

GUIDANCE NOTE 4

Setting Objectives, Outputs & Indicators at the Sector Level

1 Setting Objectives

Where possible it is advisable that countries that are undergoing a national planning process should try to adhere to the common 3RP objectives, outputs and indicators in the national planning process.

Each Sector Working Group (SWG) is tasked with developing a Sector Response Plan with up to five Objectives, five Outputs per Objective, and up to three indicators per Output. Each SWG should seek synergies between Refugee and Resilience at the objective level.

Sector and Inter-Sector coordinators should look at the 2015 3RP plan for your countries and across the region to assess what worked well and what did not work well in 2015. Look at which Objectives, Outputs and Indicators have or have not been well used (including for planning, monitoring and reporting). For those Objective, Output or Indicator statements that have not been well used consider either removing these from the log-frame or revising them to make them more relevant. On the basis of this, the Objectives, Outputs and Indicators for 2016 should be defined.

The Objectives should, as far as possible, include Outputs in both the refugee and resilience components. There may be specific instances where an Objective has Outputs in only one or the other component, and in this case the objectives should embody the key goals of the respective components, as per Guidance Note 2.

For the purposes of the 3RP process, the common **definition of an Objective** is: a statement of desired results (and impacts) on the well-being of the people of concern that contributes to effecting the positive change expected to occur as a consequence, at least in part, of a set of outputs and activities. Objectives should follow the results based logic, with a complementary set of outputs contributing to the overall objective. However these objectives may be set at a level above which 3RP partners have full control, and will have inputs from partners outside the 3RP.

When setting the objective, 3RP partners should use Results-Based language (Attached annex for Definition of Key Results Based Programming Terms), using positive verbs that express a change, i.e. Increase, Enhance, or Reinforce. Objectives should also demonstrate what change they would expect to see at the end of the planning period.

Examples of Objectives

- Sustainable and gender appropriate access to adequate shelter and infrastructure is available, improved and maintained in Camps.
- Affected populations have improved hygiene practices through access to hygiene items and hygiene promotion activities on a sustainable and equitable basis.
- Self-reliance and safe livelihoods for vulnerable groups improved;
- The capacity of the national health care system to provide services to Syrian refugees and members of impacted communities in the most affected governorates strengthened.

In order to describe the desired state which the project is expected to contribute to Objective level indicators and targets should be established, and a space for this is included in the 'Sector Response Overview Table'.

Setting Objective Indicator, Baseline & Target

Each Objective should have one Indicator, Baseline, Target and Means of Verification to measure the progress towards the objective. Objective indicators should, as far as possible, be population or process based depending on the nature of the sector and objective. The indicator selected might measure changes in knowledge, skill, behavior, health or living conditions for children, adults, families or communities. These effects can be economic, socio-cultural, institutional, environmental, technological or of other types. The Objective Indicator and Baseline should be expressed in terms of a percentage or extent against a defined target population or process. Population targets may be expressed such as the national population or the registered refugees. Resilience targets may include a focus on changes in development outcomes, institutional support and development, adaptive and absorptive capacities, and legislation.

All indicators should have a baseline (with date) and a Means of Verification.

Examples of Objective Indicators

- % of Syrian refugee children who are enrolled in formal education [Numerator = # of Syrian refugee children enrolled// Denominator = Total # of school-age Syrian refugee children]
- % of targeted Syrian refugees and member of impacted communities who receive cash grants for basic household needs [Numerator = # of Syrian refugees and members of impacted communities targeted who receive cash grants// # targeted]
- # of youth, men and women engaged in gainful employment or have established their own businesses
- % of affected public health facilities supported.

Setting a Baseline for Objective Indicators

Each Objective indicator should have a baseline where possible by which progressive change can be measured over the time period. The baseline for 2016 may be considered on the basis of a) assessments/evaluation data collected; or b) what has been achieved in 2015. For example, # of community organizations identified and assessed for mitigating tensions and preventing conflict can be a baseline for resilience oriented objectives.

2 Setting Outputs

Each Objective will contain up to five Outputs, each under either the Refugee or Resilience component.

Outputs are changes in skills or abilities and capacities of individuals or institutions, or the availability of new products and services that result from the completion of activities within an intervention within the control of the organization. They are achieved with the resources provided and within the time period specified.

Outputs are a pre-condition for the subsequent achievement of Objectives. Outputs should be almost entirely within the control of the implementing organizations and less influenced by external factors.

The realization of outputs should, as far as possible be measured through quantitative indicators, though qualitative indicators can be used where appropriate.

Setting Output Indicators

Each Output should have a maximum of three Output Indicators which are the specific units that are produced by the activities making up the Output. The output indicator should clearly state the unit and a target that is feasible within the time, capacity and resources available.

Objectives in any sector may include Outputs that fall under the Resilience component. Output indicators in this section will be specific to each Output and developed in order to measure the Output's level of

achievement/completion. Resilience Output indicators should also, in a concrete manner, capture the means through which the relevant Output is:¹

- Strengthening national and local ownership and leadership of the response;
- Contributing to sustainable benefits; and/or
- Sensitive to social cohesion/stability issues.

Inter-sector/ sector coordinators should consider how partners report into the plan (ActivityInfo or other tools) and aggregation process from partners against indicators.

Examples of Output Indicators

- # of children benefitting from school construction/ rehabilitation;
- # of people receiving cash grants;
- # of people benefitting from tent repairs;
- # of children vaccinated against polio per campaign round;
- # of people trained;
- # of trained health workers (government, CBOs and national NGOs) disaggregated by sex;
- # of impacted communities with active conflict mitigation or participatory mechanisms;
- # of deficient wastewater systems rehabilitated.

