

Terms of Reference for the Global Information Management Working Group: Data Standards Sub-Group

1. Background and Purpose

The Global Information Management Working Group: Data Standards Sub-Group (hereafter "the Working Group") is established to foster alignment and collaboration on data standards among humanitarian actors. This initiative recognizes the critical need for clearly articulated data standards to improve interoperability, enhance data quality and streamline operations in humanitarian contexts. The Working Group will function as a practitioner-led forum for sharing expertise and developing consensus-based standards and guidance. This group will build on the work of previous groups and standards in the humanitarian community.

2. Objective

To develop and recommend a set of actionable, interoperable data standards for humanitarian operations, focusing on areas where data fragmentation impacts operational efficiency and decision-making. These standards will be informed by best practices, real-world challenges faced by practitioners and existing frameworks (where applicable).

3. Scope of Work

The Working Group will:

- **Articulate** current gaps in data collection, storage, sharing, and analysis across member agencies, identifying key areas where alignment can improve outcomes.
- **Identify** priority data categories and elements that require standardization to improve cross-agency coordination and data comparability.
- **Develop** draft data standards, formats, and protocols for key data categories as a foundation for future alignment.
- **Collaborate and align** with development and other sectors linking up with the broader data eco-system.
- **Facilitate knowledge sharing** by compiling and disseminating lessons learned and best practices in data standardization from diverse humanitarian contexts.
- **Ensure the relevance, sustainability and responsiveness** of the standards by ensuring a robust system of data stewardship and governance from the inception of the standards.

4. Membership and Roles

- **Membership:** The Working Group will consist of data and information management practitioners from humanitarian agencies, including NGOs, UN agencies and other relevant stakeholders.

- **Chair:** A Chair (or Co-Chairs) will be elected from among the members to lead meetings, coordinate activities and act as the liaison with other interagency groups.
- **Secretary:** A member will volunteer or be nominated as Secretary to manage documentation, meeting notes and communication.

5. Duration and Meetings

- **Timeline:** The Working Group is established for an initial period of six months, at the end of which it will produce a summary report with recommendations.
- **Meetings:** The Working Group will meet bi-monthly, with additional ad hoc meetings as necessary. Meetings will be conducted virtually.

6. Expected Outputs

- **Standards Draft:** A draft set of data standards and guidelines for humanitarian data management and interoperability.
- **Best Practices Report:** A report compiling insights, challenges, and best practices gathered from members' experiences.
- **Final Summary Report:** A document summarizing findings, recommendations, and next steps, including considerations for extending the group's mandate if necessary.

7. Review and Accountability

At the end of the six-month period, the Working Group will present its findings and outputs to the respective interagency coordination bodies. The continuation of the Working Group beyond the initial timeframe will be based on the evaluation of its progress and relevance.

8. Confidentiality and Data Protection

Members will adhere to all relevant data protection policies and ensure that any shared information, particularly sensitive data, is handled securely and in accordance with established data protection guidelines.

Approval and Adoption

This Terms of Reference document will be reviewed prior to the first meeting and formally adopted by the Working Group members at the first meeting.