

INGO FORUM STRATEGIC PLAN 2019-2022



Time-Period of Strategy: 2019 – 2022

Time of Validation: November 2019

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1. OVERVIEW

In February 2019, the INGO Forum conducted its annual survey of our membership which included a review of the INGO Forum's performance. A total of 61 members participated in the survey.

See the INGO Forum Member Survey 2019 – Survey Analysis.

A draft Strategic Plan was formulated, based on the feedback received from the survey, INGO Forum members round table discussion and steering committee members. A strategic planning consultation and finalization workshop was held in October, where final comments on the draft Strategic Plan were solicited from members, secretariat staff and representatives of UN, NGOs and Donors/Development partners. The Strategic Plan was validated at the INGO Forum General Meeting in November 2019.

This document outlines the INGO Forum Myanmar's Strategic Priorities and Approaches to cover the next three years. It is anticipated that the simplicity of this format will assist the INGO Forum to communicate its Strategic Priorities and role as a principled collective voice of INGOs operating in Myanmar. It also offers a flexible approach, which defines the INGO Forum's core strategic priorities of engagement including 1) Coordination and Representation 2) Advocacy and Communication, 3) Information Management and 4) Capacity Building in addition to its approach, providing room to further develop and operationalize specific priority areas. Due to the nature of the operational context in Myanmar, flexibility is necessary according to the evolution of the context and will ensure its focus on scale up in response to the pressing need for enhanced coordination and a balance between a reactive and proactive strategic focus. A mid-term review of the strategy will be scheduled in 2021.

2. ABOUT THE INGO FORUM

Vision: We envision a Myanmar where humanitarian needs are met and communities empowered to contribute to their own sustainable development.

Mission: To provide a coordination platform for members to influence and increase the effectiveness and coherence of humanitarian, development and peacebuilding efforts in Myanmar.

The INGO Forum Myanmar ("INGO Forum") is an organisation that aims to bring together members of the Myanmar INGO community to build better partnerships and to improve the coordination, effectiveness and coherence of humanitarian relief, development aid and peacebuilding in the country. Founded in 2007, the INGO Forum now has more than 110 INGO member organizations. The INGO Forum supports its members to work together on issues of common interest and focuses its efforts through four key areas:

- **Coordination and Representation-** Developing effective partnerships between INGOs and other stakeholders
- **Advocacy and Communication-** Creating an enabling environment for INGOs to work collectively and with a unified voice
- **Information Management-** Providing a supportive platform for the sharing of information and best practices
- **Capacity Building-** Improve Operational and Programmatic Know-How

The INGO Forum is committed to strengthening relationships, linkages and collaborative efforts with a range of existing NGO and local Civil Society networks/platforms. A recent survey demonstrated that the overwhelming majority of INGOs in Myanmar work in close partnership with national and local civil society actors. Through effective cooperation, INGO Forum members strive to work in a spirit of recognizing the critical voice of local and national partnerships and the centrality of ensuring local ownership and accountability of target populations benefit from the projects.

The INGO Forum as a platform also supports effective partnerships and improved coordination with the Government of Myanmar. The INGO Forum encourages representation of INGOs on the Government Sector Coordination Groups provides key messages and consolidated feedback around national legal and policy developments, administrative policies and procedures.

3. VALUES & PRINCIPLES

The INGO Forum promotes and is guided by the following Values and Principles:

