Planning an Emergency Response

Distance Learning with UNHCR and the University of Wisconsin Disaster Management Center

Prepared by UNHCR Emergency Preparedness and Response Section in collaboration with InterWorks and the UW-DMC

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Self Study Module

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March 2000
Acknowledgments

This course draws on the information and guidelines given in the 1999 UNHCR Emergency Preparedness and Response Handbook, Effective Planning: Guidelines for UNHCR, UNHCR’s People-Oriented Planning materials, and a number of the current UNHCR Operations Management System (OMS) Working Papers. It should be noted that due to the evolving nature of the OMS recommendations and their impact on administrative procedures and management approaches, some of the recommendations included in this text may themselves continue to evolve as new lessons are learned and new policies are introduced. The course also includes illustrations of planning techniques and tools taken from other, non UNHCR sources, where judged appropriate for use by refugee emergency response planners.

Cover photograph
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Welcome and Introduction

Welcome to this self-study course on Planning an Emergency Response (EP02). This distance learning course deals with the skills and methods for improving emergency preparedness and response for refugee and other mass displacement emergencies through better planning. It is designed to build emergency response capacity within the organisation through widening and active stimulation of UNHCR’s “institutional memory” at the individual level. It is for staff members and partners who are involved in or may become involved in preparation of emergency response plans with or for UNHCR and partner agencies and organizations.

This course supports UNHCR’s Career Management System (CMS) as a training aid in this specific competency area. “Planning an Emergency Response” is one of the competencies required for emergency preparedness; its code within the UNHCR competency catalogue system is EP02. The competency description from the catalogue is reproduced below.

The “Planning an Emergency Response” competency (EP-02) as described by UNHCR’s Career Management System (CMS) consists of the ability to plan, set up and resource an emergency response so that the operation is up and running within very tight deadlines.

To demonstrate competency in the area of emergency response planning, the emergency manager must be able to:

1. Identify formal and informal sources of information, collect, interpret and analyse all available data on the evolving emergency situation and its implications for the operation prior to departure and use this as a basis for accurate assessment of human and other resource requirements and develop clear and realistic terms of reference.

2. Set up constructive communications and negotiations at an early stage with Governments and implementing partners who possess the expertise, resources, etc. to make an effective contribution to the operation.

3. Determine realistic short-term priorities which will support achievement of long term objectives, building in flexibility (as well as adaptability) and contingency measures.

4. Design and deliver well-presented and effective briefings and training to emergency team members prior to departure (as well as in the field),* to prepare them to face the challenge and conditions as an effective, well-motivated team.

5. Analyse ongoing operations with a view to adjusting objectives and planning parameters to fit changing situations and requirements.

— Modified from the original to include staff in all locations and roles, who may need to develop competency in this area.
This self-study course will provide you, as a potential emergency manager or planner, with useful information and techniques to improve your competence to plan effective responses to refugee and other mass displacement emergencies in conformance with UNHCR current practice and recommendations. Planning is important for almost everyone working in emergency situations, from senior managers to field officers and logisticians. The level of detail within your planning will reflect your day to day responsibilities and area of expertise. This distance learning course provides examples and guidelines for planning at different levels from the policy and programmatic areas to the actual working out of field-specific and technical details. While not all levels may apply to you or your current duties, an understanding of them will enhance your competency as a planner within the organisation, and lead to better planning and emergency response throughout UNHCR. Your competency in this area will be developed further through your own application of these ideas in practice and consequent analysis. For those wanting to study more aspects of preparedness and management of emergency response, it is suggested that this course be studied in conjunction with its companion distance learning courses:

Contingency Planning (EP-01)
Managing an Emergency Response (EP-03)
Managing External Relations (EP-04)
Providing Emergency Support and Advice (EP-06)

Organisation of this Course

This course is divided into two units. Each unit has four chapters dealing with the themes relating to that unit.

Unit One – Planning Right From the Beginning provides an overview of planning concepts and definitions of planning terminology as used in UNHCR. It presents the background, context, and approaches to planning currently in use within the organisation. It will take you through the initial conceptual steps of thinking about planning through assessing the situation being planned for, setting planning objectives, and developing activities to support those objectives.

Chapter 1: Planning in the Emergency Context—An Introduction introduces the reader to basic planning concepts and definitions and explains their applicability to emergency situations.

Chapter 2: Starting Right—Review, Assess, Analyse describes ways to begin planning an emergency response based on assessment of the emergency situation, analysis of needs and resources, and maintenance of operational flexibility for dealing with uncertainty.

Chapter 3: Setting Objectives explains the central role of objectives in the formulation of emergency response plans and describes ways to design them in realistic terms that are achievable and measurable.

Chapter 4: Work Planning provides guidance on designing and describing the activities that must be done to achieve the plan’s objectives. The crucial element of time and the divisibility of large tasks into smaller ones are discussed.
Unit Two – Realising the Plan discusses ways to develop the plan in more detail and document it in a way that promotes co-ordination and communication of the plan in an effective way. This unit will take you through the steps of identifying realistic inputs available to the response operation, co-ordinating the planning process (as well as planning for co-ordination), developing detailed timelines, diagrams, and flow charts to support and communicate the key points of the plan. The unit ends with a discussion of the necessity and means for monitoring and evaluating the planning process itself.

Chapter 5: Identifying Inputs provides guidelines on assessing and collecting information on the various types of emergency response inputs, particularly those resources available to the displaced population, programme funding/budgets, and staff.

Chapter 6: Co-ordination of Planning and Planning for Co-ordination provides useful tips on including provisions for co-ordination in the emergency response operation and for co-ordinating the planning process itself.

Chapter 7: Developing and Documenting the Plan describes ways to further develop your plans and to document them in ways that facilitate both careful analysis of the plan and dissemination of the information to other stakeholders. It introduces the Logical Framework, Gantt charts, and network diagrams as specific planning tools for emergencies.

Chapter 8: Monitoring and Evaluation of the Plan completes this distance learning course with a discussion of the uses of monitoring and evaluation in the short and longer-term improvement of UNHCR’s planning processes, as well as individual emergency response plans.

This course is not intended to be a content-specific recipe book or master template for planning an emergency response. Every situation is different and a solution that works well in one country or scenario may be completely inappropriate in another. Also, a wide range of locally appropriate working norms exist, and in many cases it will be necessary to follow those protocols already in use for future planning. While several approaches are suggested in this course, these only represent a series of ideals in relation to the specific situations being described. By considering the underlying factors presented in the course and the logic of systems for planning based on a clear analysis of context and need, you should be able to decide on the best approach for your own unique emergency situation when the time comes, while assuring that it meets the overall standards and goals of UNHCR.

How to Use this Course

Self-study is more demanding than traditional classroom instruction in that each learner has to provide her or his own framework for study instead of having it imposed by the course or workshop timetable. One of the problems with self-study courses is that people begin with great enthusiasm at a pace that they cannot sustain. The best way to undertake this distance education course is to plan your own study schedule over a pre-set period by thinking ahead, and making your own schedule for study.

The course is designed to take approximately 16 hours to complete. This includes the time for reading, reflecting, answering the questions in the text, and taking the final exam.
Pre-tests

The pre-tests included at the beginning of each Unit allow you to test your general knowledge about planning for refugee and displaced population emergency situations. These two tests consist of 20 true/false questions each. Taking these tests before beginning each unit should stimulate you to compare your own thoughts about emergency response planning to those presented in the text. Also, the pre-test allows you to quickly determine how much you already know about the ideas presented here, and can help you to see which parts of the course you can move through more quickly or those you may need to spend more time on. If you score very well on all of the pre-tests, it is likely that you do not need to take this course for the purpose of learning new information, although it may be a useful review.

Instant Feedback: Self-assessment questions, exercises and worksheets

A drawback to self-study is that instant feedback from the instructor or your colleagues is not possible. To address the need for feedback, each chapter has five true-false questions and five multiple-choice questions. Exercises are found throughout the chapters to help you get the most from the materials. Each chapter concludes with a summary of key points as a review.

Final Examination

As a final complement to the self-assessment tests and problems which are included in the course text, there is a final examination administered by the University of Wisconsin–Disaster Management Center (UW–DMC). When you have completed all the self-assessment tests and activities to your satisfaction, you may request a final examination package.

Using the REQUEST FOR FINAL EXAMINATION form which accompanies these course materials, you will nominate a proctor to give you the examination and make arrangements for scheduling the time and place. Anyone in a position of educational or academic authority (for example, a registrar, dean, counselor, school principal or education officer) may serve as your proctor. Librarians and clergy are also acceptable proctors. For these UNHCR/UW–DMC courses, your immediate supervisor or someone else of authority in a disaster/emergency management organisation may also be your examination proctor.

The UW-DMC will mail the examination papers with instructions to your proctor who will monitor your taking the test. After your proctor returns your examination to the University of Wisconsin–Extension, it will normally take 1-2 months for grading. Upon successful completion of the exam, the University will record your continuing education units (CEUs) on a university transcript and prepare your Certificate of Completion. Your certificate will be mailed to you along with current information about other distance learning opportunities.
Planning Right from the Beginning

Fleeing ethnic violence, an estimated 250,000 Rwandese swept into Tanzania over a 24-hour period in the largest and fastest refugee exodus UNHCR has ever witnessed.

UNHCR/P. Mourtzis
Planning an Emergency Response
1. There are really no differences between emergency response planning, operations planning, and contingency planning.

2. Since all objectives in an emergency operation are seen as equally important, the planner need not consider policy, immediate actions, personnel or other aspects of the operation as hierarchical in nature.

3. The emergency continuum model purports that, in general, emergency management-related activities and events happen in foreseeable cycles over time for any emergency event.

4. Elements of contingency planning are inherent in emergency operations planning.

5. The planning cycle is another name for the emergency continuum.

6. The planning team members should all be specialists in the main problem area for which the plan is being developed.

7. A careful review of existing documentation and interviews with experienced colleagues is the best way to begin preparing for emergency response planning.

8. Maps are less useful than other informational formats for emergency purposes.

9. Assessment is so important to the formulation of an emergency response that delay in the emergency response is warranted, even for urgent needs, pending a comprehensive assessment.

10. UNHCR’s People-Oriented Planning approach addresses the fact that each refugee community is unique, and that each group and sub group within the community is also unique.

11. Emergency indicators are quantifiable measures or thresholds above or below which an emergency response is likely to be needed.

12. One useful way of dealing with uncertainty in emergencies is to choose actions that maximise future choice.

13. An objective is a statement of desired result that is measurable and achievable within a specific time frame.
14. There is no model structure for refugee emergency operations plans since all plans will be unique.

15. Objectives for emergency operations should be designed using the SMART criteria, which stands for: Speedy, Measurable, Achievable, Response-based, Timely.

16. A Work Breakdown Structure (WBS) is one method of analysing complex activities into their simpler component activities.

17. There is no formal rule reflecting the size or duration of the tasks to be included in a work breakdown structure, but a rule of thumb is that activities reflected in the plan should take one day or longer to carry out.

18. Time is optimised in emergency situations by effective contingency planning carried out before the emergency event.

19. The best way to estimate times for activities in the plan is to perform “test runs,” but these times will tend to be shorter (or overly optimistic) than the actual times required on a repetitive basis over the life of the operation.

20. Checklists are useful management tools and can be generated from the work breakdown structures used in planning.
Planning in the Emergency Context—An Introduction

By studying this chapter, you will learn how to:

- Define emergency response planning in the larger context of emergency management
- Compare emergency response planning with other types of planning, particularly contingency planning
- Organise a strategic analysis based on the SWOT approach (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) as a basis for planning
- Outline a “hierarchy of objectives” in formulating emergency response plans, based on a strategic analysis of the emergency situation
- Describe the components of planning in relation to time
- Better prepare for planning with a team

What is emergency response planning?

Within UNHCR, emergency response planning has a more specific meaning than that found in general usage. For UNHCR, the term emergency usually means an emergency concerning refugees or displaced people. The following UNHCR-specific definitions are useful in building a clear understanding of what UNHCR’s emergency planning is all about.

A refugee emergency is any situation in which the life or well-being of refugees will be threatened unless immediate and appropriate action is taken, and which demands an extraordinary response and exceptional measures. In the context of UNHCR’s emergency operations, the affected population is usually composed of refugees, displaced persons, or the vulnerable population of the area.

An emergency response or operation is the sum total of all actors’ inputs, efforts, and activities taken in response to the emergency. As such, this is a complex and expensive undertaking; its successes and failure are measured in lives saved or lost.

Emergency response planning, also called operations planning, is the planning that takes place during and after an emergency event in response to that specific event. For the purpose of this study text, it is distinct from contingency planning, although elements of contingency planning are inherent in operations planning. A more focused discussion of Contingency Planning can be found in the companion text to this module “Contingency Planning” (EP-01).
Emergency response planning, if effective, facilitates change from the current (emergency) state to some desired future (non-emergency) state. Emergency response planning is more than immediate problem analysis and thinking about what should be done. It must be a shared, and formalised link between the present situation and the intended results via the design and co-ordination of inputs and activities by the various parties involved in the emergency response.

The planning process is intended to produce an efficient and logical design (or guide) for those responding to an emergency. It is necessary to reduce all possible response actions, to those that will be most efficient and useful in the specific situation being planned for. The planner is responsible not for simply defining what should be done but for planning what actually can be done, given the resources, capacities, weaknesses, and other constraints of the situation. In order to make these decisions a careful strategic analysis must be carried out.

Planning the process, by which questions are jointly answered with other concerned partners. Since it is a process, the element of time must also be introduced, not just to the scheduling of implementation activities under the plan, but to the task of planning itself.

Time and the Emergency Context

There are two time frames that should be considered by the emergency manager—the emergency continuum—is the larger view of emergencies which places actions in the context of other emergency management activities which happen before and after the actual emergency event. This is represented by a traditional disaster management theory model which looks like a circle or cycle. The second time frame falls within the emergency response itself and is also shown as a repeating cycle called the planning cycle. This shorter-term conceptualisation focuses on the emergency response planning process itself. Both are discussed below.

The Emergency Continuum

Although a very simplified diagram, the emergency continuum represents the cycle of crisis and response that can be seen in many emergencies from the perspective of the emergency manager. In this model, contingency planning follows early warning as a necessary emergency preparedness activity. If and when an emergency happens, it is followed immediately by emergency assessment, which in turn forms the informational basis for emergency response planning. This is followed by the implementation of the response, which should lead to a durable solution and ideally reduce vulnerability to future emergency events. Should there still be instabilities, early warning is again invoked and the cycle begins anew.
This is obviously a simplified and sequential view of emergency management; it, however, puts responsibility on emergency managers to act (in various functions) at all times in order to better be able to reduce the effects of or, better yet, avoid emergencies. The conceptualisation and general belief in this model is the basis for the inclusion of emergency preparedness activities as functions of emergency management—instead of a focus purely on emergency response—particularly contingency planning.

The model, although useful, does not begin to reflect the chaos and confusing nature of emergencies and the multiple political and economic factors behind them. One criticism of the model is that it oversimplifies the field reality that managers face when, at times, all of the functions shown on the cycle may be required at once. Assessment, for example, will be required from early warning throughout the emergency planning and implementation phases. In this situation the various phases of activities shown in the continuum diagram are seen to be needed where they are needed as opposed to when they are needed. A map or area can be idealised instead of a cycle on which to place the various tasks. For example, in a large complex emergency situation early warning may be needed at the same time as emergency response planning and durable solutions and may be seen as simultaneous needs on the “map” of the operation rather than as phased needs based on a timeline of the operation.

**The Planning Cycle**

At first glance, emergency response planning may look like a one-time activity. However, this is rarely the case in emergencies since situations change quickly and operational plans must reflect the current reality and limitations as well as the desired end result of the operation.

A simple diagram shows the planning cycle as a simple “feedback loop,” in which emergency responders must assess, decide/design, and act. Based on further assessment (in this case monitoring, and evaluation), the situation is re-analysed, re-planned, and the new plan put into action once again. This basic cycle continues as long as there is a need for emergency response planning.

Because of the constantly changing nature of emergencies, the emergency manager will typically need to review and change the plan. This cycle of change does not in any way lessen the importance of planning. In fact, the very nature of change in emergency situations necessitates the planning of operations to assure that activities in the field do not stray far from the mandate and goals of the organisation and operation. This frequent need for repetitive and cyclical emergency response planning illustrates the critical importance of monitoring and evaluation, which are discussed in Chapter 8.

UNHCR, through its Operations Management System (OMS) and other ongoing activities, has developed a very comprehensive view of operations planning (see illustration). While it is based on the concept of the simple planning cycle described above, it goes much farther in the elaboration of the activities which make up the central activity of planning.
In the OMS model the planning cycle is expanded to include all of the elements of planning (assessment, analysis, objective setting, design of activities, analysis of needed resources, etc.) followed by implementation. The implementation of the plan is closely monitored. Areas where the activities are not being carried out according to plan are controlled or corrected, and the process and progress is disseminated to those concerned via reporting. Evaluation is based on the outcome and leads to adjustments of future plans and/or the continuation of the current plan.

