

EMERGENCY RESPONSE PREPAREDNESS WORKING GROUP (ERP WG)

Terms of Reference – January 2025

1. Background

Myanmar is one of the world's most disaster-prone countries with its geographical location exposing it to multiple hazards including earthquakes, floods, strong wind/cyclones, storm surge, periodic droughts, fires, forest fire, tsunamis, industrial and technological hazards, some of which have the potential to impact large numbers of people. Historical data shows that there have been medium to large/scale natural disasters every few years. Myanmar ranked 11th globally in terms of exposure to climate-related hazards and capacity to prepare for and respond to hazard events and disasters.¹ The country is highly vulnerable to climate shocks such as cyclones and monsoon floods.

The humanitarian community in Myanmar has established the ERP WG in an effort to reinforce its readiness to respond flexibly to a range of potential hazards despite these new uncertainties. The work of the group aims to ensure that effective and timely assistance is provided to people in need through effective coordination and communication on emergency preparedness and humanitarian response in Myanmar.

2. Purpose / Objectives

The ERP WG provides a platform for stakeholders (including CSOs, international and national NGOs, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and UN agencies,) to jointly prepare for effective and efficient humanitarian responses to potential future hazards affecting Myanmar, mitigate the impact of disasters and save as many lives as possible from preventable causes. This involves active participation in coordination, planning, information sharing and advocacy at national and local levels.

The ERP WG includes technical functions focusing on process (e.g. sharing lessons learnt, harmonizing approaches, and developing guidelines and standard operating procedures (SOPs) and strategic functions (e.g. avoiding gaps and duplications, and joint advocacy). The group acknowledges the importance of local actors in emergency response and will ensure adequate participation. Particular attention will be paid to appropriate communication with affected populations, especially with those who are at particular risks including women, girls, persons with disabilities, older persons, LGBTQIA+ individuals, etc. to inform them of the risks and possible mitigation measures.

The ERP WG purpose is to:

- Ensure all possible measures are taken to mitigate the humanitarian impact of natural disasters;
- Support the development of efficient and up to date national Emergency Response Preparedness Plan (ERPP), as well as ERP tools, both at inter-agency and at cluster level;
- Identify gaps and addressing them in preparedness plans and exercises, and monitoring the

¹ RISK Inform Index 2025

- progresses in implementing these preparedness plans;
- Enhance the preparedness efforts of the humanitarian community through the provision of technical support and advice;
- Provide operational direction and support to sub-national coordination groups and clusters, *inter alia*, in developing and exercising their emergency response/contingency plans;
- Ensure the integration and linkages with cross-cutting issues (Accountability to Affected Populations, Protection mainstreaming, Cash and Voucher Assistance, Gender, PSEA);
- Ensure communication on early warning information, ERP plans, mechanisms, and information to all concerned stakeholders.

3. Principles

a. Leadership and membership

- The ERP WG is chaired by OCHA. A non-UN organization will Co-Chair the ERP WG on a rotational basis of two years.
- OCHA is providing dedicated secretariat support.
- Participation is open to any interested humanitarian organization working in Myanmar, with the aim to bring together CSOs, faith-based organizations, INGOs, NNGOs, the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, United Nations, and other international and regional humanitarian organizations together on an equal footing.
- There is no limit on the number of members and organizations. Consistency of representation for each participating member is crucial.
- OCHA will maintain an e-mail/contact list as the primary channel of communications among ERP WG members.

b. Nomination of ERP WG Co-Chair

- i. Co-Chair rotation: The Co-Chair role is rotational and typically held by a non-UN organization on a two-yearly basis. The Co-Chair must ensure they represent the interests of the ERP WG as a whole and not of the individual organization they work for.
- ii. Pre-requisites for the Co-Chair:
 - Agency/organization is committed to allocating a staff member with sufficient time for the Co-Chair position.
 - Agency/organization is currently an active member of the ERP WG.
 - Agency/organization is highly committed to supporting the ERP WG annual work plan.
- iii. Notice periods: The ERP WG Co-Chair is to ensure that any changes or transitions are managed smoothly with at least one-month advance notice before stepping down from the role.