- We respect humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality and independence as outlined in the International Committee of the Red Cross Code of Conduct:
 - **Humanity:** Promotion and advocacy for the right to life with dignity and security and undertaking all possible steps to prevent or alleviate human suffering
 - **Impartiality and non-proselytizing:** Assistance provided is based on need alone, not based on nationality, race, religion or political point of view
 - **Independence:** Delivering aid independently from political, economic, or military objectives
- We apply a principle of **do no harm** and endeavour to work collaboratively with affected communities and authorities, to minimise any negative effects of humanitarian action on the local community or the environment. With respect to armed conflict, we recognise that the way in which humanitarian assistance is provided may potentially render civilians more vulnerable to attack, or sometimes may bring unintended advantage to one or more of the parties to the conflict. We are committed to minimising any such adverse effects, in so far as this is consistent with the humanitarian principles outlined above.
- We believe in an **enabling environment** as the common ground for our members to operate effectively and efficiently.
- We are **accountable** to those who we seek to assist, to those providing the resources, and to the legal authorities. Through our policies, structures and procedures, and in our actions, we ensure we are accountable, answering to beneficiaries, to our partners, members and stakeholders.
- We are **transparent** in our dealings with the Union Government of Myanmar, National NGOs, community partners, the public, donors and interested parties.
- We operate as a **Non-profit**: The purpose of existence is other than making profit
- We will **not discriminate** against any individual or group on the grounds of gender, political affiliation, ethnic origin, religious belief or sexual orientation.
- We maintain high levels of **integrity and professionalism** across all spheres of conduct.
- We uphold a **zero-tolerance** policy for sexual exploitation and abuse of all forms and adhere to the Code of Conduct for members to prevent and protect against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA).

4. STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

4.1. “Effective Partnerships” Coordination and Representation

Strengthen coordination with relevant humanitarian and development actors and INGO representation on multi-agency coordination bodies

The INGO Forum will facilitate the coordination and representation of members in various coordinating bodies promoting good governance and active participation of members according to the INGO Forum Statutes of Governance. INGO Forum's role is to avoid overlap and will not duplicate sectoral, cross-sectoral working groups or the Inter-Agency Standing Committees IASC humanitarian cluster approach. Instead, INGO Forum will strive to maximize leverage by enhancing coordination and improving information sharing and may call for workshops, ad-hoc meetings or regular meetings where added value is agreed based on member needs and solicitations.

4.2. “Promote and enabling environment” - Advocacy and Communication

Influence policy and represent a strong and united voice for INGO Forum members to targeted audiences

The INGO Forum will draw on and promote evidence-based research and collective INGO messaging to influence policies related to humanitarian, development and peacebuilding activities through meetings, information sharing, policy discussions, analysis of trends and issues, publications and coordinated joint public and private statements. We will build and nurture the power of collective action of our members and partners to achieve common goals. In all actions, we strive to develop our members' capacity and confidence to increase the strength of their staff. These activities will be conducted at the national and international level and will include national and local NGOs, international NGOs, donors, partners, UN and other coordination bodies. As a coordination platform, the INGO Forum will represent its members in all its work, retaining a global perspective that is relevant at the national and local level.

4.3. “Shared Platform”- Information Management

Strengthen the collection, analysis, storage and dissemination of information to members and other actors

The INGO Forum will collect, analyze, store and disseminate INGO relevant information to its members. The INGO Forum's website, emails and meetings will be the primary methods for disseminating this information. The purpose is to improve communication with members, inform effective dialogue with other coordination bodies, and improve understanding of the mandate and roles of INGOs and NGO landscape in Myanmar with a view to increase exchange of information.

4.4. “Improve Operational and Programmatic Know-How “– Capacity Building

Develop the capacity of members to collectively be more effective

The INGO Forum will work towards increasing the capacity of its members to participate in the planning, coordination, and delivery of humanitarian, development and peacebuilding activities in Myanmar. The INGO Forum will focus on gathering and sharing information on available thematic training from the members and external bodies. The INGO Forum will invest in capacity building to improve INGOs and partner's knowledge of international standards and best practices in the humanitarian and development sectors as well as focus on niche topics as prioritized by members' needs and solicitations.

