



IM Network Survey Results

August 2016



Background

The inter-agency Information Management Network has been active for the last 2 years with regular monthly meetings and a number of specific initiatives, including support to IM in emergency response, capacity building support and the development of the Humanitarian Data Standards.

The IM Network was first established in April 2013, aiming to strengthen the quality of information for evidence-based development and humanitarian policy, planning and managerial decisions through a coordinated approach that builds on relevant existing information systems.

The IM Network aims, as agreed in the Network Terms of reference, are listed on the final page of this document. In summary, the IM Network aims to:

1. Promote best practices in IM;
2. Standardize and harmonize datasets among partners;
3. Carry out coordinated and joint IM initiatives;
4. Build capacity in the management of different forms of data;

A short online survey was conducted over a three-week period in August 2016 to gather the views of IM Network members on the IMN activities and how it could better achieve its objectives. The anonymous survey took 5-10 minutes to complete included sections on;

- respondents profiles (location, position, organization type)
- attendance at IM Network meetings
- the perceived quality and usefulness of the IM Network meetings
- use of the meeting minutes
- whether the IM Network is meeting its objectives
- suggestions for improvement

This report has been prepared by MIMU on behalf of the IM Network. It summarizes the survey results along with an overview of the IM Network activities over the past 2 years. The remarks and conclusions are suggestions drawn from the survey results for further discussion in the IM Network.

IM Network outputs

The table below outlines the anticipated outputs of the IM Network (IMN) as documented in its ToR against the outputs:

	Planned output (2013 ToR)	Actual output (as of 31 August 2016)
1	Regular Network meetings, dissemination of the summary records of those meetings	Minutes produced for all 37 monthly meetings held since the group was established in April 2013. Additional sub-groups established and sharing minutes through member email/google groups as well as sharing the minutes through the MIMU website. 1) GIS WG 2) ICT4Development WG 3) SE Data Network (not meeting regularly)
2	A data sharing mechanism is in place	The IMN Google group is the main mechanism - currently 82 members. Minutes are also shared through the MIMU website IM sector page with 509 pageviews over the last 6 months. The MIMU Geonode has been established for geospatial information sharing. No specific mechanism is in place for the sharing of agency-specific datasets.
3	A common coding system is in place	MIMU Place codes remain the interim system in place until other arrangements are developed by Government.
4	An inventory of datasets is in place	National, published datasets collated in the MIMU Baseline data (216 indicators). An inventory of IMN members' datasets was started in 2014 but completed by only a few of the larger agencies with dedicated IM capacity.
5	An inventory of IM assets is in place	See above – undertaken at the same time as the data inventory.
6	Key thematic indicators and most reliable data sources identified	No specific IMN activities in this period. Key thematic indicators have been identified through various mechanisms (clusters/sectors, MIMU Baseline data, UNDP-CSO SDG Data Readiness assessment). No exploration as yet on systems to share information on source reliability.
7	Information on data quality standards for wider use by those collecting information	Data Disaggregation taskforce established to review data collection arrangements across clusters/sectors active in humanitarian programming in Rakhine, Kachin and N. Shan. Countrywide Humanitarian Data Collection Standards (April 2015) developed and endorsed for use by each of the clusters/sectors. These have been rolled out across CCCM, Shelter, NFI, Protection sectors, and form the basis for the beneficiary categories in the HNO/HRP.
8	Fill gaps in the management and analysis of secondary data	No specific IMN activities in this period. Steps have been taken by OCHA to review the secondary data needed for emergency assessments. MIMU maintains the Baseline data which collates the indicators and sources useful for secondary data analysis.
9	Periodic review of progress of the IM Network	2014 Workplan, 2015 review of achievements and 2016 workplan (see attached) IM Network Survey August 2016
10	Other priorities as defined by the IM Network	Capacity development taskforce met once and the planned activities were followed up mainly by MIMU (created training in Excel and Information Management basics) Emergency response – review of flood response issues in 2015.

Survey participation

1) Profile of respondents

The IM Network Google group currently has 82 members, 15 of whom participated in the survey. Almost all were from Yangon (14 respondents), and 1 from Nay Pyi Taw.