c. Frequency of meetings

The ERP WG will formally meet on a bi-monthly basis. Ad-hoc meetings may be organized as and when required, *inter alia*, to address emergency issues.

d. Responsibilities

The ERP WG's specific responsibilities include:

Enhance preparedness across all actors

- i. Jointly analyze and monitor risks;
- ii. Jointly develop the national ERP Plan, including minimum preparedness actions (MPA), inter-agency contingency plans and SOPs at cluster and inter-agency level;
- iii. Support the implementation and monitoring of preparedness activities at inter-agency and cluster level, delineated in the ERP plan;
- iv. Contribute to and support the strengthening of the early warning system at the national and local levels and improve the existing systems for evidence-based emergency preparedness response planning and anticipatory actions
- v. Support the established communication system to disseminate forecasts and warnings to the intended receivers for timely dissemination among members.
- vi. Take initiative for emergency preparedness and anticipatory actions to mitigate the negative impact of disasters and emergencies on affected populations.
- vii. Ensure the integration of protection mainstreaming, including AAP, GBV, MHPSS, and other cross-cutting issues in all preparedness and response measures, and linkages with respective working groups;
- viii. Support the development and operationalization of contingency plans for multi-hazards aligned with the ERP plan at local and national level;
- ix. Ensure linkages and transparency with sub-national ERP planning;
- x. Identify and make recommendations on the prioritization of key bottlenecks and gaps potentially impeding the delivery of emergency response, and inform, advise and alert the Inter-Cluster Coordination Group (ICCG) of priorities and gaps;
- xi. Collaborate with and advise the ICCG and appropriate working groups (Humanitarian Access Working Group (HAWG), Cash and Markets Working Group (CMWG), etc.) on issues impacting the effective response preparedness across clusters.
- xii. Support knowledge exchange, documentation of lessons learned, and best practices to promote evidence-based decision-making.

e. Coordination

- i. Support partnerships between donors, local CSOs, national and international NGOs, the Red Cross / Red Crescent Movement, UN agencies and other stakeholders;
- ii. Ensure coordination and participation in needs assessments, sectoral or other relevant assessments.
- iii. Support regular liaison / coordination with concerned stakeholders.

f. Information Management and Capacity Building

- i. Provide a platform (forum for discussion) to exchange information, to make informed decisions to improve coordination and identify and address bottlenecks;
- ii. Promote knowledge management, learning and capacity building efforts at the national and local level;
- iii. Ensure effective and regular information sharing and consultation on collective preparedness and response measures and early warning information.

g. Thematic linkages / cross-cutting issues

- **Gender, diversity and inclusiveness:** The ERP WG ensures preparedness work integrates principles and good practices inclusive of women and girls, as well as men and boys, of all

ages, sexual identities and orientations, disabilities and other diversity characteristics to ensure their experiences, issues, capacities are reflected in all phases of planning and decision making.

- **Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA):** Effective measures for the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse are ensured in all preparedness efforts and response.
- **Accountability to Affected Populations and Community Engagement (AAP/CE):** The ERP WG ensures integration of AAP/ CE in all preparedness efforts, with the aim to ensure in the case of a major emergency, inter alia:
 - ✓ Coordinated and effective communications with affected populations, including those most at risk, on critical life-saving actions that communities can take through the course of the response through channels and formats appropriate to their respective needs;
 - ✓ A coordinated approach to two-way communication with affected communities;
 - ✓ Accessible and inclusive mechanisms to collect feedback from affected communities.
- **Cash and Markets Working Group (CMWG):** The national-level Cash and Markets Working Group actively participates in the ERP WG and ensures coordination of cash and voucher assistance (CVA) in ongoing operations and emergency preparedness and response through, inter alia:
 - ✓ Minimum cash preparedness standards
 - ✓ Recommendations on quality delivery of CVA during an emergency;
 - ✓ sharing CMWG tools to safeguard quality CVA delivery.
- **Disaster Risk Reduction Working Group (DRR WG):** Ensure with the DRR WG considerations related to longer-term sustainability are taken into account to the extent possible, including identifying possible entry points for early recovery and humanitarian-development nexus. Key agencies for mainstreaming nexus considerations are being engaged.