While this model is adequate for planning in many situations, it too should be expanded for use in emergency response planning. The following model, a helix, is probably a better representation as it depicts the lack of information under which planners often operate (particularly in the first days of an emergency) and the changes in circumstances—and even in policy—that make frequent adjustments to objectives and intended results part of emergency response planning.

**Emergency Response Planning and Other Forms of Planning**

The overview of emergency response planning presented above must be placed in the context of the UNHCR "Core Operations Management Process." That process is briefly outlined as follows:

- Situation Assessment
- Solution Strategy and Policy
- Detailed Assessment
- Design (Objectives/Activities/Budget/Workplan)
- Resource Allocation
- Implement
- Monitor, Control, Report
- Self-Evaluation

UNHCR operations planning must take all of these elements into account. Each will be examined throughout this training module as it applies to planning in the emergency context.

**Contingency Planning: Part of the Planning Continuum**

The continuum of planning activities should be parallel to the Emergency Continuum illustrated earlier in the text. While all planning employs similar tools and activities, each type of planning (contingency, emergency operations, and development—or durable solutions) has a different emphasis. Good planning in all of these areas should provide a suitable foundation for carrying out activities in other related fields.
It is useful to compare the transitions in planning activities by examining those that occur immediately before the emergency event (contingency planning) to those that occur immediately after (emergency response or operations planning). The differences between these two types of planning are illustrated below.

**Differences between Contingency and Emergency Response Planning**

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<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>Contingency Plan</th>
<th>Emergency Response Plan</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relation to event</td>
<td>Before</td>
<td>On occurrence of event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scope of plan</td>
<td>Global, or scenario based</td>
<td>Specific (but may have future contingencies built in)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partners involved</td>
<td>All likely partners</td>
<td>All current and active partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus</td>
<td>Consensus building, policy</td>
<td>Effective and rapid implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time frame</td>
<td>Floating, uncertain</td>
<td>Fixed, immediate</td>
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Contingency planning is an extremely valuable foundation for emergency response planning. Without prior contingency planning much time will be lost in the first days after an emergency. In a similar way, it is expected that emergency operations plans will provide a foundation for longer term development planning. For example, emergency operations plans should help to provide a platform for addressing permanent settlement, return, reconstruction, and other longer term goals.

**Preparing for Planning**

The quality of planning can be improved if the planning task itself is thought through ahead of time. In other words, it is important to plan for planning. Planners, however, should regard planning as a means to an end rather than an end in itself. Although investing too little in planning may have serious consequences, over-investing in planning, particularly if that investment is document rather than process focused, may be a waste of resources. Planning for the planning task can be divided into three stages:

- preparing for the planning task
- assembling the planning team
- monitoring the planning process

This section deals with the first of these stages, preparing for the planning task. Later sections will deal with assembling the planning team and monitoring the planning process before and during emergencies. In order to prepare for the planning task, the planning manager (the person responsible for the production of the plan) should consider the following:

- overall objective of the planning event determined through strategic analysis
- time-scale
- likely constraints
- the most appropriate planning tools for the current or expected context
Strategic Analysis

One approach to arriving at the realistic set of opportunities and obstacles for any given response is called Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Threats or SWOT analysis. This analysis can be thought of as having two general areas of concern: internal and external. Internal factors relate to human and organisational capacities and limitations of the refugees, UNHCR, partner agencies, government counterparts, and other actors involved in the response. External factors are the opportunities and barriers presented by the external environment within which all of these partners must act. A comprehensive internal/external SWOT analysis should be undertaken in order to ground the plan in the realities governing the emergency situation, including those under our control and those beyond our control. The diagram is a simplified depiction of a SWOT analysis including both internal and external factors.

Analysis of Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Threats

The following form can be used to record information about the actors involved in emergency response and planning. It is reproduced from the UNHCR Guidelines for Effective Planning. You may revise or amend this form to meet your specific needs during planning, but the type of information called for here, combined with a suitable method for regular collection and recording of the information will always be important. Planning is a group activity. Remember that the clear and logical display of information and a methodical approach will always be an asset since two of the key difficulties in this area are co-ordination and agreement to a commonly held plan.

Directions: The first section of the form provides a framework for recording your assessment of the internal capacity of a key actor in the operation. The second section provides a framework for identifying key issues and their implications on the operation which may be of particular importance to the key actor.

Key actor

<table>
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<th>Strengths</th>
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The Hierarchy of Objectives

A very broad view of planning is important to UNHCR. As a mandate-based organisation, the ability to compare specific activities within the operation back to the overall goal of UNHCR—the protection of refugees—is the only means by which we judge our successes and failures.

In order to determine specific actions in any operation, it is important to consider a Hierarchy of Objectives which links specific actions (micro level) back to the basic mandate (macro level). The Hierarchy of Objectives (also called the Results Framework) reflects the process of developing the goals, objectives and outputs of a programme/project on the basis of the assessment results and problem analysis in a hierarchy which ensures that achievements at the lower levels (outputs/deliverables) will result in the desired impact (meeting goals and objectives) at the higher levels. The hierarchy is illustrated below.

Planning is only one function of emergency management. In emergencies, in particular, the manager is faced with constant questions. What has to be done? What is the priority? Why? Decision-making, leadership, and a background knowledge of the required technical inputs are also important skills of the emergency manager. More information on management in emergencies can be found in the UNHCR Distance Education module EP-03, Managing an Emergency Response.

The hierarchy chart can give the manager an invaluable perspective on the situation to help in resolving complex questions about “what has to be done and why” and developing a vision co-operatively with implementing partners. In many cases, the planner’s task of arriving at a plan with the input and consensus of others may be as important as the plan itself.

While the planning process may result in modifications, the planning manager should start with an approximate view of what he/she wants to achieve. In addition, the planning manager may also have specific objectives for the planning task.
Apart from planning the task in question, what other objectives might a planning manager have for the planning process?

Objectives for the planning task may include: an improvement in collaboration and co-operation between the participants and an emphasis of the lead-agency role of one participant. The manager may invest more resources in planning to achieve these objectives for the planning task.

The time available to the planner strongly influences the overall planning approach. If plans must be drawn up immediately, there may have to be some constraints placed on broad participation or consultation in the process to assure speed of response. Short time-scales due to emergency pressures have tended to favour more directive and centralised approaches to planning rather than consultative and participatory ones. The result has often been uncoordinated response, and reduced overall efficiency of multi-agency international responses. In the planning phase, there must be a balance between speed and inclusion in the process. The result will be better overall co-ordination of the operation and fewer lives lost to bad management.

Likely Constraints

As the SWOT analysis shows, it is as important to include analysis of threats or constraints in planning processes as it is to determine the overall goal or objective. Constraints are abundant in almost every emergency response operation. There are critical constraints on available funds, personnel, sites, human and other physical resources, as well as expertise and experience. All of the constraints may affect two areas of concern to the emergency planner:

- constraints on the planning process itself
- constraints on the implementation of the plan

What are potential constraints on the planning process and implementation of the plan?

Time is nearly always a constraint on the planning process but other examples may include:

- limited information (or limited access to information)
- limited availability of key resource people
- unwillingness by players to commit resources to planning
Constraints on the implementation of the plan may include:

- limits on financial and other resources
- political constraints
- limited implementation capacity
- geographical constraints, distance, roads
- seasonal constraints including weather

It is very useful for the planner to identify the major constraints in advance of the planning process. Prior knowledge of the likely implementation constraints will allow the planner to structure the planning process to best address them. The planner can facilitate the planning process in a number of ways including:

- establishing the ground rules for the planning (through stating the overall objective)
- setting the time-scale for the planning activity
- selecting the participants

The planner can, to a limited extent, control the focus of the planning team by varying these elements. The planning manager may allocate more time to planning for the sectors perceived to be the biggest constraints. The planner can also invite participants with specific knowledge of the most likely implementation constraint. If, for example, geographical factors are expected to be a major constraint, the planner may wish to invite the participation of someone with very detailed geographic knowledge to participate in the planning process. In any event, the main local and (locally active international) NGOs and other partners should be included in the process, as they are likely to be involved in any emergency response.

**The Planning Team**

The planning team refers to the group of people responsible for planning the emergency response operation. In some cases, there may not be a team at all, but a single individual who has the responsibility to begin planning. In this instance there is a responsibility to act quickly to widen the planning activities to include the wider circle of active responders as it grows. In other situations the team may be so large and complex that a number of sub-teams are created from the beginning.

**The Composition of the Planning Team**

The composition of the planning team will have a major impact on the manager’s and the team’s work. It may also predetermine the planning focus to a certain extent, based on the mandates or special skills of the team members.
Planning an Emergency Response

**Question**

What difference would the team composition make in planning an emergency response to a disease outbreak?

Technical specialists will tend to see the problem in terms of their own viewpoint and frame of reference. Water engineers may be more likely to think of environmental sanitation control measures, while medical workers may be more likely to suggest case control measures. Other specialists will see the solution in their own field.

It is therefore important that the planning team be appropriately balanced for the planning task. The planning manager will have to ensure that the technical specialists look outside their own sector when considering solutions. Members of the planning team should be mindful of alternative perspectives, especially if some sectors are not represented on the planning team.
An emergency is a situation or event that happens unexpectedly and demands immediate action to protect the lives and well being of those affected.

Emergency response planning, also called operations planning, relates to a specific, active emergency situation.

Strategic analysis is an important pre-cursor to emergency response planning and can be approached through the SWOT technique, in which the following aspects of the situation are analysed:

- **Strengths**
- **Weaknesses**
- **Opportunities**
- **Threats**

Setting well-targeted objectives is a vital part of emergency response planning. A hierarchy of objectives should be established which relates field-level activities back to the mandate of the organisation.

The “emergency continuum” as a model, places emergency response planning into a larger cycle of events which the emergency manager must also prepare for and respond to.

Planning is essentially cyclical, requiring an iterative process of planning, assessing, and re-planning, until goals are achieved.

Contingency planning is an important activity for emergency managers since it sets a working basis upon which emergency response planning can be built.

Emergency response planning requires preparation, including facilitation of the wider planning team.

Good planning tools, such as the OMS design matrix, can help in assisting the planning team.
Chapter 1
Self-Assessment Questions

Check T or F to indicate whether a statement is True or False

1. Emergency response planning and contingency planning are essentially the same thing.
   T □ F □

2. The idea of a hierarchy of objectives as used by UNHCR planners presents a format that relates inputs and activities to the overall mandate and strategy of the organisation.
   T □ F □

3. In the Emergency Continuum Model, early warning sets the stage for contingency planning before an emergency event which is followed by assessment, operations planning, implementation, and durable solutions.
   T □ F □

4. The planning cycle, which illustrates the ongoing and iterative nature of planning, includes the steps: Plan, Implement, Monitor, Control and Report, Self-Evaluation, and Termination
   T □ F □

5. Technical specialists on the planning team will tend to see problems in terms of their own speciality and viewpoint.
   T □ F □

Multiple choice. Mark ALL correct statements—more than one may apply.

6. The hierarchy of objectives in emergency response planning includes all of the following except:
   □ A Mandate and strategic policy
   □ B Strategies
   □ C Goals
   □ D Objectives

7. SWOT analysis of an emergency situation considers both internal factors as well as external. Which of the following are considered to be the two internal factors to consider?
   □ A Strengths and Weaknesses
   □ B Weaknesses and Opportunities
   □ C Opportunities and Threats
   □ D Threats and Strengths
8. The importance of the “planning cycle” diagram is that it:
   A. Shows the importance of “feedback” in the ongoing improvement of the plan
   B. Shows that planning never really leads to a satisfactory end condition
   C. Shows the importance of ongoing assessment as a support to planning
   D. Shows the importance of planning before acting, even if the plan will be revised

9. Compared to contingency planning, emergency response planning tends to focus more on:
   A. Scenario based likely emergency situations
   B. All likely partners
   C. Effective and rapid implementation
   D. Uncertain time frames

10. In preparing for planning of an emergency response, the planner should consider:
    A. The overall objective of the planning event
    B. The likely time scale of the event and response
    C. Maximum budget likely to be available
    D. Likely constraints
In an ongoing emergency situation, another 20,000 refugees have just crossed the border after heavy fighting in their area. UNHCR and partner agencies are on site and operations have been running smoothly. The newest influx presents a new problem, however.

The government is insisting that these refugees be moved away from the border immediately, but you cannot move them to any of the existing temporary settlements since the people in question are traditional enemies of the refugees now living in the camps. There was no contingency plan in place for this development, you need to quickly address the needs of this new group.

Prepare a short SWOT analysis of your current situation as a basis for planning a response to this new emergency.

**Strengths**

- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 

**Weaknesses**

- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 

Opportunities

Threats
Chapter 1 Answers

1. F  6. B
2. T  7. A
3. T  8. A, C, D
4. F  9. C
5. T  10. A, B, D

Exercise Answer — While your answer may vary to some degree depending on your own experience and context, you should have at least considered the following as possible factors within your SWOT analysis.

Strengths
UNHCR and partner agencies are already in place due to existing refugee situation.
Working relationships between agencies and government are already in place.
Potential difficulties with mixing the two groups are known and accounted for.

Weaknesses
No contingency planning is in place for this event.
No new site is immediately known or prepared.

Opportunities
New site might be developed to allow for immediate needs as well as future contingencies.
Government’s request for movement opens chance to discuss locations for new site(s) for this new group of refugees.
With representatives of the two opposing groups both requiring assistance, some possibilities for future conflict mediation between the two groups may arise.

Threats
Refugees fleeing heavy fighting may have serious medical needs requiring immediate attention.
Some refugees may be armed/militant.
Time constraints may force unsatisfactory decision for relocation.
Lack of new sites may force separate groups to live together which could lead to conflict.
Relationships with Government may be strained if refugees are not moved quickly.
Collection and Analysis of Existing Information

As described in the last chapter, access to information is a constraint that emergency planners must deal with. While information may be scarce, it is a readily replenishable resource if one knows where and how to look for it. The emergency planner must become grounded in relevant, correct information to the fullest extent possible. In order to do this the planner must know:

- where the information is
- what types of information are needed
- how to access the information
- how to use the information in a meaningful way

First Read! A wealth of published information exists on all areas and populations of concern—if you can find it. This kind of information can be found in computer databases, the UNHCR Documentation Centre, printed country profiles and year books, encyclopaedias, other UN publications (e.g. UNDP Country Strategy Notes), university and specialised periodicals and journals, embassies and cultural centres, tourist publications and other educational text books. In locations where you have access, the Internet is a good place to start, since UN documents, nationally-generated information and international reporting can all be searched via this mechanism.

Interview colleagues who have had experience in the country or region. Representatives, desk officers, current and ex-programme officers from the emergency affected country(ies) will have a wealth of experience to share. They may provide you with valuable insights beyond what is available in published
Planning an Emergency Response

reports and may be of further benefit to your mission if they can connect you with other people and sources familiar with the area. They can also identify what plans and previous assessments exist as well as the specific history of UNHCR relations in the country. Institutional memory is not an automatic benefit of working in an organisation with a history in the affected region, however. You have to make it work for you by asking questions. The following checklist is indicative of the types of questions you may want to ask. The value of a face-to-face interview over published reports and evaluations is that you have the ability to follow-up answers to your questions with clarifying or refining questions. This dynamic often allows you to get much more in-depth information as well as personal insights and opinions that might not be put into published records.

**Interview Points for Debriefing Experienced Colleagues and Partners**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is the current status of the situation?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many refugees or displaced are involved? How many are vulnerable or at extreme risk?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What cultural, background, gender, age, or other factors present serious planning implications for this group?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What has been done already? With what result?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are the political, organisational, and policy constraints on the operation? Can they be improved?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What can you tell me that isn’t in the reports, news, or other sources?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you think should be done today, tomorrow, next week, next month, next year?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As with any guideline or checklist, this short list is only a starting point. Most of your questions will depend on the initial briefing you receive and the answers to your first questions. The questions above do illustrate, however, some of the underlying and basic information that can help you quickly understand the overall situation.

**Maps**

Maps for emergency response operations show the location of needs, resources, and physical and political constraints (mountains, rivers, roads and borders) on a spatial basis. The advantage of maps is that they communicate a great deal of information in a compact format that can be assimilated rapidly by anyone who is able to read maps.

**Types of Mapping**

The emergency response manager is likely to use a large variety of maps. Operations rooms usually display a large-scale map of the operational area. The maps used by the emergency response manager may include:

- Relief or physical maps showing drainage lines, streams, rivers and water sources, as well as the general location of villages and towns.
- Road maps showing road layout in the region. These will normally be supplemented by additional information gathered locally on the largest vehicle which can move on the road and bottlenecks such as bridges, places likely to become flooded, etc.
Maps showing areas of special environmental concern which planners should avoid in siting transit centres or other facilities.

Special maps indicating needs or resources. These could include maps showing the location and size of refugee camps; locations and capacity of health facilities; locations and capacity of warehouses; existing boreholes, springs, or water schemes; etc.

