

Terms of Reference

June 2021

A. Background

Information Management (IM) tools in use among humanitarian, recovery and development actors in Myanmar include a variety of databases, geographic information systems (GIS) and other systems and tools. A number of agencies have IM units which manage a variety of datasets and mapping capacities for their specific needs. Though a considerable amount of information exists, collected from a wide variety of sources by a large number of stakeholders, there are a number of problems affecting its use for analysis and planning.

Myanmar's data environment is highly fragmented, with a wide range of actors engaged in data collection; the information generated is often poorly documented, incomplete, not presented in forms which are interoperable and shared only sporadically. There are no agreed upon standards around the collection, use and sharing of data, and gaps in the quality, availability and interoperability of both statistics and spatial data seriously hamper its use. Many critical official datasets are not publicly available, leaving users to seek alternative sources of baseline data and spatial data with which to support emergency, humanitarian, development and peace-focused activities.

Without interoperable and well-documented core datasets, the analysis and understanding of vulnerabilities of different populations in Myanmar remains limited, and efforts to develop better targeted, multi-sector interventions addressing humanitarian and development needs are severely constrained.

The Inter-agency Information Management Network is Myanmar's countrywide IM Working Group. It seeks to fill some of these gaps by working with humanitarian and development actors around the country to promote:

- Inclusive, gender-responsive and conflict-sensitive information management systems;
- Improved coordination, standardization, exchange, analysis and use of information resources in humanitarian, development and peace-focused sectors, countrywide;
- Development and use of core sets of agreed data/information standards and protocols;
- More comprehensive, inclusive, interoperable and accurate datasets to support emergency preparedness and response, humanitarian assistance and development support;
- Strengthened technical capacity of agencies to provide and maintain these information systems in service of Myanmar's people;
- Sharing of relevant resources across agencies and sectors (datasets, technologies, capacities, methodological tools), drawing attention to existing gaps in information and data;
- Harmonization of established and new datasets;
- An inclusive approach which routinely captures sex and age disaggregated data (SADD), data on other vulnerable and marginalized population groups, and monitors conflict sensitivity to inform programming to reach people most in need;
- support to inter-sector/cluster IM initiatives so as to improve inter-sector analysis and monitoring and avoid duplication of effort and resources.

The Inter-agency IM Network encourages all actors to integrate good practice data standards which advance their collection, preparation, interpretation and analysis of sex-disaggregated data, and the development of gender indicators to strengthen the responsiveness of information systems to the needs of the most vulnerable and marginalized population groups who may be overlooked in data collection and analysis.

The Inter-agency IM Network further encourages development and humanitarian partners to pursue a conflict-sensitive approach to IM to ensure information management systems are informed by a detailed understanding of the context and its gendered dynamics, and the impact of interventions and the interaction between the two. Documentation of contextual learning and social cohesion opportunities or achievements should be encouraged.

B. Objectives

The purpose of the Information Management Network is to strengthen the quality of information for evidence-based and effective development and humanitarian policy, planning and managerial decisions through a coordinated approach that builds on relevant existing information systems.

The specific objectives of the IM Network 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 with appropriate attention to data protection;
- 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 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 including sex and age disaggregated data (SADD), 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 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 activities.

3. Carry out coordinated and joint IM initiatives;

- 3.1. Ensure IM activities and tools are informed by a **conflict sensitive approach** in line with Do No Harm;
- 3.2. 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;
- 3.3. **Coordinate data collection efforts** to support harmonization of data standards and datasets and to avoid duplication and over-assessment by multiple agencies;
- 3.4. **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 and interested stakeholders as well as between sectors, in line with common goals and work plans;
- 4.2. Promote **more effective use of IM** within the development/humanitarian community;
- 4.3. Encourage use of collected data to inform and improve inclusive and conflict-sensitive programming to better address needs of populations and reach vulnerable groups;
- 4.4. **Sharing expertise** to strengthen IM-related technical capacity;
- 4.5. **Share IM-related experience, lessons learned and recommendations** to strengthen systems, capacity, data and data policy.

C. Structure and Membership

The IM Network is convened by the Myanmar Information Management Unit / MIMU, working in close collaboration with OCHA which leads on IM matters related to humanitarian intervention.

Members of the IM Network are technical representatives and IM Focal points from each sector/cluster, and from UN and operational NGOs with capacity in the area of Information Management. Members are designated by their agencies for this purpose and should be committed to working collaboratively in the area of IM. Meetings will take place in Yangon and/or virtually, with efforts to ensure that any field-based technical IM representatives are kept apprised of the activities of the IM Network and provided opportunities to participate.

Representatives of donors and other entities may be invited to IM Network meetings or to a dedicated sub-group on an as-needed basis.

Frequency of meeting: The IM Network will meet formally on an agreed monthly or bi-monthly basis, with regular regional sub-groups, regional chapters and technical working groups as per the interest of the Network members. Ad hoc meetings may be organized as and when required to address emergency issues as well as to take advantage of opportunities of value to IM Network members.

Minutes and other resources relevant to the IM Network meetings will be widely disseminated through the IM Network mailing direct to members, and through the MIMU website. The same IM Network mail group will provide a resource for exchange of information with the wider set of IM Network members.

Technical working groups (TWGs) focused on issues relevant to the IM Network may be convened under the IM Network umbrella. These include:

- **Longstanding TWGs** convened with a particular membership with the support of an interested IM Network member. Examples include the existing GIS Working Group and the ICT4Development Working Group.
- **Regional chapters** (area-based groups linked to the Inter-agency IM Network) may be established in different states/regions by interested IM Network members and field-based agencies to facilitate information exchange and improved IM approaches relevant to the issues in specific regions.

Each TWG/Regional chapter should have a dedicated ToR endorsed by its members. These groups are invited to come under the umbrella of the Inter-agency IM Network to share information relevant to their areas/issues of concern with others, to benefit from the knowledge and support of the wider IM Network, and to benefit from capacity building support which prioritises IM Network members.

Short-term sub/task-groups may be convened as needed and should be task-focused and time-bound, include field level engagement as far as possible, and report regularly to the IM Network on developments within the sub-group.

D. Expected Outputs and Results

The Inter-agency IM Network aims to be productive and progressive in taking forward the IM agenda, promoting the availability of consistent and reliable information to all concerned actors for more timely, inclusive, conflict-sensitive approaches to planning, programming, analysis, monitoring and policy development.

Expected outputs and results include:

- Regular IM Network meetings, dissemination of the summary records of those meetings;
- A common coding system is in place to support data sharing;
- An inventory of datasets is in place;
- Key thematic indicators and most reliable data sources identified;
- Information on data quality standards for wider use by those collecting information;
- Fill gaps in the management and analysis of secondary data;
- A shared approach to reviewing and addressing the technical capacity needs of IM Network members;
- Periodic review of progress of the IM Network;
- Other priorities as defined by the IM Network.

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