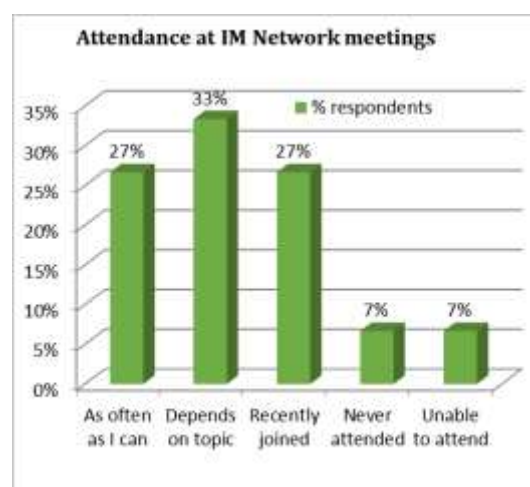
The vast majority of respondents work for UN (13), and the remaining 2 participants were from INGOs/independent. Based on the received responses, members with a focus on areas of information management/technology, data management and GIS (73% of responses) tend to be more active and interested members of the network – this is in line with the IM Network expected membership.

Respondents' main area of work		
Information management	9	50%
Management/leadership	3	17%
Information technology	2	11%
Programme management	2	11%
Data management	1	6%
GIS	1	6%

2) IM Network meeting attendance

Respondents fell into three main groups with regards to attendance – those who attend whenever possible (27% of respondents), those who joined recently (27%) and those who attend when the subject is of interest (33%).

The main reasons for not attending meetings were other commitments/travel (47%), and lack of awareness of the meeting timing (12%). One respondent could not attend due to their base out of Yangon, and one did not attend due to lack of interest in the meeting topics. Most respondents (80%) replied they anticipate attending the next meeting.



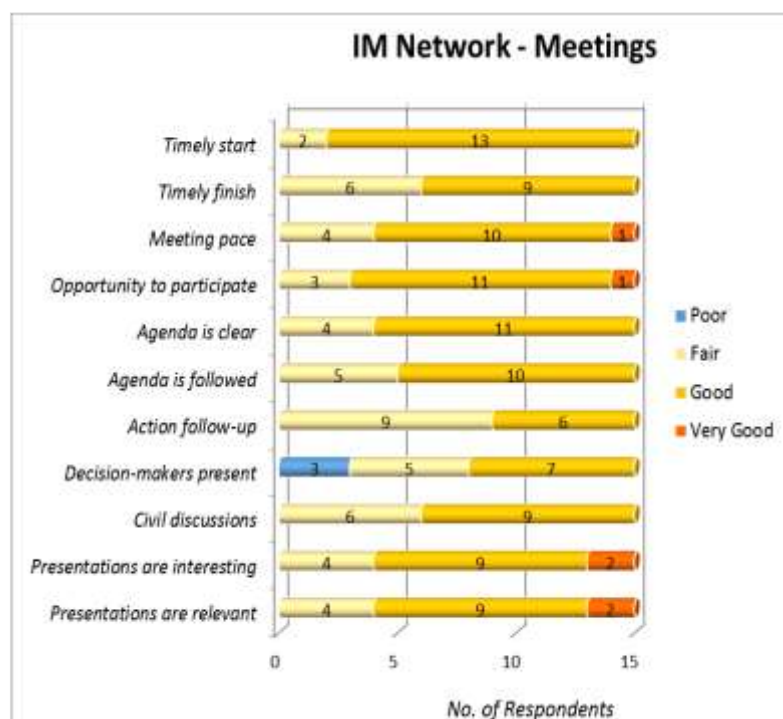
3) Meeting quality

Overall meeting management was considered to be generally good (agenda, timeliness, pace, ability to participate).

All respondents were generally positive about the presentations (interesting and relevant), with 73% finding them good or very good.

The level of follow-up of actions from the meeting was positive but also the one area with more “fair” than “good” responses which merits follow-up!

27% of respondents were concerned that the people needed to make effective decisions were not attending the meetings.