Layout maps for refugee facilities.
Satisfactory maps can usually be obtained for any part of the world. Large scale maps, which are often the most suitable for emergency response operations, are less frequently available than small scale maps.

Information should be up-to-date on all maps and, if they are more than a few years old, maps should be checked for accuracy. However, out-of-date maps can still be useful. Planners can supplement the information supplied on the map with information specifically collected for the operation. The use of hand-held Global Positioning System (GPS) receivers for identifying the approximate position of items of interest is particularly useful. GPS is a system of navigation satellites that allows users with an appropriate receiver to determine their position on the earth’s surface. Because the latitude and longitude of places shown on older maps may not agree with the GPS data, planners will need to verify the location of known landmarks with the GPS receivers before plotting in new information.

GPS receivers can be combined with Geographical Information Systems (GIS) to make information about that location immediately available. The simplest type of Geographical Information System is the computer-based map where data on the location of features is stored in a database format. Although the present GIS databases are often of too coarse a scale for effective use in many areas, the amount of data and the level of detail available through such systems is improving daily.

Geographical Information Systems are replacing paper-based maps for some planning tasks. Maps will still be used because of the advantage they offer of being able to display a large area at a large-scale all at one time, but in may cases the maps used will be produced on the spot by printing out the specific GIS data that is needed for the task at hand.

The Limits of Mapping

While almost any information can be presented on maps, they are most appropriate when spatial distribution or geographic location is important. One important constraint of mapping is that the ability to produce and read maps is an acquired skill. Many potential users might not have the necessary skills to gain the advantage from information presented in this way. The use of clear uncluttered maps with a clear frame of reference increases the likelihood that users who are relatively unfamiliar with maps will be able to assimilate the data. Even experienced map users will be able to read maps much faster if these requirements are met.

Assessment

After undertaking background research and review of existing programmes, policies and plans, a current assessment of the emergency situation is also required. UNHCR defines assessment as the ongoing information gathering and analysis process which provides the basis for sound design of operations. Assessments should be inclusive of other agency and organisation personnel whenever possible, both for wider perspective on the problem and to help assure acceptance of assessment reports, which will form the basis for emergency response planning exercises. The following tips can be used as a checklist for organising the initial assessment

Tips for Organising the Assessment

- Plan & prepare the survey tool(s) in advance.
- Involve refugees and government — talk to them personally.
- Identify users — who wants the assessment and for what purpose?
- Limit scope — assess only what is required (terms of reference).
- Determine time and place — ascertain location and deadline for reporting.
- Choose an experienced assessment team.
Prepare adequate Terms of Reference (TOR) for the team members.
Seek additional technical input if needed.
Integrate People Oriented Planning — know who the refugees are.
Use simple methods for the initial assessment.
Cross-check and interpret critical information
Share your results by reporting quickly.
Monitor the evolving situation — things change quickly in emergency situations.

**Assessing Needs**

Assessing actual needs and resources is the first step in a refugee emergency response operation. There are three basic components of a needs and resources assessment:

- The needs of the affected population
- The resources which are presently available to the population from their personal resources, from the resources of the host community, or from other sources
- The unmet needs or gaps and identification of critical needs

While the overall needs of the population should be assessed, the assessment should focus on critical emergency needs — those that are unmet with the resources available to the refugees now, or for which the available resources will shortly be exhausted. For example, water supply may be a critical need if the existing supply is expected to dry up within a few weeks.

**Initial Assessment**

In the initial on-site assessment, the need is for quick verification that an emergency exists, its scale, and the probable trends for its growth (or reduction). The information needed may be classified as: Basic Information, Analysis, Interpretation and Trends.

While the initial emergency assessment focuses on critical needs, it is also important to assess the overall needs and the available resources. The initial needs assessment is concentrated on the directly affected population. Follow-up needs assessments may be extended to other groups, such as the host population.

An initial assessment must be carried out on the spot as soon as it is clear that a refugee emergency may exist. This must involve the government and other key actors.

Immediate access to the area where the refugees are located is, of course, a prerequisite. Getting the assessment underway as soon as possible requires quick, practical steps: establish a presence at or near the refugee site for first-hand information, interview refugees, use other available sources of information, mobilise local expertise and resources.

While an organised approach is necessary, time must not be lost simply because the desired expertise is not immediately available. Where UNHCR is already present, initial action must not be delayed pending the arrival of staff with more expertise.

A quick response to obviously urgent needs must never be delayed because a comprehensive assessment has not yet been completed.

Planning the assessment involves setting the objectives, establishing the terms of reference and selecting team members. The assessment plan should indicate which information should be collected and the report should make clear if it was not possible to collect that information. The assessment team should include staff from UNHCR, the government and other potential partners (for example other UN agencies, NGOs). Often the people carrying out the initial assessment will simultaneously be providing the initial response.

— from the UNHCR Handbook for Emergencies (updated in 1999): Initial Assessment, Immediate Response
Why is an assessment of all needs and resources required rather than only critical needs?

It is quite common that refugees bring food or other resources with them, or that the host community provides resources at the beginning of the crisis. These resources, however, may soon be exhausted. An assessment must take into consideration availability and use of all resources so that needs are neither over- nor understated.
As needs for water, food and shelter are somewhat standardised world-wide, can needs be estimated directly based on the number of people involved?

Although basic requirements to sustain life may be similar, each refugee population is unique. Estimating refugee needs without regard to the composition of the population may lead to inadequate provision of some services. Program designs must consider age, gender and family sizes. For example, if the average family size is three rather than five, more family-level distribution units may be needed. A population with a large number of single men may need assistance for cooking or other tasks normally performed by women. Vulnerable groups such as women-headed households, the elderly and unaccompanied children may also require special services. Furthermore, distribution of resources within the community is unlikely to be equal, and there may be individuals who have no access to any resources.

Other Local Sources

Emergency managers and response planners should bear in mind that they seldom will be the first on the scene, or even the first to consider the possibility of a large scale emergency in any particular place. Careful review of reporting and preparedness planning that has already been completed is a prerequisite for all response planners. In this review, it is important to consider sources beyond your own office or organisation.

Any needs assessment should start with a review of the existing background information (mission reports, media articles, situation reports, local maps). Ideally, a contingency plan would have been prepared and kept updated and would guide the immediate response. The needs assessment can then build on this. UNHCR headquarters can provide maps and geographical information from a computerised database. The maps and information can be tailored to the specific requirements of the assessment. The assessment should also include interviews with the refugees and others involved, a visual inspection of the conditions and surveys.

— from the UNHCR Handbook for Emergencies: Initial Assessment, Immediate Response

Specifically prepared country profiles may be obtained from many organisations. Background information on the political and economic status of countries and areas can often be best established through media surveys and file clippings on the country or area under consideration. Ask for early warning information and analysis if available. Refer to the UNHCR computer-based information network called REFWORLD for information and updates on human rights situations and other data in both the refugees’ home and host countries.

Local sources of information are crucial in an emergency assessment. Each source will tend to have access to different types of information. For example, government counterparts may have overall numbers, while individual refugees may not. Refugees and the displaced will have first-hand information about their own status, coping abilities, and situation in their home areas before their flight. Universities may have well-developed histories or political and ethnic analyses of the “roots”
and development of the conflict. However, each of these different sources will be biased towards their own agenda and role in the country, situation, or emergency.

Consider contacting the following sources as part of the emergency assessment. Each may have important information for the formulation of your plans. Keep in mind the likely information each source is likely to have, as well as their possible biases.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local Sources</th>
<th>Types of Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Refugees/IDPs</td>
<td>Cultural issues, background/traditional gender roles, root causes, motivation, skills and resources available within the population, numbers, vulnerable populations or groups within the community, traditional coping mechanisms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local population/merchants/leaders</td>
<td>Local attitudes towards refugee population, possibilities for local support of refugee population, local services available and costs, land tenure issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local government counterparts/authorities</td>
<td>Local policies, attitudes and behaviour towards refugee/IDP population. Site availability, land tenure issues, local logistics, road conditions, improvements, constraints, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local universities/libraries</td>
<td>Analysis of roots of conflict, cultural description, legal issues concerning refugee/IDP rights and restriction under national law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local NGOs</td>
<td>Local programs, capability, size and history of local operational staff. Operating norms for humanitarian work and programmes, local logistics within country for moving goods and providing services from within the country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locally active international NGOs</td>
<td>Logistics issues for delivery of international aid and assistance, capability of staff in country and possibility for further support from HQ or international sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other UN agencies in the field</td>
<td>Co-ordination/co-operation measures and protocols, existing programs, standards in use, pay scales (should be uniform), warehousing potential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICRC and IFRC</td>
<td>Human rights issues, vulnerability studies, identification of vulnerable groups, local and international logistics issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Union /European Commission</td>
<td>Type and scale of existing programmes, longer term objectives, funding/support of partner and other NGOs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embassy contacts</td>
<td>Specific programmes and goals supported by national donors, particularly bilaterally supported programmes and activities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Needs and Resources Assessment Tools

Emergency managers preparing a needs and resources assessment should refer to the UNHCR Guidelines on Initial Assessment in Emergency Situations as well as chapters 2 and 3 on needs assessment in the UNHCR Handbook for Emergencies (2nd edition).

UNHCR’s People-Oriented Planning (POP) approach seeks to address the needs of refugees while acknowledging both the uniqueness of each refugee community and of each refugee within that community. It is important to ensure that refugee involvement in planning does not exclude any particular segment of the population. POP can help reduce this risk. The POP approach is detailed in the training materials in the UNHCR Emergency Management Training Programme (EMTP) paper, Assessment.

Assessing the Situation Using POP

One of the most critical elements of an assessment for refugee influx emergencies is the Refugee Population Profile. Who are they? People-Oriented Planning is one approach that has been developed to direct the collection and analysis of information for this profile. It provides an analytical set of guidelines or prompts. The POP framework consists of an initial, rapid, socio-economic overview followed by an activities analysis.

An initial, rapid, socio-economic overview is required if the overall population profile has been distorted by the refugee situation (and it usually has been). Apart from knowing the total number of refugees, one should also identify important sub-groups by age, gender, ethnicity, religion, female headed households, etc. The point is to answer the question: Who are the refugees? Are they mostly young men? Mostly children? Mostly male or female? Single heads of household? Fighting-age men and boys? It is important to avoid making assumptions based on your own stereotypes of the culture. Because the society is in transition, or under the stress of the emergency, traditional roles may apply in varying degrees.

The next part of the framework is the activities analysis. This part focuses on the question: what did/do they do? It is essential to know what people were doing before they became refugees and what they are doing, or are able to do now, in the refugee situation. Specifically, you need to get answers to the following questions regarding the pre-refugee setting:

What did people do before they became refugees?

One should consider protection activities, production of goods and services such as farming, domestic work, teaching, business activities, etc. This includes house-building, household production such as meal-preparation, fuel collection, home gardening, food preservation, water collection, etc.

One should also take into account a range of social, political and religious activities which, in some cultures, take considerable time or resources, such as traditional ceremonies, community meetings, etc.

Who did what?

For each of the major activities, one should ask, “Is this activity usually carried out”:

- by women?
- by men?
- by both?
- by children?
- by elders?
It is important to note that tasks within each overall activity must be specified to reflect the responsibilities within the society. For example, in agriculture, men may be responsible for land clearance, women and children for seeding and weeding, men for harvesting, women for preservation and sale of products, etc. Knowing this type of information is important for identifying what the particular group of refugees can do for themselves and which things they will need from the donor community.

Where and when did they do it?
Answering this helps you judge the time use and mobility of the refugees. Ask the following specific questions:

- What was the frequency of the activity? (once a day, every week, etc.)
- How long did it take? (all day, all morning, evenings, etc.)
- Where did it take place? (in the home, in the village, on agricultural land, etc.)

This analysis should give you a good idea of how the traditional activities of women and men have been affected by their becoming refugees and how this will influence the provision of services to them.

Who controls what resources?
Finally, look at what resources refugees controlled and used before they became refugees and what resources they control and use now. These should include:

- material resources such as money, animals, land, housing, tools, etc.
- invisible resources such as education, income-generating skills, cultural traits

In summary, UNHCR’s POP assessments are carried out to ensure that the design of the operation responds to the diversity of the population being served rather than simply matching kilos of grain or square metres of plastic with gross numbers of beneficiaries. This analysis requires understanding of needs, resources, gender and age, roles within the community, and the specific problems and opportunities that groups and subgroups face within the larger affected population. For more detail on the POP process, refer to the UNHCR publication, *A Framework for People-Oriented Planning in Refugee Situations, Taking Account of Women, Men and Children*.

Core Problem Analysis
One useful technique for identifying operational problems is called Core Problem Analysis. Operational problems can often be restated from negatives into positive terms by description of operational objectives and outputs. Identifying the core problems of an operation also represents an important shift of focus on the part of HCR staff who have, over the years, come to come to equate analytical considerations to “needs assessment”. While assessing the needs and resources of target populations is important, focusing assessment in this traditional manner does not facilitate the capture of many other important operational aspects not directly related to beneficiary needs and resources. As hinted at above, programme design is also facilitated by a focus on core problems rather than beneficiary needs. Core Problem Analysis is demonstrated and described in the document “Effective Planning — Guidelines for UNHCR Teams — OMS Working Draft, June 1999.” The two diagrams and supporting text below are from that document. The first diagram is the basic model and the second is the developed example as an illustration of application.
“In this example, the core problem which has been identified—continued dependence of urban refugees on subsistence allowances—can be easily transformed into an objective. Depending on the circumstances of the specific situation, the objective which results could be read as follows:

*Sixty percent of all urban refugees currently on subsistence allowances will have their allowances discontinued within 12 months as a result of their found livelihood activities which allow them to be self-sufficient at a level equivalent to those remaining on subsistence allowances.*

Depending on the time period involved, it might be that the objective stated above is too ambitious. Instead and objective written more at the level of causes may be more appropriate as in the example that follows:

*Within nine months sixty percent of all urban refugees currently on subsistence allowances will have completed appropriate skills training based on their skill profile and will be actively implementing their own individual strategy for increasing their own self-sufficiency and decreasing their dependence on subsistence allowances.*

The point of these examples is to highlight the relationship between the quality of the analysis and the quality of the objective setting process. The foundation for effective objective setting is effective analysis. In situations in which sustainability is a key criterion of success, core problem analysis as a first step in the objective setting process is essential”. 
Planning an Emergency Response

Using Indicators for Analysis of Assessment Information

In trying to understand critical needs, resources, and constraints within a refugee or other displaced population, planners generally need both quantifying and qualifying information about the emergency situation. Due to the complexity of such situations some measures or indicators are needed by which planners can judge the scale and scope of the emergency. Further, these indicators can help to determine priorities in situations where many problems in many different sectors exist side by side.

Potential emergency situations do not necessarily result in tragedy. The chance of this occurring will be greatly reduced if the emergency is well managed from the stage of preparedness onwards. The following indicators are measurable and are therefore commonly used as thresholds above (or below) which an emergency response is likely to be needed and of a need for immediate or reinforced remedial actions. The most important of these indicators is the death rate. Other threats may be just as critical, for example, the presence of a physical threat to refugees or potential refugees and the standards of human rights which they enjoy. Threats of refoulement should be considered as an indicator of a need for an emergency response.

— from the UNHCR Handbook for Emergencies (updated 1999), The following table on emergency indicators from same source.

### Emergency Indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Emergency Levels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Death Rate</td>
<td>&gt; 2 per 10,000 per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nutritional Status</td>
<td>&gt; 10% of children &lt; 80% weight for height</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td>&lt; 2,100 calories per person per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Quantity</td>
<td>&lt; 10 litres per person per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Quality</td>
<td>&gt; 25% of people with diarrhoea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site Space</td>
<td>&lt; 30 sq. metres per person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shelter Space</td>
<td>&lt; 3.5 sq. metres per person</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is important to monitor emergency situations against two levels of indicators: (1) **impact indicators** at the level of objectives and (2) **performance indicators** at the level of outputs. The definitions of the terms impact and indicator are from the UNHCR /IOM/90/99 Annex 7.

**Impact** The higher level effect achieved through the implementation of activities to meet goals and objectives. Within a normal UNHCR country operation impact refers to the quality and intended change in a programme (1.) Example: By achieving the sector objective to provide sufficient quantities of cooking fuel to all segments of a refugee population in a given camp, higher level impacts are achieved in the following areas: A) positive contribution to the nutritional status of the population; by reduction of sexual violence in connection with firewood collection; c) mitigation of environmental damage around the camp. UNHCR seeks to develop operational strategies which have the broadest impact.

