HUMANITARIAN PROGRAMME CYCLE

HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE PLANS

This section covers:

- An introduction to the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) and cluster responsibilities
- Planning the CCCM response
- Calculating costs
- Approval of cluster plans
- Drafting the HRP narrative
- Communicating about the HRP
- Mainstreaming cross-cutting issues

ANNUAL UPDATES TO GUIDANCE

An **updated guidance package** for developing a Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) and a Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) is usually **released each year** by OCHA. This contains templates and detailed guidance on all the processes that are expected for that year, and is released in English, French, and Spanish. This is circulated by the OCHA inter-cluster coordination team in country, also it can be requested from the global CCCM Cluster. It is available online at https://kmp.hpc.tools/facilitation-package/

In addition, the **global CCCM Cluster also circulates guidance** to help with HNO and HRP development, which is updated as needed, and will usually organize briefings with Cluster coordination teams early- to mid-year when the new global guidance is released.

This guidance therefore focuses on the big picture of developing HNOs and HRPs, aiming to give you a good basis to then understand the detailed annual guidance packages.

OVERVIEW

WHAT IS AN HRP?

The Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) itself is a document and follows on from the Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO). The **HRP is the output of the strategic planning phase of the Humanitarian Programme Cycle**.

An HRP outlines the collective humanitarian response that is planned to address the needs identified in the HNO, how much the activities will cost, and how the response and context will be monitored during the period. It usually covers one calendar year, although can cover multiple years.

As for the HNO, there is a standard HRP template, the majority of which is inter-sectoral and is usually drafted by the OCHA team in country. You will be required to draft the CCCM chapter, and will likely be asked for inputs to other relevant sections and be asked to review the overall HRP draft.

The *process* of developing a strategy is as important as the end document produced. A CCCM strategy must be **needs-based**, **adapted to the context**, and based on **consultation** with Cluster partners and other key stakeholders. Read more about strategy development processes in Toolkit Section 4.1 Strategic Planning**.**

What is an HRP for?

"*Humanitarian response plans are primarily management tools for the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) and HCT. In addition however they can be used to communicate the scope of the response to an emergency to donors and the public, and thus serve a secondary purpose for resource mobilization*" [1]

Why is a CCCM Cluster Response Strategy as well as the HRP needed?

In addition to contributing to the HRP, a CCCM Cluster must have a CCCM Cluster Response Strategy in place. This is a separate document to the HNO and HRP, although it must be aligned with them. The CCCM Response Strategy is more detailed than the HRP and is specific to CCCM, describing in more depth the technical aspects of CCCM response.

In most situations, it is usually a good idea to develop the CCCM Response Strategy to the same timeline as the HNO/HRP. This is likely the most efficient use of your time, meaning one CCCM needs analysis process and one response planning process is carried out, to produce complementary documents.

You can read more about developing a CCCM Response Strategy in Toolkit Section 4.1 Strategic Planning.

HNO & HRP TIPS

- ✓ It can be intimidating but you can do it!
- ✓ The Global CCCM Cluster is here to help when you need it – you can ask for help from your coordination and IM focal points
- ✓ Use the past HNO & HRP as a basis – there should be strategic consistency between years, and using past work as a starting point helps save time
- ✓ Cluster team should work together on both the HNO & HRP, as a **joint coordination & IM effort**
- ✓ You're not alone: the HNO & HRP must be based on consultation with CCCM partners and other key stakeholders, and must be endorsed by the SAG
- ✓ You need to have a CCCM Response Strategy as well as an HRP, but doing the processes together saves time and ensures they are consistent with each other
- ✓ Ensure to include planning toward solutions for targeted communities
- ✓ Don't forget to do other Cluster work too!

STEPS

Below are the 11 steps of the Humanitarian Programme Cycle (HPC) with the HRP-related steps underlined. These are the inter-sectoral processes, led by OCHA, to which the cluster will contribute. They are conducted over several months. An exact timeline for each response is circulated by OCHA.