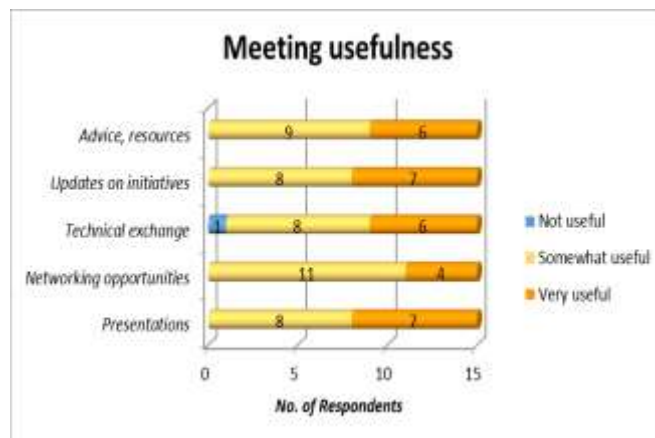


4) Usefulness of the IM Network meetings

Respondents generally found the IM Network meetings to be *somewhat useful* (over half) or *very useful* (40-47%) for presentations, networking, technical knowledge, updates and as a forum for advice, resources and suggestion.

Just one negative response was received with one respondent finding lack of opportunity for technical exchange.

The few suggestions re making meetings more interesting or useful reiterated current activities (having useful presentations, exchange of ideas and technology, agency updates).



5) Meeting minutes

Comments were also sought on the use, content and presentation of the meeting minutes: The meeting minutes were generally seen as useful with 60% of respondents *usually* or *always* opening and reading them (9 persons), while the remaining 6 persons *sometimes* opening and reading the meeting minutes. None of the respondents *rarely* or *never read* the minutes, however the sample size was relatively small and by definition and likely included more active members interested to influence the group.

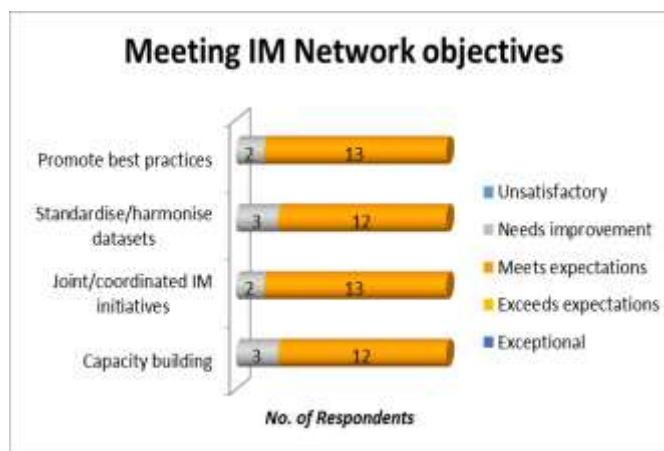
All respondents were satisfied with the presentation, content and format of the meeting minutes which were considered as *good* by 60-67% of respondents, and *fair* by the remainder. 87% of the respondents were aware that they could use the Google group for information sharing among IM Network members. When asked how the Google group could be more useful, two respondents noted that it could be used to share materials for information and for quick reference.

6) Meeting the IM Network objectives

The majority of survey respondents (80-87%) felt that the IM Network is meeting its objectives, whereas 2-3 survey respondents felt that improvement was needed across these areas.

The IM Network was not seen by any respondents as performing unsatisfactorily or exceptionally in meeting its objectives.

Suggestions to better meet IM Network objectives related to extending awareness /outreach, i.e. to provide presentations in agency offices in Yangon to foster more support, to involve the concerned professional/departments, and to extend outreach beyond the group with attendance in other network/sector/cluster meetings.



7) Making the IM Network more useful

Respondents provided several suggestions to extend the IM Network and make it more useful – each was noted by one respondent only;

Suggestions from survey respondents		Steps taken to date
1. Extend outreach	1.1 Be clearer in the purpose of the network (and share this widely);	ToR is available as an initial resource – who is the target?
	1.2 Each member to promote the IM Network to others who are not aware of the IM Network meetings and objectives;	
	1.3 Consider a skype IM network and enabling group Skype chats	
	1.4 Strengthen engagement with the clusters – attend meetings and support them with maps that are relevant to the agendas of the meetings. Work with Clusters to clean up and consolidate their updates!	Who to attend? MIMU often attends the ICCG and interfaces with specific clusters that have more IM capacity.
2. Add alternative tools/options	2.1 Create a collaborative online workspace	Not previously possible through the MIMU website but can be revisited
3. Add to meetings	3.1 Make it clear and easy for organizations/staff to suggest ideas for topics	IM Network members are asked in meetings and by email between meetings – almost no suggestions received
	3.2 Exchange knowledge and seek the solution for technical problems.	?perhaps needing more of a problem-solving system in place where members can post issues/answer queries from others

