2 INFORMATION/DATA MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

2.1 OVERVIEW AND FUNCTION

The information management strategy should be drafted and maintained by the Information Management Officer (IMO), preferably, or the Information Manager. The IMO is a specialised technical position within UNHCR. Staff filling IMO positions will need to be those with both the requisite training and the experience required to undertake information management activities, particularly the coordination, design and management of an information management strategy to support operational objectives and partners. Information management focal points may be other staff designated to cover specific information management needs within an operation.

An information/data management strategy is a plan that defines the purposes, outputs, time frames and responsibilities for all operational information systems in an emergency. An Information Management Strategy Template is included as Annex 4 in this section. The information/data management strategy will provide a broad overview of how information systems relate to one another and which organizations are stakeholders in which systems, allowing the Information Manager to better coordinate information. The strategy will also help identify whether there are information gaps or redundancies between systems.

From a consensus-building perspective, the strategy provides an opportunity for managers and operational staff to agree on reporting frequencies and data ownership. On a practical level, the strategy details how the information systems will operate. It is also a starting point for budgeting for information management costs, such as for implementing partner agreements, data-entry staff, mobile data-collection devices and laptops.

Explicitly defining and implementing an information management strategy will help make information management product delivery more predictable and more reliable. Doing so will also support the introduction of standard operating procedures (SOPs) for information/data management. The following guidance details the steps for defining and implementing an information and data management strategy during the first six weeks of a refugee emergency.

2.2 HOW-TO GUIDE: STEPS FOR UNDERTAKING/COORDINATING INFORMATION AND DATA MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

In order to develop an information/data management strategy, an Information Manager needs to answer the following questions:

- What are the information gaps?
- What types of analysis products are needed?
- Who are the focal points responsible for implementing each system?
- What methods should be used to obtain the data?
- What human resources are required to run the systems?
- What is the frequency of reporting from each system?
- When should each system be implemented?

2.2.1 Considerations for the Information Manager during planning

During planning, the Information Manager will need to consider some of the following factors, which will affect the design of the information management systems:

- The operation's contingency plans: What is the most likely scenario for how the emergency will evolve? How might the information systems need to change in the future?
- The operation's programming and intervention plans: Which sectors are the most active and/or are most likely to be? Are there some sectors with more information management needs?
- The displacement pattern: Is the population moving en masse or is there scattered population movement? Is there secondary displacement? Is the population stable or is there new movement? What is the scale of the displacement?
- Physical access to populations of concern: Is remote monitoring required? How will the logistics of data collection affect the types of information systems deployed and the frequency of availability of information products?
- Security issues, humanitarian space and the Government's position with regards to IM: Are there particular types of data that are difficult to get from populations due to security? What are the limitations of the types of information that can be disseminated?
- The IM activities of other partners: Which data management activities should be undertaken by UNHCR? By its implementing partners, operational partners, by the Government – or jointly?
- The availability of Internet connectivity and other communications/computing technology: Are website and e-mail dissemination systems the best for the situation? Is there a need for sharing burned DVDs and hardcopies of information with partners who have no Internet access? How will data from deep field locations be transmitted to the operational hub?

2.3 REFUGEE EMERGENCY: WEEKS ONE–TWO

2.3.1 Set IM objectives and reporting lines: Set up and produce initial IM products

Before drafting the information management strategy, the Information Manager will need to discuss IM objectives and products with the Representative and senior managers, and with programme, protection and sector leads. Discuss what type of information decision-makers in the office need to know, at what level of detail, and why the information is needed. It will also be important to set up a regular and clearly communicated weekly dissemination schedule, so colleagues and partners know what type of information products to expect and when to expect them.

The Information Manager, Representative and senior managers will establish a plan for preparing the following standard IM products, which may be produced during the first four weeks of a refugee emergency:

- IM strategy;
- Including IM in coordination meetings or establishing IM coordination meetings;
- Secondary data review of information already available from other sources and situational analysis;
- Initial rapid population estimates;
- Contact list of operational partners;
- An initial needs assessment report;
- Maps, including security, situation and 3W maps; and
- Web portal deployment.