4. STRATEGIC PRIORITIES			
COORDINATION and REPRESENTATION	ADVOCACY and COMMUNICATION	INFORMATION MANAGEMENT	CAPACITY BUILDING
<p>Strengthen coordination and representation with relevant humanitarian and development actors</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance INGO forum members coherence and effectiveness and support joined-up analysis and problem solving Enhance INGO representation on multi-agency bodies promoting good governance and active participation of members Enhance information sharing internally and externally 	<p>Influence policy and represent a strong and united voice for INGO Forum members to targeted audiences</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Draw on and promote evidence-based research and collective key messages to influence policies related to humanitarian and development aid and INGOs Enhance and communicate the identity and profile of humanitarian and development INGOs in Myanmar and ensure principles of INGOs are understood and protected Create and engage with different constituencies to promote dialogue between INGOs and decision-makers Provide and support an advocacy and communication platform for members working on shared objectives and operational, policy and advocacy priorities 	<p>Strengthen the collection, analysis, storage, and dissemination of information to members</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Improve the members' understanding of the civil society landscape in Myanmar Improve communication with members Improve the structure and follow up processes of INGO Forum meetings Maintain a database of contacts of INGO Forum members and contacts of relevant humanitarian and development actors 	<p>Improve effectiveness and capacity strengthening of INGO Forum members to enhance delivery of programs</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Gather and share information on available thematic training from the members and external source Provide workshops, training and sessions covering topics related to all members specific to INGOs operational environment (e.g. taxation, labour law) and topics not covered by the members Enhanced capacity of members to respond to strategic and operational challenges

4.1 Effective Partnerships: COORDINATION & REPRESENTATION

Strengthen coordination with relevant humanitarian and development actors and INGO representation on multi-agency/coordination bodies			
Indicative Activities	1. Enhance INGO forum members coherence and effectiveness and support joined up analysis and problem solving	2. Enhance INGO representation on multi-agency bodies promoting good governance and active participation of members	3. Enhance information sharing internally and externally
INGO Forum General Meeting held monthly with guest speaker (INGO Forum members or other humanitarian, development, or human rights stakeholders).	Develop fair, inclusive, transparent and accountable election process. Conduct elections on an annual and bi-annual basis.	Coordinate with other networks, both national and international (Interaction, International Council of Voluntary Agencies - ICVA, International Center for Not-for-Profit Law-ICNL, NGO platforms and APRN).	
INGO Forum Steering Committee meetings held on a quarterly basis to oversee the governance of the secretariat and provide guidance and advice on priorities.	Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) Meetings held monthly. Pre-HCT meetings held monthly and open to all members engaged in humanitarian operations to ensure inclusive and coherent messaging at the HCT.	Improve information sharing and coordination with local NGOs and CSOs, including information sharing between Rakhine/Kachin/N Shan/Kayin and Yangon levels.	
INGO Forum Humanitarian Breakfast held monthly with humanitarian agencies and other humanitarian stakeholders.	Myanmar Humanitarian Fund (MHF)Advisory Board meetings held on a bi-annual basis	Increase information flow and exchange/debate with national and local NGOs, Government authorities, private sector and development bodies, and donors.	
INGO Forum briefings on key priority areas with guest speaker held on a regular basis with INGO Forum members and other stakeholders.	South East Focus Group (SEFG) meetings open to NGOs are held on a bi-monthly or quarterly basis and open to all members operating in the South East to ensure inclusive and coherent messaging at the SEWG where INGO reps participate.	Strengthen and enhance contacts with journalists.	
Improve information sharing and mapping of the humanitarian, development and peacebuilding coordination structures in Myanmar between members.	Sector Coordination Group (SCG) Meetings held on a quarterly basis (10 SCG groups). Pre- meetings open to all members engaged in sector-specific areas to ensure inclusive and coherent messaging by INGO reps at Naypitaw SCG meetings. Enhance Information sharing across sector priorities.	Strengthen and enhance existing internal information and communication systems.	