Suggested subjects/themes for future IM Network meetings were

- Ongoing initiatives
 - Information Management initiatives in the Government
 - Response activities on current situation
 - discuss about Myanmar Unicode (NOTE that this was the subject of discussion in the August 2016 ICT4D Working group meeting)
- Available information
 - Data collection by humanitarian clusters
 - standardizing data collection + tool comparison
 - Publicly available data in Myanmar
 - Open Data from Weather station
 - Updates on the conflict situation, working on conflict, sharing conflict analyses, conflict sensitivity etc
- Improved tools
 - New technology for Information Management
- Capacity development
 - How to practically use the maps to aid decision making
 - Strengthening the IM capacity among the member organizations and how can encourage them to participate regularly

Conclusions and possible next steps

1) Participation

Relatively few of the IM Network members responded to the survey (just 18% of the current registered members), and these were primarily UN and Yangon-based staff. This is despite efforts by the IM Network to engage a variety of agencies including NGOs, and to enable field-based staff working in IM-related fields to engage through the Google group. The current Google group setup does not include location of the various members, and this is not so easy to follow up given individuals' job and location changes,

Possible reasons for the lack of field-based participation in the survey;

- The survey took place in a period of flood response for some agencies.
- More generally, there are a limited number of IM staff countrywide, with most with IM remits are Yangon-based. As a result, while quite a few people have joined the IM Network via the Google group, relatively few attend regularly.
- Internet in field locations is very limited and it is perhaps less interesting for field-based staff to try to engage virtually where the main product of the IM Network has been through the Yangon-based meetings and circulation of meeting minutes.

2) Meetings

The meetings are generally considered to be of good quality and on track in all respects. The suggestions of items to add are largely there and could perhaps be strengthened. It remains challenging to get more inputs from IM Network members – they are asked in each meeting as well as between meetings to suggest presentations or agenda items and relatively few inputs are received.

More attention could be paid to the follow up of agreed actions; this particular question did not allow any analysis of which actions or who needed to follow-up better so this needs to be considered as a general point. Much of the follow-up so far has been through three agencies (MIMU, UNHCR and OCHA) with little engagement by others which may be explain the lower rating.

The perceived gap in decision-makers' attendance could be further discussed however this challenge is really back to individual agencies who determine their own level of participation – participation tends to be at a technical rather than managerial level given the focus of the IM Network.

3) Meeting the IM Network objectives

While the IM Network is generally seen as meeting its objectives, the need for improvement was noted by some. Based on the received suggestions, the main concern appears to be related to outreach and raising awareness of the availability and value of the IM Network.

A new approach is likely to be needed to extend outreach - the Network already has 82 members, a relatively small number of whom attend the meetings which are the main forum for activity by the group. Efforts to establish sub-groups for specific IM Network activities have generally not been successful (other than the small and targeted Data Disaggregation taskforce which met over 2014/start of 2015) given the busy schedules of IM Network members. As a result follow-up of a number of IM issues flagged by the Network members has remained for MIMU to take up (establishing the data inventory, developing capacity building initiatives in Excel, IM skills development...). This in itself is not an issue but the capacity of MIMU to take on new tasks is also limited.

Specific suggestions of outreach mechanisms could be further explored (skype discussion group, collaborative online workspace, stronger links with clusters) – it is not so clear whether these are expected of MIMU or with engagement of other IM Network members.

