in the field of migration, working closely with Governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental

partners. IOM helps ensure the orderly and humane management of migration, promotes international cooperation on migration issues, assists in the search for practical solutions to migration problems and provides humanitarian assistance to migrants in need, including refugees and internally displaced people.
The Global Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Cluster is co-led by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) for natural-hazard related disasters and UNHCR for conflict situations. IOM also actively participates in the Logistics, Early Recovery, Health, Emergency Shelter and Protection Clusters.

• **The UN Population Fund (UNFPA) -** UNFPA works closely with Governments, UN agencies and other partners to ensure that reproductive health is integrated into emergency response. UNFPA provides hygiene, obstetric and family planning supplies, trained personnel and other support to vulnerable populations, and works to ensure the needs of women and young people are served through both the emergency and the reconstruction phases. UNFPA can play an important role in collecting data during emergencies as it collaborates with national statistical organisations in developing and middle-income countries, facilitating the collection, analysis, dissemination and use of reliable data and information.

A.4.4 Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)

In the context of disaster management, an NGO is an organisation that works - in any capacity - in relief assistance. NGOs can be divided into two main categories, namely the international NGOs, i.e., those operating globally or across multiple countries, and local NGOs, i.e., those primarily operating within their own country or region where a disaster strikes.

NGOs are, in principle, autonomous and relatively independent of Governments and are financed by private individuals or groups as well as Governments. NGOs are receiving more and more funding from Governments (usually their own) or international organisations, e.g., the European Union. It is important to note that many of the world's largest

NGOs have budgets and resources exceeding that of many UN agencies. NGOs are often implementing partners of UN agencies in emergency response.

The NGO community has always been important in the humanitarian world. They work in all areas of the humanitarian field and provide the greatest international capacity to implement relief on the ground. NGOs tend to specialise in one or two fields, or to target their efforts towards one vulnerable population group. They usually have skilled staff, rapid deployment capacity (if they are not already in the area), operational flexibility, and resources that might not otherwise be available in an emergency.

The number of national NGOs may also be high. These can be essential partners in disaster response because they are known locally and they themselves know the area, the culture, the population, etc. In many cases, they work together with international NGOs, the UN and/or others, sometimes as implementing partners.

A.4.5 International Governmental Organizations (IGOs)

By definition, an IGO is an organisation of sovereign states created with a shared purpose and established by a founding document such as a charter or treaty giving them a mandate. In emergencies, it is quite common to meet IGOs composed of member states from a particular world region. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the European Union (EU), and Southern African Development Community (SADC) are typical examples of IGOs. They are also referred to as International Organizations or Intergovernmental Organizations.

There are numerous IGOs in the world with various purposes, systems and mandates. Several of them have a humanitarian profile as part of their purpose and do considerable work with regards to disaster response. How they work in disasters is often dependent on their mandate and policies. For example, both the EU and ASEAN have specialised teams that may deploy rapidly to emergencies to assess and/or coordinate their response, while an organisation such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) may provide emergency assistance to help

member countries with urgent balance of payments financing needs in the wake of natural-hazard related disasters or armed conflicts. A commonality for IGOs is that, in most cases, they work in cooperation with Governments, whereas NGOs are often privately created and may seek independence from Governments.

A.4.6 Military forces

Generally, military forces are associated with protecting/defending sovereignty or as an instrument for aggression between states. Over the last decades, however, the role of military forces has expanded beyond this to include tasks related to and/or in support of humanitarian action. Military forces have become active players in international emergency response and Governments will continue to rely upon rapidly deployable military capability for support in humanitarian operations. Regardless of country, militaries are often organised in similar ways and often share many common aspects, whether they are army, navy, air force or marine/amphibious forces. Militaries are organised in a clear hierarchical structure with clear lines of command, control and communication.

However, in some contexts, military forces may, by their nature and regardless of purpose, be perceived as parties to, or instigators of, armed conflict. This is especially the case when they have a dual purpose in an emergency, e.g., when deployed for peacekeeping or peace-enforcing purposes while also having a mandate to participate in relief operations, or when the humanitarian crisis comes as a consequence of an armed conflict and the military forces party to that conflict are the ones providing security. In such contexts and if appropriate measures are not taken, upholding the humanitarian principles may become difficult if military forces are used haphazardly in humanitarian operations.

Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination (UN-CMCoord) is, and will always be, a subset of broader humanitarian coordination. UN-CMCoord is the essential dialogue and interaction between civilians and military actors in humanitarian emergencies that is necessary to protect and promote humanitarian principles, avoid competition, minimise

inconsistency and, when appropriate, pursue common goals. There are several internationally agreed guidelines on the use of military forces in humanitarian operations and civil-military interaction. Experience has shown that in all major emergencies, some level of civil-military coordination is required and that failure to establish effective and appropriate civil-military relations may have severe consequences both in current operations and in the latter stages of the emergency. See **Section G.10.3** on Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination.

A.4.7 Private sector

Humanitarian agencies have witnessed the increasing and active involvement of private sector actors, be they multinational companies or small businesses, in playing critical roles before, during, and after emergencies. The private sector is often among the first to respond during emergencies, and their engagement extends beyond the response phase.

To effectively engage with the private sector, it is helpful to recognize the diversity within this sector, encompassing:

- Multinational companies with global and regional operations,
- Large national companies,
- Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs),
- Business networks such as local chambers of commerce, business associations, trade federations, and alliances.

The private sector contributes to disaster response through various ways and approaches. Businesses prioritise the safety of their employees and families, securing their facilities and operations for immediate restoration to deliver critical goods and services needed by their customers and the wider community. Private sector actors also support disaster response through financial donations and in-kind contributions, coordinating with government partners and humanitarian organisations. In critical industries like telecommunications, mobile network companies are enlisted to deploy equipment and provide technical assistance to restore connectivity in affected areas.

While the importance of coordinating with the private sector in humanitarian efforts may be evident, such collaboration is not always effectively realised. Response coordination structures and mechanisms tend to either focus on private sector engagement as a fundraising activity or exclude private sector actors entirely. This may result in missed opportunities to gather and exchange information on the specific needs, capabilities, and contributions of the private sector during an emergency.

Engagement with the private sector can be done in several ways and can range from understanding the private sector actors who are involved in the response, ensuring that information on private sector needs and activities are included in assessments and reports, up to activating existing agreements with technical experts from companies to support cluster activities and deploying private sector focal points during emergencies.

As part of OCHA's approach to engaging with the private sector, the joint OCHA-UNDP Connecting Business initiative (CBi) supports operational engagement with local businesses through its global community of regional and national private sector networks. CBi Member Networks are local business federations that are ready, willing and able to engage in disaster preparedness, response, and recovery in partnership with the UNDAC and other international organisations. CBi currently has 16 member networks (14 national and 2 regional) representing more than 700,000 businesses around the world. To learn more about CBi, visit https://www.connectingbusiness.org/. Almost all CBi networks actively engage with their respective national disaster management agencies, with some networks having formal roles in their disaster management agencies and humanitarian country teams.

CBi's Secretariat is available to support UNDAC teams in connecting with CBi Member Networks and/or reaching out to local private sector actors during UNDAC missions. To request assistance, please email connectingbusiness@un.org. See more in **Subchapter G.7** on private sector engagement.

A.4.8 Ad-hoc and improvised humanitarian groups

As humanitarian events become more visible to the global population through mass media and social networks, there are an increasing number of 'good samaritans' keen to be engaged in providing humanitarian relief. These range from spontaneously formed small groups to more sophisticated technocrats. They are typically passionate, willing to help and may be able to mobilise their own funds to operate; but they are rarely equipped with knowledge of standards or coordination systems and may be short-lived in their operations. While assistance is always needed and welcomed, there have been instances where such groups have caused harm by creating dependence, duplicating efforts by international systems thus wasting resources, and potentially violating humanitarian and other fundamental principles.

A.4.9 Diaspora

Perhaps the least understood, overlooked and yet often resourceful group of people who may be increasingly involved in humanitarian assistance is the diaspora. The diaspora population is potentially a significant resource to tap into as they may have a wealth of knowledge of the culture, language and social nuances, as well as financial resources to support humanitarian assistance. They often lack knowledge and understanding of the international humanitarian response system, hence their absence in coordination mechanisms; but they can often be targeted for key communication messages and coordination through host country government and media channels.

Office for the Coordination
of Humanitarian Affairs

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B.
THE UNDAC
CONCEPT

United
Nations

Section contents

B. THE UNDAC CONCEPT

This chapter provides an in-depth introduction to the UNDAC concept, its core activities, and its integral role in international emergency response efforts. It delves into the fundamental principles guiding UNDAC operations, including preparedness missions, standard Terms of Reference, and generic mission objectives. Additionally, it elucidates the methodology employed by UNDAC teams, detailing their composition, team membership, functions, and requisite qualifications. Furthermore, the chapter highlights the comprehensive support network available to UNDAC, encompassing operational partners and support services essential for effective mission execution.

The UNDAC system is designed to support national Governments, the UN in-country, the HC and HCT and incoming international responders with coordination during the first phase of a sudden-onset emergency. It also aims to advise and strengthen national and regional disaster response capacity. An UNDAC team can be deployed at very short notice (12-48 hours) anywhere in the world.

The UNDAC system consists of four components:

- **Staff –** Professional and experienced emergency managers and humanitarian experts made available by their respective Governments or organisations, together with OCHA staff. UNDAC team members are specially trained and equipped for their task.
- **Methodology –** Predefined methods for coordination, including collection and management of information, coordinated assessment and coordination support structures for the first phase of a sudden-onset disaster.
- **Mobilisation procedures –** Proven systems to mobilise and deploy an UNDAC team to a disaster site anywhere in the world within 48 hours of request.
- **Operational partnerships and equipment –** Personal equipment and service packages enabling UNDAC teams to be self-sufficient, as well as operational partnerships optimising service provision for the humanitarian community during UNDAC missions.

B.1 Concept

UNDAC is a first response tool of the UN, managed by OCHA, that can be deployed in sudden-onset or escalating emergencies to establish or support a coordination mechanism for international response. It may be requested by a Government, the RC/HC or a UN agency, including OCHA. An UNDAC team works under the same mandate as OCHA and may in many cases be OCHA's first presence on the ground.

An UNDAC team is a neutral, international asset that provides experienced emergency managers, with a variety of skill sets, free of cost and at very short notice. An UNDAC team may be deployed at the outset, or in situations such as tropical cyclones, upon early warning of an emergency. The team provides international capacity to support cross-sectoral emergency assessment, coordination of relief and information management at national and local levels. UNDAC teams are requested by, and work under the authority of, the RC/HC. In situations where there is no UN presence, the UNDAC team may work in direct support of the Government of an affected country.

When required, an UNDAC team may establish and run an On-Site Operations Coordination Centre (OSOCC) and a Reception Departure Centre (RDC) to act as a link between international responders and national authorities; to facilitate coordination of international response; and to provide a platform for cooperation, coordination and information management amongst international humanitarian responders. An OSOCC is a rapid response tool that may serve as a bridge from emergency response to longer-term relief and may become the foundation of an OCHA field office. The OSOCC structure will almost always be established in earthquake situations where international Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) teams are assisting in the rescue of survivors (see **Chapter M.** for more on the OSOCC concept and **Chapter N.** for specific coordination cells).

UNDAC teams may be reinforced with experts covering more specialised fields of emergency management and humanitarian action, e.g., environmental, sudden-onset technological and industrial accidents, cluster coordination, etc. An UNDAC team is self-sufficient in telecommunications, office and personal equipment. Operational partner organisations (see subchapter B.7 for more information) complement the capacity and services of an UNDAC team in a range of areas, such as Information Communications Technology (ICT), logistics, field operations, information management, mapping, assessment and analysis.

UNDAC regional teams

The UNDAC team is divided into five regional teams:

* Americas (including the Caribbean)
* Asia and the Pacific
* Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)
* Middle East and North Africa (MENA)
* Southern, East, West and Central Africa (SEWC Africa)

In emergencies of mainly national or regional concern, OCHA will largely draw upon the regional UNDAC team of members from the affected region. This enables OCHA to deploy emergency managers who are well versed in the local context, languages and culture. In major emergencies requiring large or multiple deployments, OCHA can draw upon UNDAC members from all regions worldwide to compose the teams. See **Chapter G.13** for more details on regional approaches.

Triggers for mobilisation of an UNDAC team

Indicators triggering the mobilisation of an UNDAC team include:

* **Disasters caused by natural, technological or socio-natural hazards**, or a combination of these:
  * » When a disaster-affected country requests international assistance in coping with the disaster and requires additional international coordination resources;

  * » When a disaster is imminent, e.g., hurricanes, UNDAC teams may be pre-positioned in the country;
  * » A Government or RC/HC may also request an UNDAC team to mobilise and help determine whether or not international assistance may be required, or to focus on a specific aspect of emergency response, such as information management or for environmental emergencies, and on short-term gap-filling.

* **Complex emergencies –** When there is a sudden escalation or change in intensity of a complex emergency, which is likely to result in a requirement for additional short-term international coordination resources that can be filled by the capacities of an UNDAC team.

In each case, the deployment and detailed tasks of an UNDAC team are agreed by OCHA, the RC/HC and/or the requesting Government and agreed in the mission Terms of Reference (ToR). The team normally stays in the affected area for the initial response phase of three to four weeks.

B.2 Core activities

An UNDAC team on mission will ideally be flexible enough to carry out or be involved in a wide range of activities. Depending on the nature and the scale of the disaster/situation, an UNDAC team on mission may:

* Support and facilitate the work of the affected Government, the RC/HC and HCT in the coordination of international assistance at different levels (capital/field) and locations.

* Establish and run an OSOCC/RDC to link international efforts with national relief, facilitate coordination of international relief, support USAR operations (in earthquake situations), support EMT coordination, create and/or support a platform for cooperation, decision-making and information management.

* Support the establishment of, or strengthen, the Government coordination structure for international coordination, both on a strategic level and at the site of the disaster.

* Support coordinated assessment efforts.

- Identify (secondary) environmental risks and request specialised expertise and follow-up, as necessary.

- Strengthen disaster management and humanitarian response activities by:

  » Supporting national disaster management authorities through optimising the use of available resources to ensure maximum impact and establishment of priorities for response activities.

  » Supporting international humanitarian response through the establishment or reinforcement of a humanitarian coordination platform, application of humanitarian principles and standards, inter-cluster coordination, and provision of advice and guidance on co-ordination structures, tools and services, and humanitarian financing mechanisms.

- Support reporting, public information and information management.

- Support safety and security management.

- Identify access challenges and assist in finding a resolution.

- Provide liaison functions, including:

  » Where relevant, initial provision of humanitarian civil-military coordination (UN-CMCoord) with support from relevant sections within OCHA as needed.

  » Establishing a link with the EMT Coordination Cell (EMTCC).

  » Creating the link between national emergency management authorities and UN/international response mechanisms.

- Provide management of technical support teams including ICT services.

- Administer the UNDAC team, including development of handover and exit strategies, to in-country partners or efficient transition of services to a longer-term OCHA presence, when required.

Outside of disasters

Between disasters, as manager of the UNDAC system, OCHA:

- Ensures that UNDAC methodologies, tools and resources are up to date and made available for

the UNDAC system worldwide, based on global good practice.

- Coordinates the selection of new UNDAC candidates from Governments and international organisations to maintain the capacity of the UNDAC system worldwide.

- Trains new UNDAC members in the UNDAC methodology.

- Develops the skills of UNDAC members through functional training courses, response coordination exercises and other related training events.

- Keeps UNDAC members and UNDAC focal points in Governments and organisations informed of developments in the UNDAC system.

B.3 Preparedness missions

UNDAC supports and conducts national disaster response preparedness missions as part of wider, OCHA and inter-agency preparedness activities, such as the Capacity for Disaster Reduction Initiative (CADRI), see below.

B.3.1 UNDAC Support to the Capacity for Disaster Reduction Initiative (CADRI)

The **Capacity for Disaster Reduction Initiative (CADRI)** is a global inter-agency partnership that helps countries reduce disaster and climate risks through providing access to a unique pool of multidisciplinary expertise in various socio-economic sectors to achieve the 2030 Agenda and leave no one behind.

With an expanding membership, the CADRI Partnership has grown into a joint initiative involving 20 UN and non-UN partners, including the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, and assists countries in bolstering their resilience against disaster and climate change risks.

Aligned with the Sendai Framework, CADRI is dedicated to facilitating a cohesive approach among agencies to deliver capacity development services in disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation at the national level.

The **key services offered** are:

- **Capacity Diagnosis:** Assessing the existing capacities and vulnerabilities of countries to identify areas for improvement.
- **Prioritization and Planning:** Assisting countries in setting priorities and developing strategic plans to address their capacity gaps.
- **Training:** Providing tailored training programs to enhance skills and knowledge in disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation.
- **Referral Services:** Connecting countries with specialised expertise and resources to further support their capacity development efforts.

For more detailed information on CADRI and its services, visit CADRI's official website (https://www.cadri.net/).

What is UNDAC doing with CADRI?

In the context of CADRI, UNDAC supports countries in their efforts to enhance emergency services and disaster management capacities. When Governments express interest in CADRI's assistance, and after an initial scoping mission that identifies emergency management as a focus area, a capacity diagnosis mission takes place over 2-3 weeks to assess the country's capacity, needs and priorities. This mission produces a comprehensive report outlining the current state of capacity and areas requiring support.

B.3.2 UNDAC Emergency Response Capacity Assessment missions (also known as Disaster Response Preparedness missions)

UNDAC's emergency response capacity assessment missions aim to systematically enhance preparedness capacity. Upon request from the Government or the RC/HC, these missions assess capacity and needs to strengthen response preparedness programs and plans across three key groups of actors: the national coordination institution, member institutions/agencies/ministries of the national emergency management system, and other disaster management/humanitarian actors within the country.

UNDAC Emergency Response Capacity Assessment missions are coordinated with the inter-agency Capacity for Disaster Reduction Initiative (CADRI) and may form part of a broader CADRI capacity assessment process or be a separate yet coordinated initiative, depending on government requests and specific terms of reference.

The missions focus on conducting integrated assessments of a country's preparedness for emergencies, identifying strengths, weaknesses, and gaps in the legal framework, structure, and functioning of the national disaster response system, and its collaboration with national and international humanitarian actors. Expected outcomes include assessing capacities within the national emergency management system, offering recommendations for strengthening relevant areas, suggesting improvements to political/legal frameworks, familiarising the system with international humanitarian response mechanisms, and providing a detailed mission report with analysis and recommendations.

While OCHA does not provide direct funding for implementing UNDAC mission recommendations, the UNDAC team, in collaboration with OCHA Regional Offices, offers advice on establishing follow-up mechanisms.

B.4 UNDAC Standard Terms of Reference (ToR) and inter-agency collaboration

In 2002, the IASC Working Group recognized the value of the UNDAC system as OCHA's rapid response tool for emergency coordination. This recognition was followed by the issuance of **a set of standard Terms of Reference (ToR) approved by the ERC** in November 2002 and continuously updated thereafter (last updated in 2017). According to these standard ToR, when on a mission, the UNDAC team:

- Works under the authority of the United Nations Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator in-country – and if there is no United Nations (UN) presence, in direct support of the Government – as one of the components of OCHA's integrated first response to an emergency and ensures linkage

between the national, UN and wider international response.

- Supports and facilitates the work of the affected Government and/or the United Nations Humanitarian Country Team in-country, or other coordination bodies established in the initial response phase of an emergency, primarily in the areas of:

  » On-site coordination
  » Coordinated assessments and needs analysis
  » Information management

- Supports and facilitates the coordination of the emergency response efforts between the Government, the United Nations and the wider international humanitarian community, and, when requested, may establish an On-Site Operations Coordination Centre (OSOCC) or support the establishment of an (inter-)cluster/sector coordination mechanism for the effective coordination of all international relief assets in support of the appropriate national emergency management authority.

- May establish, during earthquakes and other emergencies involving collapsed structures where international Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) teams are deployed, upon request and pursuant to UN General Assembly resolution 57/150 (2002) and in accordance with the Guidelines of the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG), a Reception Departure Centre (RDC) and a specialised Urban Search and Rescue Coordination Cell (UCC) as part of an OSOCC with the local emergency management authorities to enable them to meet the technical needs of coordination of the international USAR teams.

- Support the coordination of initial rapid assessments, with a view to identifying the strategic humanitarian priorities as well as priority interventions required and elaborating a concerted operational picture, including through the development of updated situation analyses to inform a Flash Appeal / Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) request and the further coordinated assessment process. Detailed multi-sectoral assessments will normally be undertaken by the affected Government and cluster/sector leads in-country.

- Works to support and strengthen the information management process between national and international responders in the early phase of the response in view of facilitating sound decision-making. Information management improves the capacity of stakeholders for analysis and decision-making through strengthened collection, processing, analysis and dissemination of information and is the foundation on which decision-making for a coordinated and effective response is based.

In 2021, UNDAC specified the following **12 generic mission objectives** that inform the mission **Terms of Reference (TOR)** of each deployment. Those 12 objectives may or may not all apply to one specific UNDAC mission context and therefore need to be selected and agreed jointly by OCHA ERS, the requesting Government, RC/HC and/or OCHA country or regional office. The UNDAC team will collect basic output progress data during their mission which will also feed into the mission evaluation and after-action review:

Overall Objective 1: To establish a coordinated international response system in support of the Government of the affected country:

- **Mission Objective 1:** To support and coordinate the interventions of the Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) team.

- **Mission Objective 2:** To enable coordination meetings, shared functions and co-location of partner teams by establishing an accessible, functional operational centre (EOC/OSOCC) early in the response.

- **Mission Objective 3:** To liaise between international coordination decision-makers [HC/RC/HCT/EUCPT/the inter-cluster coordination group ICCG] and the affected Government [LEMA/NEMA] in order to facilitate participation in the coordination mechanisms and sharing of strategic priorities.

- **Mission Objective 4:** To provide context-specific coordination support to specialist international emergency coordination teams [e.g. EMT, CMCoord, Environment].

- **Mission Objective 5:** To liaise with (civil-)military actors so that military assets and actions offered to the affected Government are used in service of agreed humanitarian objectives and

principles through establishing a briefing and liaison mechanism between the UN and incoming Military assets to promote dialogue and information exchange.

- **Mission Objective 6:** To ensure that HCT, non-HCT and government humanitarian providers have access to regular coordination meetings to exchange information, facilitate collaboration and promote good humanitarian practices and standards (such as PSEA, gender mainstreaming and protection).

- **Mission Objective 7:** To facilitate the sustained functioning and continued relevance of the coordination system and mechanisms following the departure of the UNDAC team.

- **Mission Objective 8:** To support the localisation of disaster management through regional UNDAC capacity and, if requested, to strengthen the disaster management capacity of the LEMA/NEMA.

- **Mission Objective 9:** To manage the UNDAC team to perform effectively, flexibly and safely during the mission

Overall objective 2: To provide evidence based situational analysis to inform strategic priorities:

- **Mission Objective 10:** To provide decision makers [RC/HC, HCT, inter-cluster coordinators, LEMA] with evidence-based needs assessments and analysis to inform humanitarian strategic priorities and contribute to the Flash Appeal/CERF/HRP.

- **Mission Objective 11:** To establish information management systems and IT equipment that enables partners, decision-makers and humanitarian providers to communicate, collaborate and share information digitally.

Overall (OCHA ERS) objective 3

Mission Objective 12: An adaptable and multi-skilled assessment and coordination team is deployed to establish context-specific coordination and assessment services.

B.5 UNDAC methodology and cornerstones

The UNDAC methodology is based on best practices from more than 315 missions to over 115 countries since the UNDAC system's inception in 1993. It is a methodology that can be adapted to suit any given emergency situation, being flexible, adjustable and dynamic in the sense that it evolves with the various challenges an UNDAC team may face on mission and add value to the response.

Originally the UNDAC methodology grew out of a need for coordination in earthquake response, bringing together national disaster management and international humanitarian response actors. Subsequently, the UNDAC methodology evolved and took on aspects from different approaches and experiences to become a coordination interface between disaster management and humanitarian action. The methodology combines elements of disaster management, functional organisational models, political considerations and application of international humanitarian principles, standards and practices.

Lessons learned and best practices from UNDAC missions are captured, processed and fed into this knowledge-base for inclusion in future UNDAC training and methodology development.

The UNDAC methodology is built upon **four 'Cornerstones'** which underpin the UNDAC system and provide the basis for how individual members and deployed teams approach UNDAC mission objectives.

Figure B.1: The UNDAC cornerstones

CORE VALUES Equal, Committed, Competent, Flexible, Receptive, Inclusive, Operational, and Supportive	**DISASTER MANAGEMENT** Rooted in disaster management, but influenced by humanitarian coordination, bridging these approaches
UNDAC	
HUMANITARIAN PRINCIPLES The principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and independence remains fundamental in the UNDAC system	**LEADERSHIP** UNDAC is a system for supporting/ providing leadership at programmatic and operational levels while supporting leadership at a strategic level

Core values

Core values are traits or qualities that represent an individual's or organisation's highest priorities, deeply-held beliefs and fundamental driving force. Individual UNDAC members come from diverse professional backgrounds and cultures, with skills and competencies that bring value to the UNDAC team. At the heart of the UNDAC methodology lie certain core values that UNDAC members, and teams, are required to adhere to as part of their membership and while on an UNDAC mission:

- **Equal –** UNDAC members leave their egos and work-status at home. In a team, all members are equal and home positions inconsequential.
- **Committed –** UNDAC members are committed to achieve the mission objective, to contribute to a common goal, and put individual and personal agendas or needs aside.
- **Competent –** UNDAC members are experts within their fields and able to apply their expertise internationally in a variety of contexts and disaster situations. They are committed to maintain their

skills and expertise, to be prepared and to keep up to date on relevant issues.

- **Flexible –** UNDAC members are flexible and adaptable. UNDAC teams adjust mission objectives to situational needs and aim to stay on top of the developments at all times.
- **Inclusive –** UNDAC members are inclusive. UNDAC teams strive to involve and integrate partners and other stakeholders in the coordination mechanism, aiming to create one whole where the output is larger than the sum of its parts.
- **Operational –** UNDAC members apply an operational focus. UNDAC teams will base decisions/ recommendations on operational needs and not political considerations.
- **Receptive –** UNDAC members are receptive to new ideas, suggestions, guidelines, etc. UNDAC teams strive to exhibit a high level of receptiveness to various factors and considerations, including but not limited to: gender sensitivity, inclusivity, Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment (PSEAH), diversity, community engagement and local perspectives, innovation and adaptability.
- **Supportive –** UNDAC members support each other and in-country counterparts. When on mission, UNDAC teams endeavour to find a role within an existing structure and support, coach and guide without establishing non-sustainable systems.

When on mission, UNDAC members are considered UN personnel. The UNDAC core values supplement the core values and organisational culture of the UN as outlined in the "UN Value and Behaviours Framework", to which UNDAC members must also subscribe. This Framework includes the four values of inclusion, integrity, humility, and humanity, and the following five behaviours: connect and collaborate; analyse and plan; deliver results with positive impact, learn and develop; and adapt and innovate. The full text of the "UN Value and Behaviours Framework" can be found in the UNDAC Toolbox.

Disaster management

UNDAC is an OCHA first response tool that may support and/or establish basic coordination services during the critical first phase of the response. An UNDAC team may either enhance existing or OCHA surge capacity in-country or may itself provide OCHA services, including a facilitation role with regards to humanitarian coordination.

The UNDAC system also has strong roots in disaster management and can thus add particular value at the programmatic and operational levels during the life-saving phase, when rapid decisions and concrete actions need to be taken. The UNDAC team endeavours to link all responders, including humanitarian actors, the affected Government, bilateral responders, the military, the private sector, etc., to create a coordination platform, establish basic services and provide leadership when needed.

In the immediate aftermath of many disasters, there may be a void where 'everything' needs to be created, or re-created, from scratch. Simple, tangible structures for coordination, emergency organisational models and basic services need to be established before more complex structures can evolve. The specificity of the UNDAC team and its methodology is that it provides an interface between disaster management and the international humanitarian response system, whereas humanitarian coordination structures typically do not include disaster management actors and approaches. The two terms can be defined as follows:

- **Disaster management,** also referred to as emergency management, can be defined as the organisation and management of resources and responsibilities to address all aspects of emergencies, in particular preparedness, response and initial recovery. This involves plans and institutional arrangements to engage and guide the efforts of Government, non-Government, voluntary and private agencies in comprehensive and coordinated ways to respond to the entire spectrum of emergency needs.
- **Humanitarian coordination** can be defined as an overarching, principled way of managing delivery

of humanitarian assistance through strategic planning, policymaking and facilitation of cooperation and consensual decision-making.

Figure B.2: UNDAC operational space
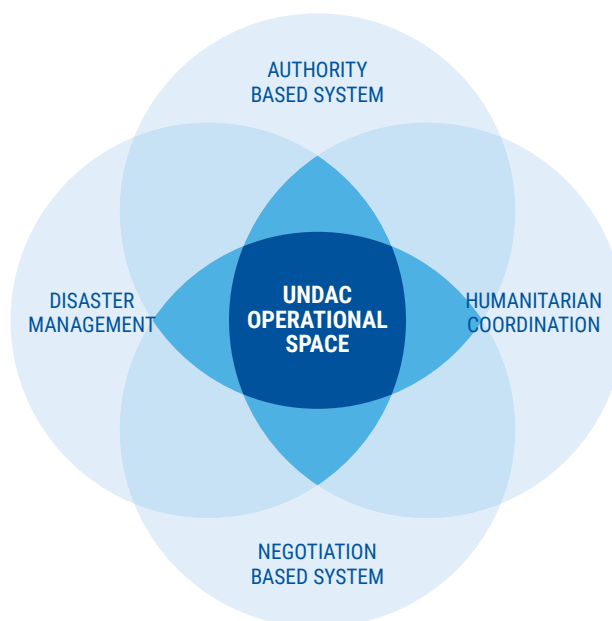
In the complex first response environment, the UNDAC team will need to be the link between different systems and organisations that have differing ways of decision-making, either authoritative, like civil protection or the military, or consensus based, like the HCT or clusters. Key success factors for an UNDAC team will be to establish:

1. **Swift trust** among these actors through demonstration of competence and professionalism, openness with information, integrity and reciprocity.
2. **Leadership,** by connecting, collaborating, coordinating or commanding people, organisations and resources to enable solutions and address priorities in emergency response.

By actively linking the disaster management and humanitarian 'spheres,' the UNDAC team brings an added value not normally found in the international humanitarian response system. This provides integrated disaster response services and may fill a gap for affected Governments, HCTs and OCHA.

Humanitarian principles

The humanitarian principles are fundamental to both the UNDAC system and most humanitarian actors (see **Section A.1.1**). In recent years, there has been a proliferation and diversification of response actors, some of whom may attach different interpretations to the humanitarian principles. Humanitarian responders increasingly include not only the agencies/organisations found in the IASC, but many more NGOs, businesses, individuals, networks of online volunteers and profit-oriented aid or security contractors. In addition, a growing number of countries and multilateral organisations are engaging in humanitarian relief, with different objectives and cultures, and varying levels of expertise and experience in humanitarian affairs.

As an extension of the humanitarian principles, the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (CHS) have been defined. The CHS sets out nine commitments that organisations and individuals involved in humanitarian response can use to improve the quality and effectiveness of the assistance they provide. By publicly acknowledging their commitments, humanitarian organisations can be held accountable to crisis-affected people and communities. The full text of the CHS (2024) can be accessed in the UNDAC Toolbox and at the following link: https://www.corehumanitarian-standard.org/.

In the immediate aftermath of a disaster, the UNDAC team on the ground will need to ensure that coordination activities are conducted in a way that adheres to the humanitarian principles and the CHS. It is important that this is also clearly communicated to technical partners, support staff and other actors working with the UNDAC team.

Leadership

Providing leadership and management in a multi-organizational, international environment brings about unique challenges that can be difficult to address through traditional organisational models and procedures. At national level, leadership in crisis management will normally be defined by national legislation. However, leadership at the international level does not have the same foundation. Leadership procedures and organisational structures therefore require distinct measures which recognize the framework of international emergency response. (See **Section A.2** for more on humanitarian response mechanisms.)

Traditional crisis management generally operates on three levels: strategic decision-making; mid-level coordination; and direct coordination of resources on-site. Strategic decisions will be made in the HCT by Cluster Leads and their partners. In certain large-scale emergencies which used to be referred to as Level 3 (L3) emergencies and where timely decision-making is essential, the RC/HC may be empowered to make decisions on behalf of the HCT. The L3 system has been replaced by the Humanitarian System-Wide Scale-Up Activation in 2018. A Scale-Up activation is now defined as a system-wide mobilisation in response to a sudden-onset, or significantly deteriorating, humanitarian crisis, where the capacity to lead, coordinate and deliver assistance and protection does not match the scale, complexity and urgency of the crisis. The Scale-Up activation replaces the previous L3 system by seeking to reinforce focused collective and time-bound emergency procedures; it is time-bound (limited to 6 months) and can only be extended once (for an additional 3 months in exceptional circumstances).

Depending on the situation and scale of the disaster, UNDAC teams can either provide or support leadership on programmatic and operational levels in emergencies. UNDAC teams generally do not provide strategic leadership but do, on occasion, provide strategic advice to Governments, RC/HCs or HCTs. UNDAC, as a concept, belongs to the programmatic and operational levels with regards to leadership.

Figure B.3 Levels of leadership in humanitarian operations and UNDAC's role at each level

LEVEL	TOOL/FORUM	ROLE
Strategic National Authorities RC/HC & HCT Donors	Strategic decision forum Strategic response plan Funding/appeals	→ **To advise**
Programmatic National Emergency Management Authority Inter-Cluster Coordination Military	OSOCC Standard setting Technical guidance	→ **To provide leadership** → **To advise through consultation**
Operational Local Emergency Management Authority Clusters Technical groups	Operational planning Operational support	→ **To provide leadership** → **To advise through consultation**

B.6 The UNDAC system

The UNDAC system is managed by the Emergency Response Section (ERS) in OCHA Geneva, which also has decentralised Regional Focal Points (RFPs) in Bangkok, Nairobi, and Panama. The five RFPs lead both UNDAC and INSARAG activities in their respective regions (Americas and the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and CIS, MENA, and SEWC Africa; as outlined in **Subchapter B.1** above).

UNDAC team members are made available by member and participating countries of the UNDAC system, as well as by OCHA, UN agencies or international, regional and non-governmental organisations. Each member or participating country and organisation accepts to maintain a single UNDAC focal point for OCHA to interact with on all matters dealing with the UNDAC system. The UNDAC focal point also acts as the point of contact for UNDAC members from that country or organisation.

The UNDAC Advisory Board meets annually to provide advice and orientation to OCHA on the management of the UNDAC system. It is composed of representatives from member countries and organisations and chaired by OCHA. Normally, the respective UNDAC national or organisational focal point attends the Advisory Board.

System membership

As of December 2023, membership in the UNDAC system comes from more than 80 member and participating countries and 23 UN agencies, international and regional organisations and NGOs.

Member countries are self-financing members of the UNDAC system and hold UNDAC mission accounts with OCHA through which funds are deposited to cover deployment costs of their national UNDAC members. Member countries participate in the annual UNDAC Advisory Board meetings. As of December 2023, the UNDAC system has 44 member countries.

Participating countries are sponsored members of the UNDAC system, whose participation is financially supported by contributions to OCHA and/or through special agreements with some self-financing member countries.

The member organisations of the UNDAC system (whether UN, IFRC, international/regional organisations or NGOs) are also normally self-financing

members that commit to providing staff as UNDAC members for missions and training.

B.7 Team membership

UNDAC members are experts who all have links to their sponsoring country or organisation.

UNDAC members from member or participating countries, often referred to as national UNDAC members, have profiles that are broadly divided between those working in disaster management at the national level and those working in international humanitarian response. UNDAC members from (international) organisations normally have international humanitarian coordination profiles and/or experience in a specific sector of humanitarian activity. OCHA trains these individuals in the UNDAC methodology for sudden-onset response coordination.

B.7.1 Functions

Every UNDAC team must have sufficiently broad skill sets to ensure that the fundamental roles and responsibilities outlined in **Section B.2** (core activities) can be delivered consistently during a mission. To this end, standard functions are assigned within deployed teams. On smaller missions, each UNDAC team member may be responsible for multiple functions whereas, during larger disasters, multiple members may be assigned to the same function.

It should be noted that, when an OSOCC is established, functions may be more broadly described and functional tasks assigned to specific cells under each function. See **Chapter D** for more details on OSOCC functions and cells.

The generic functions within an UNDAC team are:

Team Leader	• Plan of Action, mission objectives and operational updates • Direct link/liaison with RC/HC, HCT, Government, partners, clusters, OCHA regional office and/or headquarters • Strategic planning/direction • Ensure cohesion/connectivity within the team • Sign-off on external reporting • Focal point for security matters • Focal point for general team matters • Media policy approval • Safety and security management
Deputy Team Leader	• Daily management of team/mission, OSOCC management • Stand in for Team Leader when necessary and fulfil Team Leader's functions • Assign/track physical locations of team members • Liaison with operational sub-teams • Safety and security planning for the team • Manage team handover/exit strategy to subsequent teams, national authorities, OCHA, etc. • UNDAC Mission Platform workspace • Oversee reporting and information management • Internal communication • Media policy implementation
Team Support and Logistics Management	• Coordination of internal logistics • Logistical support to inter-agency missions • Management of team resources and technical support staff • Organisation of accommodation, transport, local support, translators, etc. • Establish/enforce filing system • Finance management

Information Management	• Management of internal information flow • UNDAC Mission Platform workspace • Information on web-platforms, etc. • Mapping • Information management products (3W, contact list, etc.)
Reporting	• Reporting, media and public information • Media policy advice/development • Support humanitarian financing (Flash Appeal, CERF, Financial Tracking System)
Disaster Management and Coordination	• Advise Team Leader and works with concerned authorities and disaster management partners, including: • Optimising use of available resources and prioritising response activities • Coordination of international teams • Support to coordination of needs assessment • Reporting and information management including with affected communities and authorities • Input on safety and security management • Liaison, including creating the link between civil protection and UN/international response mechanisms • Management of UNDAC support teams • Input to public information initiatives • Handover to longer term OCHA team/exit strategy

Humanitarian Response and Coordination	Advise Team Leader and works with concerned authorities and humanitarian partners, including:
	
	• Coordination of humanitarian actors
	• Establishment of an accountable humanitarian framework, principles and standards in support of UN, Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs providing protection and assistance activities
	• Advises on humanitarian sectors and clusters and on humanitarian financing mechanisms
	• Where several clusters or sectors are established, OCHA/UNDAC should:
	  » Set up an Inter-Cluster Coordination Group (ICCG) at the earliest opportunity, if not already existing, and ensure that regular meetings are held.
	  » Facilitate meetings and instigate operationalisation of strategies/policies established in the HCT.
	  » Encourage collaboration, sharing of information and building trust, both with the cluster coordinators as well as amongst them.
	  » Support clusters in establishing regular cluster coordination, e.g., information management, facilitation of separate meetings, creating links with relevant national authorities, etc.
	
	• Support to coordination of needs assessment
	• Reporting and information management, including with affected communities and authorities
	• Input on safety and security management
	• Assistance in (but not overall responsibility for) drafting of funding requests
	• Assistance in handover to longer term OCHA team/exit strategy

Assessment and Analysis	• Coordinates the Assessment and Analysis Cell (by both field-based and remote coordination) • Coordinate and prioritises assessment and analysis activities in a time-sensitive manner to inform the response • Advise Team Leader and works with concerned authorities, disaster management and humanitarian partners, including: • Providing impact estimations, situational updates, briefing notes and situation analysis • Providing expertise in assessment tools and methodologies and establishing an Assessment and Analysis Working Group (AAWG) if needed • Coordination of assessments and writing of assessment report(s) • Presentations and feedback to key decision-makers including sector/cluster leads and operational agencies • Preparation of assessment information for public disclosure • Ensuring accountability for the correct use and dissemination of assessment information
USAR coordination	Serve as UNDAC RDC/USAR Liaison Officer (LO), as spelled out in **Chapter G.10.1**, and in the INSARAG USAR Coordination (UC) Handbook, located at OSOCC or UCC depending on the scale and complexity of the USAR response. The roles of LO include: • Establish relationships with USAR coordination, including UCC and RDC • Assist USAR operations by advocating with LEMA, UN agencies, as well as international NGOs. • Provide strategic support to USAR operations, including transitioning from life-rescue activities. • Support logistics and operations, especially in cases of conflict among USAR teams. • Facilitate humanitarian data collection after the life-rescue phase when requested by A&A Cell.
UN-CMCoord	• Establish information sharing with Foreign Military Assets (FMA), task division and coordinated operational planning. • Establish common situational awareness. • Ensure the appropriate use of domestic and foreign military assets. • Support humanitarian priorities determined by humanitarian coordination mechanisms. • Establish a request for assistance (RFA) mechanism. • Document and report on the use of FMA.
Environmental emergencies	Coordinate the response to the environmental emergency, including: • Identify possible impacts arising from damaged infrastructures such as industrial or chemical facilities suffering from fires, explosions, chemical leakages, etc. • Identify possible impacts related to the physical environment, including landslides due to flooding or earthquakes, asbestos dust from damaged buildings, damaged dams at risk of breaking, avalanches, ash and lava from volcanoes, etc. • Mobilise environmental subject matter expertise for further assessment of environmental impacts.

EMT coordination	• Link up with the WHO country office to know the status of the EMT Coordination Cell (EMTCC) activation or the level of preparedness for establishing a coordination mechanism for EMTs and ensure linkages. • If EMT coordination is required and the team considers more support may be necessary, this can be raised with the WHO EMT Secretariat or through the UNDAC mission focal point in OCHA ERS. • If requested by WHO, and in line with OCHA-WHO agreement, provide support to EMT coordination. • Identify UNDAC EMTCC trained team member(s) to possibly support the activation and functioning of the EMTCC.
Safety and Security (S&S)	• Develop and maintain a basic safety and security plan and provide briefings to the UNDAC team • Serve as a focal point between the UNDAC team and the UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) in the country.
Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)	In support of the RC/HC, ensure that PSEA is mainstreamed and operationalised throughout relevant coordination structures, including the establishment of additional mechanisms as needed.
Gender	Ensure that gender concerns are mainstreamed and highlighted in relevant coordination structures, response planning and operations.
Accountability to Affected People	Ensure that AAP concerns are mainstreamed and highlighted in relevant coordination structures, response planning and operations.
Inclusion	Ensure that inclusion concerns are mainstreamed and highlighted in relevant coordination structures, response planning and operations.
Localisation	Ensure that localisation is mainstreamed and highlighted in relevant coordination structures, response planning and operations.

B.7.2 Qualifications and training

UNDAC members have diverse skill sets that enable OCHA to deploy specialised teams adapted to the context and situation. UNDAC teams demonstrate leadership capacities that are closely aligned to those required of OCHA P-4 and P-5 staff, i.e., the two highest categories of Professional-level UN staff, to improve acceptance, understanding and performance of UNDAC teams on mission. The UNDAC system also encourages leadership through close functional synergies to those required of OCHA surge staff, especially at senior levels.

An added value of the UNDAC system is the deployment of fully functioning teams as opposed to individuals. This enables an UNDAC team to cover a wide variety of functions and bridge the different demands of national disaster management and international humanitarian response, as well as draw on existing regional networks and relationships.

In addition to the concepts enshrined in the UNDAC Cornerstones (**Subchapter B.5**), all UNDAC members are required to demonstrate knowledge of the following areas:

• **International emergency environment –** Including the stakeholders in emergency response, different types of national disaster management systems, mandates of major international humanitarian organisations and a general

understanding of international law applicable to international disaster response.

- **Disasters resulting from natural hazards –** Including consequences of different types of natural hazards, determinants of risk (hazard, exposure, vulnerability), response capacity and operating in an emergency environment.

- **Environmental emergencies –** Defined as a sudden-onset disaster or accident resulting from natural or human-made factors (or a combination of both) that cause or threaten to cause severe environmental damage as well as loss of human lives and property. Technological disasters are one type of environmental emergency, which can be caused by man or triggered by a natural-hazard related disaster.

- **Complex emergencies –** Including understanding the intricate socio-political, economic, and cultural contexts, effective interagency coordination, addressing protection concerns for civilians, applying conflict-sensitive approaches, and focusing on sustainable, long-term solutions to aid in recovery and resilience-building efforts within affected communities.

- **Disaster management –** Including coordination and direct management of urgent actions to respond to the entire spectrum of emergency needs.

- **Humanitarian coordination –** Including humanitarian principles and standards, international humanitarian architecture and functioning, coordination structures, the Cluster Approach and the latest developments.

- **OCHA's mandate –** Including its mission statement, structure, functioning, the role of the ERC, emergency response tools and services including humanitarian financing, the UNDAC system, concept and methodology (including generic ToR) and UNDAC best practices from missions.

- **Cultural sensitivity –** Including a deep understanding of the cultural nuances, local customs, and traditions in the areas of deployment and how it aids in establishing trust and navigating challenges more effectively.

- **Emotional intelligence and stress management –** Including self-awareness, empathy, and resilience in high-stress situations, allowing for effective decision-making and interpersonal interactions amidst challenging circumstances.

- **Humanitarian Negotiations –** Including knowledge of and essential competencies and abilities in conflict resolution, consensus building, and soft skills that are vital for navigating complex and sensitive situations, especially in environments affected by conflict. These skills should be employed with humility, respect, patience, and cultural/religious sensitivity, serving as crucial facilitators to accomplish objectives.

- **Crisis Communication –** Including clear and effective communication skills, understanding the importance of clear, concise, and culturally sensitive messaging in an emergency context, ensuring that information is accessible and understandable across diverse audiences, irrespective of literacy levels or linguistic barriers.

- **Online resources –** Including the most relevant websites, databases, country information, reference sources, exchange platforms, etc.

Following successful completion of the Induction course and mandatory safety and security training, national UNDAC members must be issued with UN contracts prior to being deployable. The contracts are issued at the discretion of OCHA ERS and are valid for two years. A valid UNDAC contract does not guarantee deployment. UNDAC members from OCHA and other UN organisations already hold a UN contract and are hence released from their day-to-day duties for the duration of their UNDAC deployment. For each UNDAC mission, team composition is established by OCHA ERS based on the specific needs.

B.7.3 The wider UNDAC network

Trained UNDAC members who, for various reasons, are not deployable, represent a huge asset for the UNDAC system. They are considered a source of support for the UNDAC system as a whole, as well as, on occasion, specific support to UNDAC missions and activities. This global network also includes others who have become aware and supportive of UNDAC's role, services and methodology, e.g., through former membership of the UNDAC team, awareness courses or other training events or exercises, UNDAC missions, partner organisations and other response networks, etc. The wider UNDAC network is encouraged to promote understanding and acceptance of UNDAC within their own

organisation, country or region, as well as provide mission, training or other kinds of remote support.

B.8 UNDAC support

UNDAC teams deploying to an emergency must be fully operational and self-sufficient from the moment they land in the affected country. Immediately following a disaster, the team may face damaged infrastructure and communications, unsafe or destroyed buildings and a serious disruption to daily life, facilities and services. UNDAC teams may, therefore, have to bring their own telecommunications, technology, office equipment, tented accommodation and food. Mobilising this kind of support for an UNDAC team is vital to ensuring the team can start to do its job as soon as it arrives at the disaster site.

In addition to ICT, infrastructure and logistics support, specific skills might be required to complement the UNDAC team, including Geospatial Information Services (GIS), remote sensing assessment and analysis, etc. UNDAC Operational Partners providing such services will either be fully integrated or deployed alongside the team. To ensure that UNDAC missions are sufficiently supported, OCHA has developed several partnerships with Governments, regional organisations, NGOs and the private sector.

B.8.1 UNDAC Operational Partners

Support services can be provided by one or several of the UNDAC operational partners listed below. An UNDAC operational partner has signed a Letter of Intent with OCHA that stipulates the nature of the support provided and the deployment arrangements. All UNDAC partners adhere to the UNDAC Partnership Framework document that outlines the relationship. UNDAC partners support UNDAC missions on a 'best effort' basis; they are not formally committed to deploy with UNDAC but will make their best effort to do so depending on funding, staff availability, security restrictions, etc. The type of support, the size of the support team and the duration of the mission will all be discussed at the time of the deployment request and determined by the needs of the mission.

UNDAC Operational Partners can broadly be split into two groups: those specialised in Assessment and Analysis, and those specialised in Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and Logistics:

Assessment and Analysis (A&A)

To ensure adequate decision-making support, an activation of A&A Cell may take place, where partners agree on initial priorities and immediately start working remotely, using commonly accessible tools for online collaboration, to produce analytical outputs such as initial briefing notes, impact estimations and maps. If a field component is needed, OCHA/UNDAC and the operational partners can deploy experts to establish a physical A&A Cell under the umbrella of an Emergency Operations Centre (EOC)/ On-Site Operations Coordination Centre (OSOCC). For more information, see **Chapter F.2** on Assessment and Analysis.

A&A Cell leverages the joint capacities of OCHA Information Management colleagues, UNDAC, Operational Partners, and others: ACAPS, EU Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC), Humanity & Inclusion (HI), International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), MapAction, IMPACT/REACH, Télécoms Sans Frontières (TSF), UNITAR, UNOSAT and local/regional or specialised partners.

Operational Partners with expertise in A&A include:

- **ACAPS (Formerly known as ''Assessment Capacities Project')**
  Established in 2009, ACAPS is an independent information provider that specialises in humanitarian needs analysis and assessment. This includes independent and multisectoral data and analysis, tailored analytical products, scenario-building workshops, and field assessments upon request. The team comprises more than 100 professionals from around the world and provides its services on a global scale - remotely as well as through deployment in form of rapid analyses (multi sectoral, thematic, and anticipatory) as well as IM support and quantitative analysis. ACAPS tends to provide their complementary expertise on UNDAC missions as a part of the A&A cells to deliver key products such as

situation analyses.

To know more please refer to: https://www.acaps.org/en/.

- **iMMAP Inc.**

iMMAP Inc. is an international not-for-profit organisation that provides information management services to humanitarian and development organisations, enabling partners to make informed decisions that provide targeted assistance to vulnerable populations. It has been at the forefront of information management support for humanitarian clusters (UN and International NGOs): Logistics, WASH, Health, Protection, Education, Nutrition, Camp Management, Protection, Food Security, and Gender-Based Violence. Their team deploys Information Management Officers alongside the UNDAC Team, supporting activities such as the 3Ws ('Who, What, Where'), needs assessments, and crafting infographics, all focused on assessing the urgent needs of affected populations.

To know more please refer to: https://immap.org/.

- **MapAction**

MapAction is an NGO that helps anticipate, prepare for and respond to humanitarian emergencies. They achieve this by providing partners with the geospatial, mapping and data expertise needed to make key humanitarian decision making work. Their team is composed of 25 staff and circa 80 expert volunteers, supporting local, national, regional and global partners - most of its capacity is provided by skilled GIS volunteers trained to work in disaster response situations. MapAction deploys alongside the UNDAC Team to provide situational data analysis, data visualisation and geospatial expertise, whilst its remote team provides support by gathering, processing and checking data, and creating products. MapAction also actively supports UNDAC training and methodology development.

To know more please refer to: https://mapaction.org/

- **REACH - IMPACT INITIATIVES**

Created in 2010, REACH is a joint initiative of IMPACT Initiatives, ACTED and the United Nations Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNOSAT). REACH activities are conducted in support and within the framework of inter-agency coordination mechanisms at field and global levels to enable more efficient aid planning and response.

REACH's teams consist of 400 assessment, data analysis, geographic information system and field coordination experts, based across the 20+ countries. Furthermore, large-scale assessments are made possible by the contribution of over 800 short-term staff that join REACH on a yearly basis to support data collection and field implementation.

The global programme team of REACH is hosted by IMPACT Initiatives in Geneva, which provides strategic oversight and technical support for country teams. In addition to their presence in protracted crises, REACH regularly deploys to sudden onset humanitarian crises, supporting evidence-based aid planning and delivery from the very beginning of new emergencies. REACH also tends to provide their complementary expertise on UNDAC missions as a part of the A&A Cell to deliver key products such as situation analyses. .

To know more please refer to: https://www.reach-initiative.org/

- **UNOSAT**

The United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNOSAT) provides timely, high quality mapping services and geospatial information products using GIS and satellite imagery, offering timely and high-quality geospatial information to decision-makers. UNOSAT develops solutions on integrating field-collected data with remote sensing imagery and GIS data through web-mapping and information-sharing mechanisms.

UNOSAT has a 24/7 rapid mapping service ready to support UNDAC during all phases of a humanitarian crisis with a full range of timely and reliable satellite-derived products, as well as satellite image analyses and geospatial information technologies. The service can be activated by sending a request to emergencymapping@unosat.org or by calling the hotline +41 75 411 49 98. However, when there is an UNDAC deployment, UNOSAT, as an operational partner, automatically activates to remotely assist the deployed team members.

To know more please refer to: https://unosat.org/

Information and communication technologies (ICT) and logistics

Operational Partners with expertise in ICT and logistics include:

- **Americas Support Team (AST)**
  Formed in the early 2000s, the Americas Support Team (AST) was created using the International Humanitarian Partnership model, with modification to support the characteristics of the Americas Region; it can be deployed to sudden-onset and/or complex emergencies, and is also used in the region to support UNDAC and INSARAG training programs and exercises. It is staffed and maintained by members of the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department, USA 01 INSARAG classified USAR team. It is rostered with specially trained personnel who have expertise in ICT, logistics, field assessments, and information management.
  The AST is primarily deployed to provide support to UNDAC, as well as to establish a Reception & Departure Centre and OSOCC. Its focus is to assist in the coordination efforts between the Local Emergency Management Agency (LEMA), NGOs, and the United Nations. The AST is sponsored by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA).
  To know more please refer to: https://www.usaid.gov/ and https://vatf1.org/

- **Atlas Logistique – Handicap International (HI)**
  Atlas Logistique is an operational unit within Humanity & Inclusion and provides a large scope of expertise in the field of humanitarian emergency logistics worldwide. It is composed of experienced humanitarian logisticians with strong backgrounds in the following areas: emergency logistic coordination, emergency supply chain coordination, facilities management, logistics capacities assessments, safety and security management in a fragile environment, and logistics information management and reporting.
  Their main objective when deploying Logistics experts with UNDAC is to facilitate the access to affected populations and areas for the humanitarian community, with a focus on first responders. They facilitate this through the following areas of support:

  » Logistics & Infrastructure support, including coordination of logistics & infrastructures resources embedded into the UNDAC mission, through the management of OSOCC and Sub-OSOCCs.

  » Operations coordination support, including support to the assessment activities, technical support to the NEMA's logistics operations and humanitarian partners' logistics planning.

  » Logistics & Access assessment and analysis, including collection of information on logistics capacity and constraints, with a focus on access to hard-to-reach affected areas and communities.

  To know more please refer to: https://www.hi.org/fr/atlas-logistique

- **Cascos Blancos (White Helmets)**
  The White Helmets of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship of Argentina are in charge of designing and implementing humanitarian assistance. They are reliant on a volunteer corps, through a working model based on cooperation, solidarity and community participation. They act at the request of an affected country or within the framework of a call for international humanitarian assistance. They work on rehabilitation, reconstruction and development tasks, and promote risk prevention and management, in Argentina and abroad. Their support services to the UNDAC team are usually contained within the realm of ICT.
  To know more please refer to: https://www.cancilleria.gob.ar/en/foreign-policy/white-helmets

- **DHL Group**
  DHL provides on-site logistical support at airports to ensure successful processing and dispatch of relief supplies. In the first phase of an emergency response, airports can be overwhelmed by the high number of incoming relief flights, normal operations may be suspended, and additional logistics support may be required. They have established a global network consisting of around 900 specially trained employees who volunteer their time to be a part of our Disaster Response Teams (DRT). There are DRTs for the Americas (Panama), the Middle East/Africa (Dubai) and Asia Pacific (Singapore) regions, which can be on the ground and operational

at a disaster-site airport within 72 hours. A DRT for the European Union is expected to be launched in 2024.

Specially trained logistics experts will be deployed to affected airports. They will ensure that essential relief supplies, such as food, medicine, and hygiene kits, are handled swiftly and efficiently, avoiding obstruction of operations. Locally, DHL collaborates with NGOs, efficiently managing warehousing and logistics to support country-level response. The goal is to empower communities at the grassroots through fostering resilience and solidarity during challenging times. On UNDAC missions, DHL's scope includes airport ground operations support as well as warehouse management.

To know more please refer to: https://group.dhl.com/en/sustainability/social-impact-programs/disaster-management/disaster-response-teams.html

- **Fuel Relief Fund (FRF)**
  FRF is an international non-profit NGO based in the USA and the Netherlands and is the charitable organisation focused exclusively on fuel provision in natural-hazard related disasters and complex emergencies. FRF sends teams of highly trained, specialised volunteers to major disasters, partnering with local communities, fuel and energy corporations, local, national and regional government administrations, to execute a coordinated disaster response. Serving as an operational support partner of OCHA and member of INSARAG, FRF identifies fuel requirements, types and sources as well as transportation to meet fuel needs.

  To know more please refer to: https://fuelrelieffund.org/

- **The International Humanitarian Partnership (IHP)**
  The International Humanitarian Partnership (IHP) is a voluntary multinational cooperation between governmental emergency management agencies, active in the field of humanitarian assistance. The agencies are part of, funded by, and supported by their respective Governments. It consists of the following agencies: CGDIS - Luxembourg Rescue Services Agency, DEMA - Danish Emergency Management Agency, ERB - Estonian Rescue Board, ESAF - Emergency Services Academy Finland, DSB - Norwegian Directorate for Civil

Protection, MSB – Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency, DFID – UK Department for International Development, and THW - German Federal Agency for Technical Relief.

IHP provides operational, technical and financial support to multilateral organisations engaged in humanitarian work, primarily the United Nations, but also the European Union and other relief organisations. The collaboration is managed by a chairmanship system with a dedicated chairperson assigned among the members. The chair position rotates on a 1 ½ year basis. Each IHP member organisation has a dedicated IHP Focal Point responsible for the collaboration. The IHP Secretariat is provided by UNOCHA, Geneva. The objectives of IHP are to:

- » Enhance operational capacity in emergencies through deployment of specialised surge capacity (experts and equipment) to multilateral organisations.
- » Improve operational efficiency and effectiveness in emergencies.
- » Strengthen coordination of humanitarian assistance and facilitate information sharing as well as encourage cooperation between various actors in emergencies.
- » Provide a practical demonstration of donor government cooperation and coordination.
- » Enhance emergency preparedness, through capacity building, trainings and exercises.

IHP provides support modules to a large number of UNDAC missions in areas such as Information Management, ICT, base camp management, medical, as well as assessment experts. When an UNDAC team is deployed, OCHA assesses support needs and alerts the Chair of the IHP, who in turn liaises with the member countries to determine who can best deliver the support required in the time available.

To know more please refer to: https://www.ihp.nu/

- **Télécoms Sans Frontières (TSF)**
  Founded in 1998, TSF is a humanitarian NGO specialised in emergency telecommunications and new technologies for humanitarian response. TSF can deploy telecom specialists from its headquarters or regional bases within 24 hours to support disaster response. TSF's mandate focuses on providing access to information

for those affected by humanitarian crises and installing emergency communications centres for aid agencies.

In the field with UNDAC, TSF provides communications solutions to facilitate the assessment of the population's pending priority needs as well as the efficient management of information. They tend to be embedded as an IT support module who assess telecom needs of aid agencies and ensure internet connectivity for OSOCCs. In addition, TSF is called upon to provide training exercises and participate in simulation exercises. To know more please refer to: https://www.tsfi.org/en

B.8.2 UNDAC support services

Depending on the mission requirements, OCHA ERS will seek to mobilise and deploy support to all UNDAC missions. At a minimum, this may include ICT support to ensure data and voice communication but may be expanded to include a range of other services.

The services available through partners (outlined in detail below) to augment the UNDAC mission are:

- **Assessment and Analysis and Information Management**

  » **GIS and remote sensing –** UNDAC partners provide emergency mapping services and satellite imagery analysis to help identify the impact of a sudden-onset event and contribute to the overall situation analysis. Such partners bring in expertise and knowledge in this field as well as the required software, tools and data, e.g., satellite imagery acquisition or baseline maps.

  » **Assessment and Analysis (A&A) –** Humanitarian needs analysis and assessment can be strengthened both at field level and through remote support. When deploying with or alongside UNDAC, such partners will, on most occasions, be included in the OSOCC A&A Cell (see **Subchapter F.2** for more on A&A methodology and set-up). Subject-matter experts will support the A&A work with data collection, analysis and development of situational updates, briefing notes and situation analyses.

- **Infrastructure and logistics support services**

  » **ICT service package –** Provides information and communication technology to support a standard first responder team, e.g., an UNDAC or equivalent emergency response team. The service includes basic communications, internet access, office services, etc., and allows the team to operate from different locations. May also complement an RDC, coordination centres or offices. The package is accompanied by 2-3 experts who arrange installation of equipment, ensure maintenance, provide user support, as well as general practical and logistical support.

  » **Logistics support services –** Speedy transport in the field may be key to the success of an UNDAC mission. UNDAC partners can deploy logistics experts to support the team's activities and act as service provider, including securing transport vehicles, identifying suitable housing and office space, supplying the team with office goods and other required material. Typically, such support partners will be part of the OSOCC Support function (see **Section D.3.4**).

  » **Coordination centre –** Provides equipment for the set-up and management of an OSOCC or other type of coordination centre, including high-speed internet access, wireless LAN, laser printer and photocopier facilities. May be housed in tents, prefabs or existing buildings, depending on the available resources on the ground. The coordination centre service is designed on a case-by-case basis and is deployed with a minimum of two support staff to establish the facilities and infrastructure and provide regular maintenance.

  » **Light and heavy base camp –** At short notice, UNDAC partners can deploy a light base camp to support UNDAC with a tented concept providing basic services during a short timeframe, normally 2-8 weeks. The concept may include accommodation, offices, catering services, water and sanitation facilities, communications equipment and logistics services. The light base camp may supplement a coordination centre.

  » Similarly, a heavier base camp can be deployed in support to the wider humanitarian

community. The heavy base camp is a comprehensive quality tented concept for office and accommodation facilities, including all necessary equipment and services. The concept may include office, accommodation, meeting rooms, water and sanitation facilities, kitchen and catering service, tools and equipment, water purification and distribution, power supply and distribution, etc. The base camp provides sleeping areas with personal privacy, offices with appropriate workstations, catering service (three healthy and balanced meals per day and water). While UNDAC might be part of requesting the deployment of a heavy base camp and facilitate the camp's arrival, the management of the camp will be supported by other operational UN agencies. See **Subchapter H.5** Facilities for more information on determining camp locations.

- **Administrative support**
  Administrative support for an UNDAC mission will be provided mainly through the Office of the RC/HC, the regional/country office or through dedicated admin team members (rather than the Operational Partners listed above) and will usually include arrangements for entry to the affected country, e.g., visa on arrival, airport pick-up, accommodation, in-country transport and liaison with national and local officials.
  Many UNDAC missions require extensive administrative skills and knowledge of UN internal procedures. To this end, OCHA ERS has trained several of its administrative staff on the UNDAC mission cycle and team functioning, and can deploy them as part of an UNDAC team to support various administrative tasks, e.g., finance, hiring of national staff, cost-plans, etc.
  In addition, UNDAC can be supported remotely, either by UNDAC members going on "remote surge" or by ERS staff from OCHA, for example to assist with reporting and coordination until sufficient staff are on the ground, and to serve as a liaison to support the UNDAC

Mission Focal Point.
For more on the administrative support provided by OCHA ERS and modalities of remote support, visit **Subchapter H.1** on Administrative Support, H.2 on Logistics Support, and H.3 on Remote Support.

B.8.3 Mobilization of support services from UNDAC Operational Partners

Support services play a crucial role in facilitating effective response efforts during UNDAC deployments. These services may be mobilised through various channels, such as:

- Upon request of OCHA management.
- Upon request of the UNDAC Team Leader before departure and in cooperation with the mission focal point of OCHA ERS.
- Automatically (in situations where there is an obvious need for equipment and/or staff support to an UNDAC mission, such as earthquakes or other devastating sudden-onset disasters).

Standing arrangements enable OCHA to mobilise the support services alongside the UNDAC team. The arrangements for the deployment of the support teams to the field are made on the basis of cooperation between the responding countries and OCHA.

In addition to their technical and subject-matter skills, many of the staff from UNDAC partners have undertaken UNDAC Operational Partners support staff training which ensures that they can assist in OSOCC operations and other tasks of an UNDAC team. Support staff members will always bring their own personal kit and equipment to ensure their ability to operate. Many UNDAC support staff also have extensive mission experience. They should be fully integrated into the team and may, in many cases, take responsibility for one or several of the functional areas of the team.

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C.
UNDAC
MISSION CYCLE

United Nations

Section contents

C. UNDAC MISSION CYCLE

An UNDAC mission normally follows a typical operational cycle, covering three interrelated phases of activity: pre-mission, on-mission and post-mission. Awareness of the mission cycle and of the required actions per phase will help UNDAC members anticipate and plan operational activities in the field.

Figure C.1: UNDAC mission cycle overview
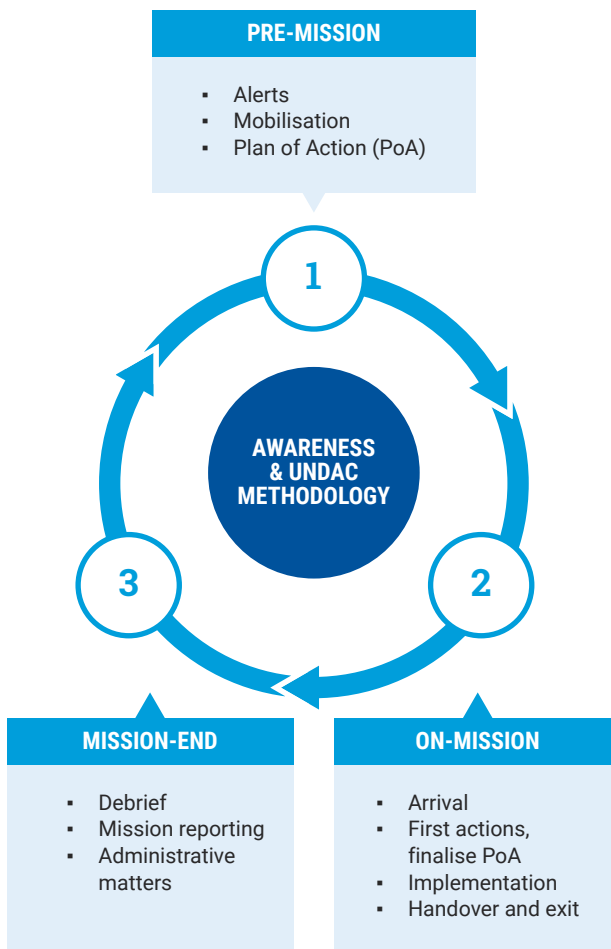
This chapter provides detailed information on each stage of the mission cycle, including actions to be taken by individual members, by the Team Leader, UNDAC as a team, and OCHA ERS. A comprehensive checklist can be found in the short version of the UNDAC Handbook.

C.1 Pre-mission

UNDAC members are expected to deploy anywhere in the world within 12-48 hours after a request is made. OCHA has well-established and practised procedures to ensure that a team can be alerted, mobilised and deployed within this timeframe, as described in this chapter.

To facilitate the rapid assembly of an UNDAC team with the necessary complementary skill sets, participating countries and member organisations need to establish internal procedures to enable their UNDAC members to avail themselves as soon as possible following an alert, while individual UNDAC members need to ensure their ongoing personal preparedness. The receipt of an UNDAC alert is not the time to start thinking about what to bring, who to call to ask for permission, or to check the validity of passports and vaccinations. General advice on pre-mission preparedness and a suggested checklist for individuals (including documentation, medical preparedness, and personal equipment) can be found in **Chapter J** with Reference Material and in **Chapter I** on Personal Health. Having steps prepared in advance helps to keep a clear mind and mitigate the effects of stress that naturally go with being alerted for a mission.

C.1.1 Alerts & mobilisation

An alert is sent to deployable UNDAC members through automated SMS messages and emails via the Virtual On-Site Operations Coordination Centre (VOSOCC), either globally or to regional teams as the situation requires. UNDAC national focal points may also receive these alerts if they wish. These alerts include a link leading directly to the VOSOCC page where UNDAC members should indicate their availability for the mission. Should the VOSOCC be unusable for any reason, UNDAC members can also indicate their availability by emailing undac@un.org and bilaterally notifying the OCHA ERS.

Note: UNDAC members should only indicate their availability for a mission if they are personally ready

M1 - Alert	• When a disaster is deemed likely to require deployment of an UNDAC team, the OCHA ERS issues an alert to UNDAC members after the creation of a dedicated page for it on the VOSOCC.
	• The automated SMS and e-mail is sent to UNDAC members and national UNDAC focal points informing them of the alert (M1) and asking UNDAC members to indicate their availability. The M1 message includes an initial Terms of Reference (TOR),
	• UNDAC members indicate their mission availability through the VOSOCC (after checking with their UNDAC national or operational focal point, or their respective management, as applicable). Those UNDAC members confirming availability to deploy must share their contact details, closest airport, and earliest possible departure time.
M2 - Standby	• OCHA ERS selects an UNDAC team from amongst the available UNDAC members and under consideration of the mission TOR stated in M1, based on the type and location of the disaster, relevant skill sets and individual profiles (including language and soft skills), visa requirements and passport restrictions.
	• Through the VOSOCC, OCHA ERS sends an automated SMS and e-mail standby message (M2) to all individual UNDAC members that have indicated availability and national UNDAC or agency focal points, indicating the names of members selected for standby.
	• The selected UNDAC members are additionally emailed a document containing information regarding the mission. This document includes a form to be signed and returned to OCHA ERS to confirm the receipt of the M2 standby message and agreement to deploy on the mission.
	• The selected UNDAC members should already be preparing for departure.
M3a - Dispatch	• OCHA ERS determines the final team composition and issues the dispatch message (M3a) to the selected UNDAC team members by automated SMS and emails through the VOSOCC. From this point onwards, UNDAC members are considered to be (remotely) on mission and start working.
	• In consultation with the deploying team members, the OCHA ERS organises or assists travel for the team members directly to the area of operation or to a staging location (in case of any travel restrictions) as follows:
	» For national UNDAC Members: Travel itinerary and electronic ticket will be issued by OCHA ERS.
	» For OCHA staff and staff from other member and partner organisations: The latter will do their own travel arrangements, in consultation with OCHA ERS.
	• OCHA ERS issues a travel attestation (in lieu of visa) that UNDAC team members must carry in hard copy.
	• OCHA ERS prepares for the team's arrival to the area of operation or to a staging location (e.g., visa arrangements with RC/HC Office and the Government, including support letters for visas before/upon arrival; airport pickup, accommodation, etc.).
	• Team communication is set up through email, Signal groups and the UNDAC Mission Workspace by OCHA ERS.
	• While it is the primary responsibility of UNDAC Member States to ensure their members are covered by a medical insurance, OCHA ERS has contracted a subsidiary insurance for all team members, including Operational Support Partners, covering the following services:

» Emergency Number 24/7,

» Assistance and medical evacuation,

» Contingency planning, and

» Claim settlements, e.g., doctors, hospitalisation, medicines, etc.

Further details on insurance coverage and procedures can be found in the UNDAC Toolbox or requested from OCHA ERS. Insurance coverage for OCHA colleagues and colleagues from other UN agencies is provided in accordance with UN standards. OCHA ERS will verify insurance coverage for deployments to conflict-affected areas.

Note: All other personal insurances (such as additional luggage/travel insurance, life insurance, etc.) are the responsibility of the selected member or their sponsoring Government/organisation.

• Selected UNDAC members complete their travel authorisation requests with the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) and security clearance through TRIP (Travel Request Information Processing), which **must** be received by members before departure. OCHA ERS will support travel authorisation and security clearance requests with UNDSS for those selected members who cannot do it themselves.

• OCHA staff **must** receive medical clearance before official travel. National UNDAC members have already signed health certification as part of their contract. Operational partners follow their own protocols.

• Selected members physically depart on mission (to either area of operation or staging location).

to deploy and after they have confirmation from their deploying office/organisation/entity.

Mobilisation of an UNDAC team will commence upon the occurrence or early warning of a sudden-onset disaster in which preliminary information indicates that an UNDAC team might be needed and requested. Where there is sufficient warning, e.g., in case of cyclones, etc., the decision may be made to pre-position an UNDAC team in the country if circumstances permit.

Mobilisation follows a pre-set, three-stage process: **M1 – Alert, M2 – Standby, M3a – Dispatch.**

Two other mobilisation notifications exist that may sometimes be utilised:

- **M0 – Be Aware**
  An informational message requiring no action, intended to provide advance information or early warning of a possible emergency to UNDAC members without yet issuing an actual alert or requesting deployment.

- **M3b – Stand Down**
  This message cancels a previously issued M1 or M2 in the event that the situation no longer requires an UNDAC deployment.

OCHA ERS' emergency number during a mobilisation is +41 22 917 1600. This number is normally manned 24/7 by the Duty Officer of OCHA ERS and will be transferred to the OCHA ERS Mission Focal Point.

C.1.2 Team set-up

Once the confirmed team composition is known, final individual preparations should be made and, led by the designated Team Leader, the team should start the following:

- Confirm travel arrangements, flights and personal luggage requirements, visa requirements, Daily Subsistence Allowance (DSA), attestation, etc.

- Obtain disaster-specific information, such as consequences, likely living conditions, equipment needed and other requirements.

- Install and log into the UNDAC Mission Workspace (GDrive) and the specific mission folder, and access the mission e-mail. See also **Section C.3.1** below.

- Receive the contact list of the UNDAC team (phone, email, passport info, blood type, etc.) from OCHA ERS.

- Determine mission objectives, Terms of Reference (ToR), and functions.

- Identify counterparts relevant to the mission in the affected country, regionally or globally (e.g., UN, NGOs, local authorities, or remote support such as UNOSAT, Dataminr, etc.).

- Hold the first virtual team meeting that should include a discussion of the security risk context including the security measures that will be required in the operating area as well as a reminder to uphold UN standards of conduct. Start the team-building process by reaching out to all members, discussing individual skills, strengths and weaknesses.

- Research context-specific information, political and socio-economic situation, climatic conditions, medical requirements, security situation, lessons learned from previous responses, etc. Upload to the VOSOCC as appropriate.

- Consult secondary information sources, e.g., international/national, media, social media, humanitarian websites, etc. Follow relevant social media accounts, as applicable. Watch out for accounts of the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, local organisations, channels set up by displaced persons.

C.1.3 UNDAC mission workspace

As a team, UNDAC members need to establish communication and information management protocols from the outset of the mission. The UNDAC Mission Workspace (GDrive) supports UNDAC teams allowing them to collaborate remotely, produce, share and archive documents using one single space, synchronising in a local area network or over the internet. It provides access to:

- The **UNDAC Toolbox** with key standard guidance and templates to be used on mission (that can also be used when offline).
- A Google Drive **Office Suite.**
- An **UNDAC email account** that will be created for each mission under the undac.org domain (Gmail-based, but with the email address ending on undac.org). OCHA ERS will provide the team with the newly created account and password.

Note: More addresses can be created upon request, e.g., for specific functional areas or On-Site Operations Coordination Centre (OSOCC) cells. If relevant, please contact OCHA ERS.

C.1.4 Plan of Action (PoA)

The aim of the PoA is to provide clarity to the UNDAC team and to relevant in-country, regional and global counterparts on the Terms of Reference (TOR) of the UNDAC team's deployments, the

division of roles and responsibilities within the team, and actions to be undertaken in particular situations. It establishes the foundation of the mission and is a living document that serves as the basis for further planning as the situation and response evolves.

Ownership of the PoA:

The UNDAC Team Leader is responsible for the development of the mission PoA which should begin as soon as the team composition is known. Each team member is expected to participate in the planning process, which is generally initiated by OCHA ERS and the Team Leader. The Mission Focal Point or UNDAC Team Leader will arrange a virtual team meeting as soon as possible that should additionally include the UNDAC Global Lead and relevant OCHA ERS staff. Together with OCHA ERS, the Team Leader engages with the OCHA country/regional office, OCHA headquarters and the Office of the Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator (RC/HC) to inform the development of the PoA throughout its lifecycle. It must primarily reflect the operational reality of the UNDAC team on the ground and not the more abstract and idealised product that could be aspired to if there was time for extensive consultation.

Key considerations when drafting the PoA:

- Validation and specification (as far as possible) of clear and precise operational mission objective(s) resulting from the (preliminary) mission TOR stated in the M1 alert.
- Team composition, including contact information, arrival dates, points of entry to the country, skill sets and possible roles and responsibilities.
- Initial actor mapping that includes:

  » Pre-existing disaster management/humanitarian presence and structures on the ground, including visual organigrammes, as well as additional capacities deployed to the response through other mechanisms,
  » national/local authorities,
  » local/national/international NGO counterparts and civil society organisations,
  » Private sector,
  » Parties to a conflict,

  » And other actors per context.
  » Request the UNDAC Mission Focal Point to liaise with other OCHA entities (e.g. Country/Regional office, Private Sector Unit (PS/CBI), Civil Military Coordination Service CMCS), Joint Environment Unit (JEU), Humanitarian Diplomacy and Negotiations Section (HDNS) that might also have knowledge on relevant actors or already have undertaken actor mapping).

- Available on-site support and restrictions, including logistical and resource considerations.
- Initial activities upon arrival (e.g., meeting with the RC/HC, OCHA, safety and security counterparts (such as the Designated Official, DO), national/local authorities, local/national/international NGO counterparts, community organisations, airport authorities, etc.).
- Information management strategy, including reporting requirements and agreed information products with deadlines. See **Chapter F** for more details on information strategy development.
- Internal and external communications plan.
- Handover and exit plan.

The first draft can be a light outline of the above considerations, e.g., only reflecting the structure of the team and rough objectives. This should then be expanded and concretised as more information becomes available, at the latest after arrival and first orientation in the response area or staging location.

A review of secondary data sources can provide important information about the developing situation even before primary data becomes available, and can already be done remotely prior to arrival in the country. Together with baseline and pre-crisis information, in-crisis secondary data is often the only source of information in disaster situations when communication lines may be disrupted and information is scarce, fragmented and inconsistent. In some cases, OCHA may already be issuing Flash Updates through its existing presence in the affected country or a regional office, which consolidates such information. This can be useful to the UNDAC team both ahead of their arrival and during the response. Other important sources of information for the PoA are the 12 UNDAC Generic Mission Objectives that form the Terms of Reference (ToR)

(see **Subchapter B.4**) or any preliminary ToRs already tailored for the mission (and circulated with the M2).

PoA Contents

The PoA should be kept short, simple and to the point, perhaps in bullet points, avoiding excessive detail that will likely change as the situation develops. Examples can be found in the UNDAC Toolbox.

The following content should be considered:

- **Situation**

  » Include a summary of known information on the disaster event; impacts; local, national and international response; and projected developments in the emergency situation and response, including secondary risks.

- **Mission Objectives**

  » Should reflect the UNDAC ToR and be based on the directions of the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC), the RC/HC, national and local authorities, the emergency situation, and in-country support requirements.

  » Indicate the main focus of the mission, e.g., assessment support, information management, coordination, cluster coordination support, USAR coordination, establishment of an On-Site Operations Coordination Centre (OSOCC) or Emergency Operations Centre (EOC), liaison, field coordination, and the expected geographic constellation of the mission, e.g., centred in the capital with field missions, stationed in the affected area with liaison in the capital, or in another construct.

  » Can be process-oriented or very specific. For the latter, using SMART objectives may be a useful guide:

    - Specific – Simply written and clearly defining what is going to be done.
    - Measurable – Can provide tangible evidence that objectives have been accomplished. While the overall mission objective(s) will be a measure for the mission, there are usually several short-term or smaller indicators which will need to be built in.

    - Achievable – Challenging and appropriate to the situation, but sufficiently well-defined that they can be achieved. The team must possess the appropriate knowledge, skills and abilities needed to achieve the objectives.
    - Realistic – A goal toward which the team is able to work, taking account of all the relevant factors and constraints.
    - Time-bound – Linked to a timeframe within which they should be reached.

- **Team Organisation**

  » Include a list of all team members, including their functions and affiliations (i.e., whether UNDAC member, operational partners, mission support, etc.). This should also include other OCHA staff in the response as part of a pre-existing OCHA presence or the OCHA surge mechanism (if applicable), including how the UNDAC team integrates into the wider in-country OCHA response.

  » Should cover functions such as Mission Leadership and Management (Team Leader and Deputy Team Leader), Situation (information management, assessment and analysis, reporting), Operations (coordination, liaison, etc.), Mission Support (logistics, administration, finance, and telecommunications), and Public Information and Advocacy (communications, media relations, advocacy, etc.).

  » Should include the location of each team member.

  » Clearly identify focal points for PSEA, gender, AAP, Inclusion, Localisation, etc.), see **Chapter G.2** for details.

  » Should include an organigramme (and map) visually depicting the team structure and geographic dispersion.

- **Programme of work**

  » Include a short description of the activities planned within the functional areas in order to achieve the mission objectives, as well as the relation between these activities and the timeframe for their execution.

  » Ensure that activities directly related to the mission objectives **are defined** and kept up to date.

» Consider how the existing capacities and structures of local actors (authorities, community organisations, etc.) will be considered in the programme of work, both in the short-term and medium to long term.

• **Handover and exit**

» Include an estimate of which mission activities should continue after the departure of the UNDAC team and to whom these should be handed over, as well as what activities are expected to culminate with the departure of the team. Although imprecise in the early stages of the mission, it is important to include this point for further development as the mission evolves.

» Missions are usually short and closing the loop should be considered and practised from the very beginning. Rigorous and consistent management of information throughout the mission will enable a more efficient and constructive handover, especially if the handover is to a second-wave UNDAC team or a new OCHA surge team rather than an OCHA presence that predates or substantially overlaps with the UNDAC mission. This includes a running compilation of useful resources (live dashboards, coordination platforms, data/analysis sources, etc.) as well as properly organised filing of documents within the UNDAC Mission Workspace.

• **In-country counterparts**

» Should include and disaggregate for UN, INGOs, NNGOs, Government/authorities, community organisations, as well as any other categories relevant to the response. Common important counterparts include the RC/HC, under whose authority the UNDAC team will work, the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) and other coordination bodies, as well as authorities at national and sub-national levels, including disaster management authorities, etc.

• **Logistics and resources**

» Include information on logistical arrangements already in place or required for the team, such as security, accommodation, office space, transport, telecommunications equipment/solutions, and mission finances.

» Include relevant supporting information, such as finances at deployment locations (currencies, access to required currencies en route and on site, recommended cash amounts to bring, etc.) or specific personal equipment to be brought (e.g., sleeping bags, tents, etc.).

• **Mission support (remote)**

» Include information on measures in place to backstop and provide remote support to the mission from outside the country of operation, e.g., from the relevant OCHA regional office or OCHA headquarters, or from other operational partners - including an overview of names, affiliations, functions, contact information, and expected availability.

• **Information management**

» Outline procedures for communications within the UNDAC team, as well as how information is processed and stored.

» Outline procedures for communication between the deployed UNDAC team and counterparts involved in the response both in-country and outside, e.g., with OCHA ERS, the relevant OCHA regional office, OCHA headquarters, the Office of the RC/HC, etc.

» Identify all official information products to be produced by the UNDAC team, including format, frequency, audience, contributors from within the UNDAC team, and persons responsible for creating, clearing, and disseminating each product. Processes for feeding into information products issued by other entities - such as the Office of the RC/HC - should also be clarified.

» The first report to OCHA ERS should always be sent as early as possible after the arrival of the UNDAC team followed by a regular schedule of updates as applicable.

» The information management plan can be depicted as a flow chart with an accompanying descriptive narrative. **Subchapter F.1** contains detailed information on the development of an information management strategy and **Subchapter F.3** on standard UNDAC reporting.

- **Safety and security**

  » Identify the Safety and Security (S&S) focal point within the UNDAC team.

  » Include information on safety and security concerns in the affected country and disaster area, including instructions for team movements (e.g., buddy system, reporting and identification).

  » State when, where and how UNDSS briefings are planned for the arriving team.

  » A separate template for safety and security planning is included in the UNDAC Mission Workspace. **Chapter E.2** contains detailed information on mission safety and security.

- **Media strategy**

  - Identify the media focal point(s) of the UNDAC team. These persons should be the only ones addressing the media, and usually include the Team Leader. For engaging with local media, ensure that at least one nominated spokesperson is fluent in the local language(s).

  - Include a communication strategy for local and international media, in consultation with the RC/HC and the wider OCHA response (including country and regional offices and the Strategic Communications Branch, as applicable).

  - Elaborate on the approach to developing, maintaining and regular sharing of key messages.

  - **Chapter F.4** contains further information on the development of a media strategy.

PoA as an integrated approach

When the UNDAC team is part of a wider OCHA response, the team's internal organisation, functions, leadership and reporting lines will need to be jointly defined, agreed, and well understood to ensure a coherent 'one OCHA' response. In these situations, it is usual that the existing OCHA presence, complementary OCHA surge deployments, and the UNDAC team form a single integrated team, which should be reflected in the internal organisation.

Consider that the typical UNDAC functions may differ from the setup of a typical OCHA office. An OCHA office tends to be more geared towards facilitating humanitarian coordination as part of the humanitarian response programme in the country, while UNDAC teams are also disaster-management oriented and focused on gap filling in the initial phase following a sudden-onset emergency (see **Subchapter B.5** on the UNDAC Cornerstones and **Subchapter E.1** on Team Management). This should be reflected in the PoA and all team members across all deployment mechanisms need to be aware of their own role and responsibilities as well as those of their team members.

However, integration of UNDAC and OCHA does not necessarily need to mean folding the UNDAC team into the OCHA presence. It may also mean that OCHA staff deployed as part of UNDAC would take over the most senior positions of the in-country OCHA presence for a limited duration. Ongoing awareness raising across OCHA and RC/HC offices globally about UNDAC and how it operates is critical to facilitate this, as is the need for UNDAC members in leadership functions to truly understand the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) humanitarian coordination structures, including the roles of RC/HCs and OCHA.

The PoA as a management tool

The PoA is a living document that should be regularly adjusted during the mission as the situation and response evolve, to ensure its effectiveness as a management tool and usefulness as operational guidance. A very rigid, detailed plan may be just as counterproductive as an overly superficial one, with the former risking being so detailed as to be swiftly obsolete and the latter too shallow to accurately reflect the situation and define what needs to be done. The challenge lies in finding the balance and creating a plan that provides enough of a framework to guide and structure the programme of work, especially in the first week, but flexible enough to adapt to (rapid) changes as they occur.

To ensure that the PoA remains dynamic and is used as a management tool, it may be useful to explore various display options and to define benchmarks to measure progress. This can be done in electronic format or by using large sheets of paper on a wall. Below is an example of a simple structure where mission objectives have been redefined as benchmarks on a timeline.

Figure C.2: Example of mission objectives timeline

WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3
▪ OSOCC established ▪ Links with RC/HC office, national authorities, etc. established ▪ Initial needs assessments carried out ▪ First Situational Analysis finalized ▪ Clusters established ▪ IM services established	▪ Exit strategy finalized ▪ OSOCC running ▪ Clusters running ▪ IM services expanded ▪ IHP camp sites assessed ▪ Coordinated assessments underway	▪ Non-essential functions terminated ▪ Handover note prepared ▪ Inter-cluster coordination functioning ▪ Handover completed

PoA objectives should reduce over time

Tasks to be completed could be broken down into defined activities, either for the team, for each functional area, or for individual team members as relevant. If feasible, the team should carry out an operations review each day and reflect any changes in the immediate work planned for that day and the forthcoming few days. Daily cycles of meetings, briefings, and other team activities can also be visualised, supporting a structured approach to work planning.

Figure C.3: Daily operational rhythm template for UNDAC missions

	MORNING BRIEFING	[TITLE]	MIDDAY BRIEFING [only if required]	[TITLE]	AFTERNOON BRIEFING
WHEN	9:00 – 9:30	[TIME]	12:30 – 13:00	[TIME]	16:00 – 16:30
WHAT	Morning call to hear operational update for the day from UNDAC Team Leader and determine any support requirements	Placeholder for A&A calls, staffing calls, logistics calls or similar	Brief catch up on any critical issues ongoing	Placeholder for A&A calls, staffing calls, logistics calls or similar	Afternoon call to hear operational update last 24 next 24 from UNDAC Team Leader and MFP report back on status of support requested
WHO	[Insert here]	[Insert here]	[Insert here]	[Insert here]	[Insert here]

C.2 On-Mission

This chapter covers critical actions from arrival to mission end. With a focus on meticulous planning, coordination, and adaptability, this chapter guides UNDAC personnel to operate effectively.

C.2.1 Arrival and first actions

The first 24 hours after arrival of the UNDAC team in-country are crucial to establishing credibility and subsequent functioning. Therefore, actions to be taken within the first 24 hours must be considered and prepared as carefully as possible. This is especially true for the initial meetings of the UNDAC team or UNDAC Team Leader with the RC/HC, HCT and/or the Government and other local authorities. Consider refraining from making a formal announcement about the UNDAC team's arrival until a significant portion of the team has assembled, forming a cohesive operational unit. This approach ensures that the team is sufficiently prepared to commence its mission effectively, meeting objectives and expectations. The timing for such an announcement should be determined in coordination with OCHA ERS and on a case-by-case basis, balancing the benefits of positioning the team as a coordinating entity as early as possible and living up to expected delivery as such.

The RC/HC's office or the OCHA country office, if present, is always informed of the team's arrival by OCHA ERS. OCHA ERS in consultation with the RC/HC's office or the OCHA country office and should normally have made all necessary arrangements, including visas on arrival (where necessary), equipment entry, airport pick-up and accommodations. OCHA ERS will ensure that respective pick-up and accommodation arrangements as well as expected arrival procedures are communicated to each deployed UNDAC team member prior to their arrival, along with the contact information of the focal points for the pick-ups. Each team member should ensure that their itineraries have been shared with OCHA ERS (who shares it with the receiving entities) and carry with them the contact details of relevant focal points at the destination and of OCHA ERS in case of any issues faced upon arrival or en route.

C.2.1.1 Arriving in country or to a staging location

Immediately upon arrival in the country, the team should complete the necessary immigration and customs procedures. In some countries, some equipment, such as satellite telecommunications, may have to be declared or even require prior authorisation by the host/receiving Government. Documentation to facilitate entry is normally given by OCHA to the UNDAC Team Leader or support staff carrying such equipment. Please note, however, that this is not a substitute for a visa or other immigration and customs requirements in the destination country or in transit countries. Be sure to clarify these requirements before starting your travel, including with OCHA ERS.

In situations where there may be difficulties (related to, e.g., visa requirements) entering a country immediately, OCHA ERS (after consultations with relevant counterparts) will consider staging the UNDAC team in a location near the area of operation. The team would arrive at the nearest staging location, such as the closest OCHA country or regional office, to the area of operations. Once entry requirements are clarified and granted, the UNDAC team enters the country as a cohesive unit. While awaiting permission and instructions to enter, the UNDAC team arrives at the staging location and conducts remote operations from there. This ensures that the team remains cohesive and operates from a centralised location until entry into the affected area is authorised and organised.

C.2.1.2 Security briefing

The UN person in overall charge of security issues in a country is called the Designated Official (DO) - usually the UN Resident Coordinator (RC) in that country. Prior to deployment, either UNDAC members themselves or OCHA ERS need to have applied to the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) for travel authorisation for each UNDAC team member for the mission and security clearance through TRIP. Travel authorisation and security clearances for additional travels in-country (after arrival) will be done by the UNDAC Administrative Support staff on the ground or OCHA ERS. If applicable, they will have requested special

authorisation for the team to use military aircraft or vessels in-country. Except in special circumstances, the DO is then granted authority to decide if the team may do so and should be consulted in this regard. You must not use military aircraft or vessels unless you have received specific security clearance from the DO and, where applicable, the local authorities.

UNDAC members on mission are UN staff and subject to the UN Security Management System (UNSMS). All team members must receive a security briefing from UNDSS officials in-country as soon as possible after arrival. If this is not initiated by the host organisation in the country (e.g. existing OCHA office) or the RC/HC as DO, the team should request this via the UNDAC Team Leader.

The UN Security Risk Management (SRM) model is a managerial tool under the United Nations Security Management System (UNSMS) for the analysis of safety and security threats that may affect UN personnel, assets and operations. Within the SRM, a Security Risk Assessment (SRA) will have been conducted pertaining to the country and/or location to which the UNDAC team deploys. All security decisions, security planning and implementation of measures to manage security risks must be based on the SRA. The UNDAC team should make sure to take account of this in their plans. Mission requirements will have to be balanced with security measures, e.g., authorisation for use of military aircraft, in-country travel security clearance, curfews, escorts, use of radios and specialised security equipment. Any potential conflict between mission requirements and security measures needs to be identified and addressed at the earliest stage, i.e., before the team composition is finalised. In some circumstances, an UNDAC-trained security officer from UNDSS may be part of the UNDAC team.

Immediately after a sudden-onset disaster such as an earthquake, the UNDSS safety plans will not have been updated with the potential new risks (e.g., aftershocks, building safety defects, asbestos). There may be a large number of new safety risks that need to be considered in the preparation of the action plan and that need to be assessed by the relevant experts before a new SRA can be put in place. This underscores the importance of UNDAC

teams developing their own security plan (rather than relying solely on UNDSS) and maintaining vigilance until safety has been thoroughly evaluated. Until safety has been properly assessed, UNDAC teams should exercise caution when establishing internal procedures and routines.

Subchapter E.2 Safety and Security contains detailed information on safety and security procedures. See also the Hazard Summaries in the Reference Material for a set of standard advice on "do's and don'ts" for different common disaster types.

C.2.1.3 Establish the team base and the On-Site Operations Coordination Centre (OSOCC)

In the capital, the team base of operations is generally established either in the main UN office, close to the RC/HC, with the OCHA office, or with the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA). Alternatively, the team may establish a base at another location if this is deemed more sensible in consultation with the RC/HC and OCHA. This could be at a hotel, in another UN agency office, at the office of a national/local authority, at a tented site or in another temporary infrastructure. If the team arrives directly at an emergency site where the RC/HC or OCHA is not represented, the team should proceed to identify a base from which it can operate, preferably as close as possible to the national or local authorities in charge of the emergency. The location and other aspects of establishing an OSOCC should also be informed by concerns of protection, gender, inclusion, and humanitarian access, as elucidated in **Subchapter G.2** on Protection mainstreaming and quality programming and **Chapter D** on OSOCC. Once the OSOCC location and functions have been established, the UNDAC team members can continue implementing their respective tasks and responsibilities as set out in the PoA.

C.2.1.4 Mission expenditures

OCHA ERS will normally nominate and authorise a member within the team or the RC office to incur UNDAC mission expenditure up to a given limit to cover the cost of the team's operating costs. The latter might include rental of vehicles, drivers and/or interpreters, rental of office space and equipment as required, which will be authorised in

advance by OCHA ERS. The UNDAC Team Leader will be informed of the amount in each case and authorised to collect funds and/or incur such expenditure through the UNDP office in-country where applicable.

C.2.1.5 Setting up UNDAC communication and reporting lines

- Agree with OCHA ERS on a time and method for daily updates from the field to OCHA (via, e.g., phone or email). If in writing, use the internal reporting template that can be found in the UNDAC Toolbox.

- Draft an initial UNDAC Report and share it with OCHA ERS, RC/HC, OCHA country or regional office, and others as applicable. Please note that the team will not issue an OCHA Situation Report but the UNDAC Report will be included in it. Moving forward, try and best align reporting deadlines with OCHA colleagues in charge of the Situation Reports. See also **Section F.3** for Standard UNDAC products.

- Post relevant situation updates and dedicated UNDAC contacts to the VOSOCC. Do not post full contacts list on the VOSOCC, but put the contact details of 2-3 dedicated UNDAC members on the VO who can serve as mediators and share contact lists bilaterally. This could include both UNDAC members on the ground as well as someone from OCHA ERS, to minimise the risk of such requests being overlooked.

- Establish a registration link (and QR code) for collecting contacts relevant to the response.

- Share the Safety & Security Plan with all UNDAC team members as well as the UNDAC secretariat. This should include all relevant security contact information, including for the radio room and Security Operations Centre (SOC).

- Share the location of the OSOCC and Sub-OSOCCs on the VOSOCC.

- Seek to procure local (e)SIM cards, if not already done. See also **Section H.4.1**.1 for personal mobile phone advice.

C.2.1.6 Building trust

Mission experiences show that there are three main factors that are critical to mission success:

Figure C.4: Key success factors in building trust
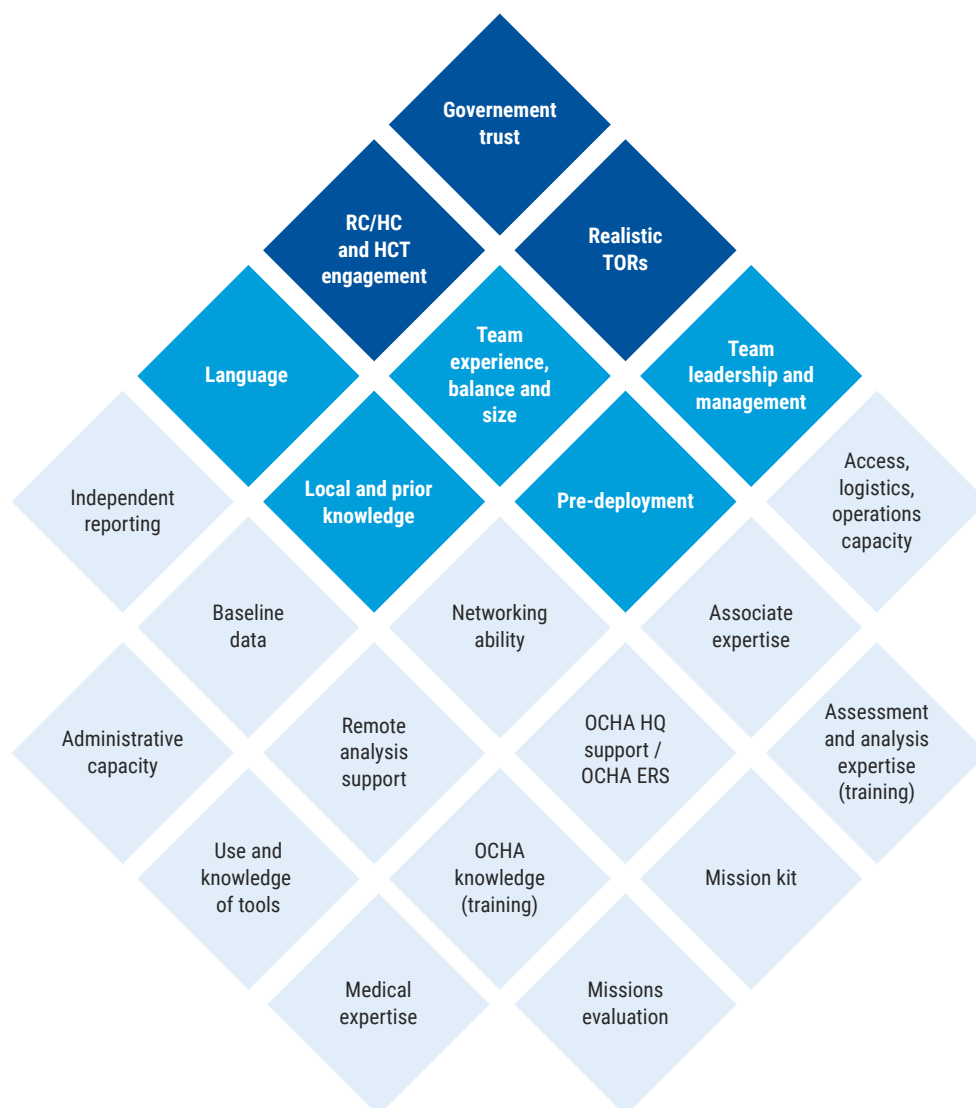
Defining the mission: it is critical there is early agreement on a realistic and achievable TOR of the team in the collaboration with and support to the government, the RC/HC and HCT and OCHA. This is a major success factor as it will lead to trust with the government and key stakeholders.

A strong team with the right mix of leadership, expertise and relevant, preferably local, experience and skills, including language, and team size.

Having associated expertise (e.g., mapping or environmental expertise) and ability to establish or connect networks (e.g., USAR, EMT, EUCP, ICC) that allow the team to take a central role in information management and driving analysis and therefore coordination and decision-making.

The above three main factors allow the team to establish swift trust with and among key partners with whom they are collaborating and coordinating. If it appears that a specific skill set is missing from the team that is relevant to undertake certain activities to achieve the mission objectives, action should be taken through discussion with OCHA ERS. The announcement of the UNDAC team's arrival once functioning as a cohesive unit is hence crucial, as premature announcements will create expectations that cannot be met.

UNDAC teams have a good reputation, but this does not mean that the necessary trust and network-building essential for mission success takes place without a conscious effort. One needs to start from scratch every time and build trust with partners step by step.

C.2.1.7 Establish contact in country

In some cases, OCHA may have a representation in the country or surge staff from the OCHA regional office may already be there. In such cases, the UNDAC team should link up with OCHA staff immediately and decide together on the next course of action. If the team arrives at a point other than the capital, where there is no representation of the RC/HC or OCHA, they should proceed immediately with establishing a team base of operations and get in touch with the national/local authorities. The team should also consider getting in touch with existing NGO or other civil society networks that may be active in the area. The International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA) might be helpful in establishing contact with the existing NGO Consortia and structures.

C.2.1.8 Initial meetings with the RC/HC, the HCT, and the national/local authorities

The initial meeting with the RC/HC, HCT, or national/local authorities is extremely important, as this enables the team to clarify its role, objectives, usefulness, and credibility in order to establish an immediate relationship, get a better understanding of the current situation and manage expectations. If there is an existing OCHA presence in-country, meetings need to be arranged as part of, or in coordination with, the OCHA office.

Bear in mind that many in-country counterparts may themselves be directly or indirectly affected by the disaster and feel overwhelmed by the challenges they are facing. The team should project professionalism and awareness of local capacities, arrangements and challenges, as well as always remain humble and modest. Be aware that the UNDAC team is an external resource and may be viewed as coming to 'take over.' It is thus important to show empathy, emphasise solidarity and offer the team's professional skills and experience to support partners in managing the disaster. A well-prepared introduction of the UNDAC team is an indication of professionalism and should be carefully thought through as part of the initial PoA.

The following aspects should be considered for the meeting:

- Decide who is to speak on behalf of the team (normally the Team Leader) and who will attend.
- Decide who will answer specialised questions, based on the respective specialties of UNDAC team members.
- Prepare an outline of the introduction – short, relevant and to the point (see below).
- Be sure to proactively manage expectations about what the UNDAC team can do and how long the team will be there. Visualise the brief if possible (remember that time will be limited), or prepare handouts on the UNDAC system, and have business cards or a contact list ready to hand over. Generic templates can be found in the UNDAC Toolbox.
- Demonstrate awareness of the existing structures to which you are arriving. Make the effort to find out what the national and sub-national coordination structures are, who the members of the HCT are and what organisations they represent. Also do this when briefing the authorities and other humanitarian counterparts such as civil society and NGOs.
- Ask questions about the context and the latest situation (it may have changed while you were travelling). What are current priorities, as well as challenges and constraints.
- Ask their views and opinions about the response and likely evolution of the situation. Inquire about experience and lessons learned from previous

(similar) emergencies and responses in the country. Try to anticipate and prepare for questions you might be asked.

- At the end of the meeting, agree on mission objectives, reporting lines, sign-off procedures, and finalise the mission ToR.

See also **Section G.1.2** for more detailed guidance on meeting management.

Aspects to be covered during the briefing

The following aspects should be covered when introducing the team:

- A short introduction to the UNDAC concept, i.e., OCHA's rapid response tool, including reference to the most relevant UNDAC missions, including recent major emergencies, similar emergencies, or other UNDAC missions in that country.
- A short presentation of each member's experience and capacity of deployed support partners. This could be a handout.
- The value-added tasks that the UNDAC team could undertake in support of the HCT, Government and/or other authorities, and partners, including:

  » Coordinating initial needs assessments and analysis.
  » Supporting information management.
  » Establishing coordination links between all international responders, including NGOs, donors, foreign military assets, private sector, bilateral response teams, etc.
  » Establishing functional relationships with national and local emergency management authorities and ensuring interface with international response, e.g., through OSOCC/EoC, liaison officers, etc.
  » Supporting inter-cluster coordination and establishment or reinforcement of humanitarian coordination structures, including at the disaster site.

- A short introduction to the OSOCC/EoC concept if this is relevant to the disaster.
- A short outline of the initial PoA, including linkages with wider OCHA response and how a close

working relationship with national/local authorities and community/civil society organisations will be established.

- An overview of other OCHA services that may be called upon, including secondary/ environmental impact assessment.

Dos and don'ts while meeting with the RC/HC, HCT and/or national authorities

Do:

- Dress professionally, e.g., business attire for at least the first meeting.
- Show respect and empathy, and express solidarity.
- Emphasise that the team is there to help them by enhancing existing in-country capacity to deal with the emergency - that the UNDAC team is a specialist emergency management tool sent by the ERC and OCHA to assist.
- Underline that OCHA and the UNDAC team are not itself involved in running relief programmes but are facilitating situation analysis, coordination and solutions that allow resources to be mobilised for an effective response, targeting the needs of affected people at the right time at the right place.
- State that in line with the above, the team can raise awareness of the situation and needs at the international level, and provide examples as to how.
- Emphasise that the team is self-sufficient (in most cases) and will not divert resources from HCT members or national/local authorities.
- Ask questions about the situation, affected areas and in-country context, national and international response so far, priorities, capacity, gaps, challenges, constraints, the likely evolution of the situation, etc.

Don't:

- Have more than one team member talk simultaneously. Except for the person assigned to speak (usually the Team Leader), all other team members should only speak if directly addressed or if requested to by the Team Leader.
- Waste time – everyone will be busy and stressed.

- Grandstand or condescend. Remember that your counterparts are also experienced professionals, and that nobody likes a show-off.
- Show signs of impatience, irritation or distraction, e.g., use of mobile phones.
- Make commitments on behalf of OCHA or UN-DAC or, if briefing national authorities, on behalf of the HCT or the UN unless discussed and agreed in advance.
- Make any financial commitments.

This meeting is also an opportunity to identify key contacts in both the capital and the affected areas. This may include identifying:

- Members of the HCT, i.e., cluster/sector lead agencies.
- Cluster/sector coordinators, if an inter-cluster/sector coordination forum exists.

- Key staff from national and local authorities in charge of the emergency response (overall or specialised areas).
- Key staff from national and local authorities in charge of international relief, if not the same as above.
- Key diplomatic missions representing countries most likely to respond to the emergency.
- International humanitarian organisations, including NGOs, represented in the country, particularly those actively responding to the emergency.
- National humanitarian organisations and civil society groups, particularly those actively responding to the emergency.
- UN agencies represented at the site, particularly those actively responding to the emergency.

The meeting might further determine the UNDAC team's Daily Strategic Planning with external partners, as shown in **Figure C.5**.

Figure C.5: Exemplary external daily strategic planning

Daily strategic planning and coordination process

GOV'T MORNING MEETING	OPERATIONAL BRIEFING	INTER-CLUSTER COORDINATION MEETING	**LEADERSHIP MEETING**	OPERATIONAL CELL MEETING	SRF SUBMISSION TO LOG CLUSTER	GOV'T EVENING MEETING	OPERATIONAL CELL AND SNR MGT MEETING
7:00	9:00	10:00	11:00	13:00	14:00	18:00	19:30
Messaging to the humanitarian community	Establishing common operational picture	Stocks, pipeline, response and reporting	Agreement on strategic operation, targeting and prioritization	Operationalizing strategic direction for the coming day/s	Submission of requests of AirOps and logistic cluster	Humanitarian community updating on plan for following day	Chec k-in to ensure readiness for following day
DHC/HCT Rep	All	Cluster focal points	DG INGC/ MoH/DHC/ HCT Reps/ Shelter/WASH/ Health/AirOps/ IFRC/UNDAC TL	INGC FP/ UNDAC TL/ Shelter/WASH/ Health/ Logistics/ IFRC/		DHC/HCT Rep	DHC/ UNDAC TL/IFRC/ FS/ Shelter/WASH/ Health/ UNDAC Ops

C.2.1.9 Finalise the PoA

Following the first contact with the RC/HC, security briefing and other key meetings, the team should affirm or, alternatively, adjust its mission objectives considering the information received and the options open to the team. The PoA should be finalised on this basis and the team should commence its activities without further delay, making sure to consider the following:

• Confirm mission objectives and finalise ToR in agreement with the OCHA ERS and following consultation with RC/HC, HCT, national authorities and/or OCHA regional/national/headquarters.

• Determine additional needs/constraints and identify required resources.

• Set out the roles of all UNDAC team members, both on-site and remote.

• Identify additional staffing requirements from UNDAC, OCHA or operational partners, including modality (on-site/remote). This should be requested via the UNDAC secretariat.

• Determine and initiate the mission handover and exit strategy.

C.2.2 Implementation

The diversity of disaster situations and contexts makes it very difficult to provide a blueprint of exactly how to execute mission activities. While specific activities related to coordination, assessment and analysis, and information management methodologies can be found in the respective chapters of this handbook, each mission develops its own identity and moves according to its own dynamics. The situation will constantly be changing, and priorities may be different from day to day. In such situations, it is important to not lose sight of the overall mission objectives defined in the PoA. Together with the cornerstones of the UNDAC methodology (see **Subchapter B.5**), they should provide direction and serve as a guide for the mission.

With mission objectives and UNDAC methodology in mind, make sure to:

• Uphold UN standards of conduct, actively preventing prohibited conduct including sexual exploitation, abuse and sexual harassment.

• Provide or support leadership at programmatic and/or operational levels as required, supporting the RC/HC, HCT, national/local authorities and/or OCHA at the regional/national/headquarters level(s).

• Support coordination structures, e.g., OSOCC/Emergency Operations Centre (EOC), inter-cluster/sector coordination mechanisms, etc..

• Facilitate and/or support assessment, information management processes, and protection and quality reponse more generally.

• Re-visit mission objectives and adapt the PoA as necessary, including new objectives, adjusted roles, responsibilities, and resources as needed.

• Ensure team routines remain commensurate to operational needs and capacities, e.g., meetings/briefings, reporting deadlines.

• Revisit handover and exit strategy on an ongoing basis (e.g., maintain contact lists up-to-date, update the overview of relevant resources and links, etc.), to ensure its relevance at time of handover.

C.2.2.1 Consolide and revisit the PoA

Make a habit of visiting the PoA on a regular basis, do an operational review, and adjust the daily work programme accordingly. The situation, as originally perceived, may have changed as more information becomes available and is analysed. More resources may have become available, and there may be a need to establish new objectives and make changes to roles and responsibilities.

Before revising the PoA, it is important to ask the questions:

• Are we on the right track?

• Do we have a good understanding of the situation, the humanitarian needs and required coordination?

• Are the right people doing the right jobs?

• Is there a need for additional resources, human or material?

• Are there too many team members for the work that can and needs to be done?

- Is the workload evenly distributed, or is there a need to rotate?
- Should the mission period be prolonged, and should additional team members be mobilised?

The answers to these questions should lead to a revised PoA, including:

- New developments in the situation that influence the objectives of the mission.
- Any changes to team organisation, including OCHA surge deployments, gaps in team expertise and possible need for reinforcement.
- Coordination needs and how the team could best support them.
- Information gaps identified through situational analysis and key places/areas for field visits.
- Update on communications and safety and security.
- Latest official statistics on the disaster and key messages for any encounters with the media and others.

Any changes to the overall mission objectives should be made in consultation with the RC/HC, the OCHA Regional Office, OCHA ERS and OCHA headquarters.

C.2.2.2 Revisit the handover and exit strategy

At an early stage in the mission, it is important to finalise the handover and exit strategy and begin finalising the various handover products to ensure that systems are in place to avoid any breakdown of the established structures upon the end of the mission. It is critical to ensure solutions that are sustainable after the departure of the UNDAC team. When establishing a structure or providing a service, it should be thought through from the beginning whether this is something that partners on the ground could sustain six months into the future. It may be easy to build something, but it may not be sustainable without the resources from the UNDAC team. Make sure to maintain contact lists up-to-date, update the overview of relevant resources and links, etc.

C.2.3 Mission End

The decision to terminate the UNDAC team's mission is taken by OCHA ERS in consultation with the RC/HC, the OCHA Regional Office and the UNDAC Team Leader. After the decision is made, the team should brief the RC/HC, the HCT and, if appropriate, the relevant national and sub-national authorities.

C.2.3.1 Handover and exit

It must be clarified at the earliest possible moment whether the operation/disaster is of a magnitude that requires an enhanced or new OCHA presence in the country or if partners on the ground, whether national or international, can take over functions established by the team. As soon as it starts to become clear which direction the operation is taking (scale, timeframe, secondary impact, scenario development, national and international response, etc.), the team's handover/exit can be planned in more detail. This includes:

- Define what services should be handed over and which should be terminated.
- Coach counterparts that will take over structures and bring them forward.
- Conduct final reporting/debrief to in-country strategic partners, i.e., RC/HC, HCT, national and/or sub-national authorities, civil society, etc.
- Confirm administrative procedures and logistics of departure in cooperation with OCHA ERS.
- Where applicable, support OCHA ERS in arranging an external evaluation of the mission.

Typical indicators for an approaching mission phase-down are:

- Routine work dominates the day.
- Working hours become more regular and there is more spare time.
- Regular meals and sleep.
- E-mail flow slows down.
- Fewer enquiries to the OSOCC/EoC.
- Situation is more and more foreseeable.

If an extension of the mission is envisaged, this should be discussed with the mission focal point in OCHA ERS and the OCHA regional office for

forward planning, i.e., availability of UNDAC team members to prolong their mission, rotation with a new team, or deployment of other OCHA surge capacity. It is important to identify to whom functions and provision of services may be handed over and to decide whether any of the UNDAC equipment should be left behind. It is also important to identify team administrative and logistical activities that need to be taken to end the mission.

At the beginning of the mission, exit planning is visionary and strategic. As the mission proceeds, it should be adjusted as necessary and concretised with further details and key actions. When the mission end approaches, it needs to become definitive, with detailed planning for the last week/days, including the team debrief and end-of-mission reporting. If rotating with another UNDAC team, start mission reporting so that the second team can continue it seamlessly without having to report on what happened before their arrival. And remember: it is often more important how you leave, than how you arrived!

A **detailed handover note** should be prepared specifying what functions, assets and services are being handed over and to whom. In many cases, the handover note can be annexed to the End-of-Mission Report. For those taking over coordination functions, this should include:

- **Situation –** Situation reports, maps, update on the current situation, themes and likely future developments.
- **Mission objectives –** Past and current, likely and future, early recovery, concerns and remarks.
- **Key actors/partners –** National authorities, NGOs, United Nations, military, donors, etc., presented as a contact list, who-what-where overview, etc.
- **Activities and processes to continue –** For example, inter-cluster coordination structures, leadership functions, information management, other coordination functions, EMT coordination (referrals of patients).
- **Evaluation of current status –** What has been accomplished, what has not been done but should be, strengths and weaknesses of the coordination mechanisms.

- **Operational information –** Safety, security, logistics, communications.
- **Administration, finance, in-country support – Including** what should continue and the financial implications (when the UNDAC team departs, mission funding ceases). A separate handover note for administrative procedures may be needed and a template can be found in the UNDAC Toolbox.

Copies (preferably electronic) of all key information should be retained to share with relevant counterparts in the country and within OCHA ERS. It is important to provide a detailed list of mission expenditures and original receipts and to resolve any outstanding financial issues before leaving the country. It is also imperative that all UNDAC team members who requested their DSA to be paid in-country have collected it from UNDP prior to departure. In all instances regarding mission expenditures and receipts, it is imperative to verify and seek clarification from the UNDAC Mission Focal Point.

C.2.3.2 Internal Debrief

During the exit period, it is also important to set aside time for an internal debrief within the team and to capture key points to be included in mission reporting. The UNDAC Team Leader should convene an internal debrief with the whole team, with the aim of bringing a sense of closure to the mission before returning home. The internal debrief includes:

- Sharing experiences on team management and dynamics,
- A SWOT analysis,
- An initial review of mission objectives,
- Awareness raising of the possible psychological impact and psychosocial services available for UNDAC team members.

The debrief is treated confidentially and should not receive wider circulation, other than the team members and the mission focal point in OCHA ERS.

It is important to be aware of any stress reactions, cumulative stress or critical incident stress that might need to be addressed. For information on mental health, practical advice on managing

mission stress, and psychosocial support on-/post-mission, see **Chapter I** on Personal health. Professional counselling is available to all team members, the contact details of OCHA's Staff Counsellors team can be found in the UNDAC Toolbox.

C.3 Post-Mission

The conclusion of a UNDAC mission marks the beginning of critical post-mission procedures aimed at reflection, evaluation, and documentation. This chapter outlines the key steps undertaken by the UNDAC team and supporting entities in the aftermath of deployment, encompassing debriefing sessions, mission reporting, and administrative matters. From comprehensive team debriefs to the meticulous documentation of mission experiences, these processes serve not only to capture lessons learned but also to inform future disaster response efforts and enhance the effectiveness of the UNDAC system.

C.3.1 Debrief

The UNDAC mission debrief marks a crucial stage in the End-of-Mission/Post-Mission procedures. Mostly conducted near the mission's conclusion, it involves all team members, including Operational support partners and associated members who have been fully integrated into the team.

Given the intensity of UNDAC missions, a thorough debrief cannot be condensed into a brief session or single event. Therefore, the debriefing process is divided into three distinct phases:

- **Phase 1: HotWash (on-mission, in-person –** See above, this initial phase occurs on-site and is led by the Team Leader. It primarily centres on assessing team dynamics and main achievements.

- **Phase 2: Individual Survey (post-mission, online) –** Each team member completes this survey independently and anonymously online. It focuses on the deployment process, team management, and other individual feedback. The survey will also be sent to in-country decision makers, coordination teams (USAR, EMT, etc) and humanitarian responders using the UNDAC/OSOCC support.

- **Phase 3: Functional Review (post-mission, online) –** Conducted remotely via an online meeting, this phase is led by OCHA ERS and involves key UNDAC team members per function. It delves into each team function and evaluates progress against the mission objectives.

These three phases of the Team Mission Debrief will feed into the After-Action Review (see below) and be captured in the End-of Mission-Report. See **Figure C.5** below.

Figure C.6: Debrief Overview

MISSION OBJECTIVES

| TORs | Plan of Action | Hotwash | Feedback survey | Functional review | After-Action Review | End of Mission Report |
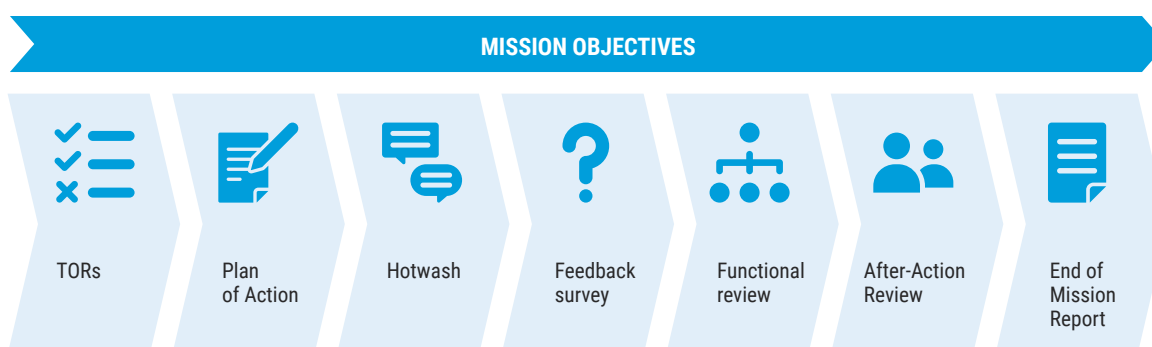
Besides the individual surveys and functional review, UNDAC may organise additional formal debriefs with key stakeholders other than the deployed UNDAC team, such as government representatives, in-country UN, the RC/HC and HCT, and the inter-cluster/sector coordination group. This debrief can be in the form of individual consultations or e-mails conversations and is reliant on the form and complexity of the disaster.

In major disasters, as much as the team schedule allows for it, OCHA ERS and the regional office may organise a more formal debriefing (i.e., After-Action Review) with external partners as part of the wider response evaluation, usually post-mission and conducted virtually.

At the end of the process, all stakeholders will have had the opportunity to provide their feedback. Please see the UNDAC Guide to the End-Of-Mission Process in the UNDAC Toolbox.

C.3.2 Mission reporting

A mission report must be completed at the end of each mission. This is usually for the benefit of the RC/HC or, as appropriate, the Government/authorities, but is also intended for sharing with the wider community of response partners. The report should focus on what the team has done, including best practices from this response, suggested improvements to future contingency plans, and suggested updates to the UNDAC methodology.

The mission report should be regarded as an integral part of the exit and handover strategy. While this report is the responsibility of the UNDAC Mission Focal Point, all team members should contribute to the process. Many UNDAC team members, based on their mission experiences, are able to offer recommendations on future disaster response preparedness to either governmental institutions or in-country UN entities. While the team is in a unique position to offer advice, to be properly effective it is important that recommendations can be followed up as part of a wider, ongoing response preparedness programme. It is therefore important to capture such recommendations in the mission reporting process for follow-up by OCHA ERS, the OCHA regional office, and other relevant partners. The recommendations may be the starting point for more targeted disaster response preparedness activities that the UNDAC system could support, or feed into initiatives already underway.

Mission reporting is also an opportunity to capture good practices that may be considered for updates to the UNDAC methodology and for training purposes. Capturing mission experiences is the best way to ensure the further development of the UNDAC Handbook and UNDAC training materials.

In addition to the mission report, OCHA ERS will prepare a short end of mission report that captures key points from the mission to be shared with the UNDAC team member's sponsoring government/organisation. It is also distributed at the annual UNDAC Advisory Board meeting.

C.3.3 Administrative matters

All UNDAC team members should complete an Expense Report as soon as possible following return from mission to enable rapid settlement of their entitlements. OCHA ERS will assist with this procedure. To process the Expense Report, team members should send the following scanned documents via e-mail to the OCHA ERS Administrative Focal Point:

- Boarding passes and any air, train or other transport tickets issued.
- All attachments relevant to personal expenses incurred, e.g., excess baggage, required vaccines for the mission, charges, visa costs, airport taxes, receipts for taxis, official phone calls or Internet usage, etc.
- UNDP-issued receipt for payment of DSA, if applicable.

Please note that UN administrative rules are very strict. Expenses will not be reimbursed unless officially authorised and originals of official receipts provided. It is thus vital to consult with the UNDAC Team Leader and/or OCHA ERS before incurring such expenses.

UNDAC members are advised to retain all original documents, copies of which have been submitted to OCHA ERS, for their personal records until the Expense Report is finalised.

Office for the Coordination
of Humanitarian Affairs

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D.
THE OSOCC
CONCEPT

United
Nations

Section contents

D. THE OSOCC CONCEPT

This chapter introduces the OSOCC concept and the OSOCC structure, functions and cells, as well as information about OSOCC support and the Reception Departure Centre (RDC).

D.1 Introduction

The On-Site Operations Coordination Centre (OSOCC) provides a platform to centralise the coordination of international response activities in the immediate aftermath of a sudden-onset emergency or a rapid deterioration in a complex emergency. It is concurrently both a methodology and a physical location for on-site emergency response coordination, designed to work in support of the Government of the affected country and as a tool for OCHA to carry out its mandate of coordination and information management in emergency response, particularly at the field level.