1. **Step 1:** Agree on scope of the analysis and __costing approach__
2. **Step 2:** Conduct secondary data review: analyse trends, identify opportunities for joint analysis with development/peace actors, and identify data gaps
3. **Step 3:** Plan and collect primary data (as appropriate)
4. **Step 4:** Conduct joint intersectoral needs analysis
5. **Step 5:** __Define the scope of the HRP and formulate initial objectives__
6. **Step 6:** __Conduct response analysis__
7. **Step 7:** __Finalize objectives and associated indicators__
8. **Step 8:** __Formulate projects/activities and estimate cost of the response plan__

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9. **Step 9:** <u>Release the Humanitarian Response Plan</u>
10. **Step 10:** Finalize the monitoring plan
11. **Step 11:** Conduct after action review

CCCM RESPONSE PLANNING

OVERALL HRP PLANNING & OBJECTIVE SETTING

Strategic objectives, and specific objectives that contribute towards these, are set by the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) with the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) for the overall humanitarian response. These are usually broad, and are often agreed as an output of a response planning workshop (often including the HCT, inter-cluster coordination group, NGO representatives, humanitarian donors, and government). They give the framework for how the sectoral responses are planned. Each Cluster then sets its own objectives and design activities that contribute to these overall objectives.

DESIGNING A CCCM RESPONSE PLAN

The design of the CCCM response for the HRP – that is, deciding which CCCM activities will be delivered, where, and to whom – should be done in consultation with Cluster partners and key stakeholders. Ordinarily, a workshop is held. Sub-national cluster input, input from local and national actors, and appropriate input from affected people must be ensured. The support of the Cluster Lead Agency (CLA) for the Cluster response strategy is necessary, particularly where the CLA is expected to act as provider of last resort.

The Cluster plan should be realistic to the capacities of Cluster partners to deliver response. It should be consistent, where relevant, with the previous CCCM response. It must also be coherent with other clusters' strategies: it can be useful to invite other Cluster Coordinators to CCCM response planning workshops, and CCCM response plans should be shared with other clusters.

See Toolkit Section 4.1 Strategic Planning for more information on how to develop a strategic plan, including an introduction to strategic planning, consultation and participation, and ensuring the centrality of protection including through the conducting of a Protection Risk Assessment for CCCM response.

DEVELOPING A RESPONSE FRAMEWORK

Read more about how to develop a response framework for CCCM response in Toolkit Section 6. Response Monitoring and Reporting. A response framework is usually a simple matrix that gives an overview of the planned response, and includes objectives, activities, indicators, and targets. This allows the CCCM Cluster to monitor the implementation of CCCM response through partner reporting, and to identify and advocate on gaps, and suggest adjustments as needed.

CALCULATING TARGETS

In the HNO phase, the Cluster calculates how many people are in need (PiN) of CCCM support, and the breakdown of the PiN by area and severity and population groups. See Toolkit Section 5.3 Humanitarian Needs Overviews.

In the HRP phase, as part of the CCCM response planning, the Cluster must calculate how many people will be targeted for CCCM interventions. The Cluster target is a subset of the PiN. It is important that CCCM targeting is done in close collaboration with CCCM partners, is conducted in a transparent manner and is done in a principled, impartial manner.
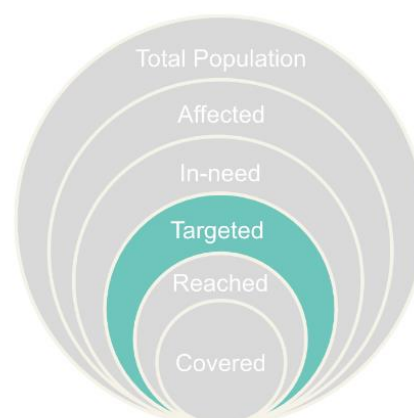
While there is no fixed formula for how to calculate CCCM targets, the following five criteria should be considered:

Needs

The severity of needs should be the primary criteria used for CCCM targeting. The five-point scale used for CCCM severity allows the cluster to classify severity either at the site level or administrative area of their choosing. The cluster can for example choose to target their activities to sites or areas of severity 4 and 5.

Vulnerabilities and Site Size

In addition to the severity of needs, it may be desirable to include vulnerability criteria into the targeting process, focusing CCCM activities in sites that contain high relatively high proportions of vulnerable populations such as person with disabilities, children, single headed households or minorities. The targeting process may also consider only targeting sites where the site population exceeds a certain threshold.