**Indicator** Indicators can be used at all levels of the Hierarchy of Objectives. Currently, within UNHCR, indicators are measures which monitor progress against the achievement of objectives and expected outputs.
Analysis—Dealing with Uncertainty and Future Options

Analysis of the assessment information and other reviews is difficult in emergencies, since the situation and the information reflecting it is typically plagued by uncertainty. Uncertainty, in this sense means that planners simply cannot be sure that all of the information they have collected is correct, or that upcoming events will occur in any predictable way. Beyond the emergency events themselves, people may not even be certain of their own organisation’s preparedness levels or capacity to respond. Once an emergency happens, there is little point in wishing that systems, training, or planning had been put in place beforehand. Furthermore, these precautions can only reduce the level of uncertainty instead of eliminating it altogether. It is important to note that uncertainty affects not only the organisational emergency response planning which is dealt with in this course, but also the refugees’ planning to respond to the emergency situation.

What traditional approaches to resolving uncertainty may not be available to the emergency response planner?

Emergencies require urgent action and it is often not possible to take time to further clarify the situation. In a rapidly changing situation, any detailed information collected may be out of date by the time it reaches the planners. How then can the emergency response planner make logical decisions if the underlying information and assumptions are themselves uncertain?

Emergency planners must be able to cope with uncertainty. The failure to do so can be disastrous, since delay in action often leads directly to increased deaths and suffering. The following techniques can be a useful way of improving planning in conditions of great uncertainty.

- Inclusion
- Preserving future choice
- Flexibility

Inclusion

The term “inclusion” refers to including a wide range of partners in the planning process. Inclusion of partners in the planning process can help to reduce uncertainty in the following ways.

- Partners frequently have information about the situation that may not be widely known. Sometimes this makes it worthwhile to include partners with strong local knowledge, regardless of their implementing capacity.
- A wider range of experience becomes available to the process. The quality of the analysis of the available information will improve and unlikely predictions can be more carefully examined.
- The discipline of group membership constrains possible rumours and misinformation.

While it is clear that including partners in the emergency response planning process offers a large number of advantages, it is not without its own costs.
**Question**

What is one cost of including more people/groups in the planning process?

The more players that are involved in the planning, the longer it may take to reach agreement. Increasing the number of participants in the planning process almost inevitably makes it slower. This is an important constraint to consider in an emergency situation where response planning must be done as quickly as possible. In some cases the sensitivity of the issues being planned (for example, staff evacuation plans) may preclude the involvement of some partners.

Nevertheless, including all partners is important to the overall programme and must be given high priority. Where a large number of players runs the risk of slowing the planning process, you should seek out mechanisms to help expedite it. For example, implementing partners could work together at the sectoral level instead of global level as a means of arriving at consensus and a plan more quickly.

**Example**

You need to move refugees from spontaneous settlement sites near the border to new temporary sites. You are planning to use twenty trucks and busses along many different roads and paths and are considering whether or not to invite a local NGO to participate in planning. This NGO is not an implementing partner and has a very small implementation capacity. The NGO has been involved in supporting local school construction projects with their truck in the area for ten years.

**Question**

Should you involve this NGO? How effective could it be in transporting refugees? What benefit if any could such an NGO bring?

Whether or not you involve this NGO should depend on what they can bring to the planning process. As their truck is unlikely to make much of a difference, it may not be worth including them for this reason alone. They may not be able to expand from managing one truck to managing a fleet of twenty.

However, since they are experienced in the area, they may have a very clear picture of the accessibility and utility of the roads. This information may be invaluable in planning the operation. It will be necessary to find a role for the NGO in the operation (for example, vehicle recovery, transport of special cases, or route maintenance) so that they are contributing to the overall operation.
Maximising Future Choice

The technique of “maximising future choice” is related to flexibility described below, in that it is about ensuring future flexibility. Some of the many possible planning choices have a far more limiting effect than other choices. As illustrated below, some branches on the decision tree lead to situations where there is very little future choice. The decision tree is a model showing how making any one solution leads to other later choices. When you are planning on the basis of good information, it is sensible to make decisions that may limit future choices. When you are planning in conditions of uncertainty, it is more sensible to allow flexibility in future choices.

In simple terms, maximising future choice means that we should avoid planning decisions that commit us to a rigid course of action in the future, or which do not allow us to change our mind later on. Where such strategic decisions are required, it may be more appropriate to wait for more information rather than to act immediately.

Flexibility

Flexibility is another key tool for coping with uncertainty. Emergency response planners have to build flexibility into their plans. Plans must be designed so that they continue to be useful even if some of the information on which they are built turns out to be in error. Plans should explicitly allow for a range of values, and contingencies that should be included in the plan.

What danger does use of flexibility in planning emergency responses pose?
Planning an Emergency Response

The next chapter deals with objectives. One requirement for objectives is that they be time bound, that is, they should specify a firm time frame for the planned activities. If a plan is completely flexible, it cannot be constrained by a time frame. This makes monitoring impossible and the plan meaningless.

You are preparing the refugee relocation plan for the previous example. You plan to move 10,000 refugees over a two-week period. What flexibility should you build into the plan?

The plan should allow for convoys of different sizes, different weather conditions, and contingencies such as delays, breakdowns and route closures. A plan with a rigid unchangeable timetable for such an operation would soon become obsolete.

Limits to Planning for Flexibility

Flexibility is a key characteristic of successful emergency response planning. Flexible plans remain useful even when some of the information on which they were built turns out to be incorrect or no longer true. Plans should be flexible within the overall objective, but this flexibility should not extend to the objective itself.

Standards, Policies and Procedures

The establishment of policies and general standards forms the basis of flexible planning. It is far easier to delegate tasks if the overall policies and standards have been established. Policies and standards can be reflected in performance standards or in detailed specifications of how the work is to be done (procedures).

What policies and standards might be used for the refugee transport plan discussed earlier?

The plan for the transport operation might include:
- Standard maximum capacities for the vehicles
- Procedures for transporting sick or vulnerable refugees
- Procedures for stopping the vehicle in an emergency
- Luggage limitations per refugee
- Limits on the time which refugees can spend in the vehicle without a break
- Speed limits for the vehicles
- Latest time allowed for arrival at the resettlement site
Reading and collecting available background information and other documentation is an important first step in emergency response planning.

The emergency manager should make use of institutional memory of the organisation by interviewing colleagues familiar with the situation or region of concern.

Maps are a very powerful tool for transmitting information and are critical for most operational response plans.

Initial emergency assessment focuses on both needs and resources, one strategy is to focus on:
- The current condition
- The beneficiaries
- The context of the situation
- Other factors

Analysis of assessment information is critical to the formulation of emergency response plans.

Information may be collected from a variety of local sources, but each will tend to have different types of information, and each will have its own bias.

One analytical approach to assessment is the People-Oriented Planning or POP approach which considers the role of gender, age, and societal roles assigned to people in the affected population.

Some specialised indicators have been developed for use in emergency situations and are helpful in comparing emergency assessment information against an "emergency standard".

Analysis of uncertainty is an important aspect of response planning that should lead to planning for flexibility in cases where uncertainty is high.

Planners must actively design their plans to allow for future flexibility through the use of standards, policies, and procedures.
Chapter 2
Self-Assessment Questions

Check T or F to indicate whether a statement is True or False

1. Colleagues who have previously worked in the emergency-affected area are not a good source of information since things change so quickly.

2. Local sources of information are generally not reliable, so should be avoided in the emergency phase.

3. One limitation of maps for use in emergency plans is that it requires skill to make them and read them.

4. People-Oriented Planning (POP) methods can be used to generate a Refugee Population Profile, one of the critical areas of emergency assessment.

5. The most important indicator for use in emergency assessment is the death rate.

Multiple choice. Mark ALL correct statements—more than one may apply.

6. Which of the following techniques or approaches are useful for planning in times of uncertainty?
   - A Inclusion
   - B Delaying decision-making
   - C Preserving future choice
   - D Flexibility

7. In order to preserve flexibility of your response plan you should establish:
   - A Concrete policies
   - B Standards of response
   - C Specific budget amounts for each sectoral item
   - D Multiple scenarios and possible scales of response

8. Inclusion of partners in the planning exercise helps to reduce uncertainty since:
   - A Each partner may have information that is not widely known among the others
   - B A wider range of experience is brought to the analysis of the problem
   - C Discipline implied by group membership constrains some types of rumours and misinformation
   - D Widely different perspectives help to quickly focus on the best plan of action.
9. In the initial on-site assessment, the need is for:
   
   A. A high degree of accuracy
   B. A quick verification that an emergency exists
   C. Analysis of trends
   D. Basic information

10. The basic components of a needs and resources assessment include all of the following except:
    
    A. The needs of the population
    B. The resources currently available to the population
    C. The resources likely to be needed in the surrounding communities
    D. Unmet needs or gaps in critical service areas

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Exercise

You are planning the movement of refugees from spontaneous sites on the border to new temporary settlement sites. The logistics officer at the branch office calls you and offers you either a fleet of 20 busses or a mixed fleet with 14 busses and 8 trucks for the refugee transport. Eight trucks will transport the same number of refugees as 6 busses.

The busses have reasonable luggage space and are far more comfortable than the trucks. They would be able to travel on all the main routes in the dry season, but not in the wet season. The trucks are four wheel drive and would be able to operate on any route and also on the main routes in the wet season. The transportation operation is planned to end before the start of the wet season.

**What assessment and analysis of this situation is critical?**

**Which fleet should you accept? Why?**
Planning an Emergency Response

Chapter 2
Answers

Exercise Answer

Assessment for planning choices in this case is essential. Your assessment of the situation must include the basic information about the refugees, their status and condition. Can they be moved in trucks with safety? Are there vulnerable groups that would require buses for survival?

You must try to assess the trends related to this situation. Is it likely that these spontaneous sites will continue to develop? Are people still crossing the border? Will they continue to do so up until the rainy season, afterwards? The assessment in this case might also include a technical component.

What is the status and quality of the vehicles offered? Are they in good running order or will they need parts?

Lastly, you must estimate the time remaining before the rainy season begins and the number of people to be moved. Can the whole population be moved in time to use buses only?

Choosing the mixed fleet will give you a larger number of vehicles to manage and provide the refugees with less comfortable transport. The bus fleet might be the appropriate choice if you could be certain that the operation would be over before the rains begin. Such certainty is unlikely in emergencies and choosing the mixed fleet guarantees greater flexibility in the future.
Defining Objectives

Within a country operation, objective(s) are formulated at the sector level for each of the programme goals. For each programme goal, a project is established.

An objective is a statement of the situation that is expected to prevail on completion of a project.

— UNHCR/IOM/90/99, Annex 7

The term ‘objective’ should be seen as a general category that encompasses a range of ‘sub’ and ‘higher’ objectives at a variety of levels. The end result in a programme is a hierarchy of objectives which complement and build on one another in a chain of results which together represent the necessary steps in achieving the desired end result.

In order for this hierarchy of objectives to be properly constructed, it is useful to introduce additional terms that can be used at the various different stages. To allow for greater degree of precision in the planning process, terms like goal and output can be used to distinguish between low-, medium, and high-level objectives. This approach has already been adopted by other organizations which make distinctions between target, aim, outcome, etc. (see table below).

As described in Effective Planning—Guidelines for UNHCR Teams (Chapter 1), the new OMS encourages the use of the following terms and definitions:

**Goal**  The desired result of UNHCR programmes in terms of overall solution; goals are established at the organizational and programme levels.

**Objective**  A statement of desired result, or specific accomplishment often established at the sectoral level.

**Output**  Defined deliverables which enable objectives and impacts to be achieved.
Objectives at all levels of an operations plan should be complimentary and build on one another. The achievement of lower-level objectives should lead to and support the achievement of those at a higher level. The matrix below gives an idea of how these new terms can be used within the UNHCR planning process and where they sit in terms of level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Objectives</th>
<th>Focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Goals and Objectives</td>
<td>Mandate/Organizational “corporate” strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operation/Programme Goal</td>
<td>Country of origin caseload/Theme at the country or “situation” levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral Objectives</td>
<td>Core problems to be solved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outputs</td>
<td>Deliverables</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Effective Planning—Guidelines for UNHCR Teams, June 1999

The new OMS guidelines on planning remind planners that objectives are statements of intended end results which may not necessarily be in the sole purview of UNHCR. The attainment of these objectives are generally not fully dependent on UNHCR activities, funds or policies, and therefore, UNHCR can at best be held accountable for contributing to their attainment or having a positive impact on their attainment. Nevertheless, setting objectives is an important step in emergency response planning, and must be based on a realistic assessment of the situation. Objective setting is composed of an assessment of the present and desired states and the needs that result from the gap between the two. In setting an objective, it is important to remember that both the present and desired states need to be defined in order to determine the gap.

The general idea of the level or scope of objectives or objective setting can be conceived as a chain of results that is needed in order to have a real impact on the situation at hand, in this case, an emergency. The links of this chain are considered to be at different levels ranging from outputs to objectives, to the overall goals of the operation at the other end of the chain. The main point is that planners must be aware of all of these links in order for their plans to have significant impact.

The establishment of objectives forms the basis of UNHCR’s actions in any operation, including emergency operations. Once the overall goal has been elaborated, objectives provide a more detailed statement of what the organisation intends to achieve through its involvement in an operation and serve as the rationale for the UNHCR presence in a country. The setting of objectives grows out of analysis of problems and the development of planning scenarios in terms of assumptions, parameters, and constraints analysis.

The objectives determined by country managers involved in an operation will guide the activities carried out by all concerned staff, assist in the process of resource allocation, and provide the means by which to measure progress on a country-by-country or operation-by-operation basis. They will also facilitate more meaningful reporting, based on what has been achieved rather than how funds were spent, and help staff focus on what UNCHR will achieve in the countries where it is present.

Objective setting is one of the steps of UNHCR’s Operations Management System, and is formally taken on an annual basis for ongoing programmes. However, in the context of this training module, setting objectives focuses on an emergency situation and is executed on an as-needed basis.
Setting Objectives

Setting objectives is vital to emergency response planning, even when information about the situation is not clear. The understanding of emergency response planning must therefore include some reference to objective setting as illustrated in the following example.

You are responsible for a refugee camp with about 10,000 refugees. The refugees have recently arrived and are having some problems adapting to an unfamiliar diet. The medical agency working in the camp is concerned about rising levels of child malnutrition and has sought your support to establish a supplementary feeding programme for targeted children under five. You are now ready to begin planning for setting up the supplementary feeding programme. You consider the objective to be: establish a supplementary feeding programme. You begin planning for ways to get that programme running as soon as possible.

From a planner’s point of view, is anything wrong with your actions in this example?

In this example, it is incorrectly assumed that the objective of the emergency planning response is: to establish a supplementary feeding programme. It may be more appropriate to state the objective as: to reduce child malnutrition. There may be many effective ways to accomplish this objective such as providing training for families in cooking the unfamiliar food, supplementing or changing part of the general ration. Taking only one possible solution to a problem as the objective is a common flaw in emergency response planning.

A further important issue that must be addressed in the definition of emergency response planning is illustrated in the following example.

In the refugee camp referred to, an emergency response planning objective was agreed upon as follows: to reduce the incidence of child malnutrition by 50% within two months. Through consultation with the refugees and between partner agencies, it was agreed that the best approach was through outreach to familiarise families with ways of cooking the unfamiliar food, together with a programme to supplement family rations with dried fish from the local market. The medical agency is implementing part of this programme while another agency is supplying the dried fish.

What other processes are needed to ensure the success of this emergency response intervention?
Planning an Emergency Response

Objectives are required in all sectors of the plan. If the group working on the plan is large enough, it is ideal to have sub- or working-groups define the appropriate objectives for each sector. The UNHCR Handbook for Emergencies presents the following model or template that identifies the sectors for which objectives will likely need to be prepared.

A Model Structure for an Operations Plan

The following is a proposed structure for an operations plan. It is based on a refugee influx. Adaptation will naturally be required for different situations.

Chapter 1: General Situation

1. Background and country situation
2. Entry points
3. Agreed planning figures, disaggregated by gender, age, ethnic groups, and any specifically vulnerable groups for this situation
4. Arrival rate
5. Reception and in-country movement
6. Settlement arrangements
7. Demographic profile of the refugees

Chapter 2: Policies and Overall Operation Objectives

1. Overall policy (strategic) objectives of the program
2. Comments on policy stance of various partners
3. Specific policies relating to women and children (i.e. gender mainstreaming activities)

Chapter 3: Objectives and Activities by Sector

1. Management and overall co-ordination
2. Protection, reception, registration
3. Food
4. Logistics and transport
5. Infrastructure and site planning
6. Shelter
7. Domestic needs and household support
8. Water
9. Environmental sanitation
10. Health and nutrition
11. Community services
12. Education
13. Economic activities
14. Support to the operation, administration, communications, staff support

Each section should include overall sector objectives, and site by site objectives, needs, resources, activities, implementation responsibilities and timing. A Gap Chart (see example on page 91) should be included to identify any gaps in the operational arrangements. The operations plan should include measures to fill any gaps so identified (see Chapter 7 for some examples of recent UNHCR operations plan outlines).