Possible next steps – participation/outreach

- **Proactively seek inputs from field-based members** through various mechanisms (not only online), starting with a review of current IM Network members' locations.
- **Review efforts to increase field participation in the IMN** – key questions to include:
 - What efforts are being made by members?
 - To what extent should the IM Network aim to increase field participation? Is it by nature more focused on head office priorities around data management and strategic IM issues?
 - Is it an issue of capacity at field level for engagement in the types of issues discussed?
- **Consider activities that may enable greater field level participation** (a sub-group in MMR language with skype discussions, collaborative online space areas to consider: Purpose? Targets? Who would convene/manage? Language? Would this offer an option for field-based agency staff?)
- **Provide an easy-read guide to the IM Network**
- **? Yangon agency discussions?**

Possible next steps – meetings

- **Suggested meeting topics**
 - Review mechanisms for IM Network members to suggest meeting topics;
 - Review suggested topics from survey respondents
- **Ensure follow up of agreed actions** (noted in the minutes);

Possible next steps – meeting IM Network objectives

- **Define the main target(s) for outreach** on the IM Network objectives and activities
- **Seek more information on suggested improvements** to meeting IM Network objectives;

Shon Campbell
MIMU Manager
September 7, 2016

ANNEX 1: Information Management Network objectives

The specific objectives of the IM Network as detailed in the 2013 Terms of Reference are as follows:

1. *Promote best practices in IM;*

- 1.1 Encourage collaboration between IM actors in the collection and storage of data, usage of software and sharing of expertise in order to streamline IM activities;
- 1.2 Agree and develop standard procedures to facilitate the exchange of information and sharing of data;
- 1.3 Develop and utilize common IM products for enhanced coordination, policy and planning, inter-sectoral analysis and monitoring;
- 1.4 Facilitate and enhance information exchange between cluster/sector working groups and with other relevant initiatives supporting development and humanitarian activities;
- 1.5 Where required, to act as an IM focal point to inform the Global Inter Agency Information Management Working Group.

2. *Standardize and harmonize datasets among partners;*

- 2.1 Promote consensus on minimum standards for IM activities: developing core sets of agreed indicators, data/information standards and protocols, common language, consistent use of names for administrative units/geographic locations and common datasets;
- 2.2 Agree on use of common tools and approaches to gathering and using information and, where this may not be possible, agree data format and structure standards to facilitate interoperability;
- 2.3 Standardize and act as an authoritative source for baseline datasets relevant to development and, as relevant, humanitarian activities in support of the sector/cluster leads. Note that sector/cluster leads should identify key standards and indicators for monitoring progress and effectiveness of humanitarian and development activities.

3. *Carry out coordinated and joint IM initiatives;*

- 3.1 Maintain a broad overview of IM activities relevant to development and humanitarian activities (who is doing what, where, when), as well as the roles and responsibilities of agencies in the collection and storage of IM related data;
- 3.2 Coordinate data collection efforts to ensure harmonization of data standards and datasets and to avoid duplication and over-assessment by multiple agencies;
- 3.3 Facilitate sharing of results and collected data between agencies and across thematic sectors/working groups.

4. *Build capacity in the management of different forms of data;*

- 4.1 Promote the sharing of relevant technologies and capacities and a coordinated approach to using and building these resources across agencies, between sectors, and with government in line with common goals and work plans
- 4.2 Promote more effective use of IM within the development/humanitarian community and by government;
- 4.3 Sharing of expertise;
- 4.4 Share techniques of consolidation and data analysis.

ANNEX 2: IM Network achievements by 2015 and 2016 Workplan

Inter-Agency Information Management Network Work Plan 2015 Achievements + Activities for 2016

The IM Network Workplan was developed in early 2014 focusing on 5 main objectives, namely Promoting data standards, improving the use of assessment data, supporting best practices in information management, improving base datasets and capacity building.

Progress against the expected outcomes was reviewed by the IM Network in early 2015 and it was felt that the 2014 planned outcomes continued to be relevant targets through 2015 with no further additions. This document provides an update on the achievements along with suggested next steps for discussion in the coming IM Network meeting.

Key Expected Outcomes in the IM Network Workplan

1. **Promoting Data Standards:** Simplified and agreed categories of data disaggregation are introduced across clusters/sectors and key data gathering tools to allow harmonization of data from different sources.