The International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG) and OCHA originally developed the OSOCC concept to assist affected countries in coordinating international search and rescue efforts following an earthquake. However, the emergency management principles of the OSOCC concept also make it a valuable tool in other sudden-onset disasters or complex emergencies without functioning coordination systems or coordination systems requiring enhancement. Many governments have integrated the OSOCC concept, or components of it, as part of their national emergency management plans, enabling them to establish and resource OSOCC components when disaster strikes and international assistance is requested, such as Reception Departure Centres (RDC), Emergency Medical Team Coordination Cells (EMTCC), etc.

In certain contexts, the term Emergency Operations Centre (EoC) may be employed interchangeably with OSOCC. While the terminology may vary, the methodology and concept remain consistent. Generally, the abbreviation OSOCC/EoC will be used to encompass both terms.

An OSOCC may operate under one of three general models:

- Direct coordination of response activities at the request of a Government;
- Coordination of specific aspects and support of others in cooperation with a Government; or
- In support of the UN Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator (RC/HC).

OCHA has developed OSOCC Guidelines intended for use by organisations or response teams that may establish and manage an OSOCC (e.g., UNDAC teams), organisations or teams that may work within an OSOCC (e.g., Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) teams, Emergency Medical Teams (EMTs), cluster coordinators, etc.), and entities and organisations that may interact with an OSOCC (e.g., host Government, the Local Emergency Management Authorities (LEMA), regional organisations, etc.).

This sub-chapter presents an excerpt of the OSOCC Guidelines. The full document can be found on the UNDAC Website.

D.2 The OSOCC concept

The OSOCC has two core objectives:

- To provide a means to rapidly facilitate on-site cooperation, coordination and information management between international responders and the Government and local authorities of the affected country in the absence of an alternative coordination system.
- To establish a physical space and act as a single point of service-provision for incoming response teams.

The OSOCC is intended to serve as a conduit for information exchange between the Government and/or local authorities of the affected country and various relief providers in a disaster, to facilitate cooperation with and coordination of international humanitarian assistance, and to provide a platform for coordination amongst actors that may not

normally work in close collaboration. The OSOCC is thus a broader coordination platform that extends well beyond the physical OSOCC.

To optimise its effectiveness, the OSOCC should be established in the immediate aftermath of a disaster requiring international assistance or upon deterioration of an existing emergency. Wherever possible, the OSOCC should be located in close proximity to the disaster site and relevant national or local authorities. The timeliness of set-up and the appropriateness of location are both critical in sudden-onset disasters to ensure optimal rescue and relief efforts. Consideration of protection and/or safety/security concerns also influences the selection of OSOCC locations, as discussed in **Chapter G.2** focusing on the Centrality of Protection and Quality Response.

Although an OSOCC is intended as a short-term response tool for the immediate lifesaving and relief phases of a disaster, it should be established with enough flexibility and foresight to adjust to the magnitude and complexity of an emergency as it unfolds. It is expected that an OSOCC in some form would be operational during the relief phase of an emergency until the Government of the affected country, together with UN agencies and NGOs if required, can fully resume the responsibility of coordination of international resources through its own structures and offices.

It is crucial to understand that an OSOCC/EoC is distinct from an OCHA office. While it may share similarities and could evolve into one, the functional design of the OSOCC concept allows it to better address the requirements of disaster management and humanitarian coordination.

D.2.1 OSOCC context

When established, the OSOCC works within the existing humanitarian system both internationally and in the affected country, as illustrated below.

Figure D.1: OSOCC Linkages and Reporting Lines

Scenario 1: OCHA Country Office present

Scenario 2: No OCHA Country Office present
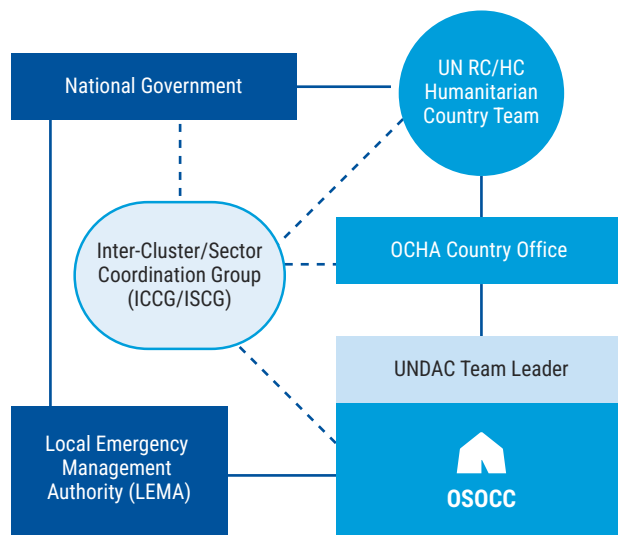
The OSOCC generally reports to the UNDAC Team Leader, who in turn ensures that activities of the OSOCC are aligned with the strategic direction of the RC/HC and the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) and supported by OCHA Country or Regional Office.
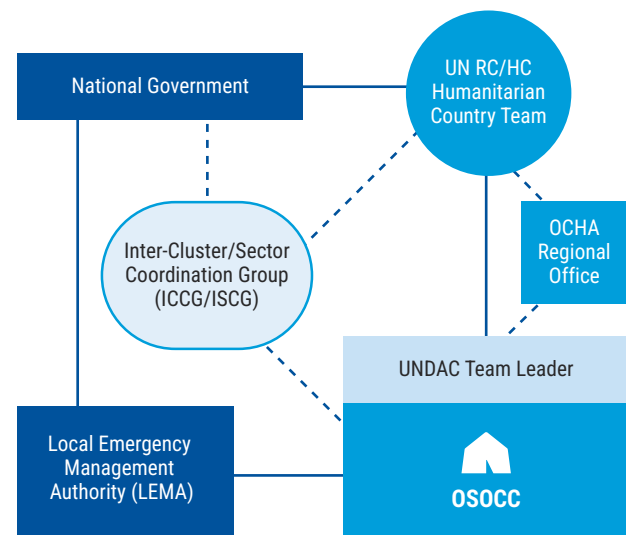
The OSOCC works in support of the affected Government in coordinating the efforts of international response organisations. Most countries have emergency management authorities at the national or subnational levels that are responsible for the overall command, coordination and management

of emergency response operation, with whom the OSOCC maintains a strong connection throughout operations.

Apart from collaborating with relevant sections within OCHA, such as information management and assessment and analysis specialised units, as well as governmental bodies in the affected nation, the OSOCC also assists and cooperates with humanitarian cluster/sector coordinators and response teams. This can be done through integration in the OSOCC structure, including physically being located in the OSOCC facility, and/or through formal or informal liaison.

D.2.2 OSOCC structure

The OSOCC is generally structured into four functions, each of which may be composed of multiple cells.

- **Function –** Refers to the broad organisational components of the OSOCC, i.e., Management, Situation, Operations, and Support. These functions will need to be considered for every UN-DAC mission and at every stage of the mission. One or more persons may perform each function, and/or one person may perform multiple functions. Each function can be expanded as necessary to include the number and profiles of personnel required to fulfill its responsibilities.

- **Cells –** Components of functions that can be used to further organise the OSOCC into common sub-groups that reflect the key areas of responsibility of that function. The use of cells is particularly beneficial in circumstances where the OSOCC has a large number of staff and additional layers of reporting are necessary for effective management, or where particular areas of expertise are needed, e.g., the use of a USAR Coordination Cell or EMT Coordination Cell. Cells are led by a Coordinator or Manager.

The basic OSOCC structure is illustrated below, noting that not all functions or cells may be needed in all situations.

Figure D.2: OSOCC Functional Structure
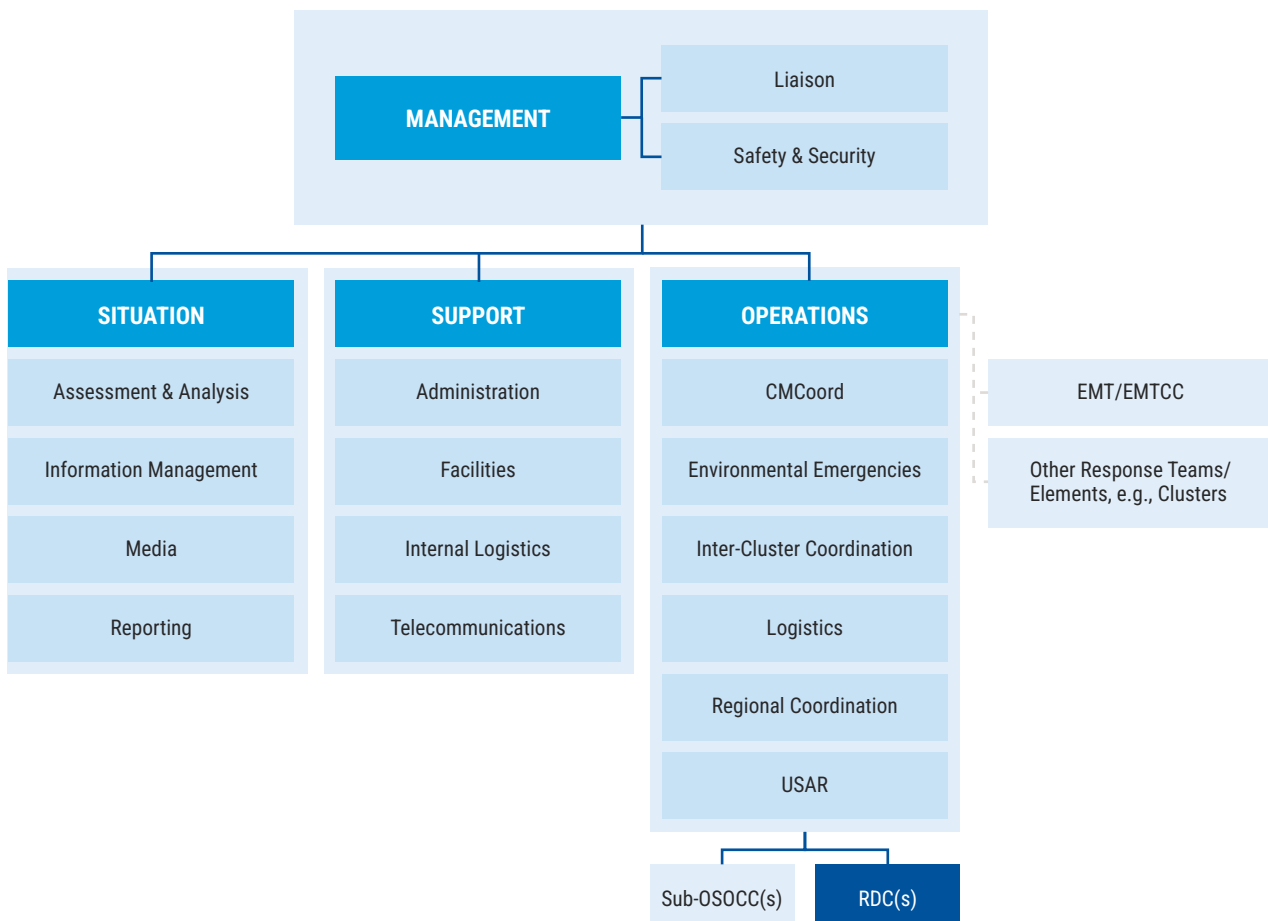
The principle of flexibility allows the structure to adapt to the operational requirements of the disaster. Depending on the magnitude of the event, situational demands and available resources, one person may manage multiple functions simultaneously and other functions may require a larger complement of personnel.

If possible, an organisational chart should be developed and displayed in the OSOCC to illustrate the reporting lines of OSOCC staff. The chart will need to be refreshed regularly to reflect the ongoing changes in the OSOCC to meet the operational needs of the response. A template for an organisational chart can be accessed on the UNDAC Website.

D.2.3 OSOCC staffing

The OSOCC is staffed by the UNDAC team, including operational support partners, OCHA staff, associated experts and other international responders such as USAR teams, EMTs, Global Clusters, and NGOs. As additional qualified staff become available, e.g., through OCHA surge mechanisms, staffing at the OSOCC should be complemented and reinforced. In large-scale emergencies, personnel from the UN or other entities involved in the humanitarian relief operation may also support the OSOCC with specific tasks.

The number, profiles and geographic spread of staff needed to perform OSOCC functions will depend on the volume and complexity of activities and the number of shifts required each day. During the immediate lifesaving phase, the workload may require a 24/7 commitment, thus a minimum of two work shifts to cover 24 hours should be established. As relief operations continue and routines are established, the hours of the OSOCC will shift to reflect the changing workload. The same staffing philosophy should be applied to other components of the OSOCC system, particularly the RDC and sub-OSOCC(s).

D.3 OSOCC functions and cells

This section outlines the core functions and cells of an OSOCC. Specific responsibilities for the various cells are described in position checklists which can be downloaded from the UNDAC Website.

In each core function or cell, UNDAC members need to consider protection and inclusion principles and issues in the humanitarian response and operations to ensure equitable, safe and needs-based aid delivery. This includes recognising issues related to safety, access, community engagement, gender equality programming, empowerment and vulnerabilities among affected groups and facilitating solutions where possible. For more detailed guidance, refer to the comprehensive **Subchapter G.2** on Protection mainstreaming and quality programming.

D.3.1 Management function

The Management Function coordinates the other OSOCC functions, establishes routines for internal information flow between functions and cells, establishes formal liaison with national and sub-national authorities and other humanitarian response entities, and works to ensure the safety and security of the UNDAC team, including operational partners. The OSOCC Manager leads this function. Other functions can be established at the discretion of the OSOCC Manager, although these should not duplicate any other OSOCC functions.

In large-scale emergencies, a separate reception area may need to be established as part of the Management Function to serve OSOCC clients. This should be operated in close cooperation with the Information Management Cell and be a first point of contact for clients seeking OSOCC services and information products.

OSOCC Manager

The function of the OSOCC Manager is usually undertaken by the UNDAC Deputy Team Leader, who reports to the UNDAC Team Leader. This enables the UNDAC Team Leader to focus on the overall strategic and operational planning and direction of

the mission without needing to be directly involved in the operations of the OSOCC. It is important to note that whereas the UNDAC Team Leader focuses on external relationships and mission leadership, the UNDAC Deputy Team Leader/OSOCC Manager focuses on internal processes, making sure the team and the OSOCC functions optimally in support of the mission objectives.

The OSOCC Manager coordinates all OSOCC functions and activities, including sub-OSOCCs and RDCs. Key responsibilities include conducting internal meetings, managing task allocations amongst OSOCC personnel, and providing leadership to the OSOCC functions. The OSOCC Manager is focused on ensuring that the OSOCC meets the objectives and fulfils the Terms of Reference (ToR) set out by the host Government of the affected country and the HCT or RC/HC.

The OSOCC Manager is also responsible for developing and updating the Plan of Action (PoA) for the OSOCC in line with the objectives and ToRs as mentioned above. The PoA should be regularly communicated to OSOCC personnel (including those working in the RDC and sub-OSOCCs).

Safety & Security (S&S) Cell

Another critical function within the Management Function is the Safety & Security Cell that works to support the safety and security of all personnel associated with the UNDAC team and the OSOCC. While the UNDAC Team Leader is formally responsible for Safety & Security of the UNDAC team, they can delegate this responsibility to the S&S Cell, as part of the UN Security Management System (UNSMS) framework in-country.

The S&S Cell is responsible for ensuring that all UNDAC team members receive an appropriate security briefing upon their arrival in a new location and upon any significant changes in the situation; for preparing, maintaining, and monitoring the S&S Plan and medical plans for the UNDAC mission (including all personnel associated with the OSOCC); and for ensuring the consideration of S&S elements in the strategic and operational decisions and actions of the UNDAC team. The medical plan is developed based on existing protocols for the

affected country, or in close liaison with the EMT Coordination Cell (see **Section G.10.2**), national and local authorities and other medical resources present, e.g., medical resources associated with USAR teams.

For more details, see **Subchapter E.2** on UN Safety and Security procedures.

Liaison Cell

In reality, liaison is a crosscutting responsibility of all functions and personnel in the OSOCC that supports an effective and collaborative approach to disaster response. It might be necessary to create a dedicated Liaison Cell tasked with formalising information exchange processes between the OSOCC and other entities. This cell would manage communication for those actors who need specific attention and are not covered by existing functions. In some instances, the Liaison Cell may be staffed when a large number of organisations send a liaison person to the OSOCC and coordination of these representatives is necessary for continued OSOCC operations and effective information sharing. This is not intended to duplicate already established liaison between other OSOCC functions and their appropriate counterparts, e.g., USAR liaison, etc., but rather to ensure there are no gaps in liaison.

The Liaison Cell works to build and maintain relationships with the LEMA, the Government of the affected country and/or response organisations that are pivotal to cooperative and coordinated OSOCC activities. Individuals taking the role of Liaison staff should possess diplomatic skills, coupled with a strong ability to cultivate relationships with diverse organisations through mutual understanding and consensus-building. They should be able to communicate effectively and to see opportunities to strengthen collaboration and coordination among responding organisations.

D.3.2 Situation function

The Situation Function is responsible for collecting, managing and communicating information about the emergency to provide an updated, common situational analysis. This analysis is used to directly inform decisions by responders, senior officials,

donors and – through mass media – the general public. Information is also displayed in the OSOCC for use by OSOCC personnel and visitors. This is achieved through the work of three cells:

• Assessment and Analysis (A&A)
• Information Management (IM)
• Media

Together, these cells interact with numerous humanitarian actors who provide information about the situation and collaborate on communication. In many cases, these same actors become consumers of the Situation Function products, e.g., situation analyses, thematic reports, media key messages, situation reports and maps.

Those working in the Situation Function in the first phase of the emergency should have highly developed communication skills, attention to detail and a strong ability to analyse large quantities of information, including qualitative sociological information that can have relevance related to the needs of specific population groups. Immediately following a disaster, this function will often be established remotely with information being shared through the VOSOCC. This may include the collection, synthesis and analysis of secondary data to provide an updated and ideally common picture of the situation while international responders are mobilising. The Situation Function will usually be staffed by UNDAC

members – often with support from other rapid response mechanisms/teams, UN agencies and the affected Government. During this first phase, remote specialist support is generally available to assist each of the three cells, as described in the functional descriptions below.

As the emergency progresses, specialists will be physically deployed as required. This may include OCHA's regional Information Management Officer(s) (IMOs) or staff from OCHA's Field Information Services (FIS) Section, assessment experts from OCHA's Needs and Response Analysis Section (NARAS) or other operational support partners, and the deployment of OCHA Public Information Officers (PIOs).

Assessment and Analysis (A&A) Cell

The A&A Cell collects, synthesises and analyses information that contributes to a common understanding of the situation. This includes identifying main challenges and impacts, root causes, and the size of the population affected and/or vulnerable groups. Socio-economic and gender analysis are critical to understanding differential impacts. This is done in close cooperation with humanitarian partners and the Information Management Cell. The visual below shows a generic structure of an A&A Cell.

Figure D.3: A&A Cell structure

| | REMOTE COMPONENT | IN-COUNTRY COMPONENT |

SENIOR ANALYST
+ ANALYSTS (IF REQUIRED)

Facilitate joint analysis in remote component

Support functional areas of in-country component as required

A&A COORDINATOR (REMOTE)

Facilitate coordination of the remote component

Encourage collaboration between partners

Maintain efficient links with in-country component

A&A COORDINATOR (IN COUNTRY)

Internal management of the cell

Maintain efficient links with remote component

Brief humanitarian leaders regularly

A&A OPERATIONAL PARTNERS

ACAPS

DEEP

EU Commission

IFRC

IMMAP

REACH

UNOSAT

Local/regional or specialized partners as required

SECONDARY DATA ANALYSIS

Qualitative analysis

Facilitate joint analysis

Draft regular situational updates, briefing notes and other outputs

NEEDS ASSESSMENT COORDINATION

Harmonize indicators for field data collection

Coordinate joint data collection initiatives

Design question guides and surveys

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

GIS services

Data base management

Visualisation

Technical support to needs assessments

The A&A Cell should always have a remote and an in-country component. Pending on the size of the emergency, the UNDAC team, the OSOCC, and the set-up of the in-country component will vary. While A&A Cell members will have to be flexible with regards to how roles are distributed or organised, it is important to clearly assign functions within the Cell.

• **For medium-sized emergencies –** It is recommended to have at least two persons assigned to the in-country component, one assessment

coordinator in charge of managing the Cell, liaising with the remote component and with external partners, and one person, ideally sheltered from the daily coordination activities, focusing on collation of pre- and in-crisis secondary data and analysis.

• **For large-scale emergencies –** A minimum of four persons are needed, but usually more, should be assigned to the in-country component assisted by operational partners.

» One assessment coordinator managing the in-country component and coordination with the remote component, external partners and other cells;

» One person overseeing the secondary data process and analysis;

» One person managing the coordination of needs assessments; and

» One dedicated IM person in charge of data management, liaison with IM remote support partners (e.g., Digital Humanitarian Network), processing of data, mapping and infographics.

• **Remote component –** Independent of the capacity on the ground, the A&A Cell will have a remote component coordinated by a (remote) A&A coordinator and a Senior Analyst. More analysis capacities could be assigned should the situation require it. The remote cell is supported by UNDAC operational partners with an A&A profile, like ACAPS, DEEP, EU Commission, MapAction, IFRC, IMMAP, REACH, UNOSAT, and local/regional or specialised partners as required. The A&A Cell is dependent on the support from these partners, and it is vital to recognise that the remote and in-country components are equal parts of the A&A Cell.

The overall purpose, main tasks, and methodology is further described in **Subchapter F.2** and in a separate guidance note which can be found in the UNDAC Toolbox.

Information Management (IM) Cell

The IM Cell collects information related to the disaster (including information obtained by the A&A Cell), organises and analyses the information, and develops a variety of products, e.g., situation reports, Who is doing What and Where (3W) data, maps, contact lists, schedules, databases, etc., which are then disseminated directly to organisations and/or made available through online platforms and channels when connectivity allows. It also oversees the flow of information into and between the various OSOCC components, as well as externally. These activities ensure a common operating picture that informs response decisions at all levels of the disaster.

During the initial hours and days of an emergency, the IM Cell is typically staffed by UNDAC members and staff from operational partners such as MapAction and IMMAP. One of their primary tasks is to issue situation reports to inform classification of the emergency and response levels. These reports should be informed by the A&A Cell and standard UNDAC reports (see also **Subchapter F.3** on Standard UNDAC reports). Given the importance of this task, it is often necessary to assign a dedicated staff member within this Cell as report writer. This staff member will be supported by the OCHA Desk for the affected country/region and/or the OCHA regional office staff (including regional or national OCHA IM Officer), who will write the official OCHA Situation Report. As required, OCHA will deploy additional IM staff through surge mechanisms or directly from the Field Information Services (FIS) Section in Geneva.

In large-scale emergencies where demand for OSOCC services is high, it may be necessary to establish a separate OSOCC Reception Area, as discussed in **Section D.3.1** Management Function. Many of the information management (IM) products, such as maps and the LogIE tool operated by the Logistics Cluster, will be in high demand, prompting the IM Cell to consider co-locating some staff with the Reception Area. This arrangement facilitates the IM Cell's role as an information hub for exchanging data with OSOCC clients. Additionally, it allows the IM Cell to encourage the sharing of datasets on the Humanitarian Data Exchange (HDX) at https://data.humdata.org/, an open platform for data sharing. The IM Cell can also advocate for registration on contact lists and inform visitors about other useful tools and resources.

Media Cell

During the establishment of the OSOCC, media responsibilities sit with the Management Function, as the OSOCC Manager typically assumes media responsibilities until an OCHA Public Information Officer (PIO) arrives on-site. Upon the PIO's arrival, they establish the Media Cell and collaborate closely with all OSOCC functions, particularly the Situation Function.

The Media Cell is responsible for coordinating all external media relations, monitoring media channels for situational awareness, and preparing information products for both the media and the public. It develops a comprehensive media plan for the OSOCC, outlining the primary spokesperson (often the OSOCC Manager) and defining the roles of other team members in media relations. Additionally, the Media Cell serves as the central point of contact for both local and international media and facilitates site visits for donors and VIPs.

The efforts of the Media Cell play a crucial role in clarifying and reinforcing OSOCC-supported response activities, thereby enhancing international awareness and advocacy for relief efforts aimed at assisting the affected population.

D.3.3 Operations function

The Operations Function oversees the coordination of international response teams and other resources engaged in delivering relief to affected populations. This function encompasses several coordination cells, each dedicated to specific functional areas. Collectively, these cells swiftly respond to carry out operational coordination tasks, including rescue operations, emergency medical care provision, environmental impact mitigation, transportation of individuals and supplies, and collaboration with military or armed actors.

Typically, each coordination cell is manned by technical specialists from the respective functional area. In the initial stages following a disaster, these cells may be staffed by members of the first-response teams trained in OSOCC methodology, as well as UNDAC members. Additionally, the different coordination cells serve as the main interface for the RDC. The RDC collaborates closely with most coordination cells to relay information regarding incoming resources and to oversee the execution of procedures related to logistics, safety, security, and other relevant aspects.

Some coordination cells may operate semi-detached from the OSOCC, i.e., the USAR Coordination Cell (UCC), the EMT Coordination Centre (EMTCC), and the Civil-Military Coordination (CMCoord) mechanism. In some cases, these cells may be set-up and operated by the Government itself. These are further covered in **Chapter G.10** Coordination Cells. Other coordination cells found in the Operations Function may include:

USAR Coordination Cell (UCC)

The USAR Coordination Cell (UCC) is established by the first-arriving INSARAG-classified USAR team in cooperation with the UNDAC team. It uses the INSARAG methodology to coordinate international USAR teams in collaboration with other OSOCC functions and national/local authorities. For more details on UNDAC's role, particularly that of the UNDAC USAR Liaison Officer (LO), refer to **Subchapter G.10.1**.

Emergency Medical Team Coordination Cell (EMTCC)

The Emergency Medical Team Coordination Cell (EMTCC) supports the coordination of responding EMTs, both national and international, to address additional healthcare needs resulting from increased morbidity or damage to existing capacity. The Ministry of Health (MoH) or national/local authority holds primary responsibility for coordination. The EMTCC exchanges information with the OSOCC and the health cluster if activated. For more details on UNDAC's role, see **Subchapter G.10.2**.

United Nations Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination Cell (UN-CMCoord Cell)

The United Nations Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination Cell (UN-CMCoord Cell) establishes dialogue with military and armed actors to ensure the most effective and appropriate use of Military and Civil Defence Assets (MCDA). It closely cooperates with the affected Government and assisting militaries, where applicable. A nominated UN-CMCoord Focal Point or dedicated officer within the UNDAC team is responsible for assessing and establishing the initial interface with military actors, both national and foreign. Depending on the scale of the emergency, OCHA may deploy dedicated UN-CMCoord officers to define the UN-CMCoord strategy and coordinate humanitarian civil-military activities within the OSOCC and/or sub-OSOCCs. For more details on UNDAC's role, refer to **Subchapter G.10.3**.

Inter-Cluster Coordination Cell

The ICC Cell is typically in the best position to collaborate with response partners (Government, organisations, clusters, private sector) to ensure quality programming. This involves highlighting and addressing protection issues, meeting the needs of vulnerable groups, promoting community engagement, and implementing gender programming.

For more details, see **Chapter G.6** on Inter-Cluster/ Sector Coordination (ICC/ISC), and **Chapter G.2** on the Centrality of Protection and Quality Response.

Logistics Coordination Cell

The Logistics Coordination Cell (LCC) within OSOCC of the UNDAC system plays a pivotal role in facilitating and optimising logistical support during humanitarian crises. Operating within the framework of the three key areas of support, the LCC ensures seamless coordination and delivery of essential resources to maximise the effectiveness of response efforts, in close collaboration with the National Authority leading the response:

- **Search and Rescue Phase Support:** During the critical initial phase of a disaster response, the LCC focuses on providing logistical support to Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) teams and Emergency Medical Teams (EMT). This involves the rapid mobilisation and deployment of equipment, supplies, and personnel to facilitate search, rescue, and medical assistance operations in affected areas. The LCC can support the coordination of transportation, storage, and distribution of resources, ensuring timely access to critical assets needed to save lives and alleviate suffering.

- **Rapid Assessment & Analysis:** The LCC is instrumental in facilitating the rapid assessment and analysis of the impact of the disaster on the affected country. Through efficient logistics management, the LCC enables the timely deployment of assessment teams and the procurement of necessary tools and equipment for data collection and analysis. By streamlining logistical processes, the LCC ensures that assessment teams have the support they need to gather accurate and comprehensive information on the extent of the damage, humanitarian needs,

physical access constraints and priority areas for intervention.

- **Setup of Coordination Mechanisms:** In addition to addressing immediate response needs, the LCC plays a crucial role in establishing coordination mechanisms for both the initial phase of the response and the subsequent humanitarian phase. This involves the establishment of logistics clusters, coordination with government authorities, UN agencies, and other stakeholders, and the development of logistical strategies and plans for the transition from emergency relief to early recovery and long-term reconstruction efforts. The LCC's proactive approach includes anticipating future logistical challenges, ensuring the continuity of supply chains, and building capacity within the local response system to sustain effective coordination beyond the immediate aftermath of the disaster.

Overall, the Logistics Coordination Cell of the OSOCC serves as the logistical backbone of the UNDAC system, enabling efficient and coordinated humanitarian action in the face of complex emergencies and natural-hazard related disasters. Through its comprehensive support in search and rescue, rapid assessment, and coordination mechanisms, the LCC plays a critical role in saving lives, alleviating suffering, and promoting resilience in disaster-affected communities.

In some cases, the LCC will serve as the early precursor to the Logistics Cluster led by the Global Logistics Cluster (GLC) and Global Logistics Cluster Lead Agency (GCLA).

Key responsibilities of the Logistics Coordination Cell include closely collaborating with national authorities to source, procure, move, and store critical supplies for the response efforts such as fuel, etc. The LCC can also support the movement of humanitarian workers within the affected areas in close collaboration with the National Authority leading the response. That could include support in cargo handling and customs clearance at entry points when relevant. It is important to note that these actions are primarily undertaken as long as the capacity of the local market or local response (coordination) capacity is insufficient. If local capacity is overwhelmed, the humanitarian community may

reinforce capacity, and clusters may be activated. If clusters are activated, the GLC will ensure an uninterrupted supply of humanitarian assistance through Coordination, gap analysis and Information Management. In some cases, when local capacity is insufficient and gaps are identified, the Logistics Cluster might provide services such as transportation and storage. The GCLA does not focus on people transport, but only cargo. However, the LCC can support/facilitate any gap the NEMA might need to fill to support relief teams, humanitarian workers, assessment teams or humanitarian relief cargo in the initial phase of the response.

The earliest staffing of the LCC will typically come from UNDAC, UNDAC Operational Support Partners (AST, IHP, Atlas Logistique-HI) and UNDAC Associated UN Agencies (in-country WFP staff, or anyone identified by the GCLA and/or Global Logistics Cluster), first-arriving relief teams, to support with initial sector assessment, coordination and response operations.

Under the cluster approach, this could involve other partners identified by the GLC who are better positioned and resourced. The GLC surge capacity will be deployed as soon as possible to support the Country Team and UNDAC with initial sector assessment and coordination and drafting/designing sector response strategy. These individuals will work closely with national authorities to establish an initial logistics plan/system to understand the local market and available capacity to effectively address the immediate needs of the response. They may also work with other local and global partners from the private sector, arriving UNDAC Operational Support Partners staffs (IHP/AST/Atlas Logistique-HI) support module staff or military actors (possibly through the Civil-Military Coordination mechanism and potential use of Military Civil Assets for the humanitarian response described in **Section G.10.3**) to identify where and how they can contribute to the response plan.

As the emergency situation evolves, adjustments to the logistics structure may become necessary to meet emerging needs. In such cases, the GLC and GCLA will deploy a Logistics Response Team (LRT) to conduct an on-the-ground initial sector assessment, determine the required logistics gaps

and needs, and draft the strategic response summarised in the Concept of Operations (ConOps). If activated, the LRT assumes responsibility for coordinating logistics operations, potentially taking over from initial responders. The sector assessment will be followed by a revision of the coordination architecture to be endorsed by the Country Team (within the first 24/48 hours), sector strategy definition, resource mobilisation, strategy implementation, etc.

Various tools (such as LogIE) and guidelines exist to support implementation of a logistics plan/system during the first phase of an emergency. A key resource is the Logistics Cluster's Logistics Operational Guide, which can be found at http://log.logcluster.org. See also **Chapter G.11** Disaster Logistics.

Environmental Emergencies (EE) Coordination Cell

Disasters and complex emergencies often have significant secondary environmental impacts. First, natural hazards and conflicts can damage industrial infrastructure and cause the release of hazardous materials. These secondary impacts can pose immediate, life-threatening risks to people (both local communities and responders), as well as longer-term challenges to the environment. Secondly, disasters and conflicts can have negative impacts on ecosystems and agriculture - causing landslides and damaging crops, forests, watersheds and/or depleting natural resources. The purpose of the EE Coordination Cell is to coordinate the response to such environmental emergencies caused by disasters and industrial and technological accidents with national/local authorities to ensure an effective approach to their assessment and management. The scope and scale of this role varies greatly depending on the capacity of the national/local authorities and international actors, and the magnitude of the risk and impact.

Following a disaster, the **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)/OCHA Joint Environment Unit (JEU)** can identify potential secondary risks posed by industrial facilities and major infrastructure located in the affected area to alert emergency responders to such potential risks. This information can be accessed via the VOSOCC. Initial on-site assessment can then occur by responders trained on

the Flash Environmental Assessment Tool (FEAT) found at http://www.eecentre.org/feat.

Following this assessment and the receipt of the request for assistance, the JEU can mobilise its response mechanism by activating the **Environmental Emergencies Roster (EER)** and deploying the **Environmental Experts (EEs)**. The EE may be deployed as a stand-alone JEU mission or as part of the UNDAC team and may establish the EE Coordination Cell. UNDAC members with environmental profile (that are not EEs) may be called upon to support the EE Coordination Cell with initial assessments and coordination. The cell will work with available resources from the affected Government and first arriving international response teams, e.g. USAR teams with hazardous materials response capabilities, to identify and assess sites and risk levels. An initial response plan will be developed and implemented through the EE Coordination Cell. Throughout the process, the cell will share information with the Situation Function and work directly with the A&A Cell. For more information on environmental hazards and emergencies, and the EE response mechanism, see **Chapter G.12**.

Further information on Environmental Emergencies can be found at http://www.unocha.org/themes/environmental-emergencies. For details on how to request environmental emergency assistance, please refer to the Environmental Emergencies Guidelines at http://www.eecentre.org/eeguidelines/

Addressing the environmental dimensions of emergencies represents an imperative for the humanitarian sector. However, enhancing environmental responsibility and greening humanitarian operations is a relatively complex endeavour; many humanitarian organisations operate in challenging contexts and utilise global supply chains, as outlined in the IASC Guidance on Environmental Responsibility in Humanitarian Operations. Therefore, it is crucial to ensure enhanced coordination on waste management in emergencies as the latter can lead to reduced impacts on local communities and the environment in terms of air, land, and water pollution, creating more environmentally responsible operations.

Coordination with other Clusters actively supporting environmental sustainability in emergency contexts is critical for inter-agency success to tackle Environment in Emergency Coordination. The Global Logistics Cluster-led Waste Management and Measuring, Reverse Logistics, Environmentally sustainable Procurement and Transport, and Circular Economy (WREC) project should be consulted during the sudden onset of emergency response and engaged in the EEC coordination due to the cross-cutting nature of humanitarian logistics and supply chains, as well as the available technical expertise within the Logistics Cluster WREC project. The WREC project is responsible for providing information and coordination on environmental sustainability in humanitarian logistics before, during, and after emergency response to guide the sector toward long-term and collective impact reduction.

Further information can be found at: https://logcluster.org/wrec/green-logistics or by contacting the Logistics Cluster project team: Global.WREC@wfp.org .

Regional Coordination Cell

In instances where regional organisations dispatch teams to manage assets deployed by their member states, establishing a dedicated Regional Coordination Cell can prove beneficial. Many regional organisations, such as the European Union Civil Protection Team (EUCPT), the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Emergency Response Team (ERT), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Emergency Response and Assessment Team (ERAT), and the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), have trained teams capable of deploying and setting up local coordination mechanisms. These mechanisms facilitate the coordination of regional assistance, i.e., assistance from their respective member states to the affected country. Instead of creating parallel structures, adopting an integrated approach through a Regional Coordination Cell is advisable.

The Regional Coordination Cell will enhance the efforts of existing cells by providing a platform for full inclusion of regional organisation members within the overarching response framework, negating the

need for separate coordination centres. This cell will operate independently without overlapping with existing structures, serving as a centralised service provider for members of various organisations. It will facilitate structured information exchange between responders, offering tailored and coordinated operational services to aid providers, the recipient Government, and other responders. While members of regional organisations can liaise directly with other OSOCC cells, the Regional Coordination Cell will streamline and enhance collaborative efforts across the response landscape.

Integration into the OSOCC framework enables regional organisations to proactively coordinate their member states' operations by liaising with relevant OSOCC cells and assisting with assessment, analysis, and information management. This ensures seamless information exchange within the OSOCC, promoting interoperability between systems and discouraging the creation of redundant structures. Existing Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for interoperability between the OSOCC and regional organisations should be consulted during OSOCC establishment. For more region-specific approaches, refer to **Chapter G.13**, which provides additional guidance tailored to different regions.

Furthermore, the OSOCC Manager retains the possibility to establish additional coordination cells for specific purposes as deemed necessary.

D.3.4 Support function

The Support Function ensures the ability of the OSOCC to operate under adverse and challenging field conditions. This includes establishing appropriate facilities, an information and communications technology (ICT) platform, applicable OSOCC administrative and internal logistics processes. These duties are often performed and/or led by one or more deployed support teams from the International Humanitarian Partnership (IHP), the Americas Support Team (AST), or similar. Additional resources, such as Télécoms Sans Frontières for ICT support, may also be mobilised as needed.

Although the Support Function is usually not organised into separate cells, the magnitude of

an emergency may necessitate such a division of responsibilities, as follows:

Facilities Cell

This cell ensures that the OSOCC and its component parts are established in adequate workspaces to enable current and future operations. As noted above, this is generally achieved through deployment of standardised service packages provided by the IHP or AST. Further guidance on OSOCC facilities is contained in **Chapter H.5** Facilities.

ICT Cell

The ICT Cell is responsible for executing an ICT plan tailored to the needs of the OSOCC and its overall response efforts. This plan aims to provide the necessary technology infrastructure for the OSOCC to carry out its functions efficiently. It encompasses the establishment of data and voice communication channels to connect different components of the OSOCC system with each other and with external stakeholders, such as deployed teams, the affected Government, and humanitarian actors. Similar to the Facilities Cell, equipment required to support the ICT plan is deployed in standardised packages by operational partners with other OSOCC personnel. Further details on ICT can be found in **Chapter H.4**.

Administration Cell

The Administration Cell is responsible for internal procedures and processes to support the day-to-day running of the OSOCC. This includes maintaining financial records in support of the OSOCC Manager, purchasing and contracting, staffing reception areas, developing a staffing roster, arranging translation/interpretation support, organising physical files and resources in support of the IM Cell, and other support duties as determined by the OSOCC Manager.

In emergencies with a need for extensive administrative skills and knowledge of UN procedures, OCHA has trained several of its administrative staff in OSOCC functioning who can be deployed as part of an UNDAC team to staff the Administration Cell. The Administration Cell will receive additional

support from administrative staff within OCHA ERS, who will provide remote assistance as needed. Additionally, this support may be supplemented by a remote support team to enhance administrative functions further.

Internal Logistics Support Cell

The Internal Logistics Support Cell encompasses two primary areas: 1) support for the UNDAC team itself and 2) assistance for emergency response teams coordinated within the OSOCC. Pre-mission activities involve coordinating with operational partners to ensure readiness of materials and equipment, while on mission tasks include setting up and managing OSOCC facilities, arranging transportation, and tracking team movements. The Internal Logistics Support Cell is often run by UNDAC Operational Partners (see **Subchapter B.8** on UNDAC support).

D.4 OSOCC facilities

The location of the OSOCC facilities (OSOCC, RDC and sub-OSOCCs) plays an important role in the coordination process (see **Figure D.4** below). The establishment of the facilities is a priority, but each location should be carefully planned. The location must be readily visible and accessible to all who want and need to benefit from its services. It should also have sufficient space to meet both the immediate needs and the projected expansion of the operation, while being safe and secure. The most suitable location for each facility is not necessarily in the midst of the disaster-affected area and consideration should be given to where coordination activities can be best facilitated.

The location of the OSOCC should ideally be in close proximity to the disaster site, the LEMA and other agencies/organisations providing humanitarian assistance. This will facilitate cooperation and information exchange. The site should also maximise the effective use of communications equipment, e.g., on higher ground and not surrounded by hills or other natural obstructions and should slope and drain effectively. Consideration should be given to a location that facilitates proper security procedures

including ease of access and evacuation, and an easily guarded perimeter.

It is essential to recognize that certain coordination cells may require forward placement to reduce the interval between the onset of a disaster and the initiation of response team operations. This necessity is especially evident for cells within the Operations Function involved in critical life-saving tasks, such as Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) and Emergency Medical Teams (EMT). Typically, EMT cells will be situated alongside the Ministry of Health (MoH) of the affected country to ensure efficient coordination, see **Chapter G.10.2.5** on the four options of EMT location/coordination.

Detailed guidance on site-selection of base camps and OSOCC sites can be found in **Chapter H.5** Facilities.Remember that the OSOCC is as much a location as a concept. In some situations, the LEMA may not want the international community to have visible and separate structures from the national and local emergency operations centres and insist on integration of the team and no visibility. In those cases, OSOCC methodology can still be applied integrated into the support of national and local operations

The same considerations outlined above apply to the sub-OSOCC(s).

Figure D.4: The four main components of the OSOCC

OSOCC

VIRTUAL OSOCC

RDC(s)

SUB-OSOCC(s)
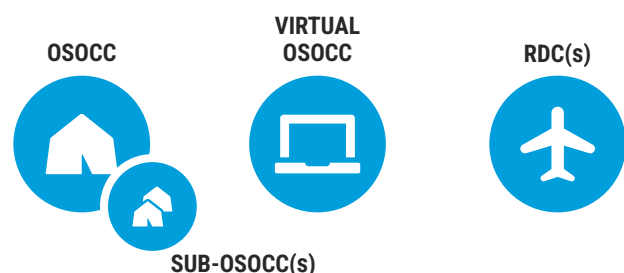
Establishing facilities

A series of deployable service packages to support the OSOCC system are maintained by and available through IHP and AST. The packages provided by these support partners range from basic ICT and administration for use in an existing building to full tent-based OSOCC and base camps. When deployed in a disaster, these modules will be accompanied by support staff to establish and maintain facilities. Before setting up facilities, the UNDAC team must carefully consider access issues and prioritise the centrality of protection and quality response concerns.

Maintaining facilities

Throughout the operation of the OSOCC system, the Support Function is responsible for ensuring that the facilities are maintained daily and can continue to serve as the base of operations for OSOCC activities. To provide for continued operation of the OSOCC facilities, the following needs to be maintained:

- Adequate internet connectivity.
- Access to a regular power supply, e.g., through the use of generators or an existing power source.
- Adequate lighting to enable round-the-clock operations as necessary.
- Access to food supplies and maintenance of food preparation areas.
- Access to water for consumption, sanitation, cooking, etc.
- Physical structures, i.e., tents and/or buildings, and the sites on which the facilities are established.

This can be challenging in a disaster environment where resources may be scarce, regular supply chains may be interrupted and field conditions may be harsh. In addition to working with these challenges, the OSOCC facilities need to retain a degree of flexibility. The facilities may need to be adjusted to accommodate changes in the number of personnel, changes in the scope of operations, shifts in accessibility requirements, and considerations for protection and security/safety aspects, including the flow of visitors/staff from other responding organisations.

Facility demobilisation

Planning for the demobilisation of the OSOCC facilities should begin at the onset of operations and will become more concrete as the end of OSOCC operations comes into sight. Overall demobilisation plans for OSOCC facilities are led by the Support Function in cooperation with international teams, partners, and national/local authorities. They should consider whether any of the equipment is needed to remain in-country to continue supporting the work of OCHA. In addition, efforts should be made to return the space and/or buildings to a usable state prior to departure.

In conjunction with physical demobilisation, the OSOCC Manager will ensure reporting to relevant authorities to provide a summary of lessons learned to inform future OSOCC missions, guidelines, and training.

In general, the Reception & Departure Centre (RDC) will demobilise first, although coordination cells may demobilise before the RDC if their primary purpose was the coordination of international relief teams. The OSOCC itself may remain in one form or another well beyond the presence of international teams, including OCHA/UNDAC, and may transition into a longer-term OCHA office.

D.5 Reception & Departure Centre (RDC)

A large-scale disaster generally results in a sudden influx of assistance and personnel from the international community to the affected country. Response teams and relief supplies will converge in the country at one or more points of entry, seeking access to the disaster area. Depending on the geography of the affected country and the infrastructure damage, the point of entry may be an airport, seaport and/ or land border. All incoming international resources will need to navigate key processes, such as immigration and customs, upon entry to the affected country, regardless of the type of entry point. Even in the best situations, the local/national authorities may be quickly overwhelmed by the sudden increase in volume of traffic, and at worst, the airport, seaport or border-crossing facility may not be left standing to receive the international assistance. Additional resources are likely required to provide the necessary surge capacity and to facilitate timely and organised entry.

The RDC, typically the initial OSOCC component established in the affected country, serves as the central intake hub for international relief traffic. As such, it is usually set up by the first-arriving USAR team for international USAR coordination or UNDAC team members (to support and oversee incoming international humanitarian assistance teams other than USAR). In some cases, national or local authorities may already have established an RDC in anticipation of incoming international relief teams, in which case incoming USAR teams, UNDAC team members work in support of them. A representative from the EMTCC may also be present to provide additional support in recording EMT teams at the RDC.

The main objectives of an RDC are the following:

- Support authorities at the point of entry (airport, seaport, etc.) in managing arrival of international teams.
- Record and help coordinate the response of international teams and link them up with the coordination structure.
- Brief arriving teams on the situation and practical information that they need to know for

immediate onward deployment to the affected areas, e.g., logistics, access, safety/security, etc.

In the early hours and days, the RDC must be prepared to facilitate the basic services of an OSOCC including delivering situational and operational briefings, providing basic logistical support, facilitating the operational activities of response teams and tracking resources. The extent to which these services are conducted will shift as the OSOCC becomes established and/or the affected country itself gains the means to facilitate incoming/outgoing international resources.

As the first contact point for incoming international assistance, the RDC needs to be established in a systematic manner that imparts a level of organisation in the chaotic environment of the disaster. To achieve this, the RDC requires a clear structure that mimics the functional approach of the OSOCC like in the **Figure D.5** below.

Figure D.5: RDC structure
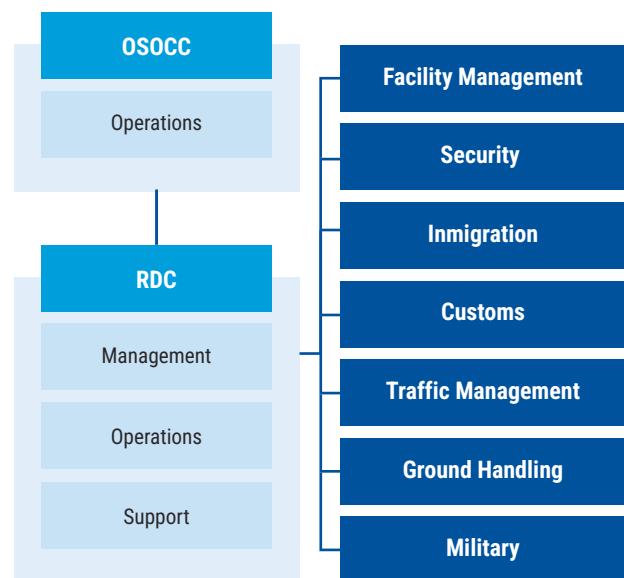
Operational decisions should primarily flow through RDC Management and OSOCC Operations. However, communication channels can be established with other OSOCC functions to support RDC activities. For example, RDC Support may collaborate with the Logistics Coordination Cell to arrange transportation for incoming international response teams from the point of entry to the OSOCC. This continuous exchange of information enables the OSOCC to

prepare for incoming resources, facilitating quicker deployment of teams to the field.

RDC coordination

The RDC often serves as the first coordination stop for international response teams and a well-functioning centre is a valuable asset for the OSOCC. The OSOCC will require information about the capacity of incoming response teams and any identified logistical needs in order to plan and carry out operational activities. In turn, the RDC will need up-to-date information from the OSOCC on the situation and the realities of the operational environment in order to brief incoming teams effectively.

A priority for the RDC is to establish a system for information flow, including identified communication channels and processes between the RDC and OSOCC. While the specific set-up and routine for coordination will be dictated by the needs and pace of the crisis, common practices include:

- An established time for a morning briefing/coordination discussion between the RDC and the OSOCC.
- An established time for the provision of updated registration information.
- An agreed-upon protocol for daily communication, e.g., by email as frequently as possible, by phone if urgent.

- Regular updating of the VOSOCC.
- A procedure for organising the departure of the various rescue teams and their travel arrangements.

In addition to its daily coordination and information-sharing functions with the OSOCC, the RDC may engage in similar activities at the point of entry. This could involve daily meetings with point of entry authorities, local representatives, or military personnel. The RDC's role is to assist the affected country in managing incoming international response teams, and the specific support model will be determined through discussions with the authorities overseeing the point of entry. Additionally, the RDC may depend on other responses or government organisations for necessities such as electricity, water, or accommodation.

The approach to an RDC should portray it as an extension of the OSOCC coordination platform, adhering to the same principles as the OSOCC itself. Fostering cooperation with and among the organisations present at the point of entry is essential for the RDC to effectively facilitate the reception and departure of international resources.

See the OSOCC Guidelines for more detailed information on RDC operations on the UNDAC Website.

Office for the Coordination
of Humanitarian Affairs

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E.
MANAGEMENT

United Nations

Section contents

E. MANAGEMENT

Management of an UNDAC team falls under the role of the UNDAC Team Leader and Deputy Team Leader. These two roles have distinct differences but also overlap. Furthermore, an UNDAC team is often expected to exercise leadership and be at the forefront of the coordination process. To do this, we need to know a few things about working in teams, leadership and management - next to safety and security procedures.

E.1 Team management

This chapter discusses team dynamics, coordination strategies, and leadership models pertinent to the UNDAC concept. Additionally, it explores OCHA surge mechanisms and integrated approaches, providing guidance on collaborating with OCHA country and regional offices, and informs about the OCHA to the duty of care framework. Moreover, this chapter presents the Guide for UNDAC Team Leaders, offering practical insights and recommendations organised by topic and cross-referenced with relevant chapters in this handbook.

E.1.1 Team functioning

A team becomes more than just a collection of people when a strong sense of mutual commitment towards a common goal creates a synergy greater than the sum of individual performances. This section explores what it takes for a group of people to become a team and thus generate the collective leadership that UNDAC teams strive to achieve.

E.1.1.1 Team development

A group of people is different from a team. In groups, people work independently, are not involved in planning and there is little interdependence or reliance on each other's roles. Teams, on the other hand, work together towards a common goal. Members can contribute and make suggestions, take ownership of different parts of the task and understand their role within the bigger picture.

According to the classic model of team dynamics, to transition from a group of people into a team involves a number of stages:

- **Forming –** Involves the introduction of team members, when the team first meets or as members are introduced subsequently. Members are likely to be influenced by the expectations and desires they bring with them and will be keen to understand how the team will operate as a whole. This is where the team members orient themselves towards goals, begin to determine how they will contribute and seek guidance from those in leadership positions.

- **Storming –** Team members will have different opinions as to how the team should operate. Individuals who are anxious about conflict may find the storming phase difficult. The best teams will understand that some tension is a necessary phase of development, will actively listen to each other and navigate an agreed way forward. Failure to do so may cause the team to disintegrate as individuals try to bolster their own opinions to weather the storm. This is where rules, procedures, structures and roles should be established. Management of the details of team functioning now becomes important.

- **Norming –** The team now emerges with an agreed method of operating and team members sign up to a common working method. During this phase, team members are able to reconcile their own opinions with the greater needs of the team. Cooperation and collaboration replace the conflict and friction of the previous phase. This is where team spirit grows, the team becomes cohesive and information and ideas begin to flow more easily.

- **Performing –** The emphasis is now on reaching the team goals rather than working on internal processes. Relationships are settled and team members are likely to build loyalty towards each other. This is where the team functions efficiently and effectively, is able to manage more complex tasks and cope with greater change.

Following the last stage, teams may go through a fifth stage of growth, such as:

- **Returning to the forming** stage as group membership changes,
- Entering a **'dorming' stage** as the group gets complacent, or
- Successfully reaching its goal, completing its work and entering an **'adjourning' stage.**

Bear in mind that this development process is not necessarily linear but dynamic. Teams tend to go back in stages if there is a significant change in membership, leadership or task distribution. The time spent at each stage may vary depending on the team members and some teams may never reach the final stage to become fully functional. This is particularly important for UNDAC teams, which generally operate in emergency environments with constantly shifting priorities, tasks and roles.

E.1.1.2 Team performance

Successful team performance usually involves a number of key steps. This is not an exact science but based on best practices and should be viewed as a useful aid to improve team effectiveness on mission. These steps can be thought of as building blocks where each block is founded on the previous one:

- **Goals –** Define clear goals of what the team is trying to achieve. This can also be thought of as the 'strategic direction' of a team.
- **Roles –** Establish functions and roles and decide on who does what to fulfil team goals and how the various roles interact and communicate with each other. Try to avoid grey areas and evaluate team functioning after the first few days. Roles should be assigned based on 1) specific technical expertise and competencies of the team members that could be useful in the interest of the team; 2) personal preferences of the team members themselves could also be considered if technical expertise/competencies are not a priority. It is important that team members feel comfortable and sufficiently equipped to cope with the role assigned to them.
- **Procedures, processes, and standards/codes of conduct –** Define how work gets done, including how each function (and cell in an OSOCC) should work, its internal structures and processes (including compliance with all UN Security Management System policies and procedures), and standards of conduct.
- **Interpersonal relationships –** Clarity around steps 1-3 that should ideally optimise the way team members interact with one another. This includes how team members communicate and resolve conflict, create a harmonious working environment and uphold codes of conduct including ethics and the PSEA pledge. Confusion and (hidden) disagreements around what the team should be doing and who should be doing what may lead to lack of effectiveness and friction within a team. See also **Section E.1.2** on Managing interpersonal relations.

E.1.1.3 Personal attitude

It is important to raise awareness among team members about key attitudes necessary for successful teamwork and team functioning. For example:

- Solidarity and willingness to support team members.
- Humility, with the team's interests taking precedence over individual priorities.
- Flexibility, as roles and daily operations may change continuously in emergency settings to better adapt to the context.
- Transparency, with each team member openly expressing problems, concerns, and emotions. In emergency settings, team dynamics extend beyond working tasks and hours, making the well-being of team members essential for the team's success.
- Compassion and supportiveness towards other team members, including the ability to request support when needed.
- Efficient sharing of information among team members.
- Avoidance of conflict or competitive attitudes, with the team's goals being the main priority.
- Knowing and upholding UN standards of conduct, actively preventing prohibited conduct including sexual exploitation, abuse and sexual harassment.
- Compliance with all UN Security Management System policies and procedures.

E.1.1.4 Team coordination

There are certain recommended actions to focus on
during each stage of the team's development:

STAGES	ACTIONS
Forming	• Set aside time for the team to get to know each other, even if it's only a minimum due to the emergency. • Define clear mission objectives, if possible as a team exercise to establish ownership. • Outline roles and responsibilities and include support partners in team setup, considering individual expertise and personal preferences (when and if possible). • Define procedures for internal team communications, preferably as a visual (see also Chapter F.2). • Quickly establish systems to enable members to collaborate and decide on procedures within their function and/or OSOCC cell.
Storming	• Clarify structures and decision-making mechanisms. • Offer opportunities for proactive involvement so all team members contribute. • Ensure follow-up on agreed actions. • Acknowledge that there may be tensions and emotions at this stage but be proactive and have an open dialogue to minimise friction. • Be flexible on revising the initial set up, if team members are uncomfortable with initial decisions. • Revisit procedures for internal communications if needed.
Norming	• Make sure to include the team in ongoing planning and resource allocation and allow for flexibility. • Delegate and provide support to functions and/or OSOCC cells. • Coach individual team members and support partners, especially the less experienced. • Be accessible and available to ensure that team members feel comfortable to express their concerns and their challenges without barriers or limitations.
Performing	• Seek feedback on team performance and look for ways to improve. • Extend external partnership opportunities and promote leadership opportunities for partners. • Facilitate opportunities for capacity-building of partners as part of the handover and exit strategy.

E.1.2 Team leadership and management

Within UNDAC teams, we often separate leadership and management roles, particularly on larger missions. The UNDAC Team Leader has a more external role, directed towards supporting the

Government, RC/HC and HCT, whereas the Deputy Team Leader/OSOCC Manager has a more internal role, focusing on team functioning, processes and procedures. The distinction is far from clear-cut and there may be several overlaps. Both roles need to incorporate elements of the other, while remaining aware of respective overall responsibilities.

Figure E.1: Leadership vs. management
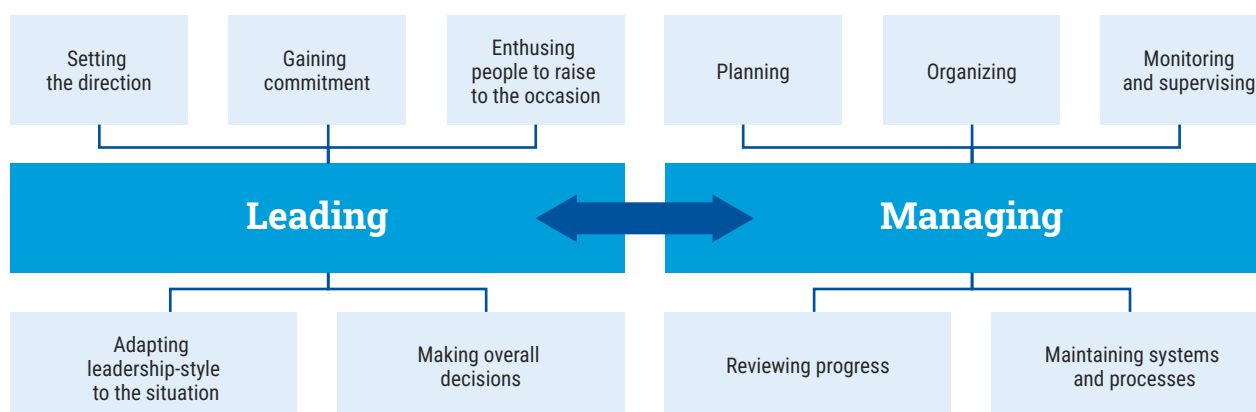
E.1.2.1 Situational leadership

UNDAC Team Leaders, Deputy Team Leaders and Field Team Leaders may face situations where different leadership styles will need to be applied.

The situational leadership approach suggests adapting leadership style depending on the situation being faced. For example, an autocratic, decisive leadership style may be more appropriate in a time of crisis where rapid decisions are needed,

Figure E.2: Leadership range
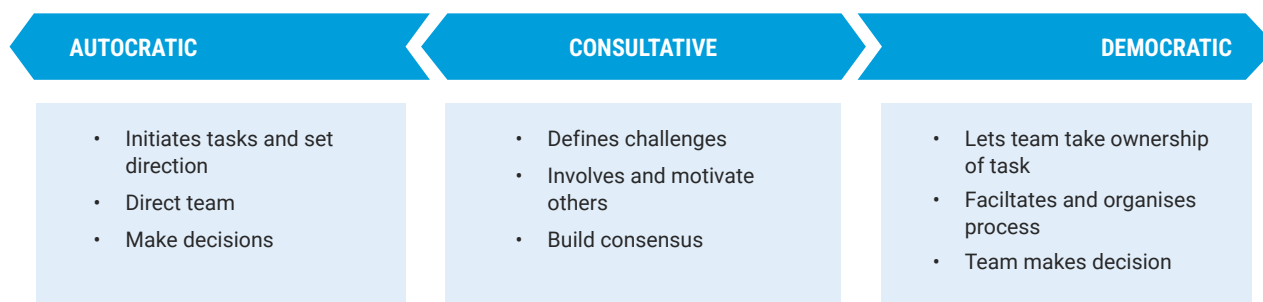
while a democratic leadership style may be best to promote ownership of a decision.

- When the leader is **autocratic**, he or she initiates action, structures activities and makes decisions. This style is assertive and may be appropriate at the beginning when processes and timescales are being determined, when team security is at stake, when the leader is significantly more experienced than other team members or when time

is short. The most important skill is being able to communicate clearly.

- The **consultative** style gets results by leading discussions, asking questions that involve all team members and motivating them to volunteer for responsibilities. This style seeks to build consensus around decisions and is important in gaining commitment to processes and building trust. The most important skill for this leadership

style is facilitation and it may be used effectively during the storming stage of a team. However, it is time-consuming, so it is important to develop the flexibility to use the other styles appropriately.

- The **democratic** style lets the group make decisions and encourages others to use their expertise, while the leader still maintains responsibility for the overall outcomes. This style is predominantly used during the norming and performing stage of a team. It will be increasingly important to engage this style of leadership when approaching the end of an UNDAC mission where tasks and structures will be handed over to others, allowing partners to use their specialised knowledge and experience, and take ownership of the process.

It is important to recognize that management styles can vary significantly based on cultural contexts, and it is essential to acknowledge that different cultures may have distinct approaches to management and leadership. In some cultures, hierarchical structures and directive leadership may be more prevalent and considered appropriate, while in others, a more participatory or consensus-driven approach may be favoured. Understanding and respecting these cultural nuances is crucial for effective leadership, as it fosters better communication, trust, and collaboration within diverse teams. Therefore, when leading international teams or operating in culturally diverse environments, leaders should be mindful of adapting their management styles to the circumstances. An effective UNDAC Team Leader will use all leadership styles depending on the nature of the situation, the development stage of the team and the dynamics within the team.

E.1.2.2 UNDAC collective leadership

We often speak of the collective leadership of an UNDAC team whereby the whole team exercises leadership to help the humanitarian community to advance towards a shared goal. Leadership is not the sole responsibility of the individual tasked with being Team Leader but is rather shared among the whole team. See also **Section C.2.1**.6 on building trust.

ELEMENT	TRADITIONAL LEADERSHIP	COLLECTIVE LEADERSHIP
Leadership	Individual	Team and functions
Decisions	Team Leader	Distributed and aligned with areas of responsibility
Structure	Hierarchy	Flattened and based on networking
Communications	Top down	Multi-directional and transparent
Diversity and inclusion	Less room for multiple cultural influences	More room for multiple cultural influences
Processes	Directive	Collective
Accountability	UNDAC Team Leader	Distributed among UNDAC functions and OSOCC cells

The idea of collective leadership challenges the traditional notions in which individuals are the source of leadership. Authority, responsibility and accountability are more broadly distributed to create opportunities for participation in leadership by all team members and across UNDAC functions and/or OSOCC cells.

The UNDAC methodology describes coordination as a synergy of actions where the effect is greater than the sum of its parts (see **Subchapter G.1** Coordination methodology). To achieve this, you will often need a fairly flat structure within the team, with members who are given a lot of freedom in how they approach their role and solve their tasks. This is further supported by how the OSOCC concept is designed. On the surface, the OSOCC looks like a traditional functional organisational model, using a system of command and control. In reality, however, the OSOCC is a collection of functions whose responsibilities lean more towards serving the OSOCC clients than the OSOCC itself. See also **Chapter D** on the OSOCC Concept.

The table above shows some differences between traditional approaches and collective leadership:

E.1.2.3 Internal coordination

Managing the details of the internal work processes within an UNDAC team is usually the responsibility of the Deputy Team Leader or OSOCC Manager. A key to success will often be to ensure sufficient information flow within the team. There is no simple 'one-size-fits-all' solution to achieve this but some strategies include:

- Whiteboards for key information, e.g., activity board, general information, operational planning boards, communication material on prohibited conducts and reporting mechanisms.
- A 'to-read' list of important documents.
- An input area in the UNDAC Mission Workspace/Toolbox or other shared workspace.
- Regular/daily team meetings.
- Regular briefings and situational updates.
- A five-minute 'scrum' every 'x' hours, i.e., all team members stop their work for a short period and everyone gives a quick update of their activities before returning to their tasks.
- Scheduled teleconferences with sub-locations/offices.
- Group chat using a messaging app, e.g., Signal or similar.

With smaller teams, internal information flow may be easier to achieve than when the team is large or spread out over a wider geographical area. The larger the team the more resources and time need to be dedicated to internal coordination. Do not underestimate the resources required to set up and ensure that internal processes run smoothly.

E.1.2.4 Managing interpersonal relations

While, ideally, personality clashes are reduced when a team has clarified goals, roles and procedures, different personality preferences can impact the team dynamics and the effectiveness of teamwork. Acknowledging that people have different working styles or ways of relating to others helps us understand our own needs as well as the preferences of others. It can often help to depersonalise conflicts.

For example, if a colleague's natural instinct is to talk aloud in order to find a solution, you may bear with him or her even though your personal preference is to think it through before discussing with others. This might be interpreted as not keeping others in the loop or being participatory, but it may originate from a personal preference of figuring out problems before sharing them.

There are many psychometric tools available to help people understand themselves better and for teams to analyse their collective strengths and weaknesses. Most tools require a trained facilitator to explain the scope of the assessment and assist individuals and teams to make sense of the results. Emergency responders often feel that the urgency of an UNDAC mission does not lend itself well to pausing and analysing team dynamics. However, a team-building session early in the mission that focuses on individual preferences, as well as team strengths and weaknesses, can save precious time and energy later on. It also helps to address irritations and cumulative stress (see **Section I.2.4** for more on managing stress) which otherwise might not have

a constructive outlet. Understanding diversity in teams improves communication and work practices and helps UNDAC teams to function efficiently and more effectively.

E.1.3 OCHA surge & integrated approaches

An UNDAC team deployment is usually part of a wider OCHA response. Normally UNDAC trained OCHA staff will be part of the deployed team (and will often lead it). In addition, surge staff from an OCHA Regional Office and Headquarters may also deploy to support coordination of the response while there may be an OCHA Country Office or Humanitarian Advisory Team (HAT) already in the affected country. In these situations, it is usual that the existing OCHA presence, complementary OCHA surge deployments, and the UNDAC team form a single integrated team, which should be reflected in the internal organisation. It is important to realise that not all staff may be familiar with UNDAC, its purpose, objectives, methodology or specific mission objectives. Similarly, OCHA regional or national staff likely have in-depth knowledge of the local situation, national counterparts and coordination structures and tools that an incoming UNDAC does not have. It is therefore of critical importance that the UNDAC team clarifies and agrees (integrated) team organisation, leadership, mission objectives, functions, Plan of Action (PoA) and reporting lines in line with team management guidance mentioned above to achieve a 'one OCHA', integrated response . The UNDAC Team Leader, ERS mission focal point and relevant sending or receiving OCHA offices should lead in this process.

E.1.4 Duty of Care

The OCHA Duty of Care (DoC) framework aims to protect staff by minimising work-related risks and improving overall well-being in the execution of the organisation's mandate - and thus UNDAC team members throughout the UNDAC mission cycle. It further empowers OCHA to create a conducive working environment and prioritise the well-being of its personnel across diverse work settings, ensuring accountability at all levels. It encompasses:

- **Definition of Duty of Care:** It obliges OCHA to mitigate foreseeable risks that may harm its personnel, including their families, in any work environment.

- **Scope and Purpose:** The framework outlines responsibilities for safety, security, health, and well-being, ensuring training and support for personnel.

- **Rationale and Implementation:** Originating from an independent evaluation, it aligns with UN strategies, such as the People Strategy and the UN Mental Health Strategy, and mandates careful risk management.

- **Vision, Principles, and Accountability:** Envisions enhanced protection for personnel and outlines principles such as risk awareness, safe environments, dignity, and accountability.

- **High-level Accountabilities:** Specifies responsibilities for leaders, including the USG, ASG/DERC, OCHA Managers, Executive Officer, and Security Focal Point.

The framework outlines overarching principles, minimum standards, and accountability to achieve OCHA's Duty of Care vision. It focuses on maintaining safety, security, physical health, and psychological well-being of all OCHA personnel, which includes not only staff but those who formally work as part of OCHA. This includes UNDAC and partner organisations' personnel deployed through OCHA to work directly for OCHA as part of the OCHA response, when issued a United Nations attestation.

As such, it divides OCHA's Duty of Care into two key areas: 1) Security and 2) Occupational Safety, Health, and Wellbeing (OSHW). Key Areas of responsibility are as follows:

Figure E.3 OCHA's Key Duty of Care Responsibilities

SECURITY RESPONSIBILITIES				
Management Responsibilities				
Ensure that all OCHA personnel have access to and are aware of security related training requirements	Ensure sufficient funding is allocated for security and security equipment	Ensure that pertinent information on security matters is promptly disseminated to staff	Monitor and report on compliance with security policies, practices and procedures	Monitor and support those involved in security incidents
Personnel Responsibilities				
Know about the risks and advice regarding security and the key people responsible for security management at their location	Know the key people responsible for security management at their location	Comply with all Country and OCHA security regulations and procedures	Obtain security clearance (TRIP) prior to travel	Complete and remain current in mandatory online security trainings and security briefings

OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY, HEALTH AND WELLBEING RESPONSIBILITIES				
Management Responsibilities				
Promote a harmonious work environment and maintain open channels of communication	Address any reports and allegations of prohibited conduct promptly, in a fair and impartial manner	Plan and implement local programmes and activities within their teams, to protect and promote OSHW	Enable the implementation of corporate mechanisms, programmes, initiatives, and tools within their teams	Communicate and consult with personnel in their teams on OSHW matters
Personnel Responsibilities				
Promote a harmonious work environment, free of intimidation, offence and any form of prohibited conduct	Know the UN's standards of conduct, duties and obligations of personnel	Take all reasonable health and safety preventive measures, and ensure their personal preparedness	Communicate openly with OCHA management regarding any specific concerns on OSHW matters	Report any observed risks or hazards to OCHA management

OCHA's Duty of Care Framework provides that the OCHA Security Focal Point is responsible for the operationalization of OCHA's duty of care in relation to the coordination of security related advice and support. In the field, the most senior OCHA staff - or the UNDAC Team Leader (if most senior) - is responsible for ensuring compliance with security protocols, promoting a respectful work environment, and providing necessary support and guidance to ensure the welfare of personnel aligns with the Duty of Care principles.

You can find both a summary and the full document on OCHA's Duty of Care Strategy in the UNDAC Toolbox. For 1) Security and 2) Occupational Safety, Health, and Wellbeing (OSHW) vis-à-vis UNDAC missions, please refer to the **Subchapter E.2** Safety and Security and **Chapter I** Personal Health.

E.1.5 Guide for UNDAC Team Leaders

The following is intended as a quick guide for UNDAC Team Leaders and includes hints and tips on team leadership and mission management. References to important material in this UNDAC Handbook are included.

Mission Preparedness

Team Leader hints:

- As a potential UNDAC Team Leader, have an in-depth knowledge of the UNDAC concept, support mechanisms and recent mission deployments, as well as OCHA, its mandate, structure and various tools and services, including humanitarian financing mechanisms.

- Keep updated on developments in the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) as well as on international humanitarian response policy, thinking and architecture, disaster trends, lessons learned and international evaluations carried out following major international disasters.

- Remain in close contact with OCHA ERS and participate in regular training activities between missions.

- After consulting with the UNDAC Mission Focal Point, the risk assessment as part of the first virtual UNDAC team meeting, and informed by the hazard summaries (available on the UNDAC

Website and/or Reference material), be aware of the potential external risks related to the mission and mitigation measures implemented by OCHA ERS, and reiterate them in front of the team.

References: *Chapters A, B, C.1, E.1.4, J.7 (Checklist on Personal Preparedness)*

Mobilisation

Team Leader hints:

- Ensure that the deployment is seen as part of OCHA's wider response and that surge deployments from other parts of OCHA are merged as much as possible with the UNDAC team forming 'one OCHA.'

- Discuss with OCHA ERS a ToR that is as specific as possible, anticipate next steps and agree on what resources and capacities may be needed.

- Assess team composition, e.g., professional and soft skills, experience, gender, regional/local knowledge and languages, etc.

- Have a virtual team-meeting as soon as team composition is clear, engage the team in discussion of preliminary mission objectives, the obligation of upholding UN standards of conduct and actively preventing prohibited conduct, and have an open discussion on team roles and individual tasks within this, as well as an initial risk analysis.

- Assess requirements for additional support from operational support partners and include them in initial team meetings.

- Seek out key contact information (e.g., UNRC/HC, OCHA Head of Office, UNDSS Security Advisor, Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Coordinator, Access Focal Point, Administration Focal Point, etc.) for the affected country via the respective OCHA Regional Office or Country Office, UN Resident Coordinator's Office or the UNDAC Mission Focal Point.

- Start an initial plan, including entry into the affected country or to a staging area, e.g., resources, equipment, documentation, visas (also in transit countries), etc.

- Ensure that relevant secondary data and baseline information is available to the team as quickly as possible, including data on existing in-country coordination structures (national and

international), emergency response planning, lessons learned from previous responses, etc.

- Develop an initial organigramme of team functions and related staff members and locations.

- Initiate and map required remote support from OCHA offices, operational partners and/or the UNDAC network.

References: *Chapters B, C.1, C.2.1, E.1.3*

Initial Planning

Team Leader hints:

- Brainstorm ideas and plan your approach with the team.

- Make an inventory of assets.

- Anticipate challenges and opportunities, including external risks related to the mission and mitigation measures. Obtain a detailed risk analysis (e.g., from UNDSS) of the context, transparently outlining both mitigation measures and areas where risks cannot be fully addressed.

- Establish 'mission mode'.

- Prioritise and assign tasks, including OCHA surge and support staff.

- Establish a preliminary timeline.

- Ensure the initial plan establishes a direction and a foundation for further planning, even if it has to be changed.

- Create the initial plan virtually due to speed of deployment as there is rarely an interim marshalling point before entry into the country.

- Any plan is better than no plan at all. Remember: if you fail to plan, you plan to fail.

References: *Chapters C.2.1, E.1.2*

Meeting with RC/HC and/or HCT

Team Leader hints:

- The meeting is a two-way interaction where information received is just as important as information presented.

- Keep your brief short, simple and to the point.

- Emphasise that the team is there to assist/support the RC/HC and HCT and will report to them.

- Even if a PoA already exists, the outcome of the meeting should clarify and ratify the overall mission objective and the plan itself.

- Ask about current UN coordination arrangements, e.g.,

  » Is there an HCT including non-UN actors or donors and an updated contingency plan?

  » Are there humanitarian clusters, a sectoral approach and which international agencies and/or national agencies are (co-)leading?

  » Have agencies and/or organisations been designated as lead in key areas of response (as per any contingency plan)?

  » Are there government counterparts or a designated national emergency management authority?

  » Are those responsible from the international humanitarian system, e.g., cluster leads, already liaising with government counterparts?

  » Is a Flash Appeal expected to be developed and launched? Is there a need for an Emergency Cash Grant and/or CERF request?

  » Which local organisations and civil society organisations are present?

  » Is there an Accountability to Affected People (APP) working group established in the country?

  » Is there a Protection from Sexual Abuse and Exploitation (PSEA) network/focal point in country? What are the measures in place?

References: *Chapters A.2/A.3, C.2.1.8, G.2, G.4, G.8*

Plan of Action (PoA)

Team Leader hints:

- Think strategically from the beginning and don't get caught up in day-to-day operational matters. They should not dominate your workday as one may easily lose oversight.

- Think about what is possible to achieve as opposed to what you want to achieve. You cannot do more than your resources, capacities and operational framework allow.

- No plan survives contact with reality. It should be the best you can predict; it will almost certainly not happen that way; you can still succeed.

- It is not the plan that is important but having gone through the planning processes and thought through possible challenges that may occur further down the road. Having made and written down a PoA gives you something to work around in a flexible manner, with improvisation as needed. You can make appropriate changes even if the detail does not work out the way you planned.

- Define the overall mission objective first. The Handbook offers a generic format of what the plan should contain but it is the mission objectives that determine how the plan should be formulated, structured, displayed and implemented.

- Consider what your exit strategy will be from the very beginning of your mission and adapt this part of the plan in the light of developing experience.

- Identify when and where physical presence is required and what team member(s) are most suited to go where.

- Catalogue resources required to ensure the team's effectiveness. Consider local resources (partner organisations, response teams) and international resources (UNDAC partners, OCHA, remote support).

- Ensure that the objectives are achievable given resource constraints, e.g., number of team members, operational support, etc.

- As a general rule of thumb, when offered resources (staff) it is often better to accept than to decline, even when there is no obvious resource gap. In the initial phase of an emergency, tasks quickly accumulate and it is good to have extra capacity ready at hand.

PoA as a management tool:

- May be created as a checklist with questions on what you need to know to achieve your objectives.

- Remember, the plan is more about process management than a product.

- May be displayed as a timeline with benchmarks and then used to review implementation of achievements and failures.

- Tasks may be broken down in smaller responsibilities that can be assigned to certain team members.

- Should serve as a record of what the team has planned and achieved and be an institutional memory of mission development.

- Use the PoA to define your support requirements, but don't let the resources control your plan.

References: *Chapters C.1.4, C.2*

Team management

Team Leader hints:

- Be aware of the difference between leadership and management. Management is about procedures, structures and processes. Leadership is about vision, providing direction, setting ethical standards, decision-making and social skills. Remember: leaders do the right thing, managers do things right.

- If a Deputy Team Leader is not already appointed, do so, and see what management responsibilities can be covered by him/her.

- Leadership is based on one's behaviour. Skills alone do not make leaders. Style and behaviour do, especially your behaviour towards others.

- There are different leadership styles, from autocratic (making all decisions by yourself), to a service-oriented style (i.e., what do I have to do to make you perform well). The situation at hand defines which style to apply. For example, it might be appropriate to choose a firm decisive style in an urgent operational setting but an inclusive style when formulating ideas and plans. See **Section E.1.2**

- Your team members will have different personalities and different ways of working and performing in a team in an emergency. Think about how your team members function and adapt your leadership where possible and required.

- When geographically spread out, define clear reporting lines and responsibilities. Not every location has to do everything.

- Remember your responsibility for team members in other locations. Call them on a regular basis.

- Keep the team-work communal and social and be aware of the risks of cumulative stress and fatigue in your team. Ensure that team members can rest and relax, eat well and look after their (and each other's) health.

- Check that team members have the resources to comply with security measures so they can continue to operate in conditions of acceptable risk. Realise that risk assessment is subjective: what some consider acceptable risk, is unacceptable for others.

- Be aware of the psychosocial support available to your team (on mission and post mission), circulate and reiterate these mental health support offers regularly (as postulated in **Chapter I** on Personal Health). Introduce a buddy system for team members to watch out for one another and provide bilateral support as required/requested/accepted.

References: *Chapters E.1, E.2, I*

Coordination, scope, approach and techniques

Team Leader hints:

- Remember the cornerstones of the UNDAC methodology, i.e., the UNDAC core values, bridging disaster management and humanitarian coordination, the humanitarian principles and how UNDAC supports or provides leadership.

- Assess existing structures and decision-making processes and adapt your structures accordingly.

- Identify the main stakeholders, their requirements for coordination support and how you best may establish yourself alongside them.

- Be particularly familiar with the roles of the RC and HC; of OCHA HQ, ROs and COs; of the IASC structures/systems.

- Remember that proximity to key decision-makers is vital.

References: *Chapters B.5, E.1.3, G.1*

OSOCC

Team Leader hints:

- The Team Leader should not ordinarily assume the role of OSOCC Manager; rather, it is the Deputy Team Leader who should take on this responsibility.

- Think clearly about your choice of location to ensure proximity to national authorities and other key entities.

- Consider possible access constraints and cater for the diverse requirements of the affected population.

- The OSOCC Guidelines and the UNDAC Handbook cover generic OSOCC functions, but it will be the situation that dictates which are needed and which should be given the highest priority.

- Remember that the OSOCC is a service provider to the whole humanitarian community. It may start as a structure for direct coordination of life saving activities, e.g., Urban Search and Rescue (USAR), but may evolve into an OCHA field office and/or support centre for the HCT in the longer term.

- If the (team or OSOCC) organisation or set up does not work: do not hesitate to stop, reorganise and re-start.

References: *Chapters D.3, G.2, G.5*

Civil Military Coordination (UN-CMCoord)

Team Leader hints:

- When military forces play a significant part in the humanitarian response, a dedicated CMCoord structure and dedicated CMCoord Officer is usually needed.

- Be aware of the purpose, scope and dimensions of humanitarian civil-military coordination.

- Establish a civil-military coordination skills inventory amongst the UNDAC team.

- Request civil-military coordination personnel and/or expertise through OCHA ERS.

- Consider, upon consultation with the RC/HC, the release of context-specific civil-military coordination guidance.

- Establish, together with the RC/HC or dedicated operational coordinator, clear lines of communication.

- Define the tasks of a dedicated civil-military coordination officer according to the key strategies of UN-CMCoord.

- Identify international and domestic military actors in your area of operations and establish and maintain an appropriate interface depending on the political context of the intervention.

- Overcome challenges with your counterparts through transparent exchange of information,

constant dialogue and establish trust and confidence in each other's work.

References: *G.10.3*

Assessment and Analysis (A&A)

Team Leader hints:

• The role of an A&A Cell is to inform decision-making.

• At the initial stage, time is key. Only a rough picture of the situation is needed. How big a problem is it? What are the major issues? Are there any particular groups/sectors/geographical areas that are specifically affected with urgent needs? Is there a need for specific expertise in the team, e.g., related to hazardous materials? Better to get the full picture half-right than only parts of the picture completely right. A lot of this information can be analysed from secondary data review and without conducting a field assessment. The A&A Cell has a remote component which is activated immediately which can work on secondary data review and analysis. To identify disaster impact, they can compare with the pre-crisis data. This will inform the scope and scale of the crisis and can also give an idea of pre-existing vulnerabilities and risks.

• Remember that an assessment is an ongoing process by which you gather available information, collate it and analyse it to inform the response, i.e., make decisions. Do not think of assessment as a field trip. The assessment process is iterative, with each step building on the previous one and providing increasing levels of detail. The findings of each phase will drive the design and focus of the next phase.

• Make sure you communicate your needs to the A&A Cell. What do you need to know? This will guide their work. Their role is to serve decision-making, not to produce data for the sake of producing data.

• Have a daily briefing with the leader of the A&A Cell to get an overview of the situation and the priority needs. Ask him/her to also give you daily operational updates in writing that you can bring into meetings. Remember it's a two-way communication and that you may sit on valuable information that is needed for the A&A Cell to get a better understanding of the situation. In

the same manner, initial responders, like Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) teams and Emergency Medical Teams (EMT) can be a huge asset in observing, e.g., general humanitarian needs or flag environmental emergencies. All this information needs to be collected systematically and analysed properly. A&A is about making sense of all the available information (it's like a puzzle).

• Make an A&A plan that reinforces coordinated approaches, e.g., establish an OSOCC A&A Cell for internal purposes, establish an Assessment and Analysis Working Group (AAWG) to engage external partners.

• Encourage a joint analysis process. Analysis is first and foremost a cognitive process and best done in a group setting. Remember: several brains think better than one. A joint analysis will also create a shared understanding of the operational picture.

• Involve other key (senior) decision-makers in joint analysis exercises or briefings: e.g., senior government officials, RC/HC, OCHA Head of Office, Cluster coordinators.

• UNDAC's role is to ensure that assessments are conducted and coordinated, not necessarily to carry them out. Nevertheless, any UNDAC team must be prepared to initiate and take charge of the assessment process if needed, especially in the early stages of an emergency.

References: *Chapters F.2, G.3, G.12*

Information management (IM)

Team Leader hints:

• The IM Function should be assigned to one or several dedicated team member(s) early on in the mission, but all members are part of the process.

• An information management strategy, including external and internal communication lines, should be developed and incorporated in the PoA.

• Ensure that you have a robust system for processing information, and data responsibility and security.

• Don't let yourself and the team be driven by technology and software solutions. Choose the best tool for the activities, and not the other way around.

- The success of a mission is often measured by the quality of the information produced and disseminated.
- Information overload will be likely. Consider resource requirements, including the option of remote support by other OCHA offices and partners.

References: *Chapter F.1*

Reporting

Team Leader hints:

- In some countries, the UNDAC team will need to contribute directly to the RC/HC office's situation report. In others, your report will be an input to the overall OCHA situation report, at the regional or global level. Make sure you agree on when and what to contribute and to whom.
- Agree on deadlines and sign-off procedures on various outputs with RC/HC during the first meeting. The same applies for OCHA internal products.
- Try to imagine yourself at the receiving end and anticipate what information you would need.
- Consider protection issues and check **Chapter G.2** on Centrality of Protection and Quality Response to make sure that your reporting is inclusive.
- Define your primary audience for the situation report, bearing in mind that this may change over the course of the mission.
- Bottom-line-up-front (BLUF) is a good rule of thumb. Tell your readers right away what the highlights of your report are.
- Make sure you have the latest updates from the A&A Cell before sending your report.
- Even when the report is written by other team members, it should be approved by the Team Leader before onward distribution.

References: *Subchapters F.3, G.2, G.4*

Operational briefings for the UNDAC team

Team Leader hints:

- Should preferably be held on a daily basis.
- Use the PoA to define the next day's tasks and assign responsibilities.
- Ensure all team members are briefed, either in-person, virtually, or by a representative of their OSOCC Cell.
- Make sure the A&A Cell provides a daily brief to the team.
- Keep team members aware of any changes in the security risk environment.
- Utilise the operational briefing for regular de-briefs and look for signs of cumulative stress, fatigue and other potential staff or team functioning issues.
- Remind of the duty to uphold UN Standards of conduct, the responsibility to actively prevent prohibited conducts and the obligation to report any suspicion of sexual exploitation and abuse.

References: *Chapters C.1.4, G.1.2, G.2*

Media

Team Leader hints:

- Always discuss media strategy with the RC/HC. They know the country and potential pitfalls.
- In a major emergency, expect OCHA headquarters to issue key messages for the media.
- Always have the latest official and key figures from the A&A Cell to hand, e.g., death toll, injured, number of USAR teams in-country, etc.
- Normally, the Team Leader should be the focal point for the media. If not, the Team Leader must ensure an overall media strategy and appoint a spokesperson.
- Media is a good tool for advocacy but otherwise stick to the team's area of expertise.
- Media messages should reflect what is being reported in public reports and requested in appeals (key messages).
- Specific media messages should be cleared with the RC/HC and OCHA headquarters.

- Ensure all team members are aware of the key figures and messages of the day to avoid being caught unaware.
- Give only factual statements, not your opinion, and never lie to the press.
- Try to get a dedicated Accountability to Affected People (AAP) expert deployed with the UNDAC team, but as a minimum coordinate the development and dissemination of key humanitarian messages in local languages. Key messages should be simple. One key message should for example be that humanitarian assistance is free. People then need to understand where to find the assistance and how to proceed.

References: *Chapter F.4*

Funding

Team Leader hints:

Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF):

- The RC/HC must endorse agency proposals to access the CERF; agencies cannot submit directly to the ERC.
- Proposals should be sent as a package to the ERC and the CERF Secretariat at cerf@un.org
- Budgets must follow the CERF template and a project allocation table is required.
- CERF is meant to jump-start the initial response. It is not meant to cover all needs but rather provide a quick injection of resources so that responders can begin critical life-saving activities while mobilising additional funds.
- Situations requiring CERF funds should normally also generate an appeal. The RC/HC allocates available CERF funds to the highest-priority, most urgent life-saving projects.
- CERF doesn't replace an appeal, it interacts with it. Appeals and CERF requests are developed in tandem, where CERF is a quick funding tool to cover the time lag between issuance of the appeal and receipt of commitments and funds from donors.
- The ideal: simultaneously prepare an appeal and prioritise projects within it for CERF funding, showing CERF allocations in summary financial tables within the appeal document.

- CERF will not fund 100% of an emergency's project requirements except in rare circumstances.
- See also cerf.un.org

Flash Appeals and Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP):

- The RC/HC and HCT must own both process and end product.
- UNDAC, and in particular OCHA staff on the team, may support the HCT in preparing appeals but only with 1-2 dedicated staff with subject matter expertise.
- The Government should support an appeal and is sometimes (but not always) involved as an implementing partner, but not as an appealing agency.
- Appeals must be short and produced very quickly (within a few days to a week).
- Appeals draw on Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) methodology but much slimmed down.
- Use the sector/cluster system in producing appeals through delegation to lead agencies.
- A decision will need to be taken whether to include acute relief needs only or also transitional needs.
- The Team Leader agrees on strategy and process with the RC/HC at the outset. Review progress and stay in close contact with him/her throughout.
- Use UNDAC members to support key cluster leads but be careful not to let appeal support consume all your team's resources and monopolise its work and time.
- Consult OCHA ERS or the OCHA regional office to get an experienced appeal writer if required
- Ensure consistency of approach and of the key messages, at field level, in the capital and at headquarters.
- Resist efforts to inflate financial requirements.
- Protect and help your appeal writer. Dedicate a good national staff assistant for translation.
- Be prepared for 'curve balls'. The situation and deadlines will, likely, change during production.

References: *Chapters A.3.6, G.8*

End of mission

Team Leader hints:

- An exit and handover/transition strategy must be included in the earliest version of the PoA, as well as in every interim plan and team operational briefing. Otherwise, it may easily get lost in the urgency of the mission. Failure to properly plan and execute a handover/transition strategy may seriously imperil your achievements and the long-term success of the mission, resulting in lost opportunities to stabilise changes and innovations. It may also leave a gaping hole in the management of the operation when the UNDAC team leaves.

- Typically, an effective strategy requires an ongoing inventory of assets and processes under the team's control, identifying local partners at the earliest opportunity who can assume key functions performed by the team and, if necessary, building up their capacity before the handover takes place.

- It is important to note that a proper handover/transition strategy may be implemented over the course of the mission as partners are identified and determined ready. It should not all be left until the end of the mission.

- Remember: people will often better remember the team for how they left rather than for the work they did during their mission.

- Make sure to organise an internal debrief and remind UNDAC team members of the psychosocial services at their disposal, also upon return.

References: *Chapters C.2.3*

E.2 Safety and security

This chapter presents safety and security mechanisms within the UN system and provides UNDAC members with tools and guidance to help ensure their personal health, safety and security. It outlines roles and responsibilities related to security, including UN Security Risk Management – an approach that applies an overriding concern for the safety of UN personnel with a secondary consideration for the safety of essential resources. The remaining sections of the chapter discuss personal safety related to missions.

E.2.1 Introduction

No mission is without risk. Team members may face security-related threats such as armed conflict, high levels of crime, acts of terrorism and civil unrest. In addition, safety threats resulting from actual or potential disasters are often present, e.g., the risk of landslides, building collapses, downed power lines, environmental hazards such as exposure to hazardous chemicals, gas leaks, etc., flood waters and disease. UNDAC members must maintain a level of 'acceptable risk'. This is achieved by following the UN security measures to reduce risk to a level that is acceptable for the corresponding criticality of the mission activity in question. In other words, is the action important enough to justify acceptance of the residual risk, i.e., the risk remaining once all security measures have been fully implemented.

The ultimate responsibility for the safety and security of UN staff in a country lies with the Host Government. Within the UN Security Management System and the OCHA Accountability Framework, the ERC has the overall responsibility for the safety and security of OCHA personnel and is accountable to the Secretary-General. The OCHA Security Focal Point at HQ is responsible for coordinating the organisation's day-to-day response to safety and security and providing all the relevant actors with advice, guidance and technical assistance. At the country level, the OCHA Head of Office is accountable to the ERC for the safety, security and welfare of OCHA personnel under their supervision, their eligible dependents and for the protection of all OCHA assets and property.

The OCHA Head of Office in-country is responsible for the safety and security of the UNDAC team while they are deployed. When there is no OCHA office in the country or other designated OCHA official present, then the UNDAC Team Leader will be responsible for the safety and security of the UNDAC team under the responsibility of the Designated Official (DO). See **Section E.2.5** below for specific responsibilities pertaining to the UNDAC Team Leader.

While this individual, along with security and safety professionals from the UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS), will do everything reasonable

to reduce the risk for the UNDAC team, each member has to take responsibility for their own safety and security.

In addition to learning and applying the safety and security content of this chapter, all UNDAC members are required to take the BSAFE training, the online security awareness training provided by UNDSS. BSAFE certificates will not expire.

Furthermore, UNDAC members are encouraged to attend other safety and security related training that is regularly offered to humanitarians. These include the Safe and Secure Approaches in Field Environment (SSAFE) course, which is a general (UN) requirement for deployments to countries with elevated current security risk, the Hostile Environment Awareness Training (HEAT) and Individual First Aid Kit (IFAK) training courses. These are not mandatory for UNDAC.

E.2.2 UN Security Management System (UNSMS)

The Framework of Accountability provides details on the various roles, responsibilities and accountability related to security decision-making from the Secretary-General to the individual staff member. It also provides the architecture for decision-making related to security. In the UN, day-to-day decision-making related to security is decentralised to the field, generally to the most senior UN representative, who is given the responsibility of Designated Official for Security (DO).

UNDAC members should be familiar with the following security-related positions that may be encountered while on mission:

- **UN Department for Safety and Security (UNDSS or DSS) –** UNDSS serves as the UN advisory and coordinating department for security risk management. DSS advises on security management through the use of the security risk management process and coordinates the implementation of security risk management measures approved by the DO.
- **Designated Official for Security (DO) – In** each country or designated area where the UN is

present, the senior-most UN official is normally appointed by the Secretary-General as the Designated Official for Security and is accredited to the host Government as such. The DO is accountable to the Secretary-General, through the Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security, and is responsible for the security of UN personnel, premises and assets throughout the country or designated area.

- **Security Management Team (SMT) –** The DO chairs the SMT which includes the head of each UN organisation present at the duty station and the Chief Security Adviser. Members of the SMT are responsible for advising and supporting the DO in their safety and security decision-making for all UN personnel, premises and assets.
- **Chief Security Advisor/Security Advisor (CSA/SA) –** An internationally-recruited security professional appointed by UNDSS who serves as the primary advisor to the DO and the SMT on all matters related to security. She/he is the senior security official at each duty station and is accountable to UNDSS. While the DO has the responsibility for the day-to-day management of the CSA, on substantive matters the CSA will report concurrently to the DO and UNDSS.
- **Field Security Coordination Officer (FSCO) –** In larger duty stations, internationally-recruited FSCOs may be deployed to assist and work under the supervision of the CSA.
- **Area Security Coordinator (ASC) –** May be appointed by the DO to control and coordinate security arrangements in areas of larger countries that are separated from the capital in terms of both distance and exposure.
- **Warden and Deputy Warden -** Wardens are appointed by the DO/ASC, in consultation with the SMT, to assist in the implementation of the security plan. Wardens are accountable to the DO/ASC for their security-related functions, irrespective of their employing organisation.

In accordance with UN Security Management System Policy **Chapter I**II, all members of the UNDAC team are considered as UNSMS personnel as either employees or a UNSMS Organization or Type II Gratis Personnel from the start of the mission (at their country of departure) until they return, and UNSMS policies apply to them. The UNDAC team includes

everyone that works directly for OCHA and the UNDAC mission under the direction of the UNDAC Team Leader. As such, as is the case with all UN staff, UNDAC team members are required to abide by the security policies, guidelines, directives, plans and procedures of the UN. This includes meeting the requirement to receive a UNDSS security briefing as soon as practicable upon arrival in-country.

More information on specific UN security policy and provisions can be found in the UN Security Policy Manual (SPM) available in the UNDAC Toolbox.

E.2.3 Security Risk Management (SRM)

Within the UN Security Management System, the Security Risk Management (SRM) model provides all staff with tools to assess and manage risk. The level of risk posed by identified undesirable threat events is determined and security risk management options are developed. The DO and SMT select, approve, implement and monitor identified security risk management measures.
Further information on Security Management can be found in **Chapter I**V of the UN Security Policy Manual.

The Security Risk Management (SRM) Process

The SRM process is a structured and risk-based decision-making tool. It guides the process for the identification and assessment of the threats to UN staff, assets and operations in a Designated Area. It then identifies measures and procedures to reduce the level of associated risk to enable programme delivery within acceptable levels of risk. The process also includes a structured decision-making model for acceptable risk, which balances security risk with programme criticality.

Importantly, the UN Security Management System is risk based, not threat based. While threats are identified as part of the process, decisions are taken based on the assessment of risk, i.e., the likelihood of being exposed to identified threats and their perceived impact.

Programme Criticality

The Programme Criticality (PC) Framework is a common UN system policy for decision-making on acceptable risk. It puts in place guiding principles and a systematic structured approach to ensure that the criticality of outputs involving UN personnel can be balanced against security risks. The PC Framework is part of the UN security risk management process.

The PC Framework is implemented as a mandatory policy of the organisation in environments of high or very high security risk. It assesses programmatic contribution to the UN's Strategic Results in a particular situation. The responsibility for Programme Criticality lies with the senior UN representative in-country responsible for programmes, i.e., the RC or Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG). You can find more information on the PC Framework in the UNDAC Toolbox.

E.2.4 Security-related responsibilities: UNDAC Team Leader

The UNDAC Team Leader is responsible for their team's adherence to UN safety and security requirements. It is imperative that this is clearly understood and accepted by all. The Team Leader is obligated to refuse tasks that pose an unacceptable risk to the team's safety. Furthermore, they are responsible for liaising with UNDSS in-country, so they may coordinate all necessary requirements to enable UNDAC personnel to deliver the UN mandate safely. The Team Leader may delegate daily management of safety and security to a dedicated team member.

Where there is an OCHA Office in-country, the specific responsibilities of the UNDAC Team Leader concerning safety and security are as follows:

- Ensure all team members receive a security briefing by UNDSS.
- Ensure that the arrangements detailed in relevant OCHA, UNDSS and country-specific security policies and procedures are being implemented with the aim of maintaining the security and safety of OCHA personnel, operations and facilities.

- Ensure that safety and security is a core component of all UNDAC activities in the country.
- Liaise with UNDSS to ensure an effective Security Risk Management approach to all UNDAC activities and operations (including determining the acceptable level of risk for each).
- Manage and direct all security-related activities of UNDAC in the country.
- Ensure that the DO is provided with regularly updated lists of UNDAC staff in the country.
- Advise the DO, CSA, OCHA Security Focal Point and/or other designated officials of the particular concerns of the team regarding security.
- Ensure full and complete compliance of UNDAC members in the country with all security-related instructions.
- Report all security-related incidents to the DO and OCHA Security Focal Point, following country-specific procedures.
- Ensure that all UNDAC personnel are appropriately equipped with the required safety and security equipment and trained in its use.
- Keep OCHA HQ and the OCHA Security Focal Point informed of all developments in the country that have a bearing on the security and safety of UNDAC personnel, operations, premises and assets.
- Ensure collaboration on security matters with implementing partners.

Where there is no OCHA Office in-country, the UNDAC Team Leader performs the following duties (as the OCHA Security Focal Point to the SMT):

- Serves as a temporary member of the SMT and attends all SMT meetings and training.
- Keeps UNDAC staff fully apprised of security-related information and measures being taken in the country.
- Ensures that there is a fully functioning and operational communications system for security management within UNDAC and that this is fully integrated into the UN Country Emergency Communications System.
- In the unlikely event of UNDAC staff selected to be Wardens or Area Security Coordinators, ensures that they are given appropriate support and are provided with appropriate time for relevant training.
- Reports to the DO and UNDSS all instances of non-compliance of security policies by UNDAC staff members and takes appropriate action as necessary.

A template for safety and security planning is included in the UNDAC Toolbox and should be a part of the overall mission PoA.

E.2.5 Security-related responsibilities: UNDAC team members

Like all UN staff employed by the organisations of the UN system, each UNDAC member is accountable to their respective organisation. All staff, regardless of their rank or level, have the responsibility to abide by security policies, guidelines, directives, plans and procedures of the UN Security Management System and its organisations. Each UNDAC team member is responsible for:

- Familiarising themselves with information provided to them regarding the UN Security Management System.
- Ensuring they receive security clearance prior to travelling through mission focal point in OCHA Geneva.
- If required for in-country movements, obtain security clearance prior to travel.
- Attending security briefings and signing a document certifying that they have been briefed.
- Knowing the key people responsible for security management at their location.
- Being appropriately equipped for service at all duty stations.
- Complying with all UNDSS and OCHA security regulations and procedures at the duty station, whether on or off duty.
- Conducting themselves in a manner which will not endanger their safety and security and that of others.
- Reporting all security incidents in a timely manner.
- Having completed the BSAFE training (mandatory) and (when applicable and required) SSAFE.

E.2.6 Personal safety and security

In addition to the duties listed above, the single most important piece of advice an UNDAC member can follow is to apply a safety and security mind-set when on mission. The following is a general list of safety and security measures that may be of help in various situations:

- Be aware of what is happening around you and react accordingly, before a potential situation becomes serious. Learn to be 'street wise'.

- Observe local behaviour (especially when driving), including changes in the normal habits of the local population as this may indicate imminent outbursts of major trouble, shelling, etc.

- Do not carry large amounts of money. The money you do carry should be divided into smaller amounts and kept in separate places. Same with credit cards, keep them in separate places. Enough cash should be carried if the need arises to pay for services, fees, taxes, etc.

- Do not arrange your days in routines, as this will make it easier for potential aggressors to elaborate plans against you.

- When at the UNDAC base, living quarters, hotels, etc., investigate possible escape routes in case the building is attacked, or a fire breaks out. Agree on procedures and a meeting point for a head count. Observe the number of windows in each room and where they are situated, the best ways out of rooms, the best places to seek cover, etc. Know the fire escape plan or create one for yourself. Make these things a habit.

- If you leave the team base, make sure that someone, preferably the Team Leader or the staff appointed to manage team security, knows where you are going, how long the trip will take and the estimated time that you will return. Create and use an OUT/IN list if applicable.

- If you regularly travel between two fixed places, e.g., between living quarters and the base, try to vary the route as well as the time each day.

- When outside the UNDAC base, always stay together with another team member. Instigate a 'buddy system' if possible.

- When going into the field, ask people who have just been to the same place and travelled the same route about the security and safety situation. If possible, keep track of incidents on a map.

- Agree with UNDSS during the security briefing procedures to be followed in case of road accidents.

- If you are equipped with a helmet and/or a flak jacket or bullet-proof vest, make sure you use them; they do work and may save your life. Not wearing them may have legal consequences in case of injuries.

- When parking, be sure to park in a way that makes it fast and easy to drive away, if necessary, e.g., do not park with the front of the vehicle against a wall or any other obstruction.

- Make it a rule that you never pick up people wanting a ride as you do not know who they are or what their intentions may be. Especially, do not pick up military personnel or police as they may be dangerous or they may be targeted which will then endanger you. Similarly, if you are stranded, e.g., because of breakdown, do not accept rides from the police or military for the same reasons.

- If you should be the target of a robbery: keep calm, be passive and talk only when spoken to, obey orders, be cooperative, avoid eye contact, and (in most situations) make it understood that you are a UN representative. Do not be provocative or play the hero. However, understand that no two situations are alike and you should use your own judgement when deciding a course of action.

- When driving, steer around potholes. They may actually be craters with unexploded ordnance or holes with mines. Be especially aware of small holes, as these may be the entry holes of shells. Just because other vehicles have gone through a pothole does not mean that there is not unexploded ordnance; it may survive 35 vehicles while the 36th will trigger it.

- Be cautious with cameras and smartphone-cameras. Photos should never be taken where there is military activity, soldiers or checkpoints.

- Be prepared for evacuation by always having a grab bag packed with private items, warm clothes, extra food and drink, a first-aid kit, and your helmet and flak jacket (if supplied).

- Always carry UN credentials and your passport. Should officials demand to have the passport, a photocopy of it may be useful to hand out instead of the passport itself. Even a duplicate passport may be useful.

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F.
SITUATION

United Nations

Section contents

F. SITUATION

Good situational awareness is key to an effective and accountable humanitarian response. To achieve this, we need to maximise our ability to make sense of the available information. Essential to this is good information management, assessment and analysis, which are interdependent processes that require careful planning and attention to context. We also need to be able to effectively communicate our knowledge to others.

The Situation chapter consists of four sub chapters:

*   **Information Management (IM):** This chapter includes information on how to scope and assess the information landscape, where to look for basic information during mobilisation and deployment, how to develop your overall IM strategy and set up your folder structure.
*   **Assessment and Analysis (A&A):** This chapter includes basic principles of A&A and describes how to coordinate A&A internally through an A&A Cell and externally through an Assessment Working Group (AWG). It contains tips for collection of data, both secondary and primary data, processing of information and advice on how to conduct meaningful analysis.
*   **Reporting, IM products and analytical outputs:** This chapter includes basic principles of reporting, information on standard UNDAC reports, typical IM products and analytical outputs.
*   **Media:** This chapter includes information on how to work with media, how to work with OCHA/ UNDAC Public Information Officers and basic principles for use of social media.

F.1 Information Management

Accurate information and data are critical to inform and coordinate a rapid, effective and principled humanitarian response.

OCHA plays a unique role as the central hub for information management services to the entire humanitarian community, including other UN agencies, and international and local NGOs. OCHA gathers, analyses and shares data and information on the entirety of a humanitarian response. OCHA produces different information products such as maps, graphics, situation reports and humanitarian bulletins.

OCHA is also the steward of humanitarian tools and services that help inform decision-making across the response. These include ReliefWeb, which provides 24-hour coverage of disasters, conflicts and crises for the humanitarian community, and ReliefWeb Response, an operational platform and resource repository for humanitarians. In addition, OCHA's Centre for Humanitarian Data manages the Humanitarian Data Exchange (HDX), a platform that shares real-time humanitarian data.

The implementation and coordination of a humanitarian response requires access to as reliable, up-to-date and accurate information as possible. Decision-makers need to know who has been affected, what the needs are and how humanitarian actors are responding to develop a strategy that will direct resources to address priority needs and gaps and mitigate risks. The management of information during a humanitarian emergency is a crucial part of any response. Reliable data on the locations of affected people, what they urgently need and who is best placed to assist them is essential to ensuring an effective and timely response.

To deliver timely and reliable data and information to humanitarian stakeholders, the information management process needs to be planned properly.

Information management (IM) includes data and information collection, storage, processing, analysis, and communication/dissemination. The IM process is where data elements are transformed into information and knowledge to inform actions, operations and advocacy. The recommended information management process has six steps:

Figure F.1: The Information Management Process

There are different Information Management profiles in OCHA: generalist, content management, coordination, and data visualisation. UNDAC will most likely deploy a generalist Information Management Officer (IMO) from OCHA to lead the information management function. The IM is supported remotely by OCHA's FIS (Field Information Services), regional OCHA office IM units, and/or other IMOs deploying in the field as needed.

The IM cell works closely with the Assessment & Analysis (A&A) cell and can support various tasks for assessment coordination such as creating or adapting assessment/survey forms for use on tablets or smartphones, e.g., KoboCollect, visualising progress and/or assessment preliminary results, assessment data cleaning and analysis etc.

Besides supporting the A&A cell, the IM cell also creates and maintains contact lists, meeting calendars, the ReliefWeb Response page, 3W, maps and infographics, and other products to support coordination. The IM cell also supports the UNDAC team with managing the shared workspace (currently Google Drive) and ensures the team can access it. IM is also in charge of supporting management of other communication channels (i.e., Skype, Signal and WhatsApp groups) for formal and informal communications (Community of Practice events and data sharing spaces).

F.1.1 The information landscape

From the moment the deployment notice is given, the UNDAC team should be ready to assess the information landscape of the emergency to which they are deploying. Numerous pre-existing resources will be useful and enable the team to hit the ground running. The better the team is prepared, the more helpful it will be in the humanitarian response.

It is important to keep an open mind about the structures and information management systems already in place in a given context. Once the team arrives, it will have to adapt to the context, create synergies and align information flows.

F.1.1.1 Before deployment

There are a number of tools and services used by the humanitarian community and development actors that UNDAC members should be aware of, use and/or promote during deployment:

- **Global Disaster Alert and Coordination System (GDACS)** was created as a cooperation framework between the United Nations and the European Commission in 2004 to address significant gaps in information collection and analysis in the early phase of major sudden-onset disasters. For the past decade, GDACS has drawn on the collective capacity of disaster managers and information systems worldwide to facilitate international information exchange and decision-making. The integrated GDACS website (http://www.gdacs.org/) offers the following disaster information systems and online coordination tools:

  » **GDACS Disaster Alerts –** These are issued and disseminated to some 40,000 subscribers immediately following sudden-onset disasters. The automated estimates and risk analysis which form the basis of the alerts are provided by the European Commission Joint Research Centre (JRC) and the Global Flood Observatory.

  » **Virtual OSOCC –** The VOSOCC is the first source of operational information in natural-hazard related disasters, providing information on teams deploying to the emergency, the latest information on the situation, the

status of essential infrastructure, etc. https://vosocc.unocha.org/

» **The GDACS Satellite Mapping and Coordination System (SMCS) –** This is a platform for coordinating satellite imagery analysis and mapping provided by different satellite mapping groups during major disaster events. The SMCS is a tool that shows which satellite images have been requested and collected, their coverage and which entity is working on what type of analysis. In addition to an operational coordination tool for satellite image analysis professionals, SMCS is also a metadata archive for past events and a discussion forum. This service is facilitated by the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNOSAT). https://gdacs-smcs.unosat.org/

» **Google Drive -** A Google Drive (or G-Drive) folder is created at the beginning of an UNDAC mission and is the team's internal file sharing tool. A file structure is provided and some pre-existing information will be added during the deployment phase, including, if already available, preliminary situation analysis, country contingency plan and other UNDAC resources.

• **Humanitarian Data Exchange (HDX) –** HDX is a data repository that can be used to download country information such as population statistics and administrative boundaries, including **Common Operational Datasets (CODs)** which are referential datasets needed to support operations and decision-making for all actors

in a humanitarian response. Even if not familiar with reading datasets, it enables responders to have an idea of how many people are living in an area, how the country is structured, e.g., number and names of regions, etc. https://data.humdata.org/

CODs provide a common framework enabling data from different sources to be combined and analysed. There are two types of CODs: core CODs and country-specific CODs.

• Core CODs are critical for information and data products and to underpin effective coordination. They are essential for effective risk analysis, needs assessment, decision-making, and reporting by OCHA and partners on all aspects of the response. Of these, the most critical datasets to support response are the basic administrative boundaries and population statistics. This data is typically provided by the Government or national authority. Caseload figures are available after an emergency and can come from a number of sources.

Country-specific CODs are defined at country-level based on local hazards and operational requirements. Examples include key infrastructure that could be impacted or used during relief operations, such as schools, health facilities and refugee camps; or topographical data such as rivers, land cover and elevation. This technical support package recommends CODs for each disaster type as well as detailed technical information on each dataset to help ensure they meet minimum standards for quality and accuracy. See also https://humanitarian.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/imtoolbox/pages/42045911/Common+-Operational+Datasets+CODs

Figure F.2: Common Operational Datasets (CODs)
COD PROCESS

CORE CODS
Provide location and demographic data

Administrative boundaries	Population statistics	Humanitarian profile

45k 46k

100k

COUNTRY-SPECIFIC CODS
Operational data

Populated places	Health facilities	Roads	Waterways	Education facilities

CODs are the **foundation** to all **preparedness** and **response** activities in a country. When CODs are available, **partners** work with **same data**, leading to a **common understanding of the disaster and response.**

Information Management Unit and **Working Group** identify and liaise with 'sources' or owners to analyze, collate, clean and reach agreement on specific **operational datasets.**

- **INSARAG Coordination & Management System (ICMS)** is an online system used by USAR teams to support coordination. IMOs can access the ICMS for information about USAR teams deployment and SAR updates https://icms-insarag.hub.arcgis.com/

- **IM Toolbox –** OCHA's Information Management Toolbox is an online space to access current and curated information tools, services, and systems to support humanitarian response and preparedness coordination. The Toolbox is the authoritative reference for OCHA information management tools and systems. The IM Toolbox is an essential part of every Information Management Officer's packing list - for all phases of humanitarian response and preparedness work. It integrates best practices of OCHA field information management officers and regional offices. Via the UNDAC's Toolbox, UNDAC members can access direct links to IM Toolbox resources pertinent to their duties. In addition, they can refer to the IM Toolbox for more resources as needed. imtoolbox.unocha.org. Some regional offices might also have their own tools to be deployed. Checking with the relevant regional office prior to a deployment is recommended to assess which tool to use in each specific context.

- **ReliefWeb –** ReliefWeb is a website that serves as a document repository. Although less for operational information, useful documents may be found here, such as lessons learned or evaluations from past emergencies, situation reports, appeal documents, etc. https://reliefweb.int/

- **Response Reliefweb (RW Response)** is a specialised digital service of OCHA. This service is part of OCHA's commitment to the humanitarian community to ensure that relevant information in a humanitarian emergency is available to facilitate situational understanding and decision-making. It is the next generation of the Humanitarian Response platform. The website gathers operational information and enables clusters to share information online. It includes a meeting calendar, a document repository and an assessment registry. It is normally activated shortly after the VOSOCC in a humanitarian emergency and will be maintained for months (sometimes years) after the disaster. (https://response.reliefweb.int/). Historical data from past disasters (until June 2023) can be found in the Legacy Humanitrianresponse.info site (that preceded Humanitarian Response) at https://wayback.archive-it.org/21210/20230626152423/https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/.

• **UNDAC's Toolbox** is a repository of templates, guidance documents, and tools which are compiled in a Google Drive as a one-stop shop to support the different functions in a UNDAC team to find helpful resources for their work. A link to the UNDAC Toolbox is added to the Google Drive of the mission for ease of access.

F.1.1.2 During deployment

When deployed, UNDAC members will need to familiarise themselves with the specific information structures and sources that may be used by the Local Emergency Management Authority (LEMA) and humanitarian responders, in particular the HCT. It is also likely that development actors will already be present in the country. Here are a few tips on how to best approach the new context:

• **Conduct an IM stakeholder analysis –** Identify key actors, learn about the information they collect and share and how best to support them. If national disaster management officers are operational in the country, they will most likely have a working information cell that can provide first-hand information. Development actors often have programmes in remote areas with a lot of knowledge, access and possibly logistical support. The important actors on the ground should be identified and a consultative process initiated to share and receive information, including ascertaining what information they can provide or help provide and how best to help them. The analysis should cover stakeholder characteristics such as:

   » Position (strategic, programmatic, operational) in the emergency management architecture.

   » Organisational mandate and strategic/political goal.

   » Knowledge of the context.

   » Subject matter or field of expertise.

   » Geographic coverage of operations.

   » Quality of information products.

   » Contact-persons.

• The stakeholder analysis will help determine who to contact with what requests, how to prioritise

meetings, and what subjects to discuss. They may publish reports or provide online information which should also be used. A stakeholder analysis is an exercise serving more purposes than IM and should be an essential part of any Plan of Action (PoA). See also **Section C.1.4** for PoA contents.

• **Consider resources –** The IM task is usually too large to be solved by one team member alone, and, if required, the team should ask for additional remote support once the gaps have been identified. This could come from an OCHA regional office, OCHA headquarters, or from an operational support partner (see **Section B.8.1** for more on operational support). During the IM stakeholder analysis, key IM/analysis staff in other humanitarian organisations may be identified with whom to collaborate.

• **Handover procedures –** Any new IM processes and tools will need to be handed over as part of the handover/exit strategy. Try to minimise 'new inventions' and complicated processes. Always be aware that someone will most likely have to take over and maintain the processes created. If using a specific software or creating a complex database, others may not be able to take it on. Keep it simple. In case of doubt, the regional office might be a good guide for tool selection.

In a nutshell, it is possible to assess the information landscape even before deploying. Once deployed, it is crucial to adapt to the context and link all information efforts to the UNDAC mission objectives.

F.1.2 Information management strategy

Planning the flow of information, both externally and internally, should be an essential part of developing the PoA. This will become the team's information management strategy. It's important to develop an information management strategy that covers the entire Situation Function, not just the IM aspect. There are many shared elements among the various components within the function, and the strategy should be designed with a holistic perspective, incorporating assessment, analysis, and other information management services.

In the first days, it can be as simple as a visual, showing communication lines between the UNDAC team and essential stakeholders, but later it should be expanded with more detail. The following key questions should help build the team's information management strategy:

• Who are our main counterparts for ongoing information exchange?

• What decisions need to be made by whom, and what information is required to make those decisions?

• Which products will the team issue, by when?

• How will we process, analyse, clear and disseminate information?

• What communication lines, internal and external, should be established and what tools will we be using?

• How do we ensure the information runs smoothly within the team and between the team and the partners, i.e., how do we ensure the right information is in the right place at the right time?

The visual below gives a generic example of how a simple overview of external and internal communication lines, regular products and meetings may look.

Figure F.3: Example overview: communication lines, products and activities
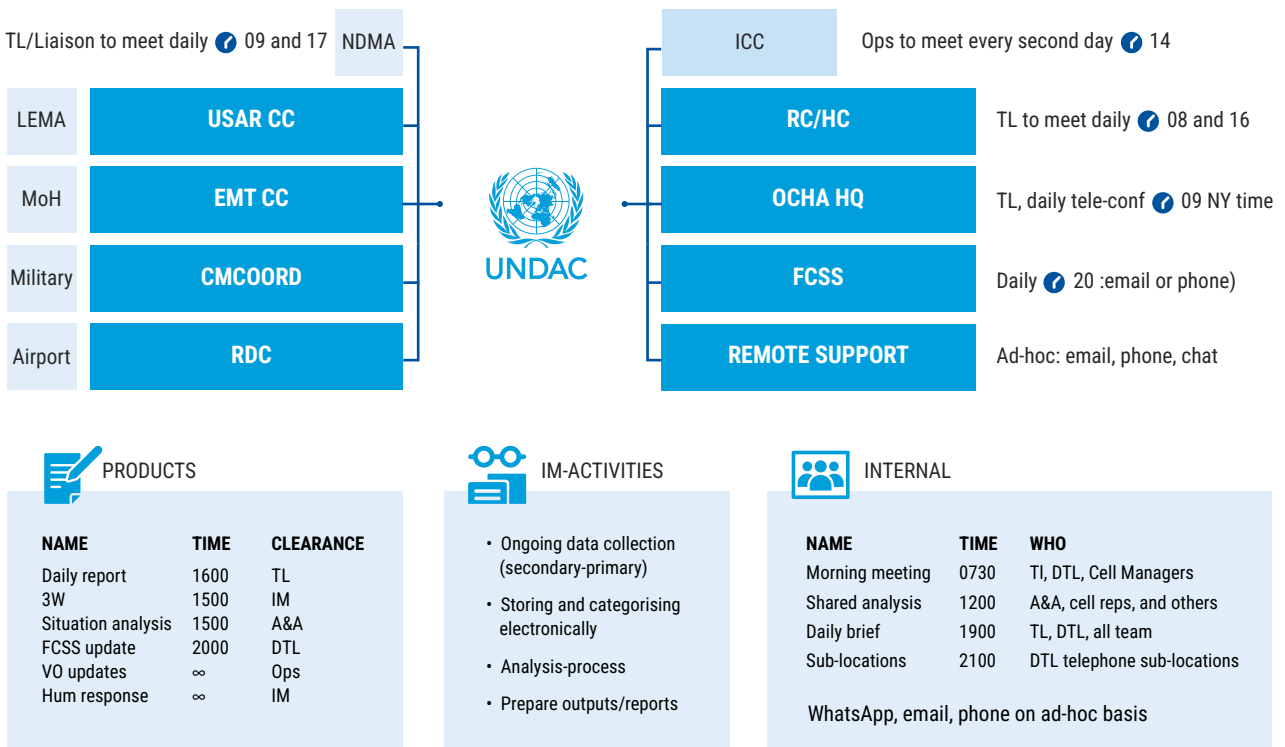
It is important to define the tools you are using for internal and external communication, to have efficient communication within the team but also with external partners. When planning the information flow, think about how and with whom you are going to share specific information. For example, if a team member is attending coordination meetings, you will need to think through how the information the team member receives feeds back into the internal and external products you create.

F.1.2.1 Folder structures and naming conventions

The way data is managed and processed impacts on the efficiency and effectiveness of the outputs, and the better organised the team is, the easier it will be to produce other products when required. The first step for storing documents and data is to agree on which platform to use, and to create an appropriate and intuitive folder hierarchy and regularly

save copies in an external drive. The UNDAC team utilises Google Drive for collaboration in cases involving non-UN colleagues. If there are documents on the OCHA SharePoint relevant to the UNDAC team, they should be copied to Google Drive. At the conclusion of the UNDAC mission, the UNDAC Mission Focal Point (at times, along with the relevant OCHA country/regional office), copies all pertinent files to the OCHA SharePoint.

At the start of the mission, the UNDAC team will have access to a standard folder structure on Google Drive, which includes a link to the UNDAC Toolbox, which also contains numerous templates and background materials. The workspace provided is generic and should be adapted to the needs of the mission. Managing the Google Drive workspace should be the responsibility of the team member(s) in charge of information management.

When adapting the folder structure, it is important that only one or two persons make decisions on how it should look and the rest of the team follow their structure with discipline and consistency. If six or seven persons start making their own versions of an intuitive folder structure, it may easily turn into numerous different structures and information may be lost.

Even if there is no right or wrong when it comes to folder structures, it is better to avoid having too many levels of folders and sub-folders. Each main folder should have no more than two sub-folders. Otherwise, it is easy for users to get confused and lose track of where they are and where they started. Adding labels is a useful tool for categorising files as they are not dependent on the file structure and can have multiple labels where necessary. For example, regularly accessed files or folders stored across multiple locations can be given the same label, thus enabling them all to appear in the same 'virtual folder' corresponding to the label. Such files (and folders) might include stakeholder map, workplan, UNDAC reports, etc.

Consistency is important, not only with the folder structure but also with the naming convention for folders and files, including version control, and to be effective, everyone must follow the same rules.

Both for folders and files, names should be:

- Unique.
- Indicative of what the file contains.
- Quickly scannable by the human eye, i.e., no codes or disturbing use of special characters like underscores, hyphens or dots IF these are not needed.
- Naturally ordered, alphabetically or numerically starting with 00, 01, 02, etc.
- For version control, include the date in an agreed format, e.g., yymmdd. This will also order files sequentially.
- Above all else, the naming convention must be used consistently.

F.1.2.2 Best practices

The UNDAC team should drive good practice and be the one sharing templates with partners for the reporting of response data, e.g., 3W information on Who is doing What and Where / 5Ws Who is doing What, Where, When and Why. Templates are in the virtual UNDAC Toolbox in the mission Google Drive folder.

Furthermore, think about how to store and share the data and information. If it is sensitive, it may only be shared in the Google Drive using comprehensive naming conventions for the files. If it is of greater benefit to the whole humanitarian community and not confidential, it can be shared through tools like HDX (for data), the VO and RWResponse (for information).

The data and information will most likely not be complete and quickly outdated. Do not make this stop the team from sharing it. A simple disclaimer in the dataset or report mentioning the shortfalls will be sufficient in many cases.

F.1.2.3 Humanitarian IM principles

Information overload is inevitable. Filtering will be necessary to prioritise information and ways found to reconcile conflicting information. Handling information (over)flow is one of the biggest challenges in a humanitarian response and IM responsibilities need to be spread across the team to avoid any

one person becoming a 'bottleneck' and holding up information flow within the team.

