

12 December 2019

Following the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) decision (14 April 2019) to move to activity-based costing (ABC) for the 2020 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP), implementation of the coordinated humanitarian response in Iraq will no longer be based on projects submitted through the HPC Tools Projects Module (former OPS). Development and funding of projects will be between partners and current or potential donors, while clusters, the ICCG and the HCT will be concentrating on providing coordination, technical and strategic guidance and support (including through reporting, monitoring and assessing) to the overall activities in order to meet the strategic priorities outlined in the HRP.

In this approach, clusters identify humanitarian activities required to improve humanitarian outcomes and estimate a budget for their implementation. The cluster budgets derived from humanitarian needs form the total HRP budget request. There will be no central project repository used to vet or “register” projects in an exclusive finite list for the HRP. While this entails an increased burden on cluster leads and on OCHA to proactively seek information from partners on funding and activities with a view to match reported financial contributions to cluster funding requests, it is expected to lead to a more strategic focus and a more diverse set of actors participating in implementation.

The ABC approach gives greater shared responsibility to all involved: cluster members, cluster coordinators, co-coordinators and Information Management Officers (IMOs), the HCT, OCHA and donors to work together towards meeting the strategic and specific objectives to reach the most vulnerable targeted beneficiaries in the most severely affected locations. It also mobilizes the same stakeholders to pro-actively consult, coordinate and inform each other resulting in enhanced efficiency and timeliness for the response and associated components such as AAP, common services and rapid response (through enhanced partner identification thematically and geographically).

This note outlines some of the main tenets of the ABC approach, providing suggested guidance to clusters, the ICCG, the HCT and donors.

Which organizations can be part of the HRP?

As the HRP activities are reflective of joint cluster agreements and commitment – and represent a collective cluster strategy for response, all cluster members are in principle eligible to participate in the HRP. Therefore, all cluster members will be listed in the HRP document. However, the list is not inclusive and new members can be included in the clusters – or leave the cluster system throughout the year.

The requirement to review membership and eligibility to contribute to the cluster (and thereby the HRP) will result in increased coordination among partners and eventually to a more effective response. According to [IASC guidance](#), cluster members should adhere to the minimum commitments that set out what all local, national or international organizations 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 the 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 organizational resources
- ✓ Commitment to mainstream key programmatic cross-cutting issues such as Gender and Age, AAP, Disability
- ✓ 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 provide interpretation so that all cluster partners are able to participate

12 December 2019

To help guide the response planning and inform donors, the HRP document will also include the latest map of operational presence, showing partners recent track record in presence and implementation. That does not mean that the 2020 presence and activities will not change from 2019, but it gives a snapshot of current presence and capacities for use by partners, clusters and donors as they plan new interventions departing from the beginning of the response year. Overall, it will be the activities themselves, and their prioritization and coherence within the HRP planning and budgeting, rather than organizational concerns about projects and funding requirements, which will be considered.

How are HRP activities and funding tracked?

Given the move to activity-based costing, OCHA will not be managing a project repository (OPS/Projects Module). Clusters are encouraged to ensure that cluster coordination takes place at the more strategic activity-based level, as per the HCT decision to move to ABC.

Partners and donors submit reports on funding provided to partners on FTS clearly indicating if funding was provided towards the HRP or not. OCHA and clusters will work closely together to review the submissions regularly to ensure that they are clearly identified as within or outside the HRP and are marked under the correct cluster. This will require a more pro-active effort by all to review and decide on the right “tagging” of projects in FTS.

During cluster SAG meetings, partner submissions should be reviewed for alignment to cluster strategies and HRP priorities. Activities must fit within the HRP frame (agreed cluster activities in line with agreed unit costs, targets by priority geographical areas and by population groups) and should endeavour to meet other criteria laid out in the HRP, including cross-cutting issues such as AAP, GAM, the HCT Protection Strategy, inclusive programming to meet needs of people living with disability etc.

Reporting protocols in ActivityInfo will not change, and clusters will have to remind partners to correctly tag activities as HRP or non-HRP. As per usual practice, cluster verification will be required through ActivityInfo and ahead of the production of monthly dashboards.

How to ensure that HRP and cluster priorities and targets are met?

During cluster meetings, the cluster should closely review the response towards targets set out in the HRP. Using the reports on ActivityInfo, monthly response dashboards, AAP feedback and surveillance and the regular funding dashboards produced by OCHA, the clusters should be reviewing whether the response is on track, identify gaps and work together to ensure that the gaps are covered. Through a consultative process, clusters should maintain flexibility towards redirecting response to underserved populations or locations and provide the necessary data and advocacy through their agencies or the ICCG/HCT to donors to provide new funding for them.

OCHA will be supporting the monitoring of implementation through the production of monthly humanitarian dashboards, which will be shared and discussed with the ICCG and HCT to ensure that the response is in line with the HRP, and to identify challenges, risks and gaps. The outcome of the monitoring will be regularly discussed with country-level principals and with donors, as well as form the basis for advocacy efforts with global donors and other stakeholders.

Given the strong evidence base of the 2020 Iraq Humanitarian Needs Overview and the clear targets and priorities outlined in the HRP, a major responsibility will fall on donors to ensure that they are funding projects that are aligned with the HRP and live up to humanitarian standards and best practices.

12 December 2019

With quality assurance tools such as the gender marker not being a pre-requisite when designing the response activity, there is a risk for a weaker quality control in the project planning phase. Mitigation measures include strong cluster-level coordination to ensure implementing organizations align with cluster strategy and regular reminders that organizations remain accountable first and foremost to the people they serve, in addition to the entities funding them (with specific requirements/compliance).

Clusters are not responsible for investigating fraud or misbehaviour of partners – or for evaluating the quality of their projects – only whether their current and future project plans are aligned with the coordinated response plan. Partners remain the sole owners of the responsibility and accountability to deliver a timely, quality response to meet the needs of affected people.

Other resources:

[HRP Costing Methodologies Options – Global “tip sheet”](#)

[IASC Reference Module for Cluster Coordination at Country Level](#)

Materials shared: <https://ochairaq.egnyte.com/fl/OLl0oP4trA>

Ad Hoc ICCG HRP Costing Methodologies (PPT) - 24 July 2019

Ad Hoc ICCG Minutes (draft) – 24 July 2019

Webinar on Costing for Syria – 9 May 2019