4.2 Promote an Enabling Environment: ADVOCACY and COMMUNICATION

Influence policy and represent a strong and united voice for INGO Forum members to targeted audiences			
Indicative Activities			
1. Draw on and promote evidenced-based research and collective INGO key messages to influence policies related to humanitarian and development aid and INGOs	2. Enhance and communicate the identity and profile of humanitarian and development INGOs in Myanmar and ensure principles of INGOs are understood and protected	3. Create and engage with different constituencies to promote dialogue between NGOs and decision-makers	4. Provide and support an advocacy and communication platform for members working on shared objectives to discuss and explore key thematic topics and operational, policy and advocacy priorities
Organize information sessions and briefings for members on key laws/policies pertaining to the development and humanitarian sectors in Myanmar.	Engage in evidence-based advocacy for development and humanitarian operational space/access through joint public and private advocacy (key messaging, joint statements, position papers etc.). Explore social media avenues for advocacy purposes – dedicated Facebook page.	Convene and support regular meetings with donors (i.e. ‘Humanitarian Breakfast’ meetings) which link INGOs, OCHA and the donor/diplomatic community.	Conduct regular meetings of the advocacy workgroup to identify and facilitate collective advocacy action contributing to the improvement of the response for vulnerable populations, access and respect of humanitarian principles by and for INGOs.
Develop and advocate collective INGO positions to influence Myanmar laws and policies pertaining to the development and humanitarian sectors in Myanmar.		Pre-HCT meetings held monthly and open to all members and local NGO representatives engaged in humanitarian operations to ensure inclusive and coherent messaging at the HCT.	Produce advocacy products based on collective advocacy action identified by members including joint statements, letters, talking points, position papers, briefing notes, infographics etc.
		Forum website, newsletter, infographics, leaflets etc. in Myanmar and English languages.	

4.2 Promote an Enabling Environment: ADVOCACY and COMMUNICATION

Influence policy and represent a strong and united voice for INGO Forum members to targeted audiences	
Actively cultivate existing partnerships (donors, civil society, UN agencies, development actors, Government of Myanmar, research institutions, other coordinating bodies and other forums) to relay positions and influence policy and programmes.	<p>Establish a government engagement working group to enhance understanding among INGOs of legal and operational requirements and cultivate constructive dialogue with GoM to overcome constraints and build effective relationships.</p> <p>Provide awareness on humanitarian principles, safeguarding, and best practices in humanitarian and development sectors (with laws, policies, research papers etc.) on a regular basis.</p>
Populate the INGO Forum website with key resources on Myanmar humanitarian and development sectors (with laws, policies, research papers etc.) on a regular basis.	<p>Through the government engagement working group, seek to build stronger links with relevant government bodies and military officials to improve understanding of the INGO sector and advocate for a more conducive enabling environment for humanitarian and development action.</p> <p>Support members to engage with the government in specific geographical areas and sectors (Sector Coordination Groups) and on development effectiveness (Development Assistance Coordination Unit, Cooperation Partners Group).</p>
Create a strong network of interested national and local journalists to ensure diffusion of INGO Forum positions to Myanmar media.	<p>Improve awareness of the role of INGOs in Myanmar for GoM and local communities including stories from the field promoting members work (case studies, beneficiaries and INGO worker's interviews) to be shared through the INGO Forum website.</p> <p>Advocate for increased INGO representation and participation in multi-agency groups and other fora run by donors, UN, and GoM.</p>
	<p>Convene meetings of geographically focused groups to discuss key concerns of agencies operating in these areas.</p> <p>Convene meetings between INGOs and local NGOs and CSOs when needs arise.</p> <p>Convene a partnership working group on a bi-monthly basis to look at localization, local civil society, and best practices in the context of Myanmar, including 2020 elections.</p> <p>Convene a working group on the nexus to support clearer analysis on its operational implications, improved coordination and review of lessons learned.</p> <p>Develop and regularly update key messages on thematic/sectoral areas relevant to INGO Forum members.</p>