The following humanitarian information management principles provide a solid base for handling information:

- **Accessibility –** Humanitarian information should be made accessible by applying easy-to-use formats and tools and by translating information into common or local languages when necessary.
- **Inclusiveness –** Information exchange should be based on a system of partnership with a high degree of ownership by multiple stakeholders, especially representatives of the affected population and Government.
- **Interoperability –** All shareable data and information should be made available in formats that can be easily retrieved, shared and used by humanitarian organisations.
- **Accountability –** Users must be able to evaluate the reliability and credibility of information by knowing its source and having access to methods of collection, transformation and analysis.
- **Verifiability –** Information should be relevant, accurate, consistent and based on sound methodologies, validated by external sources, and analysed within the proper contextual framework.
- **Relevance –** Information should be practical, flexible, responsive, and driven by operational needs in support of decision-making throughout all phases of a crisis.
- **Objectivity –** A variety of sources should be used when collecting and analysing information so as to provide varied and balanced perspectives for addressing problems and recommending solutions.
- **Neutral –** Information should be free of political interference that distorts a situation or the response.
- **Humanity –** Information should never be used to distort, to mislead or to cause harm to affected or at risk populations and should respect the dignity of those affected.
- **Timeliness –** Humanitarian information must be kept current and made available in a timely manner.

- **Sustainability –** Humanitarian information should be open sourced, preserved, catalogued and archived, so that it can be retrieved for future use, such as for preparedness, analysis, lessons learned and evaluation.
- **Confidentiality –** Sensitive data and information that are not to be shared publicly should be managed accordingly and clearly marked as such. Sensitive Data is classified as such based on the likelihood and severity of potential harm that may materialise as a result of its exposure in a particular context. Both personal and non-personal data can be sensitive.

F.1.3 Data responsibility and security

Irresponsible data management in humanitarian responses can place already vulnerable people and communities at greater risk of harm or exploitation, e.g., by exposing their location or identifying a key vulnerability. This is of particular concern when humanitarian actors handle sensitive data — data that is likely to lead to harm when exposed (See the Information Sharing Protocol template in the UNDAC Toolbox for more information on how to develop a data and information sensitivity classification).

- **Data responsibility –** Is the safe, ethical and effective management of personal and non-personal data for operational response, in accordance with established frameworks for personal data protection.

  » **Safe –** Data management activities ensure the security of data at all times, respect and uphold human rights and other legal obligations, and do not cause harm.
  » **Ethical –** Data management activities are aligned with the established frameworks and standards for humanitarian ethics and data ethics.
  » **Effective –** Data management activities achieve the purpose(s) for which they were carried out.

- **Data protection –** Refers to the systematic application of a set of institutional, technical and physical safeguards that preserve the right to privacy with respect to the processing of personal data.

- **Data security –** Is applicable to both personal and non-personal data and refers to technical and organisational measures that aim to preserve the confidentiality, availability, and integrity of data.

UNDAC teams should follow the OCHA Data Responsibility Guidelines. They apply to all operational data managed directly by OCHA (such as who-is-doing-what-where), or data managed by humanitarian actors within activities coordinated by OCHA (such as needs assessments). The actions recommended in the guidelines are designed to help minimise risk and maximise the benefits of data management. They differ according to the context and respective data management needs.

F.1.3.1 Data impact assessment

Before conducting a data management activity, conduct a data impact assessment. This is an assessment of the expected impacts of a data management activity and the steps required to reduce potential risks. It helps determine whether it is responsible to proceed with the activity in question. The data management activity should be redesigned or cancelled if its foreseeable risks and harms outweigh its intended benefits, despite prevention and mitigation measures. A data impact assessment template with additional instructions is available in the UNDAC Toolbox.

F.1.3.2 Designing for data responsibility

When conducting a data management activity, such as assessments, establish Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) that outline how data is collected, shared, presented, stored, deleted. They should always include the roles and responsibilities of the actors involved in the activity in question.

A template is available in the IASC Operational Guidance on Data Responsibility (and in the UNDAC Toolbox). Putting an SOP in place ensures that the different steps are clearly defined and collectively agreed. This promotes a responsible, transparent and consistent approach to conducting data management activities.

F.1.3.3 Data Sharing Agreement

Before sharing data, consult applicable guidance, including Information Sharing Protocols for the response, existing Standard Operating Procedures, Terms of Reference, or organisational policies for instructions on how data should be shared. Determine whether the data shared includes personal data or sensitive non-personal data.

When sharing sensitive and/or personal data, a Data Sharing Agreement (DSA) should be established between the sender and recipient. Such data may include raw survey results, lists of affected populations or detailed data on access restrictions, among others. A DSA establishes the terms and conditions for sharing specific personal and sensitive non-personal data. Many data protection frameworks require a DSA as a necessary safeguard for sharing personal data. This type of agreement is essential to upholding legal, policy and normative requirements in operational data management. A data sharing agreement template for OCHA is available in the UNDAC Toolbox and can be adapted as needed and negotiated with the data sharing partner. OCHA Centre for Humanitarian Data (centrehumdata@un.org) can support in reviewing data sharing agreements. Always consult OCHA's Executive Office to review data sharing agreements before signing.

F.2 Assessment and Analysis

F.2.1 Assessment and Analysis basics

Assessment and Analysis (A&A) is an essential component of UNDAC missions. It includes collecting and processing pre- and post-emergency data from multiple sources and using tailored methods to produce timely and usable information for decision-making.

- **Assessment –** This can be defined as a way to identify and measure the humanitarian needs of disaster-affected societies, communities, groups and individuals.
- **Analysis –** This can be defined as the process of interpreting available information, including 'raw' data, to identify significant facts, trends and anomalies to inform decision-making.

An A&A process aims to help understand a humanitarian situation by identifying the main problems, the most urgent challenges, and their sources and consequences. Furthermore, the process should seek to look ahead and anticipate what challenges the affected population may face if a significant change should occur in the context or if their humanitarian needs are not met. Suggesting response and preparedness activities should consider lessons learned, response capacities (national and international), recovery plans, pipelines, and access. For UNDAC teams on emergency missions, the

overall purpose of A&A will almost always be to assist the Government, the Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator (RC/HC) and the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) of an affected country in its strategic decision-making by identifying and prioritising needs for disaster relief.

Key to successful A&A coordination is the allocation of sufficient, dedicated resources with clear responsibilities within the UNDAC team, preferably with A&A subject matter expertise, forming an A&A Cell. This cell has two components: one established remotely immediately in the first hours after a disaster and the other established in-country after the deployment of an OCHA/UNDAC mission. The A&A Cell will have two coordinators, one for each component, who collaborate closely. See also **Section F.2.2** Assessment and analysis coordination.

It is important to remember that A&A is composed of processes, and must not be considered as simple visits to the field to have a look at what is going on. Effective A&A work involves the setting

of clear objectives, a minimum of planning for collection, collation, coordination and analysis of both secondary and primary data (see **Section F.2.3** for definitions), and formulation and reporting of evidence-based recommendations. As a rule, any visits to the field involving the collection of information should. have a clear objective, be structured and include a minimum of preparations.

For assessments and other information-collecting exercises, there are three general principles that apply:

- Know what you need to know,
- Make sense not data,
- Better to approximately right than precisely wrong.

F.2.1.1 Know what you need to know

The amount of data and information we are bombarded with through all sorts of media and forms of communication is steadily increasing. This is also the case in emergencies, and data collection efforts need to be targeted to not waste resources gathering information that is not useful.

What information is needed, and when, must be defined and narrowed down to the point that it becomes clear exactly what we need to find out and why. It is all about being specific. All information collection processes in emergencies, whether it for initial briefing notes or later primary data collection efforts, should be linked to coordination of relief, priorities, related decisions, and who will be making those decisions.

Figure F.4: Decision-making and information needs

| WHO WILL BE MAKING THOSE DECISIONS? | WHAT DECISIONS NEED TO BE MADE? | WHAT INFORMATION IS NEEDED TO MAKE THOSE DECISIONS? |
| WHEN WILL THEY BE MAKING THOSE DECISIONS? | | WHERE WILL THAT INFORMATION COME FROM? |

Therefore, always begin by asking the questions depicted in this flowchart.

It is recommended that A&A cell coordinators ask these questions directly to relevant stakeholders such as RC/HC, the OCHA/UNDAC Team leader, cluster leads and coordinators, national/local government representatives, etc. These questions may naturally arise in various coordination-fora, but one should remain proactive and get clarity on specific information needs.

The answers to these questions will create a framework for organising the work. The need for accuracy will be balanced by the need for speed and timeliness, and thus help further define what needs to be found out.

In many sudden-onset emergencies, especially in the first, chaotic phase, the objectives of assessment and analysis are not that different from one disaster to the next. Over the first 5-6 days they should contribute to the overall common operational picture, focusing on identifying:

- Scope (how large) and scale (how many) of the crisis.
- Most affected geographic areas.
- Main impacts on the population and main problems facing the affected people.
- Most affected sectors.
- Priority needs by the humanitarian sector, and inter-sector, i.e., combined needs.
- Drivers, i.e., the underlying factors or root causes that are driving a crisis and its most acute problems, or possible chain of events forward.
- Baseline context and pre-existing vulnerabilities of affected people and risks.
- Hard to reach areas and access issues
- Operational constraints
- Capacities of national and international responders

A Flash Appeal (see also **Section G.8** on Humanitarian Response Planning) will often be released about one week after the onset of the disaster prior to any extensive field data collection. Following

this, the information needs will need to be updated, probing more deeply into situation and contexts. In addition to the above list, typical information needs for week 2 and 3 following the onset of the disaster will focus on:

- Severity (how bad is it) disaggregated per geographical area.
- Protection issues, e.g., marginalised groups, issues rising from violence and conflict.
- Gender analysis, e.g., context factors that need to be considered by respondents.
- Signs of secondary risks and consequences of the shock, e.g., landslides, aftershocks, waterborne diseases, migration patterns, negative coping mechanisms, human trafficking, etc.
- Situation in isolated geographical areas
- Type of aid that has already been delivered and feasibility of multipurpose cash assistance.
- Operational constraints and access issues

F.2.1.2 Make sense not data

Too many A&A products mix data and reports together without further explanation and leave all interpretation to the reader. A&A needs to be explanatory and not just a descriptive summary of what the problems are. An explanation is needed as to why the problems are as they are and possible consequences highlighted.

Figure F.5: Reporting vs. analysis
Proportion of time and effort

Scenario 1

⌄ Less Data ⌃ More analysis BRIEF/CLEAR

DATA COLLECTION ANALYSING REPORTING

⌃ More Data ⌄ Less analysis LONG/UNCLEAR

Scenario 2
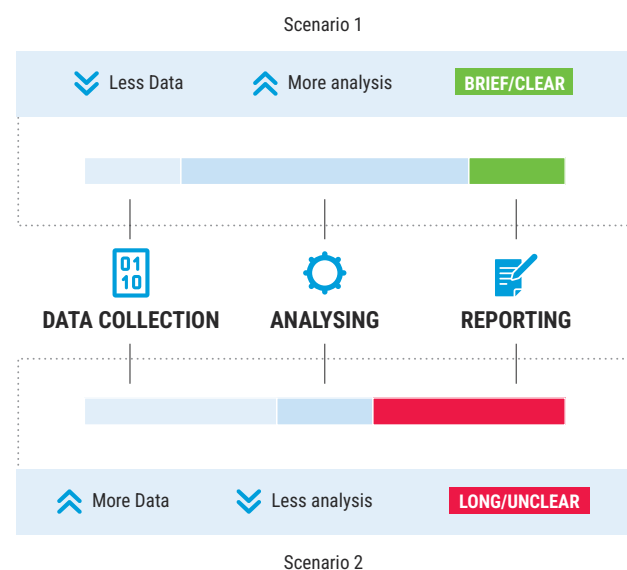
 The A&A Cell should seek to analyse more and report less. Simply collecting information, re-packaging it and passing it on is not good enough. More information does not mean being better informed. Interpret what the data means as opposed to just summarising facts and figures. Take the time to provide additional explanations to your products and brief relevant stakeholders about your findings.

F.2.1.3 Better to be approximately right than precisely wrong

A&A in emergencies comes with caveats and uncertainty is more the rule than the exception. Proper analysis takes time, but taking time is a luxury one cannot afford in a crisis. When human lives are at stake, decisions need to be made quickly; but a minimum of information will still be needed before deciding where to go. Basing important decisions on biased assumptions and opinions, without any facts or evidence to back them up, is dangerous even at the best of times. Making timely analysis with caveats is far better than no analysis at all.

Instead of aiming for precision too early in the response, settle for accuracy and design your analysis that is 'good enough' to allow for timely decisions to be made.

Figure F.6: Precision vs. accuracy

ACCURATE
PRECISE

ACCURATE
NOT PRECISE
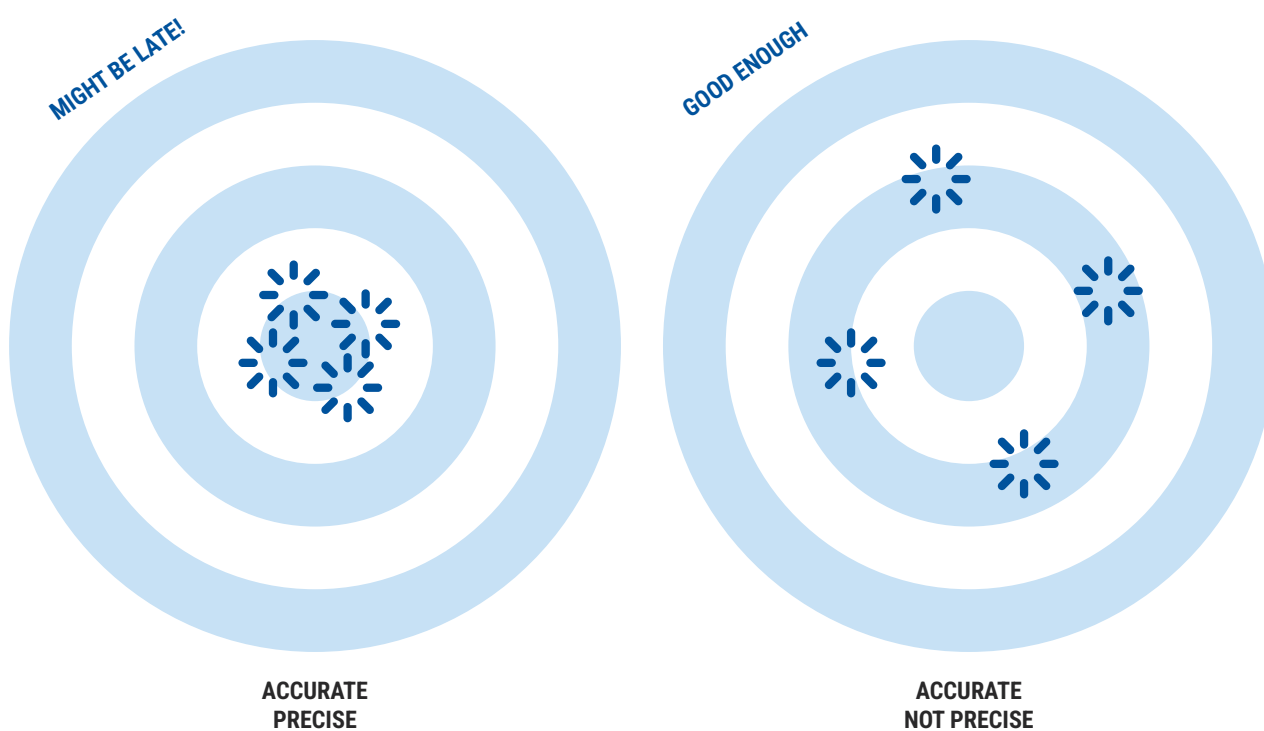
Being 'good enough' means choosing an achievable solution; most likely a simple rather than a complicated one. 'Good enough' does not mean second best. In emergency response, a quick and simple approach to needs assessment may be the only practical possibility.

Be aware, however, that decision-makers will still need to be convinced and arguments made that the recommendations stem from an approach that gives the best option given the urgency of the situation and the available time and information for decisions that need to be made quickly. Too often, when operational disaster managers bring A&A findings to political decision-makers, more detail is requested and decisions are postponed as they are not comfortable with the lack of information and the level of uncertainty, hence do not want to take political responsibility.

F.2.1.4 A&A cycle

A&A are not one-off events, but iterative, meaning that each A&A process should build on the previous one since the information required becomes more detailed, sector-specific and long-term as the response develops.

The first two steps of the A&A process, 'Define Objective' and 'Design' are critical for its success.

Defining the objective requires the application of the 'Know What you Need to Know' principle, which entails precisely identifying the information requirements of the analysis and the decisions they will support. The design step brings in the other three principles presented above, to plan what data will need to be collected within the available time frame and what kind of analytical tools and methods will be used.

Figure F.7: A&A cycle
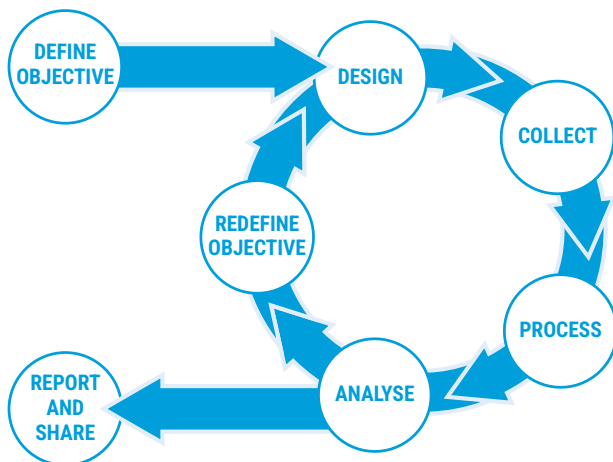
For UNDAC teams, this means that the first analytical products will most probably be based on a limited number of reports from other sources. Once enough secondary data is collected, however, further assessment of the situation can be complemented by targeted field visits to collect observations and primary data.

F.2.2 Assessment and Analysis coordination

Defining the appropriate assessment coordination approach during an emergency depends on numerous factors: the information needs for decision-making; the level of information collection preparedness in the country; the number and capacity of organisations collecting information; type and timelines of their findings; the ability of the coordination team to capture and consolidate those findings; and UNDAC's specific role and mandate in the respective emergency; to name but a few.

The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Operational Guidance for Coordinated Assessments in Humanitarian Crises (published in 2012) distinguishes between:

- **Uncoordinated assessments –** Multiple methodologies, reports and tools conducted by partners without talking to each other
- **Harmonised assessments –** Conducted separately by organisations, but in a manner that allows comparison of results (using a common operational data set, sharing key questions or indicators) and avoids gaps and duplication (by ensuring a minimal geographic and temporal synchronisation).
- **Joint assessments –** Conducted jointly using one methodology, shared resources and a collaborative approach when analysing the findings.

Experience shows that parachuting into a disaster without any in-country preparation or coordination structure and producing timely, comprehensive yet granular results is an enormously difficult task. To deal with this challenge, it is important to think of a simple approach that enables an UNDAC team to bring some order into the context, to develop and maintain a shared understanding of the situation within available resources, and to provide timely decision-making support to Governments and partners. This approach should, at a minimum, consider three elements: 1) how the team organises itself, i.e., the internal analysis set-up usually organised through an Assessment & Analysis (A&A) Cell; 2) how the external coordination could be set up, i.e., usually organised through an Assessment & Analysis Working Group (AAWG) involving clusters and

programmatic organisations; and 3) how should the analysis be planned, i.e., what methods and tools are required to meet the information needs of strategic and operational decision makers.

Figure F.8: Considerations for assessment and analysis coordination

INTERNAL ANALYSIS SET-UP

- Establish an A&A Cell, appoint a manager, and allocate sufficient resources to this function.

- Ensure effective linkages and collaboration with other OCHA/UNDAC functions.

- Decide how much of the information management work and analysis can be delegated to remote support teams, and

- Make sure that the remote and in-country components work together and establish efficient communication

EXTERNAL COORDINATION

- Establish an AAWG or utilize existing platforms like coordination meetings, IM working groups, or similar, and ensure participation from government, clusters, NGO forums, agencies, etc., as required

- Explain the importance of coordinating assessments, joint or harmonized as required, i.e., sharing of data and findings, synchronizing planned assessments, encouraging joint analysis, reducing assessment fatigue, and maximizing use of available resources.

- Set-up an e-mail and assessment registry so assessment findings from the larger humanitarian community can be easily collected and shared.

ANALYSIS PLANNING, METHODS AND TOOLS

- Identify information needs relevant for the situation and context, how they can be best met with available resources, and what methods and tools are available and would be best suited to support decision making in a timely fashion

- Consider how remote sensing, secondary and primary data collection, and analysis processes can best complement each other and be combined for both regular situational updates and more in-depth humanitarian analysis

- Clarify what information needs can be met by the A&A Cell and what processes should be implemented by the AAWG

F.2.2.1 Internal analysis set-up and A&A Cell

The A&A Cell is primarily a concept for sudden-onset disasters, drawing on capacities of OCHA specialised sections, regional and/or country offices, and OCHA/UNDAC operational partners with A&A subject matter expertise e.g., ACAPS, DEEP, EU Commission, MapAction, IFRC, IMMAP, REACH, UNOSAT, and local/regional or specialised partners as required. OCHA is the custodian of the concept, and the partners come together in a collaborative network to leverage resources and capabilities to strengthen individual and collective analysis outputs.

The **purpose of the A&A Cell** is to:

- Develop a shared understanding of the humanitarian situation following a sudden-onset disaster, in particular:

  » Scope (how large) and scale (how many) of the crisis.

  » Most affected/impacted geographic areas, population groups, and humanitarian sectors.

  » Priority needs by the humanitarian sector, and inter-sector, i.e., combined needs.

  » Drivers, i.e., the underlying factors or root causes that are driving the crisis and its most acute problems, or possible chain of events forward.

  » Vulnerabilities, risks, and operational constraints.

- Communicate regularly and frequently information that is needed for ongoing and future operations.

When an OSOCC/EoC is established, the A&A Cell is part of the Situation Function of an OSOCC/EoC where all assessment and analysis processes are being managed. It focuses on the consolidation and analysis of remote sensing data, secondary and primary data, and works closely with all other information management roles from other functions and cells. However, it is important to note that the A&A Cell is an integral part of the UNDAC methodology and will in most sudden-onset disasters be established regardless of whether the OCHA/UNDAC mission establishes an OSOCC/EoC or not.

Following a sudden-onset disaster, OCHA will activate the remote A&A cell to initiate cooperation and coordination. Partners quickly agree on a work plan and immediately start working remotely, using commonly accessible tools for online collaboration, to produce analytical outputs like initial briefing notes, impact estimations, and maps. If a field component is needed, OCHA/UNDAC and the operational partners can deploy experts to establish a physical A&A Cell in-country. The remote component will remain operational for 2 to 3 weeks as part of the cell and support with data collation, interpretation, scientific advice, and data processing. Remote-sensed data will be requested by the Cell as the primary course of action prior to any field deployment and OSOCC establishment.

Main tasks of an A&A Cell:

- Facilitate coordination of A&A Cell analyses to guide strategic and operational decision-making during sudden-onset disasters.

- Produce regular situational updates/briefings and other analytical outputs as required in consultation with the national Government, humanitarian decision-makers, and the RC/HC's office.

- Facilitate external coordination of assessments and analysis with clusters, agencies and the Government, e.g., through the establishment and facilitation of an AAWG and participation at cluster and INGO coordination meetings. See also F.2.2.3 external A&A coordination.

F.2.2.2 Structure and management of the A&A Cell

Depending on the size of the emergency, the structure of the A&A Cell will vary. As a minimum the A&A Cell must always have an A&A Coordinator, facilitating the work of the remote component, supported by a senior analyst.

When there's a field component, a separate, in-country A&A Coordinator should be appointed to liaise with the UNDAC Team and the operational partners. Within the field component, A&A Cell members need to be flexible about how roles are distributed or organised. Still, it is crucial to assign clear responsibility for functional areas within the cell.

Figure F.9: A&A Cell organization

REMOTE COMPONENT

IN-COUNTRY COMPONENT

SENIOR ANALYST
+ ANALYSTS (IF REQUIRED)

Facilitate joint analysis
in remote component

Support functional areas
of in-country component
as required

A&A COORDINATOR
(REMOTE)

Facilitate coordination
of the remote component

Encourage collaboration
between partners

Maintain efficient links
with in-country component

A&A COORDINATOR
(IN COUNTRY)

Internal management of the cell

Maintain efficient links
with remote component

Brief humanitarian
leaders regularly

A&A OPERATIONAL
PARTNERS

ACAPS

DEEP

EU Commission

IFRC

IMMAP

REACH

UNOSAT

Local/regional or
specialized partners
as required

SECONDARY
DATA ANALYSIS

Qualitative analysis

Facilitate joint analysis

Draft regular situational
updates, briefing notes
and other outputs

NEEDS ASSESSMENT
COORDINATION

Harmonize indicators
for field data collection

Coordinate joint data
collection initiatives

Design question guides
and surveys

INFORMATION
MANAGEMENT

GIS services

Data base management

Visualisation

Technical support to
needs assessments

As the visual indicates the A&A Coordinator role can be shared between two persons who will have similar, but still distinctly different responsibilities, depending on whether they are deployed to the affected country or stay remote. The roles of A&A Coordinator, Senior Analyst, and possible extra analysts in the remote component can be mobilised from OCHA/UNDAC and operational partners depending on availability.

The coordinator of the remote component and the Senior Analysts will always be the first roles that are mobilised and will therefore facilitate the coordination of the entire A&A Cell. Following the deployment of A&A resources and the build-up of an in-country component, several responsibilities should be taken over by the coordinator in the field. Depending on the size and dynamics of the mission the Senior Analyst role may also be deployed to the in-country component.

The field component of the A&A Cell will determine information needs on the ground, facilitate and support the design, planning, and coordination of needs assessments, support external AAWGs, establish assessment registries, stimulate joint analysis, and manage information about planned and ongoing assessments to harmonise efforts and avoiding assessment fatigue.

A&A Coordinator responsibilities (generic):

- Establish regular coordination meetings with A&A team and Operational Partners, chair, moderate, and summarise the discussion.

- Include any in-country representation as early as possible, e.g., OCHA/UNDAC mobilised resources, regional or country offices, and make sure that the work of the remote cell is guided by in-country information needs.

- Underline that the purpose of the A&A Cell is not limited to sharing information only. A&A Cell partners should coordinate and prioritise analysis activities in a time-sensitive manner to inform the response to a sudden-onset disaster.

- Make sure a shared digital workspace and chat channels through a messaging app are made available for all partners with a dedicated folder structure, templates and tools as required.

- Agree with partners on the type of analysis products that will be published. Sometimes it would be useful for one or more partners to work on joint products, and other times the partners only liaise with each other to avoid duplications and overlaps.

- Consolidate and share action points and the main outputs.

- Engage with humanitarian leadership and operations to understand their information needs.

- Based on the input from partners and in-country A&A resources, prepare regular (daily, or every 2-3 days as required) situational updates and brief humanitarian leadership accordingly. See F.3.2.2 for the template.

A&A Coordinator responsibilities (specific for the in-country component):

- Make sure to maintain efficient links with the remote A&A Cell throughout the mission and agree on priorities for analysis production.

- In collaboration with the remote A&A Cell, prepare regular (daily, or every 2-3 days as required) situational updates and brief humanitarian leadership accordingly. See F.3.2.2 for the template.

- Advise Team Leader and work with concerned authorities, disaster management, and humanitarian partners, on A&A methodologies and tools that could be made available and possibly be useful in the given context and situation.

- Initiate A&A coordination with external partners to ensure a coordinated approach to humanitarian assessments, analysis, and monitoring for an accountable, needs-driven, and effective response.

- Set up and chair, or co-chair, a multi-stakeholder working group for external A&A coordination through an A&A Working Group if such an entity does not already exist. See F.2.2.3 External A&A Coordination for more information.

- Sustain the ongoing work of the A&A Cell or facilitate its transition to an Assessment WG or close the A&A Cell when operation ends (ensuring proper transition and handover).

The Senior Analyst and possible extra analysts support the A&A Coordinator in the overall work of the A&A Cell, but primarily with the facilitation of joint analysis internally in the A&A Cell, ground-truthing of information with key informants, and preparation of regular situational updates and briefing materials.

Information flow

A shared workspace should be used for sharing information, tools, and templates. Given the diversity of A&A Operational Partners, it is not recommended to use software that requires email addresses from the same organisational domain. The A&A Cell has traditionally used Google Drive as its shared workspace, and you can find an A&A Cell Toolbox (referenced int the UNDAC Toolbox).

Signal has been the preferred tool for messaging apps, especially for the in-country component. If this is not feasible in the context, the A&A Cell Coordinator should discuss and agree with the partners on which app to use instead.

A&A Cell outputs

The table below shows an overview of possible A&A
Cell outputs.

TYPE	CONTENT
Impact estimations	Products showing the geographical scope of the hazard, strength of the shock, and estimated number of affected people, and, if feasible, an estimated figure of people in need.
Thematic maps	GIS products that provide a situational overview of a particular area, including information on displacements, sectoral needs, damaged infrastructure, 3W (Who, What, Where) data, and more.
Situational updates	A concise, timely, and regular update on the current humanitarian situation. Usually delivered in the form of a short presentation/brief, supported by visuals and GIS products.
Briefing Notes and Situation Analyses	Written analysis products, providing an overview of humanitarian impact, with estimates of scope and scale, and analyses of most affected humanitarian sectors, geographical areas, and population groups.
Thematic reports and profiles	In-depth reports focusing on a context-specific theme, humanitarian sector or geographical area, e.g., gender or disability inclusion analysis (see also **Subchapter G.2**), market functioning, protection issues in IDP camps, scientifically based technical reports on hazard impacts, lessons learned from previous responses in the country, anticipatory analyses, etc.
Dashboards	Visual interfaces that consolidate and display the situation in key areas of interest. They are designed to offer a quick and comprehensive overview of the situation to monitor response, identify trends, and make data-driven decisions.
Databases	A structured collection of data that is organised in a way that enables efficient storage, retrieval, and manipulation of information. It can be shared with users to perform their own analysis of a particular area or with a particular focus in a timely fashion, while the overall analysis is still pending.
Preliminary assessment reports	Preliminary results of direct observations or coordinated assessment exercises conducted by numerous actors and the visual outcomes associated with them (updates depending on available data).
Assessment reports	Final reports following a joint or harmonised assessment produced collaboratively by multiple humanitarian agencies or organisations. The process is owned by an AAWG, but an in-country A&A Cell would usually support the process.

Other OCHA/UNDAC information products are described in **Section F.3.2**.3 Other information products.

F.2.2.3 External A&A coordination

One of the main roles of the in-country A&A Cell will be to support the coordination of assessments and analysis with external partners, like clusters, NGO fora, bilateral responders, etc. As a minimum, a dedicated email address and mailing list should be created so assessment information can be easily shared with the A&A Cell and make assessment coordination a regular discussion point during coordination meetings.

The main points to discuss with external partners are:

• **Creating an AAWG or using an existing platform** – When general coordination meetings become too crowded, both in terms of participants and topics to cover, it is advisable to separate the discussion and bring together partners to focus only on assessments and analysis issues. See also the A&A Toolbox for generic ToRs for external A&A coordination (linked in the UNDAC Toolbox).

• **Ensuring that assessments are conducted consistently and effectively** – It is important to encourage partners to coordinate and harmonise their questionnaires. This can be achieved by agreeing on a core set of questions that are formulated in the same way and pooling resources. Doing so will help reduce the risk of assessment fatigue and improve the potential for meaningful multi-sectoral analysis. It is recommended to develop a set of standard indicators and survey questions, as well as establish a regular system for sharing data.

• **Encouraging a timely sharing of information about planned and finalised assessments** – This will support the entire response community to avoid gaps and duplications. Organisations can benefit from the findings and the A&A Cell can use them to facilitate joint analysis and develop multi-sectoral analytical outputs. A dedicated email address or web platform (assessment registry) where assessments and datasets can be shared should be established, and coverage

dashboards and maps should be shared back to the humanitarian community regularly.

In cases where a multi-sectoral joint needs assessment has been requested by the National Government or HCT, the process is owned by the AAWG. The role of the A&A Cell is to support the process with technical assistance in all phases of the assessment cycle.

Ongoing A&A coordination will be required beyond the UNDAC mission cycle and the phasing out of the A&A Cell. Towards the end of the mission, efforts should be made to plan for a seamless transition, and the following options should be considered:

• If OCHA is present it will take on the coordination functions established by the OSOCC and the A&A function should be managed by an OCHA Assessment Coordinator. Continued support from partners will likely be required to maintain an effective analysis function even if reducing the tasks of the function.

• In the absence or phase-down of OCHA capacity, the A&A function could be transferred to the RC/HC's office. Capacity will likely be smaller requiring a prioritisation of assessment related tasks.

• In the absence of any UN capacity, the A&A function and its tools should be transitioned to the host Government, accompanied by appropriate capacity building.

F.2.3 Planning and data collection

When planning for any data collection you always need to start with the 'Know What You Need To Know' principle, and the associated generic information needs that do not differ much from emergency to emergency (See **Section F.2.1**.1). Every sudden-onset disaster has its unique considerations, however, that are influenced by context, political dynamics, hazard-specific impacts, and resources. This means that there will always be additional information needs that cannot be anticipated and need to be outlined.

To determine how these information needs can be met within available resources, it is recommended to develop a simple analysis plan that breaks the information needs into smaller components,

detailing potential data sources, i.e., from where/ how you can find the information, and analytical output, i.e., what the information will give you. The table below shows an extract of a sample analysis plan, showing the link between key questions and analytical outputs.

Figure F.10: Example of analysis plan

INFORMATION NEED	SUB-COMPONENTS	SOURCES	ANALYTICAL OUTPUTS
# people who potentially suffered significant damage to their shelter from tropical cyclone X	Cycle path + destructive wind speeds	Meteorological agencies	Map showing cycle path disaggregated by Cat 1 and above wind-forces
	Population living in affected areas	National Census, WorldPop or other online raster datasets, UNFPA population projections	Table with population broken down by appropriate administrative level, wind-force and, where possible, with % of population living in vulnerable shelter conditions
	Building type	National statistics, World Bank	

Information to help answer the above questions can be obtained through numerous sources and come in a wide variety of formats. Whatever the information sources, its information content can be classified either as secondary or primary data. Both are equally important and should complement each other. It is fully possible to make a decent analysis based on secondary data alone, but the level of confidence in the analysis can be raised considerably if it has been complemented by primary data.

SECONDARY DATA

Information collected by someone else, which may have undergone some analysis.

Population living in affected areas

- Contextual knowledge
- Baseline data
- Lessons learned
- Web sources
- Assessment reports
- E-mail
- Media reports
- Satellite image analysis
- Photos/videos
- Social media networks
- Chat in messaging apps

PRIMARY DATA

Data collected directly through field work for the purpose of your data collection and not analysed.

Population living in affected areas

- Meetings, phone calls and briefings with national and international stakeholders
- Interviews
- Field visits
- Aerial assessments
- Direct observations

F.2.3.1 Secondary data collection

A review of secondary data can be defined as a rigorous process of data collation, synthesis and analysis building on a desk study of all relevant information available from different sources such as the Government, NGOs, UN agencies, media, social media, etc.

Even a basic secondary data review (SDR) can provide valuable information. As a minimum, researching population figures, existing basic services that functioned before impact, which vulnerable groups lived in affected areas before impact and what they lived on, can give you a solid background for comparison with in-crisis data.

Figure F.11: Secondary data flow and sources

KNOW WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- Scope and scale
- Geographical areas
- Population groups
- Identified priority sectors
- Drivers and aggravation factors
- Vulnerabilities and risks
- Operational constraints

Consult your analysis plan for additional information needs

IDENTIFY SOURCES – ASSESS RELIABILITY AND RELEVANCE

SOURCE	EXAMPLES
National institutions	Government ministries, universities and research institutions, local authorities
UN agencies, IFRC, international and national NGOs	Situation reports, assessments reports, cluster meeting minutes, funding appeals, humanitarian profiles, epidemioloical profiles, dashboards
International and local media	Newspaper articles, television reports, local public communication channels where information is shared between community members or from authorities such as on Telegram, WhatsApp, Signal
Geospatial data and satellite imagery	UNOSAT, Copernicus, Google Earth Engine
Databases and datasets	HDX, EM-DAT, PreventionWeb, ALNAP, Evaluative Reports Database, CODs
Websites	ReliefWeb, Alertnet, Shelter Centre Library, UN Country Portals
Social media	Facebook, Instagram, X (formerly Twitter)
Large scale surveys	Demographic and health surveys, Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys, censuses

Secondary data comes in different types and formats, depending on the source, e.g., quotes, descriptions, or just text describing facts, figures or a general situation. Every relevant piece of data needs to be captured and stored in such a way that it can be easily retrieved during the analysis process.

The data could be transcribed from its original format into something that can be used for further retrieval, processing and analysis, e.g., spreadsheet, Word, Excel or other specialised software. A simple template can be found in the UNDAC Toolbox.

If taking an Excel spreadsheet as an example, secondary data can be pasted into it and then tagged with various attributes:

• Date
• Geographical location (admin level)
• Population group
• Sector
• Type of source
• Web link
• Reliability-coding

These attributes can later be used as filters when searching for data answering a specific question or pertaining to a specific area, sector, or similar. Number and type of attributes should be guided by the overall purpose of the information system.

In large-scale emergencies, an online platform might be used for secondary data processing. This system allows snippets of data to be easily copied directly from an electronic text into an analysis model, bypassing the need for a separate database. This method makes SDR more efficient but requires expert coaching/mentoring before operating. In such cases, SDR experts will support the A&A Cell, remotely and/or in-country.

Reliability

Assessing secondary data, and evaluating how good it is, is perhaps one of the most difficult areas of secondary data review. How solid is the information found? Is it biased? Is it just well-presented or polished propaganda? Or is it something to be trusted and used?

Often the quality of the data is closely connected with how well the source is trusted, i.e., how reliable it is perceived to be. The following codification system is an example for assessing data reliability. Similar codifications are widely used by law-enforcement, intelligence agencies and media houses around the world, as well as humanitarian responders. The source can be rated with a code on a scale of A-E when storing the data in the table or database.

Figure F.12: Data reliability codification system

RELIABILITY	OUTCOME	HISTORY OF RELIABILITY	EXPERTISE	MOTIVATION FOR BIAS	TRANSPARENCY ON ORIGIN OF DATA
A	Reliable	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
B	Fairly reliable	Yes	No	No	Yes
C	Fairly unreliable	No	No	Yes/No	Yes/No
D	Unreliable	No	No	Yes	No
E	Cannot be judged				

Alternatively, numbers, colour-coding, or a combination can be used. Whatever the system, however, it should be employed consistently.

Remember that even a reliable source can be wrong, just as a questionable source can be correct. Be critical of the data and flag inconsistencies which may support later analysis. While working with secondary data, consider the following questions:

• Does this piece of information make sense?

• Does it fit with the general context?

• Is it relevant, or outdated and should be categorised as pre-crisis data?

• Is it plausible?

• Does it confirm or contradict other pieces of data?

• Is it 'independent' data or just a rehashing of the same data, e.g., an international media report quoting a national media report that quotes a government report?

Even if analysis forms a later stage of the process, it is important to remember that analysis starts as soon as two pieces of data can be put together, compared and questioned.

Remote sensing

There are three main types of remote sensing methods that can be used to support damage assessments:

• Satellite imagery

• Aerial assessment conducted via manned aircraft

• Imagery acquired by drones.

The two latter would be considered primary data and be coordinated from an in-country A&A Cell component, while satellite imagery and their analysis will be provided by remote A&A Cell partners.

Satellite systems are often used to capture information on damage following a sudden onset disaster and the analysis of satellite imagery requires highly specialised equipment and skills. For this reason, the analytical outputs are provided by specialised agencies such as the European Commission's

Copernicus Programme and UNOSAT. UNDAC members need to be aware of the different types of analysis that can be done with satellite imagery, their use and limitations, so they can recommend and/or request appropriate products.

Humanitarian population figures

An in-depth analysis and breakdown of population figures is frequently requested during humanitarian crises and serves as a crucial element of any humanitarian operation. These figures are essential for planning, supporting appeal documents for emergency response, as well as for monitoring, evaluation, and contingency purposes. They provide the foundation and reference point for any relief operation aiming to deliver aid based on the population's needs.

It is important to note, though, that humanitarian population figures will always be estimates and can never be precise. Some of the main challenges in estimating humanitarian population figures include:

• •Lack of reliable population or demographic data to use as a baseline for comparison.

• •Level of uncertainty about disaster impact in affected areas.

• •Diversity of calculation methods – often adapted to fit context-specific requirements with a lack of transparency around those methods and, consequently, non-replicable results.

• •Discrepancy between the overall figures of people in need versus sector-specific estimates.

• IASC has published guidance on how to estimate population figures in the publication Humanitarian Population Figures.

The approach used in humanitarian analysis involves nested levels, beginning with a total population estimate. This model is commonly known as the onion model, as all other figures are subsets of an outer layer. The three first layers—total population, affected population, and people in need—are the most important ones for an A&A Cell to concentrate on.

Figure F.13: Estimating humanitarian population figures
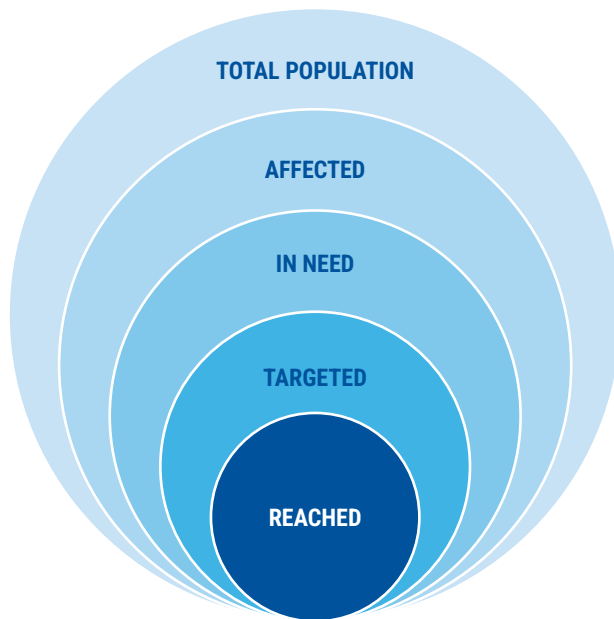
- **Total population—**This includes all people living within the administrative boundaries of the affected country. Agreeing on the source of data from which the total population can be calculated is necessary to establish reliable humanitarian population figures. A desk review of pre-crisis population statistics/census data is recommended as it is crucial to arrive at a common baseline for population calculation and ensure a credible source to ensure compatible figures and further analysis.

- **People affected –** This includes all those whose lives have been impacted as a direct result of the disaster. This figure is often the first available after a sudden onset emergency and defines the scope of the emergency. It does not, however, necessarily equate to the number of people in need of humanitarian assistance. Therefore, it should not be confused with the category People in Need (PiN). People affected should include:

  » Being in close proximity to the crisis
  » Physically or emotionally impacted, including exposed to a human rights violation/protection incident.
  » Experiencing personal loss or loss of capital and assets as a direct result of the crisis, e.g., family member, house/roof, livestock, etc.

  » Being faced with an immediate threat from a crisis

- **People in Need (PiN)—**This is a subset of people affected, and it is defined as those whose physical security, basic rights, dignity, living conditions, or livelihoods are threatened or have been disrupted and whose current level of access to basic services, goods, and social protection is inadequate to reestablish normal living conditions with their accustomed means in a timely manner without additional assistance. People in Need figures directly inform sector programming and flash appeals by quantifying the urgent humanitarian needs and, therefore, guiding resource allocation and response prioritisation.

There are two general approaches that are used to estimate population figures across all sectors, often referred to as a top-down approach and a bottom-up approach:

- **Top-down –** In the immediate aftermath of a shock such as an earthquake, sub-groups may not yet be determined and figures for the population that are displaced, and casualties may not be available. In these cases, the population affected is determined as a total, then disaggregated as data becomes available. For further disaggregation you can use and combine (if available) data pertaining to:

  » Geography/location, for example how close people live to the most intensely impacted areas of the hazard, e.g., epicentre of an earthquake, highest storm gusts, largest flooded areas, etc.
  » Pre-crisis vulnerability, for example, data on the number of people living below poverty lines, who are food insecure, or who are already suffering from effects from previous crises, like refugees living in an area struck by a natural hazard-related disaster.
  » Unmet needs, such as exiting and confirmed gaps in access to and availability of basic services and goods, protection issues, morbidity and mortality, low enrolment rates, shelter damages, etc., can be measured or estimated and used to identify a population in need.

During the first weeks of a natural hazard-related disaster, a top-down approach will usually be the best available option.

Depending on the type of disaster and context, a variety of variables can be used in the calculation, including remote sensing data when determining population figures. For example, in an earthquake, combining shake intensity with population figures and population density can indicate how many are affected and where and how severely one area may be impacted. Similarly, in a tropical cyclone, wind speed along the cyclone track combined with population data, plus additional data on possible water inundation following a flood, can provide very good estimates on how many people are affected and how severe the impact may have been.

Figure F.14: Top-down approach to PiN figure

GEOGRAPY/ LOCATION

Proximity to impacted areas

+

PRE-CRISIS VULNERABILITY

For example, food insecurity

Refugees

+

UNMET NEEDS

Access

Availability of services

Protection concerns

=

PEOPLE IN NEED
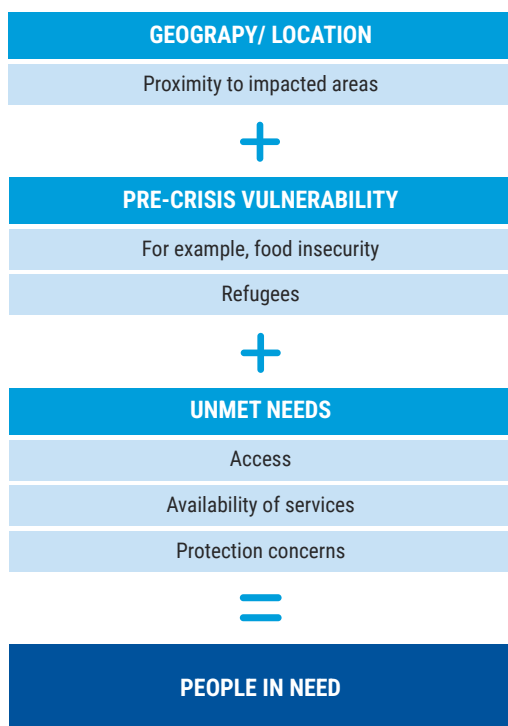
- **Bottom-up –** This method is used when individual estimates of the population in need are available for different sectors, but an overall figure still needs to be determined. The highest sectoral estimate is used as a proxy to obtain the overall number of people in need. It's important to note that this highest sectoral estimate will be smaller than the actual total, as individuals may have needs in multiple sectors. Therefore, the highest maximum number serves as the smallest common denominator. Simply adding up all sectors together is not feasible, as it would result in double or multiple counting. This approach is most effective in situations where estimates are available at low administrative levels or for affected groups, allowing for aggregation using as many mutually exclusive categories as possible, even if done crudely.

The bottom-up method is the preferred method for estimating PiN and is also the method used for population figures in sector programming and Flash Appeals.

Figure F.15: Bottom-up approach to PiN figure

NUMBERS IN MILLIONS	MEN	WOMEN	BOYS	GIRLS	NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN NEED	
SECTOR	**3.8M**	**3.7M**	**3.0M**	**3.0M**	**13.5M**	
Protection	3.8M	3.7M	3.0M	3.0M	**13.5M**	
Water, Sanitation and Hygiene	3.6M	3.6M	2.5M	2.4M	**12.1M**	
Health	3.4M	3.4M	2.4M	2.3M	**11.5M**	
Early Recovery & Livelihoods	2.7M	2.7M	1.9M	1.8M	**9.2M**	
Food Security	2.5M	2.5M	1.9M	1.8M	**8.7M**	
Camp Coordination and MGMT.	2.0M	2.0M	1.4M	1.3M	**6.5M**	
Education	0.1M	0.1M	2.8M	2.6M	**5.7M**	
NFIs	1.5M	1.5M	1M	1M	**5M**	
Nutrition	-	1.3M	0.9M	0.9M	**3.1M**	
Shelter	0.7M	0.7M	0.5M	0.5M	**2.4M**	

F.2.3.2 Primary data collection

Secondary data will in many cases be enough to inform the early stages of the response, but to properly assess e.g., priorities as expressed by the affected population, vulnerabilities per population group, etc., you will need to conduct primary data collection. Field visits need to be planned and structured, even in the simplest form. Information objectives should be thought through, which questions need to be answered/are relevant to help gather key information, what should be observed/looked for when on site, what resources are required, etc.

Primary data collection exercises in emergencies will always be a balance between timeliness, resource allocation, and the potential added value the findings will have for further response planning.

Figure F.16: Primary data collection exercises

In-country Assessment and Analysis Cell launched

If joint needs assessment is decided, AAWG agreement on Plan of Action

Joint needs assessment data collection ends

Inter-agency joint data analysis workshop

Launch of AAWG

Joint needs assessment data collection begins

Final joint data and dashboard

Joint needs assessment report

DAY: 0   3   4   6   8   12   15   16   21

Daily data sharing from joint needs assessment with dashboard updated twice a day

DATA COLLECTION FEEDS INTO REGULAR ASSESSMENT AND ANALYSIS CELL'S SITUATIONAL UPDATE
Direct observation, field data collection through first responders, National Government, UNDAC, Regional Teams, USAR, EMT, etc

There are four broad purposes for primary data collection:

- To meet information needs that cannot be met by secondary data, i.e. gather data where no data exists.
- To answer key questions from the analysis plan, e.g., around specific vulnerable groups.
- To elaborate the findings of secondary data analysis, i.e., go deeper.
- To identify specific response information, i.e., beneficiary priorities, delivery means, appropriate interventions.

Even if an overarching analysis plan is made, a detailed plan for the field visits themselves will be needed. The visual below shows an example:

F.2.3.3 Primary data collection methods

When collecting primary data for rapid needs assessments, there are generally two methods that usually can be combined.

- Key informant interviews
- Direct observation

For example, when driving on a field trip to interview key informants, direct observation is used during the journey. However, care should be taken with these observations as less accessible areas may present a very different picture. Once at the assessment area, some members of the assessment team conduct interviews, while others walk around and observe conditions following a checklist.

Figure F.17: Example field visit plan

- **Mission Objectives**
- **Assessment area selection**
  - What areas will be visited?
- **Methodology**
  - Techniques
  - Form/questionnaire

- **Safety & Security**
  - Clearance
  - Escort
  - Emergency procedures
- **Pre-departure**
  - Training (KoBo, etc.)
  - Equipment check
  - Briefing

- **Team composition**
  - Roles
  - Assignements
  - Team locations
- **Logistics**
  - Transport, comms, routing, etc.
- **Admin**
  - Interpretation, supplies, etc.

- **Data sensitivity**

- **Uploading to database**

- **Processing of data**

- **Visuals, GIS, descriptive analysis**

In addition, aerial assessments by in-country assets and community group discussions may be used if feasible.

Key informant interviews

A key informant interview is a structured conversation with a selected individual from the affected community to gather information on the consequences and effects of the disaster and ensuing community needs. This information creates a shared view of the local community's perspective as to the impact of the crisis and humanitarian concerns.

Characteristics of key informants are that they are well versed in the knowledge of their communities, their inhabitants, the site visited and/or the crisis, due to their professional background, leadership role or personal experience, e.g., a village elder, a camp manager, local authorities, mayor, or people with more technical knowledge representing specific professions, such as health workers or schoolteachers. A key informant interview is cost-effective concerning time, financial, and human resources.

However, there is a risk that the key informant will not reflect all the specific vulnerabilities of certain groups, e.g., women, children, persons with disabilities, certain ethnic groups, socio-professional categories etc. To conduct a proper vulnerability assessment, separate Focus Group Discussions with women, men, girls, and boys in all their diversities should be conducted.

Because of time constraints, KIs will often be the preferred option. It's the responsibility of the field team to ensure a diversity of KIs to inform a gender, age, inclusion and diversity analysis.

There are two types of interviews, each of which have a different approach and different advantages:

SEMI-STRUCTURED	STRUCTURED
HOW? Uses a checklist of open-ended questions in conversation to stimulate discussion on specific topics. Answers are recorded in narrative style.	**HOW?** Uses a questionnaire on selected topics to ensure that all interviews address the same issues in the same way. Answers to the questions are selected from a list of options. Important to have an 'other/specify' option to capture any unforeseen responses
WHY? Analysing interviews is labour-intensive since the conversation may be quite wide-ranging, but answers can be summarised around main points and then placed into categories to show informants' priorities. Summary sheets can then be aggregated and compared to identify patterns and priorities.	**WHY?** Easier to aggregate and compare answers with more precision than semi-structured interviews. Designing the questionnaire requires expertise and experience. Informant selection is critical and carrying out the interviews can be labour-intensive.
Semi-structured is good when it is not yet known what needs to be measured and a topic needs to be generally explored, hence set responses to be included in a structured questionnaire cannot be identified.	Structured is good when what needs to be measured is known and responses for each question can, therefore, be designed. Particularly suitable for mobile data collection, e.g., through Kobo, which speeds up the data processing significantly since data entry is conducted during data collection

It is recommended to use semi-structured interviews for capturing information that cannot be pre-coded in a questionnaire, or when contextual information is needed to better understand perceptions.

Dos and don'ts while interviewing key informants

Conducting key informant interviews requires good interviewing skills. Establishing good relations between the interviewer and the interviewee goes a long way in getting good, quality data.

Do:

- Ask the informant for consent to carry out the interview and make sure that the informant understands the purpose of the interview.

- If interviews are not led by local partners, make sure you have an interpreter available. Use local language as much as possible and translate forms.

- Establish a trusting relationship with the respondent by taking sufficient time to address concerns, and to manage expectations by communicating honestly and truthfully and maintain a neutral tone throughout the interview.

- Put the respondent at ease by practising active listening, maintaining an open, appropriate verbal and non-verbal communication style, and refraining from expressing any type of judgement on the conditions or experiences of the respondent.

- Conduct the interviews at times and places that are safe and convenient for assessment team members and informants.

- Interviews should last as long as is convenient for the informant but try not to exceed 45 minutes to an hour for each interview.

- If the analysis plan instructs to interview multiple key informants, ensure an odd-number and diverse profile and gender of KIs are interviewed to allow for better triangulation and analysis of results later.

- Actively seek female key informants and aim for a target of 50% female KI. Also seek people with disabilities as KIs.

- Use female enumerators, note-takers and interpreters when interviewing women.

- Set up interviews in quiet and safe spaces.

- Allow respondents to skip questions they do not feel comfortable or confident in answering.

- At the end of a KII or FGD, remind that humanitarian assistance is free and inform about Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) reporting channels and feedback mechanisms if available (See also **Chapter G.2.4** on Accountability to Affected People (AAP) and **G.2.5** on PSEA).

Don't:

- Wear sunglasses or jump into the questioning too fast. Be patient and spend time establishing a good rapport with the person being interviewed before going into specific questions.

- Become too focused on the questionnaire or form being used. Remember that constant note-taking may destroy the flow of the interview.

- Be alone when interviewing. Ideally, two persons should conduct the interview. The role of the interviewer should be assigned to the enumerator that the respondent feels more comfortable talking with. The other enumerator will take on the role of note-taker.

- Move into sensitive issues if not appropriate, e.g., gender-based violence, etc. Start with factual questions that are simple to answer.

- Promise something you can't keep. Be honest with people who are being interviewed. If you don't know whether help will reach that locality, say it. Explain that your role is to conduct the interviews which will inform the decision-makers but that you don't know when assistance will arrive or what type of assistance will arrive. Rather redirect the person to hotline numbers or available feedback mechanisms.

- After primary data collection has been conducted, ensure the assessment results are communicated to all concerned organisations and communities to ensure transparency and accountability.

Where possible, assessment team members should also begin with a half-day or full-day pilot to allow for feedback to be incorporated and adaptations made before a larger roll-out. Assessment teams should debrief each day at the end of data collection to discuss progress and agree any necessary changes to the approach, timing, or flag any serious

concerns for immediate referral and action. This can be done in-person or through data collection communication platforms being utilised for coordination such as WhatsApp or Signal groups. Use findings from direct observation (see below) to verify information and unpick inconsistencies in key informant responses. This enables fellow team members to examine these issues during the second half of the field visit.

Report immediately back to the A&A Cell or OCHA/UNDAC team leadership if a serious issue/risk is brought up. Do not wait until the end of the data collection to report back on life-saving issues and serious protection concerns, e.g., environmental risks not identified before, high risk of cholera in a locality, allegation of sexual exploitation and/or abuse (SEA) etc.

Direct observation

Direct observation provides a snapshot picture of an affected location and adds context and meaning to data collected through interviews. There are two types of observation:

- **Structured observation (looking for) -** Looking for a specific behaviour, object or event (or its absence). For example, whether people wash with soap before meals. A checklist is normally used as a reminder of key issues and to record observations.
- **Unstructured observation (looking at) -** Observing to see what issues exist. For example, how women and men move in and out of a camp. A short set of open-ended questions is normally used that are answered by the observers.

There are a number of advantages and disadvantages to be aware of when conducting direct observation:

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
• Can strengthen localization by including local partners such as NGOs, NDMA/LEMA agencies, national Red Cross/Red Crescent society, and the disaster affected community into the assessment development and implementation which can provide for better contextualization of findings and ownership • Relationship building between stakeholders (NGOs, UN Agencies, Red Cross/Red Crescent, NDMA/LEMA). • Pooling limited resources to improve speed and geographical coverage across a disaster affected area. • Fosters dialogue and joint analysis between key stakeholders on results to develop a shared common understanding of the situation	• Requires a high level of agreement among all stakeholders on all elements of the process and planning can be time-consuming as a result. • Ties up a lot of resources from both the A&A Cell, the wider OCHA/UNDAC team and other stakeholders. • Often lacks the necessary detail for specific and localised humanitarian interventions.

Checklist for direct observation:

- Ask permission from the people living at the site to observe them, explain why and how the information will be used.
- Observe with an open mind. Compare as much as possible with key informant interviews if feasible.

- Respect local culture and gender dynamics: dress, behave, and communicate respectfully.
- Be sensitive to local concerns and the impact of the crisis.
- Invite people living at the site to join the observation.
- Start with a walk around the location with one or two community members. Ask them

questions about what is observed on the way, to explain what has happened and why things are as they are.

- Make diversions to visit locations of specific interest such as water collection points, latrines, communal washing areas, schools, storage facilities, grave sites, markets and health facilities.

- Observe with a gender and diversity lens. Are women moving around the same way men do, can you see elderly people, can you see people with disabilities? What you can't see is also an indication of something and should trigger further questioning.

- Observations should be recorded immediately to ensure that they are accurate and reliable.

- If there are multiple observers, try to compare notes and discuss your observations as soon as possible.

Community group discussions

This method can be used to gather information from a group of people who are invited to participate in a structured discussion on specific topics with the help of an experienced facilitator. Group interviews are an excellent way to triangulate data and can be used in two ways:

- To gather information about a wide range of issues. A group of people with different backgrounds who, together, can provide an overview of the situation and discuss a wide range of issues. This type of interview is called a "Community Group Discussion".
- To gain a deeper understanding of particular issues. In this case, a group of people with similar backgrounds is useful. This type of interview is called a "Focus Group Discussion (FGD)".

Community Group Discussions are a flexible tool that has been developed for rapid information gathering and is different from other established and more rigorous social research methods like Focus Group Discussions.

Group interviews allow a greater diversity of voices and perspectives to be heard. It's a semi-structured discussion where the aim is to provide an understanding of how the disaster is affecting a community, from the perspective of the community.

When carrying out group interviews, be aware that some people are more confident in a group because of their social status in local society. That's the reason why separate group discussions for female and male are recommended. This will allow to bring out gender specific needs that would be difficult to get from a mixed group. Because of time constraints, it may be difficult to also conduct separate FGDs to look into age-specific needs but at least ensure the inclusion of a variety of ages within your separate male and female group discussions. When forming the group, also consider specific vulnerabilities such as socio-economic status and disability.

Ideally, two persons should conduct the interview (one enumerator and one note-taker) and the group should not be bigger than 10 persons. The same Dos and Don'ts as for the KII can be followed. Set up the group in a quiet space where the participants can feel free to express themselves. Encourage a relaxed and informal atmosphere and manage the more confident people so that they do not dominate the discussion. Try to avoid the presence of leaders or other authority figures as they can prevent other participants from speaking. Use them as key informants instead.

For more on these forms of primary data collection see Humanitarian Needs Assessments - The Good Enough Guide and IFRC/ICR Guidelines for Assessments in Emergencies.

Aerial Assessment

Aerial Assessment is one remote sensing method of primary data collection used to observe and capture imagery and/or data of specific geographical areas, providing a snapshot of the current situation on the ground. Aerial Assessments aim to verify, support, or challenge secondary data using vehicles such as manned aircraft, airplanes and helicopters, and unmanned aerial systems (UASs) or drones.

Aerial assessment conducted via manned aircraft offers a valuable opportunity to obtain a clear visual of the impacted region. However, securing a seat or access to data on manned aircraft is not guaranteed. If permission is granted to join a flight on an aerial assessment, adherence to their established

rules and regulations is required. Note that not all manned aircraft are equipped with cameras/sensors, so the assessment may rely on pictures taken with a camera or smartphone and / or direct observation KoBo questionnaires that are part of the Aerial assessments toolbox of the A&A cell.

As the disaster impacted geography may cover a large area, and aerial assets or flight time may be limited, it may be needed to prioritise areas for coverage. Take the time to consider the flight time feasible and plan your observation tools and flight plans accordingly. Consider important variables such as the disaster characteristics, e.g., cyclone path, earthquake fault line, coastal storm surge, etc., gaps in coverage from satellite-imagery due to delays in acquisition or cloudy images, as well as populated areas outside of the major urban areas by considering other settlements around main road and river networks within the impacted area. See below for use of UN ASIGN, a direct observation mobile app made available by UNOSAT.

The use of drones for aerial assessment is becoming increasingly popular in the humanitarian sector, thanks to the high-resolution imagery they provide, enabling A&A specialists to conduct assessments and analyses more rapidly and efficiently than ever before. While UNDAC members may be eager to use this system during deployment, **ONLY qualified members are allowed to operate drones on missions once an agreed upon method and software is solidified.** Qualifications and procedures include:

* Being a licensed pilot,
* Demonstrating the ability to fly in a humanitarian context,
* Receiving permission from the local government and ERS Mission Focal Point to conduct an aerial assessment,
* Ensuring the drone is fully functional and free of defects,
* Understanding ethical considerations, including the protection of identities of individuals who may be photographed or videoed during data collection.
* Reviewed the Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) for Humanitarian Aid and Emergency Response Guidance

It is common for other UN agencies, NGOs, and USAR teams to also conduct aerial assessments using drones. In some cases it may be necessary to coordinate Aerial Assessments within its own sub-working group to coordinate assessment efforts and share data and findings. While UNDAC teams may request access to this drone imagery, expectations should be tempered, as drone pilots may be hesitant to share imagery with external entities.

Tools for primary data collection

When collecting primary data, it may be decided to use a mobile data collection application that can be used on tablets and smartphones. UNDAC uses KoBoCollect which is based on Open Data Kit and available free of charge. A range of other organisations, e.g., the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, use the same tool which makes collaboration easy. For more information on KoBo.

A generic simple humanitarian observation form looking at severity, number of people affected, displacement, response and most urgent problems, can be found in the A&A Cell toolbox. It can be combined with interviews and uploaded on a mobile data collection application. The form will need to be contextualised, but can be used by UNDAC teams and first responders like regional teams, USAR teams, EMTs, national and international civil protection assets, etc. The form can be given to first responders or used by UNDAC teams when interviewing first responders. Regardless of which, a system for processing of the data needs to be established within an in-country A&A Cell and the findings need to feed into the regular A&A Cell situational updates (see F.3.2.2 for the template).

UN ASIGN, is one direct observation mobile app made available by UNOSAT to support its operations. It allows anyone to upload geotagged photos with annotations that are then integrated into UNOSAT mapping products in near real-time. It is specifically designed to work over low bandwidth, and the contributions are automatically mapped, to help in overall situational awareness and documentation. Having access to images and feedback of the ground is critical for UNOSAT's activities to validate the satellite image-based assessments.

The relevant feedback is shared with the coordination entities in the field for a comprehensive assessment of the situation. Users with a mobile device and an internet connection can also view the contributions on the map in real-time or load an area to be viewed later on in off-line mode. To capture georeferenced pictures, ensure that location services are activated on your phone or tablet.

For more in-depth primary data collection exercises, a print and KoBo version of a standard community-based Key Informant Questionnaire is available in the UNDAC A&A Toolbox. The question bank is designed to be applicable for all sudden-onset disasters, multi-sectoral, and include cross-cutting thematic areas like AAP, and environmental dimensions that was developed in coordination between OCHA's Needs and Response Analysis Section (NARAS), REACH, and in consultation with the global clusters. The question bank serves as a resource that teams can utilise as an initial basis for questionnaire design and is available in multiple languages. Further adaptation of the questionnaire and adaptation to the local context is recommended. The question bank is meant as a starting point for dialogue between key stakeholders during the initial decision-making on assessment design. Remember to keep it as short and simple as possible (what do you need to know and why).

Recommendations on Protection, Gender and Inclusion

When analysing needs, we have to understand the concerns and priorities of at-risk groups (see **Chapter G.2**) to ensure that the response is inclusive and appropriate. Please keep in mind these key steps when planning your data collection process:

- Ensure that different parts of the community are included in the data collection process, especially those that may be invisible or marginalised for cultural or other reasons (women and girls, persons with disabilities, older people including widows, specific ethnic groups, specific socio-professional groups etc.).

- Include protection questions to identify immediate protection risks and needs of the most vulnerable, including those usually marginalised or invisible.

- Collect and analyse sex-, age- and disability-disaggregated data (SADD) during the primary data collection.

- Ensure that questions on preferred means of delivery (in-kind, vouchers, cash) and information needs (what people need to know and how they prefer to receive information and communicate, including reporting sexual misconduct, with responders and authorities) are included in all questionnaires. Request the support from an Accountability to Affected People (AAP) specialist/liaise with the AAP working group in-country if existing (see Section on AAP in **Chapter G.2**).

- Consult with women and girls, men and boys across diverse communities to ensure that their particular circumstances, needs, priorities and capabilities are fully understood. The best way to do this is through separate group discussions for women and girls, men and boys, as culturally appropriate and preferred. If you are only conducting KII, acknowledge that your methodology has limitations.

- During KIIs, actively seek female key informants and aim for a target of 50% female KI. One way to approach this would be to monitor the gender of KIs throughout data collection to avoid finding out at the end of the process that only male have been interviewed. Acknowledge that an over-reliance on male KIs is a limitation that implies biased findings.

- Ensure gender-balance of the assessment team. Always use female enumerators and note-takers when interviewing women. If you are using an interpreter, make sure it's a woman as well. Also make sure to set up interviews in quiet and safe spaces.

- Actively seek people with disabilities as KIs. Organisations of persons with disabilities or community leaders can possibly facilitate this. There is not only one type of disability, and not all disabilities are visible. Make sure to consult persons with various types of impairments (and various ages), so to make sure that their particular circumstances, needs, priorities and capabilities are fully understood. Age, gender, social status, etc. in relation with disabilities may lead to increased discrimination or vulnerabilities.

- Request the inclusion of a protection, gender and inclusion specialist during tool revision ahead of

data collection to ensure a proper vulnerability analysis and identify further information gaps.

See **Subchapter G.2** on the Centrality of Protection and Quality Response for more details. Refer to the UNDAC Toolbox for more documents.

Environmental recommendations

When developing an assessment Plan of Action it is important to include the environmental dimensions in emergencies that can pose a significant short term and long term risk to both the environment and human health (see **Subchapter G.12** on Environmental Hazards and Emergencies for further information). Whether data is observed from aerial assessments, USAR, EMT, or UNDAC teams, or collected through community key-informant interviews it is important to include important components around potential environmental emergencies. The assessment & analysis cell should consult on and flag any concerns to the Environment Expert on mission within the UNDAC team, Environmental Cell if established, or UNEP/OCHA Joint Environment Unit response focal point. Key things to consider in assessments and assessment debriefs with partners around the environment are:

- Have there been any incidents involving chemical spills, leakages, or releases from the following industrial or hazardous facilities? (Chemical plants, Petroleum storage, Mining operations, Manufacturing facilities, Agriculture-related chemicals, Radioactive materials, Waste treatment facilities, Dams, water treatment plants, or other water related infrastructure)
- Have there been noticeable changes in the quality or characteristics of water, air, or soil since the disaster occurred?
- Have there been any environmental impacts or issues caused by the disaster that pose an immediate threat to: Life (e.g., human health, safety, well-being) and/or Livelihoods (e.g., economic activities, food and water sources)?
- What are the most pressing concerns related to disaster-generated waste in your area?

Data sensitivity

Think through any sensitive issues involved when collecting primary data, e.g., are there any risks

involved for the key informant for having answered questions, will the data expose vulnerabilities that can be taken advantage of, etc. Responsible data collection and management is especially important in humanitarian settings and the following issues should be considered when planning:

- Will it be possible to share this data?
- Is it possible to recognize an individual from this data set?
- Obtain informed consent. Ensure stakeholders are aware of the purpose of collection and consent to sharing data.
- Manage data according to sensitivity. Be transparent when possible; but, when necessary, paraphrase data so it cannot be traced back to a source.
- What will be done with the data? Will it be handed over, if so to whom and how will they manage it? Should it be disposed of?
- Should data collection staff be trained/briefed on the purpose, specific risks and sensitive issues?

See also **Section F.1.3** Data responsibility and security.

F.2.3.4 Primary data collection partners

Primary data can be collected from a wide range of partners including, the NDMA or LEMA, National Red Cross/Red Crescent Society, UN agencies, national and international NGOs, civil society organisations, the private sector, USAR or EMTs, and by the UNDAC team.

USAR & EMTs

National and international USAR and EMTs and other first responders are at the forefront of the response and will collect important information through their internal reporting systems. First responders will directly observe key information within their areas of operations and should either collect this on behalf of the A&A Cell or be used as Key Informants.

USAR teams have direct observation questionnaires that they use to assess the severity of the building damage, etc. and the results can be found in the

ICMS and should be one of the first data repositories for the A&A Cell to collect information from.

UNDAC and regional teams

In large-scale disaster responses, in particular, where one or more sub-OSOCC is established, UNDAC team members or team members from regional response mechanisms, can conduct direct observation or KI interviews within their area of operation and channel this information back to the A&A Cell.

NDMA/LEMA

Depending on the capacity of the NDMA and LEMA in the aftermath of a major disaster, an initial impact assessment or aerial fly-over may take place. For further follow-up assessments with the affected communities the governmental bodies can be essential in providing relevant knowledgeable points of contact, provide in-person or remote enumerators to support disaster assessment initiatives, translators, or access support.

National Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies

If the disaster affected country has an active national Red Cross/Red Crescent society these branches and volunteers are some of the first to respond. With a large volunteer network with existing strong community linkages, the National Society can rapidly collect data over large areas. Most National Red Cross/Red Crescent societies have a network of volunteers trained in KoboCollect who could conduct community-based KI interviews. It is advised to immediately start coordinating with them - as well as with the IFRC - as they will often be very quick in responding and collecting data.

UN Agencies

Depending on the existing UN presence in the disaster affected country, UN agencies will be quick to assess the situation or carry out joint inter-agency initial assessments. In some cases, a decision may be taken to join resources together to conduct a joint needs assessment (see F.2.3.6). In large scale disasters, or where there is a lack of resources or access, collaboration with other data collection partners can be essential in improving efficiency and coverage of the affected communities.

NGOs

International and national NGOs that are operational in the disaster affected area can provide valuable insight into the disaster response and community needs. NGOs can be mobilised through the establishment of an AAWG or through an NGO Forum to support with assessment initiatives on direct observation forms or key-informant interviews.

F.2.3.6 Joint needs assessment

A joint needs assessment is an approach developed for implementing cross-sectoral needs assessments, which can be conducted within the period of a normal UNDAC mission (2-4 weeks). It is a collaboration between humanitarian stakeholders, like the National Government, clusters, NGOs, etc., using one methodology, sharing resources and collaborating when analysing the findings. A joint needs assessment helps to develop a shared understanding of the situation including the scope and magnitude of the crisis, most affected areas, most vulnerable groups and most pressing problems.

It is important to note that while data collection exercises previously described in this chapter are most often led and implemented by the A&A Cell, a joint needs assessment process is owned and led by an external coordination body like the AAWG in cooperation with the National Government. Technical experts from the A&A Cell will offer support to the process and facilitate coordination of a joint needs assessment, but it will require leadership, active engagement and resource allocation from AAWG partners.

A joint needs assessment is designed to enable a timely generation of findings, with comparatively few resources, to inform initial strategic decision-making and further in-depth assessments with a more operational focus. The main added value of this design lies in the rapid and continuous feedback of results into ongoing operations. There should be a continuous sharing of findings with the wider humanitarian community on an ongoing basis.

The initiation of a joint needs assessment process, however, needs to consider added value and consider whether the costs outweigh the benefits. There is a risk that a joint needs assessment may take a long time to plan, execute and finalise. Especially when there is little or no pre-disaster assessment preparedness work, where there is a lack of buy-in from key stakeholders, or where operational constraints or political dynamics delay implementation.

A joint needs assessment is designed to provide an initial situation overview to aid decision-makers in identifying priority areas following the first phase of response. It is not designed to provide the detail necessary to inform specific and localised humanitarian interventions, nor does it substitute in-depth sectoral assessments. It is important to understand what a joint needs assessment can provide and what it cannot, and that this be made clear to decision-makers and stakeholders. A common misconception is that a joint needs assessment provides statistically representative figures; it does not. At this stage of the emergency, this is neither feasible nor recommended, given the dynamic nature of a crisis in the early phase and the inability of responders to absorb and utilise such detailed information before it becomes outdated.

There are a number of advantages and disadvantages to be aware of when engaging in a joint needs assessment:

ADVANTAGES

- Can strengthen localization by including local partners such as NGOs, NDMA/LEMA agencies, national Red Cross/Red Crescent society, and the disaster affected community into the assessment development and implementation which can provide for better contextualization of findings and ownership
- Relationship building between stakeholders (NGOs, UN Agencies, Red Cross/Red Crescent, NDMA/LEMA).
- Pooling limited resources to improve speed and geographical coverage across a disaster affected area.
- Fosters dialogue and joint analysis between key stakeholders on results to develop a shared common understanding of the situation

DISADVANTAGES

- Requires a high level of agreement among all stakeholders on all elements of the process and planning can be time-consuming as a result.
- Ties up a lot of resources from both the A&A Cell, the wider OCHA/UNDAC team and other stakeholders.
- Often lacks the necessary detail for specific and localised humanitarian interventions.

The main methodological elements of a joint needs assessment are:

- The collection, organisation and analysis of both secondary and primary data, guided by the key information needs and an analytical framework developed on that basis.
- The 'good-enough' approach, recommending a purposive sampling method and focused at the community level (key informants) instead of household level in the initial stage of a disaster.

Outputs of a joint needs assessment

A joint needs assessment can be completed in 21 days from the onset of the disaster, with results shared throughout. The table below shows the various outputs and when they will be shared.
It is important to note that these outputs are only related to a joint needs assessment and its findings, while outputs from the wider A&A Cell are described in **Section F.2.2**.2 Structure and management of the A&A Cell.

OUTPUT	WHEN
Data analysis plan document outlining agreed methodology by key stakeholders	Within the first 3 days of following a decision about a joint needs assessment and engagement of AAWG.
Raw data sharing	Daily basis with participating partners and key stakeholders once data collection begins, usually by day 8.
Dashboard of live submissions	Updated at least once a day, ideally twice, especially on initial emergency response stages
Key finding bulletins	Each morning after evening data submissions
Final compiled and cleaned dataset	End of data collection, usually by day 12
Results dashboard	Within 1-2 days of the end of data collection
Joint analysis working groups/workshop	End of the first week of data collection and a final workshop 1-2 days after the results dashboard has been shared, usually by day 16
Final Report	Within 5 days of multi-stakeholder workshop, usually by day 21

F.2.4 Processing

Processing the data is all about preparing it for further use. Good data management precedes analysis which, in turn, precedes production of good information products. Until adequate procedures for data organisation, categorization, and storing are in place, the team will not be able to develop high-quality products.

When processing data and information, the following questions should always be considered:

- What is the quality of the data and what confidence do we have in it?
- Can we use all the data, e.g., is it sensitive (see **Section F.1.3**), or unreliable (see **Section F.2.3**.1)?
- What is the best tool for processing?
- What is the best way to organise the data?
- What do we expect to extract from this data?

Data cleaning

A common challenge for data and information in emergencies is that it is often incomplete, and time will need to be spent cleaning it, i.e., correcting spelling mistakes, removing duplicates, inconsistencies, etc., and making it usable.

The initial cleaning of the data needs to be done with careful attention to spotting anomalies. Data cleaning refers to more than closely reviewing a set of data for simple errors; it is also about looking out for information that does not make sense. Data must be validated by comparing information from a range of sources. Sometimes this will include checking the data collected in the field from one type of source with another, e.g., is what key informants from the population are saying consistent with what official governmental sources are saying and with the field teams' own observations?

This process will also include comparing primary data with information from other sources as secondary data. This is not about proving the findings, but validating them, i.e., being able to determine if the information is credible and demonstrate and support why it is correct. Understanding the differences in reporting from different information sources and why these differences exist is part of the process. Always keep a copy of the data in its original form for reference.

Selecting relevant tools and skilled team members to handle that task would speed up the process and avoid any redundancy or backlog. Remote support could be an alternative when deployed staff are not available to handle the workload.

For more information on data cleaning, see ACAPS Technical Brief – Data Cleaning.

Place-codes (P-codes)

Location information is often incomplete, inconsistent or not interoperable. The best way to minimise challenges with location data is to use Place-codes or 'P-Codes' which are unique geographic (geo)identification codes, represented by combinations of letters and/or numbers to identify a specific location or feature on a map or within a database. They can be provided by OCHA's Information Management Section or by MapAction. See also **Section B.8.1** on UNDAC Operational Partners.

F.2.5 Analysis

Analysis is a human process that requires the application of cognitive functions, the use of targeted analytical approaches and an inquisitive mindset. Being an analyst does not necessarily require any qualifications apart from a critical mind and common sense. Essentially, it involves looking at the information available and trying to tell a story:

- What has happened?
- What is happening now?
- What is important and why is it important in this context?
- What don't we know?
- What might happen next?

Analysis begins by comparing data from different locations to identify similarities and differences and comparing them with pre-crisis data. Essentially, comparison lies at the heart of analysis. Compare what is, with what was, and conclude with what will be, if this or that is not considered. Comparing the present with the past, bringing in contextual elements, lessons learned, and minimum standards (thresholds), enables the future to be anticipated, as depicted in the flowchart below.

Figure F.18: Comparative Analysis
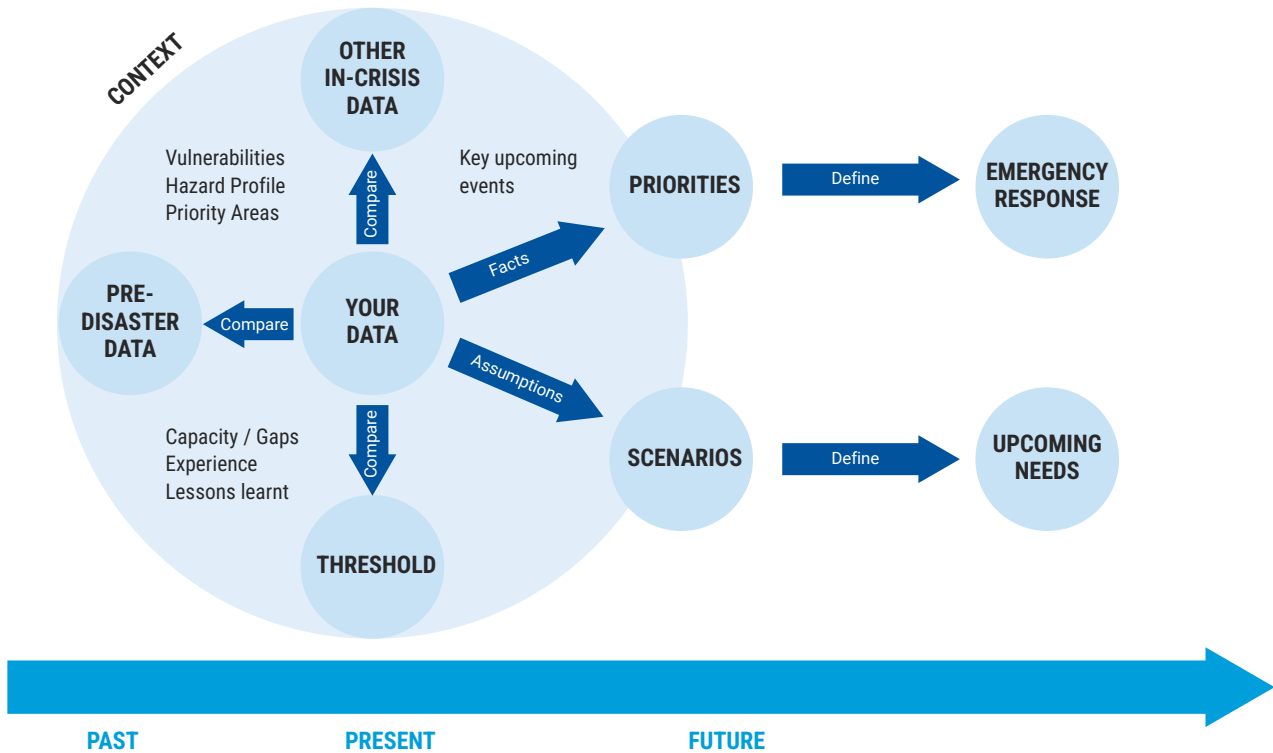
F.2.5.1 Analysis models

In most disaster situations, there is simply more information, misinformation and background noise than anyone can handle. The information available is often of varying quality, coverage, timeliness, and accuracy, challenging the ability to make sense of it. To stay on track and navigate the maze of biases and other distractions, our mental processes require a structure to help us to think slowly while having to act fast. Some simple tools, methods and approaches can help turn data into meaningful information.

Data needs to be explained and interpreted, and put into context, to identify what is most important and relevant. Analysis should start as soon as data is received and continue as long as new data comes in. One of the best tools to use will be an analysis model.

An analysis model can be compared to a wardrobe or closet with numerous small compartments, hooks, drawers, etc., which can be organised and used to store things for easy retrieval – in this case, information. It makes it easy to see what is there, where there are gaps and how areas or topics might be connected.

In very data-rich environments and complex contexts, analysis models can be complicated and consider a large variety of variables. In the first phase of a sudden-onset emergency, however, a version organised by geographical location may be good enough to develop an initial understanding of the situation. Variations of the model below have been used on several occasions and proved successful for UNDAC teams.

Figure F.19: Analysis model for the initial period following a disaster

AREA	#AFFECTED	#DISPLACED	HEALTH	WASH	SHELTER	FOOD	PROTECTION	LOGISTICS
District A								
District B								
District C								
District D								

This model can be replicated on a whiteboard or similar where information can be summarised in the various cells. This quickly shows which geographical areas are most impacted, the location of the largest number of affected people and which sectoral needs co-exist. It also shows where there are information gaps, where more information is needed and what to look for once there.

As the mission evolves beyond the first week, the information needs will become more specific and probe deeper into the situation and context. This may also require an updated model that may help in going beyond only describing the disaster situation but also support explaining and interpreting what is important and why it is important. See also **Section F.2.1**.1 know what you need to know and how objectives change over time.

Figure F.20: Analysis model for in-depth analysis

		DESCRIBE (SUMMARISE)	EXPLAIN AND INTERPRET	ANTICIPATE
SCOPE AND SCALE	Area affected			
	Drivers, context considerations			
	Secondary risks, consequences			
	People affected and in need			
	Severity			
HUMANITARIAN CONDITIONS	Humanitarian needs, per sector and inter sector			
	Protection issues, e.g., marginalized groups, violence and conflict			
	Gender analysis, e.g., context factors			
HUMANITARIAN ACCESS	Access of humanitarian actors to affected people			
	Access of people affected to assistance			
	Security and physical constraints			
CAPACITIES AND RESPONSE	Coping mechanisms			
	National response			
	International response			

The models above are generic and should be adapted to the situation and context. It should be noted that, while models are useful to think with, if they are not properly designed and adapted, they may easily lead to important information being missed.

Figure F.21: Analysis Spectrum

Analysis is not a single action but a process consisting of several steps, building on each other, increasing understanding of the data with each step. The visual below shows how analysis should move along a spectrum, providing a deeper understanding of the data with each step.
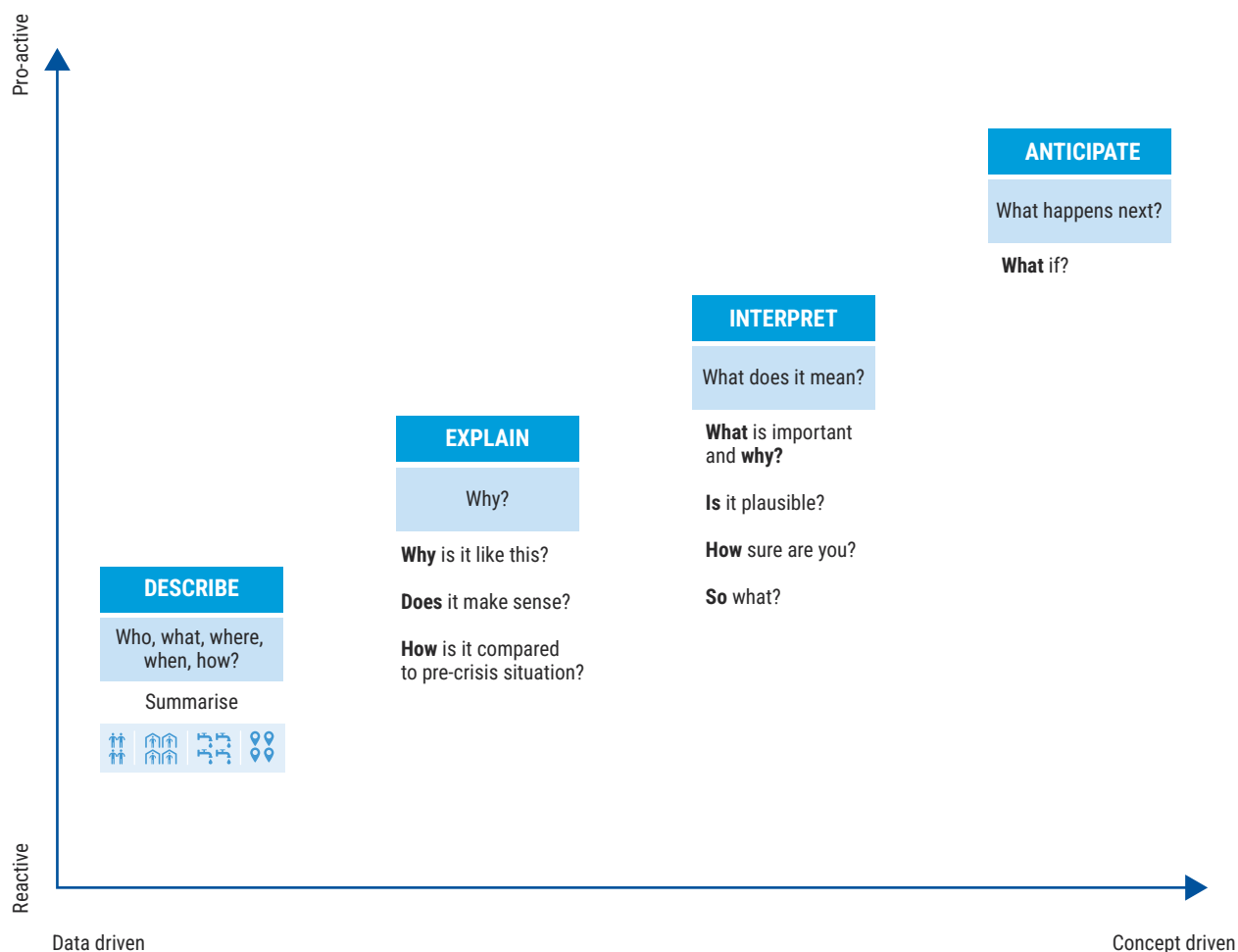
- **Descriptive analysis** identifies what is worth noting about who, what, when, where, and how, and the data should be organised in a way that is easy to comprehend and recall. Usually in the form of visuals, dashboards, maps and other infographics.
- **Explanatory analysis** provides context to the results, pointing out possible cause and effect relationships.
- **Interpretive analysis** examines the significance of a problem or topic of interest as it relates to

decision-makers' interests, using logic to outline what is most important and why it is important.

- **Anticipatory analysis** explores how the situation will evolve within a given timeframe and considers possible consequences of current events.

Probing deeper into the data allows us to look to the future, asking what might happen next and proactively anticipate what course a situation may take. This is generally based on lessons learned from previous emergencies, the analyst's experience, knowledge and strategies for modelling evidence

and developing possible outcomes for a given initial situation. Anticipatory analysis, at the top end of the analysis spectrum, may also lead to contingency planning, especially if the developments envisaged are dependent on certain assumptions about what may happen next, e.g., an upcoming monsoon season or other climatic event that occurs annually and may exacerbate the humanitarian needs.

When having conducted an in-depth analysis, we can also move further and suggest specific guidance on what actions should be taken to address the identified needs and challenges in a humanitarian context. This is often referred to as prescriptive analysis. By providing actionable recommendations and a roadmap for intervention, prescriptive analysis aims to guide humanitarian actors in making informed decisions and implementing effective humanitarian action.

When moving along the analysis spectrum, it is imperative to bring in peers, colleagues, and partners to discuss the data and agree on what they mean. Analysis will always be stronger if done in a group setting, and it is highly recommended that all analysis beyond a summary of the facts, comparisons across locations and social groups, and simple explanations are conducted together with colleagues, both within the A&A Cell and with a wider group of partners. In the early days of an emergency, other UNDAC functions and/or OSOCC coordination cells should share their information with the A&A Cell and take part in joint analysis sessions.
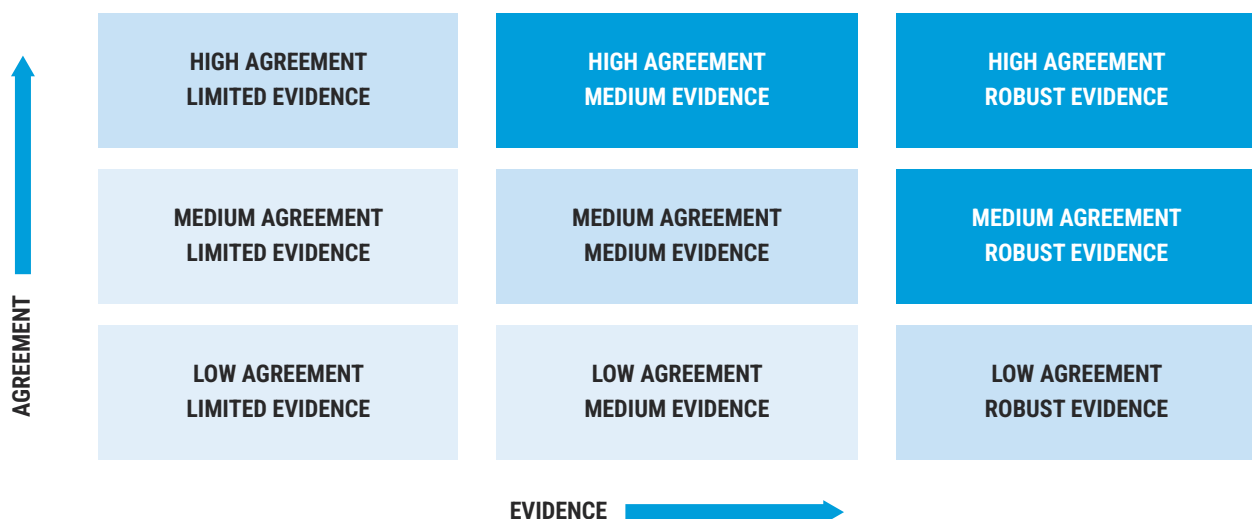
F.2.5.3 Joint analysis and sense making

Emergency needs analysis is different from more traditional, evidence-based research. One of the main differences is the timeframe. Emergency analysis will always have time constraints and the methodology, and extent to which it allows results to be generalised, will need to be considered. Generally, it is just not possible to have the quality and level of detail of data that one would like to. Analysing needs-related information during emergencies relies on the ability of analysts to draw conclusions from very imperfect and fragmented information.

One way to overcome the issue of limited or insufficient quality of information is to rely on the consensus between peers, colleagues, and partners through joint analysis. Joint Analysis is a collaborative process where partners with complementary areas of expertise make sense of information together. The purpose of this approach is to transform information into explanations and actionable findings that can support decision-making.

The advantage is that confidence is increased when a lack of sufficient evidence is balanced with a high level of agreement in what the findings mean. The figure below shows how to strengthen analysis by compensating limited evidence through discussions and reaching consensus.

Figure F.22: Strengthening analysis table

HIGH AGREEMENT LIMITED EVIDENCE	HIGH AGREEMENT MEDIUM EVIDENCE	HIGH AGREEMENT ROBUST EVIDENCE
MEDIUM AGREEMENT LIMITED EVIDENCE	MEDIUM AGREEMENT MEDIUM EVIDENCE	MEDIUM AGREEMENT ROBUST EVIDENCE
LOW AGREEMENT LIMITED EVIDENCE	LOW AGREEMENT MEDIUM EVIDENCE	LOW AGREEMENT ROBUST EVIDENCE

AGREEMENT

EVIDENCE

Joint analysis is important because it provides the opportunity to balance a lack of information with a level of consensus on the conclusions reached. For example, there may be very limited evidence, but still a strong agreement among experts that a displacement situation will worsen in the coming month, leading to increased needs in other humanitarian sectors. This is generally good enough to inform decisions.

Making sense of information involves using all the information available to make sure you find a plausible interpretation and not just form an opinion. Decision-makers' willingness to accept an interpretation is closely connected to their ability to see its plausibility and the level of agreement among people with subject matter expertise and/or contextual knowledge.

It is important to note that an interpretation is not a fact but a theory. Often, in an emergency context, the best you can hope for with your explanations is not that others will say; *'yes, that is obviously right,'* but rather; *'yes, I can see why it might be possible and reasonable to think as you do'.*

F.2.5.4 Facilitating joint analysis sessions

When doing descriptive analysis, we often summarise information using visuals, maps and other infographics that form the basis for further interpretation. Several of these will be used in reports with short narratives but should also be used as a starting point when facilitating joint analysis sessions. See also **Section F.3.2**.3 Visualizing data.

A joint analysis session can come in many forms and range from just a couple of people discussing the findings to a larger (cluster/sector-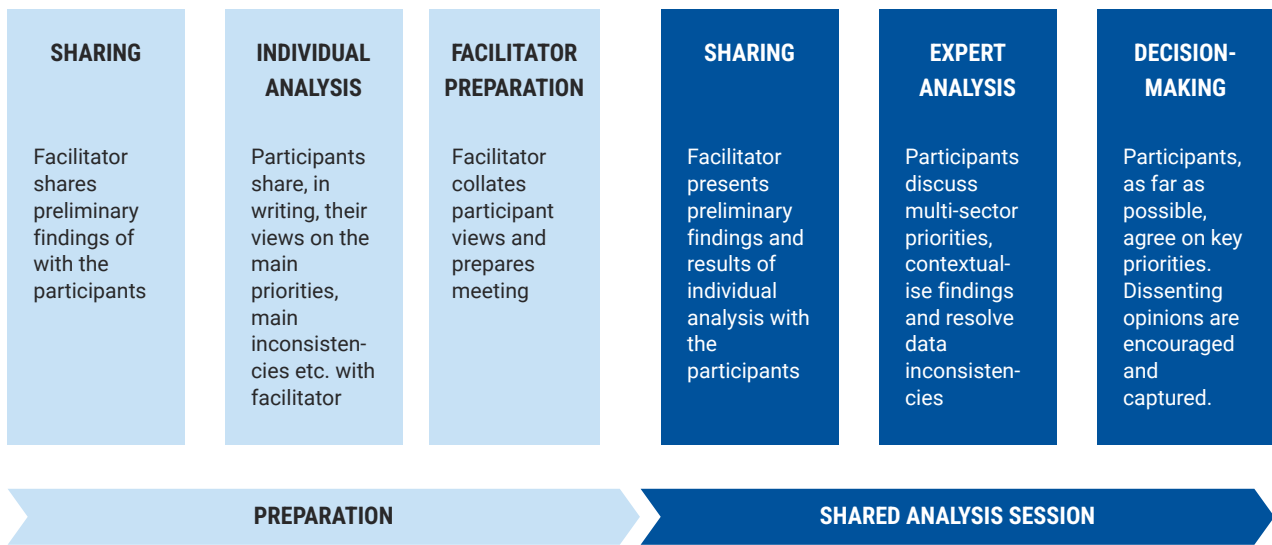wide) workshop or meeting involving partners, especially government partners where possible, from many organisations, representing a variety of viewpoints. An established AAWG would be an essential platform for joint analysis sessions. To save time, analysis may also be included as a separate agenda item for HCT meetings, cluster meetings, etc., to obtain inputs on certain key questions.Before the joint analysis process starts, it is necessary to clearly define the objectives of the exercise and how the process will be. A mix of participants, including subject matter experts, people with contextual knowledge, members of the remote A&A cell should be invited to ensure diversity and a variety of views.

Common objectives may be to:

- Formulate answers to key information needs based on available data.
- Establish a common understanding of the situation by agreeing on the findings.
- Compensate lack of evidence with expert judgement.
- Resolve inconsistencies in the data through discussion and information sharing.
- Identify patterns in the data, e.g., by determining trends.
- Agree on priorities and the way forward.
- Identify key information/data that is missing and needs to be collected.
- Develop likely scenarios for how the situation may evolve.

The most efficient way of doing joint analysis is to have a facilitated process and a structure to the discussions. The flowchart below shows a generic joint analysis process for use when organising larger, multi-sector workshops. Good preparation and preliminary work will lead to faster results and agreements.

Figure F.23: Joint analysis process

SHARING	INDIVIDUAL ANALYSIS	FACILITATOR PREPARATION	SHARING	EXPERT ANALYSIS	DECISION-MAKING
Facilitator shares preliminary findings of with the participants	Participants share, in writing, their views on the main priorities, main inconsistencies etc. with facilitator	Facilitator collates participant views and prepares meeting	Facilitator presents preliminary findings and results of individual analysis with the participants	Participants discuss multi-sector priorities, contextualise findings and resolve data inconsistencies	Participants, as far as possible, agree on key priorities. Dissenting opinions are encouraged and captured.

PREPARATION	SHARED ANALYSIS SESSION

It is highly recommended to organise regularly a joint analysis session within an A&A Cell as well as with a smaller group of key stakeholders (e.g., UNDAC Team Leader, OCHA Head of Office, RC/HC, NEMA, cluster coordinators, or during an HCT meeting) to update these decision makers with the latest analysis and verify which information needs to inform which decisions. In those cases, it is recommended that the preparation work is done by a few people and only the three last steps are done with the bigger group. As a minimum, the initial analysis should be shared in a visual form that all participants can see and understand, together with a list of initial findings. See also **Section F.3.2** for more on visualisation.

There are eight main dos and don'ts to consider while preparing for and undertaking a joint analysis exercise:

- Do not get bogged down in discussions that relate to the methodology and process of the assessment. This will divert resources away from interpretation and analysis of the findings.
- Do record limitations that are discovered in the data/analysis. By making a point of noting these down, it can sometimes help avoid discussions and getting stuck on methodology or processing.
- Do focus on analysis of findings rather than solely sharing of information. When information is being shared, it should be because it is either new information that has only just come to light OR information that assists in interpreting findings.
- Do not confuse facilitation with participation. A neutral facilitator, who does not portray a vested interest in a specific outcome, is crucial to maintaining the independence required to lead a discussion on assessment findings.
- Do explain definitions and concepts, including population affected, priority needs, etc., to ensure all participants have a consistent understanding.
- Do emphasise the difference between the analysis of humanitarian needs as distinct from the identification of required response interventions.
- Do ensure a 'safe environment' with clearly agreed norms that encourage questioning and argument. Analysis is essentially a process of interrogation of the data or information to hand. As members of the joint analysis team make statements about the data, they should encourage others to question the statements. Consequently, robust conclusions will survive, poor analysis will not!
- Do document the assumptions made when deriving conclusions on findings, as a reminder of what is based on evidence. Assumptions can easily take on a life of their own and become accepted as truths if not kept in check.

F.2.5.5 Mitigating biases

Bias in analysis processes is unavoidable and inherent. UNDAC members working in an A&A Cell should ideally be in a position where they can be objective and neutral, without any particular stake in the outcome. This will help prompt a discussion in an objective manner, without being perceived as leading it towards a particular conclusion. For the best possible result, the team should focus on:

• Selecting participants who represent different viewpoints to ensure diversity of opinion, e.g., governmental partners, bilateral response teams, donors, other humanitarian agencies, etc.

• Select subject matter experts who can speak from an independent authority on the topic.

• Defining a clear purpose of the session and providing an agenda, formulating where you ideally would like to end up.

• Ensuring that the participants are as well and consistently informed of the data as possible, to avoid simply sharing information instead of discussing what it means.

If stakeholders with varied expertise are involved in analysing the data, wider perspective and a stronger consensus will be gained. However, this will need to be balanced against any biases that these stakeholders might have. An expert or stakeholder with a vested interest in the outcome can easily push the discussion in a direction to their benefit if there is no one to counter their point of view.

F.2.5.6 Structured analytical techniques

Structured analytical techniques (SATs) is the application of individual and collective cognitive methods to weight data and test hypotheses within a context. It aims to reduce ambiguity in highly ambiguous situations.

SATs are designed to produce more objective and credible judgments by mitigating cognitive biases. They can be useful in filtering messy and unorganised data, brainstorming, evaluating different scenarios, assessing risks, identifying cause and effect relationships, and challenging predominant hypotheses. SATs can be used in all fields of analysis, including business and humanitarian analyses.

Below is a description of a few SATs that can be useful in sudden-onset disasters and implemented in an emergency setting.

Figure F.24: Example problem-tree
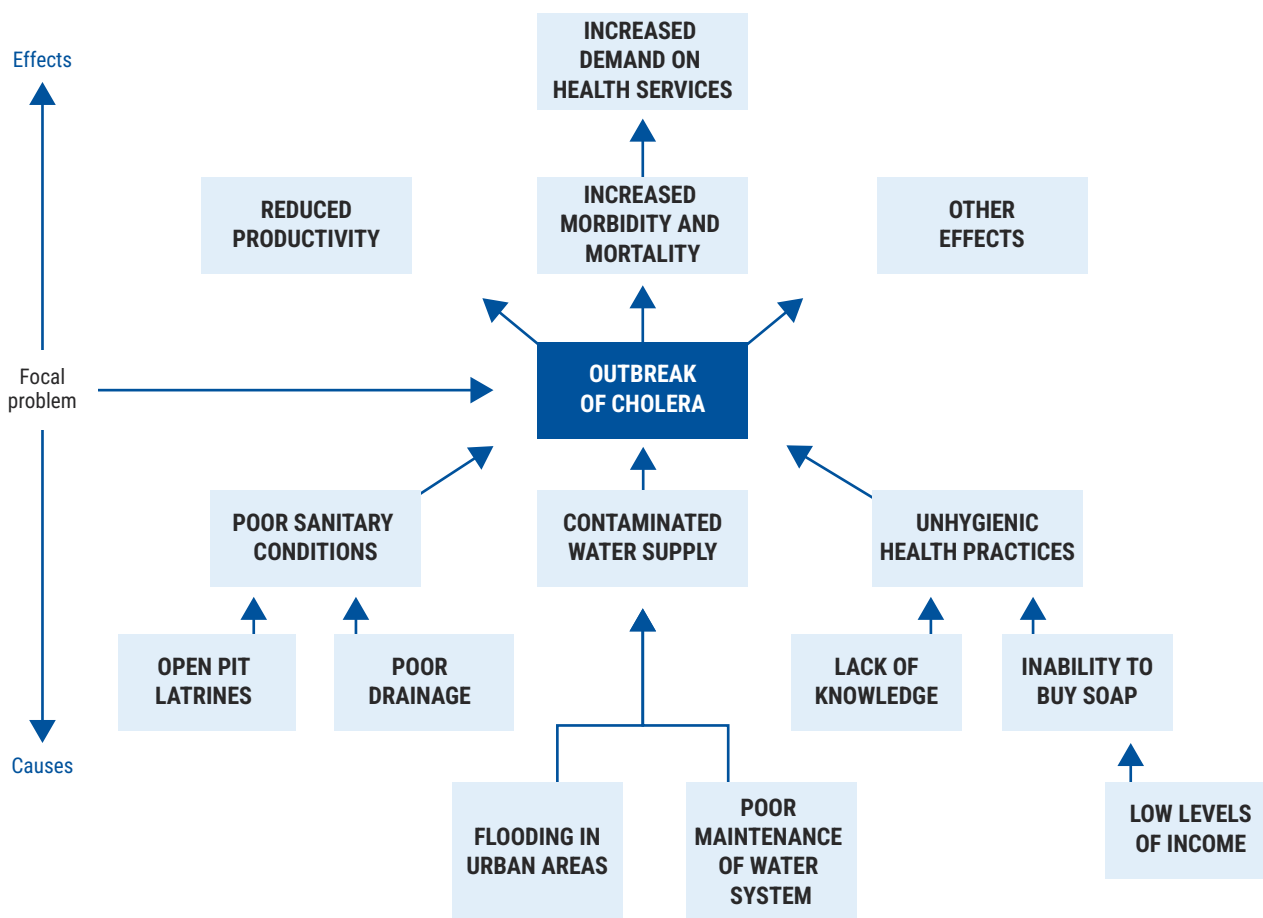
Problem-tree

This is a well-known method in many fields when wanting to explore possible root causes of a problem and how it may branch out in various effects, here exemplified with a cholera outbreak.

This will help identify root causes of a problem and make qualified assumptions about possible consequences if the situation goes unaddressed. It will also support decisions about type of responses, both emergency interventions and others addressing the root causes.

Figure F.25: Fishbone diagram
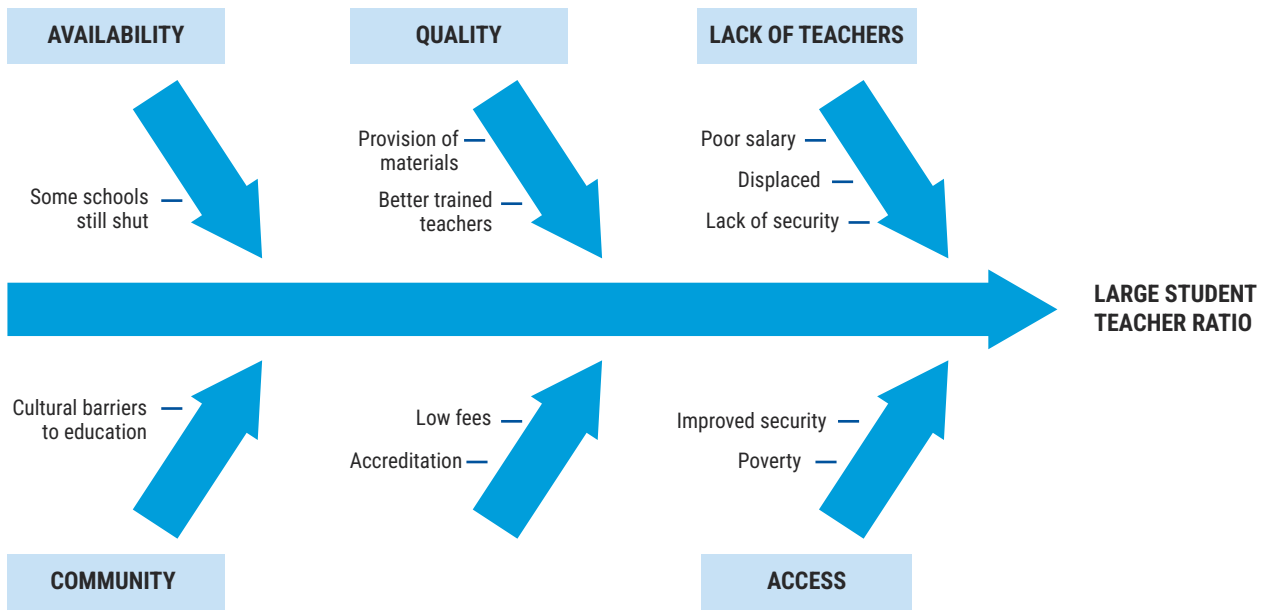
Fishbone technique

A similar technique is what is called a fishbone diagram. It's a cause-and-effect diagram that helps in exploring reasons for findings. This diagram investigates possible reasons for a large student to teacher ratio, listing main categories of explanations. The diagram looks just like a fish's skeleton with the problem at its head and the causes for the problem feeding into the spine. For each of these, you can investigate further for additional explanations for each of these categories. It directs the people discussing the topic to consider alternative causes by visualising possible causes that may be overlooked.

Six hats

This method is meant to focus a group on one specific task at a time as you move towards a solution. You do not need to mention hats or understand what the different coloured hats signify, or even use 6 hats if 5 is enough. What is important is that the group understands the scope of each part of the exercise and that it is facilitated to keep within that scope to guide the process. The reference to different coloured hats stems from an analogy that the different colours imply different focus or mindset.

HAT (FOCUS OR MINDSET)	ACTION POINT
Blue hat – Process How do we do this?	Explain the different hats, and what is expected at each step, and make sure everyone understands.
White hat - Data What do we know?	Ask the group to specify the issues and needs provided by the data and grade each issue using "Almost Certainly", "Probably", and "Possibly". This will help to identify the main issues/needs provided by the assessment with their confidence levels.
Green hat – Creativity What is possible?	What other possible issues could the data mean? What alternative explanations exist? What is outside the box but still plausible?
Black hat - Challenges What are the limitations?	The group should now critique the data. How strong was the methodology? Were the figures influenced by the data collection process? How big was the sample size? How generalisable are the results? Who were the KI's and what biases might they have held?
Red hat – Feelings What does my intuition tell me?	The group should take some time to reflect on their past experiences and consider the lessons learned, intuitions, and any other relevant data. Are there any members who have feelings or opinions that contradict what has been decided? The group should then have a discussion about whether the objectives should be adapted or nuanced, or further qualified based on these factors.
Yellow hat What are the priorities?	The group should decide what the 3 – 5 priority issues/needs are for the response. Then it should identify the priorities and why these are important. This is where the group will develop strategic objectives.

It's a method where you must be quite rigid in following the instructions. It is about focusing on one area at a time to avoid digressions and getting everyone's input for each stage. The hats are just there as a reminder as to where you are in the discussion, so you do not divert.

Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)

This methodology uses brainstorming to outline the full range of issues to be addressed. It is an approach that has been used in development programming and adapted for humanitarian analysis, where you get to choose individually what you think are the main issues, and group discussion is then used to prioritise these. It follows the following step-by-step process:

- Brainstorm the main issues and findings from the assessment onto a flipchart or whiteboard. This is best done using post-It notes so that the board can be easily rearranged. If the session is conducted virtually, it is recommended to use a virtual whiteboard.
- Once the group has put up all the ideas, clarify each one. For example, if WASH is a main issue, check in with what exactly about WASH is the problem. Group similar issues together and

decide as a group if any issues can be combined, e.g., Child Protection and Education, Health and WASH, Food Security interventions for Vulnerable Groups, etc.

- Each member of the group then gets 5 or more votes and uses a sticker or marker to put one or more tick(s) next to the issues they think should be the priority for the response. You can put all your votes against 1 issue if you like or spread them out more evenly.

- Total up the number of votes for each issue and rearrange the whiteboard, listing the issues in order of most votes.

- Expand the top 3-4 with a little more detail, articulating the conclusion, arguing for why these are the top priorities, and finalising by recommending appropriate actions. Refer back to the original list of issues to see if anything can/should be added to nuance the conclusion further.

Chain of plausibility

A much-used method for comprehensive scenario building in humanitarian contexts is the chain of plausibility approach. This includes a detailed review of all possible events and developments.

This approach identifies variables likely to cause a humanitarian impact. Assumptions are made on their importance and direction. For example, 'below average rainfall in the next three months' could delay crop planting, causing damage and food insecurity.

In a time-crunched environment as an UNDAC mission it is recommended to focus on a few, specific variables and the most expected impact, using knowledge and reason to describe the most probable evolution, adding consequences, impacts and risks. Questions like, 'what will the situation look like in 6 months', or 'what will happen with a displaced population if heavy rainfall should occur' can be very useful in prompting discussions and stimulate this form of anticipatory analysis.

Figure F.26: Chain of plausibility
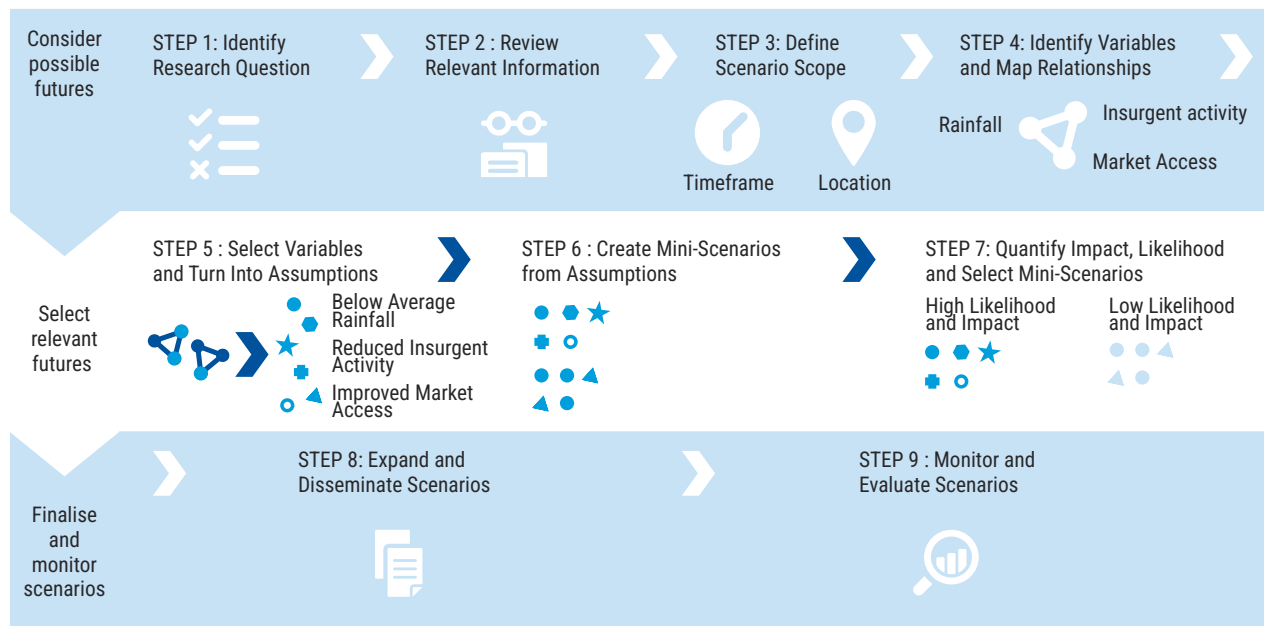
F.3 Reporting, IM products and analysis outputs

When developing a product, one should already be thinking of how it will be disseminated and design it accordingly. Will it be an interactive web product or a written report? Will it be sent to a long e-mail list or published on the VOSOCC, Reliefweb, or similar?

When planning the information management approach (see **Section F.1.2**), a dissemination strategy should be clearly defined. This should be listed and kept visible in the OSOCC/EoC or UNDAC premises, including what product is to be developed when, by whom, and how it should be disseminated.

F.3.1 Reporting

In the first week of the emergency, UNDAC reporting products may be the only source of reliable first-hand information that reaches OCHA and key partners. The UNDAC team's analysis has consistently influenced decision-making processes in most emergencies. Rigorous and reliable UNDAC reports can become one of the most important outputs of the mission. Visuals and data must be clear and adaptable to local requirements, languages, and capabilities. Reporting materials should also prioritise the importance of protection and ensuring quality response, as outlined in **Section G.2**.

The impact of a product is largely determined by the structure, clarity, credibility and reasoning behind it. For a product to be useful, its messages need to be communicated clearly and effectively. This requires an understanding of how messages are being retained by an identified and targeted audience, honesty about the limitations and uncertainties of the analysis, and an understanding of the end users; their expertise, data literacy, main concerns, and the decisions they might have to take based on the reporting. The more tailored the product is to its end users, the more impact it will have.

Whether developing a Situation Analysis that will be read by a large audience or writing an update to the mission focal point, there are some best practices you should adhere to:

- **Adapt to your audience and focus on your message –** Only those insights that are true, new, significant and relevant will ultimately be of interest to readers. This entails defining clearly the message and the way the data will be used to support the main storyline. Building a narrative and using storytelling techniques maximises the potential insights within the data. Narrow the message to the audience and their data literacy level. Think about what the audience cares about and express key information in those terms.

- **B.L.U.F –** Bottom-Line-Up-Front is a good rule of thumb and good advice whether writing a story for a newspaper, a quick email to the mission focal point in Geneva, or a comprehensive assessment report. Tell readers right away what the conclusions are of the descriptions, explanations and argumentation. Reports should ideally be accompanied by a visual, e.g., an infographic or a map, as well as a text box that summarises the key issues upfront. Rather than just stating issues, apply analysis to show how these issues are connected, what their significance is, and how they may develop (including if an appropriate response is not implemented). That will also help in identifying which issues are the most urgent or generally important. In other words, 'of all these problems identified; these are the ones considered most important, this is why they are important, and why they should be the ones to focus on first'.

- **Be clear and consistent –** Use clear and direct language and be consistent across products in terms of both style and content, even if the messaging is adapted to different audiences. The OCHA Editorial Style Guide is an informative resource that helps to clarify many of the grammar and style issues that often cause confusion, such as capitalization, punctuation and spelling.

- **Develop readable and persuasive information products –** Good analysis builds on logical arguments and sets of statements, where conclusions or claims are based on enough evidence and derived from clear, traceable and sound reasoning. The more robust the argument and the evidence behind it, the more credible it appears to end-users. Defend arguments, show how conclusions follow from data, deal with rival explanations along the way. Suggest the most suitable response to a problem, but primarily

prepare the evidence to allow decision-makers to make their own decisions. Prefer simple explanations over more complex ones as they are usually more powerful.

- **Design effective and compelling visualisations to support key messages –** Incorporating graphics, charts, maps and graphs in a report will help convey information more vividly as well as reduce text length. Large amounts of data can be represented extremely efficiently in a well-designed chart. Choose the appropriate visualisation methods for the reporting purpose and format, facilitate the desired degree of accuracy, create the appropriate metaphor, avoid clutter and above all, show the data. Understanding visual design and perception principles, appropriate use of colour or other visual textures, when to use what type of chart, are all key to communicating a message effectively.

- **Communicate uncertainty and document data and methods –** Indicating sources in final results is important for credibility. Leave a trail to be able to check work later on and for others to follow. Information is required, both on the data and on the methods by which it was collected and analysed, so others can recreate the work if needed. Limitations in reports and analytical outputs should also be communicated. This shows honesty, transparency and gives the readers a clear idea of how they can and cannot use the product. Remember the 'good-enough' principle described in **Section F.2.1** A&A basics.

- **Edit and peer review your work –** Reviewers play a very important part in identifying gaps in logic, unconvincing evidence, errors in analysis, misspelling and grammatical errors. They will have a fresh eye on the findings and will stand as the last safeguards before dissemination. Do not allow readers to be distracted by grammar or spelling errors and inconsistencies. A good substantive and editorial review will assist in making a clearer case, improving the flow of a document as well as the reader's engagement with the text.

F.3.1.1 Standard UNDAC reports

Being on the ground in the earliest phase of the response offers the UNDAC team a unique position to provide critical information for decision-making within OCHA and beyond. Throughout the mission, the team is expected to regularly deliver two types of reporting products, summarised in the table below. Occasionally, the UNDAC team may have to contribute to public OCHA situation reports, in which case arrangements will be defined on a case-by-case basis. Templates and detailed guidance for each product is available in the UNDAC Toolbox. All UNDAC members are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the OCHA Editorial Style Guide, which can also be found in the UNDAC Toolbox.

Standard UNDAC reporting methods:

PRODUCT	DAILY UPDATE	UNDAC REPORT
Purpose	Update the UNDAC secretariat mission focal point in Geneva and on UNDAC activities and issues/challenges. This can be in written form as a brief email, or verbal via phone calls with the mission focal point. If the latter, this should be complementary to updates provided in the wider daily internal UNDAC team meeting, which the mission focal point is expected to attend consistently, to avoid duplication.	Update OCHA, RC/HC and close partners on UNDAC activities and ongoing emergency operations to inform decision-making

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PRODUCT	DAILY UPDATE	UNDAC REPORT
Content	• Staff issues, including movement tracking • Main changes to the overall situation • Plan of Action updates (include changes in TORs) • Safety and security issues • Administrative, financial and logistical issues	• Summary • General situation overview • Response coordination overview • Operational considerations • USAR and EMT updates • National response overview • Bilateral international response overview
Distribution	Confidential, to the mission focal point and, if appropriate, to other relevant OCHA counterparts (e.g., at HQ, in regional offices, etc.)	OCHA, RC/HC and selected partners based on context. UNDAC FP in Geneva is responsible for wider distribution outside the affected country
Frequency	Daily	Every two days
Dissemination	E-mail or verbally (phone, MS Teams, etc.)	E-mail, VOSOCC
Cleared by	UNDAC TL	UNDAC TL

F.3.1.2 A&A Cell situational updates

In addition to the standard UNDAC reports, the A&A Cell should provide the humanitarian leadership with regular situational updates aiming at informing ongoing and future operations. This is a concise, timely, and regular update on the current humanitarian situation, that should usually be delivered in the form of a brief, supported by visuals and GIS products. The situational update should be delivered daily or at frequent intervals (2-3 days) to provide up-to-date information on the evolving humanitarian situation.

The A&A Cell coordinator(s), remote and/or in-country, should agree on who should be responsible for it, but it should be developed by both A&A Cell components in partnership, synthesising the analysis of all A&A Cell Operational Partners.

The content and format of situational update may vary based on the specific requirements of the situation and context, but as a generic guideline it should include:

HEADLINE	CONTENT
Date and time	Should always be included to provide context to the information. Start by saying. 'the following update is valid as of dd/mm/yyyy at hh:mm'

→

HEADLINE	CONTENT
Situation overview	A summary of the current situation, including any changes or developments since the previous briefing. This point should be supported by GIS products to better visualise the scope, scale and impact of the disaster.
Key developments	Highlight the most critical events or changes that occurred, affecting the humanitarian situation.
Priority needs	Identify and describe the most urgent needs of the affected population, including a justification as to why these are considered the most urgent needs.
Outlook	Provide an outlook for the coming period considering anticipated developments or challenges.

The brief should be concise and to the point, lasting no more than 10-15 minutes, including any questions and comments. It should only focus on the essential information and avoid any digressions, interruptions or follow-up explanations during the brief itself. These should be addressed during a Q&A session at the end.

F.3.1.3 Other information products

 A wide array of analytical outputs and other information products can emerge from the A&A Cell and the OCHA/UNDAC mission and be disseminated to disaster response stakeholders and humanitarian networks. In some cases, the most valuable coordination products are simple tools such as lists or maps showing locations, damage, or access conditions. Especially when combined with information about needs, they directly inform the decisions of the response leadership.