The Representative and other senior managers, emergency team leader (if deployed), sector leads and the Information Manager will need to agree on clearance procedures and a dissemination schedule for the aforementioned IM products. The Information Manager should also assist as needed with the development of

IM strategies for the production of sector-specific reports, a process that includes the dissemination of sector-specific information products.

In order to do the above, the Information Manager should undertake each of the following upon arrival in the emergency:

- Ask to see the operation's contingency plan, or, if one does not exist, ask management what the most likely scenarios are for the evolution of the emergency.
- Ask colleagues if any information management preparedness activities have been undertaken, such as planning a needs assessment.
- Find the standard geographic data being used by the humanitarian community and learn the process for updating this. (If no process is defined, the Information Manager will need to do this.)
- By discussing with the protection officer, become familiar with the operational context's protection risks and constraints, in order to gain an understanding of which types of information are the most sensitive.
- Try to find pre-emergency baseline data, including data from the country's annual statistical report, the UNHCR Global Focus website (the agency's global reporting website for donors), the Government statistical office, development actors, etc.
- Identify UNHCR and partner staff who are capable of assisting with data collection and analysis, as the skill levels of colleagues will influence the complexity of information systems implemented. Design an information management strategy that is realistic and sustainable in terms of operational capacity.
- Determine SOPs for clearances and issuance of IM products.

2.3.2 Include IM in coordination meetings

With the agreement of the Representative, the Information Manager will need to ensure that IM is included as an agenda point at all inter-agency coordination meetings at the field and capital levels as a topic of discussion.

The Information Manager should immediately begin attending inter-agency coordination meetings and begin reaching out to partners, using the opportunities to establish contact lists that will be circulated in meetings and posted on the UNHCR web portal. To such meetings, the Information Manager should always bring information products, population figures, maps and contact lists to share, in part to create linkages with partners to identify emergency information needs.

2.3.3 Establish a contact list and weekly meeting schedule

The Information Manager should also immediately start work with a UNHCR admin colleague, as designated by the Representative, to create and track a contact list of all operational partners, which may be circulated to partners. The Information Manager will be the focal point for all changes on and custodian of the contact list, unless otherwise delegated. If available, it is good practice to keep a copy of the contact list on a shared drive, to allow access to all UNHCR staff. The Information Manager should always keep a backup copy of the master contact list, saved each day on his/her personal drive.

Specific contact lists may also be extracted from the master contact list and presented to partners in different ways. For example, the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) sector contact list includes only staff members in that sector, and thus can serve dual functions as a sign-in sheet for coordination meetings. This not only allows colleagues to ensure that their contact information is correct, but also reduces data-entry time for the tracking of meeting attendance.

Another useful tool to produce and distribute to all partners is a contact list of technical experts – for example, a list of UNHCR protection and programme colleagues, in addition to sector leads for WASH, health and shelter. A sample template of a contact list is included in this section as Annex 4: IM Strategy Template; tab 2: E-mail Dissemination List. A contact list by sector may be produced by filtering the master contact list by activity.

2.3.4 Secondary data and situational analysis

Within the first two days of arrival in a refugee emergency, the Information Manager should meet with the protection officer and begin both to jointly analyze secondary data and to collaboratively produce a situational analysis.

"The situation analysis is undertaken through a desk review of existing information, including data gathered about the population. It also involves identifying the different stakeholders to learn about their interests and priorities, and mapping their activities, resources and expertise, " according to *A Community Based Approach in UNHCR* (First Edition, UNHCR Geneva, February 2007, pg. 27).

When compiling the situational analysis, it will be important to identify what types of camp administration (if any) have been set up by the refugee community, while also noting refugee coping mechanisms at the camp level. The situational analysis will also need to detail the host Government's involvement and response to the refugee situation, and track developments in terms of camp coordination and host Government assistance.

According to the UNHCR Handbook for Emergencies (Third Edition, UNHCR Geneva, February 2007, pg. 28), the UNHCR Protection Gaps Framework of Analysis Tool may be adapted for emergency situation analysis. The Protection Gaps Framework of Analysis Tool is available online at www.unhcr.org/refworld/pdfid/430328-b04.pdf, and provides a format outlining key considerations when conducting a situation analysis.