Chapter 4: Procedures for updating the operations plan

Describe how the Plan will be updated, who will be responsible for ensuring this and how the information will be disseminated.
Possible Annexes
   I. Maps
   II. Registration forms
   III. List of organisations or individuals participating in the operation
   IV. Agency profiles (details of staff and resources involved in the operation)
   V. Gap identification charts
   VI. Commodity specifications
   VII. Budgets

At the time of this writing, Chapter 4 of the UNHCR Manual is being revised and updated. In anticipation of those expected revisions, UNHCR’s IOM/90/99/FOM 90/99 deals with preparation of project descriptions. The new Guidelines for Revised Project Description Format set out a template for use in preparation of new projects. An outline of that Guideline follows.

1. Introduction
2. Content of Project Submission
3. Project Description
   Section 1: Project Overview
   Section 2: Description of Beneficiaries
   Section 3: Implementation Strategy
   Section 4: Related Inputs/Projects
   Section 5: Description of Objectives and Outputs
      A. Sector Level
      B. Sector-Activity Level

Designing Better Objectives

After objectives are appropriately determined and approaches agreed upon, other key planning tasks include monitoring, control and evaluation. As discussed in Chapter 1, monitoring and evaluation are important parallel functions that support and inform planning. Monitoring and evaluation are frequently mentioned together as they have some similarities; however, they are very different tasks. Monitoring is the on-going review of the effectiveness of implementation activities and is a critical step in the management of operations for both corrective action (control) and reporting.

   Monitoring asks the basic question: “Are we doing things right?” In order to be able to carry out both monitoring and evaluation activities, objectives must be designed and written in ways that facilitate these tasks.

What steps can you take to monitor the nutrition project described above?
You might monitor this project by visiting the training sites and checking on the number of families being trained and the quality of the training. You can monitor the distribution of the dried fish by looking at records of distribution and verifying these by checking what families have actually received at the distributions.

**Evaluation,** although related, must be distinguished from monitoring. While monitoring is an ongoing process, evaluation usually occurs at set stages in a project, typically once a year by staff involved in its planning and implementation. Evaluation seeks to determine if the intended results were achieved, and if they could have been more effectively or efficiently achieved through other means. Evaluation asks the basic question: “Are we doing the right things?” A more complete discussion of evaluation along with UNHCR’s current definition and use of that term is in Chapter 8.

While monitoring tests compliance with the plan, evaluation examines the appropriateness and effectiveness of the plan itself. Both evaluation and monitoring are feedback processes, where information on the implementation or the outcomes is used to modify either the set objectives or the chosen operations plan. Evaluation that takes place after completion of a project cannot influence the project itself, but through the lessons learned, it should influence the setting of objectives for similar projects in the future.

**How would you evaluate the nutrition project for the 10,000 refugees referred to above?**

The primary question for evaluation is: **Has the project been effective in reducing the level of malnutrition in children in the camp?** You might answer this question by looking at the recorded rates of child malnutrition in the camp and comparing them with seasonal changes in malnutrition rates in the surrounding villages or in a similar camp that did not have this project. Another important question is: **Did the project use resources efficiently to achieve its objectives?** This question may be answered by comparing the cost and effectiveness with other approaches taken to meet the same need.

The definition of Emergency Response Planning provided in Chapter 1 must now be expanded to include monitoring and evaluation. **Emergency Response Planning** is the process of setting agreed objectives, selecting the operations plan to achieve those objectives, monitoring the implementation of each step of the operations plan, and evaluating the outcomes in terms of the set objectives and the operations plan. This planning is in response to a serious situation or event that happens unexpectedly and demands immediate action to protect the lives and well being of those affected.

**What are the key points to note in this definition?**
The definition implies the following:

- Emergency response planning happens after the emergency event begins.
- It involves the setting of objectives and selecting the plan to meet the objectives.
- Monitoring and evaluation are an integral part of emergency response planning.

So far planning has been represented as a linear process with the objective of achieving a desired outcome. However, due to circumstances beyond the control of planners, objectives often need to be changed to consider new realities. Planning must therefore, be seen as a repetitive cyclical activity, as illustrated in Chapter 1.

**Objective Setting with Partners**

Setting the objectives is one of the most important components of planning, and is particularly beneficial when done in co-operation with partner agencies.

**Question**

*What benefits may occur by setting objectives in co-ordination with partner agencies?*

Involving partner agencies in setting objectives can bring several benefits including:

- Better quality objectives because of the wider experience of the whole group.
- Commitment to the agreed objectives.
- Broader awareness of the objectives of the plan.

While participation has these very positive aspects, it also has some negative ones including:

- Slower processes—increasing the number of participants inevitably slows down the planning process.
- Lack of confidentiality—this can be a problem if the planning covers particularly sensitive issues.

Participation is not a panacea for all planning problems. The negative aspects are revisited in the following discussion.
What Sort of Objective?

Many organizations use preset criteria for the development of their objectives. Especially in emergency response, when time is short and lives are at stake, it is important for planners to make realistic plans that can be carried out within specified timeframes. The following S-M-A-R-T criteria are often used in these situations.

- **Specific** — An objective should state exactly what is to be achieved. It should state the goal in a way that is easily understood by all that are expected to work towards it. The underlying objective should be stated rather than any solution adopted to meet the objective.

- **Measurable** — Objectives should be stated in measurable units. Without measurable objectives it is not possible to determine if the operation is going according to plan or not. If the objective is: *to move refugees from the border to new sites*, have we performed well if we move 500 in a week? The situation is much clearer if the objective is: *to move 1,000 refugees a week from the border to new sites*. This objective clarifies that things are not going according to plan. Perhaps the plan will need to be revised or changes made to the way in which the plan is being implemented.

- **Achievable** — It must be possible to achieve the objectives and all parties must agree that they are achievable. Demanding objectives are much more effective at drawing the best performances out of all the players than trivial ones, but this only works when players perceive the objectives as achievable.

- **Realistic** — The objective should be realistic in view of the resources and constraints. An objective may appear to be achievable, but may not be realistic in terms of other requirements and commitments.

- **Time-bound** — The objective should set a time frame so that the implementation can be monitored against the plan. The objective might read: To move 1,000 refugees a week from the border to new sites, with all 10,000 refugees moved by 30 August. “

You are preparing the relocation plan to move the entire population of 10,000 spontaneously settled refugees from the border to a temporary settlement that has been prepared. This action complies with the requirement that refugees be settled at a reasonable distance from the frontier of their country of origin to ensure their security. If you used all of your vehicles, you could move 4,000 refugees per week, but given other demands on your vehicles it is more realistic to plan to move 2,000 per week. The operation can begin in two weeks on the 1st of August.

You are preparing for a meeting with partners to plan the operation. How would you draft your proposed objectives for the plan?
The objective should meet the SMART criteria, but the exact wording of the objective may vary. One option would be:

The objective of the operation is to ensure the security of the refugees by moving all of the 10,000 refugees now camped on the border to the new settlement site by 4 September at an average rate of 2,000 per week.

Specific planning objectives should always clearly state the underlying objective. In this example the underlying objective—to ensure security—is used rather than the means of meeting it. In this case, there are not likely to be many other options that could be used to achieve the same end.

In other cases, however, the use of the underlying objective may make a significant difference in objective setting. The objective for a water trucking operation is probably to provide water for the refugees, rather than to transport water. Stating the objective correctly will remind people that other solutions may be available.

At the individual staff level, objectives must be SMART, but at the operations level this is not always possible. Often, UNHCR cannot assure that objectives are achievable within a specific timeframe since full attainment is often beyond UNHCR's limited funds, mandate, and management role. Therefore, in UNHCR's OMS training the SMART criteria described above are not specifically used, but a version of them called Quality, Quantity, Time, (QQT) is used at the level of indicators.
Objectives are statements of desired results that are measurable and achievable within a specific time frame.

Setting objectives is a key activity in emergency response planning.

Taking only one possible solution to a problem as the objective is a flaw that planners should avoid.

Although all emergencies are different, a model that may be used as a starting point in designing emergency response plans outlines four primary sectors for which objectives should likely be written (including suggestions for possible annexes).

1. General situation
2. Policies and overall operation objectives
3. Objectives and activities by sector
4. Procedures for updating the operations plan

Objectives should be designed in ways that allow sufficient monitoring and evaluation of them.

Objective setting should involve operational partners from the beginning.

Objectives should follow the SMART criteria:
- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Realistic
- Time-bound
Chapter 3
Self-Assessment Questions

Check T or F to indicate whether a statement is True or False

1. An objective is a statement consisting of activities and inputs that are measurable within a specific time frame
   - T
   - F

2. Setting objectives is vital in emergency response planning, even when information about the situation is not clear.
   - T
   - F

3. Even though monitoring and evaluation are often mentioned together, they are in fact different tasks with different purposes.
   - T
   - F

4. Evaluation asks the basic question “Are we doing these particular response activities correctly?”
   - T
   - F

5. An objective should state exactly what is to be achieved.
   - T
   - F

Multiple choice. Mark ALL correct statements—more than one may apply.

6. Which of the following are parts of the SMART criteria for objective writing?
   - A Specific
   - B Measurable
   - C Action-oriented
   - D Realistic

7. All of the following are proposed as chapters in the model operations plan except:
   - A General Situation
   - B Lessons Learned
   - C Objectives and Activities by Sector
   - D Policies and Overall Operation Objectives

8. Once the overall goal has been elaborated, objectives provide a more detailed statement of:
   - A What the organisation intends to achieve through its involvement in an operation
   - B What activities are required to reach the goal
   - C What inputs are required to support the response activities
   - D Which partners will be involved in the response
9. Planning by focusing on only one solution to a problem is:
   A. A good way to prioritise possible courses of action.
   B. A good method to ensure solidarity with partners in emergency response planning
   C. A fast way to agree on operational objectives
   D. A common flaw in emergency response planning

10. The concept of a hierarchy of objectives as used by UNHCR means that:
    A. Some objectives are more important than others
    B. There is a need to express what the organisation wants to achieve at all levels.
    C. There is a logical link between inputs, activities, goals, and mandate
    D. Policies should be measurable
The overall objective of an operation is:
To ensure the security of the refugees by moving all of the 10,000 refugees now camped on the border to the new settlement site by 4 September at an average rate of 2,000 per week.

For this objective, how would you state the sub-objectives to cover the following stages?
- the move from the temporary sites to the rest station
- processing at the rest station
- the move from the rest station to the new temporary settlement site

The sub-objectives you write should:
- reflect the underlying objective
- be SMART
- be consistent with each other
- together describe the overall objective
Chapter 3
Answers

Exercise Answer
Although your wording for sub-objectives will likely vary from this suggested answer, the following statements are appropriate and meet the SMART criteria.

Three possible statements of the sub-objectives are:

- To help ensure the security of the refugees by moving all of the 10,000 refugees now camped on the border to the rest station by 3 September, at an average rate of 2,000 per week.
- To help ensure the security of the refugees by processing all 10,000 refugees moved from the border in a humane and dignified way at an average rate of 2,000 per week, with each refugee spending not less than 12 hours at the rest station.
- To help ensure the security of the refugees by moving all 10,000 refugees from the rest station to the new temporary settlement by 4 September at an average rate of 2,000 per week, with each refugee spending no more than 24 hours at the rest station.

Each of these objectives is reasonably specific, measurable, and time bound. They are hopefully achievable and realistic.
Work Planning

By studying this chapter, you will learn about:

- The definition of activities and outputs within UNHCR’s new OMS
- How to design activities for the emergency response plan
- The importance of breaking down activities into quantifiable sub-tasks with Work Breakdown Structures
- Ways to assign times to activities in a realistic way
- Action planning
- How plans can be expressed as checklists and procedures

Definitions

The following definitions are included in the UNHCR/IOM–FOM/90/99 and are useful in understanding the discussions that follow.

Input—Any resource (money, equipment, material, etc.) which through activities is transferred into an output.

Activity—An activity is specific action or a series of specific actions which are undertaken to transform inputs into outputs. Activities can be broken down into tasks and sub-tasks as part of the workplanning process. Activities have a time frame with expected start and end dates. In the FMIS budget structure, Activity is the level below a Sector and above Item.

Output—An output is the direct result of activities undertaken. Within a country operation outputs are formulated at the level of objectives within each project. Typical examples are: classrooms built, cooking fuel distribution systems operational, refugee status determination procedures established, etc. Designing Activities as a Planning Foundation

The activities called for by the plan are its most visible, practical, and measurable components. They are the “reality” which supports the objectives and goals of the operation. The way that these activities are conceived, designed, and described in the emergency response plan will determine how well the plan works and how it is perceived and used by the emergency responders.

Segmenting Activities—Work Breakdown Structures

The process of “segmenting” tasks is important in emergency response planning. Segmenting means breaking down problems into manageable and describable tasks. It allows identification of the resources or inputs needed to
Planning an Emergency Response

carry out the plan. The segmentation approach facilitates planning and the manner in which tasks are segmented helps to determine the speed and co-ordination of the emergency response. As tasks become more and more specific, the planning of them must come from those technical sectors responsible. The examples that follow show a high level of details that would normally be done at the technical level, by technical specialists. Those responsible for the overall planning must be aware of these activities however, and know how to delegate these tasks as well as what to expect from a well thought-out plan. See Chapter 6 for more specific information on co-ordinating these different aspects of the plan.

A key step in establishing a work plan, schedule or time chart is to break the work down into its constituent elements. The technique of Work Breakdown Structure provides a means for doing so. The process of breaking down the work involves analysing the key tasks that have to be carried out in a systematic manner. The process of analysis can be described as follows:

- Analyse the overall task in terms of its complexity
- Break the task down into manageable parts/steps
- Order the parts/steps into a logical sequence
- Determine which steps can occur simultaneously, which can be deferred, which are prerequisites to others
- Determine the time frame for each step
- Assign responsibility including focal points with overall responsibility for key clusters of tasks
- Establish global and individual work plans

— from UNHCR Guidelines for Effective Planning

In segmenting the activities (or creating a work breakdown structure), a series of tasks is identified to meet the sub-objective and each of these tasks is then segmented into a series of sub-tasks. This is a key process in emergency response planning. It breaks problems down into manageable “chunks” and allows clear identification of all of the resources needed to carry out the plan. For example, the task of transporting refugees from the border to the rest station can be broken down into a number of separate tasks.

![Diagram of work breakdown structure](image)

Each sub-task can then be broken down into further sub-tasks. The hierarchy of tasks is illustrated in the next diagram (where the further breakdown of only one task at each level is shown). An initial draft of sub-tasks will be further refined during the planning process.
Each task in the hierarchy can usually be split up into three to five sub-tasks. If a task has fewer than three or more than five sub-tasks, it should probably be redefined. While the process of task sub-division can be continued almost indefinitely, it generally becomes irrelevant after the fifth or sixth level. It is sometimes preferable to break a task into ten or more sub-tasks at the bottom level to avoid creating another hierarchical level. Task hierarchies may reflect the organisational hierarchy. For example, top levels may be of relevance to senior managers, while lower levels will likely reflect activities of camp personnel, refugee workers, drivers, distributors, and other "front line" responders.

In an emergency response plan, one of the sub-objectives was to help ensure the security and dignity of the refugees while moving 10,000 refugees from the border at an average rate of 2,000 per week, with each refugee spending not less than 12 hours at the rest station.

The plan selected to meet this objective calls for setting up a rest station at which refugees can overnight before continuing their journey. Water, latrines, communal shelters, and cooked food will be provided at the rest station. One of the sub-tasks identified to meet this objective is setting up the site.

Which sub-tasks are required to set up the rest site?
Planning an Emergency Response

Your list may include:
- selecting the site (this will include the sub-task of consultation with local leaders, etc.)
- clearing and setting out the site (this will include planning the layout etc.)
- providing water supply
- digging latrines
- building shelters and kitchens

There are other ways in which this task could be broken down and the method of segmenting the tasks may partly depend on the capacities of the players. For example, if one agency takes responsibility for water and sanitation, sub-tasks for these sectors may be combined.

Selecting the Level of Detail

As a general rule-of-thumb, sub-objectives should not be set for activities that are expected to take less than one day. While this is a useful rule for setting sub-objectives for overall planning, it is not useful for segmenting tasks. The level of task segmentation or detail should be appropriate. While sub-objectives may include a few broad tasks, finer levels of detail, or many small tasks, are needed for other purposes.

The first two or three levels of tasks may be defined broadly followed by finely detailed tasks. A fine segmentation generally deals with tasks that are carried out by an individual, whereas coarse segmentation usually defines tasks that are carried out by teams. Coarse segmentation is a more useful basis for estimating budgets.

What are some examples of coarse and fine segmentation tasks?

While there are many examples, your answer may include:
- Coarse segmentation: planning overview, estimating resources, identifying broad resource conflicts, estimating overall times.
- Fine segmentation: preparing checklists for field staff, preparing procedures, training field level staff.