Typical A&A Cell products are described in **Section F.2.2**.2. Below is a list of other information products that may be useful.

Basic products

- **Meeting schedule –** An up-to-date schedule of coordination meetings should be maintained and made available both online and physically in the OSOCC. If the team has internet connectivity, use VOSOCC and Response Reliefweb to keep the calendar up to date.

- **Contact lists –** Key contact lists (e.g., the UNDAC team, wider in-country OCHA, HCT members, cluster/sector leads, local authorities, regional counterparts, etc.). This should at minimum include names (first and last), organisational affiliations, titles/functions, email addresses, and phone numbers, as well as where the person is located. As applicable, phone numbers should be clearly disaggregated with individual columns for numbers used for GSM calls/texts, Signal/WhatsApp, satellite phones, etc., as these are often different. Country dialling codes should also be included.

Situation and response overviews

- **3W –** The main purpose of a basic 3W (Who is doing What and Where) is to show the operational presence of partners by sector and location within an emergency. 3Ws can exist in many forms and shapes. Depending on capacity, the UNDAC team can create 3W as simple tables in Excel or create maps plotting the presence of operational partners. Where circumstance and capacity allow, this can be expanded to a 4W – which adds "When" – or a 5W, which adds "When" and "What modality / hoW". Basic templates are also available in each regional office and in the Information Management Toolbox (refer to respective regional office for additional support)..

The 3W, ideal for sudden-onset crises, is lighter and more dynamic, enabling quick analysis and results. Basic 3W templates are accessible in the UNDAC toolbox. However, 3W tools used in protracted crises, such as tools for monitoring humanitarian and development activities, may not be suitable for sudden-onset crises. UNDAC members can consult OCHA IMOs and/or OCHA regional offices to recommend the most appropriate tools for the specific context.

- **Most affected areas –** A quick overview in the form of a matrix or a map can show the severity of the situation comparatively across different locations. The goal of this matrix is to compare values, i.e., create a ranking of most affected areas.

- **Humanitarian profiles –** This is a visual often included in situation analyses providing a breakdown of the population, showing figures of, e.g., affected, displaced, people in need, etc. To begin with, the humanitarian profile is broad, as shown in the sample below, but can and should subsequently be disaggregated further to provide more granularity.

Figure F.27: Example humanitarian profile
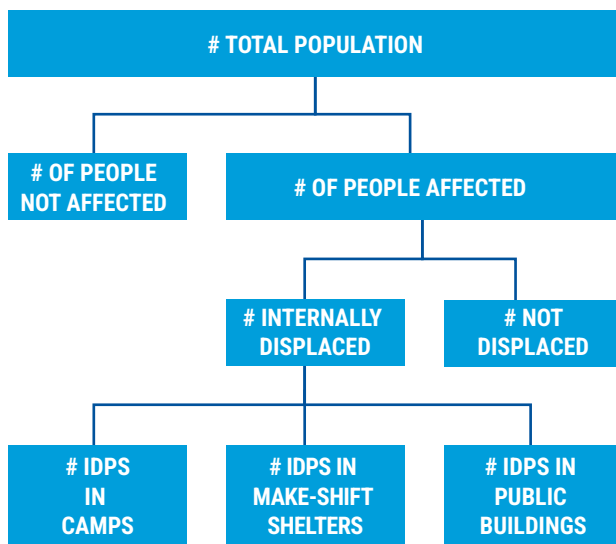
Maps

Information maps may display the following information:

- Main affected area(s).
- Displaced population locations and numbers.
- Locations of various relief organisations and, in USAR operations, also mark the sectors of operation of each team.
- Location of key national and local disaster management entities responding to the emergency, such as fire brigades, police stations, hospitals, communication centres and military headquarters.
- Location of the OSOCC/EoC as well as relevant locations in its vicinity, e.g., hospitals for treatment or medical evacuations of UNDAC team members, accommodation, key service providers, etc.
- Location of RDCs, including suggested routes between RDC and OSOCC/EoC.
- Location of key logistics features such as (damaged) roads, airfields or railway stations.
- Sampling maps.
- Data collection progress.
- Locations of security incidents.
- Locations of environmental hazards.
- Other information that can be visually displayed.

The visual representation of situational and response information is a powerful tool to build common understanding. As outlined in **Section F.3.2**.1 Geospatial Information Services, maps can range from the simple and basic to the detailed and complex, as warranted by the situation and permitted by the resources available.

F.3.2 Visualising data

Incorporating infographics, charts, maps and graphs in your report will help convey information more vividly. Visuals are powerful tools for communication and enable you to convey key messages to a diverse audience, regardless of their level of expertise. Well-designed visuals facilitate the communication of complex information in a digestible format.

Figure F.28: Different ways to visualise data

Ranking

To compare different values, including their quantitative order relationship.
Use bars (vertical or horizontal), sorted in descending order to emphasise high values or sorted in ascending order to emphasise low values.

Example: Issues mentioned by key informants as priority needs.

Nominal

To compare values in no specific order. Use bars (vertical or horizontal).

Example: Number of internally displaced people per district, to show differences in geographical impact.

Part of a whole

To show how values relate to the whole and to one another. A specific characteristic of pie charts is that viewers instinctively understand that the individual slices combine to make up a whole pie. Very useful when presenting just a few values.

Example: Age and gender disaggregation of a population, with the pie representing the total population and the segments representing women, men, girls and boys.

Temporal

To compare measurements taken over a period of time. Lines show the flow of values across time, e.g., consecutive months of a year. The movement from one value to the next represents change, giving meaning to the slope of the line: the steeper the slope, the more dramatic the change.

Example: Changes in casualty figures in the first three weeks of a disaster.
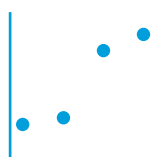
Deviation

To show how one or more sets of values differ from a reference set of values. Use a reference line to show how one or more values deviate from a point of reference, to show the degree to which an indicator does not meet a standard.

Example: Minimum standards for available drinking water per day against actual availability.

Correlation

To compare two sets of measures to determine how changes in one affects the other, as well as how strongly. The line shows the trend of the relationship and whether it is positive (goes up from left to right) or negative (going down from left to right). The more tightly the values are grouped around the trend line, the stronger the correlation.

Example: How changes in endemic diseases correlate with a decline in availability of health services.

Spatial

To show how a situation may differ from one area to another using mapping. Very effective for showing geographical distribution of an issue.

Be careful to not visualise on one geographic level based on data from another geographic level, e.g., colouring an entire province as being in high need if the data pertains only to certain districts within the province. This may mislead the viewer into thinking that the data applies to the entire province instead of only a specific part of it; and obscure where needs are actually concentrated.

Example: How severity of humanitarian needs is different from one area to the next.

Good visuals are essential when organising joint analysis sessions with stakeholders who do not know the details of the situation but are still asked to provide inputs to its findings (see **Section F.2.5**.4 Joint Analysis). Key issues for comparison may be difficult to see when presented as just numbers or text. Visualising the data using simple graphs, tables and maps, makes information easier to grasp and interpret.

OCHA has visual designers available, but they may not always be available for UNDAC mission-specific support and UNDAC IM staff should seek to visualise information in-country.

Microsoft Power BI is an interactive visualisation tool that can be used to create interactive charts, dashboard, maps and tables. It is part of the broader Microsoft Power Platform and is available for many OCHA staff. More information can be found in the IM Toolbox (also referenced in the UNDAC

Toolbox). Simple online tools such as Google Maps and common software such as MS PowerPoint can also be used effectively even without special training in visualisation. If possible, ask a GIS unit to provide pre-prepared PowerPoint map sets, that can be edited by a non-GIS expert, to produce situation maps for reports.

OCHA has a [collection of humanitarian icons](#) that can be found in UNDAC Toolbox or online for download in various formats.

It is also important to think through what visual to use for what data. The table below (and [this sheet on visual vocabulary](#)) shows examples of different forms of data visualisations and how they can be used:

Geospatial Information Services (GIS)

Mapped information is very important for creating a shared operational picture of a disaster situation and for coordinating the response. Humanitarian responders may arrive with no geographical knowledge of the affected area. Effective mapping of assessments and aid delivery is needed to avoid gaps or overlaps in response efforts.

Consider what maps and mapping services are needed from the outset of the UNDAC mission. If a dedicated mapping team is mobilised, they should be involved in all relevant aspects of mission planning so they can understand the decision-making needs and prepare suitable map products for each phase of the mission cycle. Deployed mapping team members typically not only have the ability to produce maps but can help with spatial data analysis and data cleaning.

The following types of maps are commonly needed during UNDAC missions:

- General topographic and road maps - for general orientation and navigation.
- USAR operations maps – possibly based on Google Earth or satellite images but street names and map coordinates are also very important for USAR tasking.
- Damage or flood extent maps – these may be based on satellite image interpretation.

- Field assessment planning maps – ideally showing administrative boundaries and place reference codes (P-Codes) if such a system exists.
- Affected population and needs maps – ensuring that areas of 'zero needs' are clearly distinguished from those where there is 'no data'.
- 3W maps – linked to a continuously updated 3W matrix.

If no dedicated mapping/GIS team is available, much can be achieved by the planned use of basic tools including Google Earth, PowerPoint, etc. Even a hand-drawn overlay on a photocopied road map can be adequate to communicate the essential aspects of the operational picture. The world coverage of Google Maps/Google Earth is ever-increasing and it is possible to use both without an internet connection if map data is 'cached' or saved off-line in advance. It is also worth reviewing the Maps and Infographics produced by other agencies under disasters listed on https://reliefweb.int/disaster.

OpenStreetMap (OSM) is also an excellent resource for base maps. Map areas of likely interest can be 'cut and pasted' from OSM into a program such as PowerPoint for use off-line. In a large emergency, the OSM volunteer community may enhance the OSM data for the affected area, so check back when possible for updates.

GIS teams may access map data from a wider range of sources, including the IASC Common Operational Datasets (CODs) for the affected country to download GIS-ready data. It is particularly important to obtain copies of the most recent administrative boundaries for the country and the best available dataset of settlements, as these will be referred to in assessment reports, etc. (see **Section F.1.1**.1 for more on CODs and a link to Humanitarian Data Exchange (HDX) for download of CODs).

UNDAC works with a variety of mapping partners who can support its operations and create maps and infographics to inform the broader response. OCHA Geneva will reach out to partners to ensure that maps are provided to the UNDAC team to support operations.

MapAction and UNOSAT are operational partners that work closely with UNDAC teams, supporting

with GIS. MapAction often deploys alongside UNDAC, providing tailor-made maps and other onsite services both to UNDAC teams and the wider humanitarian community, while UNOSAT often supports with a range of satellite-derived products, as well as satellite image analyses. MapAction and UNOSAT cooperate in developing GIS products during humanitarian crises. See **Section B.8.1** for more on UNDAC Operational Partners.

The UNDAC team can be updated on the status of satellite-derived analyses and the delivery of the products through the GDACS-SMCS webpage https://gdacs-smcs.unosat.org/. This coordination platform provides an overview of the analyses carried out by different satellite mapping groups involved in big emergencies and on who is doing what in terms of satellite mapping.

Recent years have also seen growing numbers of volunteer and technical communities world-wide, such as the Crisis Mappers and Digital Humanitarians, who may be able to help with aspects of mapping. Reliable internet communications are usually necessary to make full use of these resources. OCHA or MapAction can advise on how to engage the support of these communities during a mission.

F.4 Media

Most humanitarian crises attract media attention – often, but not always, commensurate with the scale of the emergency itself. When carried out effectively and strategically, engaging with the media can bring useful support to the response; conversely, poor handling of the media can result in missed opportunities or damage the reputation and credibility of UNDAC and the United Nations. In fact, not responding to media requests in a timely manner can generate suspicions and create a vacuum of information that can be used for misinformation, disinformation, and hate (MDH) proliferation.

As a public institution, the UN is committed to the highest degree of transparency and openness in executing its mandate. At the same time, news media, in general, consider themselves objective, neutral, impartial and independent in their reporting, qualities that are familiar to humanitarians. It is,

therefore, advisable to treat the news media as a stakeholder with a right to information and an asset for the response rather than as an adversary.

F.4.1 Key media messages

Media messaging beyond factual, operational updates is articulated by the RC/HC in-country in collaboration with OCHA and in consultation with the UNDAC Team Leader. This includes advocacy and strategic communications intended for the Government, operational partners, donors, host communities, and affected people.

F.4.2 Working with UN and OCHA Public Information Officers

The designated communications focal point in the UNDAC team should liaise closely with the OCHA Public Information Officer (PIO) in the country – if one exists – or with the communications officer in the RC/HC's office. Day-to-day public messaging from the UNDAC team is channelled through the OCHA Mission Focal Point who shares it with the OCHA communications teams at HQ and regional office level. OCHA will, from time to time, reach out to the Team Leader/team spokesperson to organise high-level interviews and briefings to the press corps in Geneva or New York. As soon as conditions allow, media relations should be handed over from UNDAC to the in-country OCHA PIO (including PIOs on surge deployment).

F.4.3 UNDAC contact with media

The Team Leader sets the guidelines for relations with the media and will usually be the spokesperson for the UNDAC team. The team's messaging and information should align with that of the RC/HC, the HCT, and OCHA. However, in the event of individual media approaches to team members, they should be capable of providing factual information about the ongoing work. However, to mitigate the risk of misinformation, all team members should be familiar with the contacts of the media focal person responsible for handling media requests and direct journalists accordingly.

Some basic rules:

- Assign a spokesperson for the team, usually the Team Leader, and ensure clarity on the conditions under which other members can communicate with the news media, followed by providing media and spokesperson training for the appointed spokesperson before engaging in any public interview.

- Assign a communications focal point to liaise daily with OCHA Geneva on public information. Communications focal point should prioritise media requests according to needs, target audiences and realistic time at hand. In a crisis, it goes without saying that some media requests might not be addressed due to time constraints, so there is a need to prioritise which media to engage with.

- Provide information about UNDAC and OCHA proactively or upon request. This can be off-the-shelf standard brochures or fact sheets created for the specific crisis. For information about the crisis itself, point to the latest OCHA situation reports or other public documents posted on ReliefWeb.

- If an interview is agreed, avoid speaking about topics beyond your current work and terms of reference. Speak only in factual terms and do not speculate or hypothesise. For statistics and quantification of humanitarian needs and response, use what has been cleared for public consumption in Situation Reports, Snapshots and similar products or what has been agreed with the Team Leader/team spokesperson.

Engage effectively

There are several dos and don'ts to consider when engaging with the media:

Do:

- Agree the exact topic(s) of the interview. Make sure that topics stay within UNDAC's mandate and scope of work.

- Prepare yourself: establish a few key messages, have them cleared by the Team Leader and stick to them during the interview.

- Try to anticipate the most difficult questions and rehearse the answers.

- Clarify that, as a humanitarian, you do not discuss political issues.

- Avoid responding to any question with 'no comment', but rather answer by diverting the topic.

  » One approach is to acknowledge the inquiry and then pivot the discussion back to the primary focus. For example, you might respond with, "Thank you for your question. However, at this time, it is crucial to emphasise the pressing needs of the affected population. Let's refocus on that aspect."

  » Alternatively, if the question falls outside of your purview, a suitable response could be, "I appreciate your inquiry, but I'm not currently in a position to address that specific issue. Let me ensure I gather the necessary information and provide you with a comprehensive response later."

- Admit honestly if unable to answer a question; do not guess or speculate – offer to follow up as soon as possible after checking.

- Clarify misconceptions and redirect leading questions.

- Wear UNDAC identification clothing.

- Always answer by repeating the question. This can avoid taking quotes out of context and manipulating them.

Don't:

- Pick a fight with the media; be rude towards a journalist.

- Favour one outlet.

- Give information 'off the record' unless the situation truly merits doing so, and unless agreed to by the Head of Public Information Unit.

- Guess or make statements you cannot back up. If information is not available, say so.

- Criticise the Government, NGO, Red Cross/Crescent or UN's own response.

- Use jargon and acronyms, including 'UNDAC'. If it is television or radio, you risk that they won't use the clip.

Follow up

- Keep a media log (journalist's name, the outlet, focus of the interview and the local telephone number).

- Review the story once it is published or broadcast.

- Inform the RC/HC (if you are the Team Leader) or the Team Leader (if you are a team member) if an interview has taken place. If a team member has been misquoted, the RC/HC should be notified immediately, and the team should try to correct the mistake. Once a story is out, it is often too late to correct it, but online news articles are frequently rectified and updated. The journalist should always be informed of the mistake.

- Get back to the reporter if asked questions you could not answer during the interview.

F.4.4 Social media

The term 'social media' describes internet-based tools used to publish, share and discuss information. The best known include Facebook, X, Instagram, and TikTok. These tools provide a wealth of new opportunities for communications, engagement and information-sharing, but they can also amplify false information and rumours and damage an organisation's reputation if used inappropriately or incorrectly.

The OCHA social media team will need to post updates on the situation and the UNDAC response throughout the day. You will need to support a multimedia crew, capture content or take photos and videos for social media.

F.4.4.1 Role of the UNDAC team

All official public outreach regarding the UNDAC mission and the response will be managed by OCHA HQ, including on social media platforms. To ensure that OCHA can report on the UNDAC deployment, the communications focal point within the team should:

- Provide/ensure good quality photos of the disaster context (extent and severity of the crisis/damage), affected people, UNDAC in action, and wider response activities. Photos must include a caption with information of where, when and who is in the picture and the photographer's name. Once shared with the mission focal point in Geneva, OCHA will determine their use. Photos from the first days and weeks of a disaster are

particularly important as OCHA needs visuals for its advocacy and resource mobilisation.

- If possible, record videos on a phone, which may be shared with OCHA Geneva after the emergency if there are bandwidth limitations.

F.4.4.2 Posting in personal capacity

Social media sometimes blurs the traditional boundaries between public and private communications, and professional and personal communications. For example, UNDAC members may comment on mission-related issues in their private social media accounts, but such comments still have the potential to reach a wide public audience. UNDAC members are advised to follow the United Nations Staff Regulations, which state that:

While staff members' personal views and convictions, including their political and religious convictions, remain inviolable, staff members shall ensure that those views and convictions do not adversely affect their official duties or the interests of the United Nations. They shall conduct themselves at all times in a manner befitting their status as international civil servants and shall not engage in any activity that is incompatible with the proper discharge of their duties with the United Nations. They shall avoid any action and, in particular, any kind of public pronouncement that may adversely reflect on their status, or on the integrity, independence and impartiality that are required by that status.

UNDAC members are further encouraged to follow these guidelines if/when posting to social media in a personal capacity:

- Think before posting. Do not say or write anything you would not be comfortable with owning publicly, e.g., by being quoted in the news and seen by your family or by your supervisor.

- Always keep safety and security in mind. Be cautious about what you post or discuss online, particularly in an operational context. Consider potential implications for staff or operational security of any information you post, including geo-tagging of photos.

- Use judgement and discretion: ask yourself if the information you are sharing is potentially sensitive. If yes, ask yourself if you should be

sharing it online and what the implications could be. Avoid being photographed with military equipment or guns.

- Think about how you present yourself: be polite if you disagree with others and respect differences of opinion. Avoid disrespectful, stigmatising or discriminatory language.

- Do not share internal or confidential information: any information you share externally should already be in the public domain. If in doubt, ask the owner of the information.

- Respect colleagues' right to privacy: consult them before posting any content related to them and do not 'tag' them in photos or other content without their consent.

- Ensure that all work-related content aligns with the official positions of UNDAC, OCHA, and the RC/HC. When uncertain, seek approval from the Team Leader before publishing, or refrain from posting altogether. In high-security contexts, refrain from using personal social media unless reposting from official UN accounts regarding the ongoing crisis.

- Avoid posting photos, videos or other media from internal OCHA/UNDAC events, including staff meetings and social events: do not identify or 'tag' a gathering as 'OCHA' in the title or in keywords. Do not wear OCHA/UNDAC visibility (jackets/T-shirts etc.) if not at work. Anyone can take photos and post offline and use them out of context and in MDH campaigns.

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G.
OPERATIONS

United
Nations

Section contents

G. OPERATIONS

A sophisticated operational approach is key to an efficient and effective humanitarian response. UNDAC Operations is where situational awareness, the UNDAC Cornerstones, and all coordination approaches, from disaster management to humanitarian coordination, come together. This chapter looks at how UNDAC approaches coordination, and what practices and procedures may be used to achieve the best possible outcome of the team's work. The "what" of humanitarian coordination as it relates to UNDAC missions is covered in the Background theme, while this chapter focuses on the "how" of coordination and the diverse elements feeding into humanitarian coordination.

This chapter consists of 13 subchapters.

The term humanitarian coordination may be defined as an overarching, principled way of managing delivery of humanitarian assistance through strategic planning, policy making and facilitation of cooperation and consensual decision-making. It is neither a system of command and control, nor solely built on a consensus approach. (See also **Subchapter A.3** for humanitarian coordination structures.)

The goal of humanitarian coordination is to ensure that humanitarian actors responding to disasters or emergencies work together to achieve shared strategic objectives and design and deliver their assistance in a complementary fashion according to their mandates and capacities. Their activities should be adapted in response to mutual agreements on changes in circumstances and, thus, of needs. Humanitarian coordination is the foundation of the successful application of the Humanitarian Programme Cycle (HPC) to help assess needs, and prepare for, manage and deliver humanitarian response (see **Subchapter A.3**).

Humanitarian coordination involves bringing together international and national humanitarian actors and national/local authorities to ensure a coherent and principled response to emergencies. Principled response refers to the respect of the four core humanitarian principles: humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and independence "OCHA on Message: Humanitarian Principles" as well as a "do no harm" approach. The aim is to assist people when they need relief or protection the most. The assistance provided has to correspond to what people say they need (i.e. demand-driven rather than supply-driven) in accordance with Accountability to Affected Population commitments (see **Section G.2.4**).

Humanitarian coordination further seeks to improve the effectiveness of humanitarian response by ensuring greater predictability, accountability, and partnership. Coordination involves assessing situations and needs; agreeing common priorities; developing common strategies to address issues such as negotiating access, mobilising funding and other resources; clarifying consistent public messaging; and monitoring/reporting progress and achievements. Good coordination ensures that humanitarian actors organise themselves to focus on the latter in support of the national response.

The absence of coordination, on the other hand, is characterised by gaps in service to affected populations, duplication of efforts, inappropriate or lack of assistance, inefficient use of resources, bottlenecks, impediments, slow reaction to changing conditions, and frustration of relief providers, officials, and survivors. In general, an absence of coordination leads to an unsatisfactory response to the emergency, and it may risk causing harm to affected communities.

G.1
Coordination methodology

Coordination in general may be defined as intentional actions to harmonise individual responses to maximise impact and achieve synergy – a situation where the overall effect is greater than the sum of the parts.

Coordination begins with the initiation of working relationships and regular sharing of information. Because relief providers communicate and collaborate, individuals and organisations adapt and adjust

their efforts based on changing needs and gaps, and each other's strengths and weaknesses.

In emergency situations, coordination is critical to ensure that crisis-affected populations benefit from rapid, inclusive, effective, and quality response to their priority needs through a holistic and people-centred approach.

Coordination is essential to achieve the following:

- Provide a multisectoral overview of crisis-affected communities' needs, according to their priorities and based on their vulnerabilities.
- Ensure communication with national and local authorities who are the first responsible to help and protect their own population, as well as communication with the local population, civil society, and community organisations.
- Facilitate exchange of critical information needed to orient the strategy of the emergency response, operations, and aid provision.
- Facilitate adequate and timely access to emergency-affected populations by promoting respect for the four core humanitarian principles, ensuring secure and unimpeded access for crisis-affected communities to humanitarian assistance, services, and facilitating the access of humanitarian personnel and operations to crisis-affected communities.
- Promote resources mutualization, facilitate gaps identification, and contribute to the mobilisation of funding needed to provide adequate assistance to affected communities' priority needs.
- Ensure the best use of available local resources and avoid duplication of efforts.

In fact, coordination in international humanitarian operations will never be the result of one group or organisation telling another what or how to do their work. Rather, international humanitarian actors are traditionally directed primarily by their respective mandates and capacities. Agencies and individuals must see some added value from participating in the coordination process and the benefits must outweigh the costs – and there are costs to coordination, as it requires time and dedicated resources.

Consequently, coordination is far from certain. The coordinating organisation, in this case OCHA and the UNDAC team by extension, must establish a coordination process based on certain qualities. To achieve the best possible coordination outcomes the process should be:

- **Participatory –** Coordination occurs through the legitimacy derived from involvement. The tasks of coordination must occur within a structure and process agreed to and supported by the actors in the emergency. The coordinators must secure and maintain the confidence of partners, authorities and other key stakeholders, fostering an atmosphere of respect, trust, and goodwill. Organisations need to participate in deciding the policies, procedures, strategies and plans that will affect them.
- **Inclusive –** The coordination process should actively involve and represent diverse stakeholders, including marginalised or underrepresented groups, to ensure that all voices and perspectives are considered in decision-making processes and that the outcomes are relevant and beneficial to all stakeholders.
- **Impartial –** The coordination process should not be seen to favour one organisation over another, but rather to identify the distinctive competencies of each. Coordination should advocate the principle of impartiality (see **Section A.1.1**) provided by the actor most likely to achieve the desired outcomes.
- **Transparent –** Coordination requires trust and trust requires transparency – the willing flow of information, open decision-making processes, sincere and honest rationales for decisions. This will include the need to admit failure, or at least falling short of objectives.
- **Useful –** The coordination process must produce, share and disseminate useful products, processes and outcomes. These may include a platform for decision-making, an opportunity to use shared resources, a venue for donor recognition and support, or a comfortable place to share frustrations and try out new ideas.

It is important to highlight that the four coordination principles should be applied in alignment with the respect of the humanitarian principles. In certain sensitive contexts, adjustments and adaptations

may be necessary to ensure alignment with humanitarian principles and the principle of doing no harm.

G.1.1 Coordination techniques

An UNDAC team needs more than a mandate. It must provide something that others want and need, including information, facilities, skills, equipment, credibility and other amenities. Ideally, a combination of all these things will be made available in a way that includes establishing an environment to come together physically, such as an On-Site Operations Coordination Centre (OSOCC) or, more abstractly, around objectives, common approaches, analysis or identified needs.

Practising certain skills of coordination will help facilitate the coordination process. The following are techniques and approaches that are useful in achieving coordination and circumventing common coordination barriers likely to be encountered by UNDAC teams.

Promote an understanding of collaborating organisations

The UNDAC team must first get to know the players. Only by understanding the mandates of various organisations, their intentions and their capacities (resources, both material and staff) can the team involve them appropriately and have reasonable expectations of their performance variations. The UNDAC team should, as soon as feasible, meet the representatives of the various humanitarian agencies active in the emergency situation and, if it does not already exist, start a database with contacts and activities, i.e., a 'Who is doing What and Where' (3W) (see also **Chapter F** for more on the 3W). Remember that some partners will likely already work together in-country, sometimes for years, while you will be a newcomer. In principle, a person should be able to walk into a coordination centre and have, easily accessible, a copy of descriptive information on all operating agencies and the particulars of their operations. These files will need to be updated regularly and online solutions or similar format where stakeholders can be encouraged to enter and update their own information is recommended.

Considerations for user-friendly tools and accessibility are paramount to ensure that data collection platforms are accessible to all stakeholders, accounting for available equipment, network capabilities, language proficiency, and skills. Additionally, it is crucial to address data protection concerns when utilising online platforms to uphold confidentiality and minimise risks for affected populations, partners, and other stakeholders.

The list of national and international organisations present in the operational environment should be completed also with key contacts and information as follows:

- Key national and local authorities involved or to be mobilised in the relief operations. It is important to remind ourselves that national Governments are primarily responsible for the protection of their own populations and that UNDAC intervenes in support of national authorities.

- Community and/or traditional leaders which may play a key role for information sharing and communication with communities as well as in supporting awareness raising activities.

- Local civil society organisations (CSOs) who are often very active during emergency situations in helping affected communities. CSOs have an added value in terms of context and risk analysis, and they may support UNDAC teams and humanitarian actors to tackle critical issues such as concerns in terms of access to affected communities. CSO should cover people in all their diversities (e.g. Women-led organisations, organisations of persons with disabilities, youth organisations, etc).

- Other key stakeholders, such as private sector actors who may contribute to the provision of equipment, supplies, services, and funding for the relief operations.

The involvement of local organisations, CSOs and national organisations is critical to ensure rapid, inclusive and quality assistance, knowing that often they are the first responders, and they may have a higher degree of access to affected communities. In addition, their involvement will allow the integration of an exit strategy and sustainability concerns in the response framework from the very beginning of the response.

Last but not least, the involvement of local actors will facilitate acceptance of new humanitarian actors by the crisis-affected communities, and it will ensure that the response strategy meets socio-cultural requirements and mitigate potential do-not-harm risks.

Practical tips:

- From the beginning of your mission, collect and archive contacts and key information on actors and partners through the different visits and meetings you have.

- Systematically archive the information in a shared tool accessible to the team members and ensure that colleagues are made aware of new information available that they may need for their respective activities.

- Ask your contact about "the others". During each meeting, ask partners to provide you with other contacts of organisations or persons who may support on a specific topic, including concerning people in all their diversities. .

- Build bridges. Facilitate contact and connection between people according to their respective mandate, capacities, areas of intervention etc. Persons are more collaborative in providing information when they feel that they are also benefitting from your support.

- Listen and analyse information provided by partners and stakeholders during the meetings and never underestimate the importance of certain details shared during the meetings.

- Visualise. Make sure that key contacts and information are accessible to everyone inside the OSOCC or in any other space used for coordination activities.

- Ensure that data and information collected are systematically shared with local and national authorities in charge of the response in your area of intervention, if pertinent, feasible and not sensitive on the basis of personal data protection.

- Promote coordination and contact with local and national authorities. Ensure that partners and persons you meet are aware about their responsibility to inform local and national authorities.

Establish a purpose

The challenge in any coordination process is to ensure a comprehensive approach to the design of the coordination mechanism, based on a mutual understanding of the overall purpose of the coordination activities. In a hierarchical structure, the establishment of common goals is usually defined in a top-down process. In a multi-organizational response environment, the definition of common goals will often require a much more participatory process. Only with a clearly defined and agreed purpose, i.e., why we need to coordinate this way, will it be possible to define the required coordination functions to support the process and determine the activities, i.e., what we need to do to achieve the purpose.

Practical tips:

- During emergency situations, more often than not, there is no time to be spent for strategic discussions. The best way to promote coordination is to show partners and actors the immediate advantages they can get through information sharing and participation in coordination activities.

- "Share and connect people" at any opportunity you have.

Clarify coordination parameters

Taking a little bit of the mystery out of coordination will go a long way in ensuring that it happens. Coordination will fail if organisations feel that it will be just a waste of time in endless meetings or that the coordination effort will result in a veto of their plans and activities. The best way to clarify the coordination parameters is to have frank and open discussions about the goals expected to be reached through the coordination efforts and the needs of the various organisations for coordination. As a group, it is often useful to reflect on and (re)formulate the objectives for the humanitarian operations as these may change depending on the phase of the crisis and the Humanitarian Programme Cycle (HPC).

Practical tips

- People coordinate when they feel it is useful.

- Listen to partners and actors, and identify the key coordination needs they have and information they are looking for.

- Establish key results to be achieved before any coordination meeting, bilateral or inter-agency ones.

- Keep the time. Partners and actors are often busy with the management and supervision of their operations. Coordination meetings should be structured and respect the timing agreed on at the beginning.

- Facilitate the discussion and ensure that everyone has enough space to participate, communicate and share information.

- Promptly communicate the meeting's key outcomes with partners and emphasise the subsequent steps.

Define an agile coordination structure

Coordination is most effective if built around an organised, established structure, such as the affected Government's structure or according to the Humanitarian Country Team's (HCT) contingency plan. When handling large-scale emergencies with multi-agency participation, however, it may not be feasible to base coordination on existing coordination structures because these would not be able to handle the additional, situational requirements. There may be a need to either enhance governmental structures or establish additional structures, such as an OSOCC.

To be successful, the emergency coordination structure must strive towards a high level of agility to be able to facilitate multi-organizational coordination. What might have worked last time may not work this time and everything has to be adjusted to the situation at hand. In a fast-changing emergency environment, established organisations more often than not are working in structures without the necessary flexibility to adapt to situational requirements.

Practical tips:

- Identify the coordination structure that was already in place before the emergency. This information can easily be collected during the initial meetings you will have with local and national authorities as well as key actors or organisations with a previous operational presence in the affected areas.

- If available, request access to the latest contingency plan, which includes coordination agreements and priority actions agreed upon by partners and/or local authorities before the crisis. Utilising the contingency plan can help streamline processes and save time.

- Valorise and do not substitute. Exit strategy and sustainability concerns should be considered from the beginning to avoid any risk of collapse of the coordination structure once the UNDAC team will leave.

- Adapt and do not destroy. Sometimes pre-shock existing coordination structures may not be adapted to meet the new coordination and information sharing requirements. For this reason, collaborate with key focal points of pre-existing coordination structures and support them in adapting the system to the new context without destroying or disrupting pre-existing models.

- Visualise. The understanding of coordination structures may be complicated for new actors deploying into this emergency context. For this reason, it is important to visualise the main structure and links between the different groups.

- Clarify. The objective of each coordination group should be clarified to facilitate users in the identification of the key activities to prioritise.

- Link with national and local authorities. Make sure that national and local authorities involved in the relief response are aware of existing coordination mechanisms and they participate in the activities. In case of any concern linked to eventual sensitivity of their participation in specific meetings (e.g., uneasiness or risk exposure of implementing partners and/or feared compromises on the respect for humanitarian principles), ensure that regular updates and briefings are organised for national and local authorities to ensure sharing of key information.

Ensure proximity

The UNDAC team has a unique opportunity to influence the coordination process when choosing and establishing the site for the coordination centre. Several of the functions initially taken care of by the team will very soon, or simultaneously, be filled by other stakeholders, for example, cluster coordinators, or the UN Department for Safety and Security (UNDSS). These organisations provide services the

humanitarian community will want to stay in close proximity to.

The team should ensure that these entities establish themselves inside, or as close as possible to, the coordination centre. This will provide the humanitarian community with a 'one-stop-shop' and they will come to UNDAC for services and information in a natural way – a situation where it will be easier to achieve tasks. The coordination centre should be like a lighthouse or a pivotal point that the humanitarian operations and planning turn around.

Other humanitarian agencies may even want to establish their own offices in close proximity to the coordination centre – a location that may develop into a compound for the longer-term operation where all the key partners and/or agencies work out of the same place. This will be a great advantage for the coordination process as people will have easy access to each other and there will be more opportunities for informal networking.

🔅 Practical tips:

- Choose the site of the coordination centre based on the following criteria:

    » Proximity to affected communities. It is very important to remember that our work is alongside and at the service of affected communities.

    » Safety & security. The coordination centre should be in a safe and secure location.

    » Accessibility. The centre should be accessible to the different groups of persons without any discrimination. The special needs of people with disabilities should be taken into account, as should the gender-specific concerns of women and children.

- In case other actors/organisations have already settled somewhere, you need to choose the best location that ensures proximity to these and other key actors, safety and security, and accessibility to the coordination centre.

Promote transparency and inclusiveness

When an organisation's actions are transparent, it is possible to see how and why decisions are being made. The reluctance for transparency resides in fear – fear of disapproval, that ideas will be stolen, or resources monopolised, or that freedom of action or the ability to change course will be circumscribed. By promoting transparency without negative consequences, the coordination structure may be able to reduce the natural tendency to hide organisational decision-making processes. And, of course, transparency begins at home. Thus, the UNDAC team must model transparency in its own processes. One way to do this is to periodically evaluate how the coordination process is going and how it might be improved.

For example, undertake regular mapping of stakeholders to determine if all relevant actors are involved in the coordination, taking into account that some stakeholders may be more invisible than others (e.g. marginalised groups usually include those of persons with disabilities, youth, older people, people with SOGIESC (Sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics), etc). Strive to involve and integrate partners and other stakeholders in the coordination mechanism, aiming to create one whole where the output is larger than the sum of its parts. Avoid silo-thinking and organisational ego-behaviours; be self-effacing. You yourself are unimportant, like a sports referee that is never visible, yet never loses oversight or control of the game. By avoiding one's own agenda, and clearly showing that the team does not have one, it will be easier to achieve trust.

🔅 Practical tips:

- The operational environment in emergency situations evolves very quickly. During the first weeks of the response, new organisations may deploy as well as pre-existing actors may adapt their geographical positioning to extend their activities to crisis-affected communities. For this reason, you need to ensure continuous and daily updating of contact lists and actors mapping. You may need to adapt the tools originally used for the initial mapping to integrate new information and facilitate analysis and (information) sharing. Ask for support from IM colleagues

within the UNDAC team to utilise the different IT tools available.

- Transparency is based on trust, and there is often not enough time to build relationships with all the stakeholders involved in the response. For this reason, it is important to inform them from the outset about the way in which data is processed and the scope of information exchanged.

- Trust is also based on personal attitude. You need to convey the feeling that you are always available to provide information and be as clear as possible when sharing information with partners and stakeholders. Leave your contact information with partners and stakeholders.

- Clarify from the outset what services and information you can offer and what does not fall within your remit and capacity. For these services, if available, you can establish contact with other organisations or partners who are able to fulfil the request.

- Actively approach people in all their diversities (e.g. women, youth, older people, persons with disabilities, etc.) Do not wait for people to come to you. You need to approach people to meet them and gather information.

- It is important that you attend important meetings as part of UNDAC's internal task-sharing. Your participation in coordination meetings organised by other partners and national/local authorities is crucial for the presentation of UNDAC activities, the coordination centre and its activities. Each external meeting is an opportunity to mobilise other partners and stakeholders for the ongoing coordination activities and to disseminate information.

- Share as much as possible. If you want people to share information, you need to lead by example. Take every opportunity to share and disseminate key information and contacts to add value to the coordination. To this end, do not forget to bring cards, contact cards and any other available tools that you can distribute or share with others.

- Use online connections as much as possible. In some contexts, partners may not have the time or resources to physically attend the meeting. If possible, make sure that the online connection is available and ensure adequate participation of those attending the meeting remotely.

- Share information in accessible ways (e.g. in different formats, such as written communications, radio announcements, etc) to ensure it can be used and understood by all.

Develop trust

In a multi-organizational emergency environment, the establishment of swift trust is essential to create the good working relationships needed to facilitate effective inter-organizational collaboration and coordination. This should be the immediate focus of the UNDAC team. Inter-organizational trust in the humanitarian context can originate from four aspects:

- Trust based on the judgement of goodwill and how much one considers the other to be a friend (companion).

- Trust based on the perceived ability of others to carry out the needed tasks or to get the job done (competence).

- Trust based on whether the behaviour is consistent with contractual agreements (commitments).

- Trust based on expediency because of the need to accomplish the goals quickly (swiftness).

To build trust and cooperation amongst organisations in the emergency environment, it may be an advantage to start delivering on some key (and maybe less controversial) functions such as elementary information sharing, before moving into more controversial issues. One should try to keep things simple to begin with and build on networks very similar to social networks, tied together by common interests or, as in this environment, by sectoral operational interests, e.g., the clusters, Urban Search and Rescue (USAR), etc. Rallying around the development of a common or joint strategic humanitarian plan or funding appeal is often a good way to build cooperation.

Build on linkages and networks

Identifying focal points for liaison in each organisation you meet is important. This may be determined by any number of variables such as sector or cluster, geographical area of operation, Government or opposition coordinating agent, etc. The team should ensure that the linkages have been made. In many cases, this will involve contacting the parties,

organising a meeting, facilitating the introductions of the organisational representatives and producing and sharing information products such as contact lists, etc.

Some important and helpful personal relationships may already be operating. The emergency relief community is relatively small, and the likelihood of people knowing each other or having worked with one another in a previous emergency is quite high. These pre-existing relationships can greatly aid the linkage process. Of course, the opposite may also be true where an unsatisfactory prior relationship will impede the current effort.

Nevertheless, networks based on pre-existing relationships, e.g., working relationships or having done training courses together, have immense value in emergency work. Very often, information sharing and collaboration takes place outside the formal co-ordination structures and is conducted inside a previously established network. Such networks should be utilised in the coordination process, as it will be easier for people to connect and work together.

Work done to build these relationships in advance of disasters can greatly improve coordination efforts during a response.

Facilitate an enabling environment

The environment around the coordination process should be enabling, allowing all actors to communicate, share information and collaborate with each other. In an enabling environment, stakeholders take the initiative to become involved, take on responsibilities and move from reactive to proactive. To achieve an enabling environment, it is necessary to facilitate coordination by managing the process and avoid directing it. In a coordination process, it should be easy for participating organisations to become an active partner. One should try to instil an attitude that coordination is a shared responsibility and not something someone else does on behalf of others.

Practical tips:

- Listen before you speak. The objective of coordination is to facilitate information sharing by participants to participants.

- Your role is to facilitate and to present the objectives, the agenda, and the expected results.

- Give sufficient importance to all contributions and questions from the participants and avoid interrupting them or cutting them off.

- Be action oriented. At the end of every discussion, make a summary of key actions to be implemented and monitored.

- Keep the time and remain focussed on the main subjects and key results to be achieved.

- Ensure that the meeting place is accessible and allows participants to feel comfortable to speak and to share. For example and if possible: close the door; avoid the passage/entry of "outsiders"; make sure before the meeting starts that all participants/stakeholders have been invited to the discussion.

- At the end of the meeting, provide clear information about the next steps and, if applicable, the date and time of the next meeting.

- Inform the participants about the documents they will receive after the session and explain any actions they need to take. Ensure that the information provided is accessible to all who need access to it.

- Before you take on responsibility, you should ask the participants whether there are any volunteers for certain tasks.

- Never judge, never criticise and always try to steer interventions in a positive and constructive direction.

Start with the needs of others

In promoting coordination, it is tempting to say 'as UNDAC, we need this information to be able to co-ordinate'. Thus, the need for coordination resides in UNDAC not in the other participating organisations. This is the wrong approach. The team should first ask how they can help the partners. In starting by meeting some of the agencies' needs, the team is committing to service first and earning significant credibility and trust. As part of the effort of identifying the needs of others, it will become clearer not only what coordination should seek to accomplish but also how organisations may be induced to participate. Adopt a marketing approach where you try to find out their needs and meet them, as opposed to selling them what you have to offer.

What operational organisations need could be anything from the key to a functioning toilet to the right information to base strategic decisions on. The needs are often basic tools and services, such as contact lists, meeting spaces, baseline information and common resources such as internet access and printers. Reliable and timely information management products are usually the service most wanted in a disaster situation. Good information management is the bread and butter of the coordination process.

💡 Practical tips:

- Capitalise on existing secondary information gathered from partners, studies, analyses and other UNDAC colleagues. Constantly asking for information can create a sense of fatigue among partners. Try to gather as much information as possible through alternative channels.

- Capitalise on available information from previous and/or similar crises in the area or available at centralised level. Some type of natural hazard such as flooding may be recurrent in certain areas.

Provide useful information and services

If the team is the repository of useful information, people will want to come to it. Maps, for example, often seem to be in short supply. Further, the coordination centre should be a good place to get a copy made, get a weather report, check what might be going on somewhere, get a security update or just see a smiling and congenial coordinator willing to take a few moments to listen. Making all of this information available online as soon as connectivity allows will be a critical next step.

Keep the ball rolling

Momentum in coordination is essential to maintain interest and commitment. One way to do this is to ensure rapid reporting of new or updated information. Decisions made in the coordination process must be documented in the form of minutes or reports and made available. Even more important is to ensure follow-up and follow-through on decisions. Failure to implement conclusions will cause cynicism about the process and ultimately destroy the team's credibility. Part of keeping momentum

is keeping people in touch with one another and keeping channels of communication open. This may involve going out of your way to make the right connections.

Respect people's time and schedules

Don't let coordination meetings become just another meeting. Ensure that the meetings need to occur and that there is vital and important work to be done. Do not be afraid to cancel a standing meeting if the agenda is not compelling enough. Publish an agenda for the meeting and stick to the schedule, including beginning and ending meetings on time. Practise good meeting facilitation skills. Ensure that everyone has a chance to say what is on their mind and that a small group or individuals do not dominate the conversation.

Write it down

Some of the results of the coordination process, both from large group and bilateral discussions, will be concrete enough to be developed into a document. Writing down minutes, conclusions and agreements provides a record for follow-up and accountability.

Address small problems before they grow

A small problem, be it a misunderstanding, a hurt feeling or a perception of insensitivity, may grow and fester resulting in a much bigger barrier to communication. Part of the role of facilitating productive relationships may involve engaging in active conflict management or relationship confidence-building, usually outside the formal coordination process. Starting small is generally a good idea in any situation as confidence builds in the coordination process. As always, UNDAC should be leading by example.

Build on strengths

It is important to ask people to do things they can do. Too often people agree to a task that they cannot or will not perform under the threat of consensus or as part of wanting to be a team player. Therefore, ask people to do things they can easily accomplish, especially at first. Do not be afraid to

ask them over and over whether they are sure they want to take on the task. Once the relationship is strong, it may be possible to ask them to engage in more difficult tasks.

No surprises

Nobody likes to go to a meeting and be embarrassed because they don't know something they should or that other people know. The team will need to meet and brief people outside of the formal meeting process to keep them updated on current or fast-changing events, shifts in resources or important visitors.

Hand over functions to others

It is a cliché but try to work yourself out of a job. If a coordination centre is going to need to function for a long period, it will be best if as many functions as possible are handled either by the other agencies or by local staff of the centre. If someone else can and is willing to do the job, give them the chance. In almost every situation there is more to do than can be done. Giving jobs to others can only help in freeing you up to take on another task.

Thank people and acknowledge their contribution

Rewarding participation is an important technique in building commitment to the coordination process. When organisations have done good work, changed their programme or otherwise gone out of their way to put others' needs ahead of their own, they need to be thanked and acknowledged, publicly. Few things will inspire more participation in coordination than the feeling of being a valued contributor.

Use the informal time

There is a minimum amount of 'down-time' during an UNDAC mission, but there are always opportunities to interact with the response community during off-duty periods like meals or after-hours socialising. Do not miss the chance to build effective relationships at these times. Sharing information on hobbies, favourite sports teams, family, having coffee or tea together, etc., all contribute to building

the personal regard that will encourage people to want to associate with the coordination process.

G.1.2 Meeting management

Meetings proliferate in emergencies and sometimes there seem to be more meetings than one can digest. Decision-makers sometimes need to run from meeting to meeting. Coordination through facilitation, however, involves bringing people together to reach agreement on how to cooperate and move forward. Meeting is a necessity and an UNDAC team should initiate a structured meeting format by providing facilitation, leadership and meeting venues. Leading by example and showing good meeting management goes a long way in establishing UNDAC at the centre of the coordination process.

Meetings may vary from a large, general coordination meeting that brings together a multitude of various players, down to one-on-one meetings focusing on a particular issue. Ad-hoc meetings are often carried out by necessity in the first days of a sudden-onset disaster, but scheduled meetings should be formalised as soon as possible.

Based on the situation, an UNDAC team should identify how meetings should be prioritised, who should participate, who should take the lead and how they should be managed. The meeting schedule should have a logical build up, where the objectives of one meeting feed into the agenda of another meeting, e.g., when the results of various cluster meetings at the beginning of the week feed into a general coordination meeting taking place later in the week.

Meeting management can broadly be divided into three parts: preparations, the meeting itself and follow-up.

Preparations

Before any meeting, think through the following and make some preparations. The first thing to decide on is the type of meeting as that will influence all other preparations. Below is a list of different types of meetings UNDAC teams may have to facilitate or participate in during missions:

- **Briefings –** A one-way download of information.
- **Collective briefing –** Two-way information sharing where participants brief each other. Often used in conjunction with decision-making.
- **Decision-making –** Discuss, reach a conclusion, and move forward with a joint decision. These will often come in one of two versions:
- Strategic meeting to agree on overall direction and strategic aims. This is not the place for operational information sharing or exploring details.
- Operational meeting to agree on standards and how to work together on a programmatic level.
- **Shared analysis –** A discussion around needs and assessment findings where the purpose is to balance insufficient evidence with a high level of agreement on what the findings mean (see also **Section I.5.3** Shared analysis).
- **Problem solving, negotiations –** Smaller meeting to explore a problem and find a solution.
- **Introductory meeting –** Often informal and used for networking and relationship-building.
- **Training/workshop –** Development of knowledge and skills and sometimes used in emergencies for preparing field teams ahead of primary data collection exercises.
- **Debrief –** Reviewing a task, mission, incident afterwards to elicit lessons learned or process emotions.

Having decided on the type of meeting, the next steps are to:

- Define a clear meeting purpose and define some desired outcomes. Meeting just for the sake of meeting is a waste of time.
- Develop an agenda that is as specific as possible, stating agenda items with respective objectives, speakers, allocated times, etc.
- Select the venue and assess strengths/weaknesses of the choice. Sometimes you have to do with what you can get and, by identifying weaknesses that may influence the success of the meeting, it is possible to mitigate them in advance, e.g., bad acoustics or disturbances, heat/cold, lighting, etc.
- Agree bilaterally with key stakeholders to identify concerns and agenda items.
- Identify participants and inform them about time, place and purpose.

- Disseminate key documents to be discussed to avoid too much information sharing during the meeting itself.
- Prepare visual support material and peer review it to make sure it is clear and understandable.
- Prepare the venue from an administrative and logistical point of view:

  » Equipment needed and working.
  » Room layout and seating arrangements.
  » Table tents/name tags/participant contact list.
  » Refreshments.
  » Accessibility issues.

The room layout and seating arrangements are important when facilitating a meeting and the visual below shows some examples. The blue dot indicates the position of the chair/facilitator.

During the meeting

UNDAC team members will often have to chair and facilitate meetings and having done sufficient preparations is halfway to success. During the meeting, also think about the following points:

- Be a good host and provide refreshments. It creates a positive atmosphere and is good for morale, especially in tough environments.
- Have a printed agenda and enough handouts for all attendees, e.g., the latest maps, contact lists, situation analyses, etc.
- Have a separate note taker so you can concentrate fully on meeting dynamics.
- Visualise names with name cards. Have a few blank cards for new arrivals to write down their name and organisation and remember to write large enough to be read across the room.
- Circulate a meeting attendance sheet with contact details for any follow-up communication.
- Start on time by reviewing the aim and objective of the meeting, go through the agenda, and set the timeline – and stick to it!
- Keep introductions brief and limit detailed tour de table updates from participants. Encourage short summaries or use your own briefing material that can be confirmed/corrected.
- Introduce topics and let the discussions start. If it goes off track, check for relevance and let it

Figure G.1: Different types of seating arrangements

FACILITATED DISCUSSION

NEGOTIATION

DEBRIEF

BRIEFING

TRAINING/WORKSHOP
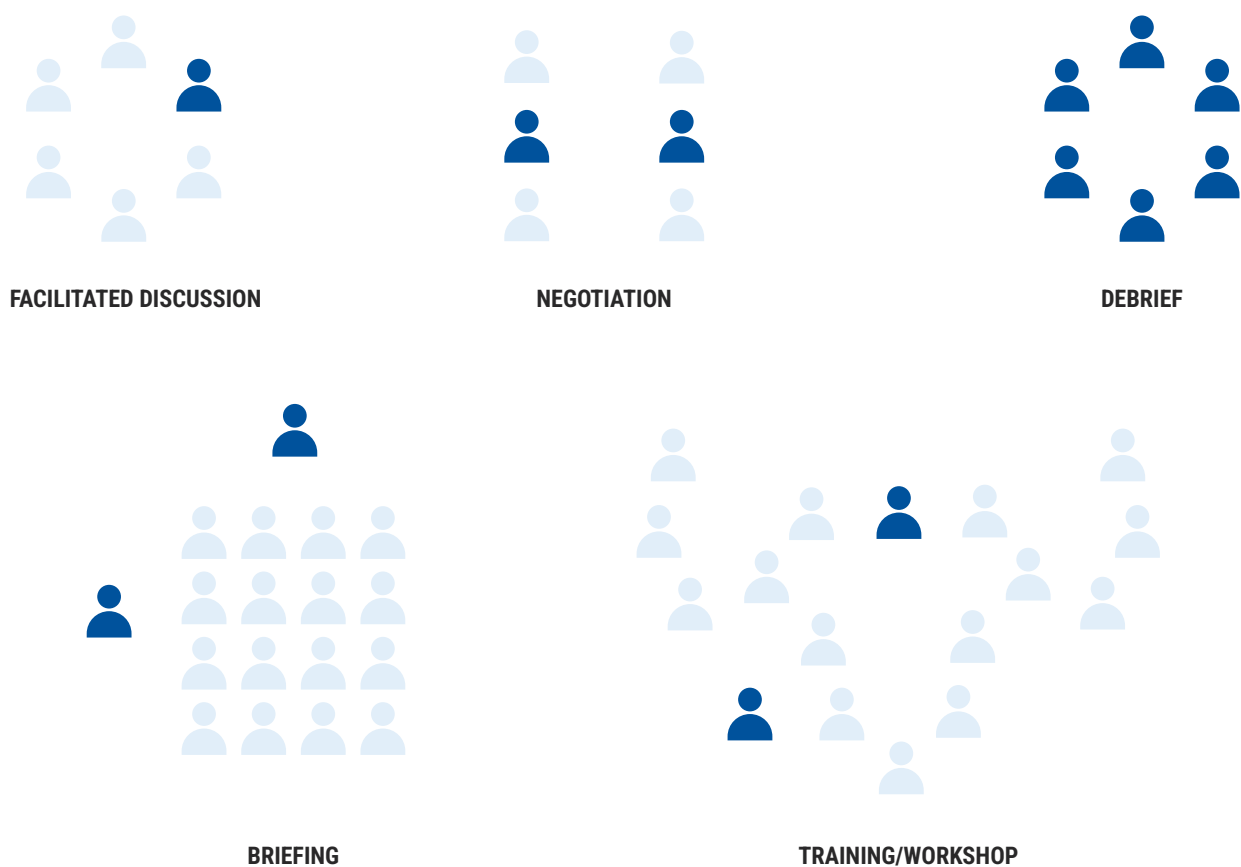
possibly run its course before bringing it back to the main topic. This can be tedious and must be balanced against the timeline, but is also important to ensure buy-in.

- When a topic is exhausted, summarise and paraphrase agreements, and move on.

- At the end of the meeting, recap all action points, clarify next steps and make sure everyone who has received specific tasks understands them.

- Make sure to balance facilitation with participation. A facilitator who gets too involved in a discussion may lose his/her neutrality and objectivity.

- If possible, record decisions live during the meeting and project them on a screen. This way, participants can make immediate suggestions for corrections and approve action points.

Facilitating challenging meetings

Even during a well-prepared meeting, experienced facilitators may face difficulties. This section

focuses on facilitation tips during a meeting when a conversation gets stuck, or participants get upset. Challenges or irritations have many causes which can lead to complaints, arguments or a tense climate in coordination meetings. Effective chairs can manage and transform challenging dynamics during a meeting with the right, powerful question(s). The following section lists tips for facilitators to address these challenges in the room, aiming at moving the discussion along.

- **Stay the course –** Many discussions frustrate participants as the conversation appears to be about the forest, the tree, and the leaf simultaneously. It is important to keep the group on track to discuss matters at the appropriate level of complexity, agreed upon in advance. Both HCT and inter-cluster coordination meetings are often accused of drifting into operational details when requested to make strategic decisions. Stay on top of the conversation to make sure that it remains focused on the agenda item and the outcome the group wants to achieve. When the

discussion departs from the agreed level, ensure that the situation is clarified before moving to solutions, and discuss solutions for the right problem. Remind the group of the level they agreed to discuss. For example:

» 'Will the discussion of this [operational detail] advance our strategy?'

» 'To come back to the strategic level, which we agreed to discuss.'

» 'To focus back on the specifics, which we wanted to clarify today.'

If a group repeatedly diverts to a level other than the one previously agreed, the facilitator should check if participants wish to refocus the discussion. It is the role of the facilitator to ask the group to make a conscious decision to divert the discussion, to close or 'park' the topic for a later discussion.

- **Shift from a problem to an outcome focus –** Groups can lose ample time and energy complaining, blaming individuals and organisations, discussing problems, etc., without moving to solutions. The following questions can move a discussion towards an outcome as answering them will force participants to take responsibility for outcomes they want to see. For example:

  » 'What would you like to see?'

  » 'What would a solution look like?'

  » 'What would be the required end state?'

  » 'How could we move this forward?'

  » 'What would it take to make it work?'

  » 'Who needs to help?'

- **Use questions to move the conversation on –** Questions can be open or closed as well as biased or neutral. Facilitators shape a conversation with the type of question they are asking.

  » Open neutral questions are useful at the beginning of a conversation when many options need to be generated as they allow a wide spectrum of answers, e.g., 'what do you think of x, y, or what options do we have? How can we deal with this challenge?'

  » Closed neutral questions might be useful at the end of a conversation as they force a choice, e.g., 'do we have an agreement?'

  » Open biased questions only permit a limited spectrum of answers and allow the facilitator to steer the conversation in a direction without limiting it to one answer, e.g., 'what do you like about...? How can we make this happen?' This type of question excludes the option of 'not making it happen'. They are helpful to implicitly communicate to the group that they have made a certain amount of progress.

  » Closed biased questions, such as, 'don't you think we should….?' polarises the group and undermines the facilitator's neutral/objective role.

- **Explore assumptions –** Differences in unconscious assumptions can cause misunderstandings or even conflicts. When participants have strongly held opinions, it might be helpful as a facilitator to explore mental models and assumptions leading to these conclusions. For example:

  » 'Can you help me understand how you came to these conclusions?'

  » 'Can you give me some data?'

  » 'What makes you say that?'

  » 'Can you restate that point?'

  » 'What is it that leads you to that position?'

Once you have elicited some data, ask the group what they think about the interpretation and conclusions.

- **Working with challenging participants –** There are many technical ways to deal with challenging participants, such as listening, redirecting, avoiding and postponing the discussion for later. However, these will work at best once. If participants feel that their concerns and frustrations are not heard but they are being 'dealt' with to simply move on, the frustration tends to remain. At the same time, valuable ideas and concerns might not have been effectively explored and addressed. While a verbal attack instinctively elicits a defensive reaction, effective facilitators want to understand the needs of a challenging participant and then refocus the discussion on outcomes. There are four technical steps to do this. However, for this to work, the facilitator needs to have a genuine interest in exploring the needs of the challenging participant.

> » Listen to the negative comment and pause briefly.
>
> » Reformulate the negative comment in a constructive, outcome-focused way.
>
> » Listen to the answer.
>
> » Use a return question or proposal.

A positive reformulation signals to the other that what he or she is looking for is understood and checked by offering a formulation attempt. It does not mean agreement, merely seeking to understand. This technique does not solve the problem, but it first de-escalates an exchange, gives the 'challenger' space to express his or her concerns and then lifts the discussion from the level of complaint to a focus on outcomes. Inflammatory interventions are often driven by powerful emotions. As a chair, acknowledge the emotion before reframing it.

- **Working with quiet participants –** Many people may not want to speak up in a larger group for a variety of reasons. This may be cultural, organisational, hierarchical, related to language issues, or something as simple as people just being introverted and more comfortable discussing important issues in groups of three or four. They might just not be sure if they have the 'right' to speak or they might not want to antagonise others they perceive as more senior, e.g., being higher in grade or more powerful, bigger agencies or donors, or those longer in-country. There are different ways to deal with this, e.g., ask participants to turn to their neighbours and discuss the issue at hand for a couple of minutes, then one person in the group shares their comments in plenary. The energy level immediately rises, and everybody contributes to the conversation.

Virtual meetings

Having virtual meetings via Skype, Zoom, Microsoft Teams or a similar type of software is very common and can save a lot of time and resources in comparison to face-to-face meetings. Virtual meetings can be very efficient but require more discipline than traditional meetings. To ensure efficiency, there are several considerations to think about:

- Agree in advance on who should facilitate and who should take care of technical aspects and take notes. It will be difficult to do both.

- Make sure everyone is sent an invitation, agenda, and possible passcodes well in advance and re-send shortly before the meeting as a reminder.

- Communicate in advance technical issues (connecting, downloading software) and allow time in advance of the meeting for people to connect and join.

- Start on time and be precise. Bear in mind that people are sitting ready behind their screens several minutes ahead of the meeting – do not waste their time.

- Clarify norms, e.g., one person speaks at a time, announce self, mute microphone when not speaking, announce leaving.

- Start with a tour de table but keep it short.

- Stick to the agenda and end on time. Participants may have other commitments and going over-time will make them run late. If not finished, it is better to skip something and agree to continue another time.

- Record the meeting and share the recording file afterwards.

- A virtual meeting as default is never completely confidential as you cannot control who will listen in on the other end.

Follow-up

A meeting whose outcome is neither written down nor followed up has little value. Finalise and circulate the minutes/action plan promptly and follow up as soon as possible. When writing up minutes/action-plans, do:

- Be concise and clear and avoid long narratives.

- Use the agenda as structure for the minutes.

- Make sure every point has a conclusion on what was agreed, naming a responsible party for follow-up and further action, including possible deadlines.

Remember that the note taker holds considerable power as it is their perception of what has been discussed and agreed on that gets written down. The minutes should be cleared and signed off by the chair of the meeting before dissemination to minimise possible bias from the note taker. They should be circulated to all invitees of the meeting

and all stakeholders who must be informed about the decisions.

Once the minutes/action plan is distributed, it is important to follow up with the persons named as responsible for follow-up as due dates approach to see whether they are on track with the action. Ensure those who need to agree on the implementation of a decision are informed, e.g., cluster coordinators. If anyone seems dissatisfied with the meeting outcome, try to meet informally with them to clarify the reason for their discontent.

Success criteria

For all meetings, there are some key issues instrumental for success:

- Know where you are going. Have a written agenda with clearly defined objectives.
- Think about cultural factors, language, communication, and local etiquette, related to issues such as time management, punctuality, hierarchy and seniority, decision-making and dispute management.
- Right participants for the right topics. Make sure that the right people are there. There is little point in discussing strategic direction with people who have no decision-making power at that level, nor will it be useful to discuss operational detail in an HCT meeting.
- Avoid an excessive number of participants as it inhibits decision-making and restricts usefulness. Consider different media and fora for different activities, e.g., information sharing, decision-making, problem solving, etc., or adopt a smaller steering group and technical working groups.
- Schedule realistically, plan the agenda, and show good time management. Starting and

stopping on time shows that you are serious and professional.
- Have refreshments available and make sure that the venue is sufficiently prepared, e.g., seating arrangements, logistics, note taker, etc.
- Announce important norms and ground rules while introducing the agenda. Makes sure that participants understand if this is a briefing, or a meeting meant for discussion and decision-making.
- Use tried and tested visual aids to summarise and explain. Most people process visual information faster than oral or written information and visual aids will help get everyone on the same page.
- Make sure to agree on follow-up actions with responsible parties and deadlines.
- Don't meet… if during preparations you realise that the issues at hand can be solved with a phone call or bilateral/informal meeting. Don't waste people's time by calling an unnecessary meeting.

G.1.3 Coordination barriers

Recognizing and identifying barriers to coordination is the first step in overcoming them. Many barriers to coordination are based on the nature of emergency operations and poor working practices in challenging environments. This overview touches upon some common barriers to coordination. While they are often not under the control of the coordination body, like the UNDAC team, they can possibly be influenced by applying some of the tips.

For more in-depth reading on these topics, also covering collaborative leadership, group decision-making, influencing and negotiating, please see the booklet 'Facilitating Collective Action' found in the UNDAC Toolbox.

COORDINATION BARRIERS	TIPS TO OVERCOME THEM
Competition: Partners contest the involvement, competence, values or interests of others. Partners compete for access, resources and visibility.	• Adopt a transparent, systematic process for identification, prioritisation and allocation of resources. • Develop shared policies and standards, considering the interests of all partners. • Ensure broad representation in decision-making and working groups.
Neutrality: Partners feel their autonomy is threatened. Perception that coordination will limit autonomy and that freedom to make decisions and run programmes as desired will be restricted.	• Seek shared objectives as part of a strategy. • Demonstrate how shared problem solving need not compromise freedom of action. • Respect the position of agencies whose involvement in coordinated activities is limited by their own mandates, e.g., International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF). • Offer observer status if appropriate.
Unilateral actions: Partners duplicate efforts in some generalised geographical areas, while other areas with affected populations are not covered. Actions that ignore established coordination mechanisms of the coordination body, whether by donors or organisations.	• Clearly define, and agree, roles and responsibilities with partners. • Actively engage all representatives in decision-making and coordination activities. • Publish needs analysis per region and sector and overlay it with maps, explaining who is doing what and where to show gaps.
Inadequate commitment: Decision-makers not willing to attend meetings. There is inconsistent involvement. A coordination process that is not working well, has unclear objectives and is seen to waste time without obvious benefits to those participating in it.	• Understand partners' interests and needs and ensure they benefit from meetings. • Provide information, resources and services that are of value to them. Make the OSOCC a one-stop-shop for useful products. • Clearly define, and agree, roles and responsibilities with partners. • Establish and maintain personal networks. • Notify partners of the purpose, agenda, decision(s) to be taken, and action deadlines for meetings. • Establish decentralised coordination mechanisms to facilitate local partner involvement.
Poor information flow: Information does not reach decision-makers or is not considered during the decision-making process.	• Identify bottlenecks and causes, i.e., where is the information stuck? • Work with those who have the information to facilitate the flow. • Ask the RC/HC for help to manage bottlenecks. • Do not censor information that might be inconvenient for decision-makers.

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COORDINATION BARRIERS	TIPS TO OVERCOME THEM
Poor leadership: Coordination body fails to act as an 'honest broker'. Personality clashes. Domination by some partners, imposing decisions without a transparent process. Too many decision-makers or too many organisations involved, which will complicate the process and make consensus, or at least agreement, too difficult to achieve. Ineffectual or inappropriate coordination leadership at the local and/or cluster level, e.g., when the coordination body exercises autocratic leadership and imposes decisions on others without a transparent process of involvement or is too concerned with due process and unable to cut through and make a decision.	• Adopt a collaborative leadership style and take care to act in a neutral manner. • Establish and maintain personal networks. • Ensure broad representation in decision- making and working groups. • Periodically evaluate satisfaction of partners through informal feedback and formal performance review process. • Establish decentralised coordination mechanisms to facilitate local partner involvement.
Insufficient resources: Lack of time or resources to devote to coordination or coordination seen as a low priority given limited time and resources. Slow or inadequate mobilisation of human, material or financial resources. Staff turnover, where new staff lack a commitment to coordination or are unaware of coordination agreements.	• Build on existing coordination processes and delegate coordination responsibilities. • Streamline the use of meetings (see Section G.1.2 above). • Invest in effective information and knowledge management. • Seek external, remote, headquarters, or global support in mobilising resources.
Inappropriate working practices: Failure to acknowledge language constraints, Differing cultural or working practices and types of knowledge. Ignoring gender or age dimensions.	• Build on existing coordination mechanisms. Involve international, national and local organisations to draw on (local) expertise, e.g., academic, research and professional institutions. • Translate all key information as required. Provide translation and interpretation in meetings. When registering contact information, include a field for language preference. • Adapt information and knowledge management systems to accommodate local levels of ICT capacity and expertise
Poor performance: Lack of accountability (upward or downward). Partners' failure to fulfil responsibilities, meet agreed standards, e.g., INSARAG Guidelines, cluster commitments.	• Remind about guiding principles and standards or agreed commitments. • Draw on authority of RC/HC, government partner or donors. • Monitor performance of all partners against criteria that equally value differing forms of contribution. • Name and shame, if all else fails…

→

COORDINATION BARRIERS	TIPS TO OVERCOME THEM
Poor knowledge or information management: Poor-quality or delayed information. Failure to establish communication or information management strategies.	• Seek external, headquarters or remote support in finding information management expertise if required. • Adapt information and knowledge management systems to accommodate local levels of ICT capacity and expertise

G.2 Centrality of protection and quality response

When conflict erupts or disaster strikes, affected people often need protection from violence, exploitation, and abuse, as well as protection of their dignity and human rights. Protection is enshrined in the principle of humanity and an objective of humanitarian action; it must therefore inform all aspects of humanitarian response. For humanitarian actors, protection is about advocating for and supporting full respect for the rights of affected people in accordance with international human rights law, humanitarian law and refugee law.

Protection is the foundation of all humanitarian work. The purpose of humanitarian action is to save lives, alleviate suffering and ensure respect for the rights and dignity of affected people. "Centrality of Protection" is fundamentally about people staying safe or recovering from harm when conflict or disaster strikes.

Experience demonstrates that not every person affected by a disaster can access or benefit from humanitarian assistance equally. Older persons and persons with disabilities may not be able to evacuate an area or queue for long periods of time to receive food rations; children may not be able to carry bulky or heavy non-food items; women may not want to use emergency latrines that are far away from their shelter on a path that is not lit because the risk of assault on the way is too high. Looking at how different groups of people are affected by a disaster and how the aid and services provided can be adapted to accommodate their specific needs is a key protection principle. Everybody should be able to benefit equally from the assistance provided.

Disasters also often give rise to new protection concerns. Human rights concerns can become more urgent, and violations often increase, during and immediately after a disaster. Population displacement, weak law enforcement and the breakdown of social safety mechanisms can heighten the risks of looting, gender-based violence and child trafficking. There can also be discrimination in aid distribution, exploitation, physical and other forms of violence, loss of official documents, and challenges related to housing, land and property rights. When such issues are not addressed in the initial stages of a humanitarian response, violations are both more likely to occur and more likely to continue after the emergency is over. Responses can include simple measures such as floodlighting to reduce the risk of gender-based violence or lockable shelter kits to diminish the risk of looting.

Protection must be at the centre of all efforts undertaken during disaster response – risk reduction, prevention, preparedness, response, recovery and reconstruction. Enhancing protection for people affected by disaster is essential during each phase of humanitarian action, including in the immediate aftermath of a disaster.

Some humanitarian organisations are specifically mandated to support specific groups of people: refugees, children, or detainees. Others have developed specialist expertise to reduce the risk of harm, by clearing landmines, helping displaced people maintain their land or property or counselling survivors of sexual violence.

However, in line with the IASC Policy on Protection in Humanitarian Action, all humanitarian actors (not only protection specialists) have a responsibility and a role to play in reducing protection risks. The policy identifies key ways that all humanitarian

actors can contribute to reducing protection risks including 1) protection mainstreaming (see below) 2) protection integration, or incorporating protection objectives into all sectors response 3) protection specialised programming and 4) advocacy.

The goal of reducing harm to affected people must inform humanitarian action, including all activities in the Humanitarian Programme Cycle (assessments, planning, programming, implementation and monitoring). The centrality of protection requires more than protection mainstreaming. It requires engagement of humanitarian leadership and by all sectors toward reducing protection risks.

So, what can we do as UNDAC?

UNDAC has a key role to play in contributing to protection of affected persons including:

• **Ensuring early identification and analysis of principal protection risks and needs of the most vulnerable in the immediate aftermath of disaster.** Protection analysis should be solicited from the Protection Cluster, human rights actors and other sources within and outside the humanitarian system, as well as from the perspective of a broad range of affected people, such as older persons, people with disabilities, women, children and minorities, through needs assessments and intention surveys. Protection analysis should

identify threats, who is vulnerable to these threats and why, and identify people's capacities in relation to these threats. The analysis should also assess the State's and other national/local actors' commitment and capacity to address protection concerns. For more guidance see OCHA's note on protection in the HPC and the Global Protection Cluster (GPC) Protection Analytical Framework.

• **Supporting analysis and processes to avoid harmful effects that could arise from humanitarian response.** UNDAC members and teams should avoid exposing people to further harm as a result of their actions, as part of a fundamental duty to 'do no harm'. They should regularly undertake analysis of potential negative implications and measures to avoid such negative consequences.

• **Flagging identified protection issues or potential violations (including concerns where more information is required) to the UNDAC Team Lead in close collaboration with the RC/HC and protection actors for further analysis, and possibly, further action.** These need to be dealt with by trained staff with the requisite skills and experience and as part of an overall strategy. Protection experts, Cluster leads and/or OCHA Protection Focal Points in-country (if they exist) or OCHA Protection Advisors at headquarters can also provide advice, guidance and training.

G.2.1 Protection mainstreaming

Protection mainstreaming

is a key responsibility for all humanitarian actors - not just protection specialists- engaged in humanitarian response. The humanitarian response should benefit all people affected equally and avoid exposing people to further harm as a result of our actions. Humanitarian actors must ensure that our activities target the most vulnerable, enhance safety, dignity, and promote and protect the human rights of the beneficiaries without contributing to or perpetuating discrimination, abuse, violence, neglect and exploitation.

Protection mainstreaming is a way of designing and implementing humanitarian programmes so that protection risks and potential violations are taken into consideration. It is the process of incorporating protection principles and promoting meaningful access, safety and dignity in humanitarian aid. The following principles must be applied in all humanitarian activities:

- **Prioritise safety and dignity and avoid causing harm –** Prevent and minimise as much as possible any unintended negative effects of an intervention which can increase people's vulnerability to both physical and psychosocial risks. For example, distributing food supplies to certain communities but not to others can exacerbate conflicts. The way distributions are organised can also hamper access by certain parts of the affected population or put people at greater risks for looting and need to be properly thought through.
- **Meaningful access according to specific needs –** Arrange for people's access to assistance and services in proportion to need and without barriers. Pay special attention to individuals and groups who may be particularly vulnerable or have difficulty accessing assistance and services. For example, people with limited mobility may not be able to go to the distribution sites and systems need to be put in place to make sure the assistance reaches them as well. Gender, age, disability, socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds are some factors that influence how people are affected by a crisis. We need to understand how different groups are impacted so that we can adapt the response – both during the planning phase and the implementation phase.
- **Community engagement and accountability –** Recognize and value all community members as equal partners, whose diverse needs, priorities, and preferences guide the response. Integrate meaningful community participation as well as the participation of internally displaced persons (IDPs), open and honest communication, and mechanisms to listen to and act on feedback from the affected communities. When communities are engaged and play an active role in the design of the response, the outcomes are more effective, sustainable, and of a higher quality.
- **Participation and empowerment –** Support the development of self-protection capacities and assist people to claim their rights, including – not exclusively – the rights to shelter, food, water and sanitation, health, and education.

For more information on protection mainstreaming, refer to the UNDAC Toolbox and the links below:

- OCHA on message on OCHA's role in protection
- Short videos on the Centrality of Protection in Practice and Protection Mainstreaming and Do No Harm
- IASC Policy on Protection in Humanitarian Action
- IASC Operational Guidelines on the Protection of Persons in Situations of Natural Disasters
- Sphere Standards Protection Principles

- GPC toolkit and guidance on protection in the context of disasters
- ICRC Professional Standards for Protection Work
- UN SG The Highest Aspiration: A Call to Action for Human Rights

Please be informed that each sector/cluster has their own specific guidance on protection for the country and global level. If relevant, please refer to Reference material J.10 Protection mainstreaming activities by sector and the latest sector/cluster guidance online. The Global Protection Cluster, for

example, can be found at https://www.globalprotectioncluster.org/.

Specific needs of at-risk groups

At-risk groups of people are those who are exposed to a combination of more serious risks than the rest of the population and who have limited capacity to cope with these risks. At-risk groups and their increased experience of vulnerability in humanitarian crises is context-specific and depends on the capacities and support networks of each individual. Women and girls, men and boys in all their diversities, persons with disabilities, IDPs may require special interventions or support depending on their circumstances and the threats their environment poses.

Vulnerability in relation to one situation does not necessarily indicate vulnerability in all situations and blanket classification of vulnerable groups should be avoided. For this reason, it is useful to carry out a vulnerability assessment to understand the specific vulnerabilities of and within a population group to risks they face as well as the existing capacities to cope in the face of these risks.

Vulnerability is influenced by displacement, geographic location, specific cultural and social power dynamics, access to information and education, access to material and financial resources, access to services and infrastructure, social support networks and specific characteristics of the group, family, or individual. Population displacement is a key factor impacting on vulnerability; displacement brings multiple risks and reduces capacity to cope.

Specific groups are often more vulnerable and need special assistance in the aftermath of a disaster. Experience shows that these groups almost always include women, children, people with disabilities and older persons. Other potentially at-risk groups that may experience increase vulnerability include the poor, persons living with HIV/AIDS, indigenous groups, families hosting IDPs, renters, squatters and the landless, geographically isolated communities, individuals associated with a party to an armed conflict and marginalised ethnic and cultural minority groups. Furthermore, persons with diverse Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression,

and Sex Characteristics (SOGIESC) remain discriminated against or even criminalised in numerous countries.

As UNDAC we must take these intersectional aspects in consideration when coordinating the initial assessment. We should do this by ensuring that at-risk groups are consulted (see part on Accountability to Affected People below) and meaningfully inform humanitarian priorities. Once the findings are clear, it is also the role of UNDAC to provide the humanitarian community with the assessment findings so that the actors implementing the response can adapt their activities according to the specific and distinct needs and vulnerabilities.

An analysis of vulnerabilities will always include a gender, age, inclusion and diversity analysis because we know that crises impact women and girls, men and boys in all their diversities, and persons with disabilities differently.

G.2.2 Gender equality programming in humanitarian action

Humanitarian crises are not gender neutral. Women, girls, men and boys of different ages and backgrounds have different and distinct needs, experiences, priorities, capacities – including during natural-hazard related disasters. Existing gender inequalities between women and men can be exacerbated during crises. These inequalities determine how people are affected and whether they can access humanitarian relief. Addressing gender equality during a humanitarian crisis means planning and implementing assistance according to these distinct needs of different groups in a community.

Gender roles and relations in the affected communities should be analysed and integrated in humanitarian coordination, situational analysis, project activities and outcomes.

The disproportionate impact of humanitarian crisis on women and girls

Women and girls are severely constrained by gender inequalities and by differences in power, privilege and opportunity. Consequently, women

and girls die in larger numbers in natural-hazard related disasters. They are also disproportionately exposed to increase of gender-based violence and sexual exploitation, increased domestic responsibilities, and increased threats to their access to sexual and republic health. These concerns and risks are particularly high for women and girls living with a disability and those from indigenous and marginalised communities. The impact of crises on women and girls are further exacerbated by their restricted opportunities to influence humanitarian action.

So, what can we do as UNDAC?

To integrate gender into a response, the following actions are suggested:

A gender analysis is done by:

• Disaggregating population figures by sex, age, disability and other relevant forms of diversities and comparing data with pre-crisis information. See **Section F.2.3** Planning for data collection.

• Collecting and analysing sex-, age- and disability-disaggregated data (SADD) during the primary data collection. See **Section F.2.3** on Data collection.

• Consulting with women and girls, men and boys across diverse communities to ensure that their particular circumstances, needs, priorities and capabilities are fully understood. Strengthen the meaningful participation of crisis affected women and girls and women-led organisations in humanitarian prioritisation and overall humanitarian action. Undertake separate focus

groups for women and girls, men and boys, as culturally appropriate and preferred. Ensure an equal balance of men and women amongst the enumerators during the primary data collection process and, where feasible, include gender and protection expertise to provide technical advice and support. Focus group discussions and key informant interviews with women and girls should be facilitated by a female enumerator. See **Section F.2.3**.2 on Primary data collection.

Sex and Age Disaggregated Data & Gender Analysis

• Conduct a gender analysis of the situation of women and girls, men and boys, non-binary individuals, noting that the intersectionality of gender with age and disability may lead to increased risks and vulnerabilities. Analyse secondary and primary data to identify the different dimensions of the crisis for women and girls, men and boys, non-binary individuals including their respective needs and capacities, roles, control over resources, dynamics and social inequalities/discrimination.

• Request gender and GBV expertise as part of the overall assessment capacity to lead on ensuring that the adequate prioritisation of gender responsive and GBV-related considerations in initial rapid multi-cluster/sector assessments, and that GBV prevention, response and mitigation is specifically addressed in assessment reports, the overall protection strategy and standards and guidelines from the earliest stages of the emergency.

Coordination and communication

- Ensure the response is directly based on the findings of the needs assessments and the gender analysis. Ensure the gender analysis is integrated robustly into information systems, communications, advocacy and programme activities of response organisations and clusters. Address both the immediate practical needs of women and girls, men and boys in all their diversities and strategic interests regarding underlying causes and contributing factors to gender inequality.

- Identify and coordinate with local women-led organisations, including those with disabilities and other marginalised groups. Local women-led organisations and women leaders are not only first responders in disaster settings but also continue the agenda on women's rights after the humanitarian, development and peace actors depart. As the main actors championing women's rights before, during and after conflict, local women's organisations and local women's leaders must be supported and actively engaged in the planning, design and monitoring of humanitarian action.

- Ensure national and local gender, older people and youth networks are involved in humanitarian coordination and decision-making from the start of the emergency response. If networks do not yet exist, explore ways to establish them, involving sectors/clusters.

- Ensure that coordination mechanisms (local, national, clusters) allow for the meaningful participation of girls- and women-led organisations and other diverse groups to ensure local actors and communities can influence the humanitarian decision-making processes.

- Ensure balanced representation by women and men in all groups is achieved.

- Prioritise prevention and response to gender-based violence (GBV) and put in place necessary actions to protect women and girls, men and boys, non-binary individuals from all forms of sexual exploitation and abuse by agency staff and partners, and lead advocacy for all agencies/organisations to do the same.

- Map the existing services available for women and girls, men and boys, non-binary individuals, and trace referral pathways for specific services, such as GBV interventions. Incorporate this

aspect into coordination meetings to ensure all organisations are informed about referral pathways for victims/survivors.

- Ensure all UNDAC members are familiar with the designated PSEA Focal Point. This individual (not the UNDAC member) would facilitate referrals of victims/survivors of sexual exploitation and abuse to the relevant services for prompt and quality assistance.

For more information, see the 2017 'Gender Handbook for Humanitarian Action' and specifically, the checklist for integrating gender into each stage of the HPC (pages 75 – 79). From page 95 onwards, the sector-based checklists and guides are available, as well as the IASC GBV Guidelines.

G.2.3 Inclusion of persons with disability in humanitarian action

Persons with disabilities are estimated to represent at least 15 percent of the world's population. In humanitarian contexts, they may form a much higher percentage. They are among the most marginalised people in crisis-affected communities and are disproportionately affected by conflict and emergency situations. In disasters, their mortality rate can be up to two to four times higher than that of persons without disabilities.

Persons with disabilities include persons who have long-term sensory, physical, psychosocial, intellectual, or other impairments that, in interaction with various barriers, prevent them from participating in, or having access to, humanitarian programmes, services or protection.

Persons with disabilities are not a homogeneous group. They are diverse in their experience, in the ways that attitudinal, physical and communication barriers impede their participation and inclusion in humanitarian action, and in their identity, including their age, gender, ethnicity, location and race. Due to the intersectionality of these factors, persons with disabilities face greater marginalisation and discrimination. During humanitarian crises, for example, children with disabilities are at higher risk of abuse and neglect, and women with disabilities are at higher risk of sexual violence.

Figure G.2: Twin-track approach

TWIN-TRACK APPROACH

MAINSTREAMING	TARGETING
Ensuring that persons with disabilities have access to their basic needs in all interventions and projects and on an equal basis with others in the community.	Addressing the specific needs of the individuals with disabilities in order to empower them and improve their situation.

EQUALITY OF RIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITIES
FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Persons with disabilities must be able to access humanitarian assistance and interventions on the same terms as other members of the population. This requires a twin-track approach that combines inclusive mainstream programmes with targeted interventions for persons with disabilities.

First, mainstream humanitarian programmes and interventions (such as protection, localization, cash programmes, etc), designed for the whole population, need to include persons with disabilities. Their

planning, design, implementation, and evaluation should reflect this objective. For example:

- Information should be disseminated in multiple accessible formats (oral, print, sign language, easy-to-read/plain language, etc.).
- Distribution sites should be placed in locations that are accessible to everyone, including persons with disabilities.
- Communal latrine blocks should be accessible to persons with disabilities – they should be physically accessible and provide clear signage.

Second, humanitarian programmes need to address the specific requirements of persons with disabilities by providing targeted interventions. For example:

- Humanitarian assistance should include assistive devices and special hygiene items.
- Additional transport allowances are needed for persons with disabilities, to enable them to access services or to account for the fact that many of them cannot use public transportation services (if available).
- Food and non-food items should be delivered to persons with disabilities who are unable to reach distribution sites. Their special needs (e.g., persons with diabetes) should also be taken into account.

This twin-track approach is critical to the inclusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian action. It should be adopted by all stakeholders in all sectors.

So, what can we do as UNDAC?

'Must do' actions are required if persons with disabilities (as well as other types of groups at risk) 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 four 'must do' actions described below should be kept in mind when reading or implementing activities mentioned in all the chapters of the handbook, including the section on stakeholder roles and responsibilities:

- **Promote meaningful participation.** Like anyone else, persons with disabilities have the right to participate in decision-making processes at all stages of humanitarian action affecting them. Their representative organisation should be consulted. Because of their knowledge and skills, persons with disabilities can be important actors and resource persons win a humanitarian response.

- **Remove barriers.** Neither inclusion nor participation can be achieved while barriers remain. Removing attitudinal, environmental, and institutional barriers is critical to addressing risks of marginalisation or discrimination. Removing barriers further benefits all parts of the society - for example, easy to read documents also support illiterate people or those not fluent in the language used; installing a ramp for wheelchairs is also useful to older people, people carrying heavy loads or families with small children.

- **Empower persons with disabilities (or other groups at risk) and train humanitarian stakeholders.** Support organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) to develop their capacities by meaningfully involving them in discussions affecting them and guiding them through the humanitarian coordination architecture. Encourage all groups of stakeholders to cooperate in ensuring that persons with disabilities are fully included in all aspects of humanitarian assistance and protection.

- **Disaggregate data for monitoring inclusion.** To monitor inclusion, data on barriers and on the requirements of persons with disabilities are essential. Humanitarian data should include disaggregated data on disability to ensure that planning, implementation and monitoring of humanitarian actions are accessible to and include persons with disabilities. This will strengthen humanitarian stakeholders' understanding of the barriers to inclusion, which in turn will enable them to remove them effectively and adopt measures to promote inclusion. In case no or insufficient data is available (or if the figures appear to be very low), the global estimate of 15% should systematically be privileged.

For more information on the inclusion of persons with disabilities, please refer to the UNDAC Toolbox and the list below:

- See the 2019 'IASC guidance on Inclusion of Persons with Disability in Humanitarian Action': IASC Guidelines, Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action, 2019 | IASC (interagencystandingcommittee.org) Türkiye: Disability Inclusion Task Team (DITT) - Tips on disability-inclusive emergency response (Earthquake) - Türkiye | ReliefWeb.

- Engagement of Youth with disabilities: Summary of the checklist to ensure the meaningful engagement of young persons with disabilities in humanitarian action (unfpa.org). The full version is at Checklist to Ensure the Meaningful Engagement of Young Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action (unfpa.org).

- English version. How to include organisations of persons with disabilities in humanitarian action - YouTube (3 minute video, also exists in the form of a transcription on the same page).

- Toolkit on the inclusion of refugees with disabilities - European Disability Forum (edf-feph.org) Exists in 12 languages and formats and contains stories, tips and other resources that can be also used in other contexts.

- Accessibility = Go ! A Guide to Action : World Blind Union (key points to consider, tips and resources to enhance accessibility for all types of persons with disabilities).

- Disability-Inclusive Language Guideline.

- Quick Guide "Towards Disability Inclusive Humanitarian Action".

G.2.4 Accountability to Affected People (AAP)

Engagement with communities in the immediate aftermath of a disaster is essential to ensure that affected people in all their diversity have the information they need to organise their own responses, access humanitarian assistance, as well as to provide important feedback on challenges and gaps. This improves programme quality and impact, leading to more effective, accountable humanitarian response operations. Whilst OCHA refers to this process as "Accountability to Affected People (AAP)", the Red Cross Movement and many other humanitarian organisations call this way of working "Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA)". The wording may differ, but the concept is the same: putting communities at the centre of the response. Community members should be recognized and valued as equal partners, whose diverse needs, priorities, and preferences guide everything we do. We achieve this by integrating meaningful community participation, open and honest communication, and mechanisms to listen to and act on feedback, within our operations.

It is absolutely crucial, no matter the urgency or complexity of the disaster, to engage communities in emergency response operations. Unfortunately, there are many examples of operations going wrong because they did not sufficiently engage the local population, from aid items being sold in markets, to volunteers and staff being attacked and even killed, because of fear and misunderstanding in the community.

As mandated in its [Terms of Reference](#), the HCT along with the Inter-Cluster Coordination Group (ICCG) and other relevant coordination groups, will ensure that international humanitarian action in support of national capacities is people-driven and accountable. In practice, this means the HC should ensure that a response-wide, collective AAP action plan or strategy is in place and functional, tied to coordination structures, programming cycles and funding mechanisms. This could further involve ensuring that the functions of the Community Engagement/AAP Working Group are properly linked to the in-country coordination architecture and is a conduit for community voices and feedback to be part of decision-making processes.

So, what can we do as UNDAC?

UNDAC can play a critical role in setting up an 'accountable response' from the outset of a crisis, and, in particular, ensuring information needs are met immediately. It is suggested that a dedicated community engagement expert is deployed with the UNDAC team. Generic ToRs for such a position can be found in the UNDAC Toolbox.

The list of suggested actions below provides ideas for UNDAC members to ensure response-wide accountability to affected people (AAP) in the initial phase of coordination which will lead to community engagement and accountability (CEA) being upheld throughout the HPC. Each humanitarian operation is different, and it will be important to adapt the actions to the context. The list can serve as a reminder of the various areas that should be kept in mind to operationalize response-wide AAP.

Assessment & Analysis

- Ensure that different parts of the community are included in the initial needs assessment, especially those that may be invisible or marginalised for cultural or other reasons (women and girls, persons with disabilities, older people including widows, etc).

- Work with the Inter-Cluster/sector Coordination Group (ICCG/ISCG) to ensure that assessments aim to include a representative sampling of the population, capturing age, gender, people with disabilities, etc. (not just community leaders). Where this is not possible, data disaggregated by age and gender should be used and assessment gaps acknowledged for future in-depth assessments.

- Develop structured questions and systems to ensure information is collected consistently, recorded and will be useful to response planning. Ensure that questions on preferred means of delivery (in-kind, vouchers, cash) and information needs (what people need to know and how they prefer to receive information and communicate with responders and authorities) are included

in all assessments. There are existing question banks to draw on in the UNDAC Toolbox.

- During the joint analysis process within the Assessment and Analysis Working Group (AAWG), ensure communities are represented.

- Ensure assessments include and draw on support from organisations that focus on information, communications and media development, such as CDAC Network, BBC Media Action, Internews, etc.

- After the primary data collection has been conducted, ensure the assessment results are communicated to all concerned organisations and communities. If it has been assessed that a certain community is not a priority geographical area for the response, we should go back and inform the community about this. Assessments often create expectations, or result in communities' fatigue and we need to be accountable for the decisions we make and inform communities about them. If results of the assessments can't be communicated and validated by the communities, include this in recommendations for ongoing response efforts post-UNDAC deployment.

- Ensure information Management (IM) products specify information and communication needs and appropriate channels of communication with affected communities.

Coordination

- Check if there is an AAP/CEA working group in the country. If there is, start liaising with them and include them in coordination meetings.

- See if a mapping of existing feedback mechanisms has already been conducted. Make sure to draw on what is already existing. If a phone line exists, try to call the number, and see if someone is picking up. Then try to see how the feedback is collected and disseminated.

- Ensure that the system allows to act upon the feedback received. There is no need to collect feedback and complaints if we don't use it to change and adapt the response.

- If there isn't an AAP/CEA working group in the country, assess feasibility and format of such Working Group or Task Force/other appropriate inter agency structure and make efforts to establish new or revive existing structure.

- Establish a list and contact details of key AAP/CEA coordinators and focal points in different agencies, INGOs, NGOs and CSOs, and clusters, sectors, etc. Very often, the Red Cross / Red Crescent national societies are identified as local champions for AAP/CEA so you can start by reaching out to them to see what systems are in place in the country and if they have dedicated staff working on this. Other implementing partners may be involved in community engagement, communication with communities or accountability initiatives; identify which are active and ask for their support. Use AAP capacity assessment tools to rapidly identify current in-country capacity and needs.

- Conduct a rapid review of existing AAP/CEA resources, documents, and map existing initiatives. Establish a way to coordinate and avoid duplication using the list of AAP coordinators and focal points to set up calls/consultations with relevant organisations/agencies/fora.

- Rapidly assess the best structure for common feedback collation and analysis as a 'common service'.

- Based on this short assessment, support the establishment of mechanisms for collective and ongoing analysis of community feedback, including those linked to protection risks.

- Promote the involvement of affected persons and communities, including the most at risk and vulnerable in assessments, planning and decision-making for disaster preparedness, risk management and response. Protection demands meaningful and systematic engagement with affected persons during all phases of a response in a manner that recognizes and is sensitive to age, gender and diversity.

- Engage with RC/HC to ensure the country leadership's support and commitment to collective AAP, inclusion and protection prioritisation.

- Support the RC/HC to identify national NGOs, community groups and/or consortia to be included in the HCT or to attend relevant HCT meetings, ensuring community participation in decision-making.

- Ensure that coordination meetings have a standing agenda item on community engagement and accountability, specifically reviewing complaints and feedback from communities;

rapidly identify trends, collectively define solutions and track progress on addressing them, i.e., request information on what organisations/agencies are saying and hearing from communities; ensure feedback trends are being reported and acted upon.

- Work with the clusters and IM teams to document community feedback and include community engagement activities in situation reports, needs overview documents, etc.

Strategic response planning

- Ensure the response planning is directly based on the feedback from communities and findings of the needs assessments which included representative sampling of the population where possible, as well as disaggregated data and joint analysis of priority needs. Ensure that humanitarian programme objectives reflect the needs, concerns, and values of all segments of the population affected by humanitarian emergencies and that programming is designed to maximise the use of local skills and capacities, including those of women and youth, build on their capacity and not undermine people's own coping/response strategies.

- Ensure all response planning documents reflect information and communication needs, as well as response and approach to collective accountability (how the humanitarian community at the collective level plans to gather and respond to feedback/complaints and provide information to affected people).

- Ensure contingency plans, flash appeals and Humanitarian Response Plans speak to priority protection and inclusion risks and analysis identified in needs assessments.

- Focus on quick wins: what areas of collaboration exist in which we can achieve quick wins, e.g., shared messaging on critical topics; adding a qualitative data collection component to needs assessments (e.g., focus groups) etc.

Communication and media

- Coordinate the development and dissemination in local languages of key humanitarian messages. Key messages should be simple. One key message should for example be that

humanitarian assistance is free. People then need to understand where to find the assistance and how to proceed.

- Listen, don't spam communities. Within the response community, map out what existing or planned 'listening' activities/projects may exist and try to create synergies to overcome potential duplications leading to confusion. These may be informal or structured. Remember to check if there was an AAP/CEA working group in the country prior to the disaster.

- Connect with local radio networks and other media to liaise with members and representatives of local/community media organisations. The co-ordinated response community should organise regular media briefings where aid officials, from local and international organisations, brief and take questions from the local media on progress, plans and challenges.

Resource mobilisation

- Advocate for resources to support collective community engagement, including coordination structures, staff or other support, community consultations, public information campaigns, translation and interpretation and complaints and feedback mechanisms.

For handover and exit

- Ensure the handover reflects on protection and inclusion related challenges and priorities and recommendations (e.g., for more capacity; addressing gaps etc.).

- Combine information from consultations, mapping, documentary review, data from needs and communications assessments to produce the initial draft of a collective AAP action plan (this will require close collaboration with IM officers and others).

- The action plan clearly outlines responsibilities, with timelines, indicators, and targets.

For more guidance on AAP, please refer to:

- IASC Collective AAP Framework | IASC (inter agency standing committee.org)
- https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/strengthening-accountability-affected-people.

G.2.5 Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment (PSEAH)

Sexual exploitation and abuse is a form of sexual misconduct perpetrated by aid workers or anyone affiliated with the UN system against a member of the affected population. Sexual harassment may occur in the workplace or in connection with work.

 Sexual Exploitation, Sexual Abuse and Sexual Harassment can be defined as below:

• **Sexual exploitation –** Any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another.
• **Sexual abuse –** Actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions. All sexual activity with a person under the age of 18 – a child – is considered sexual abuse. Sexual abuse includes rape, sexual assault, sex with a child and sexual activity with a child.

• **Sexual harassment –** Any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favour, verbal or physical conduct or gesture of a sexual nature, or any other behaviour of a sexual nature that might reasonably be expected or be perceived to cause offence or humiliation to another.
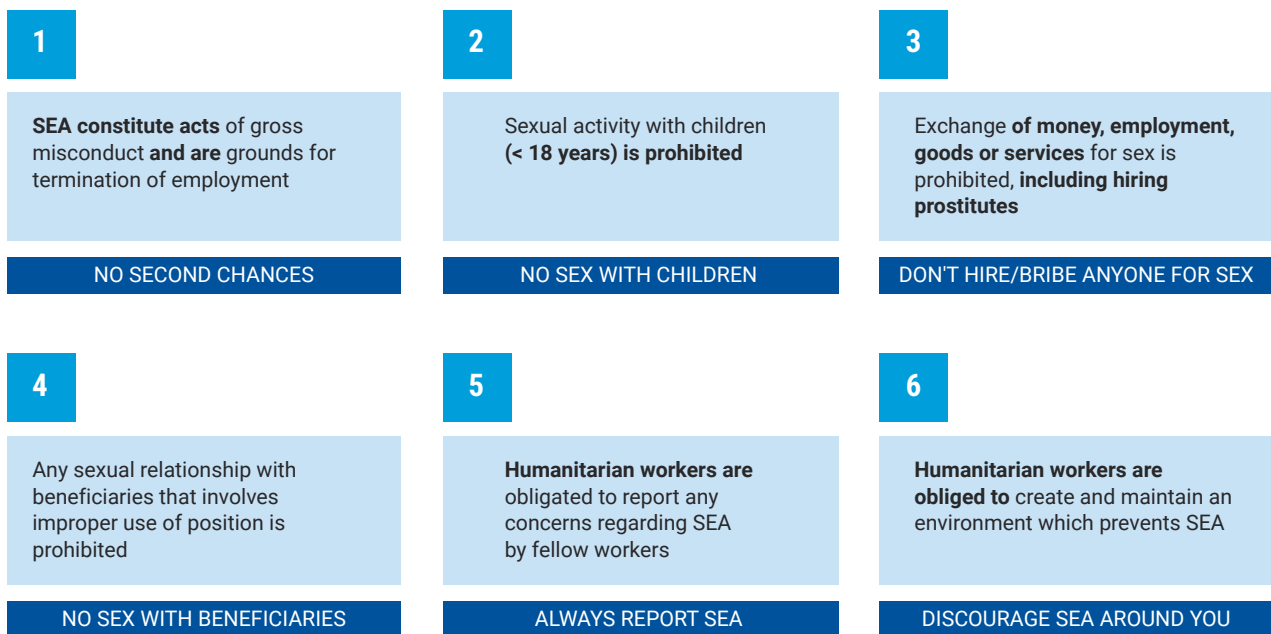
Sexual exploitation and abuse is rooted in power differentials. People with power are in a position to exploit and abuse those with less power, such as crisis-affected people. There are many possible sources of power such as money, access to information, education, gender, race, ethnicity, age, status. Given the significant power imbalance between aid workers and affected communities consent does not determine whether or not sexual exploitation or abuse has taken place. Indeed, the power dynamic may coerce affected communities into engaging in sexual activities for fear their assistance may be impacted.

Following a rapid-onset disaster, displacement, loss of resources, pre-existing gender inequalities, lack of legal protection for victims/survivors and the influx of actors in the response heightens vulnerabilities further exacerbating power imbalances and the risks of sexual exploitation and abuse.

Figure G.3: Overview on Sexual exploitation, Sexual abuse, Sexual harassment

	SEXUAL EXPLOITATION (SE)	SEXUAL ABUSE (SA)	SEXUAL HARASSMENT (SH)
WHO?	Us + Beneficiary	Us + Beneficiary	Us + Us
WHAT?	▪ Abuse of vulnerability, differential power, or trust ▪ Victim's sexual activity generates benefits	▪ Physical intrusion of a sexual nature ▪ Use of force or coercion	▪ Unwelcome advance or conduct of a sexual nature ▪ Creates an intimidating environment or becomes a condition of employment
EXAMPLES?	▪ Offering money, gifts, or a job in exchange for sex ▪ Withho;ding due services or blackmailing for sex ▪ Hiring prostitutes ▪ Threats of sexual exploitation	▪ Unwanted kissing, touching, grabbing, or rubbing ▪ Threats of an unwanted sexual act ▪ Raping or attempted rape ▪ Any sexual activity with a child	▪ Touching, kissing or speaking inappropriately to a colleague at work ▪ Attempted or actual sexual assault ▪ Raping or attempted rape

Figure G.4: Core Principles relating to sexual exploitation and abuse

1	2	3
SEA constitute acts of gross misconduct **and are** grounds for termination of employment	Sexual activity with children **(< 18 years) is prohibited**	Exchange **of money, employment, goods or services** for sex is prohibited, **including hiring prostitutes**
NO SECOND CHANCES	NO SEX WITH CHILDREN	DON'T HIRE/BRIBE ANYONE FOR SEX

4	5	6
Any sexual relationship with beneficiaries that involves improper use of position is prohibited	**Humanitarian workers are** obligated to report any concerns regarding SEA by fellow workers	**Humanitarian workers are obliged to** create and maintain an environment which prevents SEA
NO SEX WITH BENEFICIARIES	ALWAYS REPORT SEA	DISCOURAGE SEA AROUND YOU

All UN staff and affiliated personnel must adhere to the following six core principles both during and outside working hours. Acts of sexual exploitation and abuse are always serious, and grounds for immediate termination of contract and potential criminal prosecution.

Any suspicion or knowledge that sexual exploitation or abuse has been committed must be reported. You can report directly to the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), the RC/HC, the in-country OCHA PSEA Focal Point (where there is an OCHA presence), the PSEA Coordinator (where applicable), the UNDAC Team Leader or UNDAC mission focal point in OCHA ERS so that the victim/survivor can be referred for assistance in a timely manner. Failure to report is considered misconduct. Retaliation against someone who reports sexual exploitation or abuse or cooperates with an investigation is prohibited and considered misconduct as per ST/SGB/2017/2/REV.1. If you were retaliated against or witnessed retaliation you can inform the Ethics Office at ethicsoffice@un.org.

For sexual harassment, the Office of the United Nations Ombudsman and Mediation Services, the Staff Counsellor's Office, the Speak Up hotline (speakup@un.org; +19173678910) and/or the OCHA Human Resources Section can provide

assistance or advice to staff or managers wishing to pursue informal resolution. In cases of sexual harassment, it is recommended that the victim/survivor be the one to file a report. This is the difference from cases of sexual exploitation and abuse, for which we all have the duty to report our suspicions on behalf of the potential victim/survivor.

So, what can we do as UNDAC?

- Display communication material on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse in the RDC, the UCC as well as in the OSOCC and sub-OSOCC. Key communication material can be found in the UNDAC Toolbox. NB: This is for staff/personnel/emergency responders. When it comes to disseminating messages to communities, refer to the PSEA Coordinator as chair of the in-country PSEA network if existing. Conduct a rapid review of existing resources, documents, and map existing initiatives.

- Identify the in-country PSEA Coordinator and share their contact details with the UNDAC team.

- Remind of the six core principles on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse including where to report allegations.

- Brief USAR and other response teams on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse.

- Report any suspicion or knowledge of sexual exploitation or abuse (see procedure above).
- Ensure PSEA activities are added in the Flash Appeal.

G.3 IASC Emergency Response Preparedness (ERP) Approach and Anticipatory Action

This chapter covers the rationale behind the Emergency Response Preparedness (ERP) approach endorsed by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) and anticipatory action, their operational mechanics, and the pivotal role of national Governments in its implementation. Furthermore, it explores the synergies between the ERP and anticipatory action, offering practical insights and resources for effective response preparedness and readiness.

G.3.1 IASC Emergency Response Preparedness (ERP) Approach

The ERP approach was adopted by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) in 2015 as the agreed method to ensure readiness to respond to potential crises requiring coordinated action from the humanitarian community. It is currently being used in 69 countries. The aim is to increase the speed, volume, predictability, and effectiveness of aid delivered after the onset of a crisis.

Being ready to respond to emergencies quickly, appropriately, and effectively is a core responsibility of humanitarian organisations. The ERP provides an internationally agreed framework that allows Country Teams (UNCT/HCT) to analyse and monitor risks, take actions to enhance preparedness, and flag gaps in capacity to the regional and global level so that the right support can be mobilised. Heightened readiness will increase the volume and speed of aid in the crucial first weeks of an emergency. It can also increase the value for money of humanitarian action by ensuring that scarce resources are directed towards the most urgent needs and reach people in time.

The ERP approach is designed to ensure that the humanitarian community in each country has a shared and updated understanding of risks and a joint plan for enhancing preparedness. The approach (the Interim ERP Guidance represents the latest thinking when it comes to response readiness) has five main components: **1) Coordination; 2) risk analysis and monitoring; 3) prioritising humanitarian interventions; 4) capacity review; and 5) filling preparedness gaps.**

ERP will not be implemented in the same way in every country. The ERP approach was designed to be flexible and practical with a focus on outcomes rather than process. The approach is implemented when the following is achieved: Risk analysis is done and the risks identified are monitored regularly; key actions to enhance preparedness are identified, and prioritised actions are implemented; and Gaps that cannot be addressed through in-country capacity are communicated to the regional and global levels.

The responsibility to be ready to respond to humanitarian emergencies rests primarily with national Governments. The ERP is intended to complement national preparedness efforts and guide the work of humanitarian organisations to respond when national capacity is not enough. National institutions, local organisations and women's groups should be included in the ERP process as much as possible.

The ERP approach is intended to be:

- **Realistic.** It must consider existing capacities and constraints.
- **Practical.** It should focus on needs and operational capacity; what we have, how to bridge gaps, and how to reach people with assistance.
- **Flexible.** Country teams should prioritise preparedness actions considering the risks they face and the capacity and resources available to them.
- Coordinated. All clusters/sector responses should be in alignment and complementary to national response efforts.
- **Localised.** Closely linked to the utilisation of existing local capacities and resources.

Who is responsible for implementing the ERP?

- **In countries where IASC humanitarian coordination structures are in place** the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) working with the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) and country level clusters/sectors should lead the ERP process and is responsible for ensuring that response readiness efforts of relevant organisations are inclusive and coordinated.

- **In countries where IASC humanitarian coordination structures are not in place,** the RC should work with the UN Country Team and national authorities to implement the ERP. The RC should encourage the input and participation of IFRC and NGOs, including women's organisations active in-country, to ensure that their humanitarian capacities and expertise are recognized and that they can contribute fully. In-country coordination mechanisms may need to be expanded for this purpose.

- **Preparedness and response for refugee situations:** UNHCR, in accordance with its responsibilities, will lead in close coordination with WHO, RC/HCT, Governments and other actors. In countries covered by refugee and migrant response plans, the existing inter-agency platform (established by IOM and UNHCR at the request of the UN Secretary-General) will continue. The Joint UNHCR-OCHA Note on Mixed Settings (OCHA/UNHCR, 24 April 2014) remains applicable as it lays out the respective roles and responsibilities of the HC and the UNHCR Representative as well as the practical interaction of the IASC's and UNHCR's refugee coordination arrangements, to ensure that coordination is streamlined, complementary and mutually reinforcing.

- **Preparedness and response for public health crises:** WHO has the lead for the development of emergency response and preparedness planning in case of public health emergencies. In those cases, the inter-agency coordination mechanism will focus only on the multisectoral impact of the health crisis in other sectors, for example the impacts of the outbreak on affected population food security and livelihood, access to education, etc.

What is the link between the ERP and Anticipatory Action?

The ERP approach and Anticipatory Action are very much two sides of the same coin. In simple terms, the ERP's primary focus is on identifying the most appropriate response activities for a given crisis and ensuring that operational readiness is in place to implement these activities. Whereas the focus of Anticipatory Action is on identifying the most appropriate activities that can mitigate against the potential impacts of a crisis and ensuring that operational readiness is in place to implement these activities. At the country level, the process for developing both response readiness and anticipatory action are very similar and complementary.

Practical tips for UNDAC members

- When you arrive in the field, inquire on the existence of Emergency Response Preparedness/contingency plans. Either the OCHA country or regional office can provide this information.

- If a plan exists, use it as the main reference for the setup of the coordination system. Key humanitarian actors (national and international) and national/local authorities already agreed on a specific structure of coordination during the development of the contingency plan. Using the agreed model will speed up the process and ensure the legitimacy and acceptance of the proposed coordination structure.

- Capitalise on the plans' annexes such as the partners contact list, mapping of contingency stocks, geographical and access maps, etc.

- The plan could also inform the eventual development of the Flash Appeal or other humanitarian funding request.

Main resources for more detailed information

For more information on the subject please refer to Guidance Emergency Response Preparedness and the Interim ERP guidelines for Covid-19 (latest version – currently being updated – operational components are current):

- https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/sites/default/files/migrated/2020-11/IASC%20Emergency%20Response%20Preparedness%20Guidelines%2C%20July%202015%20%5BDraft%20for%20field%20testing%5D.pdf

• https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/sites/
default/files/migrated/2020-04/IASC%20Inter-
im%20Guidance%20on%20COVID-19%20-%20
ERP%20Approach%20-%20April%202020.pdf

G.3.2 Anticipatory Action

Anticipatory action is commonly defined as acting ahead of predicted, imminent hazards to prevent or reduce acute humanitarian impacts before they fully unfold. Anticipatory action works best if activities and decision-making rules (based on forecasts) are pre-agreed to guarantee the fast release of pre-arranged financing.

By using early warning systems, anticipatory action exploits the window of opportunity between the moment of prediction and the arrival of a forecasted shock to trigger interventions that prevent or mitigate imminent humanitarian impacts. This calls for more humanitarian action linked to risk and vulnerability, instead of a singular focus on needs and suffering.

By getting ahead of looming crises where possible, assistance is timelier, more cost-effective, and better quality which not only saves lives and reduces losses to livelihoods, but also preserves hard-won development gains.

Anticipatory action mitigates humanitarian impacts for those that can be reached before a shock and currently works best for climate-related disasters and some diseases. Anticipatory humanitarian action however may not prevent a crisis entirely as a storm, flood or drought will still occur.

Why is it important for UNDAC members?

If the country you have been deployed to already has an activated anticipatory action framework in place, this means that some relief efforts were and/or are already underway and certain resources may already have been made available to mitigate disaster impact and/or to meet immediate urgent needs in the first weeks of an emergency.

The anticipatory action frameworks often benefit from close coordination with national and international early warning systems, which can be useful for monitoring the risks associated with the development of certain types of natural hazards.

Anticipatory action frameworks may involve several national actors, local communities, and key authorities from the civil protection side. Anticipatory action partners may have key contact lists and in-depth knowledge of the operational environment and key dynamics in the context that can inform the needs assessment and analysis and the development of the response strategy.

For more information, please refer to https://www.unocha.org/anticipatory-action. You can find contact information of the Anticipatory Action Focal Point in OCHA New York in the UNDAC Toolbox.

Figure G.5: Traditional humanitarian response vs. anticipatory action
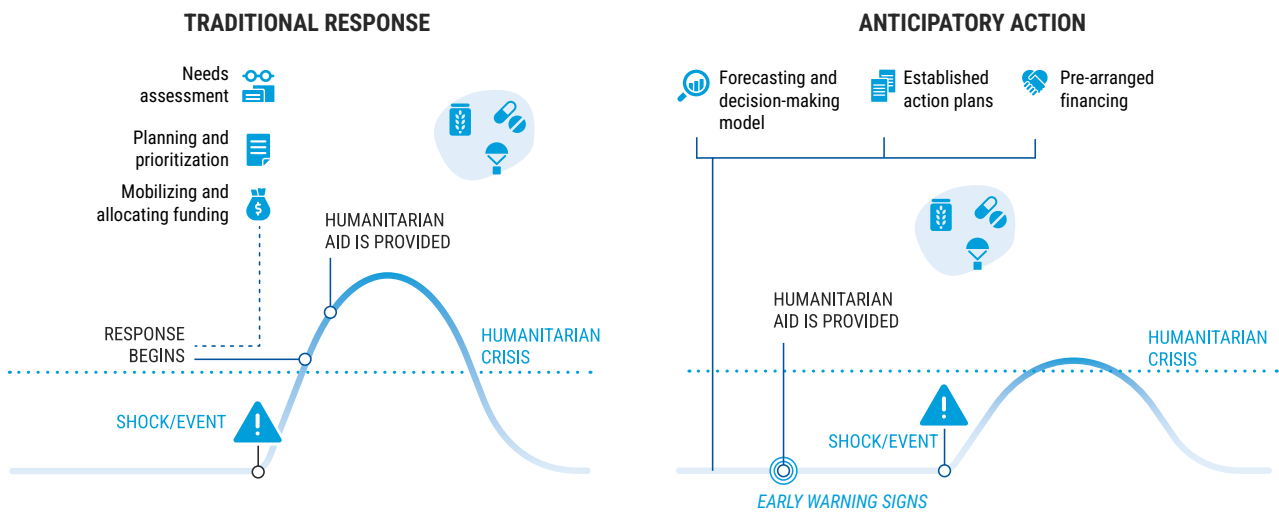
G.4 Localization

The Grand Bargain (see **Chapter A.1.2**) has brought localization to the forefront of policy discussions between stakeholders in international humanitarian action, though the notion of enhancing agency of local responders is not particularly new. Still, there is no universally agreed definition of "localization" across the humanitarian system. However, "localization" can be viewed as a process of recognizing and strengthening the role of local and national actors (L/NAs) in humanitarian action in order to ensure that needs are met effectively, in a principled, timely manner while building the resilience of local communities to face future risks and vulnerabilities.

According to [IASC guidance](#) the term L/NAs includes the following actors:

- Local, national and regional civil society organisations (CSOs), such as national non-governmental organisations (NGGOs)
- Red Cross/Red Crescent National Societies;
- Organisations of persons with disabilities (OPD) as well as older persons' organisations;
- Human rights groups;
- Women rights organisations (WROs);
- Women-led organisations (WLOs) and girl-led initiatives;
- Youth-led organisations;
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI+) groups (- While the IASC guidance still refers to LGBTI+, the politically correct wording as of 2023 is now SOGIESC, i.e., sexual orientations, gender identities, gender expressions and sex characteristics. See for example this UNHCR/IOM training package at [https://www.unhcr.org/what-we-do/protect-human-rights/safeguarding-individuals/lgbtiq-persons/sogiesc-and-working-lgbtiq)](https://www.unhcr.org/what-we-do/protect-human-rights/safeguarding-individuals/lgbtiq-persons/sogiesc-and-working-lgbtiq);
- Faith-based organisations;
- Regional, national, or local authorities or elected officials;
- Regional or sub-regional networks of L/NAs or other types of alliances (consortia etc.);

- Local or national private sector or development organisations who may not define themselves as humanitarian actors per se but who may be contributing to humanitarian efforts due to their location and/or community connections.

Localization requires a culture shift that puts affected communities and their representatives at the centre, giving them the power of decision-making. This transformation is deeply grounded in the imperative to enhance the agency of L/NAs, extending beyond mere access to funding and project delivery. It encompasses their active participation in shaping the response, participating in strategy development, and more. The essence of localization is intricately connected to being accountable to affected people, with the communities themselves positioned at the centre of the response. For more details on Accountability to Affected People (AAP), please refer to **Chapter G.2.4** above. Localization by its very nature goes beyond the humanitarian sphere and hence is also crosscutting to development and peace efforts.

The underlying principles of localization

Central to localization is a culture characterised by fair, principled and substantive partnerships (please refer to [Principles of Partnership](#). It means acknowledging and using the strengths of local, national, and international partners. This requires addressing power imbalances and biases that have historically disadvantaged local and national actors and affected communities. The main aspects include learning from each other, building trust, working together effectively, and being accountable.

Likewise, humanitarian actors need to redefine the concept of capacity development as capacity sharing — a collaborative process where international actors and local/national actors can mutually support, benefit, and learn from each other. This entails enhancing participation and backing for locally driven coordination and local leadership. Moreover, capacity sharing highlights the need for more gender balance and diverse representation in local leadership. It is crucial for both international and local/national humanitarian actors to avoid replicating or worsening negative power dynamics in their work.

Why Localization Matters: Key Considerations

- **L/NAs play a pivotal role in enhancing contextual understanding, access, and response times.** As the primary and final responders in a crisis, they possess distinct advantages over their international counterparts, leveraging their in-depth knowledge of the context and closer proximity to affected communities for quicker and more targeted assistance. Therefore, it is crucial to involve L/NAs that represent people in all their diversities.

- It is crucial to acknowledge that the nature of localization varies across locations. **Successful localization demands a context-specific approach influenced by factors such as the diverse experiences and capacities of local and international entities, the scope for L/NAs and international actors to operate neutrally and independently, the prevailing political and social context, community power dynamics, the needs and interests of affected populations, and the technical aspects of programs.** What proves effective in one context may not necessarily apply in another. While certain settings with an international response may pose challenges to localization, these contextual differences should not serve as reasons for inaction. Instead, L/NAs should be consistently invited to participate in structures and actively integrated into planning and other decision-making processes.

- **Ensure a principled approach.** Participation in humanitarian action by all actors is contingent upon respect for humanitarian principles. All international, national and local actors must work together to uphold an independent, impartial, and neutral approach. This means that UNDAC team members need to be well versed in explaining and operationalising the humanitarian principles to local responders and communities that are involved in response and coordination.

Who plays a critical role?

- Humanitarian Coordinator and members of the Humanitarian Country Team.
- A broad range of L/NAs at all levels, including the sub-national level to anchor and concretize the process.
- International actors, including international organisations implementing the response or acting as partners, intermediaries and donors. This also includes UNDAC.
- Inter-cluster/sector coordination group and clusters/ sectors.
- Donors
- CERF funding
- Country-based Pooled Fund Advisory Boards

What can UNDAC do to foster localization?

What follows is a comprehensive checklist and good practice tips that align with UNDAC's functions and provide practical guidance for fostering localization efforts in UNDAC missions.

Respect

- At all times, respect L/NAs, their leadership and their existing coordination mechanisms. Ensure you are aware of what local/national coordination mechanisms exist before you try to establish new ones. Ensure that L/NAs are at the centre and in the lead, provided they wish to lead / this does not pose danger to their safety and security and does not negatively affect affected people.

- Acquire comprehensive knowledge about the country, the context, the culture and customs, as is mentioned in the Checklist for Personal Preparedness, which is essential to demonstrate respect.

Language

- **Avoid using language that fosters artificial divisions** within the humanitarian community, steering clear of terms that create an 'us' versus 'them' dynamic. The metaphors employed should be chosen carefully to prevent the reinforcement of biases, especially those rooted in Western superiority.

- **Be mindful that the terminology used carries significant weight in shaping roles, relationships, power dynamics, and the prioritisation of activities.** Inappropriate language can hinder collaboration among equals, impede the acknowledgment of local expertise, distort power dynamics, and diminish the potential for independent, self-directed collective action.

- Actively seek opportunities to **integrate local languages.** This includes ensuring translation/ interpretation into local languages (ensuring equity in case different groups speak different

local languages), understanding local concepts where direct translations are not available, and ensuring the voices of those who don't speak the dominant languages are amplified.

- In the UNDAC Toolbox, you can find an exemplary [non-exhaustive language guide from OXFAM](#) that might be useful to be more aware of language sensitivities. You are always encouraged to look for the latest guidance and developments.

Strengthen Local Engagement

- Actively engage with representatives of L/NAs to understand the local context, dynamics, and response requirements. Facilitate knowledge exchange and collaboration.
- Address barriers to engagement: Collaborate with coordination structures to identify and address barriers hindering L/NA engagement, such as language, cultural differences, and logistical challenges. Advocate for solutions to improve inclusivity.

Promote Meaningful Participation and Leadership

- Encourage coordination bodies (ICCG/ISCG, clusters/sectors) to consider L/NA participation and leadership. Highlight the role their local partners play in partnership-based/joint humanitarian response at cluster and other humanitarian coordination forum meetings.
- When incorporating LNAs into coordination mechanisms, ensure their participation is genuinely meaningful, going beyond mere checkbox exercises or superficial representation. Take the initiative to consult L/NAs thoroughly and actively listen to their inputs. Additionally, it is crucial to build trust through open dialogues and transparent information sharing whenever feasible.

Integration and Collaboration:

- Involve the AAP focal point in directing and integrating localization efforts within the response-wide AAP strategy.
- Ensure guidance and documents are available in national languages and provide translation support. Ensure they are accessible to all your partners.

- Consider logistical requirements that are conducive to L/NA needs in meetings, both in-person and virtual, including meeting frequency, location, and modes of transport. For example, women might not be able to attend meetings in the evening since they need to take care of their children and/or have security concerns.
- Advocate for greater inclusion of L/NAs in the response in general.
- Support L/NAs to contribute to the 3/4/5Ws matrix.
- Disaggregate data in 3W matrix to show L/NA contributions.
- Ensure key members of the HCT/Cluster Lead actively engage and collaborate with L/NAs in information sharing. Look for a list of L/NAs or consider mapping L/NAs such a list/mapping does not exist yet.
- Integrate localization practices and strategies into key planning documents, especially the HRP. Advocate for LNAs to receive funding.

Capacity Sharing and Analysis:

- Involve L/NAs throughout the process, from the beginning to the end, capitalising on their knowledge of the local context.
- Identify and address analysis capacity needs of L/NAs.
- Integrate L/NA data into analyses, including collecting data disaggregated by sex, age, and disability.

Advocacy/Reporting

- Advocate with donors to increase and ensure adequate funding to L/NA organisations.
- Highlight the added value of local and national organisations in the response in terms of access, acceptance, and accountability to affected people.
- Ensure that response monitoring tools include disaggregated data to report on the achievements and contributions of L/NAs to the response.

G.5 Facilitating humanitarian access

Humanitarian access refers to the ability of humanitarian actors to reach affected populations and for those populations to access necessary humanitarian assistance and services. Unimpeded and sustained access is fundamental for establishing operations, evaluating needs, monitoring assistance, and ensuring the movement of essential goods and personnel to and within affected areas.

Various types of constraints can hinder or obstruct humanitarian access. Frequently, the combination of multiple constraints leads to limited access conditions. Access constraints may include, but are not limited to:

- Limited or damaged infrastructure, such as damaged roads, destroyed bridges, a lack of functioning airports or seaports, energy grid failures, and/or telecommunications blackouts, particularly following a climate-related disaster or natural hazard;

- Adverse climatic or environmental conditions that can destroy infrastructure or create new barriers that hinder the delivery of humanitarian assistance, including heavy rains, flooding, or seasonal snow and ice;

- Difficult terrain, such as mountainous regions, dense forests, and remote areas, which can be inherently difficult to traverse and require specialised equipment or methods of transportation;

- Bureaucratic and administrative restrictions affecting humanitarian personnel and supplies, such as visa or importation restrictions;

- Diversion of aid, interference in assistance delivery and implementation of activities;

- Denial of the existence of humanitarian needs or entitlements to humanitarian assistance;

- Insecurity, active conflict or military operations; and

- Attacks on humanitarian personnel, assets, and facilities.

Understanding the affected population's characteristics is crucial, as different populations face different levels of risk and vulnerability, and vulnerable groups are more likely to experience specific constraints in accessing assistance. (Refer to

Subchapter G.2 for more insights on the centrality of protection).