2.3.5 Analyze emergency registration and population statistics

Another key step for the Information Manager in setting up an information and data management strategy is to begin working with the registration officer to compile and triangulate population figures. A Population Reporting Template should be completed and maintained for the triangulation/analysis of population figures, and is included in the Population Statistics section of this Toolkit.

- If the emergency registration has been conducted, the Information Manager will need to begin compiling cross-sectoral analysis based on population figures, including what is known in terms of operational coverage for specific locations based on information compiled in the 3W and survey of surveys.
- If the emergency registration has not been conducted, reference the Registration in Emergencies section (Section 4) of this Toolkit on the next steps for emergency registration and IM considerations.
- If emergency registration is not possible for all areas, use rapid population estimation techniques (refer to Section 5 of this Toolkit).

The Information Manager must also work with other information specialists within the operation, both those employed by UNHCR and those employed by other organizations, to ensure that all data collected, analyzed and released is as per UNHCR standard age and sex demographics.

Age and sex breakdowns should be incorporated into all standard IM products, and demographic profiles of the refugee population should be shared with partners by the Information Manager on a daily or weekly basis (depending on the situation), via the UNHCR web portal and through other dissemination avenues.

2.3.6 Who's Doing What, Where (3W)

The Information Manager will need to continuously engage sector leads and new organizations and partners on the ground. Throughout their assignment, the Information Manager should also establish and track evolving 3W information, using the 3W tool included in the 3W section of this Toolkit, in order to maintain an understanding of operational coverage and emergency needs.

2.4 REFUGEE EMERGENCY: WEEKS THREE–FOUR

2.4.1 Conduct a survey of surveys

An important step in coordinating information management is to compile a survey of surveys and assessments that have already been carried out by UNHCR and partners. UNHCR management, programme and protection colleagues will be able to readily identify partners and contacts for the Information Manager to begin contacting for the compilation of the survey of surveys. Required for completing the survey of surveys template (included as annex in this section) will be information on the organization involved in the assessment, assessment type and name, location of assessment, fieldwork collection start and end dates, and type of population assessed.

Official UNHCR population types are as follows: refugee, persons in refugee-like situations, returned refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced persons, persons in IDP-like situations, returned IDPs, stateless persons and others of concern. For a complete definition of these population types, see the *UNHCR 2012 Annual Statistical Reporting Guidelines* (pg. 37), available online at: http://www.unhcr.org/4fd6f87f9.html.

As soon as all major partners have been contacted and an inventory of surveys and assessments has been compiled, the Information Manager will need to begin an initial analysis to identify information/knowledge gaps. These may concern population groups not assessed, locations with difficult access or sectors not covered in some locations. In addition to identifying information gaps, the Information Manager will also need to report whether particular geographical or sectoral areas are being over-assessed by multiple organizations. This process is done in coordination with partners (NGOs, UN agencies, Government offices and so on) so that the resulting outcome is shared and owned by all partners.

Should an emergency needs assessment (ENA) be recommended by the Information Manager based on analysis of the survey of surveys, this topic should be discussed in plenary at the next coordination meeting with partners. For guidance on undertaking and leading an ENA, reference the ENA section (Section 7) of this Toolkit.

2.4.2 Refugee Information Management Working Group (RIM WG)

The RIM WG is one element of the IM services that UNHCR provides its partners in refugee operations. With the participation of IM focal points outside of UNHCR, the Information Manager will set up and lead the RIM WG. Although many partner organizations will not have a staff member responsible specifically for information management, each partner organization should be asked to provide at least one focal point to participate in the RIM WG. The RIM WG terms of reference (TORs) are included as an annex in this section.

The RIM WG will coordinate IM activities at the inter-agency level between partners in refugee operations. This coordination is important to ensure the cross-analysis and harmonization of data between organizations, to prevent duplicate or competing data systems from being developed, to enable the sharing of information and to make the best use of humanitarian information management resources. The Information Manager should conduct a mapping of available resources at the operational hub and capital levels, including information on which organizations have datasets and monitoring systems in place already, and which organizations have in-house data collectors, database administrators, translators and data analysts who can assist with IM projects.