Mechanisms for Segmenting Tasks

The same processes used for overall planning (group interaction, brainstorming, and nominal groups) can be used to segment tasks. It is generally better to use these group processes for coarse segmentation and use sub-teams to determine fine segmentation. Thus, the broader picture of tasks should be planned by the entire planning team while sub-tasks should be drafted by sub-groups of the planning team, or by individuals with particular experience. However, the larger group should review drafts of segmented tasks to ensure that they are coherent and do not make conflicting assumptions.
In the example given earlier of four levels of task:

Transport refugees from border to rest station

- Travel to border
- Load refugees
- Transport
- Unload
- Prepare truck
- Report to site manager
- Collect & count travel tokens
- Put special cases in cab
- Brief leaders and load
- Complete manifest
- Check numbers
- Brief leaders on stop signal
- Load luggage
- Load refugees
- Check

**Question**

Which of these levels should be segmented in the overall planning group, and which should be delegated to individuals or smaller teams?

The first two levels are probably suitable for segmentation by the whole group. Individuals or smaller groups will probably segment the tasks beyond the second level sub-task.

**Time as a Resource**

Time is a resource that cannot be stored or stockpiled. In emergency response operations time is a critical resource. Unless action is taken quickly, there may be avoidable loss of life or suffering. Care must be taken to make the most of the time during an emergency response.

**Question**

How can use of time in an emergency be optimised?
Time use can be optimised by effective contingency planning and training before an emergency. In an emergency, effective emergency response planning can reduce time wasted through errors. A planning exercise is a form of training in which experienced participants share their knowledge. The use of time may be hampered or expedited by seasonal variations. Wet or inclement weather may slow operations. Such seasonal variations apply not only to the conditions but also to resources.

**Time and Activities**

Estimating the time it will take to complete different activities specified in the plan is an essential part of emergency response planning. Estimates for the time taken to achieve some tasks may help to indicate when an approach is not feasible. Estimates can be made by the planning team or by sub-teams and individuals for individual tasks. In general, time estimates tend to be overly optimistic.

Apart from the effect of the learning curve mentioned above, can you suggest any other reasons that might lead to unrealistic estimates?

Many factors may lead to unrealistic estimates, including:

- the optimistic attitude of the planning participants which helps them deal with the stresses of preventing avoidable death and suffering
- the failure to allow for the effect of other commitments when making estimates
- optimistic assumptions about the level of resources which will be available
- unforeseen constraints which only become obvious during the operation
- over-estimation of agencies’ capacities

Pessimism is also not a desirable ingredient in making time estimates which should be based on reasonable probabilities. A review of the original estimates should be made with the planning team. Although test runs are useful to check estimates, the resulting times should not necessarily be used as the probable average for the operation.

Why are test times insufficient as the likely average time for a task?

The “learning curve” for doing certain activities the first time suggests that trial runs are likely to take longer than repeated tasks in real operations. While trial runs provide a practical field-realistic basis to estimate what the average time will be, they take place at the start of the learning curve. Unless the “learning curve effect” is considered, time estimates based test runs will be pessimistic.
Approaches

Time estimates may be shown in two ways: in the overall time needed to reach a particular stage, or in the time needed for each task.

The first of these, the overall time, may be shown on a timeline. Timelines are essentially a representation of future time with the events or details associated with the future date noted against it. They are particularly powerful to project resource availability or refugee numbers.

The second approach, or the time needed for each task, can be demonstrated with a variety of techniques, including Gantt charts and network diagram methods such as the Critical Path Method (both are presented in Chapter 7). These approaches can be used together as they have different functions and strengths. They may even support each other in the planning process.

Presenting the Segmented Tasks

While segmenting activities (shown in work breakdown structures) is primarily a planning tool, segmented tasks can also be successfully used for implementation. The segmented tasks can be presented in a variety of forms including checklists, guidelines, and official procedures.

Plan of Action

Identifying the tasks in an operation is the first step in designing an action plan. While this approach can be applied at different levels, it is most appropriate at the sub-sector activity level where specific actions can be scheduled along a known timeline. The action plan at sectoral and sub-sector levels forms the bridge from the project objectives to the operations plan and identifies the resources (human, material and financial) needed to achieve them. The plan of action:

- provides a framework for action
- sets a timetable for implementation
- becomes a useful monitoring tool

Once the tasks (or activities) for your project have been identified, you should tie each activity to UNHCR’s Sector-Activity guidelines. Next, consider who will be responsible for completing each activity, how long it will take and whether the activities can be undertaken concurrently or must be completed sequentially. Also, identify what materials must be supplied to complete the activities, and when, and define related responsibilities assigned to organisations with whom you will be collaborating. Be sure to examine all the resources required to fulfil your objective, and their possible sources. (Chapter 7 provides more information on using network and critical path diagrams.)

On completion of this analysis of requirements, the activities can be aggregated into a plan of action that specifies their sequence and timing, associated responsibilities, all resource inputs (human, material, and financial), and implementation procedures. Each specific plan of action provides an implementation schedule and establishes target dates that can be used to monitor progress. It must, therefore, contain the following elements:

- The timeframe for each sector-activity, i.e., which months or the year
- Designation of who is responsible for carrying out the activity/task

In formulating workplans, ensure that implementation procedures are flexible, realistic and take into account local constraints. They should allow:

- Adequate lead time at the beginning to ensure smooth implementation, and adequate time to accomplish all the activities
- Compliance with UNHCR’s reporting requirements, focusing on results rather than on inputs
All those to whom responsibilities will be assigned in the project, including the beneficiaries, should be involved in the action planning and all other phases of the project. Their agreement with the objectives, implementing strategy and plan of action should be secured before the project is initiated so as to assure the long-term sustainability of the project.

Checklists

UNHCR has several checklists to support emergency planning. These include The UNHCR Handbook for Emergencies (2nd ed.), Appendix 2: Standards and Indicators, and the Checklist for the Emergency Administrator prepared by the UNHCR Emergency Preparedness and Response Section. There are also several guidelines that serve a similar purpose: the Guidelines on the Protection of Refugee Women, UNHCR Guidelines on Initial Assessment in Emergency Situations, and A Framework for People-Oriented Planning in Refugee Situations Taking Account of Women, Men and Children.

Many of these and other informational sources can be found in the new UNHCR Knowledge and Information Management System (KIMS) which is available on CD ROM to UNHCR staff. It is an internal version of the more widely distributed REF WORLD, also available on CD ROM. It is the result of a collaborative effort within UNHCR to provide staff users with an information system that integrates CDR’s REF WORLD with operational guidance material collected by the OMS unit of DOS, and InSite, a database produced by the Human Resources Services (HRS).

The operational guidance material located in the KIMS includes information on the OMS, manuals, instructions and guidelines including the UNHCR Manual, MOUs, technical manuals, and IOM/FOMS. It provides access to reference and sample materials to help you better undertake UNHCR operations.

The Advantages of Checklists

Checklists are lists of activities or outcomes presented in a list with a checkbox. They are relatively simple but can be very powerful. Checklists:

- remind the user of all of the issues to be considered
- establish an order in which issues should be considered
- ensure that all issues have been resolved before continuing

Checklists, however, have weaknesses. They are only useful if the user is diligent. For example, if a user checks a box for a task that has not been fully completed, then the checklist will not ensure that all issues have been resolved. Furthermore, checklists are usually designed for one situation and are not applicable to others.
Using Checklists

Checklists have two main uses.

- Checklists remind experienced users about all of the components of a complex task, for example, a pilot uses a checklist to prepare for take-off.
- Checklists aid users to carry out unfamiliar tasks or tasks which they perform only occasionally as in a needs assessment for a refugee group.

Unconventional ways to use checklists include:

- Using the checklist as a memory aid without ticking off the boxes
- Using the list and ticking off the boxes in the order presented on the checklist as the tasks are done (but without ticking tasks which have been done out of order until the previous tasks have been done)
- Using the list as a memory aid and ticking off the boxes in the order of completion rather than the order in which they are presented on the checklist

Which of these three approaches would you consider to be the most correct?

The first two approaches have flaws, but can be appropriate in some situations.

- Using the checklist as a memory aid only may be appropriate for very experienced users, especially where the consequences of any omissions are unlikely to be critical.
- Ticking off in list order may be appropriate for tasks which should be conducted in a specific order, but the problem is that confusion may arise over which tasks have been completed and which have not if the user relies on memory.
- Ticking off the boxes as tasks are completed is usually the best approach. Where sequence is important, each task can be given a single tick when it is done and a second tick when all of the preceding tasks in the sequence are done. Even though boxes can be ticked in any order, the issues should still normally be considered in checklist order.

Generating Checklists

Checklists can be generated from the lists of segmented tasks, limiting the tasks to those of interest to the checklist user. Checklists may cover several tasks but should ideally have no more than ten or fifteen points per list. If more checklist points are needed, the list may need to be broken down into separate checklists or into sub-tasks.

The end of each checklist should clearly state what action is authorised by completing all of the checklist items. For example, in a checklist given above for a morning vehicle check, the completion of the checklist indicates that it is now OK to start the vehicle's engine.
Refugees for whom a ride in the back of a truck may be very stressful constitute special cases. Such cases may include pregnant women, ill, or elderly persons. The plan calls for placing these persons in the cabs of trucks used for transporting refugees. This task may be broken down into the following sub-tasks:

- Put special cases in cab
  - Screen refugees, ID special cases
  - Issue tokens
  - Identify family member
  - Help special cases into cab
  - Load special cases luggage

_Which of these tasks should not be included in the checklist for the truck driver?_

The driver may not be qualified to identify special cases. This is best done by a medical agency. Also, travel tokens for special cases are probably best issued either by the site manager or by the screening agency. These tasks might appear on the checklist for the medical screening agency or the site manager.
Designing activities for emergency response plans is facilitated when activities are “broken down” into smaller component activities using work breakdown structures.

Segmenting, or breaking down the plan’s objectives facilitates breaking down the corresponding activities.

An appropriate level of detail is necessary to reach planning efficiency, as a general rule, sub-activities or objectives should not be refined to the point where any sub-item takes less than a day to carry out.

Time as a resource should be considered when designing activities.

In estimating the time activities will take, it is possible to carry out field tests, but initial results may be slower than ongoing repeated tasks due to the effect of the “learning curve” on task performance.

Workplans relate the objectives to the activities of the plan.

UNHCR-generated workplans should contain:

♦ The activities or tasks to be accomplished for all FMIS Sector-Activities listed under the “Description of Assistance” in the Project Description
♦ The timeframe for each activity, i.e. which months of the year
♦ Designation of who is responsible for carrying out the activity/task

Checklists can be used as part of emergency response plans to clarify activities in a simple way.
Chapter 4
Self-Assessment Questions

Check T or F to indicate whether a statement is True or False

1. “Segmenting” of tasks means breaking down activities into manageable and easily describable tasks.

2. One useful method for breaking down activities is to use group processes for coarse divisions and sectoral sub-teams for finer divisions.

3. Time can be optimised in an emergency operation by effective contingency planning and training conducted beforehand.

4. The failure to allow for other time commitments of your own and those of partner agencies which may interfere with emergency needs often leads to overly optimistic time estimates for activities.

5. The action plan is not recommended as a monitoring tool.

Multiple choice. Mark ALL correct statements—more than one may apply.

6. A good action plan forms the bridge from the project objectives to the operations plan and:
   A Provides a framework for action
   B Sets a timetable for implementation
   C Identifies the resources needed to achieve the objectives
   D Is the overarching reason for planning the operation

7. The action plan should include all of the following elements except:
   A The activities to be accomplished for the FMIS Sector-Activities listed under the “Description of Assistance” in the Project Description
   B The justification for the implementing partner responsible for each activity
   C The timeframe for each Sector-Activity
   D Designation for the responsible party for carrying out each activity

8. Checklists have which of the following main uses?
   A They remind experienced users about the full set of components required for complex tasks
   B They guarantee success in the activity or sector
   C They aid unfamiliar users in the carrying out of unfamiliar tasks which they perform only occasionally
   D They build consensus among disparate users
9. In formulating action plans, you should ensure that the procedures are flexible and realistic. They should also allow:

- Contingency budget lines
- Adequate lead time at the beginning
- Consideration of local constraints
- Compliance with UNHCR’s reporting requirements

10. The process of analysis for developing the work breakdown structure involves which of the following activities:

- Breaking down the task into manageable parts or steps
- Ordering the parts into a logical sequence
- Determining which steps can occur simultaneously and those which can be deferred
- Assigning responsibility

TRAVEL to the border and LOAD refugees

Overall Tasks

Transport refugees from border to rest station

Travel to border
- Load refugees
- Transport
- Unload
- Prepare truck

Travel to border
- Sign in and collect keys
- Inspect truck
- Check destination with traffic manager
- Depart yard
- Drive direct to border

Load refugees

Prepare a checklist for each of these segmented tasks.

Checklist for traveling to border

Checklist for loading refugees
Exercise Answer

Although your checklists may vary from those suggested below based on your own experience and expertise in this area, the following suggestions indicate a reasonable level of detail and scope for these activities. You may have prepared checklists like the following:

### Checklist for traveling to border

- Sign in
- Collect keys
- Check tyres & external inspection
- Oil level
- Water level in radiator
- Hydraulic fluid reservoirs
- Engine visual inspection
- Battery OK
- Fuel level OK
- Radio working
- Load — bed clean & disinfect
- Truck inspected
- Check destination

**Ok to depart from yard**

### Checklist for loading refugees

- Report to site manager
- Drive to loading bay
- Collect travel tokens
- Count travel tokens
- Brief leaders on stop signal
- Identify special cases
- Identify accompanying family member
- Help special cases into cab
- Load special case’s luggage
- Load luggage
- Load refugees
- Complete manifest
- Manifest copy to site manager
- Safety check

**Ok to depart border site**
Realising the Plan

UN Site Coordination Centre to coordinate relief efforts of NGOs and UN agencies in Rwanda, 1994.

FAO photo
Planning an Emergency Response
Check T or F to indicate whether a statement is True or False

1. Inputs are the components of the plan that support the activities to be carried out in the operation.
2. The two categories of resources generally needed in emergencies are: (1) physical resources—equipment and supplies, and (2) human resources.
3. Inputs, unlike activities, usually are not affected by time pressures, and therefore do not need to be scheduled.
4. In most large scale emergencies, UNHCR provides the budgets for all partners in the response.
5. Budgets should be seen as a planning output, rather than as a planning tool.
6. In UNHCR’s budget hierarchy the components are: Sector, Sector-Activity, Item, Sub-Item.
7. If, during an emergency, an Emergency Letter of Instruction (ELOI) is provided, then no Letter of Instruction (LOI) is needed later.
8. Co-ordination is less important in emergency response programmes than in other UNHCR related programmes, since time for implementation is short.
10. Gap identification matrices are used to find gaps between what has been stockpiled and what is still needed for the actual emergency response.
11. While some parts of planning are best done with other partners, setting objectives should be done without outside influence.
12. It is important to monitor the planning process itself as well as the activities generated by the plan.
13. Effective plans are those which are useful in reaching the agreed objectives, whereas efficient plans are those which are effective at the least cost.
14. The logical framework is a new "total quality management" concept designed for improving UNHCR's programme efficiency.

15. Timelines are important planning tools for emergency response and can be constructed for activities, needs, and resources.

16. A Gantt chart, or bar chart, is used to show budget availability on a sector-by-sector basis.

17. A network diagram is useful in showing the capabilities of various partners and their relationships to one another in the field.

18. The "critical path" for an emergency planner is the central road or route in an emergency logistics operation over which the trucks or other transport must travel.

19. Monitoring is a core function of UNHCR and should not be delegated.

20. The primary purpose of self-evaluation is to provide immediate and direct feedback of lessons learned to managers in the field on adjustments needed to ongoing operations in order to improve their design and efficiency.
Identifying Inputs

By studying this chapter, you will learn about:

- Ways to accurately assess the inputs required to support your emergency response plan
- Assessing resources available to the affected population
- The available inventory tools for use in rapidly assessing human resource needs in emergencies
- The usefulness of incorporating the element of time with inputs
- The importance and format of budgets to support emergency response plans
- How to delegate implementing authority to partners

Defining Inputs

As outlined in the hierarchy of objectives discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, emergency response plans should feature an overall goal of the emergency operation supported by objectives, which in turn are measured by specific outputs, and supported by activities, as discussed in the last chapter. These activities are ultimately supported by inputs. Inputs, in this sense, means all of the resources required to produce the outputs in terms of supplies and materials, non-personnel costs, personnel costs, miscellaneous costs, and agency operational support. Inputs are generally described in the emergency response plan both in terms of what (or who) is needed (description, type, size, etc.) and by cost or budget.

Assessing Inputs in Support of Activities

Chapter 3 showed how dividing objectives into sub-objectives can help in the design, description, and co-ordination of the plan’s activities. The use of work breakdown structures will also help you assess the resources that will be needed to complete the plan. When each component is a reasonable size, you will be able to estimate the time and the resources needed to carry out the task. Although the total time and resources needed should be estimated more accurately and efficiently when tasks are broken down into the smallest detail, this is not always the case because:

- Those who are more familiar with larger scale program elements and the time needed to carry out those activities may not be able to accurately estimate smaller scale tasks.
Planning an Emergency Response

Planning that is too detailed can be needlessly expensive. The planning effort should be proportional to the importance of the task and the impact which additional planning can have on the effectiveness and efficiency of implementation.