Access

Areas where CCCM partners are denied access and have no realistic possibility of accessing during the HRP period should be excluded from the target. In certain circumstances, such as where the planned scenario support projections of movement of people from inaccessible areas to accessible ones, these population movements can be incorporated into the targeting process.

Resource Allocation

With finite staffing, material, and transport, the Cluster partners, and the Cluster as a whole, should ensure the most effective allocation of these resources. This usually takes the form of spatial clustering of targeted sites. As an exercising in operational efficiency, the Cluster needs to carefully balance this criteria against the primary criteria of need and vulnerabilities, as quite often, it's the sites and populations in the most hard-to-reach areas that are most in need.

Partner Capacity

It is important to rationalize the CCCM Cluster's target against the current and anticipated capacities of its partners. If for example, the Cluster has ten CCCM partners, and these ten partners have the collective capacity to provide CCCM services in 100 sites, then it makes little sense to set a target that is far higher than this as it risks affecting the quality and effectiveness of the CCCM activities by "spreading them too thin".

CALCULATING COST

As one of the objectives of the HRP is for resource mobilization, each cluster is required to calculate the financial requirement of the sectoral response. That is, how much delivering the agreed activities to the targeted population will cost. There are two main approaches to calculating cost in HRPs: **project-based costing**, and **unit-based costing**. The costing approach is decided at response level.

Project-based costing is where each cluster partner that wishes to be part of the HRP (that is, part of the financial appeal) submits a 'project' to the cluster. This is ordinarily submitted in a template provided by OCHA, and includes information on what activities the partner would like to implement during the HRP period, in which locations, targeted population, and how much it will cost for that organization to deliver them. Projects are then reviewed by a committee formed by the Cluster (see Related Resources for example ToRs for a Strategic Review Committee), and adjusted if necessary. The overall financial requirements of the cluster HRP are calculated by adding each project cost together, and the overall population to be targeted is calculated.

The advantages of this approach are that, through the project registration process, the cluster coordination team has a comprehensive mapping of which partners intend to work where, delivering which activities, and to how many people. The cluster can therefore easily conduct gap analysis from the start of the HRP period, and

measure sector progress against project targets. A downside of project-based costing is that it provides very little breakdown of how costs vary across the response, by activity, by location, or by partner.

Unit-based costing (which includes **activity-based costing**) is a method where estimated average costs are calculated per activity. Each cluster decides on one or more units (usually individuals but could also refer to households, sites, kits, etc.). An average cost per unit to deliver each activity is then estimated. Usually, this involves estimating a minimum and maximum cost per unit, and then taking an average. Overall costs are calculated using the average cost per unit multiplied by the target number of units agreed for each activity. Cost estimation can be supported by information on actual activities costs shared by cluster partners. Variables such as location might need to be taken into account. This approach can provide useful comparability of costs, but can be challenging for clusters that are heavily service orientated.

While as of 2023, no single guidance document or recommended approach exists, you can view compiled guidance and examples of country practices. It also appears that that a **hybrid approach** of simplified unit-based costing along with project registration is the most favoured approach to costing in HRPs.

SENSE CHECK: for either costing approach, the targets and financial requirement should be realistic. You may need to balance aspiration and what cluster partners can actually deliver and reasonable costs for doing so.

NOTE: If a unit-based costing / activity-based costing methodology is used to calculate CCCM Cluster costs for the HRP, then it is highly advisable to **map cluster partners'** *intended* **programming** (activities, locations, target populations) once the HRP is finalized and when the implementation period starts. This could be through a 'project registration' or a lighter mapping of key information by partner. Combined with partner reporting on activities being delivered, this baseline information is vital for a cluster to be able to conduct gap analysis, monitor the CCCM response, and advocate for funding or increased activities coverage if needed.

APPROVAL OF CLUSTER PLANS

At country level, an HRP is reviewed and approved by the Humanitarian Coordinator. However, there are several steps to take to refine the plan before it reaches that level. At cluster level the CCCM HRP strategy must:

- **Be endorsed by the Cluster SAG**
- **Have the support of the CLA** (see Toolkit Section 5.1 Overview of the HPC)

The exact steps for development of the HRP – including the process for review of individual clusters' plans – is set by the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) with the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT), at country level.