Achievements to the end of 2015

- Data Disaggregation standards have been finalised with clusters/sectors for humanitarian interventions.
- Incorporated in the Humanitarian Response plan.
- Rolled out through UNHCR activities but not rolled out as planned by OCHA (was to provide workshops for agencies in Rakhine and Kachin)
- Initial discussion MIMU/PACT on further developing the tool for development focused activities

Planned activities in 2016

- 1.1 Move forward on planned roll-out of Data Disaggregation Standards.
 - Requires materials (several slides showing why useful, how used to make it more relevant).
 - Approach respective clusters/sectors to present discuss implementation.
 - Consider linking with planned preparedness initiatives in Rakhine and Kachin (OCHA).
 - OCHA IMO to present to partners in the context of strengthening IM in clusters/sectors
- 1.2 Review possible revisions to the tool for development focused activities (focus of an IMN meeting)
- 1.3 Consider simple metadata for central national datasets – probable focus for MIMU rather than IMN

2. **Improving use of Assessment data:** Strengthened capacity for sharing and collation of assessment information to enable its use in planning and monitoring.

Achievements to the end of 2015

- No interest in IM Network in this period. MIMU is revising the web-based Assessment tracking tool based on UNHCR feedback to simplify user interface/system of input

Planned activities in 2016

- 2.1 MIMU to launch initiatives to improve assessment uploading and better publicise the tools (revisions to the web-based tool, ensure short turn-around time, excel input tool sent out through 3W contacts)
- 2.2 OCHA/Helena to present the MIRA process changes

3. **Support Best Practices in IM:** Facilitate the sharing of information on good practice in IM across sectors/clusters.

Achievements to the end of 2015

- ICT4Development Working Group started in May 2014, review questionnaire for the group in late 2015
- GIS Working Group ToR revised to be more strategic
- Simple Excel tool developed to capture information on the various cluster/sector products and capacities – still to be rolled out with clusters/sectors (possibly better as a questionnaire – to be decided)...examples

of documents can be made available in a closed page for the ICCG members in the MIMU website as a resource on formats, tools etc

Planned activities in 2016

- 3.1 Review meeting structure, focus through questionnaire to IMN, GIS WG members – Q1 2016 (MIMU)
- 3.2 Promote wider attendance
 - Approach UNCT re (non) participation of UN agencies, cluster/sectors – start 2016 (MIMU)
 - Promote participation of INGO Forum members and development-focused agencies (MIMU, IMN)
- 3.3 Finalise and roll out the cluster/sector IM resources mapping tool as needed based on what has been collected in the general mailing by OCHA. Confirm with the ICCG whether it remains useful to upload available tools to a restricted MIMU webpage as examples for other clusters/sectors (MIMU, OCHA)

4. Capacity Building: Provide a set of tools to support induction and capacity building of staff involved in IM/data management across agencies.

Achievements to the end of 2015

- Key priorities identified (excel, data management, data ethics)
- 2 trainings developed by MIMU following discussions in the IMN
 - Excel training – one course provided for agencies in/around Sittwe and recorded as a series of videos – could be better profiled in 2016
 - IM workshop – piloted in Oct 15 with IM Network agencies as a 1.5 day orientation. Will be extended to 3 days and rolled out in Myanmar language from May 2016 as a periodic training to be provided in Yangon/field locations for technical and programme staff of agencies, govt.

Planned activities in 2016

- 4.1 Excel (MIMU) – review whether the Excel video course is ready for wider dissemination, refine and publicise
- 4.2 IM workshop (MIMU) to be delivered at field level – consider possible ToT if there is capacity and interest among IMN members to broaden the reach

5. Improving Base Datasets: Increase the accuracy of the Common and Fundamental Operational Datasets through specific activities targeting IM practitioners (crowdsourcing tools, thematic meetings)

Achievements to the end of 2015

- Thematic meeting on Data and the SE held in November 14 and SE Data Network established for better coordination re data issues and IM priorities in the SE. This has not met as frequently as planned – to be restarted in
- MIMU mobile tools for school/village mapping and Pcode look-up developed – the village mapping tool will be released in early 2016. (The school mapping tools (online, offline and mobile) have been used in a MIMU/MoE/UNESCO project to map government schools across the country)
- MIMU released a crowdsourcing tool in 2013 for info gathering on emergencies – OCHA was requested to provide input to the specific questions to be asked through this tool – inputs still pending. To be taken up at the start of 2016

Planned activities in 2016

- 5.1 Finalise the data mapping tool for the SE
- 5.2 Release village mapping tool and Pcode lookup aiming to improve village mapping through IMN agencies
- 5.3 Resume the SE Data Network (Q1 2016)
- 5.4 Consider, as a group, whether particular VT data from the census would be valuable and make a joint request for its release.

February 26th, 2016