The uncertainty in emergency situations often means that many, possibly erroneous, assumptions must be made in order to prepare a very detailed task list. It is more appropriate to plan on a broader scale under conditions of uncertainty, rather than to create detailed and therefore very inflexible plans.

Assessing the Resources Available to the Population

Assessing the resources available to the affected population may be problematic. Refugees may be reluctant to reveal the extent of their resources. However, resource assessment is vital so that assistance inputs can be concentrated on areas of critical need.

What approaches could be taken to assess resources if refugees are reluctant to disclose them?

Available resources may be estimated by:

- Direct observation—stocks of food and other resources may be stored in a camp or carried by refugees
- Inference—resource amounts may be inferred from observation of activity in the market, comments by the local community, and the condition of the population
- Involving the refugees in planning—the refugees may be more likely to accurately assess unmet needs when they are aware of the constraints on relief assistance. Refugees may also be more willing to focus on the items they have the greatest need for, rather than to say which items they do not need.

What other problems are likely to be encountered when assessing refugee resources?

(1) Each refugee population—as well as each refugee within that population—is unique. This requires approaching each emergency with fresh eyes and an expectation that you cannot apply a formula to determining needs without thoughtfully considering if the formula is appropriate.

(2) Resources are unlikely to be distributed equally in the community. Some, because of their status within the community, may have no access to resources that are available to the rest of the community. This may mean that while some members of the community hold substantial reserves of food or have access to the reserves held by some community members, others may have neither reserves nor access to them.

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Inventories

Inventories refer to resources that could be used to fill gaps and meet needs in a refugee emergency. There are two categories of resources that can be listed in inventories:

- equipment and supplies such as trucks, blankets, food, livestock, and other physical resources which might be of use
- human resources consisting of people, skills and capacities which are needed to successfully use the equipment and supplies

Physical resources, such as a transport fleet, require human resources to manage, operate and maintain them. Human resources are often overlooked. The distinction between physical and human resources is important because the presence of, or the need for, human resources is often overlooked. For example, trucks may be delivered to solve a transport problem without considering whether or not there is the capacity to operate them. When assessing the resources which refugees bring with them, it is important to note both the human resources, such as skills and capacities, as well as the other resources that they bring with them, such as food, animals, or tools.

What human resources are refugee communities likely to have?

The refugees’ human resources include their talents, skills, knowledge and experience, organisational ability, coping abilities and community structures. Refugees may have knowledge about medicinal plants, famine foods, rainfall patterns, agricultural possibilities, and other facets of their environment.

Limitations of Human Resources

Human resources, as with physical resources, are not equally distributed among a refugee population. For example, some skills may be gender specific or limited to a particular group.

 Refugee groups may be hampered by lack of experience in dealing with a new environment or in coping with needs inherent in the refugee situation. For example, refugees may find themselves in strange urban or rural environments, resulting in both refugees and the environment suffering stress.

What action could planners take to identify and extend human resources to reduce stress and promote coping skills?
Planning an Emergency Response

Planners can help to identify and extend human resources by involving local communities and institutions (such as the Ministry of Agriculture and local NGOs) in planning and implementing programs. Outreach and training programs may help to create awareness of problems and facilitate sharing of resources. The skills of professionals within the refugee and local communities should be employed where possible.

Specialised Emergency Preparedness/Human Resources Inventories

There are a number of specialised inventory tools, but three of particular importance to emergency response planning are:

- staffing plans
- organigrammes
- the Emergency Response Team (ERT) Roster, and Specialised Emergency and Preparedness Staff

Staffing plans are comprehensive and detailed statements of the staff required to execute an operation. An experienced user will understand the management of an operation from looking at the staffing plan. Staffing plans are complex documents that generally take several months to develop. They are only likely to be used in long-term operations, unless a previously prepared or default staffing plan is applicable.

Organigrammes are less complex and show the structure of an organisation in graphical format. Both tools provide a framework to register the personnel needed to execute the emergency response operation. They can also provide a clear picture of the professional interrelationships of the staff or agencies, which is essential for effective interaction.

At the UNHCR organisational level, the Emergency Response Team (ERT) Roster comprises a pool of some 30 internal staff, drawn from various duty-stations and sections in Headquarters, who are on standby for emergency deployment. While ERT Roster members may be proficient in specific functional areas of UNHCR operations (protection, programme, etc.), they are expected to function with as much versatility and flexibility as possible in order to cope with the demands of emergency situations. Members of the ERT Roster can only be deployed to meet the critical needs of an emergency or a repatriation operation when existing resources are unable to cope or where UNHCR has no prior presence.

The UNHCR Catalogue of Emergency Response Resources is another informative source of special interest to emergency planners within UNHCR. Along with a description of the ERT standby roster, other emergency and preparedness staff members are available within the organisation. These are the EPROs, EAs, and EFAAs, which are briefly described below:

**EPROs (Emergency Preparedness and Response Officers)**—In the event of an emergency where the UNHCR Branch Office lacks adequate resources to respond or where UNHCR has no prior presence, an EPRO can be deployed on very short notice to lead an emergency team or existing staff in the establishment and/or strengthening of UNHCR’s presence. An EPRO may also be deployed to lead a needs assessment mission which will make recommendations related to the deployment of other emergency resources. The duration of the deployment will depend on the nature of the operation, but should be limited to the critical emergency phase during which the basic structures and direction of the operation will be put in place. In general, this period is not expected to exceed two months. An EPRO cannot be deployed to fill management or staffing gaps in existing operations.

**EAs (Emergency Administrators)**—EAs have experience and training in all aspects of administration as well as proven managerial skills and experience. Possible EA functions include:

- Identification and administration of office premises
- Establishment and improvement of office procedures
- Planning for staffing needs, recruitment and administration
Finance and banking procedures
Proper communication procedures
Transport arrangements
Security plans
Staff support
Staff training
Supervision of emergency team phase-out and handover

EFAAs (Emergency Finance Administrative Assistants)—These staff members have experience and training in all practical aspects of administration (human resources, finance and general administration) with particular attention on thorough financial and accounting skills. During an emergency deployment, the EFAAs’ main objectives are to set up proper administrative procedures and to train locally recruited staff in UNHCR practices and procedures so that they can work independently upon the departure of the emergency response team.

More useful resources can be found in the UNHCR Catalogue of Emergency Response Resources

Preparing Situation Specific Inventories
The involvement of a wide range of partners in the planning process will ensure that staffing plans or organigrammes are as accurate and as inclusive as possible. It may be useful to note the human resources needed in co-ordination with the listing of the physical resource inventory. Inventories should be prepared methodically, requesting information from contributing agencies and organizations in the same or similar formats, so that resources can be compared and put together in a meaningful way.

Incorporating Timelines into Descriptions of Inputs
Where goods are not available immediately but are expected to become available over time, it may be useful to create a timeline depicting their availability. The timeline may show the expected state of the resources from the planned start of the operation through a certain time for example, repatriation, rehabilitation, and reintegration.

Example Timeline for Fuel Deliveries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Delivery</th>
<th>Cumulative</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-7</td>
<td>Aug 28</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>Cumulative</td>
<td>Initial delivery (litres of diesel)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Sep 11</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>60,000</td>
<td>Fortnightly delivery of 20,000 litres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Sep 25</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>80,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Oct 09</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>Oct 23</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>120,000</td>
<td>Final planned delivery</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Timelines may be based on a time scale that initially has more detail or more days and later has fewer details or longer time intervals. Timelines are appropriate when there is a high level of uncertainty, or when detailed planning is needed for the immediate period. A finely detailed timeline may not be useful for the operations plan, which should show all activities.

**Why should the emergency response plan timeline show all activities?**

When the same timeline is used for all activities at the overview level, it is relatively simple to check if the assumptions made for different dates are coherent. This is because resource levels and needs at different points along the timeline can be directly compared. Timelines are excellent tools for monitoring the progress of a project against the original plans.

**Budgets**

UNHCR works with many partners in the planning and implementation of emergency responses. While many of the partners will bring their own funding and fundraising abilities to the emergency, many may not. It is important, especially in the immediate emergency phase, that organisations on the ground with the skills and personnel required to carry out key tasks such as assessments are quickly mobilised to do so.

“To ensure the participation of appropriate implementing partners, and to the extent that a particular partner is unable to assure complete or partial funding, UNHCR may consider meeting mobilisation and support costs for an agreed period of time during which life-saving activities are implemented. Any extension of UNHCR funding beyond this period, however, is subject to review.”

—from Partnership: A Programme Management Handbook for UNHCR’s Partners, Section 6.3 Financial Considerations.

**The Budget as a Planning Tool**

Budgets serve as a useful planning and monitoring tool. They serve as planning tools on three levels:

- As a checklist to ensure that all sectors are considered
- By providing the planner with a framework for considering all of the resources that will be needed to complete the project
- By encouraging the efficient use of resources through considering the likely cost of the approach taken

Budgets should be subjected to some form of financial analysis to determine if the overall cost appears to be reasonable. Such analyses are most effective if they are relatively simple. Simple forms of financial analysis may include the following calculations:

- Cost of the operation per refugee served
- Cost per person per kilometre for refugee moved
- Percentage of total cost for each sector compared to similar operations
- Change in budget size from previous budgets or budgets for similar past operations
Experienced planners may use these calculations to check that the budgets are on the right track. If some costs seem unusually high, planners may wish to examine the plan to see if the estimated costs are necessary and realistic. Planners should ensure that large increases in budgets match the implementing capacities.

An analysis of the basic needs and of the approaches needed to meet them is required to support a careful budgeting process. Budgets prepared from an analysis of the basic needs are more precise than artificially designed budgets. This analysis, however, requires preparation time.

**Preparation of budget submissions in emergencies**

Any project submission and budget should be the result of a needs and resource assessment. In an emergency, given the urgent need for action, detailed budgeting in the early stages will often not be possible. Indicative lump sum amounts in a budget may be approved on an exceptional basis at the beginning of an emergency, to allow implementation to begin. To the extent possible, project submissions in an emergency, including budgets, should be submitted in the prescribed UNHCR format to avoid delays in approval. UNHCR uses a bottom-up, line item approach which calls for the specification of individual objects of expenditure. Implementing partners should consult with their UNHCR counterparts on formats and the required level of detail.

In an emergency, UNHCR may make an allocation from the Emergency Fund to enable initial assistance activities to begin without delay. When such an allocation is made, UNHCR Headquarters expects that there will be a budgeting process conducted by UNHCR field personnel and concerned implementing partners, and that the quality of that process will improve over time.

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**UNHCR’s “Budget Hierarchy”**

The hierarchy in a UNHCR project budget is as follows:

- Sector
- Sector-activity
- Item
- Sub-item

“The UNHCR Budget Structure or hierarchy has at its highest level in a project a sector or sectors followed by sector-activities, items, and then sub-items which represent the actual objects of expenditure. Chapter Five of *UNHCR Guidelines for Effective Planning* provides an overview of the Financial and Management Information System (FMIS) which includes a description of the standard budget structure and codes UNHCR uses in its assistance programmes. In order for a UNHCR project to be approved, its budget must be submitted in the FMIS format.

UNHCR Headquarters does not prescribe a specific standard of precision or level of detail for projects, and instead has adopted a flexible approach. It should be noted, however, that the UNHCR system has a preference for more detailed budgets, and there is an expectation that budgets will become more precise and more detailed over the life of the project. The FMIS budget structure accommodates very precise levels of budgeting as well as budgeting in which unit costs are aggregated at higher levels within the project.” (Note that the current FMIS system is in the process of being phased out as the new OMS is introduced and the financial system software is replaced.)

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**Delegation of Implementing Authority**

Authority to pay for the implementation of the activities, as described by the emergency response plan, must be given through appropriate formal implementing arrangements. These arrangements clarify the activities and the way they will be undertaken, and authorise the obligation of UNHCR funds. Internally, this is done through the use of the Letter of Instruction (LOI). The LOI authorises the UNHCR Representative to implement projects directly or to make contractual agreements with implementing partners.

**The Emergency Letter of Instruction (ELOI)**

“An emergency letter of instruction (ELOI) is simpler in form and procedure than a “normal” LOI and is used to delegate implementing authority rapidly to the field. It is usually sent via telecommunications. The ELOI gives the Representative in a country where an emergency is rapidly evolving the immediate authority to incur expenditures. It also enables the UNHCR Representative to enter into agreements for project implementation with implementing partners. It is not intended to cover the entire emergency operation, but to permit a rapid response to immediate needs, pending the formulation of an assistance project based on a detailed needs and resources assessment.

The ELOI is a temporary authorisation for the Field Office to incur expenditures and should be replaced by an LOI as soon as possible.

In order for Headquarters to prepare an ELOI the minimum requirement is a budget proposal in US dollars, at the Sector level. No project description or workplan is required.

The ELOI should be issued by headquarters with the following basic information:

- Total requirements
- Initial obligation level
- Purpose of the expenditure
- Any time limit applicable to the expenditure
- Project symbol
- Summary budget, at least at the sector level

Actual expenditure under an ELOI must be recorded at a more detailed level: sector activity or, preferably, sub-item. It must be charged to the appropriate (sub)-project under which implementation is taking place. A voucher must be completed to record every disbursement made, showing the name of the payee, the amount, the project symbol, the purpose and date of disbursement. The voucher should be signed by the payee or supported by receipted bills and sent to Headquarters with the monthly accounts."

— from UNHCR Handbook for Emergencies, Implementing Arrangements
Inputs support the activities of the plan and may be supplies and materials, human resources, and of course, money, as represented by the budget.

Inputs can be more accurately assessed if the plan objectives and activities have been clarified using a work breakdown structure.

The resources of the affected population should not be overlooked as possible inputs to the plan.

Inventories of different types exist which make estimation of materials and human resources easier for the emergency response planner. For UNHCR’s purposes, three important ones are:

- Staffing plans
- Organigrammes
- The Emergency Response Team (ERT) roster and other specialised emergency preparedness and response staff
- Input requirements of the plan should be described over time

The budget is a key tool for planning of inputs necessary for emergency response and can be used:

- As a checklist for ensuring appropriate consideration of all sectors
- As a framework for comprehensive review of funding needs
- To encourage the efficient use of funds

UNHCR uses a specific format (FMIS) structure in budgets—a bottom-up, line item approach which calls for the specification of individual expenses.

Delegation of authority to implement projects (spend money) in emergencies is typically based on preparation of an Emergency Letter of Instruction (ELOI).

The ELOI typically has the following basic information:

- Total requirements
- Initial obligation level
- Purpose of the expenditure
- Any applicable time limits on the expenditure
- Project symbol
- Summary budget, at least at the sector level
Chapter 5
Self-Assessment Questions

Check T or F to indicate whether a statement is True or False

1. Inputs, for planning purposes, means all of the resources required to produce the outputs in terms of supplies and materials, non personnel costs, personnel costs, miscellaneous costs, and agency operational support.

2. Each refugee population is unique, so is each refugee within those populations. Therefore effective planning for such populations is not possible.

3. The distinction between physical and human resources is important because the need for human resources is often not adequately addressed in operations plans.

4. Human resources as well as physical resources are not equally distributed among the refugee population.

5. The Emergency Response Team roster (ERT) is an inventory of locally available emergency responders who can be quickly mobilised by their own organisations in the event of a local emergency.

Multiple choice. Mark ALL correct statements—more than one may apply.

6. Which of the following are useful approaches in assessing locally available resources?
   
   A. Direct observation
   B. Inference from market activity, local comments, and the condition of the population
   C. Review of emergency situations in other countries
   D. Involving the refugee population in the planning effort

7. Incorporating timelines in the description of required inputs allows:
   
   A. The planning of needed resources over time
   B. The fine details of the plan to be known in order to be more flexible
   C. Easier monitoring of the progress of the project against the agreed plan
   D. Better prediction of the influx rates of the refugees or displaced
8. Budgets can serve as useful planning tools if they:
   A. Are used as checklists to review coverage of all sectors
   B. Serve to narrow assessments to pre-budgeted areas of concern
   C. Encourage the efficient use of resources, through more careful consideration of the relative costs of different activities
   D. Guarantee the participation of partner agencies

9. UNHCR’s budget hierarchy includes which of the following components:
   A. Sector
   B. Sector-activity
   C. Output
   D. Sub-item

10. The three types of human resource inventories discussed in the text as being particularly useful to the emergency response planner include all of the following except:
    A. ERTs and other specialised emergency preparedness and response staff
    B. UNHCR staff directory
    C. Staffing Plans
    D. Oganigrams

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**Exercise**

How can the emergency response planner develop the list of inputs needed for an emergency operations plan?
Exercise Answer

There are two types of needed inputs—needs of the affected population and needs of the organisations responding to the emergency. These types of needs can be identified in the following ways:

Refugee or other affected population needs should be identified by a needs and resources assessment. This may require:

- Direct observation
- Inference from market and other trading activity and the general condition of the affected population
- Involvement of the affected population in the assessment and planning

Needs for operational projects should be identified in the same way as the component tasks of an operation are identified, that is, through the planning process in consultation with partners. Specific tools for identifying needs and possible resources include:

- Organisational staffing plans
- Organigrammes
- Rosters—particularly the UNHCR ERT roster
- Project budgets

Chapter 5 Answers

1. T
2. F
3. T
4. T
5. F
6. A, B, D
7. A, C
8. A, C
9. A, B, D
10. A, C, D
The Need for Better Co-Ordination of Planning

Recent evaluations of large emergency operations have cited the need for better and more conscientious co-ordination between responders in order to enhance efficiency and effectiveness in emergency operations. These evaluations often detail areas of gaps and overlaps, and inefficient international responses that have numerous shortcomings in terms of budget shortfalls, personnel, political support, solid policy, co-ordination between responders, etc. Of these shortcomings, some can be addressed by better management, and some only through external decisions and actions. The Planner’s responsibility is to reduce errors that can be reduced through good planning. Chief among these is the co-ordination of the emergency response in order to make the best use of available inputs in terms of real impact on the country and beneficiaries.