Draft cluster HRP plans are usually shared with the HC and HCT for review and approval. You might be asked to share this in written form, and/or be asked to do a presentation – sometimes called a 'Cluster defence'. You might be given feedback and asked to edit or adjust numbers and plans to ensure alignment with the overall strategic objectives and to ensure consistency across clusters.

DRAFTING OF HRP NARRATIVE

HRP documents are very long, but the CCCM section is quite short. Don't panic!

CCCM sectoral chapter – you will be responsible for drafting the CCCM chapter. A template is provided by OCHA, as part of the HRP guidance package. The sectoral chapters are quite short and have limited wordcounts. If helpful, you might wish to use existing documents and previous strategies to help draft the narrative section. This describes the intended CCCM response to the needs identified in the HNO. You must take into account cross-cutting issues in both development of the CCCM response plan, and in writing the CCCM HRP chapter.

Intersectoral narrative – drafted by OCHA, usually by the coordination team. Cluster Coordinators are usually invited to review the draft, for consistency with the cluster chapters.

Specific sections e.g. on Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) – the HRP has specific requirements to include cross-cutting issues and how mainstreaming will be done across the response. These sections might be drafted by OCHA or technical specialists. You might be asked to give inputs, perhaps collected through a template, and might be asked to review a draft.

> Remember that CCCM analysis should inform the planning of the other clusters. Other clusters will need to know population numbers and preliminary needs in sites to inform their analysis and setting of priorities and targets.

COMMUNICATING ABOUT THE HRP

Once the HRP is finalized, you should ensure that **key stakeholders have access to information** throughout the year about CCCM Cluster HRP targets and activities to inform their decision-making. For example, including:

- Government counterparts
- Humanitarian and when needed, development donors
- CCCM Cluster partners – for use in funding proposals, and particularly in pooled fund applications
- CCCM Cluster partners – who are implementing and will be reporting on HRP activities

Methods of communication include:

- Organizing a briefing for interested humanitarian donors. Consider including Cluster SAG members and/or main CCCM partners. This gives an opportunity to highlight gaps as well as presenting the HRP.
- Circulating summary documents

You might find it useful to draft a simple **overview summary document**. Covering, for example: target populations and locations; objectives, indicators and targets; response activities; cost calculations; activity monitoring and funding tracking; any criteria for Cluster membership. See: Related Resources – *Note on CCCM Cluster HRP* examples from Nigeria and Iraq. Don't forget to translate into local languages, if needed.

MAINSTREAMING CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

You must ensure to take into consideration the following in CCCM strategic planning:
- Protection mainstreaming
- Age, gender, and diversity – including disability
- GBV and child protection
- Accountability to affected people
- Environment
- Localization
- Planning toward solutions for targeted communities, from the start of a crisis

To help do this:
- ✓ Use the tools in Related Resources, especially the checklists
- ✓ Consult the resources in Toolkit Section 9. Cross-Cutting Issues
- ✓ Reflect the protection outcomes that are prioritized in the HRP within the Cluster objectives / activities
- ✓ Incorporate protection principles into the CCCM strategy and ensure that programmes are designed to avoid or mitigate harms and risks (use the Protection Risk Analysis tool in Toolkit Section 9 – Protection mainstreaming)
- ✓ Include environmental considerations and actions in CCCM activities planning

✓ Develop the HRP through a participatory process that involves two-way communication with affected people – see Toolkit Section 4. Strategic Planning

TIPS FOR LOCALIZATION
   ✓ Consider holding briefing sessions for actors who are new to HNO and HRP processes to explain what they are, what they are not, and why their input and engagement is valuable
   ✓ Prioritise service delivery by local actors in HRP and CCCM response strategies, where possible
   ✓ Develop an institutional capacity-building strategy as part of the HRP
   ✓ Promote partnerships that draw on coaching and mentoring approaches rather than sub-granting
   ✓ If project sheets are used, include explicit references to institutional capacity-building outputs (e.g. reduced risk ratings)

See Related Resources on the main HPC page

References and further reading

- See Humanitarian Programme Cycle for summarized guidance, and the latest HNO and HRP guidance and templates
- IASC (2019) Reference Module for the Implementation of the Humanitarian Programme Cycle
- Inter-Agency Toolkit on Localization in Humanitarian Coordination (2022)