UNDAC, with its focus on sudden-onset emergencies and rapid deployment, can also significantly support OCHA in facilitating access, despite its short-term presence in a country. Here are ways UNDAC can assist OCHA and ultimately the HCT in this endeavour:

- **Coordinating and liaising with relevant actors, including with military actors:** UNDAC members possess expertise in liaising with diverse stakeholders, including national authorities, military actors, and humanitarian partners (refer to **Subchapter G.10.3** for more insights on Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination (UN-CMCoord or CMCoord)). During their brief deployment, UNDAC members can liaise with existing access advisors in- country and offer support. For example, UNDAC teams can help facilitate meetings between new and existing actors and ensure that access remains a focal point during, for example, inter-cluster/inter-sector discussions and planning processes. In contexts without an OCHA presence in-country, UNDAC teams might consider incorporating an access advisor and establishing initial contacts and coordination mechanisms that OCHA can further build upon. These connections can serve as a foundation for ongoing engagement and negotiations to facilitate access for humanitarian actors.

- **Identifying, monitoring, and documenting access constraints:** UNDAC teams are equipped to conduct swift and comprehensive assessments in crisis-affected areas. They can promptly gather vital information on access constraints, including bureaucratic hurdles, safety risks, or infrastructure challenges. UNDAC teams can provide data within the Access Monitoring and Reporting Framework (AMRF), a global OCHA tool to collect and analyse data on the impact of access constraints on the humanitarian response. Access data can be shared with OCHA and the HCT, assisting in their access monitoring efforts and informing subsequent strategies. UNDAC teams can ensure the proper documentation of access-related information and processes they initiate during their deployment. This documentation can serve as a reference for OCHA and subsequent responders, providing valuable insights

and recommendations for future intervention. Reporting on access should be considered in the UNDAC Plan of Action and Handover strategy from the start.

- **Addressing access constraints through engagement and negotiations:** In some contexts, achieving access requires engagement and negotiations with government officials, de facto authorities, non-state armed groups (NSAGs), affected populations and other relevant stakeholders. GA Resolution 46/182 mandates the Emergency Relief Coordinator to facilitate and coordinate the delivery of assistance. As a result, OCHA is mandated to conduct engagement and negotiations and should be consulted for advice and support.

How to Prepare and Conduct Negotiations: Practical Tips

- **Clear objectives:** It is crucial to set clear objectives prior to the engagement. This facilitates an honest conversation. While contexts will vary, the goal of the first meeting is often to build trust, establish a point of contact and crucially, to get the second meeting.

- **Context and attitude:** Understanding the context, being polite and respectful are very important to establish and nurture a relationship. The HNU can support with context and stakeholder analysis, as well as advice on engagement, in politically complex environments.

- **Gather information:** An important step is gathering information on previous negotiations with the interlocutors, who may be waiting for an answer from a previous engagement by the UN or another humanitarian actor. Gather information on any other ongoing negotiations with these groups in parallel—for example, by NGOs present in the area—to prevent a possible cherry-picking scenario. Equally, make sure to inform relevant humanitarian actors about the engagement (ensure a unified approach within the UN).

- **Building trust:** It is important to communicate openly and clearly and explain the role and mandate of UNDAC and its activities. Communicate on what UNDAC's expectations are for this engagement (without making demands) and listen to the interlocutors (their point of view, concerns or ideas on what assistance is needed).

- **Manage expectations:** Identify what assistance and services can be provided by humanitarian actors before the engagement. Avoid raising expectations or making promises that cannot be fulfilled.

- **Setting ground rules:** Briefly explain the fact that this engagement is purely of humanitarian nature and with respect to humanitarian principles.

- **Who should be part of the negotiations team:** The negotiations team should be small, maximum two people. The important consideration is not the grade/level of staff who will engage but rather their interpersonal skills, empathy and emotional intelligence.

- **Language skills:** At least one of the two people should speak the local language.

- **Gender:** Ideally, the team would consist of a man and a woman. Approaching interlocutors with humbleness and respect but showing UNDAC's commitment to UN values on gender equality and humanitarian principles (neutrality and impartiality) makes a strong point.

- **Location:** It is recommended to show good will and make yourselves available to meet the interlocutors in the location they suggest (while ensuring staff security and safety).

- **Informing national authorities:** Engaging with all parties is part of OCHA's mandate. Keeping national authorities informed of engagements shows honesty and maintains neutrality and impartiality.

Access in Countries Where OCHA is Present

In countries where OCHA is already present, OCHA plays a central and leading role in coordinating efforts to establish, maintain, and expand access for humanitarian actors. OCHA chairs or co-chairs the Humanitarian Access Working Groups (HAWGs) which function as a key platform alongside the Inter-Cluster/Inter-Sector group to facilitate humanitarian access in support of the HCT. The core activities of HAWGs include, among others, enhancing information sharing, identifying access priorities, and developing shared positions and advocacy messages on access.

For OCHA on Humanitarian Access refer to the following resources: Humanitarian Access on the

OCHA Website, the OCHA Minimum Package of Services on Humanitarian Access, Jan 2019 and OCHA on Message: Humanitarian Access.

Access in Countries Where OCHA is Not Present

In the absence of OCHA presence in-country, access-related inquiries should be directed to OCHA headquarters, specifically to the UNDAC Mission Focal Point or directly to the Policy Advice and Planning Section (PAPS), the Civil-Military Coordination Service (CMCS), or the Humanitarian Negotiations Unit (HNU), depending on the nature of the access issue. If the issues involve tactical access troubleshooting with civil authorities or military, the CMCoord Officer in the UNDAC Team or CMCS can provide assistance. See **Chapter G.10.3** on CMCoord for more guidance.

References to:

- **Chapter B** (UNDAC Mission Cycle, Plan of Action and Handover)
- **Chapter E.1.5** (Guide for UNDAC Team Leaders)
- **Chapter G.10.3** (CMCoord and Access)
- **Chapter F** (Situation function: IM, A&A, reporting)
- **Chapter G.2** (Centrality of Protection and quality response)

G.6 Inter-Cluster/Sector Coordination (ICC/ISC)

In situations requiring the establishment of several clusters (or sectors), it is important to ensure that these groups work together to maximise the collective output. The main difference between clusters and sectors lies in their leadership structure. In a cluster system, the UN lead agency takes the lead role, with governmental sectoral services serving as co-leads. Conversely, in the sectoral approach, it is the opposite. This means that in a cluster system, the UN plays a more dominant role compared to the sector approach. While the end result may often be similar, it is important to note this distinction which may, at times, still be ambiguous in practice.

See also **Section A.3.2** for general information on the Cluster Approach, and the 'IASC Cluster Coordination Reference Module' found in the UNDAC Toolbox.

A key function for OCHA (and UNDAC) in a humanitarian operation is to facilitate inter-cluster/sector coordination to ensure there is a shared understanding of needs and an agreement on a joint strategy to meet those needs, to define resources (including funding), and to ensure the RC/HC and the HCT (if it is set up) is kept abreast of key inter-sectoral concerns.

Purpose

Inter-cluster/sector coordination facilitates joint analysis and planning, agreeing on prioritisation of needs, definition of the operational priorities and strategy (geographic areas and vulnerable groups), and avoiding gaps and duplication in service delivery as well as monitoring and reporting on access constraints. It allows the clusters to jointly identify interrelated concerns, e.g., humanitarian access constraints, poor water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) conditions that are likely to lead to major health problems, and make best use of resources, e.g., taking advantage of a planned food distribution to conduct a measles vaccination campaign. It considers the different approaches and modalities of providing assistance in the most effective manner, e.g., use of cash vs. in-kind assistance. Working together in this way allows assistance to be provided in a sensible, joined up manner, using common assumptions and adhering to the same principles. It promotes consideration of protection issues that impact all sectors and helps factor in how to ensure that services are mindful of gender, age and disability challenges of populations being served.

Function

Inter-cluster/sector coordination is a cooperative effort between the clusters/sectors that improves the quality of the response. Where several clusters or sectors are established, OCHA/UNDAC should set up an Inter-Cluster Coordination Group / Inter-Sector Coordination Group (ICCG/ISCG) at the earliest opportunity and ensure that regular meetings are held. It is important that the ICCG/ISCG supports

the work of the cluster/sector coordinators in a meaningful manner and the role of the Inter-Cluster/Sector Coordinator is critical. The role includes several functions: advisor, facilitator, supporter, and influencer. It is essential to encourage collaboration, sharing of information and building trust, both with the cluster coordinators as well as amongst them. The ICCG/ISCG is accountable to the RC/HC and reports to the HCT through OCHA.

The ICCG/ISCG should ensure that sufficient linkages between the clusters/sectors and national organisations and line ministries are established and maintained. The clusters may be led or co-led by national entities and be natural partners to include in the ICCG/ISCG.

The Inter-Cluster/sector Coordinator's role extends beyond that of a meeting convenor. S/he should bring an added value in terms of knowledge, guidance, and motivation to enhance the quality of the work of the clusters. To do this, the Inter-Cluster/sector Coordinator must develop a very good understanding of the local context (political, social, security) and of the main concerns of each of the sectors. It is also important to be proactive and develop strong links with the most relevant operational actors, both national and international NGOs, Red Cross/Red Crescent, and UN agencies, and to be informed of their activities and their constraints. The Inter-Cluster/Sector Coordinator should, as often as possible, go on field missions, meet with affected people, local authorities, non-state actors, etc., to have an accurate understanding of the humanitarian landscape. The Inter-Cluster/Sector Coordinator should work closely with OCHA's IM function to ensure that IM tools and services are fully utilised to support inter-sectoral analysis. These proactive actions will allow the Inter-Cluster/Sector Coordinator to bring substance and added value to the role, and to offer knowledge of the context and local dynamics to ensure the response is principled, adapted to local realities, and takes into consideration 'do no harm' norms (see also **Section A.1.1**). While OCHA/UNDAC is responsible for facilitating inter-cluster/sector coordination, all clusters/sectors have a responsibility to contribute to the collective work of the ICCG/ISCG.
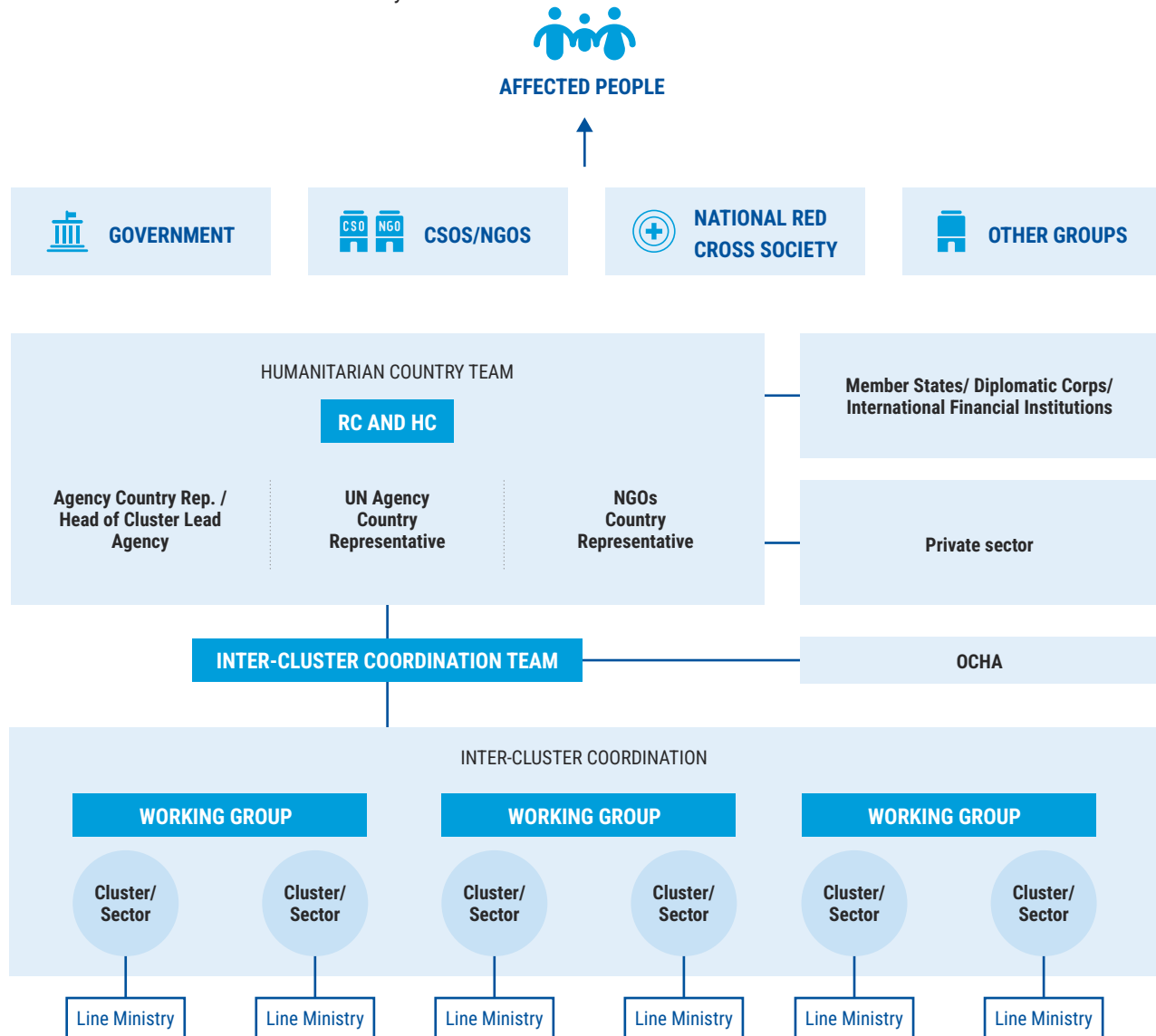
Key Responsibilities

The ICCG/ISCG tracks and monitors the response and identifies key issues and developments that the RC/HC and HCT must be informed of. It identifies and transmits to the HCT the larger strategic questions that the HCT needs to address to provide a principled and effective response. Please see **Figure G.6** below, showing the ICCG as part of the main humanitarian coordination structures at country level.

Figure G.6: Humanitarian Coordination Structure
Humanitarian Coordination at the Country Level

AFFECTED PEOPLE

| GOVERNMENT | CSOS/NGOS | NATIONAL RED CROSS SOCIETY | OTHER GROUPS |

HUMANITARIAN COUNTRY TEAM

RC AND HC

| Agency Country Rep. / Head of Cluster Lead Agency | UN Agency Country Representative | NGOs Country Representative |

Member States/ Diplomatic Corps/ International Financial Institutions

Private sector

INTER-CLUSTER COORDINATION TEAM

OCHA

INTER-CLUSTER COORDINATION

| **WORKING GROUP** | **WORKING GROUP** | **WORKING GROUP** |

| Cluster/ Sector | Cluster/ Sector | Cluster/ Sector | Cluster/ Sector | Cluster/ Sector | Cluster/ Sector |

| Line Ministry | Line Ministry | Line Ministry | Line Ministry | Line Ministry | Line Ministry |

The **Standard Terms of Reference (ToR)** for Inter-Cluster/Sector Coordination Groups highlights the following key responsibilities of the ICCG/ISCG:

- Supporting service delivery across clusters/sectors:

  » Identifying and facilitating multi-sectoral or joint programming. Where inter-sector response mechanisms are in place, e.g., joint rapid response mechanisms, the ICCG/ISCG may support and oversee these.

  » Supporting sub-national level coordination groups to facilitate effective humanitarian response.

» Informing, advising and alerting the HCT of operational priorities and response gaps, including access constraints. This includes regularly updating the RC/HC and HCT on critical strategic issues that require their attention and action.

» Taking action or advising the HCT on action required on issues impacting the effective delivery of the response across clusters including in relation to funding, access, logistics, civil-military coordination or coverage.

- Supporting analysis, planning, and monitoring across clusters/sectors:

  » Coordinating needs assessments (joint assessments if required) including assessment

planning and analysis across clusters. See also **Section F.2.2** for more on assessment coordination and analysis planning.

» Undertaking joint analysis and monitoring to identify needs, risks, threats, vulnerabilities, and capacities from a multi-sectoral perspective.

» Carrying out cross-sectoral response analysis that considers the use of and informs decisions on cash and in-kind assistance or joint programming interventions.

» Reaching agreement on joint strategic objectives and the draft Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) (or Flash Appeal) to be recommended to the HCT.

» Recommending adaptations and changes to the response based on a continuous gap analysis and monitoring, including information and feedback gathered through on-going community engagement.

» Elaborating funding requests and contributing to allocation papers (CERF/country-based pooled funds) in a collaborative manner, based on agreed priorities across sectors.

» Enabling and working in coordination with an Information Management Working Group (IMWG) to establish the information management capacities, tools and approaches required to support operational response.

• Ensure the centrality of protection and quality response, as outlined in **Chapter G.2**:

» Integrating gender, age, inclusion, and diversity characteristics of the affected populations into the response across clusters, including the use of sex and age-disaggregated data.

» Supporting community engagement across clusters to ensure the views of affected people inform decision-making and operations.

» Mainstreaming protection across all clusters in the implementation of the response and ensuring protection is integral to and informs all operational decision-making and HCT updates. See also G.2 for more on Protection and Quality Programming.

» Integrating early action, preparedness and early recovery across all clusters as part

of efforts to foster resilience in a crisis or post-crisis context.

• Promote and integrate coordination activities in favour of cash and Voucher-based intervention.

• Promote the active involvement and participation of local and national humanitarian organisations, especially women-led organisations, organisations of persons with disabilities, etc. within the inter-agency coordination.

• Ensure coordination and linkage with development and peace programmes to promote information sharing and integrated programming when feasible, possible and coherent with the response context.

• Promote the respect and implementation of PSEA IASC requirements in emergency settings by sectors/clusters members.

• Advocacy: Identifying core advocacy concerns, such as humanitarian access, preventing and addressing violations of international law or durable solutions for displacement, and requesting the HCT to advocate or provide strategic direction on these issues accordingly.

Linkages for effective coordination

Ensuring effective inter-cluster/sector coordination goes beyond the confines of the ICCG/ISCG meeting. The ICCG/ISCG unique overview of inter-sectoral needs, gaps, and operational challenges means that it should play an important role in updating the HCT on the progress of the response, providing analysis that can guide the HCT in its strategic decision-making, and request guidance from the HCT on how to address major policy issues that impact how assistance is provided. A large portion of the responsibility will fall to OCHA/UNDAC to ensure that the link is made between the ICCG/ISCG and the HCT, such as sharing with the ICCG/ISCG key decisions made by the HCT and taking valuable operational information and analysis to the HCT from the ICCG/ISCG.

It is important to recall that UN agency representatives on the HCT are representing both their cluster and their agency. In this regard, Cluster/Sector Coordinators and Cluster Lead Agency (CLA) heads are encouraged to brief each other before and after HCT meetings. When needed and for specific

topics, ICCG/ISCG members may be invited to HCT meetings. Ad-hoc joint meetings between HCT and ICCG/ISCG may also be considered pertinent.

Equally important is to ensure a strong link between the ICCG/ISCG, national counterparts, and sub-national coordination bodies. The ICCG/ISCG, usually sitting at national level, risks being isolated from field operations unless cluster coordinators and the OCHA/UNDAC Inter-Cluster/Sector Coordinator travel frequently to the field and visit national authorities. At the same time, ensuring that field coordination representatives can regularly feed into ICCG/ISCG discussions and are kept abreast of capital-level discussions both at the ICCG/ISCG and the HCT is critical to ensuring quality coordination.

If the operation context requires, it is also possible to set up regional/sub-regional inter-cluster/sector working groups in the field. In those cases, the coordinators of the regional/sub-regional working groups will be invited to the national ICCG/ISCG meetings to ensure the linkage and coordination.

See also **Section G.1** for more on coordination methodology.

G.7 Private sector engagement

In a humanitarian emergency, local businesses are among the first responders on the ground. With their resources and technical expertise, information about the local context, and their network of local partners, they can immediately mobilise to support the response. In ideal scenarios, private sector actors work closely with their national and local government partners, and with other humanitarian agencies such as non-government organisations and UN agencies to ensure coordinated efforts during the response. In some cases, private sector representatives are included in national and local response coordination mechanisms and even in humanitarian country teams, working alongside humanitarian agencies. However, there will still be instances where private sector actors will conduct their response activities independently and without necessarily coordinating formally with humanitarian agencies. Therefore, it is important for UNDAC team members to identify, whenever possible and applicable, opportunities to engage with the private sector at different phases of the response.

Some of the common activities conducted by the private sector during an emergency may be structured in terms of the following response objectives:

Company-level emergency response measures:	• Mobilising financial and in-kind resources to assist employees and their families in affected areas. • Deploying emergency response teams to assist in search and rescue.
Business continuity and delivery of critical services and goods to customers:	• Mobilising technical teams and equipment to restore lifeline utilities such as telecommunications and electricity.
Supporting wider humanitarian response to affected communities:	• Providing financial and in-kind contributions to support calls for donations by government partners and other humanitarian agencies. • Deploying technical equipment and expertise to support humanitarian response operations (e.g., deployment of mobile treatment plants or emergency telecommunications equipment to affected areas, providing logistics support to transport relief items). • Coordination and information sharing via business emergency operations centres.

Reminders for UNDAC team members when engaging with the private sector

Depending on the nature and gravity of the emergency, private sector actors will usually be interested in contributing to humanitarian response activities in the first and second week of the emergency. It is therefore critical for UNDAC team members to gather information early in the response phase on the private sector actors involved as well as their response activities.

Here are a few reminders for UNDAC team members when it comes to private sector engagement during emergencies:

- The **private sector** refers to a **diverse range of actors** which can include multinational companies, national companies, small and medium-sized enterprises, and business networks such as chambers of commerce and industries. These entities will have varying approaches and levels of engagement when it comes to supporting humanitarian response. UNDAC team members can classify private sector actors based on their response activities and determine the most appropriate way of engaging them. For example, multinational companies and large national companies will have more capacity to support relief distribution operations compared with smaller enterprises. National and local business chambers can help act as focal points when it comes to sharing information on humanitarian priority needs given their network of businesses. Small and medium-sized enterprises, while with limited capacity compared with larger firms, can provide valuable information on priority needs and status of local markets, especially in hard-to-reach areas.

- **Engagement does not necessarily mean partnerships.** Private sector engagement can start with getting to know how private sector actors are supporting humanitarian response and sharing information to facilitate better coordination.

- **Business networks** such as national or local business chambers, trade associations and private sector platforms such as CBi Member Networks and/or UN Global Compact Networks (both of which are networks of companies that work with the UN and other humanitarian and development partners) **can help act as a neutral broker between humanitarian agencies and individual companies.** This proves to be more effective in terms of sharing information on private sector activities and can minimise potential due diligence issues, most especially since in some cases, these business networks are included in national and local disaster management councils and coordination mechanisms.

Checklist for UNDAC Team Members on private sector engagement:

- **Engage with the private sector from day one.** The private sector is already on the ground, with resources, technical expertise and often greater initial situational awareness than international humanitarian responders. Check with OCHA's Private Sector Engagement Focal Point for the mission or with OCHA's Integrated Private Sector Unit if there is a CBi Member Network, a UN Global Compact Network or other business network active in the country. Liaise with the mission's Private Sector Engagement Focal Point to gather and share information on private sector activities on the ground.

- **Clarify the nature and objective of your engagement** with private sector actors. If a company offers direct support to UNDAC team members, such as in the case of transportation to move base camp equipment and team members, assess whether the support might pose safety and/or reputational risks to the team and to the UN. The [UN's guidelines on a principle-based approach to the cooperation between the United Nations and the business sector](#) advocate a principle-based approach to collaboration with businesses. While acknowledging the benefits, they highlight the need to observe the general principles of the UN Charter and address potential risks, including reputational concerns, through due diligence. OCHA has an Integrated Private Sector Unit that can assist UNDAC team members in assessing the proposed nature of engagement with a private sector actor. The unit can also deploy a Private Sector Engagement Focal Point to help coordinate offers of support from the private sector. To request this support, email ochaprivatesector@un.org. Note that any offer of support from private sector actors that are considered commercial should be directed to the UN Global Marketplace.

- **Ensure that the private sector is represented in meetings, assessments and other activities during the response.** Acknowledge private sector as important national and local actors in the response and ensure that the private sector is represented in HCT meetings and briefings, assessments and other activities, wherever possible.

- **Share information management products with the private sector.** Ensure that information on private sector response activities and their contributions are captured in humanitarian information products (e.g., situation reports, 3W reporting, humanitarian needs and response overview). Identify opportunities to involve private sector actors in data collection and analysis. The private sector's in-depth knowledge of local infrastructure, also through their supply chains and employees, could be used as a source of information to increase situational awareness.

- **Identify concrete needs and requests for support from the private sector.** Coordinate with the mission's Private Sector Engagement Focal Point and with other humanitarian agencies to identify concrete needs and requests for support from the private sector. Identifying these key asks would assist in clarifying and providing more specific guidance to private sector actors as to 'how' they can engage directly in humanitarian response and 'who' they need to contact. Be as specific as possible, e.g., 'We need four two-ton trucks, including petrol, with drivers, to transport base camp equipment from location A to location B.'

Useful references

- How OCHA engages with the private sector: https://www.unocha.org/engagement-private-sector
- Humanitarian Connectivity Charter (engagement with the mobile industry in preparedness, response and recovery).

G.8 Humanitarian response planning and humanitarian financing

An important element of the HPC is humanitarian response planning and financing which starts in the very early phase of the response. In the first days following a disaster, the RC/HC and HCT will have to decide on the need for an initial joint response plan which is consulted amongst all humanitarian actors. To the extent possible, national authorities should participate in its development.

Initial response planning and Flash Appeal

An initial response plan in sudden-onset emergencies is commonly called a Flash Appeal (FA), for which specific Inter-Agency Standard Committee (IASC) guidance and good practice exists. The FA is an initial inter-agency/sector humanitarian overview of priority needs, response strategy and fundraising tool, based on a rapid appraisal of the emergency's scale and severity. The FA articulates the HCT's common vision for humanitarian action in-country over the next few months, an initial response strategy including response priorities, actions to be taken at cluster/sector level, roles and responsibilities, and consolidated funding requirements for up to six months.

A FA is developed in the first 5-7 days following a major emergency requiring international assistance.

The **purpose of the FA** is to:

- Provide a first comprehensive and multisectoral overview of urgent needs based on available information and response strategy priority objectives.
- Avoid competing and overlapping single-agency appeals.
- Provide a framework for strategic, coordinated, and inclusive (local response actors) programming.
- Attract donor funding by presenting funding requirements by cluster/sector and possibly an inventory of associated response projects by individual organisations for each cluster/sector.

- Enable the public tracking of donor funding to the emergency, to indicate funding gaps.

An FA typically lasts 3-6 months and can be revised after 4-6 weeks based on a more in-depth understanding of needs and the response context. If the emergency will require sustained international assistance beyond the FA period, the initial FA can be extended or revised, or be further developed into a longer-term Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP), typically lasting 12 months. Analysis indicates that revising a Funding Appeal (FA) typically does not lead to increased funding. Therefore, revising an **FA should only occur under specific circumstances:**

- When improved needs analysis suggests updating response considerations and activities (e.g., planning figures, access, priorities).
- If the initial FA was issued for less than 90 days, and the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) decides to extend it for operational reasons.
- When the initial plan was issued with cluster/sector requirements only, the HCT may replace these with actual projects after the FA's launch, to enhance visibility for participating partners and support plan coordination. If the FA's content remains unchanged, it may include a brief note updating projects with a link to the project catalogue, eliminating the need for a plan revision.

The RC/HC initiates the FA in consultation with the HCT and in agreement with the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC). All humanitarian partners, including national authorities, can participate in developing the FA. Typically, national authorities are engaged, particularly via clusters/sectors' discussions with the relevant line ministries. UN agencies, international organisations and NGOs (both national and international) may include projects in the appeal. The Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement typically coordinates its response under the FA but often chooses to appeal for funding independently. Government bodies of the affected country can be included as technical partners in UN or NGO projects but cannot appeal directly for funds or be major recipients/implementers of funding generated through the FA.

A FA includes the following key elements and structure (with the latest template available here):

- Crisis overview
- Main humanitarian needs
- Strategic objectives
- Response strategy
- Sector strategies
- Financial requirements

It is important to notice that in some protracted crisis context the Flash Appeal can be used to complement the HRP to cover new humanitarian needs spread in an area out of the geographical scope of the HRP.

A collection of key resources and examples can be found at https://kmp.hpc.tools/facilitation-package/.

Humanitarian funding

While the FA presents the humanitarian strategy and appeal, humanitarian funds come from a range of sources including:

- National Governments
- Civil society
- NGO funds
- Bilateral donors
- Multilateral donors
- Corporate donations
- Individual donors
- Pooled funds

OCHA manages three main funding tools with the purpose of disbursing funds quickly to kick-start response while in-depth assessments and longer-term response planning are ongoing:

1. Emergency Cash Grant

Established by General Assembly Resolution 2816 in December 1971, the Emergency Cash Grant assists countries impacted by major disasters, with a maximum allocation of $100,000 per disaster. These grants aim to support immediate relief efforts such as local purchases of relief items,

logistical support for the relief operation, short-term recruitment of personnel, and unconditional cash transfer when local conditions don't facilitate direct procurement of relief items, but are not used for reconstruction or rehabilitation of physical infrastructure.

- **Responsibilities:** The Fund is managed by OCHA who assesses requests and allocates grants. The Operations and Advocacy Division (OAD) liaises with the country and regional offices, makes decisions, and reports on grant allocations. The OCHA Executive Office (EO) oversees financial authorizations, maintains grant balances, and prepares financial statements.

- **Requests:** Emergency Cash Grant requests can originate from various sources, such as the Office of the Resident Coordinator (RC) in affected countries, OCHA offices, the Permanent Mission in Geneva or New York, or directly from the affected country's Government. The Office of the RC/HC prepares a written request to the Director of OAD upon verification of the recipient country's request for international assistance.

- **Reporting:** Upon grant approval, OAD notifies the RC/HC, outlining terms and conditions. The RC/HC then determines implementation. A narrative report on fund usage, compiled by the RC/HC's office with OCHA support when needed, is addressed to OAD. The OAD Focal Point tracks these reports and shares them with EO.

Check the UNDAC Toolbox for Guidelines for Grant requests.

2. The Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF)

Established by the UN GA in 2005 as a fund for all and by all, the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) is one of the fastest ways to accelerate humanitarian assistance for people affected by conflict and disasters. CERF allocates funds to kick-start or scale up humanitarian response at the most critical phase of an emergency. UN funds and programmes and specialised agencies are eligible for CERF funding and implement CERF-funded activities in collaboration with local, national, and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs), host Governments, and Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies. Guided by the principles of neutrality and impartiality, CERF addresses life-saving needs in crises to ensure funding has the greatest impact.

Interventions are based on life-saving priorities collectively set by humanitarian partners on the ground using existing coordination mechanisms. Assessing the extent and seriousness of needs, and pinpointing individuals requiring urgent aid, necessitates coordinated planning and prioritisation, involving joint efforts by the UNCTs/HCTs and other humanitarian organisations. The RC/HC is responsible for leading and coordinating the CERF application process at the country level and is also accountable for the overall management and use of the CERF funds in the country. OCHA plays a central role in CERF-related negotiations and coordination at the global level. In humanitarian operations where OCHA's presence is absent or limited, the OCHA Regional Office or Resident Coordinator's Office assumes responsibility for engaging with CERF processes and facilitating necessary actions.

CERF pools voluntary donor contributions into a single fund. CERF's General-Assembly-mandated funding goal is $1 billion per year.

CERF issues grants through two windows:

- **The Rapid Response Window (RR)** provides assistance to new emergencies, to existing emergencies that have deteriorated significantly, or in response to time-critical needs, accounting for two thirds of CERF annual grants. The RR window also provides funding to anticipatory action frameworks and for early action allocations.

- **The Underfunded Emergencies Window (UFE)** delivers support for critical needs in underfunded and often protracted crises. Grants are allocated in two rounds per year, accounting for about one third of CERF annual grants.

CERF also has a loan facility of $30 million that provides vital upfront funding to eligible UN agencies at the onset of emergencies. These funds enable prompt initiation of emergency response activities, addressing potential delays in receiving contributions from donors.

For more information on CERF, see the CERF website: https://cerf.un.org/. Further guidance documents can be found in the UNDAC Toolbox.

3. The Country-Based Pooled Funds (CBPFs)

Country-Based Pooled Funds (CBPFs) are established in response to ongoing emergencies or escalating crises, and are managed by OCHA. The ERC/USG holds authority over and is accountable for all CBPFs. The CBPFs is managed by OCHA's country offices under the leadership of the RC/HC with guidance from the Fund's in-country Advisory Board, and in close collaboration with the humanitarian community. They play a key role in empowering humanitarian leadership and promoting coordination among humanitarian partners at the country-level.

CBPFs are multi-donor humanitarian funds and contributions to specific CBPFs are aggregated into pooled unearmarked funds. This approach creates critical volumes that can achieve greater impact especially within increasingly complex crises with multi-layered needs. These funds support critical projects led by organizations best positioned to respond, including international and national NGOs, as well as UN agencies. Allocation decisions are made through an inclusive and transparent process, aligning with priorities outlined in the Humanitarian Response Plans (HRPs) or where needed, in response to unforeseen emergencies.

The role of UNDAC:

Often the UNDAC team, and in particular OCHA staff on the team, will support the development of a FA which will borrow heavily from initial situation analyses by the UNDAC team, both remote and on-site. Initial response planning will occupy inter-agency/cluster meetings as of days 2-3. UNDAC may be asked to support these and should inject its operational understanding of the emergency. Initial UNDAC assessments and emerging situation analysis are key for shaping the initial response strategy under the FA, especially considering the anticipated evolution of the crisis, operational response priorities and delivery considerations.

FAs are based on needs, but usually there will be limitations in terms of implementation capacity and the duration of complementary international assistance. That means that not everything can be done in the FA and funding requirements need to be kept realistic. FAs which are inflated, or lack operational understanding and prioritisation, will neither have traction with donors nor operational relevance.

When there is no OCHA country office, remote assistance is available from the OCHA regional office or HQ which can support technical issues and drafting. Fluid communication between UNDAC, the OCHA country/regional office, the RC/HC and OCHA HQ is key.

UNDAC can further be requested to support the RC/HC with regard to the above-mentioned requests and applications for Grants/Funds, often with or through OCHA Country/Regional Offices, or in case there is no OCHA presence in the country. For more detailed guidance on funding applications, please refer to the UNDAC Toolbox.

G.9 Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA)

There is increased use of Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) in humanitarian action to address the needs of affected communities. Both donors and humanitarian responders are asking "Why not cash?", in an attempt to scale up the use of this flexible and effective modality. At the end of 2023, CVA made up over 20% of humanitarian response globally and has almost doubled in volume since 2020.

Providing cash, particularly with no restrictions or conditions (multi-purpose cash, MPC), can offer a more dignified alternative to traditional in-kind assistance by empowering people to prioritise their needs as they see fit. Cash can be a flexible and rapid response mechanism, particularly during the early stages of an emergency for mobile populations with rapidly changing needs. Moreover, the injection of cash into crisis-affected communities can stimulate local trade and markets, helping to speed recovery. It can also serve as an important bridge between humanitarian and development phases, especially when appropriate linkages are made with

Government social safety nets and vulnerability reduction programmes.

Humanitarian assistance, whether cash-based or in-kind, should be needs-based and context-specific. The appropriateness or feasibility of using cash depends on key conditions being in place, notably the existence and functioning of local markets, the acceptance, preference for and safety of using cash, the availability of transfer options, and the capacity of partners to implement cash programmes. If conditions do not exist and cannot be created, cash should not be used. Additionally, there are some needs that cannot be met by providing cash to households, such as critical infrastructure and health services, and psychosocial support. In designing humanitarian responses, actors must consider how cash, in-kind and service delivery might be used to best meet different needs.

The methods used to deliver CVA can vary widely and are depending on the context. In recent years, mobile money and digital payments have increased in scale. These forms of cash assistance are particularly used in large scale emergencies or in contexts where access may be more limited either due to political or physical constraints. Identifying the most effective mechanism for delivering cash will depend on the local context and actors should identify if existing cash transfer mechanisms already exist (e.g. social protection distribution systems) for possible scale up (as appropriate).

CVA coordination

To ensure cash can contribute to meeting humanitarian needs in the most appropriate, effective and efficient manner as part of an overall multifaceted humanitarian response, cash must be systematically and predictably coordinated and be part of the overall humanitarian coordination architecture from the beginning of every response.

Following the endorsement of the IASC Cash Coordination Model in 2022, the ICCG/ISCG is accountable for effective cash coordination. Cash Working Groups may be established (reporting to the ICCG/ISCG) to support the day-to-day coordination of CVA - including the coordination of multipurpose cash. The CWG priorities should

contribute, support, and influence the operational priorities of the ICCG/ISCG for the overall response. Where specific sectoral programmes are designed using a cash modality, these remain coordinated within their relevant cluster or sector as with any other type of assistance. Cash Working Groups also provide technical support to sectors and clusters to improve the coherence of cash, and vouchers are used as a modality within the wider response. Cash Working Groups should be established with a minimum of two co-chairs. Where an OCHA office is already present, or will be established for the duration of the response, OCHA is responsible for providing 'non-programmatic' co-chairmanship to these forums. Operational actors - including local and national actors - should provide the programmatic co-chair(s) in this structure. In some contexts, to support a mix of international and local/national actors, a third co-chair seat might be established.

Cash can have the greatest impact when delivered as a single multipurpose cash transfer. As MPC cuts across, involves, and supports various different sectors, MPC is coordinated via the CWG as a sub-group of the ICCG/ISCG. Host Governments should, where possible, play a strong role in cash coordination, including with a view to promoting relevant linkages with national social protection programmes.

Relevant issues for UNDAC in first phase response:

- From the very outset, identify risks and constraints that may limit the feasibility of cash and voucher assistance. Wherever CVA is possible, it should be considered first, as cash is an effective way to provide assistance to affected populations allowing them the possibility to choose based on their own priorities and needs. Therefore, consider the feasibility and appropriateness of using cash from the very outset, informing discussions on the most effective and efficient response options. For this purpose:

  » Liaise with the Assessment Working Group (AWG) (if a group exists) and gather information on all planned assessments, ensuring markets, essential services availability and questions regarding the preferences of affected populations for response delivery are included in all initial assessments. Encourage

joint and/or coordinated assessments wherever possible.

» Liaise with the Logistics Cluster/Sector on early supply chain and procurement assessments to support a feasibility assessment of the various modality options (e.g. whether cash or in-kind might be possible).

» Liaise with the Protection Cluster/Sector to analyse and identify potential risks associated with the implementation of Cash modalities, taking into account considerations related to gender, access for persons with disabilities, and other relevant factors (as outlined in **Chapter G.2**).

» Liaise with the OCHA Flash Appeal focal point (if planned) to ensure that basic information on markets and response modality options are included in the Flash Appeal.

» Identify existing cash transfer or social protection mechanisms that may be in place and relevant authorities who should be engaged with.

• Ensure cash is well integrated into the coordination platforms and processes from the very outset of the response.

• With a view to establishing a context-appropriate coordination architecture:

» Begin to gather information on which actors are considering cash or voucher assistance and the factors they are using to make this decision.

» Monitor as many cluster/sector meetings as possible for CVA issues and opportunities.

» If cash is feasible, OCHA is responsible - under the leadership of the HCT and ICCG/ISCG - to establish a Cash Working Group as a subgroup of the ICCG/ISCG, and advocate for relevant decisions by the RC/HC and HCT.

• With a view to integrating cash into the coordination platform and processes:

» Ensure that modality of assistance is addressed during the first HCT and inter-cluster/sector meetings and maintain cash as a standing item in the meetings that follow.

» Based on secondary data, develop an initial overview of cash feasibility, including information on market functioning, availability

of essential services, partner presence, and financial service provider presence and capacity. Consider existing government systems.

» Promote the consideration of cash-based responses as part of CERF requests, where feasible and appropriate.

• Ensure information management processes capture and illustrate any cash programmes as part of the regular reporting.

Tools for the implementation of CVA interventions are available online and translated in different languages. CALP is an organisation providing technical support and advice on the use of CVA modalities. Different key resources for needs assessment, management, implementation, and monitoring/evaluation of CVA intervention are available on their website: https://www.calpnetwork.org.

The IASC Cash Coordination Model provides clarity on coordination structures and the mandate of OCHA to lead cash coordination in IASC and mixed settings.

G.10 Coordination Cells

Part of the OSOCC methodology that distinguishes it from other functional organisational models is that functions and cells are expected to operate with a large degree of autonomy, servicing primarily the OSOCC's clients rather than reporting to the UNDAC Team Leader, RC/HC and HCT. Coordination cells especially, normally linked to the Operations Function of an OSOCC, will in many cases be separated from the main OSOCC facility.

Many countries have adopted components from the OSOCC concept and integrated them into their national contingency plans. For example, the Emergency Medical Team (EMT) coordination concept will in many cases be nationally owned as part of the Ministry of Health (MoH) emergency planning and may be operational even before the OSOCC is fully functional. Other operational coordination cells and mechanisms normally associated with the OSOCC, such as the Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination (UN-CMCoord or CMCoord) mechanism or the Urban Search and Rescue Coordination Cell (UCC), may also be operational and managed

by national authorities and be the natural point of contact for international relief teams.

In these cases, the OSOCC may only be supporting these coordination cells with staff, equipment, and information management and analysis capacities. The coordination cells will report directly to the respective governmental body, while links with the OSOCC will be maintained and information shared for overall analysis of need and response. In other cases, the cells will be staffed and operated fully by the UNDAC team with partners, while still being semi-detached from the main OSOCC and operate independently.

An inherent danger with this structure is that it can lead to what is referred to as 'silo-thinking'. The coordination cells may risk becoming too independent, focusing overly much on their own output, potentially reaching a situation where there is little or no communication between cells and little understanding of the interdependence of the OSOCC's larger output.

It is important to address this issue and ensure that, while coordination cells understand their primary role, they are also clear on how they should interact and what they need from each other and when. This requires regular information exchange between cells and in particular with the Assessment & Analysis (A&A) Cell, providing input to needs-based analysis outputs. Routines for this need to be developed, implemented and maintained in such a way that good internal coordination is achieved. See also **Section F.2** for more on the A&A Cell.

G.10.1 Urban Search and Rescue (USAR)

Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) involves search, rescue, and medical operations in collapsed structures due to, for example, earthquakes, hurricanes, floods, landslides, material decay, or explosion. People trapped within the voids of a collapsed structure often survive for many hours, even days. This 'lifesaving rescue window' provides an opportunity for search and rescue.

Non-USAR specialised emergency services (fire, police, and ambulance) and members of the local population can save lives from small structures, buildings made with light material (e.g., wood) or from surface space of larger structures. However, search and rescue of deeply entombed victims and those in structures with heavy material (e.g., concrete) require specialised teams with the necessary capabilities and resources (e.g., search and rescue dogs, search electronics, stabilising equipment, hazmat detection) to rescue those trapped under such conditions.

The **International Search & Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG)** is a global network of more than 90 countries and organisations and over 60 USAR teams have been classified as of 2024 under the United Nations umbrella. The network continually works towards strengthening and developing USAR response and coordination capacity among international USAR teams and their coordination with Local Emergency Management Authorities (LEMA). OCHA is the secretariat for the INSARAG network. INSARAG provides globally accepted guidelines for USAR operations and coordination, to foster standardised training, procedures, and structures for international USAR teams. The guidelines also aim to strengthen national level USAR. The GA RES 57/150 on Strengthening the Coordination and Effectiveness of International Urban Search and Rescue Assistance of 16 December 2002 endorses these guidelines.

During large scale USAR operations, effective coordination structures become a key component of a successful operation to rapidly deliver the appropriate resources to each rescue site. UNDAC can play an important part in supporting LEMA and INSARAG trained teams in the coordination process, also endorsed by GA RES 57/150. To be able to effectively support USAR coordination, UNDAC members must understand how USAR coordination – according to INSARAG methodology and structures – is established, maintained, and stood down, and how UNDAC can add value to USAR coordination. Similarly, the UNDAC members who support the USAR coordination, UNDAC USAR Liaison Officer (LO), can also ensure the linkages between the USAR response and the broader on-going humanitarian response.

This section outlines critical aspects of USAR coordination important for UNDAC members. For more on INSARAG and INSARAG Guidelines, including the UC Handbook (Chapter 8 on UNDAC), please refer to www.insarag.org.

G.10.1.1 USAR Team classification categories

An INSARAG USAR teams' classification can be **Heavy, Medium, or Light,** depending on their operational capacity and deployment period. Heavy and Medium Teams can operate 24 hrs/day (10 days/2 sites and 7 days/1 site respectively), while Light Teams are expected to operate 12 hrs/day for 5 days at one site.

In order to maintain qualified international USAR resources, the INSARAG community has developed a voluntary, independent peer review process named the **INSARAG External Classification (IEC)** and the **INSARAG External Reclassification (IER)**. INSARAG Classified Teams are self-sufficient and able to operate according to the INSARAG Guidelines.

The INSARAG USAR Team IEC/R process provides a global approach to ensure that there are well qualified and professional teams all around the world – especially close to potential disaster-prone areas – that are ready to respond at a moment's notice and operate upon globally accepted standards. The classification system also provides affected countries with information on the type of assistance they can expect to receive.

The USAR Directory lists USAR teams' capacities and classification status.

In addition to search, rescue, and medical capacity, classified teams are required to deploy USAR coordination capacity, personnel, and resources to ensure that INSARAG USAR coordination structures will be set up as part of the field operations whenever international USAR teams are mobilised. In this way, international USAR teams can immediately operate under the standard and common coordination methods wherever they deploy. Coordination training includes how to effectively link the INSARAG coordination structure to the government structure and work based on government lead objectives.

In missions, some of the international teams may not be INSARAG classified. Note that there are also teams that are INSARAG trained but have not yet completed their classification, or teams that have been INSARAG classified but their reclassification is overdue. Those teams have a good understanding of INSARAG coordination and are able to support international operations. If LO is not aware of the capacities of those teams, they can contact ERS INSARAG focal points. The UCC will include all teams in the coordination to the extent possible and try to pair non-trained teams with INSARAG classified teams. However, the LO should be aware that there might be teams operating in the affected country that do not wish to be part of the INSARAG coordination system.

G.10.1.2 INSARAG coordination locations

Reception & Departure Centre (RDC)

According to the INSARAG Guidelines, the first arriving USAR team (or teams) will set up an RDC for USAR teams and will therefore manage the processing of the USAR teams. If a USAR-RDC for USAR team is already set up by an INSARAG USAR team when the UNDAC team arrives, the UNDAC team/UNDAC-USAR Liaison Officer (LO) should introduce themselves to the USAR-RDC Manager, discuss any support needed and jointly decide on further measures. If there is no USAR-RDC and teams are still arriving when UNDAC arrives, the UNDAC team should check the VO for information about the RDC and contact ERS for information and next steps. For RDC-processing of other relief teams, see the OSOCC Guidelines.

The UC Handbook considers the follow **10 items as primary responsibilities of an RDC for USAR**:

Contact port authorities, ask permission to set up an RDC, and decide how and who is needed for collaboration.

Facilitate immigration and customs procedures for incoming teams.

Post location information and updates to the VOSOCC and ICMS

Register arriving/departing teams.

Deliver briefings on the disaster situation and USAR operations.

Share basic logistical information to incoming and outgoing teams.

Update the UCC about incoming team information.

Obtain information from UCC on where to direct incoming teams.

Direct teams to the UCC, and/or a BoO, and if requested by the UCC or LEMA, to rescue sites.

If possible, direct non-USAR sources ("sources" refers to USAR teams, resources, assets, and information) based on information given.

Regarding point 10, UNDAC should direct non-USAR response teams to the LEMA and/or the OSOCC based on information given, noting that those teams will be dealt with by the UNDAC members at the RDC. (e.g., NGO teams offering other response support, medical teams, or teams that bring relief aids.)

The RDC has three functions: Manager, Operations, and Support. The RDC is scalable to the demands of an event and the number of people working in each function can vary throughout the mission.

Figure G.7: RDC Functions

RDC MANAGER

RDC OPERATIONS   RDC SUPPORT
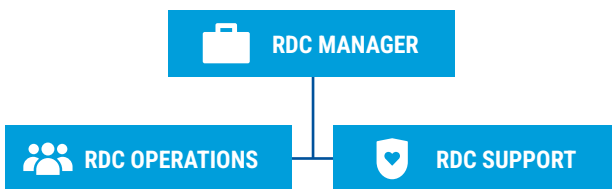
Further guidance is in the OSOCC Guidelines and in Section 3 of the UC Handbook.

USAR Coordination Cell (UCC)

The USAR Coordination Cell is set up by the first INSARAG USAR teams and is responsible for the coordination of international USAR teams for the USAR operations on behalf of the teams. The purpose of the UCC is to provide LEMA with a single point of contact for coordination, with skilled coordinators, thus helping LEMA coordinate international USAR teams, not taking over the operations.

The deployment of an INSARAG classified team is done under bilateral agreements between the Government of the responding country and the affected Government - making the country sending the team accountable for the team's performance.

The in-country international USAR coordination structure is organised according to the INSARAG guidelines and the UC Handbook and is part of the United Nations suite of international coordination systems.

INSARAG teams are trained to coordinate with each other, with LEMA and with UNDAC. A key role of UNDAC is to facilitate the building of coordination structures for UN entities and others, including USAR coordination.

The UCC will report to the OSOCC Manager for coordination purposes. The OSOCC manager reports to the UNDAC Team Leader, who in turn ensures that activities of the OSOCC (and therefore the UCC) are aligned with the strategic direction of the Government and the UN in-country (RC/HC, HCT). The UCC will also be in direct coordination with LEMA at the USAR operations level.

The UCC may or may not be set up in the same location as the OSOCC. It is more likely that the UCC will be at the (or a) USAR teams' base of operation (BoO), away from the main OSOCC).

The UCC manager strives from the onset of the operation to have a direct link to a LEMA liaison officer throughout USAR operations to discuss objectives and plans. UNDAC can play a pivotal role in assisting the UCC manager in forming that relationship, if needed.

The **primary responsibilities of the UCC** can be summarised into the 10 following items as described in the UC Handbook:

- Communicate with OCHA ERS, the LEMA, UNDAC team members, OSOCC, and international USAR teams.
- Liaise with LEMA on finding locations for a BoO, UCC, and for Sector Coordination Cell(s) (SCC(s)).
- Manage UCC team meetings.
- Post information and updates to the V-OSOCC and the ICMS.
- Share information on basic logistical support with in-country international USAR teams.
- Receive information from the RDC about team arrivals and inform the RDC where to direct teams.
- Develop a Plan of Action in line with the LEMA's objectives, while deploying the arriving international USAR teams to ensure even coverage of the disaster areas.
- Divide the area into sectors, in line with sectors developed by the LEMA.
- Prioritise worksites.
- Take charge of the use of the ICMS, assign and reassign teams to worksites and monitor their accomplishments.
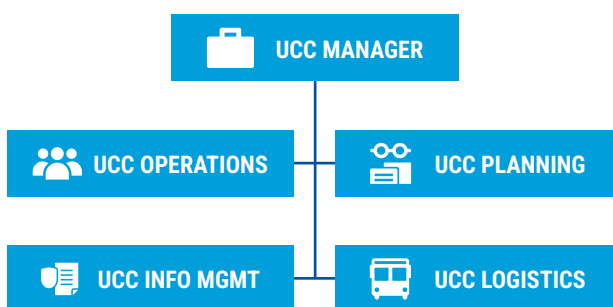
The UCC has **five functions:** Manager, Operations, Planning, Logistics, and Information Management. The UCC is scalable to the demands of an event and the number of people working in each function can vary throughout the mission.

UNDAC members preparing to support or guide a UCC for USAR teams should read Section 4 of the UC Handbook.
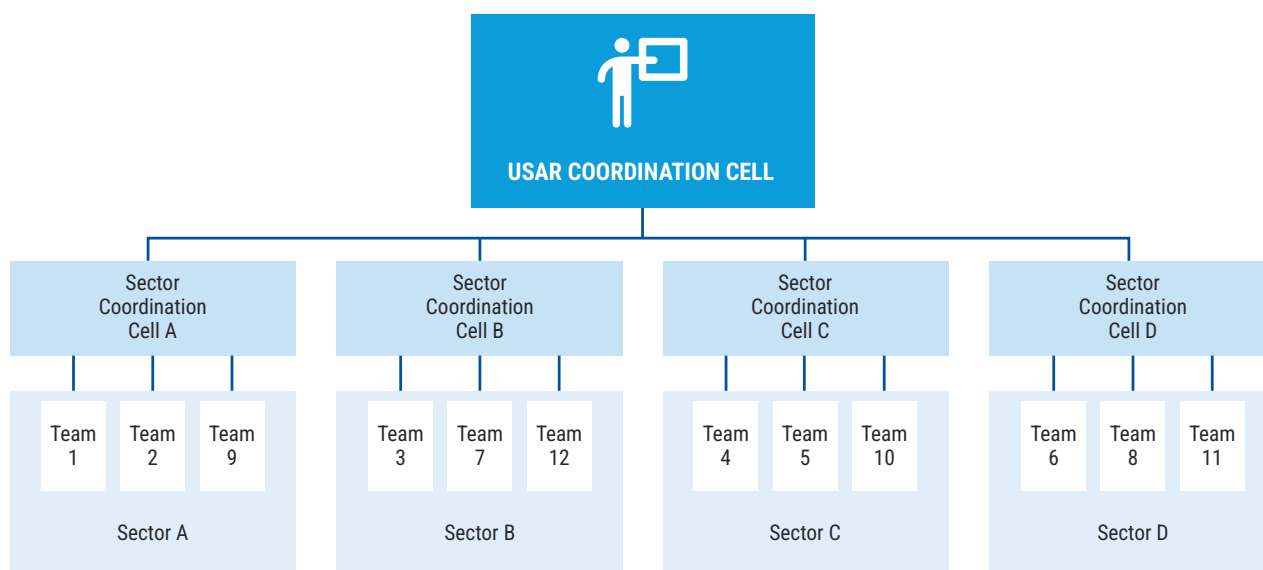
Sector Coordination Cell (SCC)

During large-scale operations, the UCC might decide to assign a USAR team to set up a Sector Coordination Cell (SCC) that becomes a coordination link between the UCC and the teams in that Sector, which reduces the number of teams that the UCC needs to communicate with. In keeping with the hierarchical structure, USAR teams in the sector communicate with the SCC which then communicates with the UC as shown below. In the event that a sub-OSOCC is established in the same sector as an SCC, and when relevant, "horizontal" communication will be held in addition to the "vertical" communication with the UC. In most cases, SCC - Sub-OSOCC communications will be limited to information sharing and local level support matters whereas USAR operational and technical issues will be dealt by the SCC with the UC (see **Figure G.9** below).

Figure G.8: UCC Functions

UCC MANAGER

UCC OPERATIONS

UCC PLANNING

UCC INFO MGMT

UCC LOGISTICS

Figure G.9: USAR Sector Coordination Structure
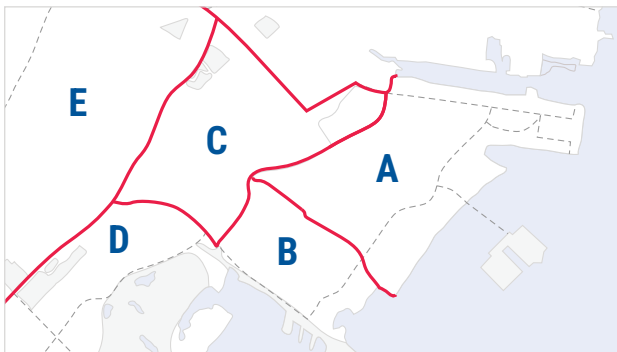

G.10.1.3 INSARAG internet platforms

Virtual OSOCC (VOSOCC) – The VOSOCC or "VO"is the first coordination hub for international USAR teams. The teams post information about their deployments and what is useful to all teams, such as conditions at the airport. Both the RDC and the UCC use the VOSOCC as a means of communication with USAR teams. The VO can be accessed by any individual who has created an account.

INSARAG Coordination and Management System (ICMS) – The ICMS is an INSARAG developed GIS based software that supports the USAR coordination by providing a real-time overview of the USAR teams' activities and as such supports the UC's decision-making process in particular for resource allocations (teams progresses, worksite allocation, support requests, etc) and reporting. The ICMS is a technical tool requiring dedicated credentials and training and can be edited only by INSARAG teams. UNDAC and others have viewing access.

UNDAC members preparing to support or guide an SDC for USAR teams should read Section 4 and 5 of the UC Handbook.

Information Sharing with the OSOCC

Given that the UCC is part of the OSOCC structure under the Operations Function, the UCC reports USAR activities (coordination, operations, rescues, etc.) to the OSOCC: first to the Operations Manager who then, in turn, reports to the OSOCC Manager. This information is communicated by the UNDAC team as needed, but at least once a day, through different communication channels and reports (e.g., situation updates, media message, communication with the LEMA, Donors, HCT, etc.). Vice versa, the OSOCC also shares relevant information with the UCC. In addition, the UNDAC USAR liaison (and other UNDAC members as needed) will have access to the ICMS system which will provide real-time updates on USAR activities.

G.10.1.4 USAR coordination procedures

Sectorisation

**Figure G.10: Sectorisation**

A disaster that warrants international USAR response is inherently a large-scale event. The extent of the destruction can be limited to a single city or be much greater, affecting numerous cities and even countries. In this case, geographical sectorisation of the affected areas is needed to ensure effective coordination of USAR efforts by improving the span of control, operational planning, assignment of the USAR Teams, and the overall management of the incident. The size and the number of the sectorisation depends, among other things, on the level of resources, the needs of the affected area, the volume of work, geographical features, and the scale of response.

Sectorisation should be undertaken at the earliest possible stage of a disaster response to ensure its effectiveness. It is expected that the LEMA has a sectorisation plan in place and that international USAR Teams follow it. The LEMA is likely to refer to local sectors such as neighbourhoods, parishes, etc. as the local government will have information organised in this format. However, if there is no sector plan, it should be developed at the earliest possible stage of a disaster response and in close liaison with the LEMA.

Worksite

Figure G.11: Worksite with identification
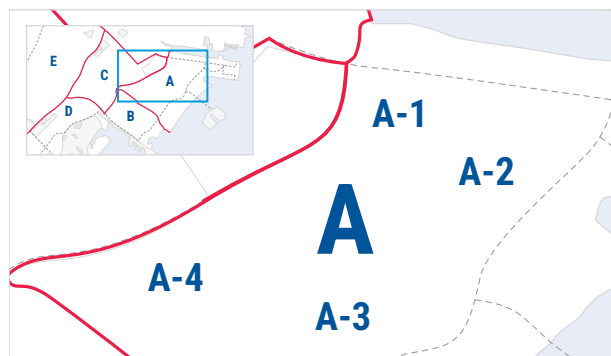
To allow effective coordination, it is essential to uniquely identify every site where significant USAR operations take place. Each of these sites will be known as a worksite. The term "worksite" can have more than one meaning, but the simplest definition is as follows, "Any site where significant USAR operations are carried out" (operations may be limited to search only). All worksites are given an identification (ID).

Assessment, Search and Rescue (ASR) Levels

USAR operations are divided into five levels which are conceptually in a sequential order. In reality, however, the teams may be assigned an ASR operation in any level order. This applies, for instance, in large scale operations where the LEMA identifies worksites before teams arrive, or when new areas are being opened throughout the response. Hence different levels of work are being carried out in different areas of the incident at the same moment. Work is therefore being carried out simultaneously at different ASR levels in different areas of the incident. The five ASR levels are as follows:

- **Level 1: Wide Area Assessment –** the preliminary survey of the affected or assigned area to determine the scope and the magnitude of the incident; identify the scope, location, and types of damage; estimate the urgent resource needs; develop a sectorisation plan, establishing priorities; identify general hazards, infrastructure issues, and potential BoO locations.

- **Level 2: Worksite Triage Assessment –** the main purpose is to identify specific and viable live rescue sites within the allocated sector to allow

assignment prioritisation and make a Plan of Action. One of the considerations for prioritising construction sites is the triage category. The key to triage is consistency when comparing triage factors. Triage factors include victim information, building information and operational constraints.

- **Level 3: Rapid Search and Rescue** – usually applies to the early stages of a large-scale event when only a relatively small number of teams are available compared to the number of sites that require search and rescue. These rapid search and/or rescue missions can normally be completed within one operational period, e.g., within a few hours.

- **Level 4: Full Search and Rescue** – should identify, locate, and rescue the small number of heavily trapped or entombed survivors that local rescuers, first responders, LEMA resources or ASR Level 3 operations did not reach.

- **Level 5: Total Coverage Search and Recovery** – often means operations carried out at a worksite to recover the deceased victims, which is usually done after the rescue phase.

It is important for UNDAC members to understand that when USAR teams conduct assessments, it is in line with these five ASR levels. The assessment focuses essentially on the USAR operational needs, which does not necessarily cover other humanitarian aspects that UNDAC or the UNCT/HCT analyse.

G.10.1.5 Activities for UNDAC Members at the RDC/UCC as USAR Liaison Officer (LO)

Establishing Relationships with USAR Coordination

It is UNDAC's role to support on-site coordination of international USAR operations. The UNDAC team and the UCC should establish liaison and coordinate with each other as soon as possible in the mission. The communication lines would usually be between an UNDAC designated liaison officer and the UCC manager. The support activities to be provided by UNDAC USAR liaison for the USAR coordination should be discussed between the UC Manager and the UNDAC TL at the onset of the response and will be based on the priorities and the resources available.

The UNDAC USAR Liaison should therefore:

- Monitor USAR operations throughout the mission,
- Reach out to the RDC and UCC Managers as soon as possible in the mission to share information and discuss collaboration,
- Facilitate effective communications lines and coordination between the RDC Manager, the OSOCC Manager, the UCC Manager, and the LEMA and report to the UNDAC Team Leader,
- Be in regular contact with the UCC to ensure smooth operations.

Advocacy Activities

UNDAC members should consider the following activities:

- With the LEMA and in support of the RDC/UCC (some of these activities can be done by ERS prior to the arrival of the UNDAC team):

  » Request and negotiate for the authorization to set up an RDC to coordinate the incoming USAR resources.

  » Request customs clearance of USAR equipment.

  » Request and/or negotiate for the set-up of a BoO and/or specific support to USAR activities.

  » Serve as a neutral broker between the UCC and the LEMA in discussions on BoO arrangements.

  » Support the UCC to ensure that USAR activities are aligned with and complement national response efforts following consultations with the authorities leading the response, including on issues on the need for sectors.

  » Be present and provide strategic support, having an oversight and considering the overall humanitarian response.

- With United Nations Agencies, International NGOs and USAR teams, UNDAC members should:

  » Ensure visibility on USAR activities through reporting,

  » Ensure coordination linkages between USAR activities, USAR Beyond-the-Rubble activities, and other Humanitarian areas of work, such as environmental emergency management,

shelter, emergency logistics, assessment of damaged buildings (e.g., schools, health facilities, government/residential/commercial buildings), and Damage Assessment and Coordination Centre (DACC) activities.

» Ensure that USAR operations follow the humanitarian principles and governmental policies, such as curfews, prioritisation of operations based on needs, code of conduct respected, etc.,

» Brief the USAR teams on any new security updates from UN DSS and provide relevant cultural and political contexts and perspectives on the affected country.

Strategic Activities

UNDAC members should be prepared for requests to address the following activities:

• **USAR Operations:**

» Advise on when to stop requesting international USAR teams who have yet to depart their countries of origin once there is a saturation of international teams, with all worksites well covered (approximately day 3 to 4).

» Advise on when to announce the end of the international USAR operations and/or transition back to national USAR operations (approximately day 7 to 10).

• **Non-USAR Activities** when transitioning of life-rescue activities:

» Facilitate discussion with the USAR teams and the LEMA on transitioning from life-rescue activities to Beyond-the-Rubble activities and Damage Assessment Coordination Centre (DACC) activities. Such transitions can have a political element. Beyond-the-Rubble activities must be needs-driven, requested and coordinated by the LEMA or a respective agency, and include a clearly defined exit strategy from the outset. These activities need to be carried out within the existing coordination structures. When undertaking Beyond-the-Rubble activities that are linked to the on-going humanitarian sector/cluster working groups, USAR teams must coordinate with relevant coordination entities (e.g., the WASH cluster).

UNDAC can provide the UCC with information about how the humanitarian actors operate and coordinate. UNDAC and the UCC should then provide guidance to the USAR teams to ensure all measures are taken to ensure that the additional resources and support offered by the USAR teams are in accordance with the established coordination structures and dedicated actors or clusters in that area of work. Sometimes, only parts of the USAR team (engineers, doctors, and rescue teams) are needed for these activities and it must be planned how and by whom they are to be supported in non-USAR activities. Not only does it need to be decided which USAR resources are to be deployed, but the reporting lines and coordination between the USAR teams, the UCC and the LEMA or other requesting agency need to be determined. This includes the period of the activities, the deployment locations and additional logistical support from the country concerned. Examples of Beyond-the-Rubble activities in the previous deployments include building stabilisation by shoring, debris clearing, body recovery, humanitarian needs observation, and coordination of building damage assessment.

» Work with the UCC to raise awareness among USAR teams and agree procedures to flag problems on relevant issues pertaining to:

- Political, religious and cultural sensitivities – e.g., protection of cultural and religious sites that are in the affected area, religious or cultural customs and taboos, e.g., between men and women.

- Possible areas of conflict or hostility – e.g., between different population groups or sensitive relations between the local population and local authorities.

- Vulnerable groups, gender and protection (e.g., risk of sexual exploitation and abuse) issues, e.g., orphans, unaccompanied children, single parent households, the elderly or disabled.

Logistics and Other Operational Support Activities

UNDAC members should be prepared for being requested to address the following activities:

- In collaboration with the logistics cluster and humanitarian sector coordinators, have an overview of the logistical needs of the humanitarian responders (national and international). This will allow UNDAC to facilitate the exchange of information on the potential demand and supply of given logistical support.

- At the local/tactical logistics level, foster the pooling of resources and general support to all responders. Examples of such support include:

  » The provision of internet connectivity to all responders, including USAR teams in the UCC.

  » The provision of mapping and printing support to USAR teams.

  » The provision of logistics-related information to USAR teams (e.g., list of transport companies, hotels, access constraints, etc.).

  » Conversely, assets and services of USAR teams might be requested in support of the UNDAC team or other responders in case of emergency. This could include logistical support, use of generators, etc.

- The UNDAC USAR LO can play a pivotal role in conflict resolution amongst USAR teams, if necessary, for instance, on BoO space, worksites assigned, teams not operating in accordance with the INSARAG guidelines, etc. The UNDAC USAR LO can raise any issues with the UNDAC TL or INSARAG Secretariat as needed.

Humanitarian data collection after lifesaving USAR operations

UNDAC might request through the UCC the support of the USAR teams for humanitarian needs assessment activities by the OSOCC A&A Cell. This may be through key informant interviews with USAR TL's or questionnaires in paper or electronic format to USAR teams. Findings are then collected by the A&A Cell for further analysis. It is important for UNDAC members to note that USAR team members are unlikely to have the full understanding of every humanitarian aspect of the response. Therefore, the expectation of any assessment by USAR teams should be carefully considered and good guidance from UNDAC is necessary to conduct a meaningful assessment.

G.10.1.6 Field coordination models between UCC and UNDAC/OSOCC

The UCC will be set up for approximately 10 days (longer if at the request of the LEMA) in the lifesaving phase. Hence, the UNDAC USAR LO should be committed to support the UCC in USAR coordination and UCC's relations with LEMA for this entire period.

Each response mission will require its own field coordination arrangements depending on the operational context and requirements. The UNDAC Team Leader, their Deputy, or the OSOCC Operations Manager and the UCC Manager will agree on their coordination arrangements. The arrangements will largely depend on the complexity of the USAR operations, the political arena, the operational environment, and the staffing capacities within both the UNDAC and the UCC team.

Two main coordination models recommended are:

- **Standard model:** The UCC Manager is in regular contact, physically or remotely (phone/email), with the OSOCC Operations Manager who would be an UNDAC member. Such collaboration is the standard model as per the OSOCC guidelines and UNDAC Handbook whereby all OSOCC Operations Cells (USAR, EMT, Environment, Logistics, etc.) report back (in various ways – ICMS, briefings, etc.), and are accountable to the OSOCC at least daily. This communication channel allows both the RDC with incoming USAR Teams, the UCC, and the OSOCC Operations Manager to exchange information on ongoing activities (through progress report) and raise issues of concerns that could fall under the UNDAC area of responsibilities in USAR activities.

- **Liaison model:** In this model, an UNDAC member is in the UCC. Based on the requirements, the presence of the UNDAC member could be full-time or part-time. This model might be preferable when dealing with a complex and/or sensitive political and operating environment where it is felt that the presence of a USAR-experienced UNDAC member within the UCC "office" can add value to the response. The member can bring strategic oversight and support to the UCC in seeing the "big picture" with linkages to the

overall humanitarian response. By being physically present in the UCC, the UNDAC liaison can bring guidance to ensure that the overall USAR response is an integral part of the coordination of the disaster. This model mainly allows for a faster communication exchange and enhanced collaboration.

G.10.1.7 Plan-of-Action Checklist for UNDAC RDC/USAR Liaison Officer

The following items should be considered when drafting a Plan of Action (PoA) for an UNDAC USAR Liaison Officer (LO). A PoA is made in collaboration with the UNDAC Team Leader (TL) and the UCC Manager and should also refer to the overall UNDAC PoA.

ERS in Geneva will establish initial contacts and communications:

- Establish contact with the LEMA to find if there is a need for USAR teams.
- Find out who is the first arriving USAR Team. Confirm their contacts for the RDC and the UCC and place them on the VO if not already done by the team.
- Ensure communication between:
- LEMA and UCC,
- LEMA and RDC.
- Assign one or more UNDAC members as Liaison Officer to liaise with the UCC manager.
- Assign an UNDAC team member to coordinate arrival of non-USAR international teams at the RDC and manage the overall RDC.
- Where possible, make arrangements to facilitate LOs and/or the RDC team deploying with a USAR team's plane.
- Ensure communication between LO and the LEMA, UCC/OSOCC and RDC.

UNDAC RDC/USAR LO – Upon receiving a M3a alert and assigned as UNDAC USAR LO:

- Announce your role in the VO USAR Coordination Cell section and add estimated arrival time.
- Establish a contact with the UNDAC TL and INSARAG Secretariat to discuss the RDC/UCC assignment.

- If needed, coordinate and consult with the INSARAG Secretariat/UN and OCHA Field Colleagues, on the possible location of the RDC/UCC/SCC.
- Establish a contact with the assigned RDC/UCC Managers to agree on the Plan of Action.
- Establish a contact with the RDC/UCC manager.
- Prepare a high level of self-sufficiency, including one's own sleeping tent and mattress, food, and water for a few days. Note that a USAR liaison may be deployed to different areas from the rest of UNDAC team members. Be prepared to stay with the UCC Team or one of the USAR teams in the BoO.

UNDAC member assigned to or supporting the USAR-RDC:

Phase 1: Initial steps

- Upon arrival, meet with the USAR-RDC manager to discuss the needs of the USAR-RDC and, if needed, also a Plan of Action. If there is no USAR-RDC and USAR teams are still arriving when UNDAC arrives, the UNDAC team should check the VO for information about the RDC and the UCC and discuss the situation. For RDC processing of non-USR teams, see OSOCC guidelines.
- Facilitate the first USAR-RDC-Airport Manager meeting if it has not been organised yet or in case USAR has difficulty contacting the Airport Manager. Assist the USAR-RDC Manager in the negotiations for RDC space in the airport for processing of USAR teams.
- Support the USAR-RDC in addressing international team transport needs.
- Support the USAR-RDC in securing information from LEMA/UCC on where to send the teams.

Phase 2: General activities

- Monitor logistical needs with the USAR-RDC manager.
- Identify incoming humanitarian relief teams, advise them accordingly, and report to the OSOCC, UCC or EMTCC.
- Maintain communication with the OSOCC, including information sharing/reporting about incoming teams. This information can also be seen in ICMS.

Phase 3: Demobilisation of USAR teams

- Update the OSOCC on USAR and relief teams departing.

- Flag any issues that cannot be resolved by the RDC alone.

- Together with the USAR-RDC manager, thank the LEMA, the airport authorities, and other relevant parties for their cooperation.

- If USAR-RDC staff depart with their teams, prior to the closure of USAR operations, the RDC may be handed over to other USAR team members, or UNDAC.

UNDAC LO assigned to the UCC:

Phase 1: Initial steps

- **Meet with the UCC Manager to discuss working arrangements.**

- As per the UC handbook, an **early meeting between UNDAC and UCC Manager** is essential. If an UNDAC team is deployed and is in-country when the first USAR team arrives, the UNDAC team leader and/or other members will meet the USAR team. However, more often, the USAR teams arrive first and are already operational when the UNDAC team arrives. UNDAC members may also travel together with USAR teams and therefore arrive simultaneously."

- **Facilitate the first LEMA-USAR meeting,** if it has not yet been organised, or in case USAR has difficulty contacting the LEMA. Discuss UCC and BoO locations, if needed. UNOCHA, UNDAC members, OSOCC representatives, or the UN Resident Coordinator can help in providing contacts for LEMA and setting up the first meeting.

- **Support the UCC in having a well-functioning relationship with the LEMA** throughout the operations, and with all SCCs. If one of these are not functioning, discuss with the UCC manager on measures that could be taken (e.g., through the OSOCC) to resolve the problem.

Phase 2: General activities

- **Provide relevant operational information to USAR.** Share important international response updates or strategy updates to which all international responders, including USAR team, should pay attention. Such information includes UNDSS advice, local government situational reports and reports on the security situation, and the arrival of Emergency Medical Teams (EMTs).

- **Attend all Team Leaders' Meetings at the UCC.** Provide encouragement and relay any logistics advice to teams; flag additional support such as translators, security support, transportation, and support offered by the LEMA.

- **Monitor the need for more USAR teams.** Consult with the UC Manager, USAR teams, LEMA after day 3 (past the "golden" 72 hours) if there is need to announce that teams who have not yet departed their home country should be stood down.

- **Monitor end of operations.** Consult with the LEMA and the UC Manager after day 8-10 in view of announcing the end of the rescue phase (though this may have occurred sooner) and possible transition to "beyond the rubble", assisting the Government on DACC, and other logistics support.

- **Beyond-the-rubble activities:** When USAR teams are available for "beyond the rubble", UNDAC LO will coordinate with the OSOCC. After the lifesaving phase is over, some USAR teams may be available or offer other assistance using their team assets, such as structural engineering, humanitarian assessment, logistics, ASR5 activities. Depending on the situation, UNDAC will coordinate those activities with the LEMA and the OSOCC. The UCC may or may not be a part of the coordination for some or any of these activities. It will be decided on a case-by-case basis.

- **OSOCC meetings:** Attend the daily UNDAC meetings in the OSOCC or UN Office location physically, depending on the travel arrangements from the UCC and UNDAC bases. The UC Manager could be invited to share an update occasionally, time permitting, and the UNDAC USAR LO reports daily.

- **Maintain communication with the OSOCC,** including information sharing/reporting for situational reports (including number of teams, name, and sending area/country; differences and interaction between national and international response; areas covered/not covered; important meeting schedules; etc.). Templates of situational reports can be found in the UNDAC Toolbox.

Phase 3: Demobilisation

- Support the RDC and the UCC during the demobilisation phase.
- If requested by the LEMA and the UCC, support the logistical needs of the USAR teams' departure.
- Facilitate donation of USAR equipment by departing USAR teams to LEMA, if requested.
- Support the UCC to remind all teams to "check out" in the RDC-DEPARTURE process and in the VO, and to submit their USAR Mission Report within 3 weeks of the response for the After-Action Review (AAR) to be announced by the INSARAG Secretariat.

G.10.2 Emergency Medical Teams (EMTs)

Emergency Medical Teams (EMTs) are mobilised as surge capacity in emergencies with health consequences that result in excess healthcare needs of affected populations due to damage to existing capacities - such as sudden-onset disasters, disease outbreaks, and complex emergencies. EMTs consist of groups of health professionals, including doctors, nurses, paramedics, support workers, and logisticians, who treat patients affected by an emergency or disaster. They come from governments, charities, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), the military, civil protection agencies, and international humanitarian networks, including the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), United Nations contracted teams, and the private-for-profit sector.

EMTs are essential in providing immediate medical care to alleviate pressure on overwhelmed healthcare systems. National EMTs are best placed to rapidly mobilise. However, when national capacities are exhausted, international EMTs can also mobilise in addition to national EMTs and must meet the minimum standard to be operational within 72 hours of a disaster to ensure a prompt and sustained response essential for effective coordination and relief efforts. EMTs, with their diverse capacities, can also be requested for other emergency operations, such as disease outbreaks or conflict settings, where strengthened healthcare support is essential.

Recent advancements in standardising EMT practices have significantly improved their effectiveness. Spearheaded by the **World Health Organization (WHO) EMT Secretariat**, these efforts include the updated **Classification and Minimum Standards**, which clearly outline the guiding principles and standards EMTs require in delivering quality care to patients. This ensures that national and international EMTs are better equipped for effective response. Guided by standardised training and operational frameworks outlined in the EMT guidelines, the teams deploy as self-sufficient units, reducing the strain on national healthcare systems.

The subsequent sections will delve deeper into EMT types, classification, deployment procedures, coordination mechanisms, and the potential role of UNDAC teams in facilitating international emergency medical assistance.

G.10.2.1 Roles and responsibilities of national and international EMTs

Understanding the roles and responsibilities of different EMT types is crucial for effective coordination and deployment during emergencies. This section delineates the duties and functions of each EMT category, clarifying their role in emergency responses.

National EMTs (N-EMTs):

- Act as **integral parts of national or subnational health plans,** employing EMT methodologies for predictable and reliable responses to health emergencies.
- Serve as **primary responders in disasters, outbreaks, or conflicts,** providing crucial stabilisation and immediate medical care as pre-hospital treatment and basic healthcare.
- **Enhancing national health emergency workforce and surge planning,** focusing on rapid response coordination and training for effective synchronisation with international EMTs.
- May include **Military EMTs:** Military organisations play a crucial role in national disaster management plans, with many governments deploying military EMTs during disasters and outbreaks. While they maintain their channels for acceptance and initial coordination, collaboration with

the EMT coordination mechanism is vital when providing direct care to ensure alignment with local protocols and referral pathways.

International EMTs (I-EMTs):

- Deploy **when national capacities are exceeded** to support overwhelmed local health systems.
- Meet **international deployment standards** per WHO's Global Classification, ensuring capability, self-sufficiency and readiness.
- Provide a **spectrum of medical services,** from basic to critical care to advanced surgical interventions, supplementing national efforts in severe emergencies.

Both national and international EMTs are crucial in delivering comprehensive, timely, and quality health services to populations affected by emergencies. Their commitment to maintaining consistent quality of care ensures effective and efficient responses to the needs of affected populations.

G.10.2.2 Types and capabilities of EMTs

WHO has developed a Global Classification system for EMTs. This framework is pivotal in ensuring a unified and effective approach to medical care across various emergencies. The main goal is to improve the quality of care and professionalism during EMT deployments, thereby benefiting the populations served by ensuring EMTs arrive on time, are well-trained and integrated with the health system that normally treats their families. The target audience of the EMT Global Classification is teams who plan to deploy internationally. The table below gives a comprehensive overview of the characteristics per EMT type.
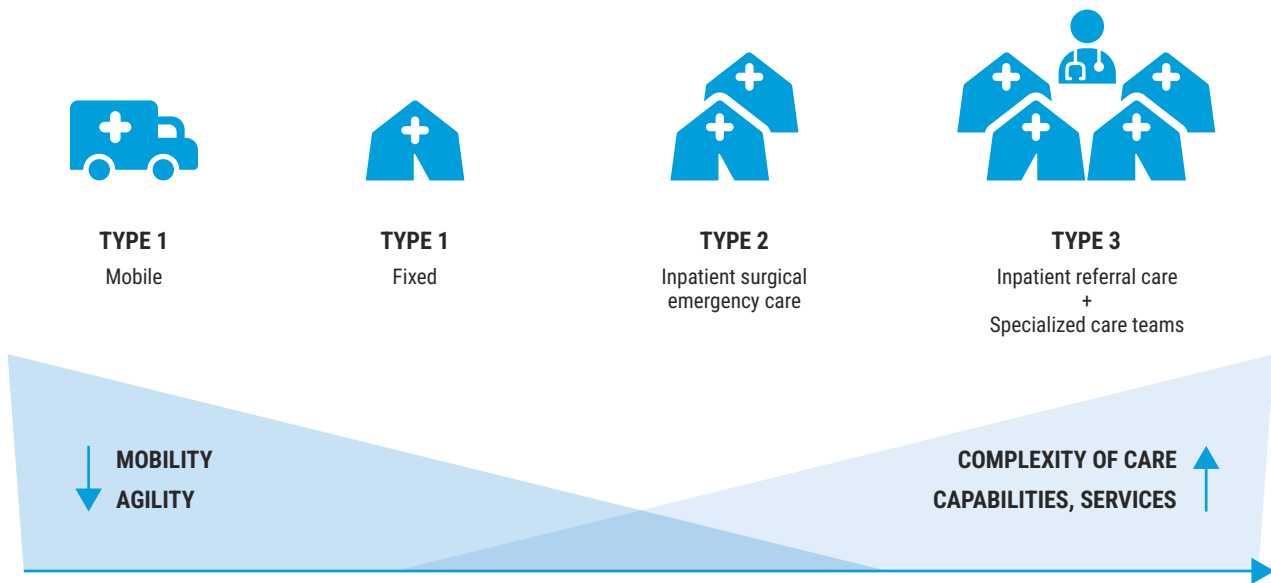
TYPE	DESCRIPTION	PATIENTS	CAPABILITIES	Operational from arrival to affected area by at least:	Field operational with ability to offer at least an extended subsequent rotation for at least:
Type 1 Mobile	Agile units for outpatient care in remote areas, tailored for rapid response.	Over 50 outpatients per day.	Provides: • **daylight hours care** for stabilisation of acute trauma and non-trauma presentations, • **referrals** for further investigation or inpatient ca**re** • **and community-based primary care** with the ability to work in **multiple locations.**	24 hours	2 weeks
Type 1 Fixed	Establish outpatient facilities for larger populations.	Over 100 outpatients per day.	Provides: • **daylight hours care** for acute trauma and non-trauma presentations, • **referrals,** and for **ongoing investigation or care** • and **community-based primary care** in an **outpatient fixed facility.**	24 hours	2 weeks

→

TYPE	DESCRIPTION	PATIENTS	CAPABILITIES	Operational from arrival to affected area by at least:	Field operational with ability to offer at least an extended subsequent rotation for at least:
Type 2 Inpatient surgical emergency care	Inpatient facilities with emergency surgical capabilities.	Over 100 outpatients and 20 inpatients, can conduct 7 major or 15 minor surgeries daily.	Provides Type 1 services plus • general and obstetric surgery for trauma and • other major conditions, as well as • inpatient acute care.	24–36 hours	3 weeks
Type 3 Inpatient referral care	Advanced medical care as specialised surgeries and ICU.	100 outpatients 40 inpatients 4-6 intensive care beds Capable of 15 major or 30 minor surgeries daily.	Provides Type 2 services plus • complex referral and • intensive care capacity.	36–48 hours	4 weeks
Specialist cells	Focused teams providing specific services adaptable for integration with other EMT types or local health services.	Advanced medical care as specialised surgeries and ICU.	Can provide the following services: outbreak, surgical, rehabilitation, mental health, reproductive and new-born care, interdisciplinary, interhospital and technical support.	Variable	Variable

Figure G.12: Relation between EMT mobility/agility and complexity of care, capabilities and services

TYPE 1
Mobile

TYPE 1
Fixed

TYPE 2
Inpatient surgical
emergency care

TYPE 3
Inpatient referral care
+
Specialized care teams

MOBILITY
AGILITY

COMPLEXITY OF CARE
CAPABILITIES, SERVICES

Figure G.12 further illustrates the relation between mobility/agility and complexity of care, capabilities and services:

G.10.2.3 Operational dynamics of EMTs: speed, timing, and duration of deployment

Following the classification of EMTs into their respective types, it is essential to understand the practical aspects of their deployment. This includes the speed at which they can mobilise, the timing of their arrival and setup at the disaster site, and their operational period.

- **Rapid deployment expectation:** All classified EMT types must be capable of deploying and becoming operational within 72 hours of a disaster. This rapid response is critical for ensuring a coordinated approach and optimal patient care. Given their proximity and role as first responders, national teams may often be required to deploy faster, typically within 6–12 hours. This accelerated deployment reflects their capability as self-sufficient initial responders.

- **Impact of team size on deployment logistics:** Larger teams, capable of supporting more patients, inherently have a larger footprint. This increased size often means more equipment and broader logistical requirements, including

transportation and support services. Such factors can significantly influence the deployment process, particularly for teams providing secondary and tertiary-level care, such as reconstructive and rehabilitation services.

- **Variability in bilateral deployments:** There can be instances where bilaterally deployed EMTs arrive on the ground before the proper establishment of a coordination mechanism for EMTs. The timing of these arrivals largely depends on the speed with which the affected State accepts specific offers of international assistance, thereby underscoring the variability in response timelines.

G.10.2.4 EMT classification, guiding principles and standards

The EMT Global Classification represents a critical component of the WHO's strategy to ensure that EMTs meet globally recognised standards of care and professionalism. This rigorous evaluation system signifies team preparedness, professional competence, and integration into affected countries' healthcare systems. Upon completing the 8-step classification process, EMTs are added to the WHO registry for international deployment, enhancing their chances of selection for response missions, valid for five years.

Integral to EMT operations are guiding principles and core standards ensuring coordination with national and international authorities' emergency management efforts:

• **Integration and collaboration**: EMTs are committed to integrating their efforts within the coordinated response systems led by national health emergency management authorities. Collaboration with national health systems, other EMTs, clusters, and the international humanitarian response community is crucial for the effectiveness of these efforts.

• **Commitment to core standards:** EMTs adhere to core standards, including registration upon arrival, detailed reporting, participation in inter-agency coordination, and supporting public health responses. Staff qualification and adherence to professional guidelines are paramount.

• **(Re)classification:** Required at least every five years or when significant team changes occur, ensures EMTs' skills and methodologies stay aligned with global standards and are continuously updated. This commitment to regular improvement equips EMTs with the latest best practices and technical advancements, guaranteeing high-quality care.

The principles and standards outlined are foundational, and further details can be found in the comprehensive Blue Book by the WHO.

G.10.2.5 EMT coordination

The coordination of EMTs presents unique complexities, especially in large-scale emergencies. This complexity stems from the increasing number of EMTs and the wide variations in their size, experience, service standards, and medical and logistical capabilities. Effective coordination in such scenarios transcends the simple matching of supply to demand, requiring a nuanced understanding of the varied elements needed to balance healthcare needs and available resources.

When International EMTs (I-EMTs) are deployed, coordination involves additional layers of complexity. Effective integration of these teams with the host country's existing national health system, which may vary greatly in structure, quality, and

capacity, is crucial. Moreover, deploying I-EMTs must seamlessly connect with the broader international response coordination, mechanisms, and methodologies.

Key aspects of EMT coordination:

• Effective **EMT coordination, typically overseen by the emergency response sections of the Ministry of Health (MoH) or relevant authority,** aligns with the health operations pillar of the On-Site Operations Coordination Centre (OSOCC) or Emergency Operation Centre (EOC). This coordination **ensures that I-EMTs are seamlessly integrated into the host country's health system** and are linked with international response mechanisms such as the OSOCC/EOC and Health Cluster when activated.

• The diverse needs and complexities in EMT coordination necessitate specialised expertise, ideally addressed by a dedicated **surge coordination mechanism, the EMT Coordination Cell (EMTCC).** See the EMT Coordination Handbook for details on the EMTCC.

• **Support and advice:**

  » **WHO support:** The WHO provides direct coordination support through country and regional offices. And in major emergencies, additional surge staff from the headquarters.

  » **WHO EMT Secretariat:** The WHO EMT Secretariat offers advice and assistance.

Note on European response coordination:

EU Civil Protection Mechanism (EUCP): In responses within Europe, or when many classified European EMTs are responding outside the EU, the EUCP mechanism may involve an EMT coordination expert in the EMTCC. This is particularly relevant to support the coordination of European teams and can also be part of the broader EUCP team's support.

Models for successful coordination:

The effective coordination of EMTs may require different coordination models, given the variability in emergency scenarios. These models are designed to incorporate and streamline the involvement of

various in-country and international actors in the response coordination mechanism. The four options below are identified for EMT coordination from most ideal to least ideal.
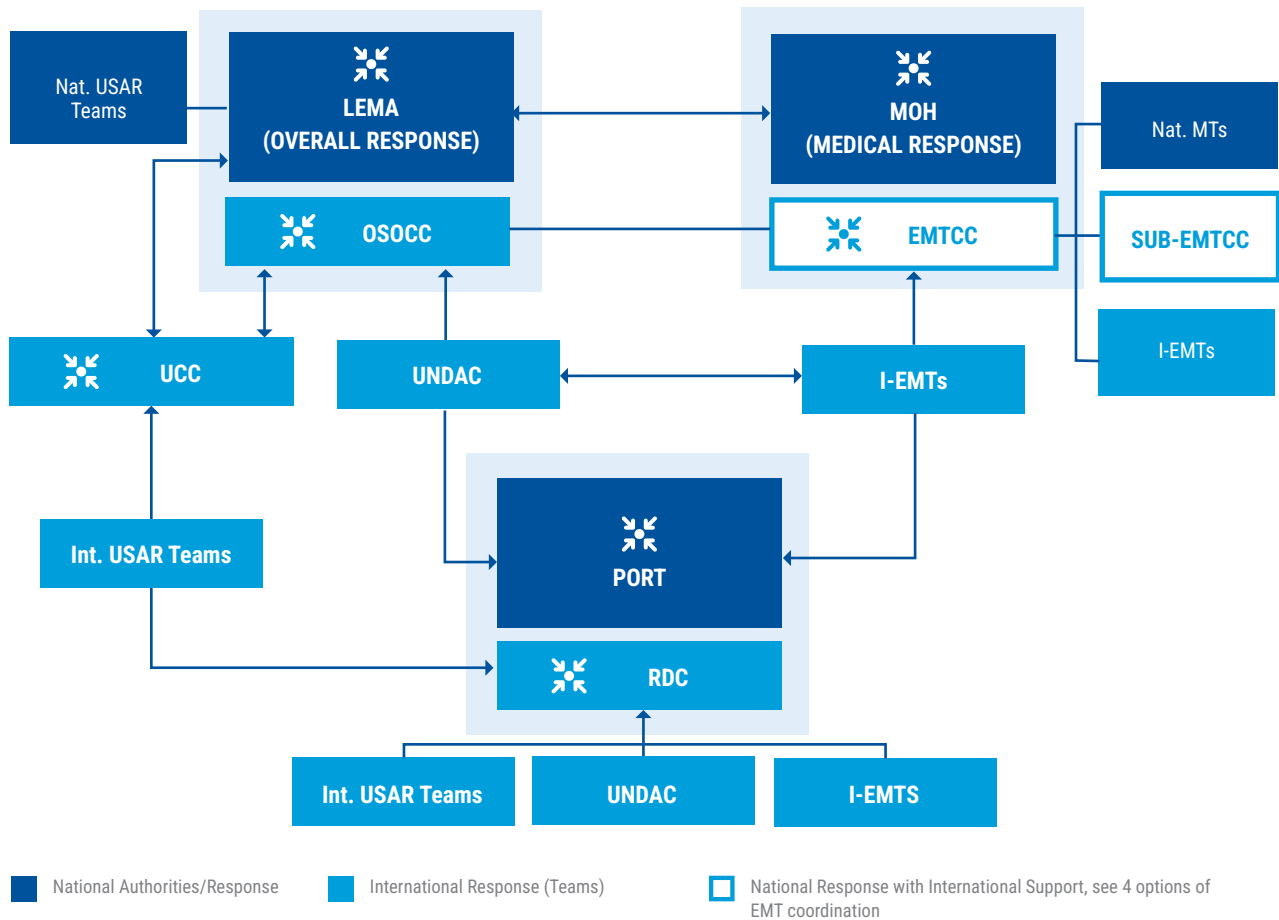
- The EMT coordination cell is established and completely run by the Ministry of Health within the existing health EOC.
- The EMT Coordination Cell is established within the National Health Emergency Operations Centre but supported by WHO and partners.
- Supported EMT coordination cell coexisting within the National Health Emergency Operations Centre.
- A trauma or clinical care working group is established under another coordination mechanism.

A critical element is establishing clear linkages with the wider international humanitarian assistance structure. This involves creating effective connections and ensuring information exchange with the OSOCC, RDC, UCC, MoH/LEMA, and the Health Cluster when activated. How the EMTCC links and interacts with the latter is depicted in **Figure G.13** below.

Effective EMT coordination further requires the endorsement and integration of coordination mechanisms by national health authorities, ensuring their acceptance and cooperation, and securing EMT participation and buy-in through transparent dialogue. Additionally, resource readiness, including pre-positioned resources and support, is crucial for timely and effective deployment.

G.10.2.6 EMT Coordination Cell (EMTCC)

Figure G.13: EMTCC linkages

■ National Authorities/Response	■ International Response (Teams)	□ National Response with International Support, see 4 options of EMT coordination

The Emergency Medical Team Coordination Cell (EMTCC) plays a critical role in emergency medical responses, actively collaborating with government authorities to effectively coordinate the surge of national and international EMTs. By doing so, the EMTCC ensures these teams are deployed where they can best meet healthcare needs arising from increased morbidity or damages to existing healthcare infrastructure.

This coordination is carried out by the Ministry of Health (MoH) or equivalent national authority, ensuring that EMT deployment enhances the Government's response capacity. In scenarios where the MoH requires external support for the EMTCC, the primary coordination responsibility remains with the national authority. This external support aims to bridge operational gaps and gradually transfer coordination capacity back to the MoH.

The EMTCC is essential for assigning EMTs to specific sites and making strategic decisions based on team capabilities and field needs. These are based on leveraging comparative advantage to maximise resource effectiveness, ensuring complementarity to bolster existing services and fill identified gaps, and maintaining predictability by anticipating and promptly addressing needs.

Expertise and supportive activities of the EMTCC:

The expertise provided by the EMTCC encompasses operational and technical aspects of EMT response. This includes promoting compliance with EMT guiding principles, minimum standards, and monitoring the quality of care. Supportive activities by the EMTCC involve:

• Providing remote or in-country technical support.

- Advising on available EMT capabilities within the Global EMT Classification.
- Activating and managing the EMT section of the Virtual OSOCC and disseminating essential information about arrival and registration procedures to all international EMTs.
- Making information available at potential points of contact with EMTs, including the WHO EMT website.

Information management within the EMTCC:

A crucial function of the EMTCC is robust information management, which forms the backbone of effective EMT coordination. This includes:

- **Comprehensive data collection:** Maintaining up-to-date information on all responding EMTs, including their logistical capabilities, deployment locations, and contact details.
- **Informed Deployment decisions:** Utilising this data to make strategic decisions about EMT deployment, ensuring that teams are assigned where they can be most effective.
- **Optimising resource allocation:** This detailed information management enables the EMTCC to optimise the allocation of resources across various emergency response needs.

Activation strategy for the EMTCC:

The activation of the EMTCC follows key strategies to ensure its effectiveness right from the onset of an emergency:

- **Proactive activation:** It is preferable to activate the EMTCC on a no-regret basis rather than delaying or forgoing activation. Proactive engagement allows for a more agile and prepared response to emerging healthcare needs in the emergency context.
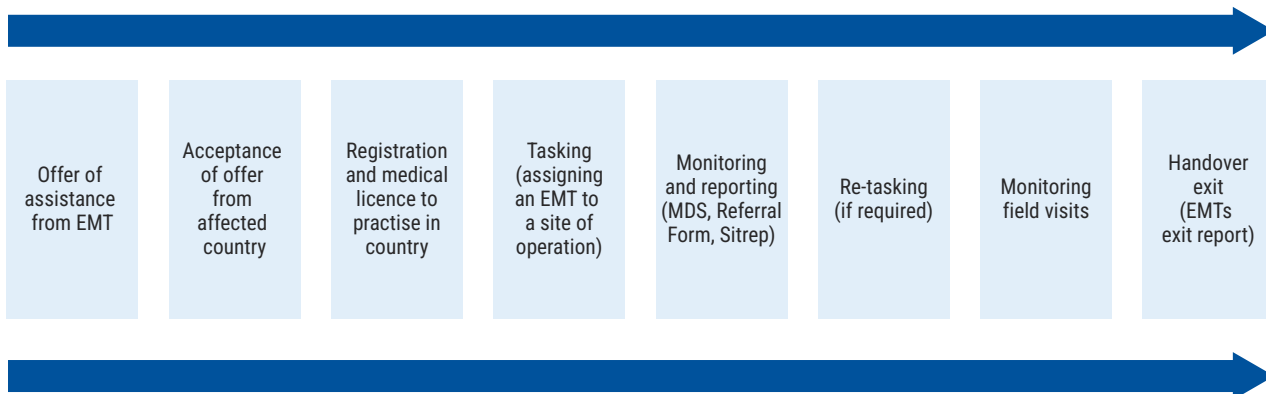
- **Staffing considerations:** Ensuring sufficient staffing during the initial phases of an emergency is crucial. This should be accompanied by the flexibility to rapidly scale down or deactivate the EMTCC based on the evolving situation and needs. Such an approach allows for effective resource utilisation and adaptability to the dynamic nature of emergency scenarios.

Potential role of the UNDAC Team:

The WHO EMT Secretariat and OCHA ERS are closely collaborating to strengthen coordination, leveraging EMT and UNDAC networks' technical expertise and pooled resources to better serve the needs of affected people. In general, UNDAC teams can support EMT coordination as follows:

- **Liaising with the WHO country office** to understand the status of EMTCC activation or preparedness for establishing an EMT coordination mechanism.
- **Identify additional EMT coordination and support needs and communicate** these to the WHO EMT Secretariat for further action.
- **Ensuring the EMTCC is connected to other OSOCC partners and two-way information exchange is occurring between the EMTCC and OSOCC** (e.g. through attending each other's coordination meetings, inputting maps, SITREPs and other information products)
- **Facilitating additional resources, staffing and technical expertise** to directly support the EMTCC, as needed.

As part of the EMT-UNDAC collaboration, EMT coordinators can also deploy as part of the UNDAC team, either as a UNDAC member trained as an EMT coordinator or as an associated expert from the EMT network. In both cases, they will fully take on the function of EMT coordinator.

Figure G.14: EMT Deployment Process

| Offer of assistance from EMT | Acceptance of offer from affected country | Registration and medical licence to practise in country | Tasking (assigning an EMT to a site of operation) | Monitoring and reporting (MDS, Referral Form, Sitrep) | Re-tasking (if required) | Monitoring field visits | Handover exit (EMTs exit report) |

G.10.2.7 Lifecycle of EMT operations: From activation to demobilisation

The EMT deployment lifecycle is illustrated in **Figure G.14** below. This subchapter details 1) Activation and deployment of EMTs, 2) Arrival in-country: EMT procedures and coordination, 3) EMT operations and tasking, and 4) EMT departures demobilisation.

1. Activation and deployment of EMTs

Activating and deploying EMTs is a strategic and crucial process in effective emergency response. Informed by insights from INSARAG and similar practices, this phase includes using the global directory of classified EMTs to assess capabilities and ensure effective integration.

National EMT activation involves deployment according to availability and capabilities outlined in the National Disaster Response Plan, ensuring a tailored and relevant response. **International EMT deployment** follows an official request from the affected country, with deployment occurring upon acceptance of their offer, aligning their involvement with the specific needs and protocols of the emergency response.

Following EMT's activation, the next critical step is their rapid and efficient deployment which is facilitated by the EMT Secretariat and EMT classification and commitment to procedures:

- **Supportive role of the EMT secretariat:** The EMT Secretariat and relevant regional counterparts are involved in activities that facilitate the rapid

deployment of classified EMTs. They play a key role in establishing and operationalising the EMT coordination mechanism, overseeing the entire process, including resource management and coordination.

- **EMT commitment to procedures:** Classified EMTs have agreed to adhere to the procedures and protocols outlined here, ensuring a standardised and coordinated approach to emergency medical response.

- A key phase in the effective deployment of EMTs is their **optimisation to meet the varied needs of the affected population.** Central to this process is the authoritative role of the MoH:

- **Licensing and registration authority:** The MoH holds the primary authority to licence and register incoming medical teams. This control is critical to ensuring that EMTs operate within the national healthcare framework and standards. No medical teams must commence work without the necessary licence to practise in the affected country, as set by the MoH.

- **Strategic deployment of EMTs:** The MoH actively directs the deployment of EMTs, in partnership with the EMTCC when activated. This joint effort involves assessing the capabilities of the EMTs against the specific needs and gaps in healthcare services in the affected areas, assigning them to locations where they are most needed.

- **Ensuring effective resource utilisation:** By overseeing the tasking of EMTs, the MoH ensures optimal use of the available resources. This oversight is vital in maximising the impact and efficiency of the emergency medical response.

2. Arrival in-country: EMT procedures and coordination

Upon arrival in the country, consistent with other international assistance teams, the EMTs shall report to the RDC to initiate the registration and integration process into the emergency response. Ideally, EMTs should receive comprehensive briefings at the RDC covering the current situation, logistical support, airport/port procedures, and security. However, the availability of these briefings may vary, especially in the absence of specific EMT knowledge at the RDC. As a minimum, the RDC should record the entry of incoming EMTs and provide them with the location of the EMTCC and contact information for the EMT coordination focal point.

After recording their arrival at the RDC, EMTs need to establish communication with the MoH or the EMTCC to complete their in-country registration and receive specific tasking and deployment instructions. See the next section for details.

Mandatory registration upon arrival:

- **National EMTs:** They are expected to register with the relevant incident command/MoH immediately upon arrival in the affected area. This registration is crucial for coordinating with local authorities and integrating into the existing response framework.
- **International EMTs:** On arrival, the EMTs must report their type, capacity, and services as per the EMT classification system. Additionally, they must register with the MoH and secure authorisation to practise for each health professional, following local licensing procedures.

Potential role of the UNDAC team:

- **Notify MoH/EMTCC of incoming EMTs**: If no EMT expert is present at the RDC, inform the MoH or EMTCC about new EMT arrivals.
- **Facilitate EMT information exchange at RDC:** Actively display and gather EMT-related information on RDC notice boards, covering transportation, logistics, translation, and coordination gaps. Promptly address any identified gaps by involving all relevant stakeholders.
- **Promote MoH involvement at the RDC:** If required, encourage the MoH to designate a liaison or take charge of EMT coordination at the RDC.
- **Mobilise support for the RDC from deploying EMTs:** Request deploying classified I-EMTs to provide additional staffing for the RDC as needed.
- **Strengthen EMTCC-OSOCC/UCC ties:** Ensure robust communication between the EMTCC, the OSOCC and the UCC.
- **Maintain current EMT information on Virtual OSOCC (VOSOCC or VO):** Regularly update the VOSOCC with the latest EMT details from the RDC.
- **Ensure broad communication of registration requirements:** Disseminate registration requirements via multiple channels, including the VOSOCC, coordination meetings, and situation reports. Distribute a contact list for EMT focal points and consider creating a social media group for communication among deployed EMTs.
- **Guide arriving teams to coordination mechanisms:** Direct newly arrived teams to the appropriate mechanisms for registration and task assignment.

Licence to practice: Registration for medical teams

In the context of emergency responses, 'registration' for emergency medical teams involves two essential legal components:

- **Authorisation to provide health services:** Registration ensures that the host country officially authorises the medical team to provide health services during an emergency.
- **Temporary medical practice licence:** This registration also extends to individual medical staff, who are required to obtain a temporary licence to practise in the host country, aligning their operations with local healthcare standards and regulations.

No I-EMT should operate in a foreign country without the necessary authorisation and licensed medical staff, as per these legal and regulatory requirements.

3. EMT operations and tasking

Tasking involves deploying EMTs to specific sites based on their specialisations, skills, and the requirements of the situation. This process is fundamental to ensuring the optimal utilisation of resources, thereby maximising the assistance provided to the affected population.

Effective tasking and operations of EMTs heavily rely on efficient information management, a crucial function of the EMTCC, as described above. While the EMTCC is responsible for providing accurate and timely data about EMT capabilities, locations, and logistics, it is ultimately the Government of the affected country that has the final decision-making authority.

The EMTCC's role includes advising and supporting the Government by presenting well-informed options for strategic tasking of teams to various operation sites. This collaborative approach ensures assigning EMTs to locations where their specific skills and resources align best with identified needs, thereby maximising the impact of their efforts in the field. The MoH/EMTCC further retains decision-making power concerning non-compliant teams.

Under the Red Channel Agreement with WHO, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) has committed to registering and collaborating with existing EMT coordination mechanisms during disaster responses.

Potential role of the UNDAC team:

- **Disseminate information:** Ensure key information products are shared broadly with all stakeholders, specifically EMTs, to support and inform their actions.

- **Update VO information:** Regularly update deployed team, logistics, and supply details on the VOSOCC.

- **Facilitate coordination meetings:** Coordinate meetings between the EMTCC, WHO representatives, and other relevant entities like Local Emergency Management Authorities (LEMA), the Health Cluster, and UCC representatives (e.g., to facilitate establishing a patient referral mechanism or development of exit strategy).

- **Utilise EMT reporting for situation analysis:** Ensure EMT reporting and coordination data informs humanitarian situation analysis and priority setting. This includes assessing health system impact, facility status, EMT deployment, outbreak presence, and potential risk due to environmental/technological hazards.

- **Facilitate information sharing and exchange:**

  » Ensure sharing of operational and logistics arrangements (such as team transport and re-fuelling) and information products (including maps, situation updates, and analysis) from the OSOCC or other coordination platforms with the EMTCC.

  » **Facilitate information exchange:** Ensure regular information exchange between the EMTCC and the A&A Cell and Environmental Emergencies Coordination Cell (if established). Share any direct observation forms developed by the A&A Cell with the EMTCC for collaboration and integration.

- **Ensure that any pertinent environmental emergencies or hazards are promptly identified,** and maintain a focus on environmental risks during coordination between EMTCC and OSOCC/JEU/Environmental Emergencies Coordination Cell.

- **Promote EMTCC announcements:** Disseminate key messages from the EMTCC, including requests for International EMTs (I-EMTs) or stand-down orders, to relevant stakeholders.

- **Facilitate collaboration with USAR Teams:**

  » **Ensuing information sharing:** Share information about the locations and capacities of health facilities and assigned EMTs to facilitate effective patient referrals by USAR teams.

  » **Sharing Disaster Victim Identification (DVI) protocols:** Provide protocols for DVI and management of the deceased to aid USAR teams in handling casualties.

  » **Providing site details:** Share details about main sites for USAR teams, especially in cases of live rescues necessitating immediate medical referral.

  » **Communicating resource availability:** Share information about the availability of civil engineers and logisticians who can assist in repairing damaged health facilities.

- **Support EMT coordination:** Address logistical or operational challenges by collaborating with LEMA and other relevant entities to ensure effective EMT coordination.
- **Assist in Civil-Military Coordination:** Facilitate the integration of military EMTs and assets into the EMTCC framework to ensure cohesive coordination of medical response efforts.
- **Provide EMTCC information management support:** Assign UNDAC team members, preferably those trained in EMTCC procedures, to assist with the information management functions of the EMTCC, if required.

4. EMT departures and demobilisation

Effective coordination of EMT departures and handovers is vital to ensure continuity of care and minimise gaps in service coverage. This process is equally important as the initial deployment of EMTs.

Key messages on EMT departures:

- **Communicate departure procedures:** Communicate SOPs and requirements to all EMTs upon deployment.
- **Notify EMTCC in advance:** EMTs should inform the EMTCC of their anticipated end-of-operations date as early as possible, or at least one to two weeks prior if it differs from the initially communicated date.

Potential role of the UNDAC team:

- **Facilitate handover meetings:** Support coordination meetings involving EMTs, the WHO, and MoH/LEMA to ensure smooth handovers and patient transfers to other facilities or humanitarian partners.
- **Disseminate EMT departure information:** Ensure that information regarding EMT departures is appropriately disseminated and included in the overall situation updates.

G.10.2.8 Key references

The evolution of EMTs since the 2013 publication of the *WHO's Classification and Minimum Standards for Foreign Medical Teams in Sudden Onset Disasters* has greatly enhanced global coordination in emergency medical response. Two key documents, commonly referred to as the "Blue Book" and the "Red Book," play a pivotal role in this standardisation process:

- **The Blue Book:** This guidance serves as the primary reference for Member States, Ministries of Health, national and international EMTs and other key stakeholders who want to build EMT capabilities and better understand requirements. This comprehensive guide clearly outlines the guiding principles and standards required by EMTs in delivering quality care to patients.
- **The Red Book:** As a critical companion to the Blue Book, the Red Book offers expanded guidance tailored for medical teams in armed conflict and other insecure environments. It introduces additional verification requirements and addresses a spectrum of essential topics, including sexual and gender-based violence, protection, clinical care, rehabilitation, and operational challenges specific to complex and hostile settings.
- **The Yellow Book:** As a critical companion to the Blue Book, the Yellow Book offers expanded guidance on Minimum Standards and Recommendations for Medical Teams Responding to Highly Infectious Disease Outbreaks.

These resources are designed to be used together, emphasising a unified global approach to emergency medical assistance. The interplay between the guidelines ensures that medical teams operate effectively, ethically, and collaboratively in diverse and challenging environments.

These WHO guidelines underscore the importance of standardised approaches and a unified language in describing and deploying emergency medical assistance. For practitioners and responders, providing a comprehensive framework for navigating the complexities of medical care in general and challenging environments.

The latest Blue and Red book editions can be accessed at WHO EMT Documents. The "knowledge hub" on the Emergency Medical Teams website further offers additional forms, templates, and guidance documents that can be accessed at https://extranet.who.int/emt/.

G.10.3 Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination (UN-CMCoord or CMCoord)

An UNDAC team deploying to an emergency where national and/or foreign militaries are deployed/will deploy may be expected to initially establish an appropriate Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination (UN-CMCoord) mechanism in support of the Government and/or the broader humanitarian responders. This mechanism will depend on the nature of the emergency where an appropriate mechanism in a permissive/peacetime emergency will be different from that of a natural/climate-induced hazard happening in a conflict setting. This mechanism is critical to the effective and efficient use of military assets and capability to temporarily fill humanitarian capacity-gaps during the critical period of response, aiming to save lives and scale up assistance to people in need.

What is UN-CMCoord?

UN-CMCoord is the essential dialogue and interaction between civilian and military actors in humanitarian emergencies that is necessary to protect and promote humanitarian principles, avoid competition, minimise inconsistency and, when appropriate, pursue common goals. Basic strategies range from co-existence to cooperation. Coordination is a shared responsibility facilitated by liaison and common training.

The key CMCoord elements are information sharing, task division (identification and allocation) and coordinated planning. The scope and modus operandi of these key elements vary according to the emergency context. The five main CMCoord tasks are as follows:
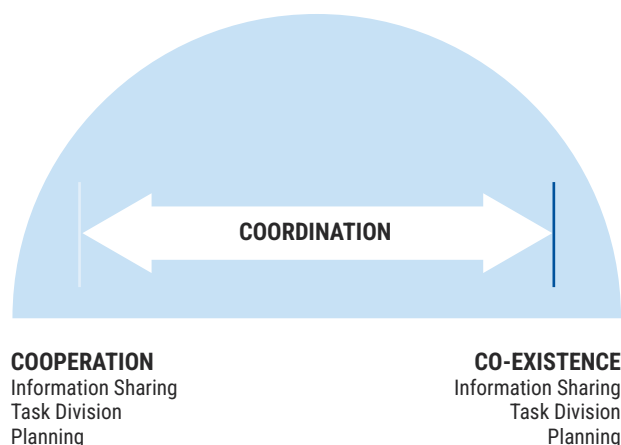
- Establish and sustain **dialogue** with military forces.
- Determine a mechanism for **information exchange** with military forces and other relevant armed groups, if any.
- **Assist in negotiations** in other critical areas of humanitarian coordination such as protection

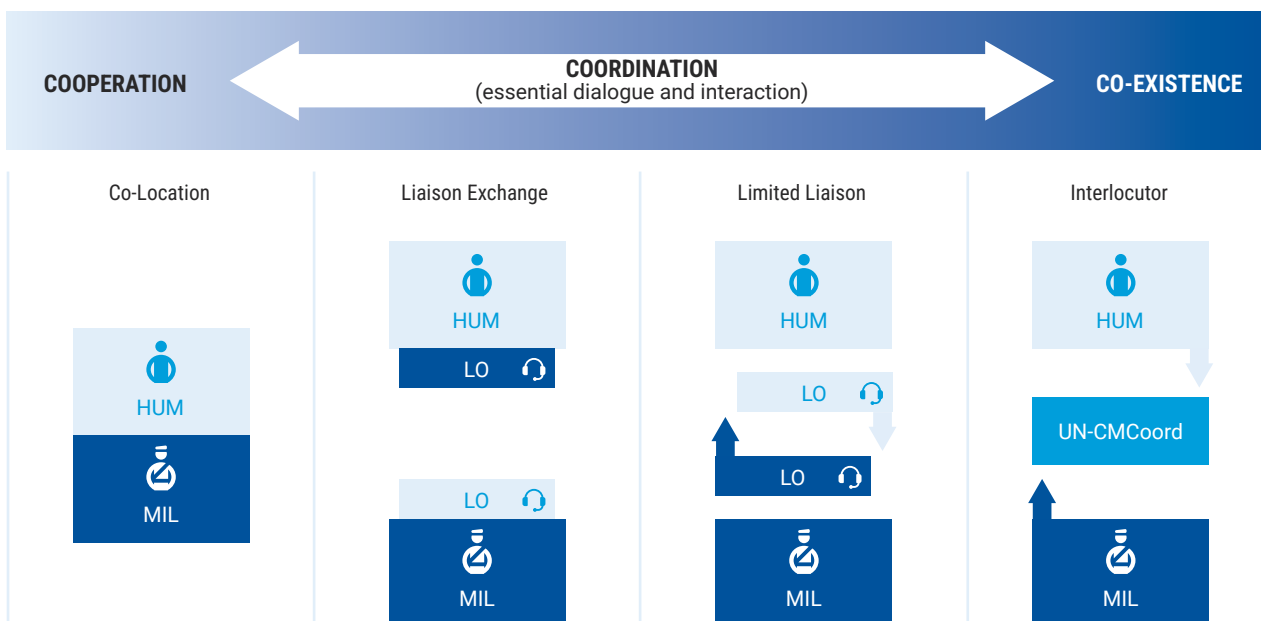and access through appropriate humanitarian-military interaction.

- **Support development and dissemination of context-specific guidance for** the appropriate interaction of the humanitarian community with the military.
- **Monitor activity of military forces** to minimise inconsistency and avoid duplication of humanitarian assistance activities.

The operational context in which humanitarian actors respond will determine the basic coordination strategy with militaries, domestic and/or international. Appropriate interaction with military actors on the ground can significantly support in filling humanitarian capacity gaps during the critical period of response. On the other hand, if inappropriately done, it risks blurring the lines between military and humanitarian activities especially in operations where both entities have very different mandates and missions. The CMCoord operational spectrum ranges from cooperation to co-existence. Cooperation is the default CMCoord strategy for natural, environmental and technological (NEaT) emergencies in peacetime and permissive environments. Co-existence, on the other hand, is the default strategy in conflict settings, particularly where military actors are party to the conflict. Other operational realities, including the liaison approach adopted, may find the CMCoord strategy in between. It should be noted that in an evolving operating environment, the CMCoord strategy and the liaison approach could also change accordingly.

Figure G.15: USAR Sector Coordination Structure

COOPERATION	CO-EXISTENCE
Information Sharing	Information Sharing
Task Division	Task Division
Planning	Planning

Figure G.16: CMCoord liaison arrangements

The liaison approach and relationship established with military entities varies depending on the operational context and nature of the military mission. It may be appropriate to co-locate in some emergency contexts, while it may be totally inappropriate for humanitarian actors to have direct contact to military entities in other emergency contexts. For example, it may be appropriate to co-locate in a permissive/peacetime emergency environment, but it is likely inappropriate in a conflict setting. The **Figure G.16** below shows options for CMCoord liaison arrangements.

UN-CMCoord and the use of Foreign Military Assets (FMA)

Many UN Member States' militaries are first responders to disasters in their sovereign territory. Member States may also provide bilaterally agreed assistance to affected States through the deployment of Foreign Military Assets (FMA). FMA, whether bilaterally deployed or through other means, and/or national militaries could support urgent humanitarian capacity gaps during the critical period of response. Militaries can support specific requirements for a defined period of time, in response to an identified and acknowledged humanitarian capacity gap. They should:

- Provide unique advantages in terms of capability and timeliness.
- Meet a specific requirement.
- Complement civilian capabilities.
- Be used for a limited duration.
- Be at no cost to the affected country, humanitarian budgets or the UN.

There may be cases where bilaterally deployed Foreign Military Assistance (FMA) could be present on the ground either simultaneously with or even earlier than deployed international civilian responders. This is largely dependent on existing standby agreements between and among States and/or how fast the affected State accepts specific offers of international assistance, including FMA.

Assistance with FMA may include:

- Strategic airlift of food, shelter, health facilities, water purification units, and foreign military contingents from all over the globe.
- In-theatre operational airlift of relief supplies.
- Evacuation of disaster victims from the hardest-hit areas.
- Engineering capacity to assist in clearing debris, opening roads, re-establishing electricity, emergency repairs of damaged roads and bridges, rehabilitating schools and medical facilities, and structurally assessing other critical

Figure G.17: Use of FMA in humanitarian operations
Guiding principle to request the support of FMA
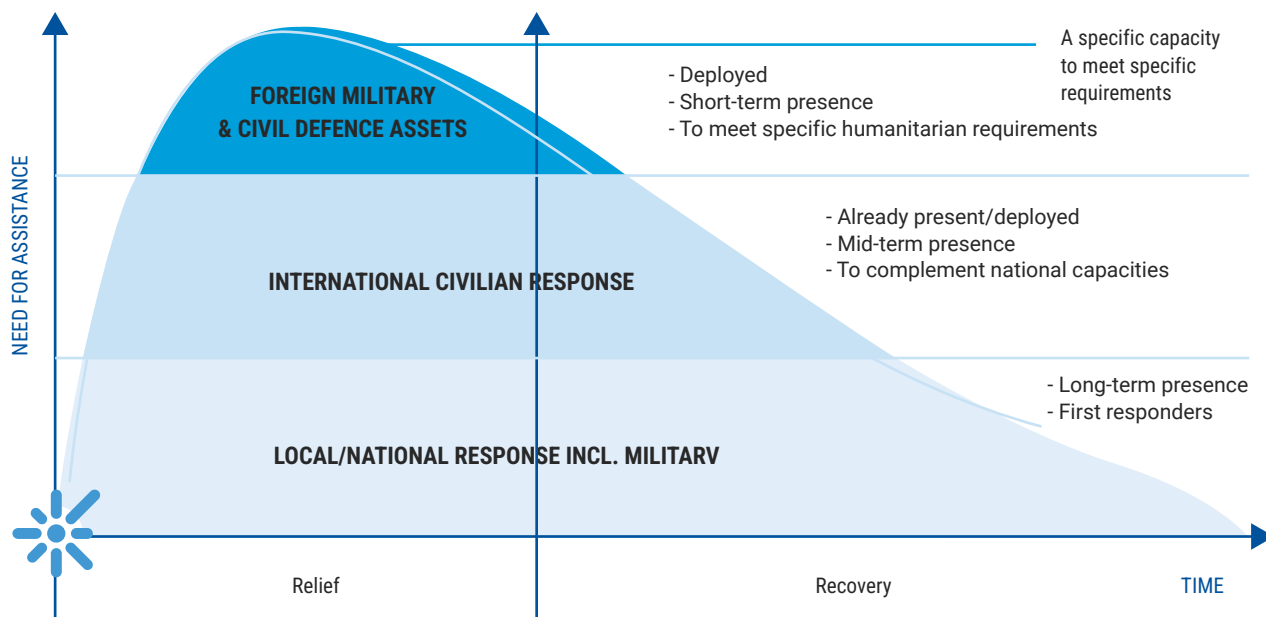
infrastructure such as long span bridges, elevated motorways, airports, seaports, etc.

- Mobile water purification units to produce huge amounts of clean drinking water.

- Fumigation of worst-hit sites in living areas to contain secondary threats such as outbreak of diseases.

- Mobile medical teams to treat injuries on site, see **Chapter G.10.2** above.

- Establishment of field hospitals to provide forward health services where needed.

- Logistics to support the delivery of humanitarian goods and services.

- Identification of potential sites for assistance as required.

The use of FMA to support humanitarian operations may have negative consequences if not appropriately coordinated, especially in non-permissive and insecure environments. It could also impact the perceived or actual neutrality, impartiality and operational independence of the humanitarian efforts. It is therefore essential that the use of FMA is based on what is appropriate to temporarily fill humanitarian capacity gaps and the unique capability that military forces have on the ground. The CMCoord function advocates that military forces provide the most significant value during the critical response phase by focusing on Indirect Assistance and Infrastructure Support, the extent of which is contingent upon the specific emergency context (see **Figure G.18**).

Figure G.18: Categories of humanitarian tasks

Where possible, in-country contingency planning processes should consider the option of using national and/or foreign military assets in support of the broader disaster response operations. If and when an affected government requests and/or accepts international assistance, including FMA, this creates an expectation from both the affected and assisting Governments that the FMA will be deployed and used. This is where the CMCoord function adds value by ensuring that, within existing Government and humanitarian coordination structures, available military capabilities are optimally used to support humanitarian priorities. A common platform is necessary for sharing information between the humanitarian and military communities in order to achieve this goal.

G.10.3.1 UNDAC and UN-CMCoord

If an UNDAC team deploys to an operational environment where there is a pre-existing relationship, engagement and/or coordination with national, foreign or UN mission military forces, adherence to humanitarian guidance in place governing the relationship is essential. If an OCHA country office is present, there will be a UN-CMCoord Officer or focal point with whom contact should be made, preferably prior to deployment. This contact is ideally initiated by the UN-CMCoord Officer or focal point within the UNDAC team. While military forces may or may not be directly involved in the relief operation, their presence can significantly impact such operations nonetheless.

If military involvement or influence is present in the disaster response, but there is no pre-existing OCHA presence, it is essential to integrate a UN-CMCoord Officer into the UNDAC team. However, all UNDAC team members should be knowledgeable about how to interact appropriately and effectively with military forces on the ground, how to facilitate essential dialogue between humanitarian and military actors and how to establish a CMCoord mechanism to enhance disaster response by facilitating information sharing, task division, and coordinated planning. FMA should be coordinated through appropriate interactions and utilised optimally to aid those in need.

The mechanism for facilitating coordination with military forces can vary depending on the operational environment. It could be established as a physical entity, either as an integral part of the On-Site Operations Coordination Centre (OSOCC) or in another capacity. This mechanism should support the broader humanitarian coordination mechanism and enhance operational coordination. UN-CMCoord Officers have established various platforms to improve interaction among the CMCoord constituency.

The UNDAC team, in a peacetime and permissive environments, may recommend to roll-out the **Humanitarian-Military Operational Coordination Concept (HuMOCC)** in support of the affected Government to provide key services such as:

- Facilitating information sharing, task division (identification and allocation) and coordinated planning.
- Promoting and maintaining common situational awareness.
- Appropriately using national and/or foreign military assets.
- Supporting humanitarian priorities as identified and determined by humanitarian actors.
- Establishing a request for assistance (RFA) and/or a request for information (RFI) mechanism, as needed.
- Monitoring, documenting, impact analysis and reporting.