The Information Manager will need to lead the RIM WG to do the following:

- Map and harmonize datasets among all operational partners. The Information Manager should track the names of locations, coordinates, Pcodes, common operational datasets (CODs) and fundamental operational datasets (FODs), which may be found at http://cod.humanitarianresponse.info/terms-use in an Excel database. Contact the local OCHA office for area-specific Pcodes. The Information Manager will need to share the Excel database of Pcodes, CODs and FODs with all operational partners, to ensure that emergency partners are using the same units of assessment for data analysis.
- Liaise with implementing and operational partners on data quality issues and data standards; participate in and/or organize inter-agency data groups at the field level; and, if necessary, advise partners on methodological issues and promote timely reporting of data, according to agreed standards, for which they are responsible.
- Ensure consensus surrounding initial population figures, and regularly update partners on registration activities and changing population demographics.
- Distribute information products, CODs and baseline data that should be used by all partners.

2.4.3 Set up web portal and information kiosk

The Information Manager will need to do the following:

- Following approval from the Representative/senior managers, initiate an emergency web portal by contacting web portal administrators. Reference the Web Portal section (Section 17) for instructions on how to initiate a web portal. Working with senior managers, define the frequency of IM products to be updated on the web portal, and begin drafting clearance SOPs for the updating and maintenance of web portal content.
- Begin populating the web portal with the information management products. Meet with the Representative and the external relations officer and discuss web portal needs, such as news highlights, uploading requirements and dissemination schedules.
- Set up and maintain an information kiosk in the UNHCR office, and ensure that hardcopies of information products are available as developed and cleared.
- Use various dissemination channels to share information products and analysis (e-mail lists, SMS, meetings), both within the office and with partners.

2.5 REFUGEE EMERGENCY: WEEKS FIVE–SIX

2.5.1 Gather data from sector specialists and understand sector information needs

By the beginning of the fifth or sixth week (or sooner), the Information Manager should meet with programme and all sector specialists to understand what sector-specific information systems are in place and what sector-specific information needs exist. The Information Manager will need to assist all sector specialists with cross-analysis and building or adjusting sectoral data management or tracking tools. For protection and sector-specific IM considerations and tools (where available), refer to the Minimum Sectoral Data sections (Sections 9-14) of this Toolkit.

In this capacity, the Information Manager will need to do the following:

- Hold discussions with the programme officer to understand whether a shelter and core relief item (CRI) distribution monitoring system is functional, and what current needs have been identified. If there is no monitoring and distribution tracking system in place, the Information Manager may establish one. For advice on how to set up a monitoring and distribution tracking system, refer to the Minimum Sectoral Data: C. Core Relief Items section (Section 11) included in this Toolkit.
- The Information Manager should work with the protection officer to gather protection monitoring or needs assessment reports (on security, coping strategies, population movement patterns, etc.), which may impact on the protection situations of persons of concern.
- The Information Manager should gather health, food security, WASH and mortality reports/analyses from respective sector specialists.
- If a vulnerable person case tracking system has been established, the Information Manager should factor this information, as available, into the cross-sectoral analysis. For additional information on registration-related considerations, refer to the Registration in Emergencies section (Section 4) of this Toolkit.
- During the cross-sectoral analysis, if the Information Manager finds conflicting or inconsistent information between sectors, the sectoral leads involved will need to be notified in order to resolve the discrepancies.

Once these steps have been completed, the Information Manager should incorporate sector-specific cross-analysis into existing information products, as agreed with the Representative.

For camp situations, camp profiles should be produced in order to coordinate humanitarian activities across camps and to disseminate multi-sectoral information about particular camps. Refer to Section 8 of this Toolkit for more information on camp profiling.

2.5.2 Identification of IM needs, production of information products and contingency planning

Continue to monitor minimum sector data reports from the sector leads and identify other emergency IM needs as they arise, and include this information and analysis in ongoing standard emergency IM products. The Information Manager may present the most compelling pieces of sectoral information visually, as an info-graphic; see the Info-graphics section of this Toolkit for additional Information.

It may be necessary to transition some of the emergency initial information systems to other systems that can either be sustained over a longer period of time or go into more detail. For example, rapid population estimations could be replaced by an emergency registration.