4.3 Shared Platform: INFORMATION MANAGEMENT				
Strengthen the collection, analysis, storage, and dissemination of information to members				
Indicative Activities	Seek to increase membership participation in MIMU 3W (Who is doing What, Where) data collection by sending reminder emails and providing members with training on submission of 3W data.	Develop email categories and communications procedures for members:	Minutes: The Forum secretariat will share meeting minutes and other relevant documents within five business days after a meeting.	INGO Forum internal contact lists to be updated monthly.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Email groups (meetings, minutes) - List of subject headings - Targeted recipient - Policies regarding the confidential or private information - Procedures for sharing large attachments - Procedures for working on collaborative documents to avoid 'back and forth' and long threads 	<p>Members are strongly encouraged to share meeting notes with INGO Forum secretariat to support timely and accurate information sharing.</p>	Maintain a sectorial database of local NGOs and CSOs, external consultants, contacts of training firms, capacity building resource persons, and conflict and media monitoring agencies.
	With the assistance of MIMU, INGO Forum secretariat will utilize 3W data of members to create relevant maps for members for operational use and to be shared through Forum website and with relevant external stakeholders to elevate the profile of INGO Forum members.	Establish secretariat server for effective creation, storage and retrieval of information.	Action Points: Where relevant, INGO Forum secretariat will create action points and follow up on these one meeting after the other.	INGO Forum CD and DCD contact list and logos will be updated and shared with members on a quarterly basis.

4.3 Shared Platform: INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Strengthen the collection, analysis, storage, and dissemination of information to members	
Maintain an accessible repository of laws, regulations, reports that are relevant to the work of INGOs in Myanmar and inform and support members with an understanding of the regulatory environment through briefings, workshops, presentations (e.g. taxation, employment law).	<p>Orientation Guide developed and shared with all new members and incoming staff of member agencies.</p> <p>The relevance of participants: The INGO Forum secretariat will identify participant types (i.e. positions/ geographic scope etc. based on meeting subject) in meeting invitations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -South East Working Group (SEWG) -INGO Forum Steering Committee -Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) -Sector Coordination Groups (SCG) -Myanmar Humanitarian Fund Advisory Board (MHF-AB) -MIMU (elections to be conducted in 2020)
Create INGO Forum member's orientation readers for humanitarian, development and peacebuilding sectors.	<p>INGO Forum newsletter sent to members monthly.</p> <p>Member survey distributed to members on an annual basis. Survey findings will be used to inform INGO Forum work for the upcoming year.</p>

4.4 Improve Operational and Programmatic Know-How: CAPACITY BUILDING

Improve effectiveness and capacity strengthening of INGO Forum members to enhance delivery of programs	
<p>1. Gather and share information on available thematic training from the members and external source</p>	<p>2. Provide workshops, training and sessions covering topics related to all members specific to INGOs working environment (e.g. taxation, labour law) and topics not covered by the members</p>

Indicative Activities

Coordination on capacity building among members:

- Maintain a database of training topics available from members and external firms and regular sharing for the members
 - Explore partnership opportunities between INGO members to deliver on capacity building and training opportunities among the members
- Capacity building focused on niche topics by INGO Forum for its members:
- Conduct regular sessions on operational and regulatory framework issues – including labour laws, taxation, registration, obtaining MOUs with line ministries, TA's
 - Conduct workshops or training on specific topics relevant to all members, not covered by any member as prioritized by members' needs and solicitations
 - Conduct workshops with INGOs and partners' knowledge of international standards and best practices in the humanitarian and development sectors as well as focus on niche topics as prioritized by members' needs and solicitations.