The **HuMOCC is only applicable to NEaT emergencies in permissive/peacetime environments. It** could be the result of expanding the CMCoord Cell in an OSOCC based on needs and the number of military actors on the ground. It also has the flexibility to be rolled out in support of Government coordination structures even in the absence of an OSOCC and is ideally led by the affected Government's NDMO or sub-NDMO with the support of UN-CMCoord Officers, as needed. UNDAC deployments in peacekeeping, peace enforcement and combat settings have not been the norm. However, in these settings, CMCoord officers facilitated the establishment of UN-CMCoord Cells, UN-CMCoord Working Groups, Civil-Military Advisory Groups, or

a UN-CMCoord Forum. They all produce key services such as:

- Sharing information for common situational awareness on humanitarian activities and safety, security, access, logistics and communication.
- Establishing humanitarian notification systems for deconfliction (by the military), as needed and agreed.
- Using military assets consistently and coherently, including from UN missions, in support of humanitarian action.
- Holding training events, workshops, briefings and other humanitarian sensitization activities.
- Contributing to other critical areas of coordination like protection of civilians.
- Monitoring, documenting, impact analysis and reporting.

In all circumstances, close collaboration with the Logistics Cluster is essential for coordinating the use of military assets during emergencies. See also **Chapter G.11** Disaster Logistics.

G.10.3.2 UN-CMCoord assessment

Humanitarian civil-military coordination work starts with an assessment and definition of the operational environment. If OCHA is present in-country, this assessment should already be available. If there is no UN-CMCoord assessment available, the activity starts with pre-deployment actions, including establishing contacts at global level and analysis of secondary data.

Each step is equally important in determining the most appropriate liaison strategy. While a common operational picture and understanding of the operating environment may already be in place, other elements must be analysed to formulate an effective strategy. The five steps include assessing:

- Operating environment.
- Actors, including their mission and mandates.
- Relationships, approaches and perceptions.
- Existing coordination mechanisms (Civ-mil, mil-mil, civ-civ, etc).
- Available military assets in support of humanitarian action.

Actors and roles in disaster response operations

The following list of issues and questions may be of use in compiling an inventory of key and supporting actors, existing civil-military coordination mechanisms, if any, and potential modes of interface between international humanitarian actors, and national and international military actors.

Possible domestic military and paramilitary actors:

- National armed forces.
- National, regional and local police.
- Paramilitary structures such as border and customs forces.
- Other indigenous military or paramilitary forces.

Possible international military actors:

- International forces stationed in the country (or happened to be in the country for bilateral activities like exercises and training) or region.
- UN peacekeeping missions in the country or region.
- Countries with military attachés in the country.
- Regional alliance/organisation members.
- Nations with bilateral military assistance agreements/bilaterally-deployed military forces.

Obtain an indication of their roles in the disaster response operations and conduct a quick analysis to ascertain if these actors will/should have interaction with the international humanitarian community.

Interfaces

The following questions are designed to identify the critical interfaces between civilian and military entities (including domestic and international elements of each), highlight the important coordination structures and assist in identifying any potential issues that might impact humanitarian civil-military coordination.

Domestic military and international military interface:

- What is the status of the international military forces?
- Are international military forces co-located with domestic military forces?

- Do they share installations or bases?
- Does the international military force have freedom of movement?
- Are these relations part of a regional alliance system?
- Do military forces have any arrest or detention authority?
- Are military forces involved in combat operations?
- To whom do the international military forces report?

Domestic civilian and national military interface:

- Is the military involved as belligerent in internal or international conflict or counter-insurgency?
- Does the military have a legal or constitutional role in disaster response, relief and reconstruction?
- What is the relationship between regional military commanders and governors/local chief executives?
- Who provides the national/local coordination or operations centres?
- Is the military the exclusive provider of key resources such as land, sea and air assets?
- What is the relationship between the military and police?
- What is the relationship between the military and civil defence/civil protection units?
- Do active or retired military officers lead key civilian ministries or agencies?
- Are there areas of the country under direct military control or martial law?
- Is the military responsible for aircraft or maritime search and rescue operations?
- Does the military manage any medical facilities?
- Does the military have specially trained search and rescue teams?
- Is the military dominated by a particular ethnic group?
- Are there groups opposed to, or frightened by, the military/police?
- Is there a relationship between the military and any civilian service providers?

Domestic military and international civilian interface:

- Can the domestic military and police forces provide adequate security?
- Are these forces responsible for the security of people in need?
- Does the military control any facilities needed by international relief organisations?
- Does the military control access to areas that may hold people in need?
- How does the military control access to restricted areas?
- Can and will the military assist international civilian organisations?
- Is the military involved in any direct distribution of relief?
- What is the process for addressing any issues with military commanders?
- What is the military's attitude regarding women and female international staff?
- Are there valid human rights concerns about the domestic military?
- Are there child soldiers in any of the indigenous military forces?

International military and domestic civilian interface:

- Is there an international military force permanently based in the country?
- Does the international military force have authority to assist civilians?
- Which international military forces have responded to past disasters?
- Does the international military force have direct contact with the population?
- How does the local population view international military forces?
- Is the international military force involved in a campaign to gain acceptance of the local population?
- Are international military forces involved in direct assistance projects?

International military and international civilian interface:

- Are civilian aid organisations associated with any of the military forces?

- What is the relationship between non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and military from the same country?

- Have military commanders and staff worked with the United Nations or international NGOs before?

- Does the military force have a doctrine for relating with civilian actors?

- Does the force have explicit orders to support or protect humanitarians?

After these questions are considered, answered and assumptions clarified, it should be possible to determine where the main emphasis for humanitarian civil-military coordination lies.

Longer-term UN-CMCoord activities

In establishing and developing the UN-CMCoord function, an UNDAC deployment must be cognizant of longer-term roles and responsibilities of UN-CMCoord staff to ensure the correct foundations are laid and activities passed on to follow-on staff. Any longer-term UN-CMCoord function will support the RC/HC, under the direction of the OCHA Head of Office, and in consultation with the HCT.

G.10.3.3 Military customs and courtesies

Military customs and courtesies have a long tradition. They have generally evolved as a result of the need for order, a sense of loyalty and honour that is fostered among military colleagues. They go beyond basic politeness and are an intricate part of the discipline, morale, esprit de corps and mission effectiveness. As a civilian interacting with the military, basic knowledge of some customs and courtesies will be helpful:

- Expect to be escorted wherever you go in a military installation.

- Be on time. Military meetings start on schedule (most of the time). Be at least 10 minutes early at the meeting location. Allow additional time for in-processing through security.

- When a senior military officer enters the room, i.e., if they outrank any other officer already present, the room will be called to attention. You are expected to stand until the officer is seated or says, 'as you were' or 'please be seated'.

- In a meeting, military officers will give you their full attention. They expect yours. Turn off phones and do not be tempted to answer calls or look at texts while a meeting is going on. It is discourteous and will be taken at best as a sign of disinterest and at worst as an insult.

- All military personnel are addressed by their rank or title. A military member may introduce themselves by their given and surname, but in the presence of others they are always addressed by rank and surname.

- When introduced to a senior officer, you should address them by rank and surname, rank only or sir or ma'am, whichever is appropriate.

- The senior officer will be first to leave a room and generally last to enter a room.

- When walking, the senior officer will generally be on the right.

- If you are present when the military host's national anthem is played, it is courteous to stand quietly until the music stops. The same principle applies if the host's national flag is being carried by or posted (raised or taken down).

G.10.3.4 UN-CMCoord, access and protection

OCHA's Minimum Package of Services on Access identified nine access constraints that may exist in any given humanitarian operation. This is by no means an exhaustive list of access constraints; there could be more in current or future operations. It should be noted however, that achieving the desired access outcomes directly contributes to the achievement of protection outcomes and supports the promotion of a protection environment in areas where people in need are located. For the purpose of identifying the most relevant constraints to the UN-CMCoord function in terms of supporting the achievement of desired access outcomes, the nine constraints below will be used. Assuming that they all exist in a particular operating environment where an UNDAC mission is deployed and/or where a CMCoord Officer is present, the estimated UN-CMCoord effort/focus in troubleshooting or resolving that constraint is provided below and colour-coded as well. The Access Constraints Pie in **Figure G.19** also illustrates the three constraints (mostly at

tactical level) that could be best troubleshooted or sorted out though the UN-CMCoord function, i.e., 4) Military operations and ongoing hostilities impeding humanitarian operations, 7) Presence of mines and unexploded ordnance, and 8) Physical environment. The other constraints could benefit from related UN-CMCoord inputs like analysis, monitoring and reporting.

Overview of Access Constraints:

- Denial of the existence of humanitarian needs or of entitlements to humanitarian assistance (up to 1/3 of the total effort)

- Restriction of movement of agencies, personnel, or goods into the affected country (up to 1/3 of the total effort)

- Restriction of movement of agencies, personnel or goods within the affected country (up to 2/3 of the total effort)

- Military operations and ongoing hostilities impeding humanitarian operations (up to 100% of the total effort)

- Violence against humanitarian personnel, assets and facilities (up to 2/3 of the total effort)

- Interference in the implementation of humanitarian activities (up to 2/3 of the total effort)

- Presence of mines and unexploded ordinances (UXOs) (up to 100% of the total effort)

- Physical environment (up to 100% of the total effort)

- Restrictions on, or obstruction of, conflict affected populations access to services and assistance (up to 2/3 of the total effort)

Figure G.19: Access Constraints Pie & Estimated Intensity of UN-CMCoord Focus/Effort
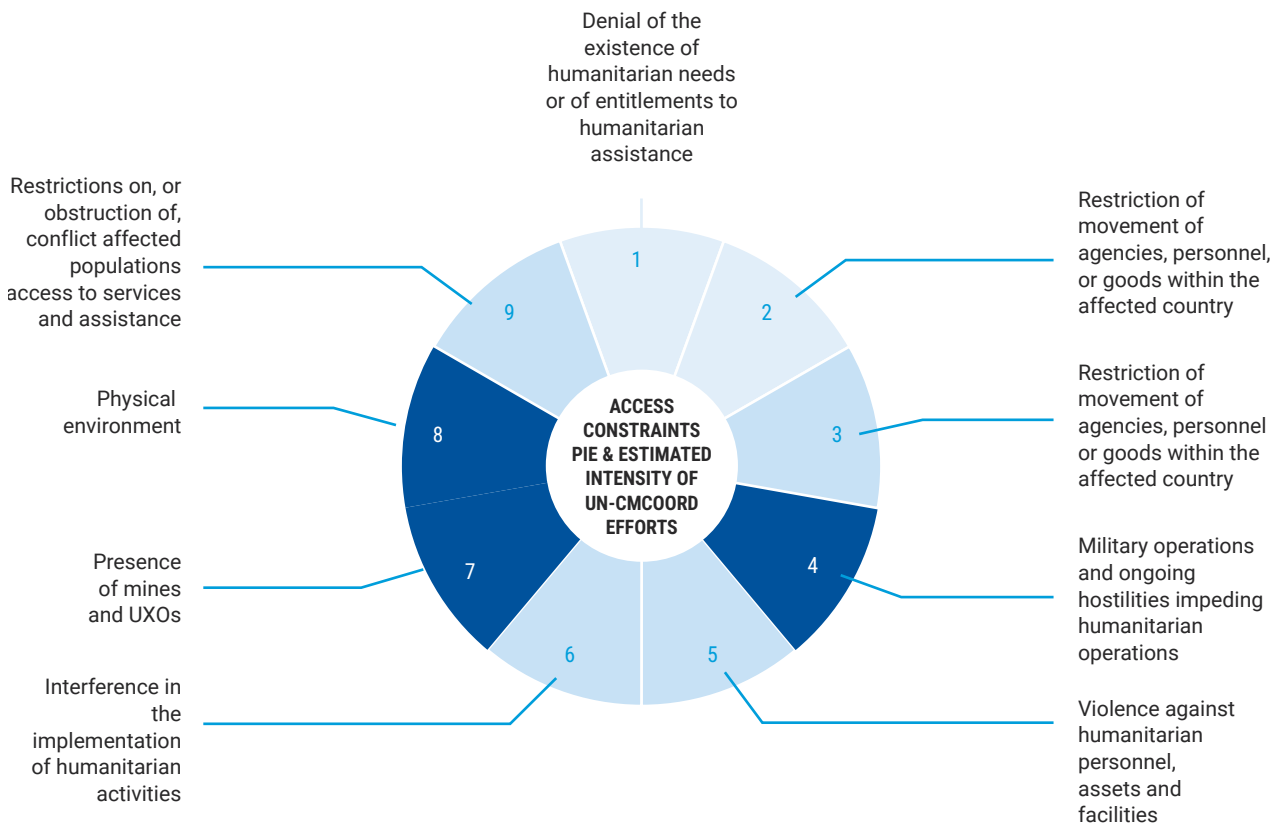
G.10.3.5 UN-CMCoord references

In the event of an UNDAC deployment to an emergency where interaction with military forces is imminent, a UN-CMCoord focal point will be provided by CMCS on the VOSOCC for real-time advice.

Guidelines

There are several sets of global guidelines, some general, others specific to certain operational environments:

- OCHA (2007) Guidelines on the Use of Foreign Military and Civil Defence Assets in Disaster Relief - Oslo Guidelines https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B7LQYninlE81LWJEUTFsM1RzOFE/edit
- OCHA (2014) Civil-Military Guidelines and Reference for Complex Emergencies https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B2Pp2VYEZjeXdTBiT-3BVSVFGTnc/view

UN-CMCoord Handbooks

- Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination Field Handbook (under revision as of March 2024) https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B3Tw3Nb3g-845d1ZMcmZkMEVGZmM/view
- Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination - A Guide for the Military https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B5N9hwXc04gnQUpNMH-duZnE2RWs/edit

Open source reference, training and learning material: www.dialoguing.org

G.11 Disaster logistics

UNDAC deployments in response to sudden-onset disasters will require, by definition, to operate in an environment where critical infrastructure has been damaged and the communications network is seriously limited or even non-existent. This will affect the population, local responders, international relief organisations and in-country businesses, making 'logistics' the most likely number one challenge to the humanitarian response.

Effective logistics is crucial for the success of relief operations. It involves delivering the right supplies, in the right quantities, and in good condition, precisely where and when they are needed. This capability is fundamental for an efficient emergency response.

This chapter provides an understanding of logistics within humanitarian operations, outlining key actors, general guidance for planning logistics programs, and highlighting the roles of both UNDAC and the Logistics Cluster.

As UNDAC typically arrives in-country soon after the onset of a disaster, or even before it if pre-positioned, team members are often called upon to either initiate logistics arrangements or to provide advice on the planning and implementation of basic logistics support.

These initial phases often reveal critical aspects of the humanitarian logistics landscape, emphasising the need for clear delineation of roles and responsibilities among responding entities. Such insights underscore the necessity for enhanced coordination and communication among disaster response teams to prevent duplication of efforts and ensure a more efficient and coherent logistics operation. Furthermore, these observations highlight the importance of expertise and understanding the nuances between different facets of logistics, among them the need to conduct proper assessments. A clear understanding aids in producing accurate and relevant assessments, preventing misunderstandings and mismanagement of resources during humanitarian responses. Integrating these insights effectively into the early stages of response efforts ensures UNDAC's pivotal role in facilitating a well-coordinated and effective logistics operation amidst the chaos of disaster scenarios.

For further information on disaster logistics, including tools, templates and fundamental, baseline logistics information per country, see…

- the **Logistics Cluster's Logistics Operational Guide (LOG)** at https://log.logcluster.org/ that covers many of the related logistics topics that UNDAC teams might need to know in an emergency,
- the **Logistics Capacity Assessments (LCAs)** at https://dlca.logcluster.org that serve as a good

starting point for UNDAC team members trying to get preliminary information, and

- The **Logistics Information Exchange (LOG IE)** at https://logcluster.org/en/logie/about, a tool has been designed for and by humanitarian logistics responders to improve coordination, information sharing and the quantity and quality of the data available in emergency response and preparedness, and can be activated in case of need.

G.11.1 Overview

The concept of 'logistics' encompasses a dynamic range of activities and lacks a universally agreed-upon definition. The LOG uses the definition that describes logistics as: *the process of planning, implementing and controlling the efficient, cost-effective flow and storage of goods and materials as well as related information, from the point of origin to the point of consumption for the purpose of meeting the end beneficiary's requirements.*

In disaster scenarios, it's crucial to differentiate between standard commercial systems and those operating during humanitarian crises. While commercial supply chains can forecast demand and use sophisticated models, humanitarian supply chains are unpredictable, often deployed urgently with unknown details, high stakes, and limited initial resources. Given these constraints, addressing disaster logistics requires a systemic approach, involving:

- The delivery of necessary supplies in optimal condition,
- Identification of local transportation,
- Analysis of incoming international pipeline,
- Prioritisation of relief items,
- Management of bulk commodities,
- Coordination of limited transport assets, and
- Potential military involvement (especially in conflict cases).

The ability to implement any logistics programme will be affected by four main factors:

- Infrastructure capacity,
- Availability and quantity of transport assets in the country,
- Access constraints, including political, bureaucratic/administrative, cut-off roads from landslides/floods, damaged infrastructure, etc., plus military factors such as active hostilities or civil conflict in the area of operations.

Effective disaster logistics necessitates the development of operational plans within an overarching logistics plan to ensure successful execution.

G.11.2 Logistics roles and responsibilities

International involvement in logistics operations varies greatly from situation to situation. Organisations commonly involved in logistics operations include:

- UN agencies
- International Federation of Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and their Emergency Response Units (ERU)
- Local/international non-governmental organisations (NGOs)
- UN peacekeeping missions
- Armed forces
- Private sector entities
- National authorities

The following sections outline high-level roles and responsibilities related to the United Nations and national government authorities.

The United Nations

Even in the early stages of an emergency, members of the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) may already have established, or are establishing, a logistics coordination body. This will normally be led by WFP as the global lead for the Logistics Cluster. In this role, WFP's mission will usually be to assist the humanitarian community in their logistics efforts and to be a focal point for any areas of logistical coordination that require the host Government's support. The Logistics Cluster, if and when activated, will offer a series of services to the humanitarian

community. Depending on the situation, these include coordination, logistics information management, transport services and warehousing.

The United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS), managed by WFP, might also be activated. Both the Logistics Cluster and UNHAS will require some time to be fully operational.

Next to internal logistics support (see **Chapter H.2** on the Support Function), the UNDAC team will mainly provide **general logistics support to the wider community as part of UNDAC's general situational awareness and information management role.** In very rare situations, UNDAC logistics activities might include some operational activities, upon the request of the RC/HC, e.g., arranging to use an OCHA Emergency Cash Grant to arrange for local roads to be cleared of debris by a bulldozer. In more complex situations, UNDAC may be called upon to support national authorities or members of the United Nations system in planning and implementing more complex logistics plans, particularly in situations where the Logistics Cluster has not yet been activated.

National authorities

Knowledge of the in-country logistics and supply chain resides with the national and local actors, including the private sector. As in other areas of relief work, it is vital that there is a close relationship with the national authorities when carrying out logistical operations. The following have proved to be central in the relationship with Governments and the effectiveness of logistical operations:

- Agreement over the form and content of the logistics plan.
- Agreement over the use of logistics assets (civil protection, military and other government entities).
- Agreement on authorities to control commodity movement and distribution.
- Agreement on setting up telecommunications networks, e.g., radio and satellite-communications.
- Arrangements for travel to and in restricted areas.

- Duty-free/taxation exempt status for all equipment and consumables.
- Timely and efficient customs procedures for emergency relief items, both aid for beneficiaries and support items for United Nations operational usage and facilitated administrative arrangements in general.
- Early agreement on the strategy for phase-out and hand-over of the operation to national authorities.

G.11.3 Planning a logistics programme

As noted above, in situations where the Logistics Cluster is not activated, the UNDAC team may be required to support the early collection of supply chain and logistics-related information as well as the development, in consultation with other actors (Government, humanitarian organisations, local NGOs, etc.) of a logistics concept of operations. The success of a response hinges on comprehensively understanding and meeting both programmatic and operational requirements. Effective project outcomes are rooted in a cohesive, collaborative planning approach encompassing all facets. Often, logistics personnel are not sufficiently engaged throughout various project stages, and yet, their involvement is pivotal, not only in assessing project viability but also in substantially enhancing the efficiency and efficacy of the intervention.

This section provides general guidance to allow team members to create basic logistics plans. Tools to assist with managing logistics information can be found in the LOG at https://log.logcluster.org/, the LCAs at https://dlca.logcluster.org and LOG IE if active for the country: https://logcluster.org/en/logie/about.

G.11.3.1 The planning process

Planning and anticipation are the cornerstones of good logistics operations and must be based on knowledge of various aspects of the situation, e.g., geological, technical, commercial, political and physical. In addition, it must be remembered that logistics is part of an on-going relief operation and any logistics planning must be coordinated with the

plans of other sectors of the relief operation. As logistics operations underpin and support the goals of the humanitarian community, it is important to take into account that there may be breakdowns or disruptions for various reasons. Plans should consider this and be as flexible as possible.

While it is important to implement the full cycle as depicted in **Figure G.20** Logistics Project Cycle, an initial logistics planning checklist in an emergency setting could be as simple as:

* Set objectives.
* Conduct a Logistics Assessment to:

    » Identify impacts and infrastructure functionality, including airport, seaport, waterways and river, road, rail, customs.

    » Assess local market and organisation capacity

    » Clarify for operational purposes (needs), including warehouse, premises. Procurement, fuel.

    » Estimate uncovered needs

* Develop policies (or adopt existing ones to cover procurement at cluster level or organisational level, according to different procurement manuals of the organisations, as this is beyond the scope of the Logistics Cluster).
* Consider resources required, e.g., vehicles, radios, computers, office space, storage space and staffing.
* Warehousing.
* Consider disposal/reverse logistics.

Figure G.20: Logistics planning cycle

When considering the initial concept of operations and collecting essential information on the in-country infrastructure, it is recommended to consider the following elements:

Possible source of information:

* Existing contingency plans from Government, United Nations, etc.
* Local Chamber of Commerce.
* Logistics Capacity Assessments (called LCAs and available through the Logistics Cluster website (https://dlca.logcluster.org/).
* Private sector initiatives such as the Connecting Business initiative (CBi) (see also **Section G.7**).

Type of information:

- **Stocks and movements:**

  - » Anticipated deliveries of relief supplies
  - » Available prepositioned stock items.
  - » Anticipated volumes, and specialty handling requirements of stock items to be delivered and/or procured locally throughout the course of the operation.
  - » Warehouse assessments: List of known warehouse locations that match overall size, capacity and special features that match anticipated cargo needs.
  - » Warehouse facilities and management.

- **Transport information:**

  - » Seaport operations, including handling equipment, capacity to receive and service vessels of different sizes/types, operational readiness, storage capacity, customs capacity.

  - » Airport operations, including handling equipment, capacity to receive and service vessels of different sizes/types, operational readiness, storage capacity, customs capacity. .

  - » Information on routes, modes, travel time, capacity, planned throughput, notes (actions to reduce bottlenecks and improve efficiency).

  - » Road transport: use and management of commercial, government and other relief fleets.

  - » Inland waterway transport routes, including known maximum capacities of vessels, seasonal changes to access, and known ports.

  - » Availability of fuel on the local market, and the availability of fuel storage and tanker transport units.

	ROAD	RAIL	SEA/RIVERWAY	AIR
Relative Speed	Moderate	Moderate	Slow	Very High
Reliability	Good	Good	Limited	Very good
Cost per kg	Medium	Low/Medium	Low/Very Low	High
Flexibility	High	Low	Low	Medium
Other Considerations	Extensive Network	Limited and fixed infrastructure	Restricted Network	Limited Network
	Short and medium distances from neighbouring country to operation site; internal transport for short and medium distances	Large consignments from port of discharge to inland operation site; ecological	Large quantities; less urgent; pre-positioning phase; long distances with no time constraint	Emergency phase; expensive goods; fragile or perishable goods; cold chain; no alternative option; small shipments; e.g. diplomatic pouches; long distance with time constraint.
Advantages	Relatively fast; no transshipment; direct delivery; flexible; cost	Economical; large loading capacity; range and speed (context depending)	Economical; large loading capacity; no restriction on loading capacity; cheap	Fast; reliable; limited losses; direct; easy tracking and tracing

→

	ROAD	RAIL	SEA/RIVERWAY	AIR
Disadvantages	Roads may be dangerous or blocked; sometimes driver nationality or vehicle registration not acceptable	Difficulty finding freight cars; frequent delays; transshipping required; inflexible; limited tracking	Slow; transshipping at ports; use as a second means of transport at high volumes; higher theft risk in ports; not flexible	Expensive; restricted to journey's between airports; restricted loading capacity; special considerations (dangerous goods, size limits, packing, etc.)

- **Distribution, monitoring and evaluation:**

    » Identify distribution sites, vehicles, local community leaders, and local authorities for implementation of distribution.

    » Plan and resources for implementing monitoring of supply chain performance.

    » Plan and resources for evaluation of supply chain.

- Security arrangements.

Supply chain components:

- Points of origin (producing or donor countries).
- Port of entry, e.g., land, sea, air.
- Primary warehouse (usually near the port of entry or major local production centres).
- Forward warehouses (for holding).
- Field storage points (from which relief goods are transferred to distribution points).

Generally speaking, the transportation modes become smaller the further cargo moves down the supply chain, i.e., the chain will usually start with ships, trains or aircraft and then progress through big trucks with trailers or semi-trailers to smaller trucks or even four-by-four vehicles.

For a large-scale logistics operation, the following may also be needed:

- Offices and administrative equipment.
- Warehouses at various levels.

- Fuel and spares stores.
- Vehicle maintenance workshops.
- Vehicle parking.
- Vehicles for management staff.
- Fleets of trucks.
- Special vehicles such as cranes, tankers and cargo-handling machines.
- Communications equipment.
- Accommodations.
- Hazardous waste disposal facility (for engine oil, tyres, batteries, etc.).
- Systems for tracking the status of procurements and tracking inventory items in storage/transport.

When required, the concept of operations should include transit hubs, staging areas and other forward logistics hubs to support the distribution of relief goods. As a start, a simple map will go a long way in informing the responders on the overall plans.

The reference material provides an overview of aircraft/helicopter characteristics and aircraft loading and offloading methods.

G.11.3.2 Overview of potential logistics support to the project cycle

Below you can see a more detailed overview of the six steps of logistics support to a project cycle and key points concerning the areas of logistics support (as taken from and outlined in the LOG.

PHASE OF PROJECT CYCLE	DESCRIPTION OF PHASE	AREAS OF LOGISTICS SUPPORT
Programming	During the programming phase, an organisation or team delineates its role within a country, establishes its aims and competencies, forges connections with stakeholders and partners, and aligns with the community it intends to aid. Inadequate programming significantly curtails project implementation capabilities and can detrimentally impact the overall response to affected populations.	• Evaluate logistics capacities within the area or region, encompassing geography, population, urban and rural areas, road networks, infrastructure, etc. • Gather data on contextual factors, safety considerations, access information and procure maps of the area. • Commence a market analysis to understand the local economic dynamics.
Identification	The identification phase aims to scrutinise the challenges encountered by the project's target population and explore potential solutions to address these issues. Hence, emphasis must be placed on monitoring infrastructure, safety considerations, and year-round weather conditions. Policies and protocols may require adjustments to align with national laws, particularly in contractual agreements with suppliers. The OECD has introduced the Methodology for Assessing Procurement Systems (MAPS), incorporating qualitative and quantitative indicators, addressing gaps, and presenting findings to offer recommendations pertinent to the evaluated market. Additionally, the Logistics Cluster utilizes the Logistics Capacity Assessment (LCA) to compile assessment data.	• Establish contact and rapport with competent authorities and potential collaborators in the intervention area, including suppliers, carriers, customs agents, etc. • Extend logistical assistance to evaluation teams, providing transport, communication, accommodations, and other essential resources. • Furnish assessment teams with necessary access information, such as maps, security details, geographical insights, gathered during the preceding phase. • Supply information on roadways/ airfields and logistics for the transportation of goods and personnel. • Assist in formulating a plausible supply chain strategy, covering storage, order management, and tracing the origin of materials. • Conduct comprehensive market surveys, both local and regional.

PHASE OF PROJECT CYCLE	DESCRIPTION OF PHASE	AREAS OF LOGISTICS SUPPORT
Formulation	The formulation phase marks the planning stage critical to the supply chain, where actions are meticulously planned. It involves drafting a procurement plan and budget outlining projected project activities, including cost estimations and delivery schedules for required materials and services. The logical framework matrix stands as the primary tool used in project formulation. This matrix constructs logical connections between essential resources necessary for executing planned activities, facilitating the achievement of expected outcomes aligned with intervention objectives.	• Comprehend the project's objectives and activities, assessing their feasibility, costs, and proposing adjustments when necessary. • Delineate logistics requirements (in storage, procurement management, transportation of goods and personnel, equipment) and estimate associated costs. • Accurately comprehend donor regulations, ensuring compliance with intervention guidelines or proactively addressing potential constraints, proposing alterations as deemed appropriate.
Funding	The funding phase is the stage where organisations secure financial resources for project implementation. Financial requirements are determined by comprehensive budgets covering all direct and indirect expenses linked to project execution. Typically, these budgets encompass personnel, travel, equipment, supplies (inputs), support, and indirect costs. A procurement plan forms the foundation for computing expenses related to products/services and the logistical costs essential to operationalize the project.	• Calculating costs related to inputs and services vital for project execution. • Assessing expenses tied to acquiring, operating, and maintaining communication equipment. • Estimating costs associated with transporting personnel and goods. • Determining expenses involved in equipment hosting. • Addressing costs linked to security management. • Estimating the depreciation of fixed assets.
Implementation	The implementation phase marks the execution of projects. It involves monitoring the real-time progress of activities against the initial plan. Monitoring Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) like maintenance costs and delivery timelines is crucial to guarantee the successful execution of planned projects.	• Revising and updating procurement and supply plan details. • Overseeing procurement operations. • Ensuring adherence to donor regulations. • Forecasting budget allocation and expenditures. • Tracking maintenance and transportation expenses.

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PHASE OF PROJECT CYCLE	DESCRIPTION OF PHASE	AREAS OF LOGISTICS SUPPORT
Evaluation	Assessing projects internally helps gauge achievements and pinpoint challenges. Ideally, evaluations should occur during project closure to streamline future project or program designs. Additionally, certain donors may necessitate a final report upon project completion.	• Recording the procurement process. • Conducting market evaluations. • Analysing stock consumption. • Managing equipment, including donations, reassignment, or exception requests. • Performing a lessons-learned or after-action review.

G.11.4 The Logistics Cluster

The Logistics Cluster, established by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) and following the Humanitarian Reform and the subsequent Transformative Agenda, is among the 11 humanitarian Clusters. The Cluster Approach aims to enhance system-wide readiness and technical capabilities for responding to humanitarian crises by ensuring coordinated, accountable, and predictable leadership across key technical sectors such as logistics, health, and shelter.

The Logistics Cluster functions as a community of partners working collaboratively to address logistical challenges and enhance the overall humanitarian logistics response. The governance of the Logistics Cluster is overseen by its partner organisations globally and at the country level, supported by dedicated assistance teams, and led by the appointed Cluster Lead Agency (CLA).

The World Food Programme (WFP) was designated by the IASC as the lead agency for the Logistics Cluster at the global level and is answerable to the Emergency Relief Coordinator for its performance. WFP maintains the Global Logistics Cluster Support Team headquartered in Rome, Italy, managing its operations through allocated resources at global and local levels, contingent upon funding from donors for Logistics Cluster operations. Additionally, WFP serves as the provider of last resort for common logistics services.

When activated, the Logistics Cluster is responsible for coordination in the logistics sector during emergency response operations, including information management and where necessary, service provision. To achieve this goal, the Logistics Cluster fills gaps in logistics capacity, meets the need for logistics coordination services and, where necessary, acts as 'provider of last resort'. Logistics Cluster operations may vary in scale from information sharing and coordination (such as infrastructure assessment, port and corridor coordination, transporters and rates, customs, equipment supplier information) to those involving common air, ocean and overland transport, storage, etc.

The Logistics Cluster provides a unique opportunity for the humanitarian logistics community to exploit shared assets, aptitudes and competencies of the Logistics Cluster lead agency, the participating organisations and entities working within the cluster system. The Global Logistics Cluster lead's role is to facilitate these joint ventures, both at the global and field level, to ensure system-wide preparedness and technical capacity to respond to humanitarian emergencies.

Activation

The decision to activate the Global Logistics Cluster lies primarily in the needs of the field operation. The RC/HC, in close consultation with the HCT, is responsible for securing agreement on the establishment of appropriate sectors/clusters and sectoral

groups, and for the designation of sector/cluster leads. This should be based on a clear assessment of needs and gaps, and on a mapping of response capacities, including those of the host Government, local authorities, local civil society, international humanitarian organisations and other actors, as appropriate.

When it is determined that global cluster activation is needed:

- The RC/HC informs the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC).
- The Global Logistics Cluster lead determines the nature of the response required.
- Country-level clusters are established with activities according to the scale/nature of need.

If activation of the Logistics Cluster is foreseen, a Logistics Response Team (LRT) might be sent to the field to assess the situation, determine whether activation of a Logistics Cluster is needed and/or what logistics support might be needed in-country. If activated, the LRT usually initiates Logistics Cluster operations. Whenever possible, the LRT and UNDAC will join forces and support each other in establishing a common picture of the situation.

The LRT can be comprised of members from different organisations, including staff from the Global Logistics Cluster Support Cell in Rome. It is important for field logisticians (and possibly UNDAC) to contact the members of the LRT, as their inputs count particularly at this stage. Sometimes, the assessment might conclude that there is no need for Logistics Cluster activities, in which case this is reported back to the RC/HC and no country level cluster is established.

It is suggested for a Logistics Sector Representative to accompany the initial UNDAC deployment and actively participate in the initial coordination and joint assessment of the logistics situation following a disaster.

G.12 Environmental hazards and emergencies

G.12.1 Introduction

The Earth's environment, including natural landscapes and human structures, presents various environmental challenges and hazards for communities worldwide. It serves as both a potential threat and a valuable asset that demands protection. Recognizing that "there is no Planet B" underscores the urgent need to address the environmental impact of disasters, whether they are sudden-onset catastrophes caused by natural hazards, complex emergencies, or technological accidents. Responding to these challenges is paramount, particularly since in our increasingly interconnected and globalised world, the compound, cascading, and systemic nature of risks and disasters takes on a whole new dimension, which often requires technical expertise beyond the capacity of the individual affected state.

For the purposes of this handbook, an **environmental emergency** is defined as a sudden-onset disaster or accident resulting from natural, technological or human-induced factors (or socio-natural hazards), or a combination of these, that causes or threatens to cause severe environmental damage as well as harm to human health and/or livelihoods. The damage caused by natural hazards (such as earthquakes, storms, floods, tsunamis, wildland fires, and landslides) as well as man-made disasters (such as industrial, transport accidents, technological failures and chemical spills) can have secondary environmental consequences. Sometimes, natural events like storms or earthquakes can trigger technological accidents, known as Natech (Natural Hazards Triggering Technological Accidents) events, which may result in the release of chemical contaminants.

Governments in countries affected by environmental emergencies may seek expertise and resources from the international community to manage such crises. International support can be provided bilaterally, directly from supporting countries to the affected country, or through multilateral channels such as the European Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM), the United Nations Environment

Programme (UNEP) / Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Joint Environment Unit (JEU) and/or the UNDAC system.

G.12.2 Understanding Environmental Dynamics in Emergency Response

Understanding natural and technological hazards, along with the intricate interplay between the environment and humanitarian operations, is paramount in the realm of emergency response. These hazards present distinct challenges that can significantly impact the safety, health, and well-being of populations. **Natural hazards** are defined as environmental phenomena that have the potential to impact societies and the human environment. Examples of natural hazards include avalanches, coastal flooding, cold waves, droughts, earthquakes, hail, heat waves, hurricanes, ice storms, landslides, lightning, riverine flooding, strong winds, tornados, tsunamis, volcanic activity, wildfires. **Technological hazards** originate from technological or industrial conditions (actions or facilities created by humans), dangerous procedures, infrastructure failure or human activity. For further information on various hazards including environmental and technological hazards, please see Hazard Information Profiles (HIPs) | PreventionWeb

The complexity of today's emergencies, often characterised by the convergence of these hazards, necessitates a holistic approach to emergency management that encompasses a broad understanding of diverse risk factors and their potential impacts. In this context, effective disaster preparedness and management requires an in-depth understanding of the overall impact of all existing components of risks, i.e. a deep understanding of the different hazards in their spatio-temporal characteristics, but also the knowledge of exposure, vulnerability and coping capacities of human communities and the natural environment, as well as the capacity for adaptation and resilience.

The interplay between the environment and humanitarian operations underscores the imperative of integrating environmental sustainability and resilience into emergency planning and response. Addressing environmental degradation, climate change, and resource scarcity is crucial for developing sustainable response strategies that meet immediate humanitarian needs and foster long-term recovery and resilience. By prioritising environmental and technological considerations, emergency response efforts can effectively safeguard vulnerable communities, protect critical infrastructure, and support enduring recovery and resilience efforts.

Thus, adopting a multidisciplinary approach that includes environmental experts, technologists, and humanitarian responders enables emergency response teams to anticipate challenges, mitigate risks, and optimise response efforts in complex and evolving disaster scenarios. Advanced technologies and data analytics for real-time monitoring, risk assessment, and decision-making, enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of humanitarian operations. Ultimately, a comprehensive understanding of environmental and technological hazards, combined with a commitment to integrating environmental considerations into humanitarian operations, is essential for building resilient communities capable of withstanding and recovering from the multifaceted challenges posed by disasters.

The roles of the UNEP/OCHA Joint Environment Unit (JEU) and the UNDAC team in environmental response are integral to addressing environmental emergencies. Depending on the context, UNDAC can play a pivotal role in rapid identification and mitigation of environmental impacts following disasters and conflicts. The responding teams with the support of technical expertise could conduct risk assessments, identify gaps in assistance related to environmental issues, coordinate environmental response and recommend additional international capacities and assistance.

G.12.3 JEU, Environmental Experts and their link to UNDAC: Coordination Role & Technicalities

G.12.3.1 The role of the JEU

The JEU is the United Nations emergency response mechanism that mobilises and coordinates international assistance and response resources to countries facing environmental emergencies and crises

with significant environmental impacts. Housed in OCHA's Response Support Branch (RSB)'s Emergency Response Section (ERS), the JEU has access to OCHA's tools and services for response coordination, including the UNDAC and INSARAG mechanism. As such, the JEU can serve as the primary focal point of contact to UNDAC teams in seeking specialised assistance and expertise to address environmental issues and hazards encountered during missions.

The JEU has a number of key environmental response functions:

- Monitor potential environmental consequences following the impact of natural hazards, conflicts or technological/industrial accidents.

- Alert the international community and mobilise multilateral technical assistance on environmental response upon requests from Member States.

- Deploy international technical experts to rapidly identify and assess sites and risk levels resulting from crisis and make impartial and independent recommendations and advice for mitigation measures.

- Support overall coordination of environmental response. By mobilising and coordinating response, the JEU draws on resources and knowledge of over 17 different networks and partnerships, enabling close engagement with UN agencies, programmes, and affiliated organisations, as well as Member States and regional organisations such as the EU's Civil Protection Team (EUCPT). The JEU also works closely with non-governmental organisations (NGOs), the private sector, industry groups, and academic and research partners.

If the Resident Coordinator's team or the Government requests support in addressing the environment in their initial response, the JEU, together with UNEP, OCHA, and other operational partners, can mobilise expertise to address the various environmental dimensions that should be considered during the humanitarian and post-humanitarian phases and deploy a team of experts. These experts may be deployed as part of UNDAC mission, to:

- Identify environmental impacts and risks caused by the crisis and relief operations as
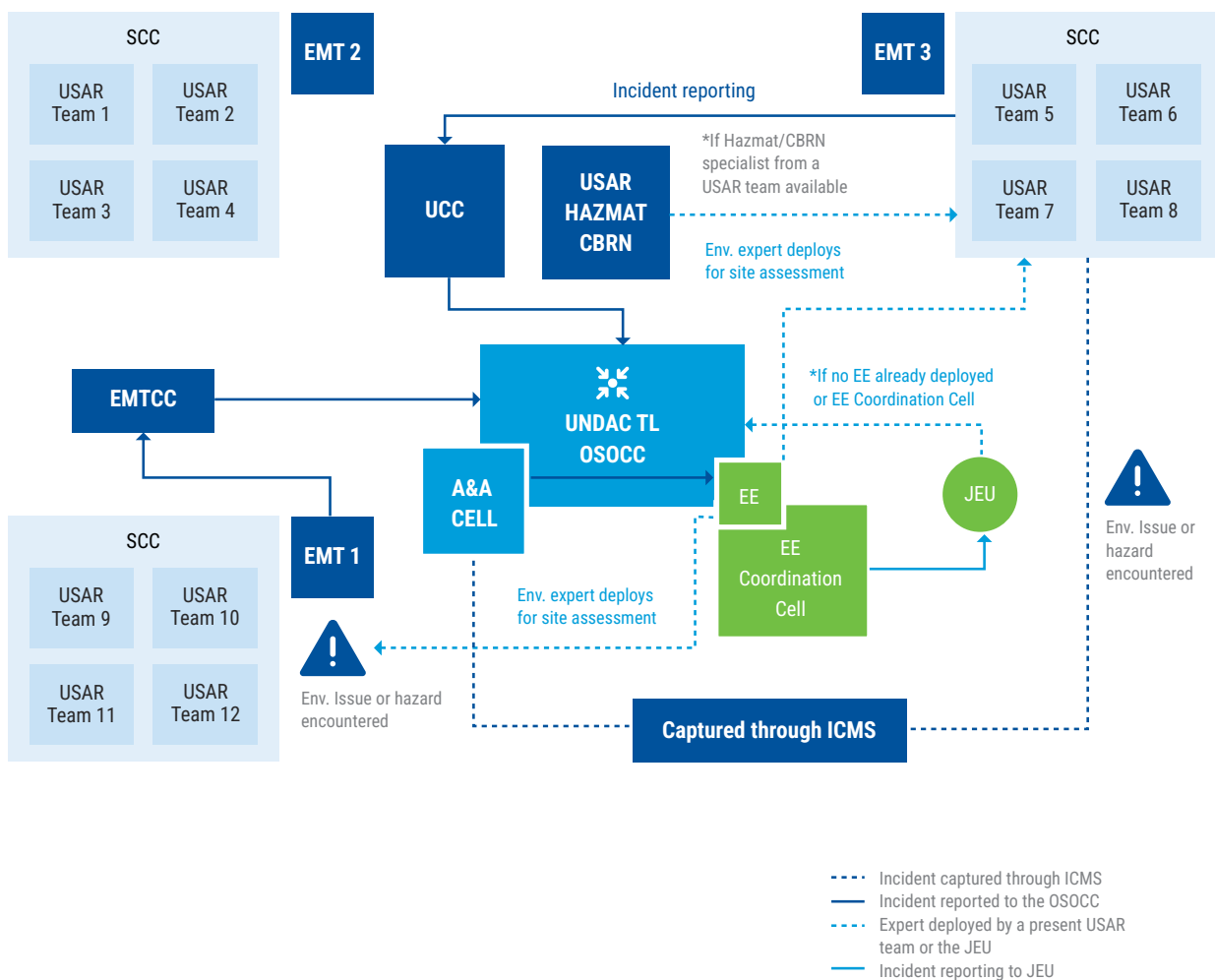
well as potential environmental pressures of recovery efforts.

- Identify the negative response-related activities and coping mechanisms resulting from an emergency that can impact the environment or create new environmental risks.

- Assess institutional capacities at national and local levels to mitigate environmental risks and manage environmental recovery.

- Coordinate the overall response to the environmental emergency.

- Provide a plan and recommendations that aims to integrate environmental needs within humanitarian programmes and projects.

- Provide a standard reference point for future comprehensive environmental assessments in the post-crisis setting.

Through OCHA's Duty System, the JEU is available 24/7 to mobilise assistance for those Member States facing emergencies. Upon alert of an incident or request for support by the affected Government, the JEU will advise on immediate actions and, if necessary, forward a request for assistance to its network of partners. Depending on the nature of the incident (i.e., type of hazard/accident and impact, and/or type of substance involved) the JEU will endeavour to tailor-fit the expertise needed. The expert(s) may be deployed independently or as a part of an UNDAC or EUCPT mission to assess the incident, perform sampling (if possible, analyse the samples in-country), and provide recommendations.

In case there is a request for international assistance received by/from the Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator (RC/HC), UN Agencies, programmes or national/local authorities from Member States, the JEU would forward such a request to environmental emergency response partner organisations putting together a set of elements including the terms of reference for the required experts, in accordance with the Guidelines for Environmental Emergencies (see UNDAC Toolbox). If the sponsoring organisation agrees to respond to the request, it would deploy the environmental experts needed within a United Nations international mission including UNDAC missions (at no cost to the requesting country), the procedures of which are outlined in the subsection G.12.3.

Figure G.21: EE Activation

Legend:
- ---- Incident captured through ICMS
- —— Incident reported to the OSOCC
- ---- Expert deployed by a present USAR team or the JEU
- —— Incident reporting to JEU

G.12.3.2 The role of UNDAC team members and environmental issues

Depending on the context and on the nature of the request, UNDAC team members with support of environmental experts may be requested to identify acute environmental impacts as well as secondary risks caused by environmental emergencies. The acute environmental impacts are defined as risks to human life and welfare that require immediate attention in the initial humanitarian response. Furthermore, UNDAC members may play an important role in identifying environmental considerations, including vulnerabilities and concerns, and integrating them into humanitarian response.

While environmental issues are an integral part of all aspects of humanitarian response, technological and industrial accidents pose a specific challenge. These accidents can be caused by humans or natural hazards, and may result in environmental damage, loss of life, and property damage. In response to these accidents, UNDAC teams with environmental expertise may be deployed. It is important to note that UNDAC teams are not responsible for responding to nuclear and radiological accidents, as this falls under the mandate of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

When a group of environmental experts is deployed as part of an UNDAC team, commonly the UNDAC structure will have the environmentalists as part of the Environment Emergencies Coordination Cell

(see **Chapter D** regarding its location as part of the OSOCC set-up) and will conduct a rapid overall environmental assessment of the crisis. As environment is an integral part of the response, UNDAC team members are expected to proactively identify and report environmental impacts/findings to the UNDAC Team Leader and the environmental cell. In consultation with national authorities, recommendations for further action and requests for further expertise (experts, sampling, equipment) can be made through the JEU.

If an UNDAC team requires specialised environmental information or expertise, the JEU is the first point of contact to provide the necessary information and

expertise. They can provide guidance on a range of situations which an UNDAC team could confront during a mission and/or to mobilise its technical network of partners to provide required technical expertise.

G.12.3.3 Typical procedures of UNDAC-JEU environmental response missions

This section provides the typical protocols and responsibilities of JEU and UNDAC in managing international environmental responses under the UNDAC-JEU response mission framework. This is when there are environmental experts deployed as part of the UNDAC team.

PRE-DEPLOYMENT PHASE		
TASKS	**ROLES OF JEU**	**ROLES OF UNDAC**
Verify needs and requests	• Contact OCHA/UNEP/Resident Coordinator's offices to assess available international assistance that can be provided and coordinate with other UN representation; • Prepare Terms of Reference (ToR) based on expressed needs, requested expertise and latest information in collaboration with UN representation.	
Alerts and mobilises the international community	• Based on the information received, forward a request for assistance to potential providers (such as the UCPM, etc.). • Create a new emergency in the VOSOCC. • Alert the environmental networks and the donor community (EE0) about the emergency and send a request for environmental experts. • Alert/inform the UNDAC network.	• Calculating costs related to inputs and services vital for project execution. • Assessing expenses tied to acquiring, operating, and maintaining communication equipment. • Estimating costs associated with transporting personnel and goods. • Determining expenses involved in equipment hosting. • Addressing costs linked to security management. • Estimating the depreciation of fixed assets.
Consolidates the mission team and define the composition and modalities of mission	• Consolidates mission composition, structure and coordinate deployment of assets; this includes the modality of the mission, either independently or together with UNDAC or other type of international deployment modality (e.g., through ECHO ERCC, or other partner where an interface agreement exists).	

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PRE-DEPLOYMENT PHASE

TASKS	ROLES OF JEU	ROLES OF UNDAC
Provides pre-deployment briefing and deploys experts	• Update the VOSOCC environment tab stating what resources will be deployed, their capacity, and estimated time of arrival. • Provide experts with pre-deployment debriefing together with UNDAC and with the expert-providing organisations.	• Update the VOSOCC environment tab stating what resources will be deployed, their capacity, and estimated time of arrival. • If environmental emergency assistance forms part of an UNDAC team, contact the Team Leader as early as possible to agree on further actions.

DEPLOYMENT PHASE

TASKS	ROLES OF JEU	ROLES OF UNDAC
Provides support for deploying mission	• Oversees and support the mission deployment: • Manage the information on the VOSOCC's environment page and provide regular situation updates; • Ensure that sufficient links are established and maintained with regional and/or in-country UN representation; • If necessary, ensure that the assistance is coordinated with other forms of international response; • As required, support the appropriate staffing of an Environmental Emergency Coordination Cell in an OSOCC in cooperation with UNDAC. • Act as backstop for the mission and ensure that necessary administrative support is provided in cooperation with the providing country	• Ensure that information about the environmental emergency response is included in overall situation reports; • Upon arrival in the recipient country, contact the requesting party (or their representatives) and/or in-country UN representatives; • Coordinate all activities with national authorities and international coordination mechanism, such as the OSOCC, USAR etc • Through the environmental expert(s), assess the impact of the incident and communicate the results in the form of a written mission report promptly to all concerned parties; • If necessary, provide the national authorities and the affected population with emergency advice on immediate actions to be taken; • Promptly communicate needs for additional international resources, including possible additional sampling and analysis, to the JEU (and the OSOCC if such is in place)

POST-DEPLOYMENT PHASE

TASKS	ROLES OF JEU	ROLES OF UNDAC
Provides support for deploying mission	• Ensure that the mission report is disseminated to relevant international entities, including regional and/or in-country UN representation; • In cooperation with regional and/or in-country UN representation, ensure that a proper transition between emergency response and early recovery takes place; • If necessary, facilitate technical expertise and resources to support the affected country in the implementation of recommendations; • Facilitate an evaluation of emergency procedures and disseminate findings to all stakeholders and make them available on the VOSOCC; • Support monitoring and evaluation of mission success by following up on status of mission's recommendations three months later, in collaboration with partners; • As necessary, facilitate review of emergency procedures based on lessons learned.	• Devise transition/exit strategy in cooperation with national authorities and regional and/ or in-country UN representation taking into account measures for early recovery and disaster risk reduction; • Ensure that all mission related equipment is sufficiently packed, marked and classified according to international standards before departure, including samples of hazardous material brought back for further analysis • Evaluate deployment performance and communicate recommendations for updates of emergency procedures to JEU

For further information on the environment experts deployment procedures, please refer to the EE Hub at The Environmental Experts' Hub (EEHub) - EECentre, and the Environmental Emergencies Guidelines and template of ToRs of environment experts (UNDAC's environment expert and Technical experts, including Contamination expert, Oil spill management expert, Dam stability expert, and Disaster waste management expert) in the UNDAC Toolbox.

G.12.3.4 Assessing environmental impacts and risks

In environmental response management, one of the initial steps is to quickly identify and assess sites, as well as environmental risks and impacts resulting from crises and accidents. These assessments and identifications can be conducted remotely or through field assessments by experts.

Assessing the impacts and risks of technological/ industrial accidents

During technological/industrial/chemical accidents, chemicals released into the environment are the primary concern. Accidents can take many forms, such as spills of hazardous substances, explosions, illegal dumping, and industrial fires. To assess the environmental impact of chemical and industrial accidents, a structured and scientific protocol and methodology are required. This should integrate various tools and methods, including remote sensing analysis, sampling, and JEU's Flash Environmental Assessment Tool (FEAT).

PHASE	KEY TASKS
Initial (remote) assessment of sites and accidents	• **Notification and response activation:** Promptly activate the emergency response system upon notification of a chemical or industrial accident. • **Safety precautions:** Ensure the safety of response teams and the surrounding community by implementing safety protocols and evacuation plans if necessary. Consult a Hazmat/CBRN Specialist regarding Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Protocols and decontamination procedures in advance, remotely or in the form of a team member. Do not enter hazardous zones without measuring instruments and an escape and decontamination plan (along with the necessary tools to implement it). • **Remote analysis:** Utilise remote sensing techniques to assess the spatial extent and severity of environmental impacts. Satellite imagery and aerial surveys can provide valuable information on the distribution of contaminants and affected ecosystems. • **Gather information:** Collect information about the accident site, including the types of chemicals involved, quantities released, affected environmental media (air, water, soil), and potentially impacted areas using FEAT. • **Assessment coordination:** Reach out to the UNDAC Assessment & Analysis Cell to determine the collaborative arrangements.
Field assessment, identification of key environmental issues relevant to humanitarian operations and verifications	• **Field sampling:** Conduct field sampling to collect environmental samples (air, water, soil) for laboratory analysis. Ensure proper chain of custody procedures to maintain sample integrity. • **Laboratory analysis:** Analyse environmental samples for chemical composition, toxicity levels, and other relevant parameters to assess environmental contamination. • **Field observations and questionnaires** conducted by Environmental Expert or through collaboration with partners identified by the UNDAC Assessment and Analysis Cell Coordinator who can assist with identifying key environmental issues (Ex. UNDAC A&A direct observation tools, key-informant tools, MIRA, etc.) • **Quantitative and qualitative analysis and verification of FEAT outcomes:** Conduct both quantitative and qualitative analysis using FEAT to evaluate the severity and extent of environmental impacts. Consider uncertainties and variability in input data.
Risk management and mitigation	• **Risk analysis:** Evaluate the outcomes of initial and field assessment and the risks posed by environmental contamination to human health, ecosystems, and natural resources. • **Risk prioritisation:** Prioritise response actions based on the severity of environmental risks and potential long-term impacts. • **Implement mitigation measures:** Implement immediate mitigation measures to contain the spread of contaminants and minimise further environmental damage. • **Remediation planning:** Develop a remediation plan to restore affected ecosystems and mitigate long-term environmental impacts. Consider techniques such as soil remediation, water treatment, nature-based solution and habitat restoration. • **Environmental monitoring:** Establish a monitoring program to track environmental recovery and the effectiveness of mitigation measures over time
Documentation and Reporting	• **Documentation:** Maintain detailed records of all assessment activities, data collected, analysis results, and response actions taken. • **Reporting:** Prepare comprehensive report documenting the environmental impacts of the accident, assessment findings, and recommendations for future risk reduction and preparedness.

The Flash Environment Assessment Tool (FEAT) helps identify potential secondary risks posed by large infrastructure and industrial facilities containing hazardous materials. Industrial hazard profiles are available on the Virtual OSOCC for a number of countries and can be adapted to the specific location in a couple of hours using the FEAT. Focusing on the "big, obvious and life-threatening" impacts, the FEAT allows UNDAC members to identify immediate risks and needs, to prioritise field visit locations and to guide requests for additional expertise. The FEAT tool and online training can be accessed on the Environmental Emergencies Centre (www. eecentre.org).

Assessing environmental impacts and needs in post-crisis situation

The immediate phase after a disaster or conflict is the period during which efforts to save human lives and alleviate human suffering take priority. During this phase, emergency needs, water supplies and sanitation, food aid, temporary shelter and health needs must be supplied as quickly as possible. While environmental issues are often not considered during this phase, it is imperative to understand the dynamic between a disaster, conflicts and their environmental impacts, the needs of the community and implications for the post humanitarian process. The table below shows some of the recurrent environment-related consequences associated with natural hazards.

TYPE OF HAZARDS	POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS
Hurricane/Cyclone/ Typhoon/Flooding	• Devastation of coastal ecosystems • Destruction of vegetation and alteration of landscapes and habitats • Intense rainfall leading to flash flooding, soil erosion, and sedimentation • Disruption of water quality and aquatic ecosystems due to flooding • Saltwater intrusion into freshwater sources and agricultural lands • Storm surges inundating coastal areas and causing saltwater intrusion • Release of hazardous materials such as oil spills and chemical contaminants • Risks to human health and the environment due to hazardous material exposure
Tsunami	• Coastal habitat destruction and alteration • Erosion and sedimentation along coastlines • Disruption of marine ecosystems and coral reefs • Contamination of coastal waters with debris and pollutants • Saltwater intrusion into freshwater sources and agricultural lands • Displacement of sediment and soil deposition inland • Loss of biodiversity and destruction of coastal vegetation • Disruption of coastal infrastructure and human settlements • Release of hazardous materials such as oil spills and chemical contaminants • Risks to human health and the environment due to hazardous material exposure • Long-term recovery challenges for affected ecosystems and communities

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TYPE OF HAZARDS	POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS
Earthquake	• Alteration of landforms and ecosystems, including landslides, ground subsidence, and liquefaction • Destabilisation or damage to infrastructure cause by soil liquefaction, leading to widespread destruction and hindering rescue and recovery efforts • Rupture of underground infrastructure, resulting in the release of hazardous materials e.g. chemicals and pollutants into the environment, contaminating soil, water sources, and air quality. • The displacement of soil and debris causing obstruction of rivers and streams, causing flooding and disrupting aquatic habitats • Secondary environmental hazards such as tsunamis, aftershocks, and fires, compounding the challenges faced by affected communities and prolonging the recovery process.
Volcanic Eruption	• Release of ash, gasses, and lava altering the landscape • Air pollution from sulfur dioxide, carbon dioxide, and ash emissions • Acid rain formation due to sulfur dioxide interactions with atmospheric moisture • Contamination of water and food sources with volcanic ash and chemicals • Disruption of ecosystems and loss of biodiversity • Soil fertility reduction and agricultural damage from ash deposition • Potential lahars (mudflows) and debris flows affecting downstream areas as secondary hazards • Short-term disturbances of transportation and logistics (e.g. air flight cancellations) • Climate impacts from large volcanic eruptions causing temporary cooling • Long-term recovery challenges for affected landscapes and ecosystems
Droughts	• Depletion of surface water sources such as rivers, lakes, and streams • Decreased groundwater levels and aquifer depletion • Loss of wetlands and drying of water-dependent ecosystems • Reduced soil moisture leading to desertification and land degradation • Increased frequency and intensity of wildfires due to dry conditions • Decline in agricultural productivity and crop failures • Disruption of wildlife habitats and migration patterns • Loss of biodiversity and extinction risk for drought-sensitive species • Long-term impacts on ecosystem resilience and recovery even after drought conditions alleviate
Forest Fires	• Destruction of forest ecosystems and loss of biodiversity • Release of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gasses into the atmosphere • Air pollution from smoke and particulate matter affecting air quality • Soil erosion and degradation due to loss of vegetation cover • Alteration of hydrological cycles and increased risk of flooding and landslides • Disruption of wildlife habitats and loss of habitat diversity • Long-term changes in soil fertility and nutrient cycling • Increased vulnerability to invasive species and pests in fire-affected areas • Challenges in ecosystem recovery and regeneration post-fire

Environmental damage can also result from negative impacts of humanitarian operations. These damages are in addition to those caused by various types of hazards. For instance, debris generated by disasters is often cleared into unsafe or ecologically sensitive habitats, such as lagoons or wetlands, which sustain livelihoods and provide other ecosystem services. The IASC Guidance on Environmental Responsibility in Humanitarian Operations offers guidance and lessons learned for improving environmental responsibility in UN emergency and humanitarian operations. See more in **Section G.12.5** below on Disaster Waste Management.

The linkage between environment experts and UNDAC's Assessment and Analysis Cell is crucial for comprehensive environmental response. Environment experts contribute specialised knowledge on the environmental impacts as their insights inform the Assessment and Analysis Cell's understanding of overall humanitarian needs, helping to tailor responses that mitigate risks and promote sustainable recovery efforts in affected countries. The Assessment and Analysis Cell can also provide the environment expert with insight regarding on-going or planned assessment activities by partners responding in the affected areas that may capture important environmental dimensions or allow room for assessment collaboration. See **Subchapter F.2** on Assessment and Analysis.

G.12.3.5 Coordination/Environmental Emergencies Coordination Cell

UNDAC teams are deployed to assist countries affected by disasters in coordinating international relief efforts, assessing needs, and providing information management support. In this context the Environmental Emergencies Coordination Cell within the On-Site Operations Coordination Centre (OSOCC) can be established to coordinate assessments and support environmental response activities. See **Chapter D** for more on the OSOCC Concept.

Key functions of the **Environmental Emergencies Coordination Cell** within the OSOCC may include:

- **Coordination of Environmental Assessment:** Conducting rapid assessments of the

environmental impact of disasters, including pollution, ecosystem damage, and other environmental hazards.

- **Overall Coordination** with all stakeholders involved:

  » Coordinate with national/local emergency management authorities (Ministry of Environment, Civil Protection, etc.) to ensure the early integration of environmental considerations in emergency response.

  » Ensure that environmental responders are integrated into the emergency coordination structure set up for the response (such as through the establishment of an Environmental Emergencies Coordination Cell as part of OSOCC).

G.12.3.6 Technical Partners for Environmental Response

There are a number of international, regional and technical institutions, mechanisms, and governance frameworks offering support to member states affected by environmental emergencies. Some of these organisations are enlisted below. An affected State would sometimes request assistance from more than one actor listed. These would then respond in a coordinated manner, each within their mandate and area of expertise. In any emergency where it is unclear whom to call upon for assistance, the JEU can be contacted 24/7 to facilitate the identification of the appropriate response mechanism and/or points of contact. The below is the list of JEU's technical and operational partners who can be mobilised/contacted to support environmental response, part of which have an already established Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with JEU:

- Remote Sensing: UNOSAT, EU Copernicus, International Charter Space and Major Disasters, Sentinel Asia
- Mapping: MapAction, IMPACT Initiatives/REACH, iMMAP
- Weapon Contamination: OPCW
- Industrial Accidents: OECD, The UNECE Industrial Accidents Conventions
- Mine Action: UNMAS

- Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Waste: The Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm (BRS) Conventions Secretariat
- Marine Pollution: IMO and Regional Activity Centres (RACS), e.g., MEMAC ROPME; NOWPAP MERRAC; REMPEC, REMPEITC-Caribe; PERSGA-MEMAC
- Coastal and Freshwater Wetlands: Ramsar convention
- CBRN: CBRN Mitigation Group (Scientist advice remote or local in CBRN /Occupational Hygiene issues)
- Wildfires: The Global Fire Monitoring Centre
- Regional Organisations: The European Union Civil Protection Mechanism; ASEAN, CDEMA, CEPREDENAC; SAARC

G.12.4 Handling hazardous materials

To assist in environmental response efforts, UNDAC team members may encounter areas with chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) hazards. Whether accidental or deliberate, these hazards pose serious threats to deployed UNDAC teams. As a general rule, entry into CBRN events should only occur with Hazmat/CBRN experts present and with sufficient equipment for every team member.

Prior to any deployment to sites with potential CBRN hazards, a needs assessment and analysis of potential CBRN threats must be undertaken. These assessments and analyses should be based on a risk management methodology and the information collected from various competent and trusted sources before and during the deployment of environmental response assets. Furthermore, the team must be equipped with CBRN equipment such as Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), detectors, decontamination solutions and specialised drugs.

If the risks of CBRN threats are deemed too high, the UNDAC team should refrain from deploying to that specific context/location. Environmental missions deployed in contexts with limited and manageable CBRN threats must receive specific awareness, safe behaviour, and escape training. Additionally, they should be provided with sufficient protective equipment for all mission members throughout the deployment.

The following are **golden rules for responding to hazardous materials accidents**:

- Conduct pre-deployment assessment.
- Plan your actions.
- Control incident scene to reduce access, in the event of another accident release.
- Coordinate with agencies (local, state and national responders, and international responders such as EMT, USAR, Red Cross, etc.). Environmental missions are not standalone operations but part of a wider response structure, led by a clearly predetermined leader (national or international). The decision-making processes in all phases - risk assessment, mitigation and preparedness, and decision-making during the actual response - must be closely coordinated with the lead, who also has the responsibility to ensure standardised, harmonised, and coordinated assessment and response.
- Know how to obtain technical information and communicate with industry experts.

For personal preparedness, refer to the "Comprehensive health and safety guidelines for environmental emergencies" and the section on "Medical emergencies and first aid" in the Reference material (J.9).

G.12.5 Disaster Waste Management (DWM)

G.12.5.1 Operationalisation of the terms "disaster waste management" vs "debris management'

Disaster waste management (DWM) is a critical aspect of both disaster response and post-disaster recovery, as this process is essential for providing humanitarian assistance, facilitating the clean-up and reconstruction of affected areas, mitigating environmental impacts, and ensuring the health and safety of the local population. OCHA, in its Disaster Waste Management Guidelines, identifies two types of disaster waste generated during disasters:

- Waste generated by the direct impact of the disaster, including debris generated by construction waste, rubble and natural materials like mud and

trees, as well as vehicles, chemicals, pesticides and fertilisers, etc.

- Waste generated by humanitarian relief operations, referred to as humanitarian waste.

In environmental emergencies, it is crucial to prioritise the immediate and proper removal of debris and other waste generated by the direct impact of the disaster. This is necessary to enable access, facilitate reconstruction, and minimise negative environmental and health impacts. However, it is also important to address humanitarian waste generated by relief activities promptly. Leaving humanitarian waste unattended can lead to a secondary environmental disaster within the primary disaster area.

Despite the distinct origins and leadership of agencies managing debris and waste from the direct impact of disasters versus humanitarian waste, their management often involves similar processes. These include sorting, collection, handling, transportation, and treatment, which encompasses the

value chain and safe disposal. Close coordination between these efforts is essential and beneficial.

G.12.5.2 Disaster Waste Management: framework and guidance

For waste to pose a risk to human health or the local environment, three elements of risk must be present as part of the Disaster Waste Management (DWM) framework:

- The waste must be hazardous (i.e., toxic to human health) or present a hazard,
- There must be a route or 'pathway' by which the hazardous waste can be transported, and
- The hazardous waste must affect a 'receptor', such as a person or a water source.

According to the DWM Guidelines, DWM should follow the waste management principle, which prioritises the best options to reduce the need for landfill and maximise the use of resources (reuse, recycling, treatment):

TYPE OF DW	DISPOSAL	REUSE/RECYCLING/TREATMENT
Debris (concrete/bricks, furniture, plastics, cardboard, paper, timber, cables, soils and sediments, bulky items, etc.)	• If possible, temporary segregated disposal for future reuse/recycling. • If asbestos is present as a contaminant, ensure it is adequately covered and labelled. Use personal protective equipment (PPE) and implement wet processes until it's covered, including during transportation.	• Bricks/concrete for construction • Timber for cooking, heating, shelter. • Scrap metals for recycling. • Cardboard/paper for recycling. • Plastic packaging for recycling
Hazardous materials and substances	• Store in proper drums, bins or other containers in temporary sites. • Dispose of if sanitary landfill is available or other treatment options as per country rules.	Check the availability of specialised companies to treat hazardous waste.
Health-care wastes	• Store in proper drums, bins or other containers in temporary sites. • Dispose of if sanitary landfill is available or other options as per country rules.	Check the availability of specialised companies to treat medical waste (e.g., medical waste incinerators).
Commercial and industrial waste	• Store in proper drums, bins or other containers in temporary sites. • Dispose of if sanitary landfill is available or other treatment options as per country rules.	Check the availability of specialised companies to treat hazardous waste.

TYPE OF DW	DISPOSAL	REUSE/RECYCLING/TREATMENT
Post-conflict areas (unexploded ordnance (UXO), landmines and ammunition within the debris, military vehicles, phosphorus and other weapon contaminates	• Handling by specialists. • Disposal under controlled measures by specialists.	NA
Vulcanic waste like ashes	Handle with care and wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE). Note that storage can be challenging due to similar particle sizes. Ashes or lahars can become fluid with water; consult a skilled geologist before disposing of them in a landfill.	Can be used in Concrete, as fertiliser after some years of degradation.
Waste from IDPs camps and households	See next section	

In order to reduce the burden on existing sanitary landfills or temporary storage sites, sorting facilities must be established adjacent to these sites wherever possible. These segregation facilities will allow the separation and recovery of materials to be recycled, such as scrap metal, plastic, wood, etc., or treated in the case of hazardous waste, and only the waste to be disposed of will be sent to landfills. If possible, a network of small sorting centres can also be set up outside the destroyed areas, involving the recycling or hazardous waste treatment sector, which can collect these items and reduce the amount of waste to be sent to sanitary landfills or temporary storage sites.

DWM Phases and Steps

1. IMMEDIATE RESPONSE PHASE

As per the DWM guideline, during this phase, it is important to identify the most urgent priorities by creating a waste hazard ranking through the following steps:

STEP	ACTION	TOOLS
Waste issues identification	Desk-based evaluation to determine geographic presence of waste.	Normally carried out using governmental sources, Geographical Information System (GIS), news, information gathered from local agencies, and the JEU can support using **the Hazards Identification Tool (HIT).**
Waste characterization	Identify the quantity and quality of waste streams and dumps/ landfills.	Through site visits and waste sampling analysis.
Waste mapping	Create a waste map of the affected area, which should be updated as information becomes available.	Use collected data in steps 1 and 2 to generate the waste map. T**he waste needs assessment** can be used as a checklist to identify the different types of waste present, where and in what condition.
Waste assessment	Allow for prioritisation of actions to be developed.	The three elements of the framework for disaster waste management: where waste is present, determine. if there is also a 'pathway' and 'receptor'. **The waste hazard ranking tool** can be used to highlight all waste streams and associated hazards/ risks.
Actions prioritisation	Give a 'common sense' ranking to each identified waste stream and/or issue.	Using the following guide: • Identification of appropriate disposal sites. **Disposal site guidelines** could be used to help select emergency dumpsites. • Main streets clearing but keeping the waste within the emergency area until appropriate disposal sites have been identified. • Utilisation of all available equipment and stakeholders • Hospitals and clinics waste segregation • · Arrangement of available resources to address the most pressing issues. **Waste-handling matrix** can be referred to for options related to handling, treating, and disposing each disaster waste type.

2. 72 HOURS ONWARDS PHASE

If people remain in the disaster area, their household waste should be collected where possible. And at this stage, a rapid assessment of disaster waste should be carried out to inform further decision making. Exact data is not required, but a reasonable idea of the status of waste management, access to disposal sites, the capacity of local authorities to deal with the situation and the need for international assistance, if any, should be provided.

Where people are displaced, waste from IDP camps should be managed in coordination with local waste management services. And ownership of waste, especially recyclable waste, is an important issue that needs to be resolved to avoid future conflict. See the section 6.4.3

G.12.5.3 Debris management and Early Recovery Cluster

The Early recovery cluster aims at building the foundations for sustainable recovery and a speedy return to longer term development during and immediately after a crisis. During post-disasters, UNDP, the lead agency for the Early Recovery Cluster, implements debris management assessments and plans to allow the clearance, recycling and disposal of debris. Following the early recovery approach, UNDP engages and builds capacity of Government and affected communities to participate in the debris management activities. UNDP usually establishes emergency employment that not only allows the clearance and management of debris, but also pays people and provides emergency livelihoods and increases the resilience of communities.

UNDP has developed a Guidance note for debris management that provides practical advice to UNDP COs on how to plan and implement debris management systems. In this guideline, UNDP states their work on removing and managing debris/rubble focused on development following the OCHA waste disaster guidance.

G.12.5.4 Humanitarian waste management

Humanitarian waste is the waste generated by humanitarian organisations during the implementation of their relief activities in humanitarian emergencies, which may or may not be considered environmental disasters, and which can become an environmental and health hazard if not properly managed in a timely manner. Humanitarian waste includes all waste generated by the affected population from the relief items distributed and services provided, such as food waste, packaging materials, shelter waste and other NFI, as well as waste from the organisations' functional services in their offices, guest houses, warehouses and vehicle workshops.

The Sphere Handbook set clear guidance and minimum standards for waste management interventions to WASH, Shelter and Settlement, Food security and Nutrition, Health, and other clusters and recommends inter-cluster coordination to establish or re-establish sustainable solid waste management systems during emergencies in collaboration with local authorities and other key local stakeholders.

Guided by the principle of "do no harm" and the goal of reducing environmental impact, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) recently published Guidelines for Improving Environmental Responsibility in Emergency and Humanitarian Operations, which emphasise the importance of organisations finding ways to operate in a more environmentally responsible manner and to integrate environmental considerations into their programmes and projects as well as into their support operations and day-to-day activities.

DG ECHO has also developed Voluntary Environmental Indicators to facilitate the integration of DG ECHO's Minimum Environmental Recommendations and Requirements (MERs) into project proposals which can be useful for even non-ECHO partners to utilise and measure their performance on environmental issues related to humanitarian waste measurement and management. ECHO's MERs include recommendations and requirements by sector (i.e., WASH, health, camp management, etc.) as well as cross-cutting issues such as supply

chain and logistics. On humanitarian waste, the MERs recommends measuring and tracking humanitarian waste generated and sets key indicators (such as % of project sites covered by an environmentally sustainable solid waste management plan, % of solid waste managed) according to the sustainable solid waste management plan in place. In order to reduce the burden of waste, ECHO also stresses the importance of implementing waste reduction strategies addressing secondary/tertiary packaging/disposable plastics, increased durability of items, and quantity of waste avoided as a result of implemented waste reduction strategies.

ECHO also advocates for collaboration with public and private recycling and waste management services to ensure proper disposal. This includes partnering with waste management actors and conducting behaviour change activities to prevent littering and pollution. Additionally, the project aims to sensitise the target population on safe waste management practices, with a focus on the percentage of beneficiaries receiving assistance who have been sensitised.

To facilitate information on existing recycling and waste management infrastructure, the Global Logistics Cluster's environment project (WREC) is mapping facilities with the support of the logistics partners. However, given the limited access to recycling and waste management services and facilities in emergency context, waste reduction must be prioritised by humanitarians at the procurement phase, engaging suppliers in reducing packaging and providing relief items that are reusable, repairable, durable and recyclable at the final destination. The Joint Initiative for Humanitarian Packaging has developed several resources and tools to promote the reduction and alternative option to plastic packaging that can be applied in humanitarian emergencies. The Guidelines for Packaging waste management in humanitarian operations addresses the environmental impact of packaging waste from the delivery of food and non-food items as the volume of humanitarian aid and relief efforts continues to increase globally. This document aims to help humanitarian organisations implement sound packaging waste-management strategies

and emphasise the negative effects of improper packaging waste-management practices on human health and the environment.

When addressing each cluster's waste management responsibilities, there are common operational needs (e.g., information on existing recycling companies, waste transportation, safe disposal facilities, awareness raising, waste management expertise, etc.) that need to be coordinated at inter-cluster level for a more cost-effective response.

G.12.6 Resources and References

Environmental Emergencies Response

- JEU Environmental Emergencies Guidelines

Environmental Impact and Needs Assessments

- The Flash Environmental Assessment Tool (FEAT) 2.0 - EECentre helps to identify existing or potential acute environmental impacts that pose risks for humans, human life-support functions and ecosystems, following sudden-onset disasters.
- Disaster Waste Management Guidelines | International Environmental Technology Centre (unep.org)
- Rapid Environmental Assessment Tool (REA) - EECentre
- Multi-sectoral Initial Rapid Assessment (MIRA) indicator question bank for community key-informant interviews with Environment dimension section (pending updated resource & UNDAC A&A toolbox link): Community KI Question Bank - Google Drive
- Direct Observation - Google Drive assessment forms by UNDAC teams with Environment dimension section (pending updated resource & UNDAC A&A toolbox link)
- Environmental Needs Assessment in Post-disaster Situations: A Practical Guide for Implementation | UNEP - UN Environment Programme
- APELL Awareness and Preparedness for Emergencies at Local Level | SDG Integration (undp.org)

Hazardous Material Resources and Mobile Applications

- Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration Emergency Response Guidebook (Emergency Response Guidebook (ERG) | PHMSA), available as a downloadable document and a mobile application

- Hazard Identification User Guide tool (HIT) - Resources (eecentre.org)

- Chemical Companion, also known as Emergency Response Decision Support System (ERDSS)

- Administration for Strategic Preparedness and Response's (ASPR) Chemical Hazards Emergency Medical Management (CHEMM - CHEMM), available as downloadable software

- ASPR's Radiation Emergency Medical Management, available as a mobile application

- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's CAMEO Chemicals (CAMEO Chemicals), available as a mobile application and downloadable software

Environment in Humanitarian Action (EHA)

- SPHERE (Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response)'s environment thematic sheet: Sphere-thematic-sheet-environment-EN.pdf (spherestandards.org)

- The Nexus Environmental Assessment Tool (NEAT+) - Resources (eecentre.org) is a rapid and simple project-level environmental screening.

- IASC Guidelines on environmental responsibilities of humanitarian organizations.

- The Virtual Environmental and Humanitarian Adviser (VEHA) tool has been designed as an online resource for practitioners and professionals working in the response, planning and management teams.

Disaster Waste Management (DWM)

- OCHA Disaster Waste Management Guidelines

- UNDP Guidance note for debris management – Crisis prevention and recovery

- Sphere Handbook 2018 – Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response

- IASC Guidance on Environmental Responsibility in Humanitarian Operations

- DG ECHO voluntary environmental indicators, December 2023

- WREC Quick Guide: Environmentally Sustainable Procurement, July 2023 | Logistics Cluster

- WREC Waste Management & Recycling Infrastructure Assessments

- WREC Introductory Guide to Circular Economy

- WREC Quick Guide: Waste Management

- WHO: Solid Waste Management in Emergencies

- DG ECHO: Minimum Environmental Requirements and Recommendations

- WREC: Global Digest of Waste Management

G.13 Regional response and coordination mechanisms

G.13.1 Africa

OCHA supports several disaster management initiatives in Africa and encourages close cooperation with regional emergency response mechanisms during UNDAC missions.

G.13.1.1 Regional emergency response mechanisms

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) disaster response planning has evolved in recent years to improve preparedness, response and early recovery coordination and facilitate collective and up-surged regional capacities to support Member States affected by disasters. In 2017, SADC approved a Disaster Preparedness and Response Strategy and Fund 2016-2030 with an overall goal to build a culture of safety and disaster resilience. The strategy emphasises the need for improved regional capabilities to address disaster risks. These focus on strengthening coordination and capabilities for preparedness, response and early recovery in the region. As part of the implementation of the strategy and fund, the SADC Secretariat established the Emergency Response Team (ERT) and SADC Humanitarian and Emergency Operations Centre the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs); both these instruments were developed by 2020.

The SADC ERT embraces interoperability with other regional and international emergency response mechanisms including OCHA regional surge mechanism and UNDAC (among others). The ERT will be responsible for supporting Member States and communities in distress during disasters. Assistance to be given by the ERT will take place in various modes, which will include:

- Direct assistance, which refers to the face-to-face assistance related to humanitarian and relief support or medical assistance and early recovery actions;
- Indirect assistance, which refers to assistance provided through use of vehicles, aircraft or supplies for humanitarian relief; and
- Infrastructure support through repairs to critical infrastructure (airport(s), seaport(s), roads, bridges etc.) damaged as a result of the disaster, and the clearing of critical routes. This also includes the restoration of water and electricity supply lines where such have been affected by the disaster.

While the SADC ERT is the human resource dimension, the SADC Humanitarian and Emergency Operations Centre (SHOC) is the institutional component and is part of the wider SADC Disaster Preparedness and Response Mechanism. It is envisaged that the SHOC responsibilities for humanitarian and emergency coordination under regional response will be implemented in collaboration with national, regional and international cooperating partners in support to coordinate preparedness, response and early recovery operations in the affected countries. SHOC will coordinate the following activities:

- Regional disaster risk identification and monitoring;
- Management of regional relief assets, inventory and capabilities (expertise and equipment application);
- Establishment and management of regional rosters (SADC Standby Force and Emergency Response Team) which will include deployment, relief actions and decommissioning;
- Coordinated regional partnerships for effective disaster risks preparedness, response and early recovery;

- Skill development and enhancement of capacity through training and conducting of the periodic Simulation Exercises (SIMEX) and other standby preparatory actions; and
- Monitoring, evaluation and reporting on regional disaster risk preparedness and response.

G.13.1.2 Regional arrangements

Some ECOWAS countries have Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) between their national disaster management structure and armed forces to quickly mobilise military resources (engineering, navy, air force), including Ghana, Benin, and Nigeria. OCHA is working with ECOWAS in a working group on civil-military coordination for disaster response with the aim of developing guidance (together with African Union guidance) for the ECOWAS region.

G.13.2 Americas and the Caribbean

In the Americas, OCHA has close cooperation with regional and sub-regional organisations and individual member states on all matters relating to disaster management and humanitarian coordination. The relationships are managed by the OCHA Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (ROLAC), located in Panama, which should be consulted if any questions arise during an emergency in the region.

What follows is an overview of key regional bodies working in disaster management and response within the Americas and the Caribbean, highlighting their roles and contributions to regional resilience and coordination efforts, before delving into the details of the regional emergency mechanism in the following subchapter.

- The **Regional Group on Risks, Emergencies and Disasters for Latin America and the Caribbean (REDLAC)** serves as a platform for humanitarian coordination and information sharing across Latin America and the Caribbean.
- In Central America, the **Coordination Centre for the Prevention of Disasters in Central America and the Dominican Republic (CEPREDENAC)** is an institution within the Central American Integration System (SICA) and aims to reduce vulnerability through policies and measures for

the prevention, mitigation, preparedness, and management of emergencies. CEPREDENAC provides technical guidance on disaster risk management and enhances the cooperation among its member countries during emergencies, especially with regards to customs and logistics in humanitarian assistance operations.

- In the Caribbean, the **Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA)** is a regional intergovernmental agency for disaster management in the **Caribbean Community (CARICOM)** and comprises eighteen Participating States: Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, The Commonwealth of The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, British Virgin Is-lands, The Commonwealth of Dominica, Grenada, Republic of Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, Turks and Caicos Islands. CDEMA focuses on a comprehensive disaster management approach, which is an integrated and proactive approach to disaster management and seeks to reduce the risk and loss associated with natural and technological hazards and the effects of climate change to enhance regional sustainable development.

G.13.2.1 Regional emergency response mechanisms

Regional Group on Risks, Emergencies and Disasters for Latin America and the Caribbean (REDLAC)

Based on the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), REDLAC was established in 2003 as a humanitarian platform, facilitating the sharing of information and experiences at the regional level, supporting national coordination structures, and promoting synergies with other regional mechanisms for the coordination of humanitarian responses in the region.

REDLAC brings together United Nations agencies, Non-Governmental Organisations and the Red

Cross and Red Crescent Movement. Donors, private sector organisations, subregional or regional inter-governmental organisations are special invitees and may participate in REDLAC on an ad-hoc basis. OCHA ROLAC chairs REDLAC as its secretariat.

REDLAC provides support to the emergency teams in the field and ensures inter-agency collaboration. Through information sharing, REDLAC members identify key challenges at national level (coordination, gaps in the response, etc.) and develop advocacy strategies to address them. The group also shares regional logistics support information during the emergency, particularly with regard to cargo and charter flights from Panama to the affected country.

Similarly, at the regional level, sectoral groups have been established in accordance with the humanitarian framework outlined by the IASC, aiming to bolster national-level sectoral frameworks. The leaders and co-leaders of these groups oversee their operations, ensuring the participation and inclusion of humanitarian actors engaged in sector-specific activities and fostering a holistic, cross-sectoral approach.

Coordination Centre for the Prevention of Disasters in Central America and the Dominican Republic (CEPREDENAC)

CEPREDENAC has developed the Regional Mechanism for International Humanitarian Assistance in Central America and the Dominican Republic. It is a set of strategic, operational and administrative instruments for international humanitarian assistance guiding the processes for the management and mobilisation of international humanitarian assistance to and from CEPREDENAC/SICA member countries. It focuses on humanitarian assistance and also provides for the continuation or establishment of post-disaster recovery actions.

Other complementing regional protocols and procedures interacting with national level ones are:

- Central American Protocol for the Sending, Transit and Receipt of International Humanitarian Assistance in Disaster or Emergency Situations.
- Regional Manual of Procedures for Foreign Ministries in the Event of Disasters
- Operational Preparedness and Response Manual for Central American Countries
- Civil-military coordination protocol

Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA)

CDEMA has a Coordination Unit which is based in Barbados and coordinates the regional response support to an affected Participating State through the National Disaster Office.

The Regional Response Mechanism (RRM) was established by CDEMA as the vehicle to deliver timely and coordinated response support to affected Participating States. It consists of a number of plans, procedures and guidelines supported by a collection of Agreements, Memoranda of Understanding and Protocols articulating several areas and entities as shown in the following infographic:

Figure G.22: Conceptual Framework for the Regional Response Mechanism

UNDAC HANDBOOK - 8TH EDITION
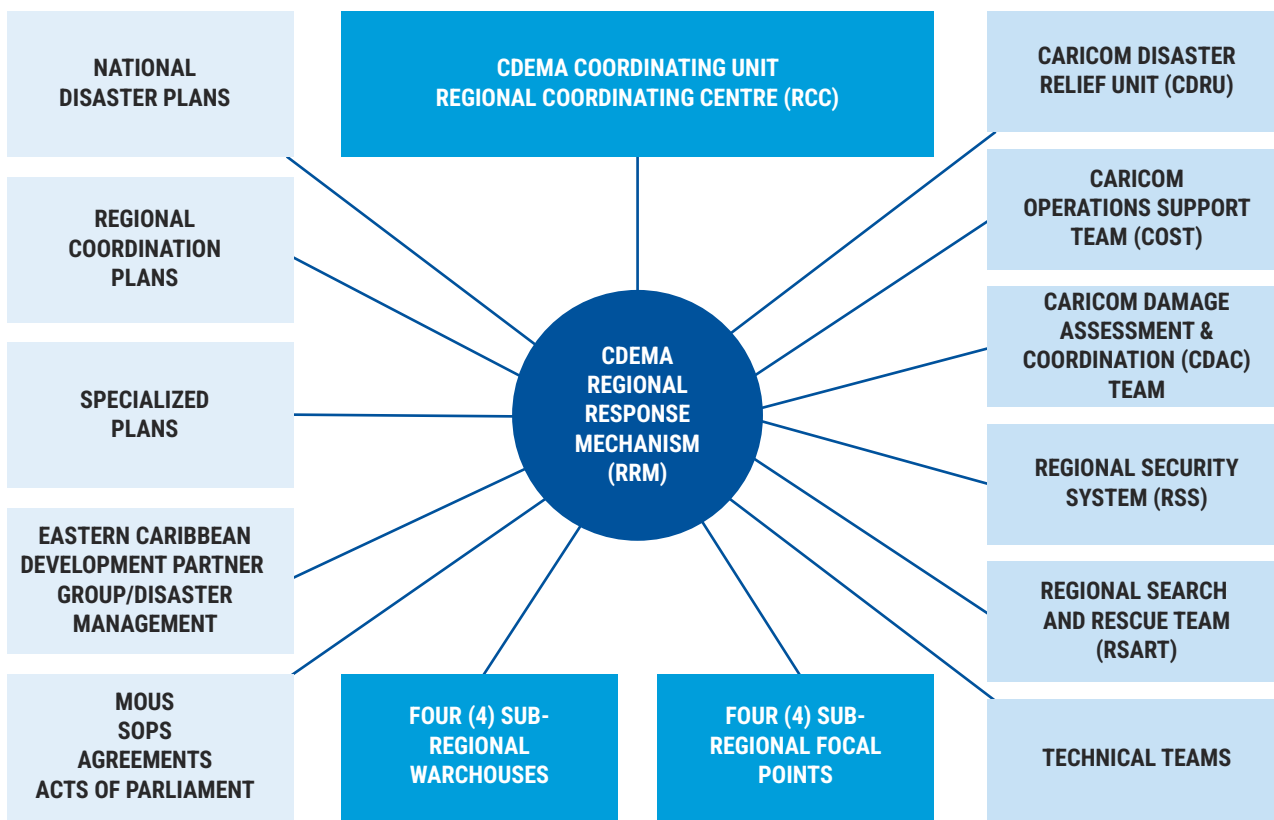
Besides the regional instances, there are four **Sub-Regional Disaster Emergency Response Operational Units** located in Jamaica, Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago, with sub-regional warehouses, which maintain basic levels of first response and search and rescue items.

CDEMA offers the following support mechanisms and instances to its participating states through its RRM:

• **Rapid Needs Assessment Team (RNAT) –** Intended to support the affected Government with a rapid assessment of damage and impact. The initial RNAT assessments are to be completed within 72 hours from deployment, providing an analysis of the early emergency phase of the humanitarian situation. The RNAT comprises six to eight people drawn from a pool of experts throughout the participating states. The team is led by CDEMA and implements the Damage Assessment and Needs Analysis (DANA) reports for pre-impact, initial situation overview, Initial Damage Human Needs Assessment, Detail Damage SEctor Assessment, Post Disaster Needs Assessment.

• **CARICOM Damage Assessment Coordination (CDAC) –** Intended to increase the national capacity of an affected state to undertake Damage Assessment and Needs Analysis (DANA). The premise is similar to the UNDAC methodology. However, the CDAC approach is specifically designed to suit the Caribbean context.

• **CARICOM Operational Support Team (COST) –** Intended to provide surge capacity to directly support the National Emergency Operations Centres (NEOC) in coordination of response efforts. The concept of the COST is firmly grounded in the context of strengthening existing national capacity to coordinate response.

• **CARICOM Disaster Relief Unit (CDRU) –** The CDRU comprises military, fire and police assets drawn from the 18 CDEMA participating states. The Unit is deployed to provide humanitarian assistance in direct support to the civil authorities of any CDEMA participating state. The CDRU is activated, mobilised and deployed by the Regional Security System's Central Headquarters (RSS HQ) in consultation with and on behalf of CDEMA. The CDRU's mission is to conduct disaster response and relief operations on behalf of CDEMA in support of any CDEMA participating state stricken by natural or technological hazards. Its main tasks include the management of relief supplies, emergency telecommunications and the provision of appropriate personnel for repairing critical lifeline facilities. The CDRU works for the national authority and does not take control of any operations unless directed to do so by the designated national authority.

• **Regional Search and Rescue Team (RSART) –** These can conduct urban light-level search operations in teams of six persons to support local search and rescue teams of the affected state. The RSART can be accessed by any CARICOM Member State and is available to support humanitarian response and relief operations following a disaster impact.

• **The Regional Coordination Centre (RCC) –** This is the central focal point within the CDEMA response system for the coordination and management of any declared emergency or disaster event in an impacted member state. The RCC is located within the CDEMA Coordinating Unit in Barbados and is responsible for coordinating all aspects of the response operations when the Regional Response Mechanism is activated.

• **Regional Security System (RSS) –** This is an integral part of the Regional Response Mechanism. The RSS provides an important link between the disciplined forces and CDEMA. It is responsible for activating the CDRU when requested by the CDEMA Coordinating Unit or the Regional Coordinating Centre, if it is activated.

• **The Eastern Caribbean Partner Donor Group/ Disaster Management (ECPDG/DM) –** Co-chaired by the Executive Director of CDEMA and the UN Resident Coordinator in Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean. Its main objective is to facilitate an effective, timely and coordinated response operation, based on a request from an affected Participating State. It provides a forum for information sharing among donors and development partners and to make strategic decisions regarding programme development and coordination and facilitates the coordination of emergency assistance from external sources.

G.13.2.2 Joint operability between OCHA and CDEMA

OCHA and CDEMA have been working to enhance interoperability between regional and international coordination mechanisms, tools and services. During emergencies, UNDAC can be deployed to support CDEMA and provide surge capacity where needed.

OCHA ROLAC has been working closely with CDEMA and has deployed jointly on several emergency missions in the region. In November 2017, they signed an MOU to formalise joint activities and to be able to work together in a more structured way.

OCHA-CDEMA Joint Interoperability Manual was agreed in 2020 to provide greater predictability, structure and a common understanding of their respective actions, roles and responsibilities in the region based on the principles of complementarity, competitive advantage and the sovereignty of affected states.

A continuous information sharing between OCHA and CDEMA in the event of potential or actual emergencies to discuss best options for responding is expected. Based on their SOPs, OCHA surge teams and/or UNDAC teams, and CDEMA's response teams should be deployed based upon an agreed modality and in a coordinated fashion in support of the respective national and local authorities and partners. OCHA can deploy staff and/or UNDAC members to integrate as associate team members into CDEMA's response teams, such as the Rapid Needs Assessment Team (RNAT), to enhance communication and coordination in carrying out assessments on the ground. OCHA can also co-deploy their response teams, including the UNDAC team, alongside the response teams deployed through CDEMA.

G.13.3 Asia

In Asia, OCHA has close cooperation with regional organisations and individual member states on all matters relating to disaster management and humanitarian coordination. The relationships are managed by the ERS Asia-Pacific Regional Focal Point, the OCHA Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP) located in Bangkok, Thailand, as well as the Humanitarian Advisory Teams (HAT) in Indonesia and the Philippines.

Since there are considerable differences in disaster management approaches between Asia and the Pacific, these regions are described in separate sections. See **Section G.13.6** for arrangements in the Pacific.

G.13.3.1 Regional emergency response mechanisms

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) is a legally binding regional multi-hazard and policy framework for cooperation, coordination, technical assistance and resource mobilisation in disaster management in the ten ASEAN member states, i.e., Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Viet Nam. The Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste was granted observer status in 2022 and is expected to become a full member of ASEAN by 2025.

The objective of the AADMER is to provide an effective mechanism to jointly respond to emergencies through concerted national efforts, intensified regional cooperation, and more structured engagement with international partners. Through its SOPs for Regional Standby Arrangements and Coordination of Joint Disaster Relief and Emergency Response Operations (SASOP), the AADMER enables ASEAN member states to mobilise and deploy resources for emergency response.

The ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre), established in 2011 to facilitate coordination and cooperation among ASEAN member states and is responsible for operational coordination, as well as with relevant UN entities and other international organisations, to promote regional collaboration. The AHA Centre offers a range of tools and services, including training and capacity-building for staff of National Disaster Management Organizations (NDMOs) of ASEAN member states to become members of the regional emergency response team.

The ASEAN Emergency Response and Assessment Team (ERAT) is a pool of trained and rapidly deployable experts on emergency management able to support NDMOs in the earliest phase of an emergency in a variety of areas including (a) conducting rapid assessments; (b) estimating the scale, severity and impact of the disaster through a damage assessment and needs analysis; (c) gathering information and reporting on the immediate needs of affected people; and (d) coordinating with the AHA Centre for the mobilisation, response and deployment of regional disaster management assets, capacities and humanitarian goods and assistance to the disaster-affected areas. As of end 2023, there are approximately 400 ERAT members, including staff of NDMOs, related ministry staff, private sector and civil society organisations.

ASEAN ERAT uses guidelines modelled on those of UNDAC, outlining the roles, responsibilities, and detailed mission phases. Like UNDAC, ERAT members must be available to be rapidly mobilised (within 24 hours) and be prepared to be deployed for approximately two weeks. An ERAT team is deployed upon request of, or if the offer of assistance is accepted by, the affected member state. ERAT members are required to undergo induction training, following which members become deployable at the national level; regional deployment is contingent on a member undertaking additional and specialised skills-based training.

ERAT, when deployed, will establish a Joint Operations and Coordination Centre of ASEAN (JOCCA). The JOCCA is essentially a place for all ASEAN member state response entities to converge and coordinate. Similar to the relationship between UNDAC and ERAT, the JOCCA is modelled on the UN's On-Site Operations Coordination Centre (OSOCC). Both coordinating platforms provide direct support to the NDMO in coordinating regional and international assistance.

G.13.3.2 SOPs between the United Nations (OCHA/UNDAC) and the AHA Centre/ERAT teams

The below SOPs are 'living guidance' on interoperability of UNDAC and ERAT teams during response within an ASEAN member state. The points detailed here have been discussed and agreed between OCHA and the AHA Centre and are subject to revision and strengthening as they are tested regularly through simulation exercises and actual response.

MOBILIZATION

Initial alerts (following events requiring further analysis)	OCHA ROAP and the AHA Centre will keep each other updated on the status of any request and/or decision by the recognized authority of the affected state to accept external assistance.
Standby / Team Composition	OCHA ROAP and the AHA Centre will discuss team composition, both with respect to available functional specialists and reference to the availability and deployment of roster members trained as both UNDAC and ERAT.
Initial Plan of Action	OCHA ROAP and the AHA Centre, and the UNDAC and ERAT Team Leaders, will keep each other updated on the Initial Plan of Action, i.e., deployment plans (routes, timings, etc.) and immediate action upon arrival.

ON MISSION

Initial in-country contact	Where possible, the UNDAC and ERAT teams will jointly hold introductory meetings with national authorities and the RC/HC outlining the purpose, respective roles and support that can be provided.

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ON MISSION

OSOCC/JOCCA Location	Where possible, the OSOCC and JOCCA will be co-located – although separate physical structures are likely to be maintained. By preference, the site of the OSOCC-JOCCA should be at or near the NDMO. A joint Situation and Planning Cell/Section will work together to process and analyse information to ensure that reporting, if not joint, is consistent. Other functional areas may be joint if possible and must coordinate their work in all cases. Regular communications between respective functional areas will be established. ERAT may deploy staff to the UCC, EMTCC and CMCoord mechanism to support coordination, as required. Where sub-OSOCC(s) and/or sub-JOCCA(s) are established, similar consideration will be given to co-location.
	The RDC will be jointly run by UNDAC and ERAT, together with staff from INSARAG and other trained partners as required.
	Where deployed to support either the UNDAC or ERAT and where the OSOCC and JOCCA are co-located, support partners such as TSF, MapAction, DHL and/or IHP – all of which have partnership arrangements with both UNDAC and ERAT – will jointly support both teams.
Coordination	If the response triggers a request for INSARAG or EMTs, a RDC will be established, under UNDAC leadership, by the first-arriving team whether this be the first arriving UNDAC team, ERAT Team, INSARAG-trained USAR team or EMT-trained medical team. In the event that there is no UNDAC deployment, the RDC will be established under the leadership of ERAT.
	UNDAC and ERAT Team Leaders and Deputies will meet regularly to share information and coordinate planning, operations and coordination forums. Functional heads from the OSOCC and JOCCA should meet as required.
	Where INSARAG and medical teams deploy (regardless of their country of origin), OCHA and WHO have a mandated responsibility to provide coordination services to these teams through specialized coordination cells (UCC and EMTCC). These mechanisms remain under the respective agency's joint leadership with the relevant government authority. Staffing for either cell can be composed of UNDAC, ERAT, OCHA, WHO or INSARAG/EMT classified teams.
	UNDAC and ERAT will coordinate on response planning to ensure any response plans or appeals are complementary, avoid duplication and/or gaps in the response, and focus on respective areas of comparative advantage in the delivery of requested assistance.

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Information Management	UNDAC/ERAT will jointly share and use the same evidence-based statistics in all information products related to the disaster situation and emergency response.
	UNDAC and ERAT will work closely together on the production of various information products (such as situation reports), ensuring that data is drawn from a common source and is used following a common analysis. In their respective products, the two teams will include information specific to the international or regional response as relevant.
	UNDAC supports broader information management coordination through chairing/convening an IM Working Group, which primarily involves IM officers from cluster lead agencies.
	The VOSOCC is the online communication platform for UNDAC, technical teams and associated coordination platforms (RDC, OSOCC, UCC, EMTCC). All ERAT members, and particularly those working in the RDC or supporting the UCC or EMTCC, will use the VOSOCC and will update relevant contact points, JOCCA location, and operational information of ASEAN teams on the VOSOCC and may copy over pertinent information from the VOSOCC to WebEOC (an ASEAN version of the VOSOCC), where relevant.
Assessment	UNDAC and ERAT teams will advocate for the deployment of joint – where appropriate – and in all cases coordinated needs assessments. Preferably assessments will be organised in consultation with, and in support of, national authorities.
	Assessments will follow global best practice, i.e. be conducted in a phased manner, collecting only information which cannot be identified from other (secondary) sources, and including participation from a variety of actors, including UNDAC, ERAT, Government, Cluster Leads and members, etc.

DEMOBILIZATION

Handover	UNDAC and ERAT will be responsible to close or hand over all functions for which they are primarily responsible, identifying whether handed-over activities will be given to national, or if required, international partners.
	UNDAC and ERAT handovers will include introduction of any replacement team to the respective counterpart and briefing on the other's work to date and forward strategy.
Exit Debriefs	UNDAC and ERAT Team Leaders will participate jointly in any final debriefs with the national authorities and RC/HC, accompanied by the handover report.

Figure G.23: UNDAC/ERAT interoperability
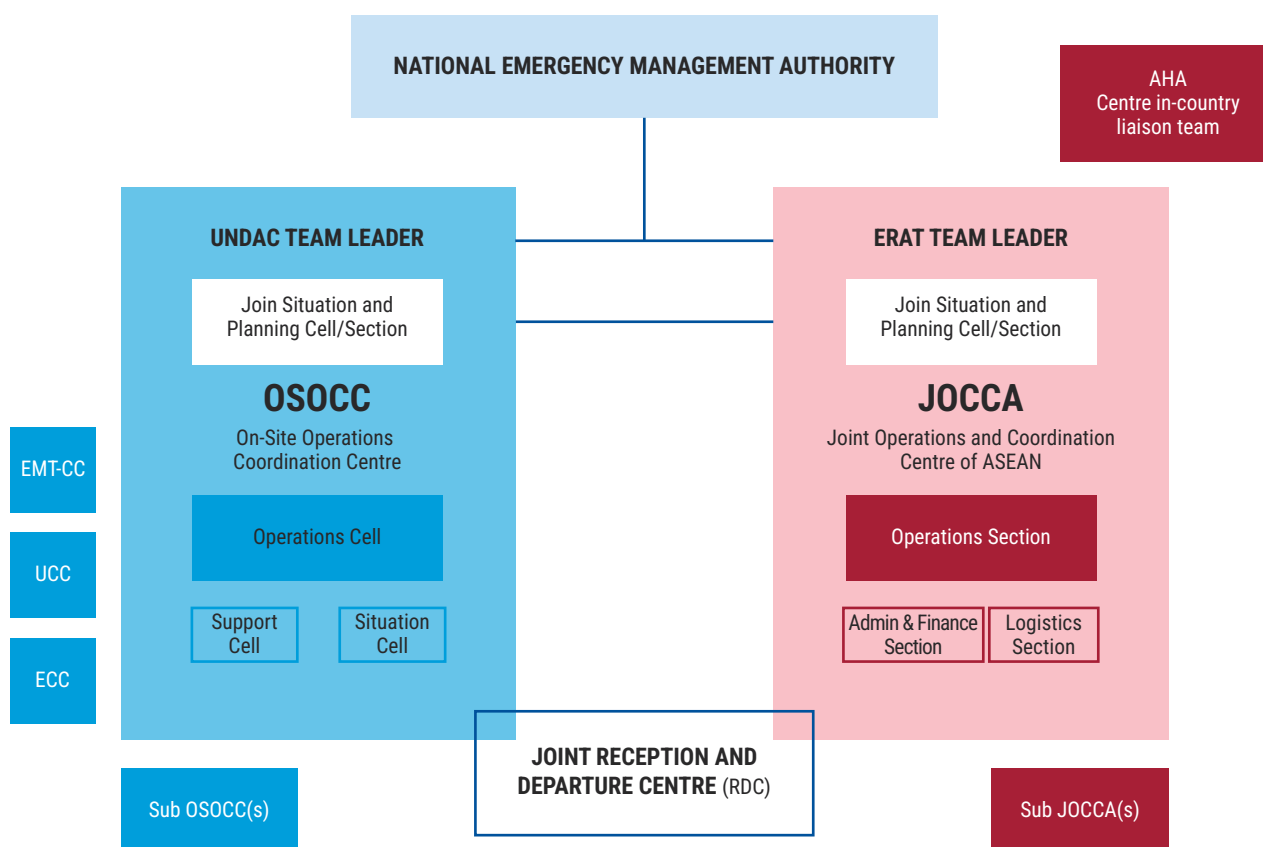
The OCHA and the AHA Centre are working closely to enhance interoperability between regional and international coordination mechanisms, tools, and services. UNDAC and ERAT regularly jointly participate in simulation exercises and training to test their interoperability in terms of coordination, assessment, information sharing and planning. Many ERAT members are also UNDAC members.

G.13.3.3 Regional arrangements

Disaster Response in Asia and the Pacific, A Guide to International Tools and Services (https:// asiadisasterguide.unocha.org/?_gl=1*9tost2*_ga*NjI5Njc4MzE4LjE2OTYyNTY0Njc.*_ga_ E60ZNX2F68*MTcwMzgzOTI1Mi4yNC4xLjE3MDM-4MzkzMjQuNjAuMC4w) provides an overview of all regional and international arrangements in emergency response in the Asia and Pacific region. It is designed to help disaster managers in national Governments as well as other responders to gain basic knowledge of how to use regional and international architecture, tools and services.

The guide is not prescriptive and is currently being updated to reflect increasing regional capacity and new tools and services that have been developed in recent years.

G.13.4 Europe

OCHA has a significant relationship with European Union (EU) mechanisms regarding humanitarian assistance and coordination. The Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO), headquartered in Brussels, Belgium, is a regular preparedness and response partner during deployments to other regions, and EU Civil Protection Teams are increasingly deploying to the same emergencies outside the EU to which UNDAC is responding.

G.13.4.1 Regional emergency response mechanisms

The Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC), operating within ECHO, was set up to

support a coordinated and faster response to disasters both inside and outside Europe using resources from the countries participating in the EU Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM). The ERCC is operational 24/7 and serves as the European focal point for information management, offers of assistance and the coordination of deployed assets. With a capacity to deal with several simultaneous emergencies in different time zones around-the-clock, the ERCC is a coordination hub facilitating a coherent European response during emergencies, helping to cut unnecessary and expensive duplication of efforts.

The main goal of the UCPM is to facilitate cooperation in civil protection assistance interventions in the event of major emergencies. In addition to the EU member states, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia, Türkiye, and Ukraine participate in the UCPM.

As part of the EU response mechanism, ECHO has established a reserve of resources referred to as the European Civil Protection Pool and rescEU. These assets are kept on standby and made available as soon as needed for EU civil protection missions all over the world. These include modules of heavy pumping equipment, forest fire-fighting modules, USAR modules, medevac planes, stockpile of medical items, field hospitals, etc. An EU Civil Protection Team (EUCPT) is usually deployed to facilitate the arrival of EU assistance and interact with the national authorities, UNDAC, and the wider cluster system.

G.13.4.2 Cooperation between the United Nations (OCHA/UNDAC) and ECHO

The collaboration between the UNDAC system and ECHO, and the ERCC in particular, is regulated by two formal agreements:

• The "Administrative Arrangement to enhance the cooperation and coordination between the Directorate General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Response Support Branch in the field of disaster preparedness and response", and

• The "Operational Guidelines for Field Cooperation between EU Civil Protection and United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) Teams".

The Administrative Arrangement clarifies the relationship with regards to:

• Early warning and rapid alerts,

• Joint preparedness activities,

• Real-time information exchange, and

• Operational coordination and liaison and deployment of experts.

with the aim of ensuring efficient cooperation and coordination between ECHO and OCHA.

In emergency responses within the European Union, it is understood that the ERCC will lead the international response to the affected EU member state. In emergency responses outside the EU, field cooperation between UNDAC and EUCPT is regulated by the Operational Guidelines and the EUCP Team ensures that the coordination of the UCPM response is fully integrated in the overall coordination provided by OCHA and respects its leading role.

The guidelines define functional areas of cooperation between EUCP and UNDAC teams on the ground, with the aim of streamlining operations and avoiding duplication of efforts with regards to: remote monitoring, assessment, and analysis; field-based assessment and analysis; field coordination; official representation; Information management and reports; safety, security, and logistics; external communication and media engagement.

During emergencies, the support of the ERCC can be requested by UNDAC. Upon request, the ERCC makes available technical experts who join the UNDAC team as embedded members. Such expertise can include structural engineers, dam engineers, environmental experts, volcanologists, etc. As embedded members, EUCP team members join the UNDAC team under their own administrative arrangements. When deployed at the request of UNDAC, EUCPT members are fully part of the UNDAC team and report to the UNDAC Team Leader. A third document regulating this situation and the opposite - UNDAC members embedded in the EUCPT - is being drafted at the end of 2023/ beginning of 2024.

EUCPTs also deploy in humanitarian operations to support the bilateral response of the European Union to the affected Government. In such cases, the EUCP team will deploy with their own support called Technical Assistance Support Team (TAST), equivalent to the support provided to the UNDAC team by the International Humanitarian Partnership (IHP), and other UNDAC partners. In such cases, it is likely that the UNDAC team and the EUCP team will work in the same environment and both team leaders should endeavour to establish a liaison mechanism to exchange information. In the spirit of the formal agreements in place, both teams should work in close cooperation. If and when clarification might be required, the UNDAC team should refer to OCHA Geneva for guidance.

As part of the Joint Preparedness activities included in the Administrative Arrangements there are exercises, especially EU Module Exercises (EU MODEX) in which USAR, EMT and other response capacities get the chance to train their preparedness for a deployment in the context of full-scale exercises. Some of these MODEXs include the participation of UNDAC members who could support the exercises by being part of the Exercise Controller (EXCON) or embedded in the EUCPT. MODEXs offer an opportunity to connect both networks, share knowledge, information, expertise and know-how, as well as to test the existing procedures and coordination tools and mechanisms.

G.13.5 Middle East and North Africa (MENA)

The Middle East and North Africa region has some of the world's largest protracted conflicts, frequent natural-hazard related and human-made crises, pandemic outbreaks, and climatic shocks.

Both OCHA's Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa (ROMENA) and country offices in the region support and strengthen humanitarian coordination and response preparedness. ROMENA works closely with UN Resident Coordinators, Humanitarian Country Teams, national and regional organisations, and Member States to mitigate the impact of natural-hazard related disasters and other emergencies.

A number of countries in the MENA region are members of the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG). In 2023, under the regional leadership of Qatar, an INSARAG Arabic-speaking group was established to enhance USAR collaboration in the region.

G.13.6 Pacific

Disaster management relationships in the Pacific are managed by the OCHA Regional Office of the Pacific Islands (ROP), based in Fiji. The office covers 14 countries and territories in the Pacific Region (Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Samoa, Solomon Islands, The Republic of the Marshall Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu).

G.13.6.1 Regional emergency response mechanisms

The Pacific Humanitarian Team (PHT) is a network of humanitarian organisations working in the Pacific with the expertise and resources to support disaster preparedness and response in the region. PHT members include UN agencies, NGOs, the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, and other humanitarian agencies with the necessary capacity to respond to disasters. The PHT is organised around ten regional clusters (WASH, Health & Nutrition, Education, Food Security, Protection, ETC, Logistics, Shelter, Evacuation Centre Management and Displacement, Early Recovery) and one working group (the Pacific Regional Cash Working Group) and is chaired by OCHA. OCHA ROP is the PHT's secretariat and consists of the following structures:

- **PHT Principals –** This group is made up of heads of organisations from key PHT members, including UN agencies, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and NGO representatives, and is co-chaired by the three UN Resident Coordinators in the Pacific (based in the Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji and Samoa) and OCHA. This forum focuses on discussion on a strategic and advocacy level and also entails engagement with senior government entities and representatives as well as other key stakeholders, donors in particular.

- **PHT Regional Cluster Coordinators Group –** This group comprises the regional coordinators of the ten PHT clusters and the Pacific Regional Cash Working Group and is chaired by OCHA. This platform focuses on operational issues and provides support to national disaster preparedness and response systems.

- **Cluster Support Teams –** The PHT has ten Cluster Support Teams working in different sectors, each with a designated lead agency and a number of members or supporting agencies. The primary function of these teams is to support national clusters or sectoral working groups where they exist. Where they do not, the support teams provide technical support to government entities that have been assigned cluster-specific tasks by their respective Governments.

G.13.6.2 Pacific regional arrangements and initiatives

When disasters occur, domestic and foreign militaries are increasingly being called upon by countries (and territories) in the Pacific when events overwhelm national capacities and existing logistics are insufficient to reach remote affected areas. Militaries play a valuable role in contributing to humanitarian action as they have unique assets and specialist expertise which can be used to conduct aerial and sea surveillance and assist in the transportation and distribution of relief items.

A key partnership in the Pacific is the **FRANZ Alliance** (comprising France, Australia and New Zealand). Signed in 1992, it is a response mechanism to natural-hazard related disasters in the Pacific region and commits the three countries to coordinate, share information and ensure the best use of assets (usually ships and aircrafts) when responding to disasters. Since its formation, the FRANZ Alliance has been used to respond to most major disasters, primarily in the South Pacific. OCHA is a standing invitee to meetings of the alliance.

Solomon Islands (in 2019) and Fiji (in 2023) have established national response mechanisms, called **National Emergency Response Teams (NERT).** These teams consist of national clusters (usually led by ministries) and their members as well as other relevant Government and non-government entities. Both NERT systems are in line with UN-DAC's methodology, ensuring the interoperability of national and international responses. NERT members are also expected to be the link of national and international responders. As such, OCHA supports the NERT system's development and training in the Pacific.

Although the primary role of NERT is responding to emergencies in their own countries, there are also considerations to be able to deploy internationally (similarly to the Emergency Medical Teams, EMTs). Pacific member states collaborating in regional organisations, i.e., the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), are exploring the establishment of a regional emergency response and preparedness mechanism in the Pacific.

The Pacific Islands Emergency Management Alliance (PIEMA) is an SPC supported mechanism to strengthen emergency preparedness and response capabilities and capacities of key national response agencies in the Pacific as well as represent a partnership with key umbrella organisations including NDMO, Police and Fire, and Emergency Services.

Emergency medical teams (EMTs) have been established in a eleven Pacific Island countries and areas: Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

Office for the Coordination
of Humanitarian Affairs

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H.
SUPPORT

United Nations

Section contents

H. SUPPORT

UNDAC missions are dependent on sufficient support in the form of administrative and logistical arrangements, technical equipment and facilities in which to work and live. This chapter highlights the administrative deployment support provided by OCHA ERS, internal logistics support, and modalities of remote assistance. It introduces the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and other technical equipment utilised during UNDAC missions, placing particular emphasis on communications equipment and the Global Positioning System (GPS). Additionally, it offers tips and hints for designing an OSOCC and/or a basecamp.

H.1 Administrative support from OCHA ERS

Every UNDAC mission will be fundamentally supported by the UNDAC Mission Focal Point and the OCHA ERS team that serves as UNDAC "back-office" mission support. UNDAC Mission Focal Point refers to an OCHA ERS staff member who is designated as the dedicated contact person for the UNDAC Team deployed in the field but will themselves not deploy. They are typically based in Geneva or one of the OCHA regional offices in the case of the UNDAC Regional Focal Points (RFPs).

The following list is an overview of which services and support OCHA ERS will normally provide to the UNDAC Team on the ground and aims to show what UNDAC members can or cannot except from OCHA ERS.

Pre-Mission:

- Support exchanges with OCHA Regional Office and RC/HC to clarify the need for UNDAC deployment.
- Issue alerts and clarify support requirements, team roles, and member profiles – depending on the security situation and known entry restrictions.
- Prepare and organise the UNDAC Team for deployment (members and operational support partners), including safety and security

assessments as part of OCHA's Duty of Care and coordinate logistical arrangements and equipment requirements.
- Compile and share initial information and baseline data.
- Open discussion on the Virtual OSOCC (VO), facilitate discussions on the Virtual OSOCC (VO) or assign VO Focal Points.

On mission:

- Provide adequate backstopping support and advice to the UNDAC Team on methodology, admin/finance matters, technical coordination, and Duty of Care.
- Ensure clear reporting lines and monitor mission objectives.
- Constantly monitor field requirements and participate in daily end-of-day briefings to remain informed about field needs and to exchange relevant decisions with/from OCHA HQ (such as those from the Emergency Response Task Force, ERTF, if applicable).
- Lead follow-up on and share UNDAC daily reporting with Chief ERS and OCHA HQ, as relevant.
- Coordinate internal and external information sharing, including social media visibility, if necessary, in collaboration with Chief ERS and support partners.
- Oversee demobilisation procedures and debriefing activities.
- Conduct performance evaluations and capture lessons learned through feedback mechanisms.

Post-mission:

- Capturing lessons learned via feedback surveys and after-action reviews.
- Final mission reporting.
- Follow up on travel claims.

As part of the deployed team and when the situation requires it, OCHA will deploy one or several administrative colleagues to support in all administrative areas, such as hotel bookings management, office space setup and maintenance, rental of

vehicles with drivers including fleet management, etc. The team leader might also consider tasking the admin person with other responsibilities, in terms of security, assessments, information management if staff profile matches. More details on other logistical activities, please see below in **Subchapter H.2**.

H.2 Logistics support

Logistics support for the UNDAC team encompasses two main aspects:

- **Support within the OSOCC Framework:** Logistics support to the UNDAC team itself falls under the Support Function of the OSOCC. This includes managing the team's administration, arranging transportation, preparing for field missions, setting up and maintaining office facilities, and other related tasks.

- **Support for Emergency Response Teams:** The logistics support extends to emergency response teams coordinated within the OSOCC framework, such as USAR and EMT teams. This involves providing essential information to incoming teams regarding available accommodations, logistics providers, transportation options, and any other pertinent details to ensure their smooth integration into the operational environment.

During the UNDAC mission cycle, logistics support activities may include the following:

Pre-Mission:

- Coordinating with various operational partners involved in logistical and infrastructural support to ensure that materials and equipment dedicated to UNDAC operations are kept ready for deployment, thereby guaranteeing optimal conditions for the deployment and operation of UNDAC teams in the field.

On mission:

- Support the designing and setting-up of the OSOCCs and Sub-OSOCCs while considering the specific constraints and challenges of coordinating actors within the current operation's framework.

- Support the daily management of these centres, addressing administrative, office, energy, communication, accessibility, and visibility issues, in line with any specific needs of the OSOCC or Sub-OSOCC activities (such as meetings, coordination, and office space for partners).

- Support with the identification of safe and secure means of transportation for the UNDAC team.

- Support the establishment of systems to track the movements of each member of the UNDAC team, to ensure proper monitoring of deployed teams within the country at all times.

- Participating in planning and organising operational issues related to needs assessment activities involving the UNDAC team, when required.

- Support Implementing and monitoring communication means necessary for the UNDAC team's tasks, including GSM and satellite communication for voice and data.

- Identify suitable accommodation for UNDAC team members.

Post-mission:

- Participation in global debriefing sessions (After Action Reviews), particularly those focusing on logistics and infrastructure issues, aimed at enhancing the deployment arrangements for subsequent UNDAC missions.

Initially, these logistics needs are often specific and urgent, particularly in terms of facilitating the rapid deployment of teams to their designated locations, ensuring timely response to the unfolding emergency situation. Especially the first hours after the arrival of USAR teams are critical. Their flights need offloading and onward transport to the Base of Operations (BoO) and worksites immediately after landing in the affected country. Normally governmental representatives will support this, and they may have USAR transportation alternatives on hand as part of their earthquake contingency plans, but the UNDAC team should be prepared to proactively support this and make sure that life-saving USAR efforts can get underway as soon as possible.

Additionally, UNDAC may provide **general logistics support** to the wider community as part of its

situational awareness and information management role. Furthermore, UNDAC may assist national authorities or members of the United Nations system in planning and implementing more complex logistics plans, particularly in situations where the Logistics Cluster has not yet been activated. This more general logistics support is detailed in the **Chapter G.11** on Disaster Logistics and is beyond the Logistics Support Function.

H.3 Remote support

Ensuring effective remote support for UNDAC missions involves clear communication, task management, and risk mitigation strategies. Below is a simplified checklist to facilitate seamless coordination of remote support vis-a-vis the team on the ground.

- **Include Remote Member from the Start:** Ensure the remote support member is included in all team meetings and briefings. Clearly define tasks and responsibilities for remote participation.

- **Designate a Focal Point:** Appoint a focal point within the field team to coordinate with the remote support member.

- **Pre-Identify Key Tasks:** Identify tasks suitable for remote support based on context and requirements. Prioritise tasks for efficient execution and consider working in tandem (one person on the ground working with one person remotely). Tasks that can realistically be provided and asked for from remote support include, but are not limited to:

  » Analyse secondary data received by email, reports, media etc.; compile it; visualise it.

  » Monitor and update the VOSOCC.

  » Administrative tasks like setting up accounts and mailing lists, registering UNDAC members, draft and change organigrammes.

  » Provide UNDAC members with the relevant contacts from OCHA headquarters on request.

  » Update reporting and advocacy documents (sitrep, flash appeal, etc.) based on pre-existing draft and latest developments.

- **Clarify Communication Channels:** Establish clear communication channels and procedures inside the team, clarify communications between field and remote team members. Define meeting schedules and attendance expectations.

- **Define Work Hours:** Set work hours for remote support in alignment with the mission schedule. Be mindful of time differences to avoid unrealistic deadlines.

- **Utilise Collaborative Tools:** Use platforms like Google Drive or SharePoint for simultaneous document collaboration. Ensure all team members have access to necessary documents and templates.

- **Participation in Meetings:** Encourage remote support members to join morning briefings and debriefings via video conference. Provide additional briefings to keep remote members updated on developments and responsibilities.

By following these steps and utilising the checklist, UNDAC teams can optimise remote support, enhance communication, and effectively manage tasks, contributing to the success of humanitarian missions.

H.4 ICT and Technical Equipment

In the aftermath of a sudden-onset disaster, time is of the essence. Information and communication technologies (ICT) are invaluable tools for humanitarian response, enabling coordination of relief efforts, gathering of real-time data, and connecting with affected communities. ICT plays a critical role in every stage of the humanitarian response cycle, from disaster preparedness and early warning systems to emergency response and recovery.

A sufficient and reliable telecommunications and IT system is an important part of any UNDAC deployment, enhancing information management and being of critical importance for team safety and security. In some operations, minimum standards in telecommunications must be implemented to comply with the safe operating procedures of the UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS).

UNDAC operational partners can support the UNDAC team by providing basic infrastructure for communication, data connectivity, navigation and office

support services. They can further provide additional services and support, like on-site GIS analysis and production of maps. It is, therefore, important that UNDAC members are familiar with the technical equipment available through UNDAC operational partners' service packages (see **Subchapter B.8**).

The UNDAC team should, already before being deployed, assess what services might be needed during the mission and look ahead, considering a potential upscaling while planning the mission .

UNDAC operational support partners' service packages, like the ICT Module or Humanitarian Information Management (HIC) Module by the International Humanitarian Partnership (IHP), can be requested directly through OCHA ERS.

H.4.1 Communication

Communication in humanitarian settings can be severely hampered by the destruction of infrastructure, such as telecommunications networks, power grids, and internet connectivity. This can hinder the exchange of vital information among organisations, partners, and their respective headquarters, leading to delays in aid delivery, coordination challenges, and a lack of transparency.

Given the importance of communication in humanitarian settings, (re-)establishing emergency communication channels is essential. Various strategies to overcome communication challenges can include:

• **Satellite Communications:** Satellite phones and internet connectivity via satellite systems can provide reliable communication in remote areas.
• **VHF and HF Radio:** Very High-frequency (VHF) and High-frequency (HF) radio systems are robust and can operate in areas with limited or no infrastructure.
• **Mobile Phones:** Even in the absence of a functioning network, mobile phones can be used to establish communication through text messaging or voice calls over satellite links.
• **Internet-Based Communication Platforms:** Humanitarian organisations can leverage online platforms like WhatsApp, Signal, Slack, etc. to facilitate communication and collaboration.

Mindful data-usage

In areas where data connectivity is limited or unreliable, responsible data usage becomes crucial to ensure that everyone has access to the essential services and information they need. Several strategies can help individuals practise responsible data usage in limited connectivity settings:

• **Limit Background Data Usage:** Disable background data for apps that are not frequently used or that do not require constant updates. This can significantly reduce data consumption without compromising essential services.