Disaggregation

In the 3RP document indicators should be disaggregated by target populations. In your result tracking matrices/ ActivityInfo at the country level you should aim to include age and gender disaggregation. When considering which indicators for disaggregation consider what have been useful operationally in 2015, and what indicators make sense to disaggregate and which are not useful. If there is no or little operational benefit to disaggregate then consider not requesting this in 2016 to save energy for partners reporting in 2016. Consider that not all indicators require to be disaggregated.

¹ See Guidance Note 2 'Incorporating and Communicating Resilience Programming in the 3RP' for further discussion of resilience as it relates to 3RP projects and guidance regarding categorization.

Annex: DEFINITION OF KEY RESULTS BASED PROGRAMMING TERMS

Adapted from: i) UNDG Results Based Management Handbook, October 2011; ii) DFID Tools for Development handbook (2012); and iii) SOAS, Project Planning and Management, London University, 2014.

Results based management (RBM)

Results-based management is a strategy by which all actors, contributing directly or indirectly to achieving a set of concrete and measurable results, ensure that their processes, products and services contribute to desired results (outputs, objectives², higher level goals and impacts) and use information and evidence to inform decision making on the design, resourcing and delivery of programmes and activities as well as for accountability and reporting. That means:

1. There is a concrete RESULT linked to MEASURABLE indicators and to specific monetary inputs.
2. There is an evident link between funds used and achievements reached
3. Funds should be used on a cost-effective approach (what is the BEST use of the funds we can provide? Why is it better to provide the funds to a specific project?)

It is recognized that many actors are using different RBM definitions and terminologies, even though the concepts are, in many cases, similar. The use of common terminology will help actors move toward a common ground for supporting programming. When agreed, these definitions can contribute to greater coherence and consistency and help when communicating RBM issues with other stakeholders including governments.

Results

Results are changes in a state or condition that derive from a cause-effect relationship. The Results Chain is a causal sequence which lays out the sequence to achieve desired results – beginning with inputs, moving through activities and outputs, and culminating in individual outcomes and those that influence outcomes for the community, through goals, and end in a higher level impact to which a range of partners across sectors contribute. This results chain is based on a theory of change, including underlying assumptions.

Impact

Impact implies changes in people's lives. This might include changes in knowledge, skill, behavior, health or living conditions for children, adults, families or communities. Such changes are positive or negative long-term effects on identifiable population groups produced by an intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended. These effects can be economic, socio-cultural, institutional, environmental, technological or of other types. In many frameworks Impact is connected to the higher level of change that occurs as the mid and long-term result of a set of interventions. In UNHCR logframes impact is connected to the Objective level.

Objective (also described as Outcome)

A statement of desired results (and impacts) on the well-being of the people of concern that contributes to effecting a positive change and achieving the overall goal, expected to occur as a consequence, at least in part, of a set of interventions or activities. It should describe the desired state which the project is expected to achieve/contribute to, and provide the reason for undertaking a programme or project. An objective can occur as the result of a combination of outputs, and may also be the result of additional factors not related to the outputs.

Guiding questions for setting an objective:

What specific effect is the project to achieve as a direct result of the project outputs? If the project is completed successfully, what improvements or changes could be expected in the group, organization or area towards which the project is immediately directed?

Guiding questions for setting Achievement indicators at objective level:

What are the quantitative measures or qualitative judgments, to assess whether the project purpose has been achieved?

Outputs

Outputs are changes in skills or abilities and capacities of individuals or institutions, or the availability of new products and services that result from the completion of activities within an intervention within the control of the organization. They are achieved with the resources provided and within the time period specified. They are a pre-condition for the subsequent

² Note objectives and outcomes are used synonymous for the purposes of the 3RP.

achievement of purposes and goals. Production of outputs should be managed by the project and less influenced by external factors that the project management cannot directly control.

As most projects have more than one output, their sequential ordering is essential, because the output of one activity is likely to be required for the production of another output. The outputs of a project need to be stated in such a way that:

- Their realization can be identified, in terms of quantity, quality, time and place.
- As for objectives, a target is specified for the magnitude of output to be produced and the timescale for this.
- It is clear if a certain output is a prerequisite for other outputs.
- Necessary outputs for achieving the Objective to be achieved are listed and they relate to the objective.
- They are feasible within the resources available.

By definition outputs are separate from objectives. Unfortunately confusion between them is a common design error. Outputs are also commonly confused with activities. Remember that an output is the result of an action or activity. For example:

- The **output** of a training activity is **trained people**
- Training a group of beneficiaries is an **activity**
- The **output** of a research activity is the **research results**
- Research conducted on xxx topic is an **activity**
- Research findings on the xxx topic is an **output**

Guiding questions for setting an output:

What outputs (type, quality and number) will need to be produced (by activities undertaken with inputs provided) in order for the project purpose to be achieved?

Guiding questions for setting an Achievement indicator at Output level:

What type, quality and number of outputs would be produced by certain dates? (Performance)

Activities and Inputs are not part of the 3RP planning processes. However individual organization should plan based upon the activities and inputs required to achieve their Outputs and Objectives.

Activities: Actions taken or work performed through which inputs, such as funds, technical assistance and other types of resources, are mobilized to produce specific outputs. Each activity should contribute to at least one larger output.

Inputs: The 3RP coordination process does not look at the input level, however individual organization should plan based upon their required inputs, including the financial, human, material, technological and information resources.

Achievement indicators: Indicators are a qualitative or quantitative means of measuring an output or objective, with the intention of gauging the performance of a programme or investment.

Baseline: Information gathered at the beginning of a project or programme against which variations that occur in the project or programme are measured.

Target: Specifies a particular value that an indicator should reach by a specific date in the future.