INGO FORUM SURVEY 2019 – MEMBERS SUGGESTED THE FOLLOWING LIST OF TRAINING UNDER THE CAPACITY BUILDING TO BE CONSIDERED

- Humanitarian principles in conflict-affected areas
- Humanitarian Law and Human Rights Law
- Sphere standards at Yangon and State levels in English and Burmese language
- Negotiation in Humanitarian Settings
- Information sharing on Disaster Risk Reduction and government coordination mechanisms
- Mine Risk Education
- Implementing the triple nexus
- Sector-specific workshops to make the coordination between INGO on those topics more efficient and effective. When appropriate, development partners will be invited to join.
- Conducting inclusion and gender audits at our workplace
- Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) follow up training for HR and National Programme Staff
- Training on peacebuilding approaches -conflict sensitivity, 'do no harm' and peaceful conflict resolution
- Climate Change
- Youth and education
- Land issues
- Gender equality
- LGBTI
- ASEAN and international affairs
- Urbanization; urban development
- Energy sector
- Hate speech, nationalization issues
- Provide training for staff on human resources, leadership, management skills
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Risk management
- Mapping exercises
- Development-Humanitarian-Peace Nexus
- Organizational sustainability strategies
- Safety and Security

5. HOW THE INGO FORUM WORKS

In light of the context in Myanmar and emerging issues that the INGO Forum encounters, we embrace approaches that are deemed most effective for collective action and for momentum to grow for optimal results. These approaches underpin our interventions and represent the processes adopted:

- **Information Sharing:** We are creative and provide information and opportunities to learn, explore new ideas and initiatives and approaches, identifying areas of added value.
- **Collective Advocacy and Communications must be strategic and evidence-based:** Evidence is used to influence policy. We base what is said and done on the best research, feedback and our members' combined experience to influence policy and practice.
- **Membership active participation and coordination:** We are inclusive and collaborative, and work with our members and practice placing attention on those who are most active and encouraging others to participate more broadly to achieve the best results.
- **Representation and amplifying collective voice:** We strive to represent strong and unified voices for INGO forum members to targeted audiences, locally, nationally, regionally and globally.

5.1 Resources are fit for purpose by November 2020

INGO Forum Secretariat Staff will be comprised of:

- Director INGO Forum
- Programme and Advocacy Coordinator
- Programme Relations Manager
- Area Coordinator to be based in a field office
- Safety and Humanitarian Advisor to be based in field office with frequent visits to Yangon
- Communications and Outreach Coordinator
- Senior Operations Manager
- Admin and Finance Officer
- Through the use of external consultants, the Forum will:
 - Improve in Legal Policy Development and research areas
 - Improve in government relations
 - Improve partnerships and localisation
- Based on the diversity of field offices, the INGO Forum will hone this strategy to respond to specific operational issues within their state where necessary, while ensuring they remain within the broader scope of this strategy.
- Develop clear professional development plans from 2020 - 2022

5.2 Steering Committee and Membership

- Initiate within the Interaction Resource Development initiative, a review of INGO representation bodies, which should result in clear recommendations to increase the engagement of members, the establishment of new working groups and the effectiveness of current committees including the links to external coordination bodies, based on the strategic themes and approaches.
- Conduct orientation of new INGO Forum members and implement the annual survey of members to evaluate INGO Forum's performance and provide recommendations
- The INGO Forum will enhance its categories of membership in 2020; full, observer membership with corresponding benefits and obligations
- The INGO Forum Director and Steering Committee will internalize the use of an investment in technologies for remote management and communication since its structure will involve spreading of secretariat staff and membership across the geographical regions.



5.3 Fundraising Strategy

The INGO Forum will adopt a range of fundraising strategies, which will continue to include raising the profile of the INGO Forum; increasing and maximizing membership contributions through the tiered fee structure; facilitating INGO Forum's contributions within members funding proposals or in-kind investments; approaching new donors who are funding operations in Myanmar that appreciate the value of coordination, collective action whose objectives are compatible with the INGO Forum's vision and mission. An ad-hoc fundraising group will be established to work on an ethical and principled fundraising framework for the INGO Forum Myanmar in 2020.



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