• **Choose Data-Saving modes:** Several mobile devices offer data-saving modes that automatically optimise data usage by reducing background data activity.

• **Be mindful of data-intensive activities:** Avoid using data-intensive activities like streaming high-definition video or downloading large files when data connectivity is limited.

ICT support staff can help you access and adjust the settings on your computer and mobile device

H.4.1.1 Mobile phones

Mobile phones are indispensable tools for communication during humanitarian emergencies, enabling coordination and communication. While infrastructure damage and network disruptions can pose challenges, mobile phones can still provide valuable communication channels when local cell networks remain operational.

Data connectivity through 3G, 4G, or even 5G networks is crucial for accessing critical information and exchanging messages during humanitarian crises. Messaging apps like Signal and WhatsApp offer reliable communication options, allowing users to share updates, coordinate among stakeholders,

and connect with your contacts without the need for voice calls or costly international roaming.

Purchasing a **local SIM card** provides several advantages in humanitarian settings:

- **Expanded Network Coverage:** Local SIM cards often offer better network coverage compared to international roaming plans, ensuring uninterrupted connectivity in affected areas.
- **Reduced Costs:** Local SIM cards generally have lower voice and data charges, making them more cost-effective for long-term use or frequent communication.

Using **eSIM Technology,** embedded in select mobile phones, allows users to activate a mobile network subscription without the need for a physical SIM card and thus offers several benefits:

- **Quick and Efficient Activation:** eSIMs can be activated remotely, eliminating the need to visit a physical store or obtain a physical SIM card in an emergency situation.
- **Simplified SIM Management:** eSIMs allow users to switch between multiple mobile networks without replacing physical SIM cards, providing greater flexibility and cost-savings.
- **Reduced Reliance on Hardware:** eSIMs eliminate the need for physical SIM cards, reducing the risk of loss or damage in challenging humanitarian environments.

H.4.1.2 Satellite phones

Handheld satellite phones offer a valuable solution for communication in areas where traditional terrestrial networks are unavailable or unreliable. These devices connect to satellites orbiting Earth, enabling voice, text, and data transmission even in remote and isolated locations. There are two main types of satellite communication systems used for handheld satellite phones:

- **Low Earth Orbit (LEO):** LEO systems consist of a constellation of satellites orbiting at altitudes of around 500-2,000 kilometres. This provides faster data speeds and shorter call delays compared to traditional geostationary satellites.

- **Geostationary Orbit (GEO):** GEO satellites orbit at an altitude of approximately 36,000 kilometres above Earth's equator, providing global coverage but with slower data speeds and longer call delays.

Satellite phones come with **certain limitations and considerations** that users should be aware of:

- Not all systems have full global coverage. Check for coverage in the area where the phone will be used. Coverage maps are typically provided by satellite phone providers.
- Indoor coverage cannot be provided without an external antenna.
- Voice calls made through satellite phones may experience delays and lower voice quality compared to terrestrial calls due to the longer transmission path. Consider following general radio procedures covered under F.3.1.4 Radio communication systems when using a satellite phone.
- Data transmission speeds on satellite phones are typically slow and bandwidth congestion is possible in large-scale emergencies.
- Handheld satellite phone use is considerably more expensive than traditional mobile phones due to the complexity of satellite technology and the cost of satellite usage.
- Avoid using the phone near tall buildings, steep valleys, and dense forests that may disrupt the signal.

H.4.1.3 Internet connectivity via satellite

Access to information is crucial to the UNDAC team. When telecommunications infrastructure in the field is damaged or has low capacity, the use of satellite data terminals might be the only option.

In most cases, one of UNDAC's operational partners will set-up a satellite link and connect it to a Wi-Fi network, providing the OSOCC, the base camp or other relevant facilities with high speed internet.

There are currently two different systems used in a humanitarian setting:

1. VSAT (Very Small Aperture Terminal)

VSAT is a satellite communication system that enables data transmission over a wide area. VSAT systems typically consist of a dish antenna, an indoor unit, and a modem. The dish antenna is mounted outdoors and points towards the satellite. The indoor unit is connected to the dish antenna and processes the incoming and outgoing data signals. The modem converts the data signals into a format that can be transmitted over the satellite link.

In sudden-onset disasters where the infrastructure has been disrupted, a VSAT is almost always needed. Not only because of damages to the communication network, but also because a large-scale operation will inevitably trigger an increase in internet traffic. should be requested from UNDAC operational partners like the International Humanitarian Partnership (IHP) or Télécoms Sans Frontières (TSF) as early as possible.

2. BGAN (Broadband Global Area Network)

BGAN is an older satellite communication system that was developed for mobile broadband data transmission. BGAN terminals are typically smaller and more portable than VSAT terminals. However, BGAN has slower data speeds and higher latency than VSAT. Using BGAN is considerably more expensive than VSAT. As a result, BGAN is not as widely used as the VSAT and rather as emergency backup, during short assessment or reconnaissance missions, over a short period of time.

There are several models of BGAN terminals, but they all operate in a similar way. Some basic knowledge is necessary to get a stable and efficient connection and there is a step-by-step procedure to be followed when installing it. A user manual is included in the set.

H.4.1.4 Radio communication systems

Radio communication systems can operate anywhere and are not dependent on existing infrastructure. They are generally used on UNDAC missions when:

- There is no functioning mobile telephone network.

- Their use is required by safety and security regulations.
- There is a desire to reach multiple users simultaneously.

If needed, radios will be provided by UN agencies or UNDAC operational partners.

It is important to know that usually, mobile networks and/or satellite communications are more widely used during missions than radio communication systems. Nevertheless, UNDAC members should be familiar with radio communication systems.

Radio systems

The radios used by UNDAC, UN agencies and partners/NGOs are mostly VHF radios (Very High Frequency) with a limited range, i.e., a few kilometres. The range may be extended by the use of repeaters. Special equipment and trained staff are needed to install and maintain such a system. In some areas, HF (High Frequency) radios are used for long-range, low-cost voice communications. During an UNDAC mission, the use of HF radios is rare and satellite telephones, or other methods of telecommunication, are preferred.

Operating VHF or HF radios requires adherence to applicable regulations set forth by individual countries or jurisdictions. These regulations govern frequency allocation, power output limits, licensing requirements, and other aspects of radio communication to ensure safe, efficient, and coordinated use of the radio spectrum.

The need for permission to use certain frequencies as well as the applicable country specific regulations in relation with radio system usage should be taken into account before the UNDAC teams' deployment.

General radio procedures

The following is an overview of best practices for radio communication that minimise radio time, make it more effective and reduce misinterpretation of radio messages. The UNDAC team should always follow these practices. It is important that all users

of the radio system practise strict radio discipline at all times.

- Decide on the message before transmitting.
- Be clear and brief.
- Make sure no-one else is speaking before transmitting.
- Divide messages into sensible phrases with pauses where appropriate.
- Speak in a natural rhythm.
- Avoid excessive and unofficial transmissions.
- When ready to transmit, push the transmission key and wait a second before speaking. When finished transmitting, wait before releasing the key.
- Use standard pronunciation and emphasise vowels. Avoid extremes of high pitch and speak in a moderately strong voice (do not shout).
- Keep a distance of about 5 cm between the microphone and your lips. Shield your microphone from background noise.
- Remember: think – push – speak.

Radio terminology

To ease common understanding and avoid errors, generally accepted terminology is used across most of the humanitarian community. For example, the International Phonetic Alphabet (Alpha, Bravo, Charlie, etc.) is used as the basis for call signs and any time that complex spellings or information must be transmitted. It is advisable that all UNDAC members are familiar with the phonetic alphabet.

When using radio communications, call signs are used instead of names. These call signs reflect the function and not the individual that you want to reach. The UN has developed a system for the allocation of call signs that is applicable worldwide. It requires minimum administration, is easy to use and uniquely defines stations and users. The system is applicable to both UN agencies and other humanitarian partners.

In addition to the phonetic alphabet and standard UN call signs, other standard procedural words (prowords) are generally used. An overview of the phonetic alphabet, the UN call sign structure, and the most common prowords and their meanings can be found in **Section J.6**.

H.4.2 Technical equipment

H.4.2.1 Protecting technical equipment

In settings where power grid disruptions and power surges are a possibility, protecting personal IT equipment is crucial to ensure the continuity of operations and maintain access to critical information. By taking proactive measures to safeguard laptops, phones, and other devices, individuals can minimise the risk of damage and data loss.

- **Utilise surge protectors:** Surge protectors are essential for protecting electronic devices from power surges, which can occur due to lightning strikes, faulty wiring, or other electrical disturbances. Surge protectors absorb excess voltage and divert it away from connected devices, preventing damage to sensitive components.
- **Avoid charging devices during power surges:** During power fluctuations, it is best to unplug and disconnect all electronic devices, including laptops, phones, and chargers. Charging devices during power surges can increase the risk of damage due to spikes in voltage.
- **Store devices safely:** When not in use, store IT equipment in a safe location away from direct sunlight, extreme temperatures, and dusty environments. These conditions can contribute to hardware failure and data corruption.
- **Back-up data regularly:** Regularly backup important data to an external hard drive or cloud storage service. This ensures that critical information is preserved even if the device itself is damaged or lost.
- **Utilise battery back-ups:** Battery-powered backup devices like power banks can provide temporary power during power outages. This can allow for continued operation of essential IT equipment until the power grid is restored.
- **Be mindful of dust and dirt:** Power surges are less likely to damage devices in clean environments. Regularly clean IT equipment and power cords to remove dust and dirt, which can

act as insulators and increase the risk of electrical hazards.

H.4.2.2 Power supply and socket adaptors

In crisis settings where personnel from different organisations and countries converge, ensuring device interoperability and compatibility with local power systems is crucial for effective communication and operations. By carefully considering these aspects before embarking on a mission, individuals can minimise potential disruptions and enhance the overall effectiveness of humanitarian efforts.

- **Research local power standards:** Before travelling to a new location, research the type of power sockets and voltage standards used in the country or region. This information is typically available from travel guides, embassy websites, or online resources.
- **Carry universal power adapters / socket adaptor:** Invest in a universal power adapter that can accommodate a wide range of power socket types. This allows for compatibility with local sockets and eliminates the need to purchase multiple adapters for different countries.

H.4.2.3 Personal laptops

UNDAC members commonly bring their personal laptops on missions. A few things should be taken into consideration when doing so:

- **Administrator privileges:** Members should have full administrator privileges on any computer they bring. Many company computers have security solutions that require passwords or software to change settings or install software. Members should ask their employer to provide local administrative access to any computer brought on mission.
- **Keyboard layout and language features:** Laptops with English language features and keyboards are more easily accessed by mission support staff and can be used by colleagues.
- **Power supply:** Power outages can be common in the field. Mission computers should have a healthy battery, preferably of a high-capacity type.

Remember to bring socket adaptors and ensure that the computer's power supply can handle both 110v/60Hz and 230v/50Hz voltage.

- **Enable automatic software updates** to reduce the network load. To do so, automatic updates, e.g., Windows, antivirus software, etc., should be disabled. To keep the computer protected from harmful software, check for and install the latest updates prior to leaving for the field.
- **Careful Use of USB memory sticks**: USB memory sticks are frequently used on missions. They are a common source of viruses and antivirus software should have the ability to automatically check these when inserted.

H.4.3 Satellite navigation and tracking

Obtaining correct coordinates is fundamental to the success of various UNDAC activities, including the communication of operational locations, e.g., the OSOCC, rescue sites, etc., and the collection of assessment data, e.g., camp locations, road obstructions, physical infrastructure, etc. Their coordinates can be located using devices such as handheld satellite navigation devices, a smartphone or a tablet/ computer with satellite navigation capability. Some models of satellite phone can also provide coordinates.

H.4.3.1 Global Navigation Satellite Systems (GNSS)

There are several Global Navigation Satellite Systems (GNSS), with the Global Positioning System (GPS) being the most widely known. Other global systems include GLONASS, BeiDou and Galileo. GNSS compatible devices will connect to any of the aforementioned systems.

When collecting coordinates in the field, handheld units are ideal because they have a long battery life and are usually more robust than other electronics. Whatever device is used, UNDAC members must be familiar with their use and should be able to display coordinates and record waypoints in the device memory. Bear in mind that smartphones may need a specialised application to be able to display, store and export coordinates. Regular mapping applications may not be suitable for this function.

Satellite navigation devices should be 'warmed up' before setting out. This will ensure an accurate satellite fix, especially in situations where the device may have been moved hundreds of kilometres since its last use. This can take several minutes, dependent on location. It will take even longer in built-up areas, valleys, etc.

It is important to note that the use of GNSS is not infallible and information on positioning can be influenced by interference. It is therefore always advisable to combine the use of GNSS with traditional methods of position determination such as the use of maps, reference points and information provided by the local community and/or Government.

H.4.3.2 Coordinates and datum formats

Dedicated GNSS units can display many different geographical coordinate systems, but the most common and useful ones are lat/long (latitude/longitude) and UTM (Universal Transverse Mercator).

Lat/long is the most widely understood coordinate system. Within the system, coordinates can be displayed in three different ways:

- Degrees, minutes, seconds (DMS), e.g., "31:15:30 S" (S = South)
- Decimal degrees (DD), e.g., "-31.255"
- Decimal minutes (DM), e.g., "31:15.5 S"

Note carefully that all the above latitude examples are actually the same. There are 60 minutes in a degree, so 15 minutes equals 0.25 degrees. It is also important to note that latitudes south of the equator, and longitudes west of the Greenwich (zero) meridian, usually have a minus sign when written in decimal degrees (as shown above in the second example).

UTM coordinates are used less often. They consist of X and Y components, in that order, and are sometimes preceded by the three-character UTM zone. Note that the X and Y values may be recorded as unequal numbers of digits. For example: '30N 154227 1845499'. The first part is the UTM zone, then the X coordinate, and finally the Y coordinate. UTM zones vary with longitude. It is essential to use the appropriate one for your location.

Geodetic systems are used to translate satellite navigation positions within the device to actual positions on the Earth. Datum are sets of values used to define a specific geodetic system. Datum can seem confusing, but in almost all cases GNSS devices can be safely set to the global WGS 84 datum which is used by most smartphones and applications such as Google Maps. When exchanging data, it is key to note what datum the data was collected in to ensure it is properly handled.

H.4.3.3 Waypoints and tracks

A waypoint (or just point) is a single place recorded in the GNSS device, either before the trip (for navigation) or to capture the coordinates of places during the trip, e.g., a bridge, water-well or camp. When recording waypoints into a GNSS device, be sure to record a textual record of the information related to the waypoint. For example, 'WP24 - temporary warehouse' or 'WP25 - road washout – passable by 4x4 vehicles. Recording the waypoint details on paper is usually more practical than trying to input text into an electronic device in the field.

Some GNSS devices allow a tracklog, or just track, to be recorded in the background as you move. The track file can then be downloaded onto a computer and displayed on a map using Google Earth or GIS (Geospatial Information Services) software. If using track logging, work out how to switch the tracking on and off before going on a trip. Some GNSS units have tracks permanently on, with the oldest track points being continually over-written.

When back from a trip, download and save the waypoints and track coordinate files from the GNSS, so that the device can be used again on another task. Pass the files, together with the associated paper records, i.e., the waypoint details, to the GIS team who can map the data to build up the operational picture.

H.4.3.4 Satellite tracking

Satellite tracking technology is a crucial tool in crisis management, providing a range of capabilities to enhance safety and security during and after disasters. Satellite tracking systems can monitor the movement of critical emergency assets, such

as rescue teams, medical supplies, and food aid, ensuring their timely deployment and efficient utilisation.

Satellite-based tracking devices can be deployed on personnel enabling their precise location tracking and coordination. This technology is particularly valuable in remote or hazardous areas where traditional communication methods may be limited.

H.5 Facilities

H.5.1 OSOCC

In large-scale emergencies, it is important to think big from the start. The OSOCC may need to provide office space and service areas for a large number of people as OCHA surge capacity and other international organisations needing space in the OSOCC start to deploy. It is usually better to plan for more space than originally thought and not end up with just a limited area at your disposal.

H.5.1.1 OSOCC location and facilities

The location of the OSOCC will, to some extent, depend on the situation. In an earthquake, the OSOCC is best situated close to the site of the disaster, but in a widespread flood situation it might be best to find an easily accessible location just outside the affected area.

The OSOCC can be set up in existing buildings/ structures, or rely on the use of tents. Depending on the nature of the disaster, the UNDAC team should decide on what version is best suited.

OSOCC in a building

If a building is chosen for an OSOCC, it should be structurally sound and not damaged during the emergency. The building should be large enough to accommodate the co-location of staff from the Government and other agencies that wish to operate within the OSOCC structure. Ideally, there will be several separate rooms to use as offices and the following features:

- A **general area for receiving and registering visitors,** preferably providing a welcoming ambiance, e.g., a coffee area/machine.
- A **general situation room** with tables and chairs sufficient for meetings of 12-15 people (larger, if possible).
- There should be some **private offices** where confidential discussions may take place.
- **Possibility to install generators** or **access to a grid with stable voltage and frequency** (or stabilised with UPS or stabilisers) and 1-3 phases with correct fuses, circuit breakers and earthing.
- Preferably **access to adequate hygiene or sanitation systems** with safe handling of sanitary waste.
- **Communications equipment** should be in a secure communications room.
- **Office equipment,** e.g., photocopiers, printers, should be accessible but not in general meeting space areas.

OSOCC in tents

Constructing the OSOCC using several tents is often the best solution. Designing the OSOCC to maximise its purpose as a service provider requires that tents are set up in a way that considers both crowd management and proximity of functions and OSOCC cells.

UNDAC operational partners like the International Humanitarian Partnership (IHP) and Atlas Logistique can provide the necessary equipment to set up a tented OSOCC. The UNDAC Team should, in early stages after arrival in the affected area, contact OCHA ERS to request the needed equipment. Referring to operational partners' support catalogues, like the International Humanitarian Partnership's Support Modules Catalogue can be beneficial (available on the IHP website and in the UNDAC Toolbox).

The base camp site selection guidance below may also be helpful when designing an OSOCC as many of the considerations are applicable for both types of tented environments.

H.5.1.2 OSOCC set-up

Maximising the OSOCC's effectiveness as a service provider necessitates consideration of diverse functional requirements and operational needs, ensuring its capability to respond adeptly to emergencies and deliver essential support services.

- The **OSOCC Reception Area** should be located so it is easily visible from a distance, clearly marked with flags and designed to serve a large number of people without coming into conflict with other OSOCC cells.
- **Meeting areas /** tents may be located in the vicinity of the OSOCC Reception Area but outside of the OSOCC. This may facilitate both external and internal meetings, e.g., cluster and team meetings.
- **OSOCC Management** may want to be centrally located to easily attend to all cells throughout the working-day.
- Components of the **IM (Information Management) Cell** may often want to be close to, or co-located with, the Reception Area and its clients, e.g., MapAction may want to be in a position where they can easily serve clients with map requests.
- **Analysis and reporting functions** may prefer to be in a more private area to facilitate the focus needed for this kind of work.
- **Administrative and internal logistical functions** rarely need to be in close contact with OSOCC clients.
- If the OSOCC also includes **accommodation areas** for its staff, these tents should be secluded and not accessible to the public.
- Plan for office space and service areas for a large number of people and consider OCHA surge capacity and other international organisations' needs. Thus, plan for more space than originally thought to avoid limitations during emergencies.

In the OSOCC Guidelines, a generic schematic illustrating how an OSOCC can be designed is included. It can be accessed together with other OSOCC tools on the UNDAC Website.

H.5.1.3 OSOCC equipment

The first team to arrive at the affected area will need a basic set of office equipment to coordinate relief efforts, communicate with OCHA ERS and set up the OSOCC.

- **Printers:** Portable printers are crucial for printing critical documents, such as incident reports, maps, and resource lists.
- **Projectors:** Projectors can be used to display maps, charts, and other visual aids during meetings, training sessions, and briefings. This can enhance communication and improve understanding among team members and affected communities.
- **Whiteboards and Flipcharts:** Whiteboards and flipcharts are essential for brainstorming, taking notes, and facilitating discussions. They provide a flexible and accessible medium for capturing ideas and sharing information.

Through prioritising crucial office equipment and promptly requesting urgent items from UNDAC operational partners, the UNDAC team can secure the essential resources needed to efficiently coordinate relief efforts. During the initial stages following their mobilisation, the UNDAC Team should reach out to OCHA ERS to request necessary equipment. Utilising support catalogues from operational partners, such as the International Humanitarian Partnership's Support Modules Catalogue (available on the IHP website and in the UNDAC Toolbox), can offer valuable assistance in this process.

H.5.2 Base camp

In large-scale emergencies, a camp for accommodation and offices for UN agencies may be requested. These camps provide facilities such as sleeping area, offices, kitchen, showers, sanitary solutions etc., and the infrastructure and human resources needed for running such a camp.

H.5.2.1 Size versus time

When planning for the set-up of a base camp, factor in size and time. The bigger the planned camp, the longer the set-up will take. A camp accommodating 80 to 90 staff will take up to two weeks to set up.

Even though parts of the camp might be operational before completion of the full camp, time for set-up needs to be considered during the planning phase. Depending on the space needed, planned mission duration, successive scale-up operations and the needed level of service, operational partners will be able to consult the UNDAC team on the scale of the needed base camp.

UNDAC operational partners, such as the IHP, can provide **light base camps,** IATA compliant, packed in small, lightweight units that are easy manoeuvrable. This enables them to be transported via commercial flights for rapid deployment within 8 to 48 hours. Light versions can accommodate up to 12 people and offer a very basic level of service (accommodation, catering arrangements, toilet, sanitation and shower facilities, electrical power and lighting, tables and chairs). Typically, a light version of a base camp would be utilised for a duration ranging from 2 to a maximum of 8 weeks.

Large base camps, such as the IHP's Heavy Base Camp, offer a broader array of services at a higher standard, catering to larger staff numbers for extended durations ranging from 3 to 12 months. Depending on the size and modules requested by OCHA ERS, these camps can be deployed within 48 to 72 hours. The set-up of a large base camp accommodating 80 to 90 staff can take up to two weeks. Once the necessity for a larger base camp is determined, the request should be promptly submitted to facilitate preparatory arrangements by the provider. Providers, such as IHP, will always try to send a reconnaissance or liaison team to prepare for the large base camp.

If, during the first stage of the mission, a need for a prolonged mission – longer than 6 to 12 months – is identified, operational support partners such as the IHP, will suggest opting for a **prefab based office and accommodation solution.**

H.5.2.2 Site selection

The UNDAC team may be tasked with identifying a suitable site for a camp. Several considerations must be taken into account before making the final decision on the site. The IHP's Office and Accommodation Handbook (available on the IHP website and in the UNDAC Toolbox) illustrates in detail how to choose the best suited site, how to set-up and run the camp, as well as what considerations to take into account when operating in a cold environment.

The IHP reconnaissance / liaison team will take the following aspects into account when advising the UNDAC team in identifying a site:

Non-technical aspects

- **Land ownership, potential political and/or legal issues:** How can the land be used? Who owns the land? Land ownership issues must be identified and addressed as early as possible, and should preferably be confirmed before the start of construction and other preparations.

- **Safety and Security:** Are there any safety and security implications and potential risks associated with the site and area? Might the set-up of a camp in this location create safety and security issues? The area should be easily secured to keep out unwanted visitors. Hazards within the compound should also be considered and the basecamp should be compliant with the standards defined by the UN Department for Safety and Security (UNDSS). Is there an evacuation plan? Under which conditions will it be activated and by whom?

- **Social and cultural aspects**: Is the site used for cultural rituals? Is the site used seasonally? Will setting up a camp in this location create tensions with the local community?

- **End of mission / Back to "normality":** Consider how the space may be used when things start returning to normal and if it will serve another purpose, e.g., school grounds, sports arena, public park, etc. Try to have minimal impact to enable a speedy return to normal conditions.

Technical aspects

- **Size:** Calculate the minimum requirement size of the compound. How many people will need accommodation? How many people will need office space? How many people will attend daily coordination meetings? The following equation can be used as a rule of thumb:

  » 1500 m2 (for camp core)
  » + 20 m2 per person accommodated person
  » + 20 m2 per office space
  » + 15 m2 per vehicle

Note that this equation does not offer space for a welfare area, and this should be added as needed. Consider possible future changes and uncertainties, and plan for possible expansion of the facilities, space for unloaded equipment, and crowd management.

- **Features:** Soft clay or hard rock will create varying conditions for how water can pass through. Soil conditions will also affect the way to level the site. To hinder erosion and flooding, the site should have a natural inclination up to 6 % but not less than 1 %. Also, the lowest point of the site should be at least three metres above the water level in the rainy season. Local information is most often available regarding how soil conditions vary throughout the year.

- **Location:** When assessing the site, it is pertinent to consider not only if the site is large enough, but also if it is suitable in terms of location. What is the proximity of local neighbours, roads, markets, other humanitarian organisations etc.? What has the site previously been used for?

- **Access (land and air):** Consider how vehicles will enter and exit the compound. Minimise turning areas and allow for heavy trucks (especially during set-up). If possible, the site should provide for a helipad with clear access and egress, both on the ground and for take-off and landing.

- **Environment:** Environmental considerations should be integrated into site selection and site planning from the very start of the operation. Location and layout, and the use of local resources for construction and fuel can have a negative environmental impact. Waste should be managed without risking health, exposing adjacent dwellings to discomfort or causing long term impacts on the environment. Environmental damage has health, social and economic consequences for the local population and can have political repercussions.

- **WASH:** Conditions for sanitary facilities should promote safe and hygienic usage and sanitary waste should be handled safely without negative impact on health, ground water or adjacent dwellings.

- **Hazards and risks:** Natural, biological, technological, intentional and environmental risks should inform the planning of office and accommodation solutions. The facilities should not be prone to diseases or contamination or have significant vector risks. Potential hazardous materials and goods can be de-positioned or exposed following a natural-hazard related disaster such as earthquakes and floods. Hazardous waste should be handled according to appropriate safety guidelines or safely stored until further processing.

H.5.2.3 Site planning and preparation

Site planning is one of the most vital aspects for the physical establishment and construction of the office and accommodation facilities. To a large extent the site selection and land ownership determines the limitations and opportunities for the IHP Support Team to establish the facilities.

Site planning should preferably, and to the furthest extent possible use an inclusive approach when deciding about the characteristics and set-up of the facilities. Continuous dialogue between the UNDAC team and the IHP Support Team is vital.

A master plan or overall site plan should show the overall configuration of the site, its surroundings and characteristics, and its proximity to natural and existing features, such as buildings and roads, as well as the measurements of the site.

When preparing the site for set-up, the following aspects will be considered by the IHP Support Team:

- Is it relevant to level the site before establishing the facilities?
- Will equipment or heavy machinery be needed?

- Will it be necessary to harden the area? Will there be a need to buy stones, gravel or slabs etc. to harden roads and pathways?
- Will it be possible to dig in the ground (for wells, cables, pipes, infiltration beds etc.)?

H.5.2.4 Camp construction

The reconnaissance/liaison team will consider the various alternatives and make adaptations to best suit the equipment and site chosen. The UNDAC Mission Focal Point and UNDAC Team Leader should establish a point of contact with the IHP Support Team Leader, and liaise with this person on a regular basis.

Depending on the modules requested and to be set-up by the IHP Support Team (like accommodation, office, water purification, hygiene and sanitation, kitchen and canteen, power supply) the time to be fully operational can vary. However, parts of the camp may be used before being fully operational.

H.5.2.5 Liaison with base camp support staff

Depending on the size and scale of the operation and the camp to be set-up, a number of support staff will be on site. The IHP Support Team usually consists of a team leader, camp technicians, electricians, plumbers and potentially a nurse. The Support Team is responsible for the functioning of the camp and constant exchange between the UNDAC team and the IHP Support Team is vital.

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I.
PERSONAL
HEALTH

United Nations

Section contents

I. PERSONAL HEALTH

This chapter emphasises the significance of personal health before, during, and after a deployment. It begins with discussions on medical and psychological preparedness, highlights the risks associated with hazardous materials and epidemics/pandemics during deployments, provides basic recommendations on hygiene and diet, addresses coping mechanisms for mission stress, and presents available psychosocial support for UNDAC team members.

UNDAC missions may be both physically and emotionally challenging. Operating on mission often entails long workdays with minimal opportunities for sleep and rest. The situation changes constantly, and the mind has to work at full speed to keep on top of things. There may be few, if any, sanitary facilities and team members may not have regular access to toilets or showers. Accommodation may be a small tent on the ground and food may come in the form of field rations. Altogether, the conditions may be demanding for the mind and body. Team members must be prepared for challenging missions and know how to find coping mechanisms.

When deploying to an emergency, one is more exposed to communicable diseases due to the sudden change in climate, food and workload. The body's natural defence mechanisms may not be able to cope with this change, making us potentially more vulnerable to diseases. Minor infections that are easily curable may have more dire consequences and even the smallest symptom of sickness should be taken seriously.

Ensure that you also familiarise yourself with the chapter on 'Medical emergencies and first aid' in the Reference material for basic information on the topic. However, please note that these instructions do not substitute for first aid training. All UNDAC members are encouraged to obtain and maintain updated certification in first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).

Deployments and mission experiences can further affect the mental health of deployed team members. Next to the information outlined in this chapter, OCHA's Wellbeing Platform (https://wellbeing.unocha.org/) can be a helpful point of reference to find wellbeing practical advice and assessments. Please refer to the resources on stress levels, anxiety, sleep patterns, etc. on the OCHA Wellbeing Platform or find copies in the UNDAC Toolbox.

I.1 Pre-deployment

UNDAC members should be in good physical shape and fit to meet any challenge one may encounter on an emergency response mission. They should have regular health screenings/check-ups to ensure that they remain in the best of health. Such screenings enable the early detection of medical problems which can then be managed effectively. The health screenings should include, but not be limited to:

- General medical examination, with blood and urine tests.
- Chest X-ray and electrocardiogram (ECG/EKG).
- Dental exam.
- Eye exam.
- Ensuring all vaccinations are up-to-date (see **Section C.2.1**).

Having proper clothing is also important to keeping healthy on a mission. This includes carrying waterproof gear (consider applying commercially available waterproofing coatings) and footwear suited to the climate. As UNDAC mission conditions can change quickly and unexpectedly, be sure to pack the full range of those items into your kit, even if initially deployed to a hotel. Items such as mosquito nets, water purification equipment and a warm sleeping bag can prevent a variety of health issues. When becoming an UNDAC member following the UNDAC Induction Course, UNDAC members receive a UNDAC kit/bag with some of the most crucial items, including a sleeping bag, a mosquito net, a head lamp, a first aid kit, all-weather jacket and trousers, water purification set, and more. See also Section "Climates" in the Reference material (J.7.9) for what to consider in different climatic zones.

Apart from physical conditions, psychological preparedness plays a pivotal role in effectively handling demanding assignments. By comprehending the difficulties, fostering resilience, coping with stress, and reaching out for assistance, individuals can optimise their mental well-being and flourish amidst challenging circumstances. It is important to recognize that every challenging assignment presents a distinct chance for personal and professional development. Armed with the appropriate psychological strategies, colleagues can surmount obstacles and attain their objectives.

Below is a non-exhaustive list some observed strategies that prove highly beneficial in preparing for a hardship assignment:

- **Understanding the Assignment –** Before embarking on a challenging assignment, it is crucial to thoroughly grasp the challenges ahead. Research the cultural, social, and environmental aspects of the destination. Acquaint yourself with local customs, norms, the security situation and potential stress triggers to mentally prepare and set realistic expectations.

- **Cultivating Resilience –** Resilience, the ability to bounce back from adversity, is indispensable for thriving in challenging assignments. Foster resilience by adopting a positive mindset, replenishing your energy, and reframing challenges as growth opportunities. Engage in activities that promote mental toughness, such as practising mindfulness, physical exercise, and seeking support from peers or a support network.

- **Building Emotional Intelligence –** Emotional intelligence is the ability to recognize, understand, and manage emotions, both in oneself and others. Hardship assignments can be emotionally demanding, requiring individuals to navigate stressful situations and interact with diverse personalities. Strengthening emotional intelligence can enhance your ability to cope with these challenges. Practice self-awareness, develop empathy, and improve your communication skills to foster better relationships and effectively manage conflicts.

- **Stress Management –** Effectively managing stress is vital for psychological well-being during hardship assignments. Prioritise self-care practices like adequate sleep, balanced nutrition, and relaxation techniques such as deep breathing or meditation. Identify healthy coping mechanisms like working out, journaling, or seeking social support, alongside effective time management and realistic goal-setting. For more on Stress Management, please see **Section C.3.2**.4.

- **Seeking Social Support –** Maintaining a robust support network is indispensable when facing hardship assignments. Cultivate relationships with colleagues, friends, or family members who offer emotional support, guidance, and encouragement. Share experiences and concerns with trusted individuals to gain varied perspectives and a sense of belonging.

- **Developing Problem-Solving Skills –** Hardship assignments often demand creative thinking and adaptability. Strengthen problem-solving skills by embracing flexible thinking, seeking alternative solutions, and learning from past experiences. Embrace a growth mindset that fosters continuous learning and improvement.

- **Be kind to yourself –** Everyone adjusts to change and upheaval differently. Do not criticise your coping skills or beat yourself up for every mistake you make. Self-compassion is an important part of building resilience, so go easy on yourself.

- **Seeking Professional Support –** If psychological challenges become overwhelming, do not hesitate to seek professional help. The OCHA Staff Counsellor's Office provides dedicated support; contact details can be found in the UNDAC Toolbox. Consulting a professional can offer invaluable insights and strategies to enhance well-being and performance.

I.2 During the deployment

During the first days in a different country, the newcomer – unaccustomed to the conditions of life and climate – is likely to have a lower resistance to disease and illness. Measures as simple as getting rest, maintaining a healthy diet, avoiding contaminated water, following proper hygiene guidelines and monitoring one's environment for hazards, can help ensure good health while on mission.

I.2.1 Hazardous materials (Hazmat)

Environmental emergencies can be potentially dangerous and must be handled by trained experts. Handle Hazmat incidents with extreme care and ensure compliance with the following guidance:

- Leave the area immediately.
- Do not walk into or touch spilled materials.
- Stay away from fumes, smoke and vapour. Remain upwind even if there is no smell.
- Be aware of changing weather conditions and changing wind directions. Note the wind speed, direction, type of precipitation, temperature and cloud cover.
- Do not operate radios, mobile phones or other electronic devices within a distance of 500 metres.
- Notify local emergency officials or community leaders of the situation so that they may isolate the scene.

When faced with a potential hazmat situation, consider the following information related to weather:

- On a warm day, chemical substances will tend to evaporate more quickly than on a cold day.
- High winds will disperse gases, vapours and powders, or dioxins released from fires.
- Precipitation may be problematic if a weather-reactive substance is released. On the other hand, precipitation may be a benefit as it may slow down the dispersion of airborne materials and reduce the area of impact.

For more regarding personal preparedness, refer to the **Section J.8** on "Comprehensive health and safety guidelines for environmental emergencies" in the Reference material.

Remember that the role of UNDAC team members without environmental expertise is to identify whether there is an existing or potential acute environmental risk and to inform local and/or international authorities. Attempts to solve the problem without appropriate technical knowledge and protective measures can put yourself and/or the entire UNDAC team at risk.

Depending on the situation and urgency, additional expertise can be requested through the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)/OCHA Joint Environment Unit (JEU). For more details on the JEU, environmental hazards/emergencies and disaster waste management, refer to **Chapter G.12**. Further guidance on disaster waste management contingency planning, such as handling asbestos, should be obtained upon consultation with Hazmat/CBRN experts (present or remote); basic guidance can be found in the UNDAC Toolbox.

I.2.2 Epidemics and pandemics

When deploying, UNDAC should comprehensively factor in epidemics and pandemics within its considerations for personal health. An epidemic is a disease outbreak that is rapidly spreading in a limited region, e.g., an outbreak of Ebola. A pandemic is an epidemic that is actively spreading to multiple regions across the globe, e.g., Covid-19.

This includes adopting a meticulous risk assessment strategy that evaluates the prevailing health risks at the deployment location, identifying potential endemic threats, i.e., a disease that is regularly occurring within a region, and analysing the potential impact on team members. The preparation phase should include a review of the local health infrastructure and capacity to manage outbreaks, ensuring that the deployment does not exacerbate any existing health crisis.

If a risk has been identified, pre-deployment medical screenings are crucial to ascertain the health status of team members, minimising the risk of spreading infections and ensuring that personnel do not unknowingly contribute to an outbreak. Implementing rigorous personal hygiene measures and providing guidance on preventive measures against infectious diseases should be an integral part of pre-deployment briefings. Moreover, UNDAC should equip its teams with appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) and ensure they are well-trained in its use, emphasising the importance of adherence to safety protocols and procedures.

Regular health monitoring during deployments in high-risk environments, coupled with robust communication channels to disseminate health-related

information and updates, is paramount for ensuring the safety and well-being of UNDAC members, while also mitigating risks.

See the UNDAC Toolbox for guidance and contingency plans specifically addressing pandemic scenarios, outlining response strategies, evacuation protocols, and medical support mechanisms. For more information on Respiratory Infections and other airborne transmitted pathogens, also check the Reference material in **Chapter J.**

I.2.3 Hygiene, insect protection, diet, water safety, and managing diarrhea

One of the main reasons for travellers becoming ill is eating and drinking without taking into consideration some simple rules. The risk of contamination from foodborne and waterborne illnesses is often even greater following a disaster. Following the advice in the sections below may spare UNDAC members a considerable amount of short-term annoyance and could prevent serious long-term diseases.

Hygiene

During a mission, there are several measures that should be taken to avoid exposure to possible infections. The most common way of contracting disease comes from poor sanitation and hygiene. Therefore, one should be extremely cautious and conduct regular hand-washing, particularly before meals. Water used for oral and dental hygiene should be purified or boiled beforehand.

Unless provided with reliable assurances that water is safe, swimming or bathing in lakes, rivers, etc., should be avoided at all times as it may lead to a variety of undesirable consequences, such as Schistosomiasis (also known as Bilharziosis or snail fever) which is one of many parasitic diseases found in contaminated water in many parts of the world.

Protection against insects

Certain insects, and particularly certain mosquitoes, may transmit infections such as malaria. When mosquitoes are numerous in an area where malaria is endemic, all exposed areas of the skin should be treated with mosquito repellent to prevent bites. In addition, it is useful to wear clothing that covers the arms and legs in the evening.

It should be remembered that mosquito nets only provide protection under certain conditions: material sufficiently finely meshed, folded correctly during the day and the net properly closed at night so that insects cannot get in. Inside buildings, insects should be destroyed by spraying with an insecticide. Sprays made from products with a pyrethrum base destroy rapidly but their action is short-lived.

Diet and Food

This should be well balanced. Heavy meals should be avoided and alcoholic drinks either excluded or consumed in moderate quantities, only in the evenings. Plenty of liquid should be consumed to compensate for perspiration losses and it may be necessary to increase salt intake in the case of profuse sweating. Amoebic dysentery and other enteric infections, often widespread in tropical regions, are transmitted by foods eaten raw, contaminated by dirty hands or unclean water. This causes acute or chronic digestive troubles which may be prevented by taking simple hygiene precautions.

The following recommendations for avoiding foodborne illness apply to all situations, from street vendors to the finest hotel restaurants:

- Cooked food that has been held at room temperature for several hours constitutes one of the greatest risks of foodborne illness. Make sure your food has been thoroughly cooked and is still hot when served.
- Avoid any uncooked food, apart from fruits and vegetables that can be peeled or shelled (but avoid fruits with damaged skin). Remember: 'cook it, peel it or leave it'.
- Ice cream from unreliable sources is frequently contaminated and may cause illness. If in doubt, avoid it.
- In some countries, certain species of fish and shellfish may contain poisonous bio-toxins even when they are well cooked. Local people can advise you about this.

Water

When travelling, if you have any doubt, all water should be perceived as being contaminated. Again, as in the case of food, it is vital to follow some simple rules to prevent diseases caused by unclean water:

- When the safety of drinking water is doubtful, boil it or disinfect it with reliable, slow-release, disinfectant tablets. These are generally available in pharmacies (and a limited number provided as part of the UNDAC Mission kit/bag).

- Avoid ice unless you are sure that it is made from safe water. Be aware that ice from apparently clean sources, e.g., hotel ice machines, is not always safe.

- Beverages, such as hot tea or coffee, wine, beer, and carbonated soft drinks or fruit juices which are either bottled or otherwise packaged, are usually safe to drink.

- Unpasteurized milk should be boiled before consumption.

- It is possible to buy bottled clean water in most places. Hence, it is recommended to purchase water and use bottled water whenever possible, even for brushing your teeth.

- Remember that water filters designed for household use may not remove all contaminants that can cause illness. Boiling may still be required if using such a filter.

Managing diarrhoea

Diarrhoea is the most common health problem encountered during field missions. To avoid diarrhoea, ensure that hand washing and hygiene is given constant attention, and that the source of water consumed is safe. Most diarrhoeal attacks are viral in origin, are self-limiting, and clear up in a few days. If affected, it is important to avoid becoming dehydrated. As soon as diarrhoea starts, drink more fluids such as bottled, boiled or treated water, or weak tea. Fruit juice (diluted with safe water) or soup may also be taken. Dairy products should be avoided as they can sometimes aggravate diarrhoea.

When diarrhoea is severe, the body loses water, salts (especially sodium and potassium), water-soluble vitamins and other important trace minerals.

To replenish some of these losses, as well as restore energy, the following mix has proven successful in UNDAC missions:

- Water.

- ORS (oral rehydration salts/solution) in the correct dilution.

- High doses of effervescent Vitamin C, i.e., a minimum 1000 mg, provided there is no history of gastritis, and multivitamins with B-Complex.

- Calcium (600-1000 mg).

One should try to drink as much of this mix as possible during the duration of the diarrhoea. It is recommended that at least three litres of liquid be consumed within the first three hours after the onset of diarrhoea. Fluids should then continue until symptoms are relieved. At all times, a regular diet should continue. When using ORS, adults may generally consume an unlimited amount; it is advised to begin its use if diarrhoea continues for more than one day.

The best indicator that the fluid intake in a diarrhoeal state is sufficient is when there is adequate diuresis, i.e., good amounts of urine are produced at an average of 60 ml per hour. Watch out for signs of severe dehydration and electrolyte (salt and water) imbalance, such as poor urinary output, cramps in legs, and dizziness/fainting spells.

Activated charcoal tablets may be consumed to reduce irritation and absorb some of the possible toxins in the gastrointestinal tract. However, antidiarrheals should not be used routinely and medical assessment is recommended in severe cases of diarrhoea.

Seek medical help if there are any blood diarrheal stools or accompanying fever and vomiting. Diarrhoea that lasts for more than three days also requires medical attention. When there is no medical help available and there is blood in the stool, a five-day course of Cotrimoxazole may be taken. Metronidazole (Flagyl) is also a useful drug to be taken over five to seven days to treat possible parasitic infection. Do not consume alcohol when on antibiotics as this may cause complications and/or reactions.

I.2.4 Managing mission stress

Working in emergency relief environments will expose UNDAC members to a number of situations and conditions that create stress and may lead to a stress reaction. Situations that are found to be stressful for one individual might not be stressful for another. In addition, the type of reaction can vary significantly from one person to another.

Not all stress is bad. The pressures in the disaster environment can be helpful as they tend to focus attention, increase concentration, mobilise energy, and consolidate the will to succeed. However, failure to cope effectively with stress may cause a decline in capacity, a decrease in productivity and can prove detrimental to team functioning. Thus, even though on most UNDAC missions there is rarely enough time for rest, it is important that one take as much time as possible to sleep and relax on a regular basis – be it just for a couple of hours. Remember that a sick team member is a liability and not an asset. Therefore, it is important that the team acknowledge, and are prepared to deal with stress and its consequences from the very beginning of the mission.

There are two types of stress one should be aware of when working in disasters:

- **Cumulative stress –** Stress that is built up over time by the normal conditions of a disaster mission and which, if not dealt with, can gradually lead an individual to perform less effectively. Some form of stress while on mission is inevitable, but failure to address cumulative stress may lead to a burn-out.
- **Critical incident stress –** Stress caused by experiencing one or more traumatic incidents. This type of stress may lead to mental and physical health problems that cannot be dealt with at the mission level.

I.2.4.1 Cumulative stress

This type of stress develops in the complex, unnatural and often exhausting situation of a mission. It is important to know the causes, recognize the signs and apply coping strategies to avoid more serious health implications associated with stress.

Possible causes of cumulative stress

The following are potential causes of cumulative stress:

- Lack of safety and security/health hazards.
- Witnessing violence/tragedy/trauma.
- Anxiety about the mission, accomplishments, responsibilities, knowledge and skills.
- Travel delays.
- Problems associated with meeting basic human needs, e.g., housing discomforts, lack of privacy, a lack of quality food or little variety, water shortages, etc.
- Immobility, inactivity, lack of exercise.
- Problems at home or missing family and friends.
- Inability to make a difference/no progress/apathy amongst responders or survivors.
- Noisy/chaotic environment.
- Malfunctioning equipment.
- Insufficient rest/relaxation periods.
- Pressure from authorities, supervisors and/or peers.
- Pressure to achieve.
- Unresolved conflict in the team.
- Unclear/constantly shifting tasks, unrealistic expectations (self or from others).
- Unsupportive or difficult colleagues, superiors.
- Non-recognition of work/hostility to efforts.
- Media attention.
- Lack of resources, limited control of the situation.
- Cultural/language differences.
- Murphy's Law, i.e., 'anything that can go wrong, will go wrong'.
- Perfectionist attitude, i.e., not being able to accept a 'good-enough' solution or outcome but striving for perfection in an environment/context where flawless achievements are highly unlikely and/or unattainable.

Indicators of cumulative stress

It is important to know about, and therefore be able to recognize, indicators of cumulative stress that might occur. It is not only vital to recognize them within yourself, but also in your colleagues.

The indicators may include some of the following:

- Inability to make decisions and seemingly paralyzed by choice.
- Narrowing of attention/impaired judgement/loss of perspective.
- Disorientation, forgetfulness.
- Impatience or verbal aggression, being overly critical.
- Anger/rage.
- Inappropriate, purposeless, or even destructive behaviour.
- Over-activity.
- Sleep disorders.
- Susceptibility to viruses/psychosomatic complaints.
- Hyper-emotions, e.g., grief, elation, mood swings.
- Physical tension, headaches.
- Substance abuse.
- Eating disorders, e.g., lack of appetite, eating too much.
- Diarrhoea.
- Lack of energy, interest, enthusiasm, feeling fatigued.
- Withdrawal/depression/loss of sense of humour.
- Inability to perform.
- Questioning basic beliefs/values/cynicism.

Extended exposure to demanding and lengthy work hours, challenging environmental conditions, insufficient social support and recognition, as well as separation from family and home culture are amongst the factors that contribute to the onset of burnout. More information on burnout can be found at https://wellbeing.unocha.org/articles/how-to-deal-with-burning-out.

Coping with cumulative stress

Experience has shown that knowledge (especially through training) about cumulative stress, awareness of the early-onset indicators, and prompt action to establish coping systems has a positive effect on reducing cumulative stress and in avoiding burnout. It is normal to experience cumulative stress during a disaster operation and most reactions to stress are considered normal behaviours.

Cumulative stress can be identified and managed. The following are some ways to minimise cumulative stress during a disaster operation:

- Resolve conflicts early on.
- Know your limitations, manage your expectations and accept the situation.
- Get rest, relaxation, sleep and exercise.
- Eat regularly.
- Change tasks and roles.
- Identify and act on the source of stress.
- Take time off.
- Keep calm.
- Create personal semi-private space.
- Control substance abuse.
- Talk/laugh/cry with your colleagues.
- Practice prayer, meditation or progressive relaxation.
- Pamper yourself: read, sing, dance, write, listen to or play music, work on a hobby, cook a meal, etc.
- Participate in social activities unrelated to the mission.

I.2.4.2 Critical incident Stress & psychological first aid

A critical incident is a sudden event or situation encompassing actual, threatened, witnessed, or perceived death, serious injury, or a threat to the physical or psychological well-being of an individual or a group. Examples of critical incidents include:

- Witnessing shootings, explosions, and destruction,
- Serious injury to self or injury/death of a relative, co-worker or friend,
- Experiencing events that are life threatening,
- Sexual assault and rape,
- Witnessing casualties; experiencing events that cause extreme physical or emotional loss.

Encountering a critical incident frequently leaves a lasting impact on an individual's approach to life thereafter.

IMMEDIATE	DELAYED
Physical responses:	Physical symptoms:
• Nausea, sweating/chills	• Headaches
• Dizziness	• Stomach aches
• Hyperventilation	• Fatigue
• Irrational activities	• Muscle weakness
	• Shortness of breath
	• Tightening of the chest
Emotional responses:	**Emotional and psychological responses:**
• Fear	• Nervousness and unease
• Anxiety (unrelated to any current event)	• Sleep disorders
• Sadness	• Loss of faith or renewed faith
• Feeling overwhelmed	• Determination to live life fully
• Survivor's guilt	• Fearlessness
• Helplessness	• Substance abuse
• Lack of control	• Decreased attention
• Anger	• Difficulty concentrating
• Irritability/grief/hopelessness	• Memory problems
• Feeling Isolated	• Flashbacks
• Feeling numb	• Depression/withdrawal
	• Resentment/numbness

Cognitive responses:

- Easily startled by loud noises or sudden movements
- Forgetfulness, dissociative amnesia
- Difficulties in concentrating
- Feeling disconnected or that nothing is real
- Lack of perception
- Confusion
- Decision-making/problem-solving difficulty

Common reactions to critical incident stress

Indicators of critical incident stress may be separated into immediate and delayed reactions.

The following list is not conclusive, but presents some of the most common symptoms:

If you do not experience these symptoms but experience others, that does not make them any less valid. They are just as important and should be acknowledged. If you do experience these symptoms, remember that they are valid reactions in response to surviving a critical incident.

Psychological First Aid: Coping with critical incident stress

In the case of a traumatic event, Psychological First Aid is the agreed type of intervention. It can be applied by non-mental health professionals and is utilised to help people express emotions and normalise their stress responses. Psychological First Aid is humane, supportive and practical assistance provided to fellow human beings who have recently suffered exposure to serious stressors. It involves:

• Non-intrusive, practical care and support.
• Assessing needs and concerns.
• Helping people to address basic needs (food, water).
• Listening, but not pressuring people to talk.
• Comforting people and helping them to feel calm.
• Helping people connect to information, services and social support.
• Protecting people from further harm.

It is not something only professionals can do, and it should not be considered professional counselling. The action principles of Psychological First Aid are:

Note that members of the team exposed to a serious traumatic event and facing challenges to cope should be referred to a mental health specialist.

For more information on psychological first aid, please refer to the Psychological first aid: Guide for field workers (https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241548205) and/or the free online training at https://www.nctsn.org/resources/psychological-first-aid-pfa-online.

Further, OCHA Staff Counsellor's Office is available for supporting the psycho-social well-being of all UNDAC team members. They can provide different types of support to help deal with concerns and crises in work or personal life. Please find the relevant contact details in the UNDAC Toolbox.

Figure I: Personal Health

PREPARE	Learn about the crisis event	Learn about available services and support	Learn about available safety and security concerns
LOOK	Be observant of safety concerns	Be observant of people with obvious and urgent needs	Be observant of people with serious distress reactions
LISTEN	Make contact with people who may need support	Ask about people's needs and concerns	Listen to people and help them feel calm

LINK	Help people address basic needs and access services	Help people cope with problems	Give information	Connect people with loved ones and social support

I.2.5 Mental health during a sudden-onset disaster

Individual responses to life events vary depending on past experiences and multiple factors. In general, events that are highly negative, random, unpredictable, uncontrollable, and have widespread effects on entire communities are often perceived as traumatic.

There are typical and "normal" initial reactions to natural-hazard related catastrophes that you or people around you might be undergoing as you try to comprehend the situation. Below are some practical tips on how to take care of yourself and colleagues during a traumatic event like a sudden-onset disaster.

Taking care of yourself

In the midst of the natural-hazard related disaster, it is normal to not feel mentally well. However, there are some things that could help you:

- **Limit exposure to news and social media –** While the media can offer valuable information about ongoing events, we strongly advise you to restrict your exposure to it. Studies indicate that excessive media consumption can intensify distress and anxiety, as it may contribute to a repetitive mental cycle of reliving stressful moments.

- **Control what you can –** Establishing routines within the chaos can be beneficial. For instance, allocating specific times for meals or bedtime can provide stability and offer moments of respite from earthquake-related thoughts. A consistent evening routine may contribute to improved sleep quality as well.

- **Engage in healthy behaviours –** Strive to maintain a well-balanced diet, practice mindfulness, shift your focus to different topics, and ensure an adequate amount of rest. Prioritise sufficient sleep, and consider taking turns with a colleague/team member to stay alert, allowing others to rest. Good physical health can positively impact your mental and emotional well-being.

- **Remain hopeful**

- **Seek professional support –** Staff Counsellors are available anytime for support and will continue being in contact with you, ilf you find yourself struggling with the psychological challenges of a hardship assignment. Please find the Staff Counsellors contact information on the UNDAC Mission Platform (under Management > Welfare, Safety and Security).

There are also immediate responses that are positive and should be encouraged, such as a desire to be close with friends, family, or other survivors; a need to talk about one's experiences; and altruistic behaviour such as wanting to help other survivors.

More resources and references can also be found at https://wellbeing.unocha.org/articles/mental-health-after-natural-disaster.

Supporting colleagues and family

Supporting a loved one after a distressing event requires acknowledging the situation without trying to diminish their pain. While you may wish to alleviate their suffering, it is crucial to recognize that time, rest, and appropriate support are essential for their recovery. Offer condolences, express your willingness to assist in any way needed, and encourage open communication about their preferences. Providing practical support, being present, and understanding their emotions are key aspects of helping someone navigate the aftermath of a traumatic experience. Remember, it is essential to respect their pace and decisions throughout the recovery process.

Suggestions for supporting a colleague, friend, or family member following a traumatic event include:

- Allocate time to be with the person and convey your availability. Human contact can be reassuring for individuals who have experienced trauma.

- Recognize that their feelings may include irritability, depression, anger, or fear. Emotional outbursts are common, so it's essential not to take them personally. Reassure the person that their reactions are normal and will diminish over time.

- Provide practical support, such as assisting with housework, grocery shopping etc.

- Encourage self-care, emphasising the importance of healthy eating, avoiding substances like alcohol or drugs, and maintaining regular sleep patterns.

- Respect the need for personal time; sometimes, individuals may require moments of solitude.
- Express your availability without passing judgement.
- Recommend maintaining a consistent daily routine and habits for stability and predictability.

Talking about what has happened:

Engaging in conversations about the trauma can be beneficial, but it is crucial to never pressure someone into talking. You can express your willingness to listen, but ultimately, it is their decision whether they choose to share their experience.

Here are suggestions on how to handle such conversations:

- Allow the person to discuss the traumatic event, even if it elicits strong emotions. Stay calm and listen attentively, as becoming upset yourself does not contribute positively.
- Respect their wishes if they do not want to talk. Recognize that they may need time alone with their thoughts and assure them that you are available to listen whenever they feel ready.
- Reassure them of your care and genuine interest in understanding their experience. They might express scepticism about your ability to comprehend their ordeal, potentially leading to isolation. Be patient, explore additional ways to offer support, and avoid pressuring them.
- If they choose to share their feelings, listen attentively, even if details are repeated. Repetition is a common aspect of processing traumatic events.
- Allow the person to dictate how much they want to disclose. Avoid pushing or asking intrusive questions.
- Acknowledge the event and their emotional response to it. Express empathy by acknowledging the distress and conveying your condolences for their pain.
- Embrace moments of silence, understanding that your presence can be immensely comforting.
- Accept and validate a range of emotions, including tears and laughter. There is no predetermined or correct way for them to express themselves.
- Remember that while you cannot eliminate their pain, you can share it with them, fostering a

sense of companionship. Let your genuine concern and care shine through.

- Extend practical assistance, such as running errands, preparing meals, providing transportation, or assisting with their workload (with the manager's approval).
- Ensure they have someone else to talk to if they are not comfortable sharing with you, or if you find it challenging to cope. UNDAC team members can contact the OCHA Staff Welfare Unit for support. The contact details can be found in the UNDAC Toolbox.
- When facing difficult decisions, discuss the situation with the person and help them explore various options. However, refrain from making decisions on their behalf. If it is shortly after the traumatic event, consider suggesting a brief waiting period before committing to any decisions.

I.3 After the deployment

UNDAC members should seek medical consultation and treatment promptly if they have signs of any illness or injury following the mission. Of particular concern is persistent fever, cough or abdominal upset with diarrhoea, as these may be due to a disease contracted during the deployment.

Any medications started prior to or during the mission should be continued until the prescription is complete or as indicated by the manufacturer of the medication. This information may be found in the packaging of the medication and applies especially to antimalarial drugs.

UNDAC Members should update their individual health records if they develop any illness following deployment with UNDAC. They should also advise OCHA which may then alert other UNDAC members to be aware of a potential health threat in the deployment location or the local health authorities at the deployment site.

Returning home & psychosocial support

Mission life can be a positively stimulating and rewarding experience, embracing new people and cultures, working on interesting projects. Then at some point the deployment comes to an end and

you need to reintegrate with your home culture and work routine. As a result, many humanitarians experience stress and re-adjustment issues, and to what degree will depend on a multitude of factors. Some of which are mentioned here along with tips to better manage this often unsettling period.

There are various factors that might affect your re-entry back home:

- Length of your mission,
- The amount of stressors and exposure to trauma during your assignment,
- Previous field experience,
- Degree of differences between home culture and host culture,
- How meaningful the assignment has been,
- Interpersonal relationships during your deployment,
- How well you manage long distance relationships.

Everyone experiences the transition back to their home differently. It is possible that after the initial feeling of euphoria during the first few days, you could experience feelings of loss, and isolation. You may feel that no one really understands what you have been through, and what's more, most people are not that interested. You may feel frustrated that you just cannot seem to communicate the magnitude of the experience you have undergone.

A few tips to help during this period of re-entry:

- You will readjust to your home environment just as you adjusted to your field mission. For some people, it takes a few days, others a few weeks.
- Some people find it difficult to put the experience into words. Journaling your thoughts is a good place to start. This could be done just before going to sleep.

- Find other ways to share your experience: speak to your colleagues back in the office and those who had similar experiences.
- Consider taking a few days off following an intensive field mission before returning to work.
- While you are away, keep up to date with events and in touch with loved ones at home.
- Do not always expect that your home will be just the same as it was when you left on a mission.
- Before you go home, reflect on how you have changed and how this may affect your home-coming. If there is an offer of any kind of farewell, take it. Any sort of farewell can only help you move on and, importantly, it also helps those who are left behind.

Deploying to a natural-hazard related disaster is not only an eye-opening experience, but can also have an impact on the mental health of deployed colleagues, even after they return home. The stress caused by witnessing or experiencing trauma can affect all aspects of a person's life, including their mental, emotional and physical well-being. Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a mental health condition that develops in some people who have experienced or witnessed a traumatic or frightening event, such as a natural-hazard related disaster, a serious accident or attack, an act of terrorism or military combat, or who have been threatened with death, sexual violence or injury. You can find more information about PTSD here: https://applications.emro.who.int/docs/WHOEMMN-H235E-eng.pdf?ua=1.

Further, OCHA Staff Counsellor's Office is available for supporting the psycho-social well-being of all UNDAC team members. They can provide different types of support to help deal with concerns and crises in work or personal life. Please find the relevant contact details in the UNDAC Toolbox.

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J.
REFERENCE
MATERIAL

United
Nations

Section contents

J. REFERENCE MATERIAL

This chapter includes conversion tables, details on commonly used aircraft and helicopter characteristics, and loading and offloading methods. Additionally, you will find acronyms, a phonetic alphabet, and UN call signs for effective communication. For personal readiness, there is an extensive preparedness checklist covering various aspects. Moreover, environmental experts have their own dedicated checklist, which includes health and safety guidelines. Finally, comprehensive guidance is provided on medical emergencies, first aid, and protection activities across sectors. This chapter serves as a reference for supporting preparedness, efficiency, and safety throughout your mission.

J.1 Conversion tables (imperial and metric)

METRIC TO IMPERIAL		IMPERIAL TO METRIC	
LENGTH		**LENGTH**	
1cm	= 0.394 inches	1 inch	= 2.54 cm
1 m	= 39.4 inches	1 foot	= 30.5 cm
1 m	= 3.28 feet	1 foot	= 0.305 m
1 m	= 1.09 yards	1 yard	= 0.914 m
1 km	= 0.621 miles	1 mile	= 1.609 km
WEIGHT		**WEIGHT**	
1 g	= 0.035 ounces	1 ounce	= 28.3 g
1 kg	= 2.2 pounds	1 pound	= 454 g
1 ton	= 2200 pounds	1 pound	= 0.454 kg
1 ton	= 0.984 tons (US)	1 ton (US)	= 1.02 tons
SURFACE		**SURFACE**	
1cm2	= 0.155 sq in	1 sq inch	= 6.45 cm2
1 m2	= 10.76 sq ft	1 sq foot	= 929 cm2
1 m2	= 1.2 sq yd	1 sq foot	= 0.093 m2

SURFACE		SURFACE	
1 ha	= 2.47 acres	1 sq yard	= 0.836 m2
1 km2	= 247 acres	1 acre	= 0.405 ha
1 km2	= 0.386 sq miles	1 sq mile	= 2.59 km2

VOLUME		VOLUME	
1 cm3	= 0.061 cu in	1 cu inch	= 16.4 cm3
1 m3	= 35.3 cu ft	1 cu foot	= 0.028 m3
1 m3	= 1.31 cu yd	1 cu yard	= 0.765 m3
1 ml	= 0.035 fl. oz	1 fl ounce	= 28.4 ml
1 l	= 1.76 pints	1 pint	= 0.568 l
1 l	= 0.22 UK gal.	1 UK gal.	= 4.55 l
1 US gal.	= 0.833 UK gal.	1 UK gal.	= 1.2 US gal.

Temperature
(Celsius x 1.8) + 32 = Fahrenheit
(Fahrenheit - 32) x 0.555 = Celsius

J.2 Characteristics of aircraft commonly used during emergencies

Aircraft Type	Cruising speed (knots)	Maximum cargo weight metric tons (2,200 lb)	Cargo hold size LxWxH (cm)	Door size WxH (cm)	Usable cargo volume (m3)	Pallet qty 224x318 (cm)	Desired runway length (ft)
AN-12		15	1,300 x 350 x 250	310 x 240	100	n/a	n/a
AN-22		60	3,300 x 440 x 440	300 x 390	630	n/a	n/a
AN-26		5.5	1,060 x 230 x 170	200 x 160	50	n/a	n/a
AN-32		6.7	1,000 x 250 x 110	240 x 120	30	n/a	n/a
AN-72/74		10	1,000 x 210 x 220	240 x 150	45	n/a	n/a
AN-124	450	120	3,300 x 640 x 440	600 x 740	850	n/a	10,000
A300F4 -100		40	3,300 x 450 x 250	360 x 260	320	20	8,200
A300F4 -200		42	3,300 x 450 x 250	360 x 260	320	20	8,200
A310-200F		38	2,600 x 450 x 250	360 x 260	260	16	6,700
A310-300F		39	2,600 x 450 x 250	360 x 260	260	16	6,700
B727-100F		16	2,000 x 350 x 210	340 x 220	112	9	7,000
B737-200F		12	1,800 x 330 x 190	350 x 210	90	7	7,000
B737-300F		16	1,800 x 330 x 210	350 x 230	90	8	7,000

Aircraft Type	Cruising speed (knots)	Maximum cargo weight metric tons (2,200 lb)	Cargo hold size LxWxH (cm)	Door size WxH (cm)	Usable cargo volume (m3)	Pallet qty 224x318 (cm)	Desired runway length (ft)
B747-100F		99	5,100 x 500 x 300	340 x 310	525	37	9,000
B747-200F	490	109	5,100 x 500 x 300	340 x 310	525	37	10,700
B747-400F		113	5,100 x 500 x 300	340 x 310	535	37	n/a
B757-200F		39	3,400 x 330 x 210	340 x 220	190	15	5,800
B767-300F		55	3,900 x 330 x 240	340 x 260	300	17	6,500
DC-10-10F		56	4,100 x 450 x 250	350 x 260	380	23	8,000
DC-10-30F		70	4,100 x 450 x 250	350 x 260	380	23	8,000
IL-76	430	40	2,500 x 330 x 340	330 x 550	180	n/a	2,800
L-100	275	22	1,780 x 310 x 260	300 x 280	120	6	n/a
L-100-20	275	20	1,780 x 310 x 260	300 x 280	120	6	n/a
L-100-30	280	23	1,780 x 310 x 260	300 x 280	120	6	n/a
MD-11F		90	3,800 x 500 x 250	350 x 260	365	26	n/a
B737-300F		16	1,800 x 330 x 210	350 x 230	90	8	7,000

Note: The cargo capacities and cruise speeds listed in the table are averages. Actual capacities will vary based on the altitude, ambient air temperature and actual fuel on board.

J.3 Characteristics of helicopters commonly used during emergencies

Helicopter type	Fuel type	Cruising speed (knots)	Typical allowable payload for hovering in ground effect (kg/lb)	Typical allowable payload for hovering out of ground effect (kg/lb)	Number of passenger seats
Aerospatiale SA 315B Lama	Jet	80	420/925	420/925	4
Aerospatiale SA-316B Allouette III	Jet	80	526/1,160	479/1,055	6
Aerospatiale SA 318C Allouette II	Jet	95	420/926	256/564	4
Aerospatiale AS-332L Super Puma	Jet	120	2,177/4,800	1,769/3,900	26
Bell 204B	Jet	120	599/1,20	417/920	11
Bell 206B-3 Jet Ranger	Jet	97	429/945	324/715	4
Bell 206L Long Ranger	Jet	110	522/1150	431/950	6
Bell 412 Huey	Jet	110	862/1900	862/1,900	13
Bell G-47	Aviation Gas	66	272/600	227/500	1
Bell 47 Soloy	Jet	75	354/780	318/700	2
Boeing H 47 Chinook	Jet	130	12,210/26,918	12,210/26,918	33
Eurocopter (MBB) BO-105 CB	Jet	110	635/1,400	445/980	4

Helicopter type	Fuel type	Cruising speed (knots)	Typical allowable payload for hovering in ground effect (kg/lb)	Typical allowable payload for hovering out of ground effect (kg/lb)	Number of passenger seats
Eurocopter BK-117A-4	Jet	120	599/1,320	417/920	11
MI-8	Jet	110	3,000/6,6139	3,000/6,6139	20-30
Sikorsky S-58T	Jet	90	1,486/3,275	1,168/2,575	12-18
Sikorsky S-61N	Jet	120	2,005/4,420	2,005/4,420	n/a
Sikorsky S-64 Skycrane	Jet	80	7,439/16,400	7,439/16,400	n/a
Sikorsky S-70 (UH-60) Black Hawk	Jet	145	2,404/5,300	1,814/4,000	14-17

J.4 Aircraft loading and offloading methods

Aircraft may be loaded in four ways:

- **Bulk loaded –** Cargo is loaded on the floor and held in place by nets, straps or ropes. This may increase the usable cargo space on an aircraft; however, securing cargo in place may be more difficult. Bulk loading also slows loading, offloading, sorting, distribution and customs processing.

- **Palletized –** Cargo is preloaded onto wood or metal pallets and held in place by nets, straps or ropes. This method is commonly used to store and ship humanitarian supplies. Military pallets, officially called HCU-6/E or 463L pallets (nicknamed "cookie sheets"), measure 224 cm wide and 274 cm long (213 x 264 of usable space). They are made of wood with a thin aluminium coating and weigh 160 kg (with netting). The loaded pallets can be as heavy as 4500 kg. These pallets are reusable and must be returned.

They are commonly used on aircraft such as the C-5, C-17, C-141 and C-130. Some commercial aircraft also use them. For logistical planning purposes, when building pallets, limit the height of a stack to 243 cm (96 inches) for these aircraft unless authorised to stack higher by the crew chief. The size of commercial pallets varies greatly depending on the country or region and the intended use. They are generally wood but may also be metal or plastic. They are used on aircraft such as the DC-8, B727, DC-10 and B747. These pallets are also reusable. It is possible to stack pallets on an aircraft, but it is more difficult and very time-consuming. Remember, flight crew duty time is ticking!

- **Containerized –** Cargo is preloaded into closed containers and then loaded onto the aircraft. This method is used to load large commercial aircraft such as B747s and DC-10s. Cargo containers come in a great variety of shapes and sizes and their maximum loaded weights range from less than 450 kg to over 11 tons. Each type is designed to be loaded and offloaded with cargo in place using a mechanised loading system

or a forklift. Containerizing is very difficult and time-consuming, and sometimes it is impossible to hand-load or unload containers once they are on the aircraft. If a forklift will be used to load or offload containers or pallets, make sure that the forklift can carry the largest pallet, has tines long enough to counterbalance the weight and that the highest point of the forklift is lower than that portion of the aircraft (wing, tail or door in open position) where it must move to retrieve the container or pallet.

- **External (helicopters only) –** Cargo is placed in a net or suspended from a line and picked up and moved by the helicopter using a belly hook.

Helicopters normally lift and move more cargo externally (slinging) than internally. The external cargo is loaded into specially made nets that are connected to a cargo hook on the belly of the helicopter. Cargo may also be suspended on cables (lead lines). Make sure lead lines and nets are approved for slinging cargo.

Pallets, containers, nets and lead lines are reusable. They may also need to be returned quickly to their point of origin, so they can be used for loading more cargo. Always think in terms of 'back hauling' cargo equipment for reuse or when it is no longer needed.

J.5 Phonetic alphabet, standard UN call signs and radio prowords

Letter	Pronunciation	Letter	Pronunciation	Letter	Pronunciation
A	ALPHA	J	JULIET	S	SIERRA
B	BRAVO	K	KILO	T	TANGO
C	CHARLIE	L	LIMA	U	UNIFORM
D	DELTA	M	MIKE	V	VICTOR
E	ECHO	N	NOVEMBER	W	WHISKY
F	FOXTROT	O	OSCAR	X	X-RAY
G	GOLF	P	PAPA	Y	YANKEE
H	HOTEL	Q	QUEBEC	Z	ZULU
I	INDIA	R	ROMEO		

Within the UN call sign system, the first letter indicates the location of the network. The first letter of the location name is usually designated. If this letter is already in use by another network within the country, the last letter is used. This continues until an available letter is found in the location name. For example, a network operating in Pakistan would use Mike for Multan and Delta for Muzaffarabad.

Standard UN call signs
The second letter of a call-sign indicates the agency:

Letter	Pronunciation	Letter	Pronunciation
Alpha	FAO	November	UNFPA
Bravo	World Bank/IMF	Oscar	OCHA/UNDAC
Charlie	UNICEF	Papa	UNOPS
Delta	UNDP	Quebec	UNDPKO
Echo	UNESCO	Romeo	UNHCR
Foxtrot	WFP	Sierra	UNDSS
Golf		Tango	UNHABITAT

Letter	Pronunciation	Letter	Pronunciation
Hotel	WHO	**Uniform**	UN Secretariat
India		**Victor**	
Juliet		**Whisky**	
Kilo		**X-ray**	Reserved for NGOs
Lima	UNJLC	**Yankee**	Reserved for NGOs
Mike	IOM	**Zulu**	Reserved for NGOs

The first digit of the call sign indicates the position within the agency:

#	Department	#	Department
1	Management and miscellaneous senior staff	6	Agency-specific
2	Finance / Administration	7	Drivers
3	Logistics	8	Technical support staff, e.g. Telecom, IT, etc.
4	Programme	9	Visitors / Agency-specific
5	Staff security / guards		

The last one or two digits indicate the different individuals in the department. For example, the UNDAC Team Leader in Muzaffarabad would be Delta-Oscar-1; the UNDAC Deputy Team Leader would be Delta-Oscar-1-1.

Radio prowords

Proword	Meaning
ACKNOWLEDGE	Confirm that you have received my message and will comply.
AFFIRMATIVE – NEGATIVE	Yes/Correct - No/Incorrect.
ALL AFTER or ALL BEFORE	Everything that you (I) transmitted after... (Keyword).
	Everything that you (I) transmitted before... (Keyword).
CORRECT (THAT IS CORRECT)	What you have transmitted is correct.
CORRECTION	An error has been made in this transmission. It will continue with the last word (group) correctly transmitted.
	An error has been made in this transmission. Correct version is...
	That which follows is a correct version in answer to your request for verification.
WRONG	Your last transmission was incorrect. The correct version is...
SILENCE – SILENCE – SILENCE	Cease all transmissions on this net immediately. Will be maintained until lifted.
SILENCE LIFTED	Silence is lifted. The net is free for traffic.
END OF MESSAGE – OVER (OUT)	This concludes the message just transmitted (and the message instructions pertaining to a formal message).
FIGURES	Numerals or numbers will follow.
	In general, numbers are transmitted digit by digit except that exact multiples of hundreds and thousands are spoken as such.
OVER	This is the end of my turn of transmitting. A message is expected. Go ahead.
THROUGH ME	I am in contact with the station you are calling; I can act as a relay station.
MESSAGE PASSED TO	Your message has been passed to...
ROGER	I have received your last transmission satisfactorily.
ROGER SO FAR?	Have you received this part of my message satisfactorily?
WILCO	I have received your message, understand it, and will comply. (To be used only by the addressee.)
	ROGER and WILCO are never used together.
UNKNOWN STATION	The identity of the station calling or with whom I am attempting to establish communication is unknown.

Proword	Meaning
WAIT (WAIT-WAIT)	I must pause for a few seconds.
WAIT – OUT	I must pause longer than some seconds and will call you again when ready.
OUT	This is the end of my transmission to you.
	No answer or acknowledgement is expected.
OUT TO YOU	Do not answer; I have nothing more for you.
	I shall now call another station on the net.
READ BACK	Repeat the entire following transmission back to me exactly as received.
I READ BACK	The following is my reply to your request to read back.
SAY AGAIN	Repeat all of your last transmission.
	Followed by ALL AFTER, ALL BEFORE, WORD AFTER, WORD BEFORE etc. means: Repeat... (portion indicated).
I SAY AGAIN	I am repeating my transmission or portion indicated.
SEND	Go ahead with your transmission.
SEND YOUR MESSAGE	Go ahead, transmit; I am ready to copy.
SPEAK SLOWER	Reduce the speed of your transmission.
I SPELL	I shall spell the next word, group or equivalent phonetically. (Not used when transmitting coded groups only.)

J.6 Personal preparedness checklist

Before deploying on a UNDAC mission, members are required to ensure their personal preparedness and readiness for mobilisation. This involves meticulous planning and arrangements to address both personal and professional responsibilities and considerations.

J.6.1 Overall readiness

- **Personal arrangements –** Ensure family is prepared for a possible sudden departure on mission, organise care arrangements for dependents, manage personal affairs, including

  » A will and a power of attorney or other legal instruments to regulate your daily affairs in your absence.

  » Payment of pending bills and cancelling/rescheduling of appointments for the expected mission period.

  » Life insurance, disability insurance, personal belongings insurance.

- **Professional arrangements –** Secure rapid employment release and maintenance of salary and benefits, and make necessary agreements with the national UNDAC focal point (e.g., agreements, insurances, funding arrangements) as applicable.

- **Training and exercises –** Participate in relevant training and exercises to enhance personal preparedness, e.g., various OCHA or other courses where UNDAC members are offered slots.

- **UNDAC documentation and contacts –** Ensuring validity of UNDAC contract and medical certificate, and maintaining updated contact and personal information on the **VOSOCC.**

- **Mission kit –** Preparing and maintaining UNDAC and personal mission kit, including **valid** travel documents, money (cash in hard currencies, credit cards), prescription medicines, and other essentials.

J.6.2 Travel documentation

- Passport (with at least six months' validity), preferably machine readable, and with at least two blank pages. Carry photocopies and additional passport photos (for issuance of visas on arrival if needed).

- International certificate of vaccinations, with photocopies.

- United Nations Certificate, with photocopies.

- Travel itinerary and electronic ticket (issued by OCHA for national UNDAC members; OCHA staff and staff from other member and partner organisations will do their own travel arrangements).

- Hard copy of Travel Attestation from OCHA (in lieu of visa).

- Emergency contact numbers (OCHA Geneva, in-country and personal).

Note: Carry both printed and electronic copies of essential documents (in cloud space e.g., Dropbox, Google Drive, SharePoint, etc.).

- Arrive early at the airport to handle any departure issues

- Be prepared to explain UNDAC / emergency relief mission to airline staff

- Ensure visa requirements, if any, are understood and met

J.6.3 UNDAC-specific documentation

- UNDAC Handbook, full version (downloaded) or short aide-memoire version.

- Mission-specific country information, including latest situation reports, maps, contact information, etc.

- Hard or electronic copies of latest relevant reference material, e.g., Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), OCHA and other key guidelines.

- Contacts of UNDAC Mission Focal Point and relevant OCHA ERS contact details.

- Verify with OCHA ERS the availability of eSIMs.

J.6.4 Financial preparedness

- Carry cash (preferably small denominations) in local currency or in accepted currency (USD, EUR, or other major international currencies).

- Carry international credit cards (with emergency numbers in case of loss or theft).
- UNDAC Daily Subsistence Allowance (DSA)

  » DSA covers personal expenditures for UNDAC team members

  » Available via direct transfer to bank account or, in exceptional cases, through the local UNDP office in local currency. For the latter case, immediately notify OCHA ERS prior to deployment.

  » Expect potential delay in receiving DSA, particularly in disaster situations.

J.6.5 Medical preparedness

Ensure vaccinations are up-to-date, carry necessary international certification and health record, and carry medical supplies, as follows:

1. **Personal health records** (up-to-date, with any relevant certificates and prescriptions; may be needed by health providers if they fall ill on mission) including:

   » Blood type

   » Vaccinations record

   » Allergies, particularly to food or medication

   » Records of medical illnesses and medication being used

   » Recent dental check-up

   » Health insurance details

   » Name and contact details of your usual health care provider, e.g., personal doctor or medical specialist

   » Emergency Contact (family, friends, colleagues) at home

2. **Vaccinations** (recommended and, in some parts of the world, obligatory):

   » MMR (Measles-Mumps-Rubella: 2 doses are valid for life, normally given in childhood)

   » Yellow fever (obligatory for some countries, i.e., no entry without a valid certificate of vaccination)

   » Tetanus, in combination with diphtheria

   » Poliomyelitis (obligatory for some countries, i.e., no entry without a certificate of vaccination)

   » Hepatitis A

   » Hepatitis B

   » Typhoid

   » Rabies

   » Covid-19

   » Other vaccinations according to diseases endemic in the region being visited, e.g., Japanese encephalitis, meningitis ACWY

A number of websites give updated information on requirements and recommendations for each country, e.g., the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (www.cdc.gov/travel) and the World Health Organization (www.who.int). International SOS also has a website (https://www.internationalsos.com/medical-and-security-services) and application that provides relevant information.

3. **Medical kit with essential supplies to treat minor health illnesses or injuries**

Prepared in advance. Check medicine expiry dates periodically. Clearly mark contents, including medication name and proper usage. Use a sturdy waterproof container, with compartments for different needs.

- **Personal prescription medication** as needed. Please note that some countries require prescriptions from doctors or may limit the import of certain types of prescription medicine. Consult the logistics note and/or check with OCHA ERS.
- **Contingency medication:**

  » Fever, aches, pain, e.g., paracetamol, ibuprofen, aspirin

  » Sore throat, cough, e.g., lozenges

  » Runny nose and allergies, e.g., antihistamine

  » Abdominal upset, e.g., activated charcoal, antacids

  » Diarrhoea, e.g., Imodium

  » Oral Rehydration Salts (ORS)

  » Anti-malarial pills

  » Malaria is a serious risk on many missions and UNDAC members should establish

procedures for obtaining appropriate prophylaxis, and treatment, on short notice, e.g., through an advance prescription from a doctor. Since no malaria prophylaxis can be fully effective, it is important to take preventive measures, e.g., repellents, insecticide impregnated mosquito net, appropriate protective clothing. Further information and country guidance can be found on health websites as indicated above.

» Broad-spectrum antibiotics
» Water purification tablets

4. Skin care:

» Sun block/sun screen
» Lip salve
» Moisturizer
» Plasters in assorted shapes/sizes
» Hydrocortisone cream against skin allergies, insect bites, etc.
» Antiseptic cream for cuts, abrasions, etc.
» Antiseptic wipes/soap
» Insect repellent (at least 50% DEET or Icaridin)

5. Others:

» First-aid kit
» Bandages
» Alcohol wipes
» Medical gloves
» Disposable medical face masks that comply with preventive standards for safety and efficacy against the spread of viruses

Upon receipt of an UNDAC alert, members should take the following steps:

• Evaluate their state of health. If there are any doubts about existing illnesses, injuries or mental health status, members should not make themselves available for deployment until they have been resolved and should advise OCHA accordingly.

• Check that their individual medical kit is prepared and packed, including any prescription medication or supplies that may not be available in the deployment location.

• Pack spare health articles such as glasses, contact lenses, etc., and any associated requirements.

• Include individual health documentation in their hand luggage, including vaccination certificates and personal health data.

• Check the health threats and requirements in the deployment location, update their medical kit as appropriate and commence any prophylactic treatment necessary.

Chapter I. on Personal Health includes additional information related to staying healthy on mission.

J.6.6 Personal equipment & luggage

Overall…

• New members receive a standard mission kit, including:
• Pack according to location/culture, climate, and disaster type.
• Ensure readiness with a diverse range of clothing and equipment.
• Pack light and smart, be able to personally carry everything by themselves.
• Supplement kit based on personal preferences.
• Include food for the initial 72 hours and water for the first 24 hours. (A contingency plan for obtaining food and water on location is important.)
• Carry at least two changes of appropriate clothing (appropriate for the disaster type, location/culture, climate/elevation and expected duration of the mission; quick-dry clothing is recommended as it enables you to travel light and wash your own clothes).
• Include sturdy walking boots (2 pairs) and business attire for meetings with local officials.

In detail…

• Backpack or hold-all (as carry-on luggage)
• A personal tent for accommodation may be needed, but it should be clarified with OCHA before departure if this will be supplied by operational support partners or through other arrangements.
• Rain gear, jacket and trousers that fold up small, and appropriate all-weather footwear.

- Sleeping bag with silk or cotton liner
- Travel pillow/case
- Field mattress
- Waist pouch or money belt, for documents and money
- Hat and/or other headgear (for sun or warmth as appropriate)
- Lightweight stove and one litre bottle for fuel (empty for air transport)
- Mug, plate, cooking set and eating utensils.
- Water bottle with purification filter and large opening for better cleaning
- Dry food - for the first 72 hours in case of lack of alternatives. Check online 'food for trekking' as examples of high energy, lightweight and compact food rations
- Toiletries, including a towel, toothbrush/paste with a snap-on case to keep it clean, wet-wipes, deodorant, soap or all-in-one body wash – travel-sized and airport-security friendly (under 100ml); liquid soap in a separate plastic bag in case of leakage during travel
- Menstrual hygiene products, if applicable
- Anti-bacterial gel or liquid for hand cleaning
- Roll of toilet paper, crushed to fit in suitcase, or Kleenex tissues ('wetties')
- Earplugs and facemask, with spares
- Extra glasses and an ample supply of contact lenses, if required
- Two pairs of sunglasses
- Headlamp, torch/flashlight with spare bulb (or LED) and batteries
- Pocket knife/multi-tool, Swiss Army knife, Leatherman, etc. (not in hand luggage)
- Sewing kit (not in hand luggage)
- Ball of string
- Duct tape
- Plastic bags
- Matches and candles
- Pencil and notebook
- Laptop (See also **Section H.4.2.3** for advice on using personal laptops)
- Chargers for personal equipment, universal adapters for electrical appliances
- USB memory sticks

- Mobile phone with possibility for using locally bought SIM cards
- Smartphone with camera and web interface for messaging apps and other online services, preloaded with standard apps, e.g., UNDAC Handbook, INSARAG Guidelines, KoBo Toolbox, Signal messaging app, etc. (See also **Section H.4.1.1** for advice on use of personal phone and locally bought SIM-cards.)
- Extra battery pack/power bank for your phone

For (travel to) warmer climates, consider:

- Mosquito net
- Mosquito repellent
- Cool boots/shoes

For cold climates, consider:

- Woollen hat
- Windproof jacket
- Fleece jacket
- Woollen sweater
- Warm boots (water-resistant)
- Woollen socks, gloves or mittens, scarf or buff-type head and neckwear, woollen or thermal underwear

The following may also be helpful:

- Compass/GPS
- Alarm clock
- Pocket-size binoculars
- Identification tags ('dog tags') with name, nationality and blood type
- Books and magazines – e-readers are good options as they take less space
- Downloaded music and movies

Tips for packing & traveling:

- Your travel allowance is based on your ticket. If you have excess luggage, you can seek reimbursement by submitting your Expense Report to the OCHA ERS Administrative Focal Point upon return from the mission. In the case of excess baggage, please ensure you have a receipt clearly stating that you paid for an additional piece of

luggage. (Refer to **Chapter C**, Post-Mission, for administrative details).

- Pack essential items in hand luggage for immediate use upon arrival.
- Maximise use of hand luggage entitlements and respect the latest international air travel regulations regarding forbidden objects in hand luggage.
- Allow ample time for security checks at transit points.
- In cases where team members may have onward internal flights to reach the disaster site(s), consider reduced luggage allowances for onward internal flights in terms of packing and in choice of luggage. The likelihood of checked luggage being lost is significant, so ensure that all essentials are packed in the carry-on luggage.
- Organise luggage to facilitate reorganisation if needed for internal flights.

J.6.7 Cultural sensitivity and adaptation

Cultural, political, social, and religious considerations may influence how the team approaches its mission objectives and must be taken into consideration by individual team members to ensure adaptation to local customs and avoid offending or alienating local counterparts.

- Research cultural norms before deployment, e.g., travel advice from their home country's Foreign Office,
- Seek briefings on customs and traditions upon arrival (e.g. from local staff).
- Respect local dress codes, such as mandatory headscarves for women.
- Avoid attire like short sleeves and shorts for business interactions.
- Be mindful of prohibited food and alcohol consumption.
- Respect local meeting management, hierarchies, and customs for mission success.

J.6.8 En route

- Prioritise rest during travel to maintain readiness upon arrival.

- Inform OCHA ERS promptly in case of any unforeseen issues like missed flight connections.

J.6.9 Climates

UNDAC missions can occur in a variety of climates around the world. While many responses occur in urbanised temperate areas that generally do not require special safety or survival knowledge beyond that included in other parts of this Handbook, UNDAC members should be aware of special considerations when operating in specific environments that pose unique survival challenges. This section provides some advice and tips for operating in different climates, but is not meant to replace the individual pre-mission research that should be completed by each team member.

J.6.9.1 Cold climates

The following sections provide advice and tips for operating in cold climates but are also applicable if experiencing unusually low temperatures in any part of the world.

Clothing

It is often said that 'there is no such thing as bad weather, only unsuitable clothing'. All cold conditions, from extreme polar climates to some degrees above freezing, can be easily handled with appropriate clothing. The following advice applies.

- Several layers of clothing are better than one heavy layer. Dress in at least three layers: an inner layer closest to the body, a mid-layer for insulation, and an outside layer that prevents body heat from escaping.
- Under layers should trap air for insulation. Wool is best for undergarments and is warm even when wet. Avoid cotton as it absorbs moisture and rapidly causes heat-loss when wet.
- The outer layer should be of a breathable material. It should be windproof but not waterproof (which could trap vapour inside). Waterproof clothing should only be used in rain and when properly ventilated.
- Cover every part of the body, and especially the head which is the most vulnerable to heat loss.

- Wear a woollen hat at all times and cover it with a drawstring hood if needed.

- Add a scarf or buff, preferably of wool, around the neck to keep the throat and main arteries warm.

- Use mittens, not gloves. Mittens allow body-heat to circulate around the hand while gloves isolate the fingers which have very little blood circulation and easily get cold.

- A fur-type trim attached to the hood of a jacket prevents breath from freezing on the face and injuring the skin. If clothing has no drawstring, tie sleeves above the cuffs, use mittens with high cuffs and tuck trousers into boots to prevent heat escaping.

- Wear several pairs of socks, preferably wool, graded in size to fit over each other and not wrinkle. The foot should not be tight inside the boot as that will prevent circulation of warm air.

- For footwear, use insulated, waterproof, e.g., Gore-Tex or similar, or leather boots with rubber soles and a lining.

- Wear loose clothing and allow body-heat to circulate. If sweating, ventilate by opening zippers and fasteners, loosening the collar and cuffs or removing a layer. Moisture from sweat conducts cold and dry air insulates. Keep dry – keep warm!

Shelter

- Availability of Suitable Accommodation:

  » Confirm whether UNDAC operational support partners, like the International Humanitarian Partnership (IHP), provide tented accommodation suitable for the climate.

  » Determine if specialised staff will pitch and maintain tents, or if it will be your responsibility.

  » Be prepared to pitch and maintain tents if not supported by specialised staff.

- Use of Heating Source:

  » Assess if an external heating source is needed inside the tent.

  » Be aware of the fire risk associated with using a heating source inside a tent.

- Safety Measures:

  » Recognize that tent material is highly flammable.

  » Keep any heat sources away from the sides of the tent to prevent fire hazards.

  » If using a heat source with open flames, keep the tent door open in case of emergency.

- Snow and Rain Management:

  » Shake off as much water as possible from clothes and boots before entering the tent in snowy or rainy weather to keep the interior dry.

  » Brush off dry snow outside the tent before it thaws to prevent moisture build-up inside.

- Sleeping Bag Use:

  » Remove outer garments (except the woollen hat) when inside a sleeping bag.

  » Avoid wearing shoes inside the sleeping bag to retain body heat and create a comfortable temperature inside.

  » Understand that proper insulation inside a sleeping bag may eliminate the need to heat the tent in most cases.

Health concerns

Cold climates may carry a number of health risks which can be managed:

- Frostbite and hypothermia are the main hazards in cold climates. See Reference material J.8 for how to treat them should they occur.

- Efforts to exclude draughts in shelters may lead to lack of oxygen or carbon monoxide poisoning. Some ventilation is essential.

- Thinking may become sluggish. Keep alert and active but avoid fatigue and conserve energy for useful tasks. Sleep as much as possible. Unless you are so exhausted that you cannot regenerate heat, you will not freeze in your sleep.

- Exercise fingers and toes to improve circulation. Take precautions against frostbite. Mittens are better than gloves.

- Avoid spilling petrol on bare flesh as it will freeze at once and damage the skin.

- Don't put off defecation; this can cause constipation. Time it conveniently, before leaving the shelter, and dispose of waste appropriately.

- Core temperature (body and head) is vital. When the body freezes it extracts blood from the limbs to warm the core. The head is where the human body loses the most heat when exposed to low temperatures. Remember the old saying: if your toes freeze - cover your head!

- Eat and drink more than usual as the body uses more energy in cold climates. Food should be rich in fat and protein to restore calories that burn off more rapidly as the body works to keep warm.

J.6.9.2 High altitudes

It is possible that UNDAC missions may be conducted at altitudes over 2500m, i.e., a high-altitude region. In addition to the advice for cold climates given above, missions in this context are connected with the possible risk factor of altitude sickness. Even rescue dogs can be affected.

Considerations for Altitude:

- Understand Altitude Sickness:

  » Be aware that altitude sickness can develop in individuals acclimated to high altitudes due to factors such as ascent rate, starting altitude, or individual susceptibility.

  » Altitude sickness results from a lack of physiological adaptation to reduced atmospheric oxygen levels.

- Prevention Methods:

  » Recognize that gradual ascent of no more than 600m per day is considered the best prevention method for altitude sickness.

  » Acknowledge that immediate deployment in disaster response missions may not allow for gradual ascent, necessitating careful consideration.

  » Understand that chemoprophylaxis (medication) is not 100% effective against altitude sickness. Therefore, deployment to high altitudes needs to be carefully considered.

- Careful Deployment Consideration:

  » Evaluate the feasibility and potential risks associated with deployment to high-altitude areas.

  » Ensure thorough planning and risk assessment before undertaking missions in high-altitude regions.

Altitude sickness comprises several possible medical conditions that may develop at high altitudes, such as:

- **Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS) –** A throbbing frontal headache that is aggravated by exertion. It is the most common ailment, particularly in the morning. Other symptoms include malaise, lassitude, disinclination to work, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, shortness of breath on exertion and disturbed sleep.

- **High-Altitude Pulmonary Oedema (HAPE) –** Can result from untreated AMS. It is caused primarily by rapid ascent, cold and exertion. It is potentially life-threatening, beginning with a headache, then body ache, cough and breathlessness on exertion (which is progressive), non-anginal chest pain, lack of appetite, disturbed sleep, vomiting and giddiness. At times, a fever may be the presenting symptom.

- **High-Altitude Cerebral Oedema (HACE) –** The most dreaded but also the least common of high-altitude sicknesses. The onset is as with AMS and the alteration of consciousness is the most important feature. Vision loss or changes, dizziness and vomiting may progress to stupor and coma.

In case of any of the above-mentioned symptoms in a high-altitude setting, immediately seek medical attention and consider that descent might be necessary.

J.6.9.3 Tropical climates

This section deals with missions to tropical climates, characterised by high temperatures and high humidity. In these climates everything thrives, including disease and parasites. Except at high altitudes, equatorial and subtropical regions are subject to high temperatures, heavy rainfall and oppressive humidity. Violent storms may also occur.

Clothing

- Dress light but stay covered to avoid insect bites and stings. Clothes should be loose fitting, clean and dry; cotton or linen is usually best as

it offers good ventilation. Clothes impregnated with insect repellent are very effective against bites. Good footwear and protection for the legs is essential.

• Keep clothing and footwear off the ground when not wearing so that scorpions, snakes and spiders don't creep in. Shake out clothes and check shoes and boots before putting them on. Be wary when putting hands in pockets.

Shelter

• Shade, ventilation and protection from insects are important shelter considerations in tropical climates. Shelters and tents exposed to the sun should have a double-layered roof with airspace 20-30 cm between to aid cooling. Double layers of cloth will help keep out rain if angled. In choosing camp sites make sure you are above potential flooding. Sleep on a raised bed to allow air to circulate.

Health concerns

• Serious diseases may be contracted in tropical climates, through eating contaminated food, drinking impure water or from insect bites, and appropriate precautions must be taken. In malaria-risk countries, protection against insect bites, use of mosquito nets and malaria prophylaxis is essential.

• The WHO website on International Travel and Health (http://www.who.int/ith/en/) provides up-to-date information on health risks by country. See also **Chapter J** for health advice on mission and the section on medical preparedness above.

• In tropical climates, sanitation and personal hygiene become more important. Each UNDAC member should take special care of their own cleanliness and that of their surroundings. Bathe regularly and carry out frequent inspections of the body. Scratches and wounds should be attended to at an early stage to avoid them turning septic. Dusting with foot powder will help prevent fungal diseases, such as ringworm and athlete's foot.

J.6.9.4 Desert climate

Deserts are vast, arid areas with little vegetation and generally sparsely populated. The average rainfall is very low and long spells of drought are frequent. Desert climate is generally associated with extreme temperatures which can range between 45°C and nearly freezing. Due to its scarcity, water assumes significance in logistics planning, and storage and transportation are prerequisites for operations.

Clothing

• Choose light and loose-fitting garments.

• Ensure there is air space between clothing and the body for ventilation.

• Select clothing that helps reduce fluid loss, provides protection from sunburn and insect bites, and offers warmth at night.

• Cover legs to protect from sun exposure and potential hazards.

• Wear suitable footwear to prevent burning and blistering of the feet.

• Cover the head and neck, as these areas are particularly susceptible to sun exposure.

• Wear sunglasses to protect the eyes from harmful UV rays.

• Prepare for dust or sandstorms by having additional protection for the eyes and mouth.

• Consider using goggles or a face mask to shield the eyes and mouth from sand and dust particles.

Health concerns

Most desert illnesses are caused by excessive exposure to sun and heat. Following the advice above will help. Additional health considerations are as follows:

• Constipation and pain in passing urine are common and salt deficiency may lead to cramps.

• Heavy sweating, coupled with garments that rub against the skin, may block the sweat glands and result in an uncomfortable skin irritation known as prickly heat.

• Heat cramps, heat exhaustion, heat stroke and serious sunburn are all risks in the desert. A gradual increase in activity and daily exposure to the sun will build up a defence, provided that plenty of drinking water is available.

- Keep the moist areas of the body clean and dry to prevent infection, i.e., crevices of armpits, the groin and toes.
- Even the most trivial sore can become infected if not dealt with straight away. Pull out any thorns as soon as possible to avoid painful sores that may develop and prevent walking. Bandage all cuts with clean dressings and use what medical aids are available.

J.7 Comprehensive health and safety guidelines for environmental emergencies

Next to Checklist on Personal Preparedness and the Chapter on Personal Health, please find some guidance below on Personal Protection Equipment (PPE), CBRN hazards, and decontamination.

J.7.1 Personal Protection Equipment (PPE)

PPE is indispensable for ensuring safety in hazardous work environments. It includes hard hats, safety glasses, gloves, hearing protection, and respirators, all tailored to specific risks.

While donning a CBRN Suit is relatively easy, safely removing it without contaminating one's surroundings requires meticulous organisation and measurement by a CBRN Spec/Hazmat expert.

Additionally, it is advisable to have a flashlight installed in a helmet and apply sunscreen for prolonged outdoor activities. Ensure that local staff have equivalent protection.

Maintaining contact with OCHA ERS and/or the UN-DAC Team Leader and utilising tracking devices like Garmin InReach GPS or satellite radio. Do regular checks on emergency connections and ensure strategic parking of rescue vehicles for swift response.

J.7.2 CBRN Hazards

It is essential to refrain from entering CBRN events without a Hazmat/CBRN Specialist and adequate equipment for every team member. Protective equipment such as masks, suits, and gas protection is mandatory. Additionally, it is crucial to have a CBRN/Hazmat specialist present to measure before, during, and after entering dangerous zones. They can advise on protective levels, decontamination procedures, ensure safety, identify emergency exits, and provide first aid in case of contaminations alongside a paramedic.

Understanding the 4 CKs (C. Kaupp factors) in advance can make handling a CBRN incident easier:

- Proper identification of the substances/mixes involved.
- Safe estimation of the volume, mass, and mobility in different phases like air, groundwater, and soil.
- Reliable indication of human and environmental toxicity (e.g., IDLH from OSHA/NIOSH, US EPA).
- Avoid exacerbating the situation; always consider the potential outcomes of your actions or inactions.

Chemical hazards

The most common hazards in JEU operations dealing with environmental emergencies are likely to include the following substances:

- Release of asbestos,
- Petrochemicals (fuels such as diesel, petrol, heavy fuel oil),
- Technical industrial chemicals (TIC's) such as acids and alkalis, solvents, monomers,
- Agrochemicals such as fertilisers (ammonium nitrates), pesticides (organophosphorus compounds/nerve toxins),
- Gases from burst pipes and containers,
- Building material components such as debris, cements,
- Small and household chemicals like cleaning agents and disinfectants.

Without an equipped Hazmat/CBRN specialist, at least one 4-channel device must be carried in the event of an environmental disaster (e.g., MSA Altair with oxygen, CO, H2S and EX). These devices must be maintained and calibrated.

Without a suitable detecting device, access to debris areas, rubble and subterranean structures is not recommended without a JEU Hazmat/CBRN Specialist. Without knowledge of the specific chemicals involved, proper PPE selection is challenging. If the chemical is known, information on the correct PPE can be found in the respective safety data sheet (i.e., a document containing details pertaining to occupational safety and health regarding the utilisation of different substances and products). Consult the Hazmat/CBRN Spec if no information is available before entering a zone.

- **Remark regarding asbestos:** After an earthquake, significant amounts of asbestos can be released. Despite using a proper black/white system and protective equipment, there may still be intake that could potentially impact health. Hence, it is preferable for UN JEU members older than 50 years to be on such missions. Additionally, every member must be informed about the potential danger of "the silent death" caused by asbestos.
- **Remark regarding chemical warfare agent (CWA)), ammunition, explosives, or Toxic Industrial Materials (TICs):** If the situation indicates a risk of the presence of CWA (chemical warfare agent), ammunition, explosives, or TIC's (Toxic Industrial Materials) such as ammonia or organic phosphoric acid esters (pesticides), specialised assistance from skilled HAZMAT and/or EOD (Explosive Ordnance Disposal) personnel is necessary.

Biohazard

Biohazards proliferate rapidly under optimal conditions. An outbreak is to be monitored via the UN network, the national population health organisation or NGOs.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Kit recommended includes:

- Malaria prophylaxis and cholera prophylaxis/swallowable vaccine.
- Diarrhea medication and salt for fluid replacement.
- Gloves, FFP2/FFP3 masks, and hand sanitizer suitable for aircraft use.

- Protective suits (e.g., PP-Overall) for comprehensive bodily protection.
- Virkon S for chemical disinfection.

Nuclear and Radiation spills

Radiation is easily detectable. Therefore, entry into radiation-affected zones should not occur without measurement equipment, air protection, and a decontamination plan following a calculated exposure time. It is important to note that ordinary clothing does not shield against gamma radiation; it primarily protects against active dust particles.

When conducting decontamination procedures, ensure that water used for the process is collected and filtered. Additionally, avoid performing these procedures near your base. Instead, decontamination should be completed before entering safe spaces like vehicles. Dosimeters should remain worn by team members until the mission's conclusion, with daily reporting to the hazmat team and medical personnel.

It is advisable for at least one team member, ideally all, to wear an alarm dosimeter continuously until hazmat personnel can confirm the absence of any ionising radiation sources.

J.7.3 Personal hygiene/decontamination after debris operations

Shoes and clothing inevitably become contaminated after daily activities. Therefore, it is advisable to conduct a **preliminary decontamination by blowing and brushing** before entering vehicles or returning to accommodation. Where feasible, it is important to adhere to the social norms of the deployment country. When dealing with chemicals like asbestos, continue wearing a face-covering mask (FFP2/3) until the decontamination process is complete, especially if using pressurised air or brushes.

Emergency clothing should be stored separately from clean garments in boxes rather than bags to prevent leakage of contaminants. When removing chemicals from clothes or skin, start by using dry paper, such as toilet paper, before proceeding with

water. Notably, asbestos dust easily adheres to surfaces like hair, so wearing headgear and washing hair daily can help prevent contamination, (which is a particularly good alternative to military-style short haircuts).

Always follow the instructions provided by the Hazmat/CBRN Specialist for proper decontamination procedures.

J.8 Medical emergencies and first aid

This section contains very basic information on medical emergencies and first aid. Most field medical situations encountered are not immediately life-threatening. The few that are can generally be addressed by anyone with basic first aid skills and a rational approach that includes a calm and thoughtful manner. Panic may cause or contribute to a 'shock' response in the patient and cause others to act irrationally as well. When confronted by a medical emergency, the first step is to determine whether assistance can be safely and effectively provided. Do not move the patient unless essential – either for your safety or that of the patient.

The instructions below are not intended to be a replacement for first aid training. All UNDAC members are encouraged to obtain and maintain certification in first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). Take steps, known as 'standard precautions', to protect yourself before attempting to treat the patient. Use surgical gloves if available. It is also strongly advised to use a barrier device for CPR if giving mouth-to-mouth resuscitation.

The initial ABCs of medical emergencies/first aid

The basic steps in assessing the patient and initiating treatment are as follows:

- **Airways –** Open and maintain an adequate airway.
- **Breathing –** Check for breathing by listening at the mouth and watching the rise of the chest.
- **Circulation –** Check for circulation by feeling for a pulse at the wrist, ankle or throat.

Choking and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR)

The patient will be unable to speak or breathe effectively if their airway is obstructed. If they are coughing or gasping strongly for air, only monitor as coughing is a clear sign that they are getting air. If they are unable to speak, trying to clear their throat or coughing weakly, stay with them and carefully monitor their breathing. If the patient is unable to speak and puts their hands around their throat, act promptly as this is the universal sign for choking.

Clearing the airway is easiest if the patient is standing. Step behind them, make a fist with one hand and place it over the abdomen, thumb side towards the patient, between their navel and the bottom of their rib cage. With your other hand, grasp your wrist. With a sharp inward and upward thrust, compress the abdomen. Repeat until the airway is clear.

In a fully unconscious person, if professional help is not available, the airway can be cleared using a 'finger sweep' by reaching into the back of the throat to remove a visible object, being careful not to push the object in further. If unable to clear the blockage but the patient has not resumed breathing, perform CPR as follows:

- **Position the patient –** Lay the patient on their back. Kneel and position yourself at a right angle to the patient's body, with your knees perpendicular to the patient's neck and shoulders.
- **Head tilt/chin lift –** Position your palm on the person's forehead and gently push backward, placing the second and third fingers of your other hand along the side of their jaw, tilting the head and lifting the chin forward to open the airway.
- **Modified jaw thrust –** If you suspect a neck injury, a modified jaw thrust (without the head tilt) may be used. This is done by placing your hands on each side of the patient's face, your thumbs on the cheekbones (but not pushing) and pulling the jaw forward with your index fingers. Again, examine the mouth for foreign objects. If you find any, use the finger sweep to clear them.
- **Check for breathing again –** Put your ear directly over the patient's mouth to listen and feel for air being exhaled. Look at the patient's chest to see if it is rising or falling.
- **Mouth-to-mouth resuscitation –** Position yourself at a right angle to the patient's shoulder. Use

the head tilt/chin lift manoeuvre and pinch the patient's nose closed using your thumb and fore-finger. Open your mouth wide and place it tightly over the patient's mouth. Exhale into the patient just enough to see the chest rise. Take another breath and repeat. Check to see if the patient's chest is rising when you exhale. If the stomach bulges the air is going into the stomach and not the lungs. The airway may still be blocked. Check the airway again.

- **Check for a pulse –** After you have delivered two breaths into the patient, check for a pulse using two fingers just to the side of the throat. If the patient has a pulse, but is not breathing, continue mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, using the same technique of big breaths followed by chest compressions. Remove your mouth between breaths. Continue to check for signs of breathing and watch for chest movement. If the patient's breathing is weak, you may have to continue mouth-to-mouth, following the patient's breathing pattern, ensuring a breath at least every five seconds.

- **Alternate chest compressions (to restore blood flow) and breathing –** If you are unable to find a pulse in the patient, you must begin heart compressions to restore circulation. The compressions must be coordinated with the mouth-to-mouth resuscitation.

  » Kneel and position yourself at a right angle to the patient's chest.

  » Find the base of the breastbone at the centre of the chest where the ribs form a V. Position the heel of one hand on the chest immediately above the V. With the other hand, grasp the first hand from above, intertwining the fingers.

  » Shift your weight forward and upward so that your shoulders are over your hands; straighten your arms and lock your elbows. Shift your weight onto your hands to depress the patient's chest (2.5 to 5 cm in an adult).

  » Pump the patient's chest 30 times and then breathe for them twice. Count aloud as you do it, slightly faster than one compression per second (80-100 beats per minute). Thirty chest compressions followed by two rescue breaths is considered one cycle.

  » Be careful not to provide too many breaths or to breathe with too much force. Remove your mouth between breaths and take sideways breaths of air to inhale fresh oxygen yourself.

  » Check the pulse and breathing after four cycles.

  » Continue with alternating 30 chest compressions and 2x breathing,

  » Continue until help arrives, if possible.

- As soon as an **automated external defibrillator (AED)** is available, apply it and follow the prompts. Give one shock, then continue chest compressions for two more minutes before giving a second shock. If you are not trained to use an AED, an emergency medical operator may be able to give you instructions. If an AED is not available, continue alternating chest compressions and breathing.

- **Performing CPR on a child –** The procedure is essentially the same, but you use only one hand for chest compressions and pump the child's chest five times. You then breathe for the child once, more gently than you breathe for an adult.

- **Two-person CPR –** One person provides breathing assistance while the other pumps the heart. Pump the heart at a rate of 80 to 100 beats per minute. After each 30 compressions, a pause in pumping is allowed for 2 breaths to be given by the other person.

Shock

The most commonly encountered form of shock in the field is traumatic shock, induced by injury. If left untreated, it may result in death. The patient may be cold and clammy, have pale skin, a rapid weak pulse, rapid shallow breathing or a combination of these symptoms. Except in cases of head injury, have the patient lie flat on their back and elevate their legs. Cover them with a blanket or other thermal cover and monitor their ABCs, i.e. Airway, Breathing, Circulation/Compression (see https://www.ahajournals.org/doi/10.1161/CIRCULATIONAHA.110.970889). Always monitor for signs of shock and routinely treat it in cases of severe injury. In this case, cover them with a blanket or other thermal cover and monitor their ABCs.

Bleeding

There are several ways to control bleeding. These should be attempted, in the following order:

- Using sterile gauze, apply pressure directly over the wound. When the bleeding stops, tape or otherwise secure the gauze in place. Immediately removing the gauze may cause the bleeding to restart.
- If you have knowledge of the arterial pressure points, apply pressure using one or both thumbs over the artery. Once this has controlled the bleeding, apply pressure bandages to the wound site.
- If the wound is bleeding heavily, e.g., a gunshot-wound, push several sterile gauzes or pieces of bandage inside the wound using a finger. Remember the number of gauzes put inside the wound so the same number can be safely removed during later treatment and not cause infection.
- If unable to control the bleeding in any other way and professional help is many hours away, apply a tourniquet to the affected extremity. There is a high risk of losing the extremity, particularly if professional attention is not immediately available. This is a last resort.
- Bleeding from the torso does not lend itself to control by any method other than direct pressure to the wound. Elevation may help and if ice is available in sufficient quantity, it will also help.
- Bleeding from the head can usually be controlled by direct pressure, elevation, icing, or a combination of all three. Do not apply a tourniquet.

Burns

Burns may be of three basic types: chemical, electrical, and thermal. The treatment for each is different, but in every case treatment for traumatic shock should be part of the approach.

Chemical burns

These may arise from inadvertent spills when handling chemicals, coming into contact with improperly disposed of chemicals and chemical waste, or from chemical warfare agents. To decrease risk of exposure, responders should have access to information on industrial facilities in the area, be observant of their surroundings (containers, tanks, fuel stations, storage) and associated risks, know the location of nearby hospitals and treatment facilities, have access to personal protective equipment and not hesitate to request advice from local authorities or health service providers.

Do not approach damaged facilities or touch unknown chemicals without the appropriate expertise and personal protective equipment (gloves, suits, boots, mask, etc.). Always request advice from fire or health services on different types of protective equipment and how to use it.

If exposed to chemicals, take the following steps:

- Remove contaminated clothing and isolate it by placing it in a closable container, e.g., a large plastic bag. Avoid pulling clothing over your head – cut the clothes off if necessary.
- Wash yourself with soap (preferably liquid soap) and tepid water, or with water alone. Rinse skin with copious amounts of water for at least 20 minutes.
- Rinse eyes with water.
- Seek medical attention if needed, i.e., in case of large burns, poisoning symptoms (being sick, drowsiness, headaches, fever, seizures) or contact with an unknown chemical.
- In case of ingestion, do not induce vomiting. Call a poison centre and/or seek medical assistance.

If a chemical release is suspected, take the following steps:

- If inside a building or a closed space, find clean air quickly by exiting the building without passing through the contaminated area or by breaking a window.
- If outdoors, avoid any obvious plume or vapour cloud. Cover your mouth and nose and, if possible, any exposed skin, i.e., roll down sleeves, button up coat/jacket. Move away from the source the fastest way possible, preferably by moving crosswind or upwind. Contact the authorities and your team immediately to report the incident and receive additional instructions.

Nuclear and radiological emergencies range from power plant accidents to small incidents with

radiological materials. For these, the operators of these facilities, together with local and national authorities, have the primary responsibility for emergency response. Possible international assistance in the case of such incidents is coordinated through the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Electrical burns

These usually stem from electrical shock. Before approaching the patient, be certain that no further risk of injury is present. If the patient is still in contact with the electrical source and you know it is low voltage, you may move the wire or the patient to a safe position with a dry pole or rope. If the wire is of unknown or high voltage, seek professional help to shut off the power or move the wire. Attempting to move wires yourself is dangerous and should not be done.

- As soon as it is safe to do so, check the patient's ABCs and continue to monitor them. Patients with electrical burns often suffer cardiac or respiratory arrest.
- If there are evident burns, cover them loosely with sterile dressings.
- Seek professional help in treating the burns. Do not apply burn creams or ointments.

Thermal burns

These range from mild sunburn to the severe burns associated with open flames, heated metal and scalding water. Thermal burns are categorised by degree: first, second and third-degree burn, and appropriate treatment is keyed to the severity of the burn.

Degree of burn	First degree burns (superficial burns)	Second degree burn (partial thickness burns)	Third degree burns
Symptoms	• Minor swelling • Redness of the affected area.	• Definite redness of the affected area • Swelling • Blistering	• Dense white, waxy or even charred appearance. • Areas of deeper burning, surrounded by areas that display first and second degree burn characteristics.
Treatment	• Apply cool running water or wet compresses as soon as possible, continuing until the pain subsides. • Leave the burned area exposed and do not apply ointments or salves. • If pain recurs, reapply cool water.	• Apply sterile water for 15-30 minutes and cover with a dry, sterile bandage. • Treat the patient for traumatic shock.	• Check the ABCs and continue to monitor them. • Treat for traumatic shock and cover the burned area with a sterile, non-adhesive dressing. • Elevate the burned area.
Professional help?	n/a	Seek professional help.	Seek professional help immediately.

Fractures (broken bones)

Usually, the patient will know if they have broken a bone. The symptoms are bruising around the fracture site, localised pain, deformity and swelling. In treating a fracture, the objective is immobilisation of the ends of the broken bone. Immobilise any fracture before moving the patient. This is especially important in the case of known or suspected spinal injury. When splinting a fracture, immobilise the adjacent joints as well as the fracture site. After splinting is completed and on a continuing basis until professionally treated, check circulation in the affected extremities. In the case of an open fracture (when the bone breaks the surface of the skin), the bleeding will most likely need to be controlled using pressure points instead of applying direct pressure. Treat for shock routinely in fractures of major bones and open fractures, while continuing to monitor for the onset of traumatic shock symptoms. Open (compound) fractures require immediate medical attention.

Frostbite

Frostbitten tissue will feel cold to the touch and be either numb or painful to the patient. An early sign will be whitening of the skin which may be treated by holding a warm part of the body on the cold part, e.g., cold cheekbones may be warmed up with the palm of the hand. In extreme cases, the tissue will turn white and harden. To treat, gently warm the affected areas in a heated space, using lukewarm water where it is possible to immerse the affected area. Give the patient warm fluids and be alert to signs of shock. Re-warming the tissue too rapidly will cause circulatory problems and possibly worsen the tissue damage. Prevent injured fingers, toes, etc., from rubbing against each other by placing gauze pads between them. Seek medical attention for all but mild cases, as there is risk of septicaemia and gangrene in more severe cases.

Hypothermia

The patient will shiver in the early stages of hypothermia, but once the body core temperature goes below about 32°C (90°F), shivering may stop. The patient will be uncoordinated and may demonstrate mental confusion, slurred speech and irrational behaviour. Merely bringing the patient into a warm space will not reverse severe cases. Remove any wet or constricting clothing, place the patient in a pre-warmed bed or sleeping bag and add water bottles of warm (not hot) water around the torso. If warm water is not available, use one or more warm, dry people in the sleeping bag or bed together with the patient to provide heat. If the patient is sufficiently conscious to protect their airway, give them warm (38-45°C/100-115°F) fluids such as lemonade. This provides readily absorbed fuel (sugar) and a means to provide heat to the body core.

A phenomenon known as 'After Drop' can occur because of aggressive rewarming. Redistribution of blood to the whole body can lead to a further drop in core temperature, with a full range of medical complications arising as a consequence. This can be prevented by moderated warming techniques. If the casualty has vital signs, is insulated and immobile, there is no rush to actively warm them.

If a patient has contracted hypothermia in a horizontal position, e.g., having been immersed in water or being caught by an avalanche, be extremely careful with rising him/her to a vertical position. Standing up quickly can cause a sudden drop in blood pressure as the vascular system cannot constrict fast enough in the lower limbs and abdomen to squeeze oxygenated blood up to the brain. This drop in blood pressure can reduce blood supply to both the brain and heart to the point of unconsciousness or cardiac arrest.

Heat exhaustion

The patient usually sweats profusely, feels clammy to the touch, may complain of a headache or nausea and may be disoriented and feel weak. If you suspect heat exhaustion but the patient is not sweating, see heat stroke (below). Get the patient out of the direct sun and cool them down by applying cold compresses and fanning. If they are conscious, give oral rehydration solution and water, or plain water. If recovery is not fairly immediate upon treatment, seek medical attention.

Heat stroke

The patient will have hot, dry skin and a temperature well above normal. This situation is life-threatening

and must be treated immediately and aggressively. In more advanced cases, the patient will lose consciousness and may convulse. Get the patient out of the sun and into a cool space.

Remove their clothing and immerse them in cold (not icy) water until the onset of shivering. Seek medical attention. You must immediately lower the body temperature or the patient may die.

J.9 Protection mainstreaming activities by sector

The following list of actions provides guidance for putting protection principles into practice in the context of disaster preparedness and response. It is not strictly a checklist for UNDAC members, but provides some overall considerations at cluster/ sector level with a view to ensuring people's access to impartial assistance, according to need and without discrimination. The list could be useful if the Protection Cluster is not activated and no Focal Point is in-country. The non-exhaustive list of actions have been written (based on Protection Cluster guidance) to help national and international protection workers to:

- Improve their understanding of the rights and vulnerabilities of different groups affected by disasters.
- Identify and respond to common protection threats.
- Support protection-sensitive approaches to post-disaster recovery and rehabilitation.

Small changes in the management and delivery of humanitarian assistance can sharply reduce protection risks and violations; and enhance the rights of affected people. In addition, inclusiveness and mainstreaming protection improves the overall effectiveness and efficiency of all sectors, because it ensures that humanitarian assistance reaches every disaster-affected person in need.

AREA/SECTOR	ACTIVITIES
Evacuations	• Ensure that the means of transport used for evacuations are accessible to all persons in need (e.g., they should also allow for the onboarding of wheelchairs). Persons in need often have to be accompanied by caregivers, these people have to also be accounted for in the planning. • Ensure evacuation plans address the needs of people who are hard to reach (who are housebound, in hospitals, orphanages or prisons, older or with disabilities). Assist them to reach evacuation sites, pack their belongings, and board transport. Map their location for emergency response teams. Make sure the assistive devices of persons with disabilities or older people (hearing aids, crutches, glasses, wheelchairs, etc.) are not forgotten or damaged during the evacuation. • Establish protocols to prevent family separation during evacuations (register each family member, provide name tags for babies, ensure families travel together, etc.). • Enable people to make informed choices about their evacuation. Provide information on the services available at emergency shelter sites and measures in place to protect land and property left behind, etc. • Organise information campaigns. Target (1) groups that are difficult to reach, using (2) a variety of media, in (3) all relevant local languages. Make door-to-door calls, and employ media used by those with impaired hearing and sight. Target institutions or semi-autonomous living spaces. Involve organisations of persons with disabilities, associations of older persons, etc. for advice and support. • Make clear that forced evacuations must be justified, based on law, and implemented without discrimination.

AREA/SECTOR	ACTIVITIES
	• During evacuations, prioritise (1) sites where people face the greatest physical risk; and (2) inside those sites, people who require assistance (such as older and persons with disabilities, women, unaccompanied children, female or child-headed households, minorities, etc.). Do not forget that people living in institutions also require evacuations.
Evacuations	• Establish protocols to avoid and manage conflicts over property and theft. Encourage property owners to list their assets before evacuation or on arrival at an emergency shelter. • Discourage attempts to return to areas of high risk by establishing cordons, warning signs, patrols, etc. • Once it is safe to return to affected areas, support 'go and see' visits and disseminate regular information on safety, available options, livelihoods assistance programmes, etc.
Contingency planning and disaster preparedness	• Assess potential emergency shelter sites for accessibility, physical and social risk, employing multi-sectoral teams. Pick sites on grounds of accessibility, safety, proximity to the disaster site and access to livelihoods. • Ensure that legislation adequately covers all the issues that may arise after a natural-hazard related disaster. • Safeguard birth registration data and housing, land and property records (e.g., integrate local data in a central database, update and back up records).
CCCM	• Prioritise allocation of shelters to families with vulnerable members. • Make sure that older persons, persons with disabilities, single women, and unaccompanied children and youth: (1) are housed in appropriate shelter, close to toilets, bathing facilities and aid distribution points; (2) are placed with appropriate groups (relatives, other vulnerable persons, etc.) and, at the minimum, are accommodated separately from unrelated males; (3) receive priority access to food and NFIs, which have to be culturally appropriate. • Provide shelters that can accommodate families of different sizes. Allocate one family per shelter. Provide separate accommodation for pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers. • Adapt facilities to reflect the needs of older and disabled persons (handrails, wheelchair access). • Arrange, in cooperation with WHO and the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement, for the provision of mental health and psychosocial services for those who need it. • Prioritise older people, persons with disabilities or injured people for relocation to more suitable locations. • Make sanitary facilities safer, as well as food and water collection points and child-friendly spaces, by means of floodlighting and patrols. • Provide child-friendly spaces, youth clubs, and schools. • Preserve the humanitarian character of camps and evacuation sites. Camps and sites set up by military forces or armed groups must be transferred to civilian management as soon as possible; the role of police and security forces should be limited to provision of security. • Where required and appropriate, place national or international police in shelter sites. • Monitor security, and promote community arrangements for monitoring, prevention and responding to security risks. Make sure that plans for the closure of camps or evacuation sites include shelter and protection strategies that promote durable solutions.

AREA/SECTOR	ACTIVITIES
Early Recovery	• Develop vocational training and micro-credit programmes that target female-headed households and persons with disabilities; facilitate their self-sufficiency and employment. • Ensure that livelihood and support programmes (cash- and food-for-work, etc.) include youth, women, persons with disabilities and older persons and address their constraints (by providing part-time, flexible and home-based work, etc.). • Address the causes of child labour (such as poverty and unemployment), for example by offering return-to-school incentives, reducing family indebtedness, or promoting employment of adult family members, providing building skills, etc.
Education	• To avoid child labour and promote schooling, link education strategies to livelihood initiatives. • Ensure children can attend schools, at evacuation sites, at return, and if relocated.
Food Security and Nutrition	• Ensure that distribution mechanisms: (1) respect local customs; (2) provide food in quantities that can be carried easily; and (3) facilitate direct delivery to people with limited mobility (such as older persons and persons with disabilities). • Introduce strategies that facilitate food distribution to individuals who lack documents and to IDPs living in urban areas or with host families, etc. • Ensure that food meets the nutritional needs of children, pregnant and lactating women, older persons, and people with special nutritional needs. For example, food supplies should be easy to open, chew and digest.
Health and Psychosocial support	• Provide health services and medicines that address disaster-related injuries and rehabilitation; provide care in regard to obstetrics, chronic diseases, midwifery, and paediatrics. • Ensure that individuals who have limited mobility (older persons, persons with disabilities, women restricted for cultural reasons, etc.), as well as IDPs who lack documentation or who live in urban areas or with host families, have access to health services (home visits, mobile clinics, transport services etc.). • In cooperation with MHPSS providers, develop programmes that address the psychosocial needs of children, youth, widows, older persons, and persons with disabilities. (Consider counselling services and 'hotlines'; support and self-help groups; community-based networks: religious or customary events and rituals; community and sports activities.) • Ensure that relief workers and others involved in the provision of relief activities are allowed to take breaks, and are supported to take care of their own mental health.
Protection	**Personal documentation** • Establish programmes to assist individuals to obtain, recover or replace personal documents at low or no cost. • Establish safeguards, and monitor, to ensure that individuals who have lost personal documents are not detained arbitrarily or prevented from accessing humanitarian aid or housing programmes. • Advocate for flexible evidence requirements on proof of identity when documents are lost, and interim solutions (for example, community-based approaches). • Ensure that women and unaccompanied or orphaned children are issued personal documents in their names.

AREA/SECTOR	ACTIVITIES

Monitoring

- Establish an inter-agency mechanism to coordinate monitoring and analyse the full range of protection risks to vulnerable groups. Ensure the mechanism is safe, confidential and respects privacy, and it is shared (as appropriate) across sectors.
- Raise awareness in the community about protection risks and, where it can be done safely; establish community-based mechanisms to support monitoring, prevention and response.
- Develop referral mechanisms (support services and information management systems) to facilitate case management.

Family separation and reunification

- Establish protocols to prevent family separation during evacuation and secondary population movements. Tag babies; ensure that families travel together, do not separate persons with disabilities or older people from their caregivers, etc.
- Establish procedures for identifying and registering separated children; set up family-tracing and reunification programmes. Adopt a coordinated approach (use shared registration forms, house the identification database in one agency).
- Include older persons, persons with disabilities and unaccompanied minors in family tracing and reunification programmes.

Rule of Law

- Support local authorities to restore law and order swiftly and prevent criminality. For example, conduct patrols; facilitate the repair or relocation of courts, police stations and correctional facilities; replace justice sector staff. If necessary, temporarily assign staff from unaffected locations.
- Train newly appointed judicial staff in disaster-related issues (guardianship appointments, housing, land and property issues, etc.).
- Decentralise legal services (via mobile legal aid clinics, or informal and customary leaders) in order to provide legal information and assist people to access humanitarian aid or compensation programmes.
- Provide technical assistance to develop and monitor specifically established legal or administrative fora.
- Disseminate information on legal issues (replacement of personal documents, land law policy, inheritance and guardianship laws, etc.).
- Provide technical assistance to guide the drafting of emergency laws and decrees that may be required.
- Disseminate widely emergency laws and decrees that regulate freedom of movement (no-go zones, curfews, etc.), in formats and languages that make them accessible and understandable to all, particularly those in emergency shelters.
- Advocate for minimum standards in detention facilities, particularly timely case processing and the separation of children from adult male detainees. Persons with disabilities should also be separated from other detainees. Monitor their situation frequently.

AREA/SECTOR	ACTIVITIES
Shelter/NFI	• Ensure vulnerable groups: (1) receive separate and appropriate shelter; (2) are helped with shelter construction; (3) receive shelter that is lockable and opaque. • Include sanitary supplies for women and portable light sources in NFI packages. • Ensure that distribution mechanisms: (1) respect local customs; (2) supply materials in easily carried packages; (3) facilitate access by people with limited mobility (by direct delivery, separate distribution points, mobile services); and (4) promote dignity (for example, prevent excessive queuing and overcrowding). • Ensure that shelter programmes are accessible to and include individuals who lack documents and IDPs living in urban areas or with host families, etc. • When distributing humanitarian aid, include mental health institutions, hospitals, orphanages, etc. • Make sure information strategies on the relief process target: (1) groups that are difficult to reach, using (2) a variety of media, in (3) all relevant local languages. Make door-to-door calls and employ media used by those with impaired hearing and sight.
WASH	• Bathing, toilet and water collection facilities should be: (1) separated by gender; (2) lockable; (3) well-lit; (4) close to vulnerable groups' shelters; and (5) include handrails or other measures to facilitate access by older and persons with disabilities.

J.10 Respiratory infections and other airborne transmitted pathogens

This chapter provides UNDAC members knowledge and references on various infectious biological hazards and how they may impact the UNDAC missions. To cite only some examples: Influenza, Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (SARS-CoV), Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (MERS)-CoV, SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19), Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV), Avian Influenza Virus, other respiratory viruses with epidemic or pandemic potential[1].

The insights provided here add to **Chapter I.2.2** Epidemics and Pandemics and guidance and contingency plans found in the UNDAC Toolbox.

J.10.1 Definition & metrics[2]

"Airborne transmission of infectious agents refers to the transmission of disease caused by dissemination of very small droplets that remain infectious when suspended in air over long distance and time" (WHO, 2020a). "Viruses, bacteria and fungi can be disease-causing pathogens and spread from one infected person to another through activities such as coughing, talking, and sneezing" (WHO, 2014a).

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1   This list is non exhaustive

2   .We recognize differences between pathogens transmitted through close contact (<1 m) and those that can travel longer distances. In our current analysis, we are also considering the potential spread of an unknown pathogen (referred to as Disease X) over longer distances, and we are preparing for the worst-case scenario by examining possible measures for prevention and control.

We understand that the actions needed will have a significant impact on the overall organization, but we believe a proactive and thorough approach is necessary to minimize potential hazard. Our primary concern is the risk of a potential health emergency due to widespread transmission, and the measures we are proposing are provisional, lasting 2-3 weeks, until more information is collected.

Therefore, we strongly recommend taking precautions and implementing all measures as if the pathogen could spread at distances >1 m. This includes considering fomite transmission (involving contact with a contaminated object or surface) and recognizing that animals can transmit some pathogens (for example, birds in the case of Avian Influenza, dromedary for MERS). Being cautious and prepared for the worst-case scenario is crucial in minimizing the impact of a potential health emergency.

Transmission can occur through direct contact with an infected person (through particles released into the air both in close physical proximity and over longer distances), indirect contact with contaminated objects, direct or indirect contact with infected animals (Leung, N. H. L., 2021).

Primary hazard:

Infectious disease linked to the pathogen that is causing the outbreak (Rogers, D. P. et al., 2020).

Metrics[3]:

- **Infection-specific indicators:**

  » **Incubation period:** time between infection and the symptoms onset (Yan, P., 2008). Indications on this time frame to determine the time monitoring window of healthy individuals movements, for public health intervention plans (e.g., social distancing, quarantine period) (Lessler, J. et al., 2009; Nishiura, H., 2009), and for treatments (Zhao, S. et al., 2021).

  » **Latent period:** or pre-infectious period, time window between infection and infectiousness when infected individuals cannot transmit the disease (Milwid, R. et al., 2016). Latent period is usually equal or less than incubation period, and informs on disease transmission (Zhao, S. et al., 2021).

  » **Infectious period:** time interval in which the transmission between infected and susceptible individuals can occur; it is challenging to be estimated correctly since this period could overlap with the incubation period (Milwid, R. et al., 2016). During overlapping, infected people, still in the asymptomatic phase, could infect other individuals (Milwid, R. et al., 2016).

  » **Asymptomatic infection ratio:** number of asymptomatic infections of a determined disease among all the infections (Xiang, Y. et al., 2021). Asymptomatic individuals show no or mild symptoms and the ratio allows to assess transmission potential (Xiang, Y. et al., 2021).

» **Infection fatality ratio (IFR):** number of deaths among all identified cases of a particular disease. It describes the risk of death per infection and offers an understanding of the lethality of the disease among infected population (Luo, G. et al., 2021).

» **Basic reproduction number (R0):** number of new infections, in a susceptible population, generated by a single infected individual, during the entire infectious period (Heffernan, J. M. et al., 2005). It informs on the infection contagiousness and transmission. A R0 lower than 1 indicates that each infected individual produces less than one secondary infection, whereas a R0 higher than 1 means that the pathogen is able to invade the susceptible population, and is likely to continue spreading (Heffernan, J. M. et al., 2005).

» **Effective reproduction number (Rt): it** is similar to R0, but includes the changes in population's susceptibility - vaccinations, previous infections, public health interventions (e.g. social distancing, quarantine) - (Gostic, K. M. et al., 2020). While R0 represents the basal transmission, Rt indicates the actual transmission rate at a specific time (Lim, J. S. et al., 2020; CDC, 2023a).

- **General disease impact indicators:**

» **Morbidity:** state of being symptomatic or unhealthy; morbidity indicators are designed to measure the occurrence of diseases, injuries, and disabilities in populations (PAHO/WHO, 2018). Morbidity is usually represented using incidence or prevalence rates (Hernandez, J. B. R. and Kim, P. Y., 2023). Incidence analyses the occurrence of new events, while prevalence helps in planning and organizing existing resources as well as asking for additional support (PAHO/WHO, 2018):

  - **Incidence rate:** number of new cases of a disease divided by the population at risk for the disease during a specific period (PAHO/WHO, 2018). This helps in understanding how quickly a disease is spreading (van Seventer, J. M. and Hochberg, N. S., 2017).

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3   These metrics are important for public health officials to track diseases spreading and to assess their impact to select the correct strategies for infection control and prevention. Differences in terms of morbidity and mortality rates call for actions and strategies depending on infection with high spreading but low mortality or low spreading and high mortality.

- **Prevalence rate:** number of existing cases of a disease divided by the total population at a specific time. A single observation of each individual is performed and the information regarding individual status is obtained (PAHO/WHO, 2018). I it represents the current overall population outcome (Tenny, S. and Hoffman, M. R., 2023).

» **Mortality:** the oldest and most common source of data regarding the population health status (PAHO/WHO, 2018). Mortality rate measures deaths frequency in a defined-population and -period of time (Choi, J. et al., 2019). WHO defines the estimated general mortality rate as the "estimated total number of deaths in a population of a given sex and/or age, divided by the total number of this population, expressed per 100,000 population, for a given year, in a given country, territory, or geographic area" (WHO a). Mortality data are a fundamental source of demographic, geographic, and cause-of-death information, and used to quantify and monitor health problems (PAHO/WHO, 2018). Due to differences in life expectancies worldwide, a standardisation of mortality rate according to the age is required for a better comparison (PAHO/WHO, 2018).

» **Hospitalization rate:** number of people requiring hospitalization due to a specific disease, it informs on healthcare burden (Hamid, H. et al., 2020).

» **Attack rate:** in a specific time, portion of at risk population who becomes. Similarly, the secondary attack rate is the proportion of a susceptible population that contract the infection in a defined group (e.g., close contacts). It indicates how social interactions relate to transmission risk (Wu, J.T. et al., 2011; Liu, Y. et al., 2020).

J.10.2 Impact on population[4]

- **People infected might develop:**

» Short- or long-term respiratory conditions and/or other health implications (CDC, 2022).

» Mental health conditions (distress, anxiety, and depression) due to the fear of infection, uncertainty, isolation, and social-related implications (stigmatization and discrimination) (WHO b; UNSDG, 2020).

» Exposure to infectious disease outbreaks can lead to the development of post-traumatic stress symptoms (PTSS) (Qiu, D. et al., 2021).

- Healthcare and frontline workers might experience stress and burnout (Luo, Y. et al., 2020; Babamiri, M. et al., 2022; Qiu, D. et al., 2021), together with being highly exposed to the infection source (Madhav, N. et al., 2017).

- Excess of mortality linked to the pathogen or to the community crisis (Rogers, D. P. et al., 2020; Eurostat, 2020).

- **Services disruption impact:**

» Services overwhelming can cause a shortage of medical resources, hospital beds, medical supplies, and healthcare staff (Rogers, D. P. et al., 2020).

» Food and service insecurity, challenges in the import/export of materials, food, and goods (UNDRR/ECLAC, 2021).

» Restructuring of social priorities (UNDRR/ECLAC, 2021).

» Increased number of poverty and malnutrition (UNDRR/ECLAC, 2021).

» Productivity losses (Rogers, D. P. et al., 2020).

» Unemployment of "day labourers" and people with short contracts (Lee, A. and Cho, J., 2016).

» Tourism sector income decrease with possible significant economic loss and negative impacts (UNDRR/ECLAC, 2021).

» Lack of education opportunities (Rogers, D. P. et al., 2020).

» Political and financial instability and international tensions (UNDRR/ECLAC, 2021).

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4   The complex connections between environmental, human, political, and economic systems lead to systemic risk and cascade impacts. Supply networks and systems for information, finances, food, health, energy, and the environment are generally intricate, interconnected, and prone to vulnerability. The socio-economic impact can be worst in countries with underlying factors such as poverty, inequality (gender, ethnicity, and social status) and informality (UNDRR/ECLAC, 2021).

» Increase in crime, social chaos, civil disobedience and linked infection transmission rise (Rogers, D. P. et al., 2020).

J.10.3 Potential aggravating factors[5]

- **Host-related factors (i.e., characteristics of the population affected by the pathogen):**

  » Vulnerable population:

    - Infants, children, and elderly people are generally at higher risk for severe respiratory illness and complications (WHO, 2014a).

    - Chronic conditions such as lung and heart disease, diabetes, cancer, weakened immune systems, concurrent infections, malnutrition and pregnancy can play a role in the illness outcome (WHO, 2014a; UNDRR, 2021; CDC, 2023b).

  » Smoking and vaping can weaken the lungs and the immune system, making individuals more vulnerable to respiratory infections (WHO, 2014a; Stanford Medicine, 2024).

  » Host ability to transmit the disease (WHO, 2014a): it depends on biological (e.g. whether the host can transmit the pathogen while being asymptomatic) and behavioural (e.g. personal hygiene practices) (Aiello, A. E. and Larson, E. L., 2002).

- **Pathogen related factors:**

  » Pathogen characteristics, like transmission mode and virulence factors (e.g. presence of toxin genes) (WHO, 2014a).

  » Inoculum size; number of infectious agents present at the start of an infection (WHO, 2014a).

  » Ability to infect animals and other species that can act as vectors (Short, K. R. et al., 2015).

- **Environmental factors:**

  » Exposure to air pollution, temperature, and humidity (WHO, 2014a).

» Poor room ventilation and indoor air quality (WHO, 2014a).

- **Factors related to healthcare readiness and resources:**

  » Lack of hospital capacity, diagnostics, treatment, personal protective equipment (PPE) availability, stocks - masks, gloves, disinfectants - and appropriate laboratory facilities (ECDC, 2023; Mohammadpour, M. et al., 2021). Ability to implement community-related interventions, management, and socio-economic factors play a role in readiness and responsiveness (Mohammadpour, M. et al., 2021).

  » Availability of medical care, infection prevention and control (IPC), healthcare, and isolation facilities (WHO, 2014a).

  » Absence of vaccines or low vaccination rates (WHO, 2014a).

  » Low level of insurance or government health expenditure (UNDRR/ECLAC, 2021).

  » Lack of health workers or trained personal (doctors, nurses). Their infection can exacerbate the issue of availability of human resources (UNDRR/ECLAC, 2021).

  » Lack of essential goods - drinking water food, shelters, clothes -, medications, and detergents (UNDRR/ECLAC, 2021).

- **Presence of socio-political vulnerabilities:**

  » Population characterised by poverty, inequality (disability, gender, ethnicity, race, religion, and social status), informality, and lack of political representation (UNDRR/ECLAC, 2021).

  » High mental stress level (UNDRR/ECLAC, 2021).

  » Political and financial instability and disorders (UNDRR/ECLAC, 2021).

J.10.4 Typical assistance needs[6]

When a community faces a respiratory infection outbreak, a rapid, coordinated, and adaptable

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5   The list of potential aggravating factors and their description is not exhaustive.

6   We recommend referring to the International Health Regulations (IHR – WHO, 2005), which provides a legal framework for countries' rights and obligations in handling public health events and emergencies with cross-border potential.

response is crucial for an effective management. Consultants should maintain a strong relationship with counterparts involved and be sensitive to the norms of the community (CDC, 2018a). All countries must strike a fine balance between protecting health, minimizing economic and social disruption, and respecting human rights (WHO c).

Cost-effective strategies to increase pandemic preparedness, especially in resource-constrained settings, aim to strengthen core public health infrastructures. This includes water and sanitation systems and increase situational awareness, rapidly extinguishing sparks that could lead to pandemics (Madhav, N. et al., 2017).

- **Public Health interventions:**

  - » Masks, hygiene items, and concise information sheets distribution understanding (UNICEF, 2020).

  - » Diagnostic test to identify and isolate cases promptly (ECDC, 2020).

  - » Systems to trace and quarantine contacts of infected individuals in appropriate facilities and protocols editing and update (ECDC, 2020).

  - » Surveillance and monitoring to track infection spread and severity (ECDC, 2022).

  - » Syndromic surveillance on health−related data based on clinical observations (WHO, 2014b).

  - » Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE): clear, informative, and on time communication transmission to the community about the outbreak (WHO d).

  - » Share information with key stakeholders (Kamalrathne, T. et al., 2023) with misinformation, disinformation, and malinformation management (OECD, 2020a).

  - » Proper communication during the outbreak (CDC, 2018b). Clear and concise information advertisement in multiple languages for an effective communication. Include emergency contact numbers and official channels, and consider incorporating infographics for prompt understanding (UNICEF, 2020).

  - » Provide housing or shelters, financial support for the affected population, like temporary rent assistance, defer and/or reduce utility bills (UNDRR/ECLAC, 2021).

  - » Furnish continuity of essential services - food (emergency feeding programmes if needed) and water supply - utilities, vector control (if in place), and emergency services (UNDRR/ECLAC, 2021).

  - » Ensure continuity of sectors such as fuel, energy, telecommunications, banking and finance, law and order, post, and manufacture services (UNDRR/ECLAC, 2021).

  - » Mitigate animal and public health risks: farm, market, food chain biosecurity, surveillance, movement control, depopulation, tracking, vaccination (if allowed), and food hygiene (UNDRR, 2021). For a more in-depth analysis, refer to the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH, founded as OIE) Codes and Manuals (WOAH, 2023).[7]

- **Medical assistance and administrative control needs[8]:**

  - » Healthcare facilities to handle the increased number of patients (WHO, 2020b).

  - » Adequate PPE, other supplies, and medications (CDC, 2016).

  - » Vaccination and antiviral prophylaxis for health-care workers, if applicable (WHO, 2014a).

  - » Ensure healthcare professionals, possibly including support of temporary staff or volunteers, and ensuring their well-being (WHO, 2014a).

  - » Create a health-care worker surveillance system for influenza-like illness (ILI) (WHO, 2014a).

  - » Limit patient movement and ensure appropriate room settings (ECDC, 2022).

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7   WOAH is the reference organization by the World Trade Organization (WTO) for international standards relating to animal health and zoonosis (EC, food safety).

8   Please refer to the document: Infection Prevention and Control of epidemic- and pandemic-prone acute respiratory infections in healthcare (WHO guidelines) 2014, for more recommendations, best practices and guidance (WHO, 2014a).

» Use disposable or dedicated patient-care equipment (CDC, 2016).

» Establish treatment guidelines based on the available treatments and evidence of the situation (WHO, 2023).

» Appropriate waste management (UNEP, 2020).

» Appropriate management of dead bodies (WHO, 2014a), ensuring dignity and respect of the religions and cultural practices in line with public health and safety considerations (IFRC/ICRC/WHO, 2020).

» Psychological support to the population (WHO, 2022).

» Ensure maternal, new-born, children and adolescents health services and rights (UNFPA, 2020).

» Organize medication, care - including home-based - and community visits for elderly people, as the restrictions may disproportionately affect them (WHO, 2020b).

» Guarantee medications for communicable diseases, such as HIV (including pre-exposure prophylaxis), hepatitis, sexually transmitted infections, tuberculosis (WHO, 2020b).

» Organize medical attention for non-communicable diseases; guarantee the required drugs for cardiovascular diseases, cancer, diabetes, chronic respiratory diseases, chronic kidney disease, oral health conditions, and palliative care (WHO, 2020)[9].

» Maintain sexual and reproductive health services (e.g. contraception, abortion, fertility care, disease treatments) (UNFPA, 2020).

» Ensure support and access to vital services for those struggling with addiction (e.g. illegal drugs, gaming), acknowledging the added difficulties posed by the crisis (EMCDDA, 2020; Levander, X. A. et al., 2022; WHO, 2020b).

• **Preventive Measures:**

» Organize vaccination campaigns, if available (WHO, 2020b).

» Promote hand and respiratory hygiene, cough etiquette, and disinfection practices (CDC, 2016).

» Lockdown, promote social distancing, schools closure, teleworking, cancel mass gatherings and implement containment and mitigation policies - limit people movement within and between communities to slow down disease spread and/or implement tests to facilitate it - (OECD, 2020b).

• **Research and Collaboration:**

» Share data, material, and resources with local public bodies and international bodies, and other countries to coordinate a local and global response (WHO e). Promote open communication among different stakeholders to achieve a coordinated, prompt, and effective action, eventually reducing the impact on population (WHO, 2023). International data sharing and cooperation allow researchers to study the virus directly (Jit, M. et al., 2021). This leads to the quick development of diagnostic tools, vaccines, treatments, and effective containment strategies vital in combating viral epidemics and preparing for future health emergencies (Pratt, B. and Bull, S., 2021):

- Rapid and transparent sharing of biological material and pathogen-related information, including genetic material (WHO f).

- Epidemiological data collection and sharing, like transmission mode, number of confirmed cases, hospitalizations, and deaths (WHO, 2005).

- Epidemiological data on animals, if needed (WOAH, 2023).

J.10.5 Rapid risk assessment, impact analysis and forecast

During a viral outbreak with the potential to become an epidemic, it is mandatory to consider various factors in order to limit the spread and impact of the infection. A combination of environmental data, modelling, and surveillance is essential for epidemic prediction and a better response (Myers, M. F. et al., 2000). The forecast for an infection outbreak should include (Myers, M. F. et al., 2000; Desai, A. N.

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9   This list is non exhaustive.

et al., 2019; Lutz, C. S. et al., 2019; Pollett, S. et al., 2020; Pollett, S. et al., 2021; Luan, J. et al., 2022):

- **Data analysis:** Collect and analyse data on the infection based on the metrics previously described (e.g. morbidity, mortality, incubation period, Rt), together with demographical information (sex, age, characteristics of affected individuals, risk factors, aggravating factors) (Anastassopoulou, C. et al., 2020).

- **Review historical data:** review previous infection outbreaks in a systematic way, to understand past epidemic patterns to forecast the correct measures for new outbreaks (Pollett, S. et al., 2021). Characteristics of the main epidemics and pandemics of the last millennia, together with the different interventions implemented, and the lessons learned to improve pandemic preparedness, could be found in Williams, B. A. et al. (2023).

- **Epidemiological modelling:** apply modelling strategies to predict spread of infections and to possibly identify infection peaks. Different computational models are available for various outbreaks forecast (Nsoesie, E. O. et al., 2014; Dembek, Z. F. et al., 2018; Kalantari, M., 2021; Anastassopoulou, C. et al., 2020; Pollett, S. et al., 2021; Xiang, Y. et al., 2021). For influenza outbreaks, for example, the autoregressive integrated moving average (ARIMA) model is typically used (Nsoesie, E. O. et al., 2014; Soebiyanto, R. P. et al., 2010). For COVID-19 outbreak, susceptible-infectious-recovered-dead (SIDR) model has been applied, among others, although it does not take into account several parameters (e.g. incubation period, transmission modalities, and the effect of public health interventions) (Anastassopoulou, C. et al., 2020).

- **Healthcare system assessment:** evaluate the capacity of healthcare facilities, together with stocks availability of medical supplies (not only specifically involved in the infection, but also for general purposes) and of PPE (Desai, A. N. et al., 2019; Williams, B. A. et al., 2023).

- **Public health intervention assessment:** plan and evaluate the impact of interventions (quarantine, social distancing, travel restrictions, contact tracing, medicinal treatments, vaccination, PPE use, infection screening) (Xiang, Y. et al., 2021; Ge, Y. et al., 2023). Public health interventions should take into account economic and social impacts (Xiang, Y. et al., 2021).

- **Social behaviour evaluation:** assess current population social interactions and movements and predict changes in response to infection outbreak and related intervention (public health – e.g. social distancing effects) (Eksin, C. et al., 2019; Managi, S., and Chen, Z., 2022).

- **Economic impact assessment:** evaluate the infection-related impact on economy and forecast possible related effects. Consider also general stocks (e.g. food, medicines, everyday use items), if issues to supply chain and/or work availability are foreseen (EPRS, 2020; Xiang, Y. et al., 2021; Managi, S., and Chen, Z., 2022).

- **Case scenario planning:** plan best-case, most likely-case, and worst-case scenarios, and plan for contingencies accordingly (Kumar, G. et al., 2021; Rakhshan, S. A. et al., 2023). A worst-case scenario forecasting is suggested, being more conservative. Integrate a global perspective to achieve international strategies and cooperation. Consider also virus spread across borders (Desai, A. N. et al., 2019; Luan, J. et al., 2022).

- **Plan research and development:** monitor ongoing research (promoting cooperation) for virus characterization, treatments, and vaccines development (Williams, B. A. et al., 2023).

- **Risk assessment:** perform risk versus benefit assessment when evaluating possible interventions (public health, social, medical, and economical) and communication strategies. Always perform ethical considerations, taking into account all populations, including more susceptible individuals. Several risk assessments of infectious disease threats are available on ECDC website. After having assessed the risk, it is important to communicate it efficiently (Recchia, V. et al., 2022). Risk communication recommendations to guide institutions in proper communication are available (Abraham, T., 2009).

- **Plan proper communication:** ensure a clear and consistent communication with the public, to avoid misunderstanding. Communication via mass media and social media is essential to provide clarity underneath events, maintain trust in the organizations, and transmit useful messages (Recchia, V. et al., 2022). Best practices for communicating with the public during an outbreak,

epidemics, and pandemics are made available by WHO ([2004](#); [2014a](#)).

A continuous review and update of the forecast is suggested and forecast should be done in a long-term perspective, evaluating long-lasting changes and impacts. For a correct prevention and preparation of a future infection outbreak, an effective detection together with an early dissemination process could be significant ([Kamalrathne, T. et al., 2023](#)). Therefore, epidemiological surveillance, data analysis, and early warnings identification are essential in a context of early risk assessment of epidemics/pandemics ([Kamalrathne, T. et al., 2023](#)).

J.10.6 Early/rapid impact estimations

Early or rapid impact estimation is critical to evaluate disease's potential severity and spread to guide immediate public health responses.

The initial detection of an unusual increase in disease cases (see below for unusual explanation) or the identification of a new pathogen from surveillance systems or healthcare services, it follows a verification step and a confirmation of the outbreak ([WHO, 2023](#)). Data collection and analysis allow to evaluate the potential impact of the outbreak on public health and to determine the level of risk to human health, spread, and control capacity. The risk assessment will then be reported and disseminated ([WHO, 2023](#)). The situation analysis should examine the current state of the country's health system, including its strengths and weaknesses, as well as any specific challenges or vulnerabilities ([WHO, 2023](#)).

For better hazard surveillance, it is necessary to define indicators and set abnormal or unusual thresholds, which require public health interventions ([WHO, 2014b](#)). The first step is to understand if an event could be considered unusual, some examples:

- Being out of the regular season.
- Affecting a significant number of health workers.
- Appearance of new features (resistance, change in symptoms, affected groups, etc.)

- Presence in a limited period and geographic location.
- Characterised by an expected number of cases but with a higher case fatality ratio (CFR). ([WHO, 2014b, WHO, 2023](#)).

On the contrary, it is considered usual an elevated/slightly above the number of cases is in conformity with what is expected. In addition, risk on health systems, facilities and other countries should be considered ([WHO, 2014b](#)).

To monitor the process, several indicators (thresholds) should be defined[10]. These indicators should include time and place of occurrence, indicated as number of events/time/place ([WHO, 2014b](#)). The threshold could be set to one or more cases. For less common diseases, a more conservative approach (threshold set at one event) is preferable; cases include haemorrhagic fever, smallpox, poliovirus, new subtype of human influenza and SARS ([WHO, 2014b; WHO, 2023](#)). Instead, for more common diseases, like meningitis in Africa, the threshold is set on an increase compared to baseline values or over a period of time ([WHO, 2014b](#)). Data from either single or multiple/aggregated notifications should be analysed and interpreted at local and national level ([WHO, 2014b](#)).

As a complement to Indicator-Based Surveillance (IBS), Event-Based Surveillance (EBS) is used to gather intelligence from a wider range of sources, including non-official and non-conventional sources such as media reports or social media ([WHO, 2012](#); [WHO, 2014b](#); [WHO, 2023).](#) EBS allows for early detection and improved monitoring of public health threats, especially when official reports from local public health authorities are missing or delayed. Information emerging from EBS is however unstructured and subject to more uncertainty, therefore needing verification ([WHO, 2012](#); [WHO, 2023](#)).

As soon as single or aggregated cases are notified or emerge as signals from EBS, their authenticity needs to be verified. A cross-checking of the data is performed, aiming to additionally collect

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10   For more surveillance information refer to: WHO, 2010. Technical Guidelines for Integrated Disease Surveillance and Response in the African Region, 3rd ed. (https://www.afro.who.int/publications/technical-guidelines-integrated-disease-surveillance-and-response-african-region-third).

information for risk assessment (WHO, 2014b). The verification procedure is based on:

- "Contacting local health authorities;
- Contacting the original source;
- Cross-checking with other sources;
- Collecting additional information; and
- Checking for official information available on the internet" (WHO, 2014b).

Different systems and networks are designed to provide near real-time information about infectious disease outbreaks to provide early warning, risk assessment, and rapid impact estimation for infectious diseases. Some of the key electronic global bio-surveillance systems include[11]:

- **The Epidemic Intelligence from Open Source (EIOS) initiative,** led by the WHO Hub for Pandemics and Epidemic Intelligence, brings together a number of public health authorities, partnerships and other relevant stakeholders worldwide (including UN agencies, ECDC, Africa CDC, national authorities and ONGs) to build a unified all-hazards One Health approach to early detection, verification, assessment, and communication of public health threats using publicly available information. Based on technology developed by the JRC, the EIOS system aggregates a large amount of information from selected sources (including media, official bulletins, and the other systems described below: GPHIN, ProMed, HealthMap, DONs) in various languages. It also allows for earlier collaboration

and exchange of signals at global level, across the aforementioned network of public health stakeholders (WHO g; WHO h; WHO i; GPHIN; ProMED; HealthMap).

- **Global Public Health Intelligence Network (GPHIN) is** an internet-based early warning tool that gathers preliminary reports of health threats by monitoring global media sources (GPHIN).
- **Program for Monitoring Emerging Diseases (ProMED)** is an online service that identifies unusual health events related to emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases and toxins (ProMED). Information is curated by a multidisciplinary global team of subject matter experts in a variety of fields including virology, parasitology, epidemiology, entomology, veterinary and plant diseases (ProMED).
- **HealthMap** is another tool that performs automatic classification and monitoring of online information to detect signals of emerging infectious diseases (HealthMap).
- **WHO Disease Outbreak News (DONs)** reports online information on confirmed acute public health events or potential events of concern around the world (WHO h).
- **WHO's Early Warning, Alert and Response System (EWARS)** in emergencies is an electronic simple and cost-effective disease surveillance system that detects disease outbreaks quickly before they spread (WHO i).

A full bibliography with further reading can be found in the UNDAC Toolbox.

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11   The list is not to be considered exhaustive; it is essential to underline that the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have surveillance and early warning systems for infectious diseases. Many other national and international agencies, research institutions, and collaborative networks work to monitor and respond to infectious diseases, contributing data and insights to the global effort (WHO, 2014b).

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of Humanitarian Affairs

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K.
HAZARD IMPACT
SUMMARIES

United
Nations

Section contents

K. HAZARD IMPACT SUMMARIES

These hazard summaries offer a general overview of the potential impact of the most common natural hazards that UNDAC teams may be deployed to. They aim to assist in understanding the impact and priority needs in the immediate aftermath of a sudden-onset disaster caused by a natural hazard-related disaster in an affected society.

Furthermore, they aim to develop hazard-specific literacy among UNDAC members to better understand the challenges of operating in an area affected by natural hazard-related disasters and how they can impact the UNDAC mission.

The summaries are not meant to offer a detailed analysis of the specific impact of different hazards in various settings. It's important to thoroughly assess the context during deployment, as each disaster has its own unique characteristics, and contextual factors will greatly influence humanitarian needs and response. The summaries can, however, be used as a starting point after an alert of a hazard impact has been received to prepare for an emergency response and guide further information collection.

K.1 Earthquakes

An earthquake is a phenomenon that occurs when there is a sudden slip on a fault line, which results in ground shaking and radiated seismic energy. This can also be caused by volcanic or magmatic activity or other sudden stress changes in the earth. The duration of most earthquakes is usually a minute or less. However, aftershocks can occur on and off for a few days, weeks, or even months following the main earthquake, depending on its magnitude. There are different ways to measure the magnitude of an earthquake. The Moment Magnitude Scale (Mw) is the most used as it is based on the seismic moment, which is related to the amount of total energy released by the earthquake. Similar to the Richter scale, an increase of one step on the logarithmic scale of moment magnitude corresponds to a $10^{1.5} \approx 32$ times increase in the amount of energy

released, and an increase of two steps corresponds to a $10^3 = 1000$ times increase in energy. Consequently, an earthquake of 7.0 Mw contains 1000 times as much energy as a 5.0 Mw and about 32 times that of a 6.0 Mw.

Earthquakes with a magnitude of 7.0 or higher can cause intense shaking and other serious consequences over a wide area. Earthquakes with magnitudes between 6.0 and 6.9 may cause a lot of damage in very populated areas, while smaller earthquakes can still cause damage to weak structures near the epicentre.

There are qualitative intensity measures that describe the severity of an earthquake based on its effects on the earth's surface, infrastructure, and population. One such measure is the Modified Mercalli Intensity (MMI) scale. The MMI scale ranges from I (not felt) to XII (Total Damage). Structural damage typically begins at VI, but this can vary depending on the fragility of buildings in a given region.

Other measures to quantify ground shaking intensity include ground motion parameters such as peak ground acceleration (PGA), peak ground velocity (PGV), and elastic spectral acceleration for a given period of vibration (SA).

The basic rule is that earthquakes are unpredictable natural phenomena that cannot be forecasted in terms of location, magnitude, or time. Ground shaking from an earthquake is unique and can vary significantly from location to location. However, as many other natural hazards that are occurring around us, earthquakes obey simple laws of nature, that allow us to infer how these complex events may unfold.

Several properties of the earthquake rupture, such as rupture directivity or so-called 'super-shear' ruptures, may impact the strong ground motion generated. Theoretically, for two identical earthquakes that differ only in depth, the deeper earthquake would be expected to result in lesser intensity on the surface.

Earthquakes release the stress accumulated along fault lines, but not all the stress is released during a single large earthquake, and this 'left-over' stress is the origin of any sequence of aftershocks that follow the first EQ. When the size and position of the fault line that generated the main EQ is known, one can roughly 'predict' the area where the aftershocks will occur. However, in some cases, the main EQ may trigger another EQ of considerable magnitude because of the stress transfer, which may be outside this 'predicted' area. Again, the size, location and magnitude of such 'triggered' cannot be 'known'.

While there may be some exceptions, the temporal decay of the aftershock frequency can generally be characterized by Omori's law, which states that the rate of earthquakes triggered by a main shock decay with time according to an inverse power 1/tp of time with an exponent p≈1. This mathematical model explains how the number of aftershocks is very high during the first days following the earthquake and decreases following a predictable pattern. Conclusively, the first hours and days following an earthquake will have the highest risk of new and strong earthquakes, referred to as aftershocks. The magnitude and frequency of these aftershocks will follow the same trend, making it possible to "predict" the number of earthquakes with the same magnitude following a main shock. For example, if the main shock was M6 you can expect to have 10 M5s, 100 M4s, etc.

These considerations have almost universal validity and do not depend on geological or tectonic settings. There is, however, a caveat one should be acutely aware of. When applied to a sequence of seismic events these laws are strongly linked to the fault rupture mechanism. In other words, they are valid only if we have a single rupture along a single fault, i.e., only one major seismic event along the considered fault line. Whenever there is a new rupture in the fault line, like a major aftershock, the considerations described above are reset and new calculations must be made.

K.1.1 Early warning

It is currently not possible to predict earthquakes or provide early warnings which could greatly reduce the risk of loss of life. However, some early warning systems and signs can provide a few seconds of notice before the earthquake shaking waves arrive:

- **Earthquake Early Warning Systems –** These systems rely on a network of seismic sensors that can detect the initial pulses of energy when an earthquake begins. The data is then analysed in real-time to predict the **expected** intensity of shaking and alerts are sent to surrounding areas, providing up to several seconds of warning. It is important to note that these alerts may not always target the public directly but instead focus on the automatic shutdown of critical infrastructures, such as natural gas distribution pipelines, etc.

- **Tsunami warnings –** Earthquake parameters (location, depth, magnitude) detected through seismic networks would assist Tsunami Early warning Centres to determine the tsunamigenic potential of the earthquake. Warnings are pushed out to threatened coastal areas, sometimes providing hours of lead time to evacuate. For earthquakes in close proximity to coastal areas, such warnings may not be possible, but the occurrence of a strong or long earthquake should be interpreted as a natural sign of self-evacuation. (See also **Section K.2** for more on tsunamis.)

- **Earthquake forecasting –** Long-term earthquake hazard assessments using historical data, and short-term aftershock forecasts, using the pattern known as exponential decay described above can indicate increased risk.

K.1.2 Rapid impact estimations

GDACS rapid impact estimation: Within ⬚ 30min from the main event there is an automatic definition of alert level for humanitarian activation, this includes:

- Areas that are mostly affected,
- Event map,
- Shakemap,
- Meteorological forecast map,
- Exposure estimate (affected area - intensity polygons, intensity affected places),
- Exposed population,

- Critical infrastructures,
- Estimated casualties.

Within the Global Disaster Alert and Coordination System (GDACS), under the Satellite Mapping Coordination Systems (SMCS), satellite mapping information products also become available when the relative mapping services are activated.

K.1.3 Physical impact

- Geological hazards like earthquakes do not occur as frequently as climate-related disasters. However, earthquakes have killed more people than any other type of natural hazard in the past twenty years.

- The impact of a shallow earthquake is typically characterised by surface fault rupture (and fissures), as well as subsidence or uplift. The strength and duration of ground shaking at any given location depends on several factors, such as the magnitude of the earthquake, the distance to the earthquake's epicentre, and the local soil conditions.

- Some types of terrain transmit seismic waves more easily than others. Buildings constructed on solid bedrock in compliance with the applicable seismic design codes are less likely to suffer damage, while those built on unconsolidated rock and sediments may experience greater amplitude and duration of seismic waves, thereby increasing the potential for damage.

- When saturated, certain terrain types, such as sandy sediments, can liquefy, meaning that the soil can behave like a liquid, causing both infrastructural damage and sinking of structures.

- The impact of an earthquake is mainly determined by two factors: the intensity of ground shaking caused by the quake, and the quality of structural engineering in the region, e.g., building codes, inspection before, during and after construction. Soil conditions, the level of preparedness of emergency services, and the resilience of the local population are also factors contributing to the level of impact.

- The degree of damage to buildings depends on various factors such as the horizontal and vertical irregularities of the building, the type and frequency of the waves the shake creates, the soil conditions, and the resilience of the building. Buildings that are only slightly or moderately damaged may collapse during large aftershocks.

- Earthquakes can cause considerable damage to infrastructure, e.g., power cables, telecommunications systems, water and sanitation pipes, and gas lines can be ruptured, severed, or extensively damaged, hampering relief efforts and day-to-day living.

- Damage to infrastructure following an earthquake can result in the release of flammable liquids or gases. This increases the risk of fires when they come into contact with ignition sources. Additionally, heating and cooking appliances may be overturned, which can also trigger destructive fires during and after the earthquake.

- Dams, embankments, and levees may fail during an earthquake, causing downstream flooding due to cracks and instability.

- Shaking caused by large-magnitude events can result in destabilization of slopes, leading to landslides and debris flows, particularly in mountainous regions. In addition, destruction of roads, bridges, and other infrastructure can make access and communication difficult. Landslides and debris can block roads or cause surface damage.

- Earthquakes that occur near coasts or oceans can cause tsunamis, which can be extremely destructive and increase the overall impact of the disaster. Locations situated at sea level are particularly vulnerable to such events. Furthermore, critical infrastructure such as ports and airports may become unusable due to the severity of the earthquake and/or tsunami.

- Tsunami-like seiche waves can impact areas close to large bodies of water. Earthquakes can change the course of rivers and result in flash floods. For more information on tsunamis generated by earthquakes, refer to **Section K.2.**

K.1.4 Direct impact on the population

- The leading cause of death after an earthquake is trauma resulting from building collapse or other seismic activity, accounting for up to 75-80% of fatalities.

- Death is rare for people who are outside a building at the time of the earthquake.

- Diseases and mortality rates in the weeks following an earthquake depend largely on the occurrence of epidemics. Outbreaks of diseases, however, are unlikely and usually of very modest proportions.

- Structural collapses from earthquakes generate trapped victims who may survive for several days. Under special, ideal conditions with food, water and temperate climatic conditions, survival may extend considerably. However, 85-95% of persons rescued alive from collapsed buildings are rescued in the first 24-48 hours after an earthquake.

- After an earthquake, the majority of injuries are minor cuts and bruises, followed by a smaller group with simple bone fractures, and a minority with multiple severe fractures and internal injuries, requiring surgery and intensive treatment for crush syndrome. Within the first three to five days, most injured individuals will arrive at medical facilities. There may be two waves of patients. The first wave will consist of casualties from the immediate surrounding area of the medical facility, followed by a second wave of referred cases from more distant areas as relief efforts are organised. Victims of secondary hazards, such as aftershocks and fires, may arrive at a later stage.

- Earthquakes can have long-lasting effects on mental health, particularly among children and teenagers. One of the most common mental disorders that can result from earthquakes is Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). PTSD is characterized by persistent, intrusive memories of the traumatic event, hyperarousal, avoidance of trauma-related cues, and negative changes in thinking and mood.

- Households begin their recovery efforts immediately after the earthquake. Major population movements are rare; however, it may occur in heavily damaged urban areas.

K.1.5 Aggravating factors

- In most cases, the closer an area is to the earthquake epicentre, the more intense the shaking will be, which in turn increases the likelihood of severe damage. The area closest to the epicentre is generally the hardest hit.

- Earthquakes closer to the surface cause more widespread damage due to the shaking spreading over a larger area.

- The time of day can have a significant impact on the severity of an earthquake, as it governs the number of people in large buildings, attending work or school, etc. Earthquakes occurring during nighttime hours can result in higher death tolls because more people may be asleep inside vulnerable buildings that may collapse. Additionally, emergency response efforts may be hindered by the challenges of mobilising resources during overnight hours.

- During an earthquake, poorly designed, inspected and constructed buildings and structures are more likely to fail and collapse, exacerbating the impacts. Unreinforced masonry buildings pose the greatest danger during strong earthquakes, with weaker masonry resulting in higher death tolls.

- Regions with fragile buildings, high-density populations, or local soil conditions that promote ground shaking may experience more severe and widespread damage from earthquakes of a given magnitude and other characteristics.

- Areas with higher population densities are at a greater risk of extensive damage and loss of life in the event of an earthquake, as more people and infrastructure are exposed.

- Populations that lack earthquake awareness training and warning systems are more vulnerable to adverse impacts as they may resort to behaviours that put them at greater risk. For example, going close to a shoreline not knowing of the tsunami risk, or taking cover close to structures rather than away from them, etc.

- Fire is a secondary effect of earthquakes that often causes damage. Because power lines may be knocked down and natural gas lines may rupture during an earthquake, fires are often triggered. Fire damages may be compounded if water lines are also broken during the earthquake, as there will not be enough water to extinguish the fires once they have started.

- In the event of an earthquake during winter in cold climates, survivors are at high risk of experiencing hypothermia, frostbite, and other illnesses caused by prolonged exposure to the damp and cold weather. Additionally, bad weather can

hinder rescue efforts and make response much harder. Furthermore, during the cold weather, there is a higher likelihood that stoves and fires are burning inside the houses that have collapsed, which significantly increases the chances of fires after the earthquake.

• When earthquakes occur in hot climates, the lack of water makes it harder for people trapped in rubble to survive.

• Hospitals could face power outages that could lead to the death of patients in intensive care units. Hospital personal may abandon their duty post in desperate need to reach out to their relatives.

K.1.6 Typical needs

Mobilizing an effective response after a major earthquake requires coordination across government agencies, disaster relief organizations, businesses, community groups, and civil society organisations.

• **Search and rescue -** Specialized INSARAG-certified urban search and rescue (USAR) teams are crucial for detecting survivors trapped in collapsed buildings and structures. Some of the first responders deployed are USAR teams tasked with locating and extracting survivors trapped under collapsed structures. Speed is critical for saving lives so these teams are deployed as quickly as possible to the most affected areas.

• **Medical care –** Local medical facilities are often overwhelmed by injured individuals, and, temporary field hospitals equipped with emergency medical personnel, supplies, and equipment are essential for treating those in need.

• **Logistics –** A combination of increased air traffic, congested air space and reduced airport capacities in the affected area will cause delays affecting all forms of relief transported by air. In-country air traffic will be similarly affected as international. Overland transport may be affected by increased population movements, damaged roads/train lines, and reduced capacity should be expected. Supply chains will also be disrupted. Destruction or damage to ports, bridges, and roads increases transportation costs and substantial shipment delays. With disruption to roads, rail lines, airports, etc., temporary

solutions help ferry in aid and allow people to leave impacted zones.

• **Shelter –** When homes are destroyed, many people become homeless and require emergency shelter and housing solutions. The risk from aftershocks often leads to people settling outside their former homes, not wanting to move back in until the number of aftershocks decreases, and the building has been assessed by structural engineers. Resources to assist displaced persons are crucial in the aftermath. Immediate needs are shelter supplies such as tents, cots, blankets and essential living items like food, water and hygiene items. The opening of evacuation shelters equipped with temporary housing, food/water, hygiene services, medical aid, etc., should be prioritised.

• **Food/Water—** Disrupted infrastructure may cut off access to food and clean water. Distributing food rations, bottled water, and purification equipment helps stabilize supplies. Market support and cash incentives should be considered.

• **Sanitation –** Water supply, treatment and reconstruction of water supply systems and drainage/sewer systems is vital. Without proper sanitation and waste management, the situation for survivors will deteriorate rapidly and increase the risk of communicable diseases. Distribution of hygiene items, latrines and hygiene promotion should be prioritised.

• **Power supply –** Electrical infrastructure can be severely damaged. Bringing in generators, repair crews, and equipment, and coordinating repairs is key to restoring power access.

• **Communication networks –** Damaged communications systems isolate people and prevent coordination. Rapid deployment of temporary cell towers, satellite phones, radios, and internet connectivity aids rescue coordination, supports situational awareness and reconnects affected population.

• **Debris removal –** Rubble can block roads and prevent access. Heavy construction equipment, including bulldozers, excavators, cranes, and crews, are indispensable assets for clearing roadways, providing access to blocked areas, and enabling search and rescue efforts. Finding areas to dispose of rubble can be a challenge, however, and debris should be recycled as far

as possible. It is also important to be aware of hazardous materials, like asbestos, that may be part of the rubble and ensure this is removed in a safe manner.

- **Protection –** Emergency situations also tend to exacerbate existing inequalities among the population and lead to a rise in human rights and protection concerns. Special considerations should be given to known protection risks in the context. See also **Chapter G.2** Centrality of protection and quality response. A breakdown of social structures and services can result in increased risks of exploitation, abuse, and neglect for vulnerable groups, and relief efforts must prioritize the unique needs of these groups to ensure their safety and well-being.

- Women and children often face heightened vulnerability and are disproportionately affected. Female-led households may have less access to resources, financial independence, and decision-making power, which complicates their ability to recover. Children are particularly susceptible to physical harm and psychological trauma. They may be orphaned, and displacement often disrupts their education and routine, leading to long-term challenges.

- **Environmental—**Technological accidents can be triggered by earthquakes, which can damage hazardous installations and release hazardous substances, leading to fires or explosions, gas leaks, damaged facilities, chemical spills, etc.

K.1.7 UNDAC mission

- Mobilisation and deployment happen within hours of the event. Selected team members must be fully self-sufficient with food/water for 72 hours, a tent, a sleeping bag, a field mattress, and hygiene articles. Check climate and weather when packing and be prepared to work and sleep in tented conditions for weeks.

- Expect congested air traffic and severe delays. Travelling with an international USAR team or another relief flight is preferable. The risk of delayed luggage is also higher, so make sure to pack essentials in carry-on luggage.

- On arrival, ensure a Reception & Departure Centre (RDC) for international relief teams has been established and be prepared to stay behind

at the airport to support it. Liaise with National Emergency Management representatives already at the airport if they're there or immediately afterwards. Alert the RC/HC of your arrival in parallel. It is UNDAC's role to support on-site coordination of international USAR operations and the UNDAC team and the UCC should establish liaison and coordinate with each other as soon as possible in the mission. A dedicated UNDAC USAR Liaison Officer (LO) should be appointed as soon as possible and ensur that the USAR operations is linked with the overall humanitarian operation. See also **Chapter D.5** on the Reception & Departure Centre and **Chapter G.10.1.5** for more on UNDAC USAR Liaison.

- Normal hygiene services will be disrupted or non-functional. Make sure to bring sanitary items and other articles for washing and staying clean, such as wet wipes, toilet paper, and sufficient clothing. Take care of any bruises, small wounds, or injuries immediately to prevent infection.

- Access to food and water in the disaster area may be disrupted. Consider acquiring field rations from USAR teams.

K.1.8 Safety concerns

All earthquakes happen in sequences. Be aware that some earthquakes are actually foreshocks, and a larger earthquake might still occur. Leftover stress will remain in the fault lines where the original earthquake happened, and this stress will be released as aftershocks or new earthquakes of various magnitudes and depths throughout the mission. Aftershocks pose a significant risk, causing further damage and increasing stress for both victims and aid workers.

Consider staying outside and a safe distance from infrastructure throughout the mission.

Specific safety considerations:

- **Building collapse—**Buildings and other structures damaged by shaking can become more unstable and collapse after the initial earthquake, putting anyone inside or nearby in danger. Even a small aftershock can lead to the collapse of a building if it has already been damaged. Several damages may not be visible to the naked eye, and therefore, it is important to thoroughly

inspect any structure that has been impacted by an earthquake.

- No infrastructure can be assumed safe without proper assessment by subject matter experts, such as certified structural engineers. These professionals are the only ones who can provide advice on the extent to which infrastructure has been compromised, and they should check both workplaces and resting places. Incoming USAR teams may have the capacity to carry out such assessments. Should a building be cleared as a work or rest space, make sure to establish escape routes and be prepared to evacuate at short notice. As general guidance:

  » If caught in an aftershock, drop to the floor, take cover and hold on.

  » Identify safe places in buildings, such as under sturdy tables or desks or against interior walls away from windows, bookcases, or tall furniture that could fall on you.

  » Keep a flashlight, a pair of shoes, appropriate clothing that can be put on fast, a grab bag with essential items packed, and your personal identification documents near your resting place in case you need to evacuate at night. You may also want to consider sleeping with most of your clothes on to avoid spending time dressing.

  » In a high-rise building, avoid using the elevators and stay away from windows and outside walls.

  » Wear a whistle to attract attention to yourself and a facemask to protect yourself from dust.

- **Power lines –** Shorted lines, damaged poles, and wires heighten the risk of electrocution and fires. Stay clear of any sparking or downed cables.

- **Gas leaks and fires –** Ruptured gas pipes lead to leaks, which increase the chance of fire or explosions. Evacuate areas where you smell or hear gas leaks. Gas leaks, electrical shorts and toppled heat sources heighten fire risk. Have extinguishers ready and avoid sources of sparks while evacuating.

- **Landslides/mudslides –** Earthquakes can destabilize slopes and loosen debris. Watch for falling rocks, debris flows, and mudslides - especially near mountains/hills after heavy rains.

- Dam failures – Damage can cause dams to fail without warning, rapidly flooding downstream areas. Stay away from dams and low-lying areas.

- **Sanitation –** Compromised water and sanitation infrastructure can lead to sickness from poor hygiene. Store clean water safely and apply good hygiene practices to prevent contamination.

- **Chemical releases—** Failure to contain toxic chemicals may occur even in small premises, like shops, etc. Do not enter unless the space has been declared a safe atmosphere.

K.1.9 Security concerns

Chaos and confusion can lead to potential security risks. These can include increased crime rates due to overwhelmed law enforcement and a temporary breakdown of law and order. The risk of regular crime and petty theft may rise as people who have been severely affected by the event may resort to negative coping mechanisms. Both workplace and rest-place need to be established with sufficient security measures in place.

K.2 Tsunamis

A tsunami is a series of ocean waves caused by earthquakes or other phenomena such as volcanic eruptions, underwater landslides, coastal rock falls, and meteorite impacts, leading to significant water displacement in the ocean. It is a complex event that can last for many hours before the situation returns to normal. A tsunami consists of multiple waves in succession, and the first to arrive on the coast is not always the largest or most destructive.

Out of all the listed phenomena, earthquakes are the primary cause of tsunamis, accounting for 80% of occurrences. Particularly, when earthquakes occur in the regions where tectonic plates converge, and one plate subducts beneath another, the resulting tsunamis can be exceptionally catastrophic in their size and impact.

Tsunami waves have the potential to grow to enormous dimensions and can travel across entire ocean basins with very little energy loss. They are much faster than any wave produced by the wind in

the open sea and can reach speeds of 700-800 km/hour in deep ocean.

Tsunami waves in the open sea are hardly noticeable due to their low height, typically ranging from a few centimetres to a few dozen centimetres. For example, a ship sailing on the open sea can be hit by a tsunami without passengers noticing anything unusual. However, as the wave approaches the coast, it transforms and becomes shorter in length but taller in height. Its speed decreases proportionally with the depth of the water, and as a result, the height of the wave increases, creating wavefronts that can reach up to several meters. When the tsunami reaches the coast, its speed reduces compared to the open sea, but it can still reach a speed of typically 25 km/hour.

Tsunami waves are distinct from waves generated by wind or weather disturbances, which only affect the surface of the water, because the movement of tsunami waves affects the entire water column from the bottom of the ocean to the sea surface. After the initial rise, the force of gravity makes the water mass move horizontally, generating tsunami waves that propagate outward in all directions similar to ripples from a rock thrown into the water. They can travel for thousands of kilometres without losing energy, allowing them to strike with great force on coasts far from their origin. The force of a tsunami wave, even if it is just 20-40 centimetres high, is powerful enough to knock down an adult man and drag him into the sea, or to move a heavy car for tens of meters. They can advance a few of kilometres inland, destroying everything in their path and causing significant damage.

The first sign of a tsunami wave is often a significant rise or fall in sea level along the coast, that usually depends on the orientation of the fault that generated the earthquake in relation to the coast. The change in sea level can sometimes be noticed as a 'negative wave' where the water pulls back unusually far from the shore, exposing the seabed for several hundred meters that is normally underwater. Conversely, it may appear as a fast-rising tide or as a series of growing waves or as an actual wall of water causing the water level to rise by several metres and unexpected inundation of the coastline, flooding areas that are typically dry.

K.2.1 Early warning

The UNESCO Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC-UNESCO) coordinates the global implementation of tsunami warning systems and supports the IOC Member States in assessing the tsunami risk and in educating communities at risk about resilience measures. Four Intergovernmental Coordination Groups (ICGs), corresponding to the regions Pacific (ICG/PTWS), Caribbean (ICG/CARIBE-EWS), Indian Ocean (ICG/IOTWMS), and Mediterranean, Northeast Atlantic and its Connected Seas (ICG/NEAMTWS), have been established to address regional needs. Additionally, each ICG counts on the strategic advisory of specialized Working Groups whose members are professionals from key disaster management and research institutions. In case of an earthquake or volcanic event with the potential of generating a tsunami, the designated Tsunami Service Providers (TSPs) of each ICGs officially provide timely tsunami information products to the designated Tsunami Warning Focal Points / National Tsunami Warning Centres (TWFP/NTWC) of Member States. It is then the responsibility of mandated national organisations operating within the legal framework of the sovereign nation in which they reside and serve, to provide alerts to their citizens and communities.
There are currently 12 accredited Tsunami Service Providers (TSPs) that monitor seismic and sea level activity and issue timely tsunami threat information within the IOC-UNESCO framework to NTWCs / TWFPs and other TSPs operating within an ocean basin.

Seismic networks can provide information on earthquake parameters such as location, depth, and magnitude. Tsunami Early Warning Centres can utilize this information to determine the potential for the earthquake to generate a tsunami. Coastal areas at risk of tsunamis are alerted through warnings that provide a lead time of several minutes to hours, allowing people to evacuate to safety.

It might not be possible to issue tsunami warnings with sufficient lead time, especially for those coastal regions that are very close to the tsunami source zones. For example, an earthquake in a small water basin like the Mediterranean can result in a tsunami hitting the shore just a few minutes later. In

such cases, if a strong or long earthquake is felt, it should be interpreted as a natural sign to evacuate oneself immediately.

K.2.2 Rapid impact estimations

GDACS rapid impact estimation: Within 30min from the main event there is an automatic definition of alert level for humanitarian activation, this includes:

- Areas that are mostly affected,
- Event map,
- Tsunami travel time map,
- Simulated maximum coastal wave height (geo-referenced tiff files),
- Meteorological forecast map,
- Exposure estimates of tsunami-affected locations with expected/measured wave height and time of arrival,
- Exposed population,
- Critical infrastructures.

Within GDACS, under the Satellite Mapping Coordination Systems (SMCS), satellite mapping information products also become available when the relative mapping services are activated.

However, authoritative information comes solely from designated National Tsunami Warning Centres (NTWC) or Civil Defence, Civil Protection or any other designated National Emergency Management authority.

K.2.3 Physical impact

- Damage and destruction from tsunamis is the direct result of the following factors:
  - » Inundation
  - » Wave impact on structures
  - » Erosion
  - » Strong currents
  - » Debris

- Strong tsunami currents can erode foundations, causing bridges, seawalls and embankments to collapse. The forces from a tsunami may destroy the framework of buildings and other structures

and drag forces can move houses and overturn heavy objects like railroad cars. Floating debris, including boats, cars, and trees, can also cause considerable damage. These debris particles can become dangerous projectiles that may crash into buildings, piers, and other vehicles.

- Ships and port facilities can be damaged by surge action caused by even weak tsunamis.
- Fires resulting from oil spills or combustion from damaged ships in port, or from ruptured coastal oil storage and refinery facilities, can cause huge damage.
- In the aftermath of a tsunami, power shortages may last for weeks in the affected areas.
- Sewage and chemical pollution following destruction can result in secondary impacts. Damage to intake, discharge, and storage facilities can also present dangers.
- Tsunamis not only cause immediate damage due to the kinetic energy carried by moving water but can also have long-term effects on the environment, agriculture, and fisheries. When a tsunami hits, a considerable amount of saltwater gets deposited on the ground, which accumulates and concentrates salt. This salt buildup can kill off existing plants and trees and prevent new ones from growing, making cultivation nearly impossible. This can disrupt the livelihoods of people who depend on agriculture, exacerbating the damage caused by the waves.
- While they can absorb some of the tsunami energy, sediment and coral rubble thrown about by a tsunami can damage coral reefs. Vast destruction of coral reefs, mainly due to geo-morphological changes resulting in the uplifting or submergence of reefs, has been observed in tsunamis.
- Damage to mangroves can be highly variable, ranging from little damage in some areas to the destruction of entire forests in other areas.
- Areas lying immediately outside the area affected by the wave may appear untouched, as if there were a clear delineation between affected and unaffected areas.

K.2.4 Direct impact on the population

- When tsunamis hit low and densely populated coastal areas, they can cause human and

economic losses that far outnumber other natural disasters.

- People caught in tsunami waves often drown or experience physical trauma due to debris and turbulent waves. Women are often more exposed, as they have the care of small children and are slower to evacuate. Evidence suggests that the fatality rate for persons with disabilities can be up to four times higher than that of the general population.

- Injuries are similar to those of earthquakes (see **Section K.1.4**).

K.2.5 Aggravating factors

- When an earthquake that triggers a tsunami occurs near land, the resulting impact can be compounded by typical earthquake damages (see **Section K.1.3** and K.1.4).

- Coastal areas that are heavily developed with a tourist industry, port facilities, etc., are at higher risk of huge tsunami impacts.

- A lack of tsunami preparedness, such as levees, evacuation procedures, escape routes to higher land, etc., can have a devastating effect on people and infrastructure.

- Damaged critical infrastructures, such as dams, power plants, ports, airports, etc., that become inundated, or experience structural damage can disrupt services. Coastal protection structures such as sea walls may also be damaged, leaving the coastal population exposed to future hazards.

K.2.6 Typical needs

- As with earthquakes, mobilizing an effective response after a tsunami requires a concerted effort across government agencies, disaster relief organizations, businesses, and community groups.

- There will be a need for assistance with:

  » Emergency medical care.
  » Provision of shelter solutions for displaced people, including services for water, sanitation, and safe spaces.
  » Food and water.

  » Restoration of power supply and communication networks
  » Protection services for the most vulnerable segments of the population
  » Debris removal.

Seawater may flood sewage systems, resulting in an overflow of wastewater that may contaminate drinking water sources and increase the risk of water-borne and communicable diseases.

Stagnant water left over from the wave may become breeding spaces for insects and increase the risk of vector-borne diseases.

Increased air traffic, congested airspace, and reduced airport capacities may delay the delivery of relief supplies by air. Factors such as increased population movements, damaged roads or train lines, and reduced capacity may also impact inland transportation.

When a tsunami is combined with earthquake impacts, USAR and restoration of logistics services over a larger area may be needed.

Emergency situations also tend to exacerbate existing inequalities among the population and lead to a rise in human rights and protection concerns. Special considerations should be given to known protection risks in the context. See also Chapter G.2 Centrality of protection and quality response.

A breakdown of social structures and services can result in increased risks of exploitation, abuse, and neglect for vulnerable groups, and relief efforts must prioritize the unique needs of these groups to ensure their safety and well-being.

Women and children often face heightened vulnerability and are disproportionately affected. Female-led households may have less access to resources, financial independence, and decision-making power, which complicates their ability to recover. Children are particularly susceptible to physical harm and psychological trauma. They may be orphaned, and displacement often disrupts their education and routine, leading to long-term challenges.

Informal settlers in coastal areas are also more vulnerable as housing is poor and after a tsunami their lack of land rights are exposed.

K.2.7 UNDAC mission

Given that a tsunami most often is an effect of an earthquake, and an impacted area may be affected by both hazards, UNDAC's mobilization and mission will be similar in nature, with the same needs for rapid deployment and self-sufficiency.

When the tsunami-affected area is far from the triggering earthquake, and the risk of after-shocks is low, it may be possible to establish work and rest places in buildings immediately outside the areas affected by the wave. Seismologists and Tsunami Early Waring Centres should be consulted for this however.

K.2.8 Safety concerns

In addition to normal safety concerns associated with earthquakes, be aware of the increased risk of water-borne, vector-borne, and communicable diseases. Pay particular attention to good hygiene practices and the use of mosquito nets and repellents.

K.2.9 Security concerns

Similar to earthquakes (see **Section K.1.9**), but less impactful if the affected area is smaller and normality exists outside the area.

K.3 Tropical cyclones

Tropical cyclones (TC) are one of the biggest threats to life and property even in the formative stages of their development. They generate several different hazards that can individually have significant impacts on life and property, such as storm surge, flooding, extreme winds, tornadoes, and lightning. Combined, these hazards interact with one another and substantially increase the potential for loss of life and material damage. In fifty years, from

1970–2019[1], tropical cyclones led to a daily average of 43 deaths and US$ 78 million in losses.

Tropical cyclones are rapidly rotating storms that begin over tropical oceans. They can vary in size (from 200 to 800 km) and intensity (related to the maximum wind speed). Tropical cyclones are also called hurricanes in the Atlantic and Caribbean, and typhoons in the North West Pacific.

Tropical cyclones are classified according to their maximum sustained wind speed and location (see TC classifications in the table below and more on the WMO website). This classification does not consider the tropical cyclone's size nor the associated hazards such as storm surges or rainfall.

See https://www.nhc.noaa.gov/aboutsshws.php for a visualisation of the impact on houses and vegetation at various wind speeds. A detailed description of the impact on buildings, roads and other infrastructure can be found at Microsoft Word - SSHWS-table-final.docx (noaa.gov).

Approximately 85 tropical storms develop annually. More than half (45) of these storms intensify into tropical cyclones, known regionally as hurricanes or typhoons. In the northern hemisphere, the peak of the season is from August to October. In the southern hemisphere, it is from January to March. In the North Indian Ocean, it is associated with the movement of the monsoon, and the peak of cyclonic activity is around May and November.

More information can be found at https://wmo.int/content/tropical-cyclone-climatology and in the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) Coordination Mechanism (WCM) hazard calendar for tropical cyclones available at https://community.wmo.int/en/wcm-hazard-calendars.

TCs are multi-hazard events by essence. They can bring together several dangers, including destructive winds, storm surges, high waves, heavy rainfall, and tornadoes. These lead to secondary hazards like mud/landslides and flooding. This combination of hazards makes them particularly dangerous and challenging to manage. For example, the

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1   World Meteorological Organization (WMO) Atlas of Mortality and Economic Losses from Weather, Climate and Water Extremes (1970–2019)

combination of heavy rain and storm surge leads to coastal inundation/flooding (https://www.nhc.noaa.gov/surge/surge_intro.pdf). Coastal communities especially need to be well-prepared and have robust emergency plans in place to mitigate the impacts of these events.

The longer the tropical cyclone circulation system is sustained after landfall, the more likely that torrential rains will be maintained.

K.3.1 Situational awareness and anticipatory action

Tropical cyclones are monitored from their early stages through international cooperation and

coordination. WMO coordinates activities through its Tropical Cyclone Programme. Regional Specialized Meteorological Centres (RSMCs) and Tropical Cyclone Warning Centres (TCWCs, https://community.wmo.int/en/tropical-cyclone-regional-bodies) detect, monitor, analyse, and forecast tropical cyclones' intensity, their track and related hazards in their area of responsibility. Those centres provide real-time advisory information to National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHSs) which issue the official warnings (see https://worldweather.wmo.int/en/home.html and https://severe-weather.wmo.int/).

Tropical cyclones may be difficult to predict because they can suddenly weaken or change their track. Meteorologists adapt computer modelling to

Table 1 Classification of tropical cyclones (see also https://wmo.int/content/classification-of-tropical-cyclones).

Average wind speed (km/h)	North Atlantic, East & Central North Pacific	North Indian: Arabian Sea & Bay of Bengal	North West Pacific	South West Indian	South East Indian/ South Pacific
< 63	Tropical Depression				
63-117	Tropical Storm	Cyclonic Storm & Severe Cyclonic Storm	Tropical Storm & Severe Tropical Storm	Moderate & Severe Tropical Storm	Tropical Cyclone Category 1 & 2
≥ 118	Hurricane Category 1	Very Severe Cyclonic Storm	Typhoon	Tropical Cyclone	Severe Tropical Cyclone Category 3
	Hurricane Category 2				
	Hurricane Category 3				
	Hurricane Category 4	Extremely Severe Cyclonic Storm		Intense Tropical Cyclone	Severe Tropical Cyclone Category 4
	Hurricane Category 5	Super Cyclonic Storm		Very Intense Tropical Cyclone	Severe Tropical Cyclone Category 5

forecast how a tropical cyclone evolves, including its track and change of intensity, when and where one will hit land and at which intensity. The TC forecasts are made available for up to 96 hours. Nevertheless, determining a tropical cyclone's exact location, time, and intensity at landfall remains challenging. It is worth noting that the effects of a TC start well ahead of the landfall and impacts could be felt long after landfall.

Over the years, predicting the track of tropical cyclones has improved greatly. However, figuring out how strong they will be, how much rain they will bring, and how high the storm surges will be hasn't improved as much. A method based on probabilities (the range of possible outcomes and how likely each one is) is being developed and applied to track, intensity, and related hazards.

Through its Members and Centres, the WMO community supports humanitarian action globally by providing authoritative weather, water, and climate information and expert advice. The WCM curates authoritative information to deliver situational awareness products to UN and humanitarian agencies like UNHCR, UN OCHA, and IFRC. In addition, the WCM facilitates liaison between humanitarian agencies and hydrometeorological and climate services. Information or dedicated support can be provided upon request (see WMO Coordination Mechanism: https://wmo.int/activities/wmo-coordination-mechanism-wcm).

K.3.3 Rapid impact estimation

GDACS rapid impact estimation: Within ⊠ 30min from source update (usually every 6 hrs): automatic definition of alert level for humanitarian activation, this includes:

- Area potentially mostly affected (tropical cyclone track map)
- Event map
- Wind and precipitation forecast maps
- Storm surge calculations
- Intensity category wind polygons
- Exposed population to wind, rain and storm surge estimate (affected area in the tropical cyclone's wind category)

- Exposed critical infrastructure

Within GDACS, under the Satellite Mapping Coordination Systems (SMCS), satellite mapping information products also become available when the relative mapping services are activated.

K.3.4 Physical impact

Extension of the impact caused by a tropical cyclone varies with its size and intensity. Damages depend on the speed of the wind, the amount of rain, the height of the potential storm surge, flooding and the combination of all those hazards.

Weather and sea conditions can deteriorate substantively well ahead of landfall, and impacts will be felt long after landfall. The impacts caused by tropical cyclones can result in fatalities, displacement of populations, and damage to infrastructure, especially in densely populated areas. Coastal communities affected by a tropical cyclone's landfall are particularly vulnerable to such floods. The greatest damage to life and property is not from the wind itself but from rainfall and storm surges leading to flooding and landslides.

- Strong winds and floods caused by tropical cyclones can heavily damage infrastructure and buildings. High buildings are particularly vulnerable to hurricane force winds, as wind speeds tend to increase with height.
- In mountainous areas, these floods can be particularly harmful as heavy flash floods can lead to landslides and mudslides, especially in areas with saturated soils.
- Wind can disrupt telephone lines, antennae, and satellite disks, and damage high-voltage wires, causing power cuts.
- Crops, livestock, and fisheries in the affected area are likely to be damaged, as well as seeds and tools.
- Debris such as signs, roofing materials and small items left outside can turn into small missiles in strong winds and can lead to loss of life and damage to structures.
- Winds can cause trees to split and fall. Uprooted trees can damage underground utility lines.
- A certain amount of the destruction caused by cyclones results from debris hitting structures

that would normally be able to withstand the wind. Should the winds persist, the amount of debris will increase, causing additional damage and producing more debris.

K.3.5 Direct impact on the population

The direct impacts of tropical cyclones depend on the number of people living in low-lying coastal areas in the storm's direct path, the built environment, including building design, and whether there is sufficient time for warning and evacuation. High-density settlements in low-lying areas combined with poor housing construction amplifies risks. Storm surges, worsened with rain, leading to coastal inundation, is the primary direct cause of mortality following tropical cyclones.

- TCs can destroy businesses, farms, and fisheries, leading to immediate and often long-term income loss for individuals and families dependent on these sectors.

- TCs can destroy standing crops through high winds, flooding, and saltwater intrusion, leading to immediate food shortages. Flooding and structural damage can ruin stored food supplies, exacerbating food insecurity.

- High winds, flying debris, and flooding can cause the immediate death of livestock. Surviving animals may suffer injuries and are at increased risk of diseases due to exposure to the elements, contaminated water, and poor sanitary conditions post-cyclone. Grazing lands and stored feed can be destroyed, leading to food shortages for livestock. This can result in malnutrition and decreased productivity.

- TCs can directly and indirectly impact public health in various ways. Some of these include an increase in drowning and other physical injuries, a rise in the risk of water and vector-borne infectious diseases, disruption of health systems and facilities, leaving communities without access to healthcare, and causing damage to basic infrastructure like food and water supplies and safe shelter.

- A speedy response is crucial to prevent the spread of diseases. The disease risks are highest in overcrowded areas where water and sanitation standards have declined. This can occur when large populations are displaced from flooded areas and forced to stay in shelters without proper water supply.

- Flood waters may contain sewage and chemicals and hide sharp metal or glass objects, electrical lines, or dangerous snakes and reptiles, resulting in injuries, diseases, electrocution, and bites.

- Major population movements are rare but may occur in heavily damaged urban areas due to flooding or storm surges.

- Repeated TCs and the resultant damage to agricultural land can compromise long-term food security, making it harder for communities to recover and rebuild their food stocks.

K.3.6 Aggravating factors

Several factors can worsen the effects of a TC:

- **Winds:** Valleys with gradual slopes can increase wind speed, while deep, enclosed valleys offer wind protection. Surrounding dense forests can reduce wind force.

- **Rain and floods:**

  » Slow-moving and tropical storms that move into mountainous regions usually produce larger amounts of rainfall.

  » Bigger systems = more rainfall, slower systems = more rainfall.

  » The physical characteristics of the drainage basin, such as the soil type, the degree of saturation of the ground, and the vegetation that controls runoff.

  » The type of drainage system used has a notable impact on its expected discharge capacity. Closed systems that use pipes are more prone to blockages, making maintenance more challenging. Failure to maintain these systems can result in overflow and severe flooding in urban areas.

- **Storm surge:** Potentially disastrous surges can occur in low-lying coastal areas and across inland water bodies such as bays, estuaries, lakes, and rivers, leading to severe flooding. When the tide is high and combined with the storm surge, the total water level is higher, and the impacts are worsened.

The type of drainage system used has a notable impact on its expected discharge capacity. Closed systems that use pipes are more prone to blockages, making maintenance more challenging. Failure to maintain these systems can result in overflow and severe flooding in urban areas.

Buildings with lightweight structures and wood frames are most susceptible to damage during cyclones, particularly older buildings where the quality of wood has degraded over time. Houses made of unreinforced or poorly constructed concrete blocks are also at risk. Buildings constructed with mud are particularly vulnerable to heavy rainfall and flooding.

K.3.7 Typical needs

In case of large infrastructural damage, USAR teams may be needed to search for survivors trapped under damaged buildings. Similarly, Emergency Medical Teams (EMTs) may also be needed to treat injuries and diseases that occur in the aftermath of a tropical cyclone.

Violent winds and flooding may displace people. Shelters and evacuation centres, including all basic services regarding food, water, non-food items, sanitation, health services and safe places, will usually be a priority.

Food security – Distribution of non-perishable food items to address immediate food security needs, including provision of high-protein and high-calorie foods, especially for vulnerable populations such as children, pregnant women, and the elderly. Long-term strategies to rebuild and improve food production, including providing seeds and agricultural inputs for replanting crops is also needed.

WASH—Ensuring access to safe drinking water is a priority. This involves the immediate provision of bottled water or water purification tablets. Additionally, mobile water treatment units should be deployed, and household water filters should be distributed to further guarantee clean water access. Restoring damaged water supply systems, including the repair of wells, pipes, and treatment plants should be initiated as soon as possible. To prevent waterborne diseases and maintain hygiene, temporary sanitation facilities should be established,

providing a critical component of the overall recovery strategy.

Agricultural assistance may include the provision of seeds, fertilizers, and tools to help farmers restart crop production and measures to address soil salinity and erosion caused by flooding and storm surges.
See also **Section K.4** on floods for more on typical needs.

K.3.8 UNDAC mission

UNDAC teams have often been sent to countries that are expected to be hit by a tropical cyclone as a preventive measure. Mobilization and deployment in such cases happen rapidly, as it is critical for the team to be on the ground before the cyclone makes landfall, ensuring that they can respond quickly and effectively.

- When pre-positioned, the first step should be establishing a working relationship with the National/Local Authorities and the RC/HC office. Together, you should assess the preparedness measures that have been put in place. At a minimum, you should agree on roles and responsibilities and the first actions to be taken after the tropical cyclone has passed. Supporting damage assessments, access, and humanitarian needs are typical first tasks for an UNDAC team, as well as preparing for facilitation of coordination for possible incoming international response.
- If the team has been pre-positioned in a country expected to be hit by a tropical cyclone, it is of utmost importance to locate a safe place to shelter when the storm makes landfall. UNDAC members must be prepared to be in lockdown during the period while the tropical cyclone passes and should be deployed with enough food and water to carry them over. It may take several days before it is safe to start any substantial work, and communications and power may be cut off during this period.

During the mission, work and rest areas should be established in a strategically central position for the relief operation, co-located with or close to the National Emergency Management Agency's (NEMA) Emergency Operation Centre (EoC).

K.3.9 Safety concerns

Safe shelter during tropical cyclones should be in modern reinforced concrete buildings that follow building norms, including risk mitigation measures. Structural engineers can advise on this. The building should be located away from other installations, like power masts and cables, etc., that may fall and damage it. Preferably, it should be on high ground that is not susceptible to flooding.

Because there is a high risk of power loss, it is advisable to procure a generator and enough fuel to sustain operations while in lockdown.

See also floods **Section K.4.**

K.4 Floods

Floods are naturally occurring seasonal phenomena that play a vital role in maintaining soil fertility. They do so by depositing fresh layers of sediments, sand, and gravel and flushing salt out of soils. Coincidentally, floods are also one of the most widespread natural-hazard-related disasters in scope and severity.

Floods can be either local, affecting a neighbourhood or community, or very large, affecting entire regions. The pattern of floods across all continents has been changing over the last decades. In many regions, floods are becoming more frequent, intense, and impactful for local communities, particularly because the number of people living in areas vulnerable to flooding is increasing due to poverty, governance and development challenges.

Heavy rain is the primary cause of significant riverine floods. Brief torrential rain, which can generate flash floods, is the second leading cause. Both of these types of rains can be created by a variety of weather phenomena, including winter depressions, atmospheric rivers, tropical cyclones, and seasonal monsoon rains. See also **Section K.3** Tropical Cyclones. Other natural processes, such as snowmelt, can also lead to flooding. Additionally, inadequate drainage in urban areas and failure of levees and dams can contribute to flooding.

There are various types of floods, including river floods, which is the most common type, coastal floods, flash floods, groundwater floods, ice-jam floods, ponding floods, snowmelt floods, surface water flooding, and glacial lake outburst floods.

- **River flood –** This is a temporary increase in the water level of a stream or body of water that reaches a peak and then recedes at a slower pace. These floods can happen in various river and catchment areas. They usually occur on flood plains or washlands when the water flow exceeds the capacity of the stream channels, and water spills over the natural banks or artificial barriers. River floods are primarily caused by prolonged precipitation events upstream from the affected area. However, they can also occur when traditional flood-control structures, such as levees and dikes, are overtopped.

- **Flash flood –** This is a type of flood that occurs quickly and with a high peak discharge. It usually happens within 3-6 hours of heavy rainfall, and it is limited to small water basins with steep slopes. Flash floods are highly localised and can cause raging torrents that sweep away everything in their path. They can occur due to various reasons, such as dam or levee failure, sudden release of water in a previously blocked passage, or heavy debris or ice that obstructs the riverbeds. These floods can be extremely dangerous, especially in urban areas or mountain canyons.

- **Coastal flooding –** This is a type of flood that usually occurs due to storm surges and high winds combined with high tides. The surge is a consequence of rising sea levels caused by low atmospheric pressure, especially near major estuaries or confined sea areas. When water accumulates in an area, it can become more intense due to two factors. Firstly, the seabed may become shallower, causing the water to pile up. Secondly, the flow of water back towards its source may be slowed down, which amplifies the buildup of water in that area.

K.4.1 Early warning

Except for flash floods[2], it is possible to reasonably predict river floods and coastal floods. By using weather forecasts to determine expected precipitation levels, combined with in-situ observations of soil moisture, snow or antecedent water levels and hydrologic/hydrodynamic models it is possible to make predictions of flooding.

Local prediction systems are available in many regions. Globally, floods can be forecasted through the Copernicus Global Flood Awareness System (GloFAS) and its Rapid Risk Assessment (RRA) tool. The RRA provides information on the hazard, including its timing, spatial distribution, magnitude, and details on the potentially exposed population, administrative divisions, settlements, and critical infrastructures. GDACS is currently developing full integration of the RRA into the floods section to automatically forecast major flood events.

K.4.2 Rapid impact estimations

GDACS rapid impact estimation: Within <15min from the source update, there is an automatic definition of alert level for humanitarian activation, this includes:

- Areas that mostly affected,
- Event map,
- Meteorological forecast map
- Exposure estimates (affected area polygons
- Reported casualties.

Within GDACS, under the Satellite Mapping Coordination Systems (SMCS), satellite mapping information products also become available when the relative mapping services are activated.

K.4.3 Physical impact

It is natural for rivers to overtop their banks with higher or lower frequency and spread out over their natural catchment areas. Human settlements and infrastructure in flood-prone areas can worsen the impact of floods, causing damage to property and loss of life.

- Flooding can cause significant damage by carrying a large amount of debris, such as sediment, silt, and organic material, which can obstruct and damage drainage channels, bridges, public roads, thoroughfares, and homes. Electricity is often interrupted in flood-affected areas.

- Structural damages after floods are common, as buildings may be swept away by water, inundated, collapse, or become damaged by the impact of floating debris.

- Floods can erode the ground under buildings and render them useless.

- Landslides and mudslides are common after heavy rains when saturated soils cause rock, earth, or debris to move down slopes.

- Containers of toxic substances can be carried away and their contents may be released.

- Flooding can dislodge landmines that had been under the surface or buried in riverbanks.

- Floods have the capacity to change the direction of rivers, which can disturb transportation, infrastructure, and agriculture over a vast area. Valleys are usually more adversely affected than open areas. The losses incurred are not limited to direct damages alone; indirect losses can also be significantly higher. Crops, food stocks, livestock, seeds, and tools in the impacted area may be lost.

- Freshwater floods carry suspended solids that leave mud and soil behind when the waters recede, possibly causing interruptions in water mains. Saltwater floods can make water sources unusable due to the high salinity levels. There are no inexpensive treatment methods that can be used to remove salinity from saltwater.

K.4.4 Direct Impact on the population

- Even as low as 15 cm, fast-moving water can knock a grown person off their feet, and 40 cm deep water can carry away most automobiles.

- One of the leading causes of death during floods is drowning. Two-thirds of deaths associated

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2   The Flash Food Guidance System (FFGS) is an initiative developed by the Hydrological Research Center to provide WMO members with guidance products for flash floods. See https://wmo.int/projects/ffgs and www.hrcwater.org for more information.

with flooding are from drowning, with the other third from physical trauma, heart attacks, electrocution, carbon monoxide poisoning and fire.

- Other health issues related to floods are usually caused by injuries, infections, and chemical hazards. Common injuries that may occur include lacerations or punctures caused by glass debris, nails, and electrical shocks. Hypothermia can also be a problem, especially for children who are trapped in floodwaters for extended periods. Exposure to flood waters and rain can increase the risk of respiratory tract infections due to loss of shelter and exposure.

- Floods often result in drinking water contamination. Furthermore, power cuts may interrupt water treatment and supply plants, increasing the risk of water-borne diseases and impacting the proper functioning of health facilities.

- Floods can potentially increase the transmission of communicable diseases, e.g., water-borne diseases, such as typhoid fever, cholera, leptospirosis and hepatitis A, and vector-borne diseases, such as malaria, dengue and dengue haemorrhagic fever, yellow fever, and West Nile Fever.

- Floods often cause a large number of people to be displaced in a short amount of time. The length of the displacement depends on the duration of inundation. Even after the water recedes, the living and working conditions of those affected may not necessarily improve. Longer-term humanitarian needs usually emerge when the flood victims return home.

- Flooding may also lead to the release of hazardous materials, gas, oil and chemical spills and subsequent contamination.

K.4.5 Aggravating factors

- Geography and climate, such as recurring seasonal heavy storms and high groundwater levels, are significant factors that affect the risk of flooding. Steep terrain tends to concentrate runoff into streams very quickly and is often a contributory factor.

- Changes in soil properties, such as burn areas resulting from wildfires, impervious soils, removal of surface vegetation, and excess runoff caused by warm rainfall on significant snowpack, can also contribute to floods. When warm weather follows a winter with heavy snowfall in higher elevations, this can cause a rapid thawing and lead to unusually high-water levels in runoff rivers and catchment areas.

- Neglected or poorly designed dams, constructions and residential sites in flood-prone areas, obstructions of drainage channels, sewage treatment plants, waste dumps, or hazardous industries in low-lying areas can all contribute to the severity of flooding and its impact on communities.

- Communities located downstream from dams, low-level housing, and mud-built houses are all at risk of flooding.

- Lack of holistic flood risk mitigation planning along large river basins can make floods worse. For example, if communities upstream build levees on natural catchment areas, it may lead to excess water that gains force and creates more severe floods for communities further downstream.

K.4.6 Typical needs

- In the event of a large-scale flood, the immediate priority is to evacuate individuals from high places like rooftops and trees where they may have sought refuge from the rising water.

- Floods often result in a large number of displaced people in need of shelter solutions, evacuation centres, including all basic services regarding food, water, non-food items, sanitation, health services and safe places.

- Sewage systems may be flooded, resulting in overflowing wastewater that may contaminate drinking water sources and increase the risk of water-borne and communicable diseases. Stagnant water may become breeding spaces for insects and increase the risk of vector-borne diseases. Water purification units may be a priority.

- Epidemiological surveillance and disease control including:

  » Medical diagnosis and treatment
  » Vector control measures
  » Vaccination against Hepatitis A
  » Malaria prevention
  » Hygiene and health education awareness raising and promotion.

- In large floods, access to several areas by road becomes difficult or impossible. The road network will highly likely be underwater in several places, and bridges and fords may be damaged or flooded. In such situations, aerial assets such as helicopters may be the only way to reach people who are cut off and can't be reached by land.

- Emergency situations also tend to exacerbate existing inequalities among the population and lead to a rise in human rights and protection concerns. Large displacements can worsen existing inequalities and raise protection risks. Special considerations should be given to known protection risks in the context. See also **Chapter G.2** Centrality of protection and Quality Response. A breakdown of social structures and services can result in increased risks of exploitation, abuse, and neglect for vulnerable groups, and relief efforts must prioritize the unique needs of these groups to ensure their safety and well-being. Women and children often face heightened vulnerability and are disproportionately affected. Female-led households may have less access to resources, financial independence, and decision-making power, which complicates their ability to recover. Children are particularly susceptible to physical harm and psychological trauma. They may be orphaned, and displacement often disrupts their education and routine, leading to long-term challenges.

- Informal settlers in coastal areas or close to waterways are also more vulnerable as housing is poor and after a flood their lack of land rights are exposed.

K.4.7 UNDAC mission

- Depending on which natural hazard precedes the flood, e.g., windstorms, prolonged or torrential rains, etc., the UNDAC mission may either be sent ahead of the forecasted weather as pre-positioning or be mobilised after the flood has occurred. In the latter cases, deployment will often take a few days while the mission Terms of Reference (ToR) are discussed with the RC/HC and/or OCHA regional office.

- During the mission, work and rest areas should be established in a strategically central position, on a high ground not prone to flooding, for the relief operation, co-located with or close to the National Emergency Management Agency's (NEMA) Emergency Operation Centre (EoC). The flooded area may be very large however, and finding a central position may be challenging. In these situations, several UNDAC hubs (sub-OSOCCs) may be needed.

- A separate UNDAC flood response guideline can be found in the UNDAC Toolbox.

K.4.8 Safety concerns

The possible impact on water and sanitation services will also impact the UNDAC team. Pay particular attention to hygiene and preventing waterborne, vector-borne, and communicable diseases. Use mosquito nets and repellents and consider if malaria prophylaxis is necessary.

Exercise caution and use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) when entering premises/structures that have suffered flood damage. The respiratory effects of dampness and mould can cause serious illness and can be fatal in more severe cases. The respiratory effects include general symptoms such as cough, wheezing, and shortness of breath, as well as an increased risk of airway infections, including aspergillosis, i.e., an infection of the airways by the fungus Aspergillus.

Possible access issues may necessitate travel by small boats. Boat safety procedures, such as wearing life vests and being aware of life rafts, should be given special attention.

Travel by road may involve crossing areas that are flooded or eroded from water damage or landslides. Special attention should be given to safety procedures for crossing roads immersed in water, and subject matter experts should consider whether the road can be used by light and/or heavy vehicles.

K.4.9 Security concerns

Normal precautions depending on context and the safety & security briefing from UNDSS.

K.5 Volcanoes

Volcanic activity is responsible for direct and indirect different hazards associated with lava flows, lava domes, ash or tephra fallout, volcanic gases, ballistics, pyroclastic density currents, debris flows, lahars and floods. These are all consequences at the ground surface triggered by the movement of magma below the earth's surface or its direct emergence under subaerial conditions. The violence of volcanic activity on the earth's surface depends on the pressure of the gases dissolved in the magma.

There are two main types of volcanic eruptions: effusive and explosive. Effusive eruptions occur when almost no gas is dissolved in the magma, causing a slow and quiet flow of lava to the surface. Effusions of lava commonly continue from days to months, occasionally for years. Velocity of the lava front depends on magma viscosity. When viscosity is high, lava flows propagate very slowly, so it can generally be avoided by exposed population. Explosive eruptions occur when large quantity of pressurized gas is dissolved in the magma, leading to violent explosions that produce ash, tephra, ballistics and pyroclastic debris.

Each has very different dynamics, also regarding time and area of impact. A volcanic eruption, with all the related hazards, can last from a few days to years. Its dynamic can be detected within minutes or days, and it can affect from a few square kilometres to hundreds of square kilometres or to the entire planet.

In most cases, a combination of different volcanic activities may occur during the same volcanic eruption, e.g., ground shaking, lava flow, gas, ash emissions, etc. Explosive eruptions are considered the most dangerous, as alert time is short and limits possible evacuation of areas of risk. Moreover, it is usually extremely challenging to determine when a volcano may provoke an explosion, even in presence of clear precursor signals of it.

During an effusive eruption, the speed of lava depends on its viscosity, and it can initially reach several kilometres per hour for low viscosity (basaltic) magma. However, within a few hours, it can slow down to a walking pace or less. On steep slopes, the velocity of some lava can be as high as tens of kilometres per hour.

Basaltic lava flows can extend from 1 to 10 kilometres, with some reaching over 30 kilometres and even 50 kilometres. These types of lava flows can also be 3 to 20 meters thick. Historical lava flows on land have typical volumes between 0.01 and 0.1 km3, but in some cases, the flow fields can be exceptionally large and exceed 10 km3.

More viscous lava (andesitic), on the other hand, are travelling usually shorter distances, ranging from 5 kilometres in length, up to tens of kilometres and typically advances at rates of 0.1 km per day or even less. After an eruption, some parts of lava flows may remain molten, which can extend the lava advancement time. Lava flow with andesitic composition may vary in thickness from 20 to 300 meters, with volumes typically ranging from 0.01 to 0.1 km3. However, in some cases, they can be as large as 10 to 20 km3.

A lava dome is a volcanic edifice created by the emergence of very viscous (andesitic) magma at the surface. Lava domes generally grow slowly and do not pose an imminent danger to a population, but they may collapse to generate hazardous pyroclastic flows.

Historically, pyroclastic flows have been the deadliest of all volcanic activity types. Pyroclastic flows are hot, dense, fast-moving flows of lava pieces, volcanic ash, and hot gases that move extremely quickly across the ground surface at velocities of tens to hundreds of kilometres per hour and have temperatures typically between 200 and 600°C. They typically originate from the gravitational collapse of explosive eruptive columns and lava domes. Most pyroclastic flows spread between a few to tens of kilometres from the source. For exceptionally large-magnitude events, pyroclastic flows may travel over 100 km and cover areas of up to hundred km2.

Two different flow parts commonly form pyroclastic flows: a dense basal undercurrent and a diluted upper part whose motion is mainly dominated by turbulence. The dense basal part strongly interacts with (and is controlled by) the topographic surface

as it erodes and deposits material along its path. The diluted upper part tends to be less controlled by topography and may decouple from the main dense undercurrent, overcoming topographic obstacles and following other paths.

When a pyroclastic flow impacts the sea surface, its large momentum may be transferred to the water, generating a tsunami. In such a case, the volcanic eruption can have indirect consequences for the population living in the coastal area, also hundreds of kilometres from the volcano.

K.5.1 Early warning

Knowledge of possible eruption sites, the travel distance a lava flow, the height of a volcanic column, the distance a pyroclastic flow can travel, the area of the possible volcanic ballistics and ash fall, the speed of the flow front, and the affected area is crucial for assessing hazards related to volcanic activities.

If a volcanic area is well-monitored, the movement of magma towards the surface may be detected days, weeks, or even years before an eruption. This enables planning, preparation, and emergency actions such as evacuation of the exposed population.

Monitoring lava-dome extrusion rates and topography in high resolution, both spatially and temporally, can allow for the anticipation of dome collapse pyroclastic flows, leading to timely evacuation of the population.

K.5.2 Rapid impact estimations

GDACS rapid impact estimation: issued within 1hr from source update (upon expert assessment); manual definition of alert level for humanitarian activation, this includes:

- Potential area mostly affected,
- Event map,
- Volcanic ash detected and forecasted by Volcanic Ash Advisories (VAA),
- Meteorological forecast map,
- Exposure estimate (affected countries, critical infrastructures, population affected in various distances from eruption source).

Within GDACS, under the Satellite Mapping Coordination Systems (SMCS), satellite mapping information products also become available when the relative mapping services are activated.

K.5.3 Physical impact

- During an eruption, a volcano can eject large quantities of volcanic material, known as tephra, into the atmosphere. This can include ash, small rocks, and volcanic bombs, i.e., larger rocks. Tephra fallout can cause damage to human health (respiratory issues), buildings, infrastructure, and agriculture, particularly if the accumulation is heavy.

- Lahars are fast-moving mudflows or debris flows that occur when volcanic material mixes with water, either from rainfall, melting snow, or the melting of ice and snow on the volcano. Lahars can travel many kilometres downstream, burying everything in their path, causing significant destruction.

- Lava can flow from a volcano's vent, destroying everything in its path, including buildings, roads, and vegetation. Although lava flows usually move slowly enough to allow for evacuation of at-risk communities, they can still pose a significant threat to them. Inundation, burial, fire, and explosion may damage buildings, infrastructure, communications, agriculture, and the environment.

- Damage may not be complete, but partial burial or inundation by lava generally makes buildings, infrastructure and land unusable. Buried infrastructure may also be destroyed due to thermal impacts.

- Pyroclastic flows can kill all living things and destroy structures by abrasion, impact, burial and heat.

- Escape routes may be cut off, or lava may trigger explosions on melting snow, ice and water, or flammable fluids.

- Lava flows may ignite forest or urban fires.

- Volcanic gases and aerosols (air pollution) need to be considered, possibly over large areas. Volcanic eruptions release various gases, including sulphur dioxide, carbon dioxide, and hydrogen sulphide, into the atmosphere. These gases can have adverse effects on air quality and can

contribute to respiratory problems, acid rain, and climate disruption.

- Ashfall can blanket vast areas, causing respiratory problems, damaging crops, and disrupting transportation and infrastructure.

- Volcanic eruptions can cause environmental damage, including habitat destruction, soil erosion, and contamination of water bodies. Lahars (mudflows) and ash deposition can alter landscapes and ecosystems, affecting biodiversity and ecosystem services.

- Ashfall can damage crops, contaminate water sources, and disrupt livestock grazing, leading to agricultural losses and food shortages. Ash can also coat vegetation, making it difficult for plants to photosynthesise and affecting ecosystems.

- Prior, before and during volcanic eruptions, the ground around the volcano may deform by swelling or sinking. This deformation can damage infrastructure, such as roads and buildings, and can also lead to landslides and other geological hazards.

- Volcanic eruptions can trigger secondary events such as earthquakes, landslides, and avalanches, which can cause further damage and complicate rescue and recovery efforts.

K.5.4 Direct impact on the population

- Volcanic eruptions can lead to injuries or fatalities due to tephra fall, pyroclastic flows, lahars, and other types of volcano-related natural phenomena. Deaths commonly result from thermal injury, including laryngeal and pulmonary oedema, asphyxiation, and impact or blast trauma.

- Harmful gases, ash, and other pollutants can be released into the air, leading to respiratory problems, eye irritation, skin irritation, and other health issues. Exposure to volcanic ash can also increase the risk of lung diseases.

- Injuries may occur if individuals walk on a lava carapace too thin to carry the weight of a person when there is molten lava below the outer shell.

- The risk of a volcanic eruption can force the evacuation of nearby communities due to the immediate dangers posed by lava flows, ashfall, pyroclastic flows, and other hazards.

- Psychosocial effects may include anxiety, stress, grief, and trauma resulting from loss of life,

displacement, property damage, and disruption of daily life. Social cohesion may be strained, and vulnerable populations may face heightened risks. Long-term displacement, if combined with loss of livelihoods and homes, may cause longer-term mental and physical health impacts. The long-term cascading effects can be more severe than immediate impacts.

K.5.5 Aggravating factors

- The composition of magma (molten rock beneath the earth's surface) can influence the explosiveness of an eruption. Magma with high viscosity and gas content tends to produce more explosive eruptions as gas bubbles become trapped, and pressure builds up before release.

- The presence of gases, such as water vapour, carbon dioxide, sulphur dioxide, and others, dissolved in magma can influence eruption dynamics. Increased gas content can lead to more explosive eruptions by driving rapid expansion and fragmentation of magma as it reaches the surface.

- Tectonic forces, such as plate movements and interactions between tectonic plates, can influence volcanic activity by affecting the movement and storage of magma beneath the Earth's surface. Subduction zones, where one tectonic plate is forced beneath another, are often associated with volcanic arcs and explosive eruptions.

- The interaction between magma and groundwater can lead to eruptions where water is rapidly vaporised by heat from magma, causing extremely explosive fragmentation of rock and ash generation. This process can occur when magma encounters water-saturated rocks or aquifers.

- The eruption history of a volcano can influence future eruptions by affecting the state of the volcanic edifice, magma plumbing system, and surrounding landscape. Volcanoes with a history of explosive eruptions may be more likely to experience similar events in the future.

- External triggers, such as earthquakes, landslides, or human activities, e.g., mining, geothermal drilling, can sometimes initiate or influence volcanic eruptions by disturbing the stability of volcanic systems or causing changes in pressure and stress within the Earth's crust.

- High population density in volcanic hazard zones increases the number of people at risk during an eruption. Settlement patterns that place communities close to active volcanoes can lead to greater exposure to volcanic hazards, including lava flows, pyroclastic flows, and ashfall.

- Urban areas near volcanoes may have dense infrastructure, including buildings, roads, and utilities, which can be vulnerable to damage during eruptions. Poorly constructed or informal housing may be particularly susceptible to collapse or damage from volcanic hazards.

- Socioeconomic disparities can exacerbate the impact of volcanic eruptions, as marginalized communities may have limited access to resources, infrastructure, and social support networks. Vulnerable populations, such as low-income households, indigenous communities, and informal settlers, may face greater challenges in preparing for and recovering from volcanic disasters.

- Lack of access to accurate information about volcanic hazards, evacuation procedures, and emergency preparedness measures can hinder community resilience and increase vulnerability to volcanic disasters. Education and awareness-raising efforts are essential for empowering communities to make informed decisions and take proactive measures to reduce risk.

- Weak institutional capacity, inadequate disaster response planning, and limited disaster management resources can hamper effective preparedness and response efforts. Communities may lack access to information from early warning systems, evacuation plans, shelters, and emergency supplies needed to cope with volcanic emergencies.

- Volcanic eruptions can disrupt local economies that rely on tourism, agriculture, or other industries at risk of volcanic hazards. Economic dependencies may create incentives to downplay volcanic risks or prioritize short-term economic gains over long-term hazard mitigation measures.

K.5.6 Typical needs

- Attempts during ongoing eruptions to halt or divert flows by erecting barriers, spraying lava with water, or breaking the margins of lava channels have had mixed success. Nevertheless, barriers have been constructed alongside new high-value assets in some areas with volcano hazard risks.

- Many people may be displaced from their homes due to volcanic ash, lava flows, or other hazards. Providing emergency shelter is crucial to ensure the safety and well-being of those affected. Evacuation remains the most effective strategy for protecting life and health from primary and secondary hazards.

- Injuries such as burns, respiratory problems from ash inhalation, and trauma from falling debris are common. Medical care facilities may be overwhelmed, so setting up temporary clinics and providing medical supplies and personnel is crucial.

- Eruptions can contaminate water sources and destroy crops, leading to shortages of food and clean water. Providing access to safe drinking water and distributing food supplies is essential.

- Immediately after a volcanic eruption, people may be isolated, trapped or injured in affected areas. Lava flows and landslides may have cut off evacuation routes. Search and rescue teams may be needed to locate and evacuate survivors.

- Emergency situations also tend to exacerbate existing inequalities among the population and lead to a rise in human rights and protection concerns. Land rights issues related to long-term evacuation may be a concern for informal settlers. Special considerations should be given to known protection risks in the context. See also **Chapter G.2** Centrality of protection and quality response. A breakdown of social structures and services can result in increased risks of exploitation, abuse, and neglect for vulnerable groups, and relief efforts must prioritize the unique needs of these groups to ensure their safety and well-being. Women and children often face heightened vulnerability and are disproportionately affected. Female-led households may have less access to resources, financial independence, and decision-making power, which complicates their ability to recover. Children are particularly susceptible to physical harm and psychological trauma. They may be orphaned, and displacement often disrupts their education and routine, leading to long-term challenges.

K.5.7 UNDAC mission

UNDAC missions to volcanic eruptions have, in many cases, been initiated when early warning indicates a risk of an eruption. The affected country and the RC/HC have asked for specialist support with volcano risk assessment, evacuation planning, and setting up coordination support services.

Team composition in these cases requires a complementary set of skills spanning subject matter expertise in volcano risk management, environmental experts, and general disaster risk management. Collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)/OCHA Joint Environment Unit (JEU) and UNDAC's Operational Partners, like the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, is often necessary to put the right team of experts together.

Given the quality of early warning systems, there is often time to mobilise and compose a team with the right complementary skillsets and plan the mission properly before deploying. Typical mission objectives may include:

• Support the development of contingency and evacuation plans and be ready to support any response activities should the need for complete evacuation occur.
• Provide technical advice to local and national authorities to identify, assess, and mitigate negative environmental impacts induced by volcanic activities.
• Provide technical advice on volcanic (ongoing or possible) activities, dynamics, impact on nature and ecosystems, environmental toxicology, ash management, disaster waste management and environment in humanitarian action.

K.5.8 Safety concerns

There is a risk of exposure to tephra fall and volcanic gases, and regular monitoring of air quality should be conducted. This service is normally provided by national meteorological agencies, and UNDAC teams should check if the recorded average levels of suspended particles and gases are below the exposure limits recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO).

If ash falls, it may clog water and air filters. As a contingency, access to clean water should be secured before an eruption occurs.

A large quantity of ash in the atmosphere may create problems for air traffic, and consequently, reaching the areas affected by the eruption by helicopters and/or small airplanes could be very difficult or impossible.

The exposure to volcanic gases and particles can be mitigated with proper safety equipment like gas masks. UNDAC members should either bring them from their home base or check if they can procure them in-country.

Extreme caution must be exercised when moving near volcanic eruptions, as lightning strikes appear to occur most frequently around volcanoes with large ash plumes.

K.5.9 Security concerns

Normal precautions depending on context and the safety & security briefing from UNDSS.

K.6 Wildfires

Wildfires can be defined as any unplanned or uncontrolled fire affecting natural, cultural, industrial and residential landscapes. Wildfires play a natural role in many ecosystems by clearing out dead vegetation, promoting new growth, and recycling nutrients. However, when they occur in populated areas or under extreme conditions, wildfires can become destructive disasters, causing widespread damage and economic losses.

Wildfires are either started by natural causes, e.g., lightning, occasionally by burning coal seams or volcanic activity, etc., or – predominantly at global level – by human activities primarily linked to vegetation management through the burning of live or dead vegetation in natural or anthropogenically altered ecosystems. These include natural lands such as forests, grasslands, bush (shrub, scrub), terrain with high organic matter content (peatlands, wetlands), as well as human-managed lands such

as cultivated lands (agricultural and pasture lands, plantations, abandoned formerly cultivated lands).

Wildfire occurrence, characteristics, and impacts are sometimes linked to other hazards, like droughts, heat waves, and extreme weather events, which can influence fire intensity, spread, and severity and thus the duration, size, and controllability of wildfires.

K.6.1 Early warning

A component of the Copernicus Emergency Management Services is dedicated to enhancing wildfire prevention and assessing wildfire impacts and is referred to as the European Forest Fires Information System (EFFIS). It aims to provide early warning, and increase firefighting preparedness and efficiency, and to monitor the impact of damages caused by wildfires. EFFIS is currently focused on Europe, but its global reach is advancing through the development of a similar service through the Global Wildfire Information System (GWIS).

K.6.2 Rapid impact estimations

- Mathematical models were developed in the 1940s to predict wildfire behaviour. These models have been continuously evolving over the years. They take into account various factors and their complex relationships, such as the type of fuels (grass, shrub, small or large trees in their horizontal and vertical disposition on the ground), weather conditions (wind speed and direction, temperature, and relative humidity), the terrain's topography.

- Modelling wildfires and forecasting fire behaviour can anticipate the direction and intensity of the fire, which can be crucial for efficient evacuation and fire suppression. The models can also predict the spread of the fire and forecast smoke pollution, which helps protect human life and infrastructure.

- Some national and international disaster management organizations are exploring the use of artificial intelligence (AI) to analyse historical and real-time data sources such as weather, topography, fuel conditions, etc., using algorithms to forecast fire behaviour.

- Satellite data provide information on burnt areas and emissions. Among other data, GWIS provides statistics on the average area burnt, the number of fires, emissions and fire danger conditions by region and country on a global scale.

K.6.3 Physical impact

Wildfires can have severe and long-lasting physical impacts on natural ecosystems and human communities.

- Wildfires can damage or destroy infrastructure such as homes, buildings, roads, power lines, and telecommunications equipment. This can disrupt communities, affect national critical infrastructures, like hospitals, national grid, and transport systems, impede emergency response efforts, and require extensive resources for repair and rebuilding. The physical damage caused by wildfires can result in significant economic losses, including property damage, loss of crops or timber, and impacts on tourism and outdoor recreation industries.

- Wildfires affecting the remnants of human activities, like waste deposits, remediated and un-remediated mine sites, contaminated lands, etc., may result in co-burning and subsequent release of hazardous/toxic substances.

- Wildfires produce large amounts of smoke, particulate matter, and other pollutants, which can degrade air quality over wide areas. This can have significant health impacts on people, especially those with respiratory conditions, and can also affect visibility and aviation operations.

- Water quality will be impacted by wildfires as they deposit ash and other pollutants into water bodies, contaminating drinking water supplies and aquatic habitats. Runoff from burned areas can also increase the risk of flash flooding, soil erosion and pollution of downstream watersheds.

- Wildfires can destroy large areas of vegetation, including trees, shrubs, and grasslands. This loss of vegetation can disrupt ecosystems, reduce biodiversity, and lead to soil erosion and loss of habitat for wildlife. They can alter soil properties, leading to changes in soil structure, nutrient levels, and water retention capacity. This can impair soil fertility and productivity, making it more

difficult for vegetation to regrow and increasing the risk of erosion and sedimentation.

- The effects of wildfires on vegetation cover and soil stability may also create secondary hazards, such as postfire landslides, mudslides, flash floods, erosion and siltation, i.e., the dirt, soil, or sediment that is carried and deposited by water. While some silt in water is normal and healthy, many additional tons of silt may negatively impact water quality.

K.6.4 Direct impact on the population

- Wildfires produce smoke and other pollutants that can worsen air quality, leading to respiratory problems such as asthma, bronchitis, and exacerbation of existing conditions. In severe cases, exposure to wildfire smoke can cause acute respiratory distress and other serious health issues. Certain populations are particularly vulnerable. Wood smoke has high levels of particulate matter and toxins. Respiratory morbidity predominates, but cardiovascular, ophthalmic, and psychiatric problems can also result. Large areas of contaminated atmosphere may require the use of facemasks.

- Direct exposure to wildfires can result in injuries or fatalities, particularly for firefighters and residents in affected areas. Burns, smoke inhalation, and trauma from fire-related accidents are common risks during wildfire events. Severe burns resulting from direct contact with the fire require care in special units and carry a risk of multi-organ complications.

- Wildfires can have lasting psychological and emotional effects on individuals and communities, including feelings of fear, grief, and trauma. The uncertainty of evacuation, loss of property, and witnessing the destruction of natural landscapes can take a toll on mental well-being and contribute to post-traumatic stress disorders and other mental health issues.

K.6.5 Aggravation factors

- Sustained winds can aggravate the intensity and duration of wildfires. Dry, hot, and windy weather conditions create ideal conditions for wildfires to ignite and spread rapidly. Low humidity levels and high wind speeds can fan flames, increase

fire behaviour, and make firefighting efforts more challenging.

- Droughts reduce fuel moisture content, enhancing flammability and increasing the amount of dead matter susceptible to fire (dead branches, foliage). The availability and dryness of fuel, such as vegetation and dead organic matter, significantly influence wildfire behaviour.

- Excessive plant growth and accumulation of flammable debris can increase fuel loads, making fires more intense and difficult to control.

- The terrain and topography of an area can affect the behaviour and spread of wildfires. Steep slopes, canyons, and valleys can channel and accelerate fire spread, while changes in elevation and aspect can influence wind patterns and fire behaviour.

- The type, density, and flammability of vegetation play a significant role in determining wildfire behaviour. Dense forests with highly flammable trees and shrubs are more prone to intense wildfires, while grasslands and chaparral ecosystems can also support rapid fire spread under conducive conditions.

- Fires burning on terrain contaminated by radioactivity may lead to uncontrolled re-distribution of radioactive particles.

- Wildfires burning into industrial areas and waste deposits may generate toxic pollutants.

- Fires burning on terrain bearing unexploded ordinance and land mines could result in injuries and fatalities.

K.6.6 Typical needs

- Evacuation to safe areas is the main priority during wildfires. Individuals and families may require temporary shelter, including emergency shelters, transitional housing, or accommodations with friends and family members.

- International assistance may be needed with Ground Forest Fire Fighter (GFFF) teams and modules specially designed for international deployments, including aerial FFF assets, which should plug into the national incident command system (ICS) for wildfires.

- Access to food and clean water is essential for the well-being of affected populations, particularly those who have been displaced or are unable

to return to their homes due to damage or evacuation orders.

- The distribution of emergency supplies such as non-food items, such as clothing, bedding, hygiene articles, etc., can help meet the basic needs of affected individuals and families, particularly those who have lost possessions or been evacuated from their homes.

- Access to medical care, first aid services, mental health support, and medication is critical for treating injuries, respiratory problems, and other health issues requiring medical attention.

- Wildfires can cause emotional distress, trauma, and anxiety for affected individuals, including survivors, evacuees, and first responders. Providing psychosocial support, counselling services, and community-based mental health programs can help address emotional needs and promote resilience.

- Emergency situations also tend to exacerbate existing inequalities among the population and lead to a rise in human rights and protection concerns. Special considerations should be given to known protection risks in the context. See also **Chapter G.2** Centrality of protection and quality response. A breakdown of social structures and services can result in increased risks of exploitation, abuse, and neglect for vulnerable groups, and relief efforts must prioritize the unique needs of these groups to ensure their safety and well-being. Women and children often face heightened vulnerability and are disproportionately affected. Female-led households may have less access to resources, financial independence, and decision-making power, which complicates their ability to recover. Children are particularly susceptible to physical harm and psychological trauma. They may be orphaned, and displacement often disrupts their education and routine, leading to long-term challenges.

K.6.7 UNDAC mission

UNDAC missions to wildfires are rare but may take place in situations where national firefighting capacities are exhausted, and the affected country asks for international support. UNDAC has been mobilised in cases of large-scale wildfires that become a national emergency and cause

long-lasting pollution. In such cases, the typical response needs have been with GFFF teams, aerial FFF assets, emergency medical teams, and environmental experts.

Supporting the affected country with evacuation planning, coordination of international support and environmental assessments will be typical mission objectives in these cases. Environmental experts may be deployed alongside the UNDAC team.

When international GFFF teams, aerial FFF assets, and other firefighting assistance are deployed, UNDAC may have to establish a Reception/Departure Centre (RDC) and systems similar to a USAR Coordination Cell (UCC) to assist national ICS with coordinating international assistance. While INSARAG does not focus on FFF, OCHA can engage the network when affected governments are seeking advice or support in FFF. See also **Section G.10.1**.2 INSARAG coordination locations.

K.6.8 Safety concerns

The behaviour of wildfires can be difficult to predict as they can change direction and intensity based on weather, topography, and fuel availability. At the resting place and UNDAC office, the team needs to have an evacuation plan in place and be familiar with evacuation routes and assembly points. If the plan entails evacuating by car, keep vehicles fuelled and ready to go, and have an emergency kit in the vehicle with essential supplies. Follow evacuation routes and avoid driving through areas with active wildfires or heavy smoke.

Consider wearing protective clothing, including long sleeves, long pants, sturdy shoes, and a have a facemask or gasmask available to reduce exposure to smoke and ash. Carry a flashlight, mobile phone, and emergency supplies with you.

Limit outdoor exposure and avoid inhaling smoke and ash by staying indoors with windows and doors closed. Use air purifiers or filters to improve indoor air quality.

Exercise caution when moving near structures (domestic/industrial) near fire-active areas or where fires have been extinguished and hot embers are

still live. In remote woodland areas, structures usually have their own sewage disposal systems via underground septic tanks, rich in Methane and Hydrogen Sulphide gases, which, under ideal vapour-to-air mixture conditions, can form an explosive mixture in contact with an ignition source like hot embers.

In heavy woodland areas prone to wildfires, one usually finds sawmills using a variety of chemicals in bulk for different purposes, including wood processing and preservation. Common chemicals include Chromated Copper Arsenate (CCA); Alkaline Copper Quaternary (ACQ); Copper Azole (CA) and Boric Acid. Other chemicals such as Calcium Chloride are used to control dust in saw mill environments. Reference should be made to their respective Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) to obtain relevant PPE and safety information.

K.6.9 Security concerns

Normal precautions depending on context and the safety & security briefing from UNDSS.

K.7 Droughts

Droughts are climate extremes characterised by persistent unusual dry weather conditions affecting the hydrological balance. The conditions are usually associated with lack of precipitation, deficit in soil moisture and water reservoir storage. Consequently, conditions on the ground are such that they can affect socio-economic sectors as well as ecosystems. Drought is usually a slow-onset hazard and complex phenomenon that intensifies over time and is often defined based on specific needs across different spatial and temporal scales.

A flash drought is a type of drought that develops very quickly, typically within a few weeks, and is characterized by a rapid onset of severe water shortages. Unlike traditional droughts, which can develop and persist over months or even years, flash droughts occur suddenly and are often triggered by a combination of factors such as high temperatures, low humidity, strong winds, and a lack of precipitation. These conditions lead to rapid soil moisture depletion, stressing vegetation and water resources quickly.

Droughts can be characterized based on their severity, duration, extent, and timing, which can be all measured by using various indicators. All of them rely on setting thresholds based on long term climate data. Such thresholds are then used to identify the onset and the end of a drought as well as the extent and the severity of the event.

Drought indicators are based on climatic variables or parameters used to describe drought conditions and include:

- Precipitation, e.g., rainfall and snow,
- Temperature,
- Streamflow, i.e., the volume of water that moves over a designated point in a fixed period of time,
- Groundwater and reservoir levels,
- Soil moisture and snowpack.

For example, precipitation is often monitored with the Palmer Drought Index or the Standardized Precipitation Index (SPI). There are also combined indicators or complex models that consider several biophysical variables, such as the National Land Data Assimilation System (NLDAS) or the Combined Drought Indicator in Europe (Copernicus European Drought Observatory). There are also indices used for water supply forecasting, such as the Surface Water Supply Index (SWSI), and indices which reflect impacts on vegetation, such as the Vegetation Health Index (VHI) and Vegetation Drought Response Index (VegDR).

The Handbook of Drought Indicators and Indices provides a compendium of the most used drought indicators/indices in drought-prone regions.

K.7.1 Early warning

At an international level, the Integrated Drought Management Programme (IDMP), co-sponsored by the WMO and the Global Water Partnership (GWP), has developed a comprehensive framework based on three pillars: drought monitoring and early warning, vulnerability and impact assessment, and drought mitigation, preparedness and response. IDMP has over 35 partner organisations, including the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD).

IDMP developed the [National Drought Management Policy Guidelines](#), that include a 10-step process to assist countries in developing national drought plans and polices.

K.7.2 Rapid impact estimations

GDACS rapid impact estimation: Within ⬚ 30min from source update (every 10 days): manual definition of alert level for humanitarian activation, this includes:

- Area mostly affected by drought,
- Risk of Drought Impacts for Agriculture (RDrI-Agri from the Copernicus Global Drought Observatory),
- Event map,
- Meteorological forecast map,
- Exposure estimates for affected countries.

Within GDACS, under the Satellite Mapping Coordination Systems (SMCS), satellite mapping information products also become available when the relative mapping services are activated.

K.7.3 Physical impact

Droughts can impact all socio-economic sectors that are dependent on water availability and the environment and are often interlinked with water scarcity issues and the consequences of unsustainable use of water resources. The impacts of drought can be multiple and persist over longer time scale compared to the ones associated to other hazards.

Drought can have a significant impact on the availability of water in the soil, surface water bodies, and groundwaters, both in terms of quantity and quality. It generally occurs gradually and affects large areas over an extended period. The initial phase of drought is usually marked by a departure from normal precipitation levels, which is referred to as meteorological drought. Subsequently, drought conditions continue to spread through the hydrological cycle, both spatially and temporally, which is known as hydrological drought.

As a result of the lack of water, various systems and sectors that rely on water are affected. These include agriculture, ecosystems, power generation,

industry, river transportation, water supply, human and animal health, livelihood security, personal security, access to education, tourism, and recreation. Infrastructures and buildings located in certain soil types may also be affected due to the cracking and subsidence caused by the lack of water. The complete economic and financial consequences of droughts are difficult to quantify.

Regardless of the severity of drought, its impact greatly depends on the socio-economic context in which it occurs. The effects are determined by the exposure of people or things to the drought and the specific vulnerabilities of the affected area. Typical consequences may include:

- Decrease of vegetation productivity as a consequence of low soil moisture, affecting both agriculture and natural ecosystems.
- Shortage or lack of water from both surface and groundwaters.
- Water quality decreases, e.g., temperature, salinity, organic matter and turbidity, i.e., muddiness created by stirring up sediment or having foreign particles suspended.
- Presences of pathogens, algae blooms, oxygen content, and pollutants' concentration.
- Pest outbreaks in water-stressed ecosystems.
- Higher risk of wildfires by reducing fuel moisture content, enhancing its flammability, and increasing the amount of dead matter susceptible to fire, e.g., dead branches, foliage.
- Higher risk of floods as a result of decreasing soil absorbance and retention capability, thus increasing surface flows during intense precipitation events.

K.7.4 Direct impact on the population

As mentioned above, drought impacts depend heavily on the socio-economic contexts in which droughts occur. The effects of droughts are heavily influenced by the vulnerabilities of the population and what or who is exposed. Vulnerable populations are disproportionately affected by droughts, which are the most serious hazard to livestock and crops in nearly every part of the world. It's estimated that approximately 55 million people globally are affected by droughts every year.

Water scarcity impacts 40% of the world's population, and WHO estimates that as many as 700 million people are at risk of being displaced by 2030 due to drought.

In case of water supply shortages, a population will be exposed to discomfort and a regulated limitation in water use, or in extreme conditions will be displaced elsewhere.

The probability of health impacts resulting from drought can vary significantly, depending on the severity of the drought, the vulnerability of the population, existing health and sanitation infrastructure, and the availability of resources to mitigate the impacts. However, when drought leads to shortages of water and food in susceptible communities, it can have various effects on the health of the affected population, which may increase the risk of disease and death.

Droughts may adversely affect many economic sectors, e.g., agriculture, energy and industry, inland transportation, and tourism. An affected population may be subject to indirect impacts such as unemployment, an increase in the price of services, and mental health issues. Other acute and chronic effects, may include:

- Malnutrition due to the decreased availability of food.
- Micronutrient deficiency, such as iron deficiency anaemia.
- Increased risk of infectious diseases, such as cholera, diarrhoea, and pneumonia.
- Lack of safe water and sanitation.
- Lack of fodder and death of livestock can heavily affect pastoralist communities.
- Displacement, mass migration and rural abandonment.
- Economic downturns in any water-dependent sector.
- Conflicts over water resources and social unrest.
- Ecosystem collapse and biodiversity reduction.
- The increased risk of wildfires and dust storms may exacerbate respiratory and heart conditions.

K.7.5 Aggravating factors

- **Climate change -** an increase in global temperatures will lead to more frequent and severe droughts.
- **Heatwaves and high temperatures –** the heat greatly increases potential evapotranspiration, i.e., the sum of all processes by which water moves from the land surface to the atmosphere via evaporation and transpiration, which accelerates water depletion.
- Water scarcity – the unsustainable use of water resources, excessive abstraction and poor water management exacerbate drought effects.
- **Land degradation or unsustainable soil management** – the reduction of canopy cover, e.g., deforestation increases temperatures at ground level and reduces air moisture, and overexploitation alters the water cycle and may reduce water retention capability.
- **Urbanization –** increasing the amount of impervious surfaces and soil sealing prevents water from being absorbed into the ground and the local recharge of groundwater. Furthermore, the heat island effect and lack of vegetation exacerbate the loss of moisture.
- **Water pollution –** contamination of water sources can reduce the availability of clean water, worsening the consequences of a drought.

K.7.6 Typical needs

- Droughts severely limit access to clean water due to reduced precipitation and depleted water sources. Providing safe drinking water becomes a top priority to prevent dehydration and maintain hygiene. Temporary water supply issues may be addressed with water delivery by tankers, water purification, or through other technological temporary solutions.
- Crop failures and livestock losses may cause food shortages and malnutrition. Humanitarian efforts focus on providing food aid and nutritional support and implementing strategies for sustainable agriculture and food production. Crop failure may be covered by insurance schemes or government intervention in support of farmers and rural communities.

- Droughts may exacerbate health issues due to water scarcity, malnutrition, and displacement. Access to healthcare services, medicines, and disease prevention measures are crucial to address immediate health needs and prevent outbreaks.

- Many communities rely on livestock for food, income, and transportation. Providing veterinary services, supplementary feeding programs, and support for livestock management helps protect valuable assets and maintain livelihoods.

- Children and vulnerable populations are particularly at risk during droughts. Ensuring access to nutritional supplements, therapeutic feeding programs, and healthcare services targeting maternal and child health are essential to prevent long-term health consequences.

- Droughts often devastate livelihoods, particularly in agricultural-dependent communities. Supporting alternative income-generating activities, providing seeds for drought-resistant crops, and offering training in new skills help communities recover and build resilience.

- Displacement, as people move in search of water and food, may lead to the need for temporary shelter; improving infrastructure for water storage and distribution and building resilience against future droughts through better infrastructure planning are crucial aspects of humanitarian response.

- Droughts disrupt education and can cause psychological distress. Ensuring continued access to education for children, providing psychosocial support for affected individuals, and promoting community cohesion help mitigate the long-term impacts of droughts on mental well-being and social stability.

- Emergency situations also tend to exacerbate existing inequalities among the population and lead to a rise in human rights and protection concerns. Special considerations should be given to known protection risks in the context. See also **Chapter G.2** Centrality of protection and quality response. A breakdown of social structures and services can result in increased risks of exploitation, abuse, and neglect for vulnerable groups, and relief efforts must prioritize the unique needs of these groups to ensure their safety and well-being. Women and children often face heightened vulnerability and are disproportionately affected. Female-led households may have less access to resources, financial independence, and decision-making power, which complicates their ability to recover. Children are particularly susceptible to physical harm and psychological trauma. They may be orphaned, and displacement often disrupts their education and routine, leading to long-term challenges.

K.7.7 UNDAC mission

Given the usually slow-onset nature of droughts, UNDAC missions to droughts have been rare. However, due to climate change, one may expect droughts to appear more often, be more severe and have a faster evolution, e.g., flash droughts, and UNDAC may be mobilised to support an affected government with contingency planning, humanitarian and environmental assessments, and coordination of international assistance.

K.7.8 Safety concerns

Given the increased risk of wildfires and dust storms, appropriate clothing, facemasks, or gas masks may be needed as a contingency measure.

K.7.9 Security concerns

Normal precautions depending on context and the safety & security briefing from UNDSS.