“A co-ordinated framework is essential for the effective and efficient implementation of the emergency programme and for making management decisions. Co-ordination at central and site levels will involve frequent informal contacts between UNHCR, the government, other UN organisations directly involved, the implementing partners, the beneficiaries and other parties concerned.”

— from Partnership: A Programme Management Handbook for UNHCR’s Partners, Section 6.3.6 Organisation and Co-ordination.
Emergency Response Plan Stakeholders

Co-ordination is a prerequisite for efficiency in operations that require inputs from multiple parties toward a common goal. Competition is the result when different parties are working in the same context or situation toward different goals, but are depending on the same resources. Emergency operations invariably have attributes of both of these. The supporting elements for both exist in all emergencies where more than one actor or affected party (or stakeholder) is present. The refugees/displaced, the local government, foreign governments, the NGOs, UNHCR, other UN agencies, and the local community are all stakeholders and will all have slightly (or in some cases vastly) different goals depending on their own interest or stake in the operation.

Despite their differences, all stakeholders typically have a set of shared goals and objectives as well. By identifying and working on these shared goals, operations can be co-ordinated to increase overall efficiency. When these are correlated to UNHCR’s central mandate of protection of refugees, the overall humanitarian response to displacement emergencies can and should be facilitated by UNHCR, especially when the organisation fulfills the role of Lead Agency in the operation. Co-ordination, then, requires conceptual planning input from the stakeholders if it is to be actively supported, and is genuinely held to be in the mutual interest of all concerned. In international humanitarian operations, co-ordination must be approached in this way since most of the partners work with and not for UNHCR. While this inclusive approach is the best available, emergency response planners must remember that there is a cost to undertaking this approach.

Stakeholders in the Success and Failure of Humanitarian Relief

What difficulties may be posed by multi-agency participation in the emergency response process?
Multi-agency participation may create some disadvantages as well as advantages in the emergency response planning process. Two possible disadvantages are an overall slower planning process and the need to protect confidential matters of individual agencies.

Organisational Co-ordination of the UN Response to Complex Emergencies

Complex emergencies typically involve large scale humanitarian crises where:
- Civilian populations are besieged and/or displaced
- The required response transcends the scale or mandate of any one organisation
- Parties to the conflict actively impede humanitarian aid
- Humanitarian assistance relief workers are placed in situations of high personal risk, including situations where relief workers are specifically targeted

In these situations, there are typically four model structures or options for the co-ordination of the emergency response. These are generally referred to as:
- Lead Agency model
- Resident Co-ordinator model
- Humanitarian Co-ordinator model
- Regional Humanitarian Co-ordinator model

Lead Agency (Appointed by the UN Secretary General)
'This refers to the UN agency, which, in a particular emergency, provides the great majority of the UN assistance and is designated with the humanitarian co-ordination functions for that emergency'. — UNHCR Emergency Handbook

Resident Co-ordinator/Country Team
'The Resident Co-ordinator is the leader of the United Nations country team and is normally the head of the UNDP in a particular country. He or she may be designated to co-ordinate the UN response to a complex emergency in that country'. — UNHCR Emergency Handbook

Humanitarian Co-ordinator
'If the emergency is of considerable size, a Humanitarian Co-ordinator may be appointed distinct from the office of the Resident Co-ordinator and lead agency. The Humanitarian Co-ordinator normally phases out once the emergency reaches recovery phase and any residual tasks are returned to the Resident Co-ordinator'. — UNHCR Emergency Handbook

The decision on if and who to appoint as the Humanitarian Co-ordinator is made by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC). This committee includes OCHA (the convener), FAO, IOM, UNDP, UNHCR, WFP, UNICEF and WHO as full members, with an additional number of standing invitees.

Regional Humanitarian Co-ordinator
'If the emergency affects more than one country, a Humanitarian Co-ordinator having regional responsibilities may be appointed'. — UNHCR Emergency Handbook

More information on the co-ordination of emergency response can be found in the companion module to this text "Managing an Emergency Response" (EP-03).
Identifying the Priorities of Different Organisations

Every individual participating in the process has his or her own agenda, in addition to the different priorities and long-term goals of the agencies they represent. Agencies may operate with widely different philosophies and may perceive the same situation quite differently. For example, governments may worry about national security in the wake of a refugee influx, while an NGO may be concerned with implementing its own mandate.

In the example in Chapter 4, you decided to move the refugees by truck and bus. Three implementing NGOs will be involved in addition to the government and UNHCR. One of the NGOs provides health care and two NGOs, one national and one international, cover logistics. The police will escort the vehicles under the direction of the Ministry of Home Affairs (Refugee Section).

Who are the stakeholders in the transport operation?

The stakeholders at an institutional level are clearly the Ministry of Home Affairs, UNHCR, the police, and the NGO implementing partners. At an individual level, the stakeholders include agency staff, the refugees and their leaders. In examining only the transport operation, other stakeholders in the relocation process might be overlooked such as the agencies working in existing and new camps, and the local population who will be affected by the moves.

Beneficiaries

Beneficiaries are usually the largest stakeholders in any emergency response plan. They often have the most to lose or gain from the plan. They are also the people with the greatest amount of information about their own capacities, needs, and situation. For these reasons, beneficiaries should be involved in planning whenever possible.

While beneficiary involvement in contingency planning before the emergency may not be possible, it is normally possible to have beneficiary involvement in emergency response planning. Simply informing people of the outcome of the planning process is not participation. True participation occurs only when beneficiaries have the opportunity to influence the decisions taken.

Under what circumstances might it be difficult to involve beneficiaries in emergency response planning?
Beneficiary participation requires a structured approach, as there are usually far more beneficiaries than can attend a single meeting. The lack of well-functioning societal or community structures after an emergency is the most common constraint to beneficiary participation. The problem may exist in these forms:

- There are no structures for consulting with beneficiaries, or structures may not be obvious to assistance agencies. This is often the case in the start of emergency response operations.
- Existing structures have been discredited, are not representative, or are manipulated by their members for political ends.
- Structures are elitist or exclusive. One common example is the low representation of women or minorities in some consultation structures.

Partner Agencies

Implementing partners, including governments and assistance agencies, usually have a very large stake in the emergency response plan. The plan and associated resources may determine the size of their operation, or even the continuation of their presence in an area. Governments, in particular, are concerned in terms of the effects of the plan on the host population, the country’s economy and security, among other factors.

With the possible exception of very large operations, direct consultation with partners is usually possible at coordination meetings. Where operations are very large and partners very numerous, it may be necessary to use a representative structure for consultations with occasional general meetings. Because of the relative ease of consulting with partners, they are far more likely to be consulted about the emergency response plan than are the beneficiaries.

Other Stakeholders

Many other stakeholders may be affected by the emergency response plan. They include donors who are providing funding for implementation of the plan, as well as suppliers of goods and services to support the operations. Other major stakeholders are the members of the host community.

Provide an example of how the host community may be affected in the move of refugees from the border to the temporary settlement site.

Both the population near the temporary settlement and the population near the existing spontaneous settlements will be affected. The effects may be positive as well as negative, such as:

- Increased availability of work opportunities — Members of the host community may be employed to provide services at either the sites or the temporary settlement.
- Increased availability of cheap labour — The refugees may be a source of labour (possibly illegal) for local farmers and entrepreneurs, perhaps replacing local workers.
- Improved access to services — Those near the settlements may enjoy free access to services for refugees. For example, health clinics for refugees may be free and may also be open to the host community.
Planning an Emergency Response

- **Improvement in basic services** — The presence of refugees may lead to improved services, such as better roads or schools.
- **Expanded market** — The refugee camp markets, or the involvement of refugees in local markets, may increase the range of available goods and lower prices.
- **Increased market prices** — Competition for resources may raise prices and create friction (for example, the increased demand for supplementary foods may cause prices to rise). Such competition may assist local producers, at the expense of local consumers.
- **Degradation of the local environment** — Environmental degradation may occur in the vicinity of settlement sites through unsustainable exploitation of resources.

**Participation in Planning**

A basic premise for encouraging participation is that no stakeholder group is homogeneous. This is recognised by UNHCR in the People-Oriented Planning (POP) approach, where individual needs and resources are acknowledged. A refugee emergency causes changes in the needs and resources of all stakeholders. Representatives of stakeholder groups should fairly represent the needs and resources of the group and avoid creating winners and losers through the proposed changes in an emergency response plan.

Stakeholders may be directly or indirectly involved in the planning process. While both forms of participation can be achieved through consultation at the start of the planning process, people can best influence the planning process through direct participation in planning meetings.

**Gap Identification**

One of the purposes of co-ordination of emergency humanitarian response is to avoid wasteful duplication of effort and to perform all needed services or functions without gaps between the organisations responsible for these functions. This is the efficiency argument for co-ordination; it is an important aspect of program evaluations and overall success in meeting planned objectives.

**Comparing Resources with Needs**

Gap identification is the identification of the differences between the needs and the available resources. The gaps identified represent critical needs for the refugees. Gap identification sheets or matrices facilitate identification of gaps. At the simplest level, a gap identification matrix is a grid with a range of resources along the top and a range of needs on the side. Any of the needs which are met by the available resources are indicated by an X in the cell where the need and the resource intersect. Cells without an X represent a gap.
Gap Identification Matrix for Part of the Operation to Move Refugees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NEED</th>
<th>RESOURCE AGENCY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>UNHCR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trucks</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Escort Vehicles</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambulance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bus Fleet</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recovery Vehicle</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repair Workshop</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What gap in the resources is revealed by the above gap identification matrix?

It is clear that no resource agency has yet been identified to cover mechanics. Gap identification matrices are most useful when there are many operating agencies and extensive needs. The UNHCR Handbook for Emergencies (2nd Edition) includes a Gap Identification Worksheet for this purpose.

Incorporating the Element of Time into Gap ID Charts

The traditional gap identification matrix does not show the time resource, which can be problematic if the resources or needs vary with time. In such cases a timeline-based gap identification sheet can be constructed. This tool shows the needs, available resources and consequent gaps at different points along the timeline.
Planning an Emergency Response

Timeline Gap Identification Sheet for Diesel Supply

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Supply</th>
<th>Need</th>
<th>Gap (Cu)</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-14</td>
<td>Aug 21</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-7</td>
<td>Aug 28</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>-10,000</td>
<td>Initial delivery (30,000 litres)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Sep 11</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Sep 18</td>
<td>60,000</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>-10,000</td>
<td>Fortnightly delivery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Sep 25</td>
<td>60,000</td>
<td>40,000</td>
<td>-20,000</td>
<td>Fortnightly delivery of 20,000 l.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Oct 02</td>
<td>80,000</td>
<td>70,000</td>
<td>-10,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Oct 09</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>90,000</td>
<td>-10,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>Oct 16</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>90,000</td>
<td>-20,000</td>
<td>Final planned delivery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>Oct 23</td>
<td>120,000</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>-20,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>Oct 30</td>
<td>120,000</td>
<td>110,000</td>
<td>-10,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63</td>
<td>Oct 06</td>
<td>120,000</td>
<td>120,000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>Oct 13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>End of operation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What use would the emergency manager make of the information in this timeline gap identification sheet?

The emergency manager would look at the gap levels and would see that there is a fuel gap in the period before the first fuel delivery (as work is programmed to start on 24 Aug). He/she would then probably see if any arrangement could be made to borrow fuel for this period. The manager might also wish to reschedule the fuel deliveries to avoid the risk of running out of fuel just before the second delivery. The manager can also see that a maximum capacity of 30,000 litres of storage will be needed. If this is not available, than smaller and more frequent deliveries will be needed.
Participatory Objective Setting

Setting objectives is a key part of planning which should be conducted in participation with partners. Objectives can be set at meetings by using a variety of techniques. These may include:

- **Group interaction**—The process of group discussion based on an agenda is the usual approach. A drawback to this approach is that groups may tend to settle on the first proposed objective.
- **Brainstorming**—In brainstorming, all ideas, however unlikely, are initially accepted without any evaluation or feedback. The "idea generating session" is followed by a "weeding-out process" that eventually leaves a limited number of agreed-upon objectives. Brainstorming may be useful in situations where very creative approaches are needed.
- **Nominal group technique**—In this approach, the meeting opens with presentations by each of the participants on what they think the objectives should be. The presentations are made initially without comments, followed by group discussion and agreement.

Whatever process is chosen, the key is to ensure that all opinions are heard and understood.

Beginning the Planning Process

When the planning team meets for the first time, the planning manager must:

1. Define the overall objective
2. Establish the timetable for the planning process

These two steps form the parameters for the planning process and they should be clearly detailed by the planning manager. All participants should agree on the objective and timetable. Without limiting the planning process, the manager may need to compromise and adapt both the objective and the timetable based on suggestions by the team. Following the definition of the overall objective and the planning timetable, the planning manager should work with the planning team to agree on:

- The planning approach
- The division of responsibilities
- The way in which the planning process is to be monitored

Selecting the Planning Approach

The planning approach encompasses the organisation of the planning task and the planning tools that are to be used. Organisation of the task includes establishing the structure to carry out the planning. The way in which the planning is to be organised will often be dictated by external circumstances, be they time pressure, the composition of the planning team or other factors.

It is usually essential that the first meeting clearly defines the structure of the planning process. It is not as important to define initially the planning tools to be used as the same ends can be achieved with a variety of tools. The manager must establish where specific tools are likely to be needed, and that the planning team has the skills necessary to use them.
The Division of Responsibility

All planning tasks, except for the simplest, should be divided among members. While working as a group is ideal for some tasks, it is inefficient for many others. Responsibilities should ideally be divided voluntarily for each planning sub-task. The advantage of calling for volunteers is that people may feel a greater commitment for obligations which they have freely accepted than for those which are allocated to them.

What is the risk in allocating tasks on a volunteer basis? What steps can a manager take to minimise the risks?

In volunteering for tasks, people may underestimate the scale of the task or their own capacity. There may be insufficient volunteers for some vital tasks. When the planning manager is not familiar with all of the participants, voluntary participation may not be practical. Options for the manager may include:

- Pre-allocation of critical tasks by direct consultation with partners in advance and asking them if they would be willing to carry out the critical tasks
- Allocation of critical tasks in the meeting before opening the less critical tasks to volunteers

Procedures for Better Co-ordination

Procedures, often called standard operating procedures in military terminology, are another way in which segmented tasks can be presented to users for the purpose of co-ordination of levels of services or operational standards. Procedures are written statements of the standard steps to be taken in specified circumstances.

Procedures are more refined than checklists, in that they often allow for alternative actions depending on the circumstances. Whereas checklists often call for a single set of actions, procedures may call for different responses to different problems. While procedures may also be used as guides for unfamiliar tasks or tasks which are only occasionally carried out, they are generally far more detailed than checklists.

Checklists are used while carrying out a task; whereas procedures are generally used for training people how to do a task and as a reference to which people may refer. Procedures may be used to co-ordinate the approaches of different agencies or organisations involved in similar activities or the same activities in different locations.

The advantages of procedures are that they:

- Promote a standardised approach to the same problem by a range of people
- Assist people who may not be particularly skilled in a particular topic to make appropriate decisions
- Inform all concerned parties of the standards for the operation
- Facilitate delegation
Creating Procedures

Procedures can be written as a step-by-step list, similar to a checklist but in more detail. They may contain checklists for different tasks within the procedure.

Procedures may be presented as flowcharts or text descriptions. Despite the visual appeal of flowcharts, plain-text statements are normally more suitable for presenting simple procedures. Flow-charts are appropriate for presenting complex procedures to staff who have the training to understand and follow them. A simple example of a procedural flowchart follows.

```
Have you got refugees on board?

NO

Breakdown

Check likely cause of breakdown

NO

Can you repair it?

YES

Radio now for assistance

Repair it

YES
```

How would you put the above flow-chart procedure in text form? Which method is the most useful?

The preceding flowchart may be restated as follows:

If your vehicle breaks down while transporting refugees, please call for assistance immediately. If you have no refugee passengers, you should check to find the cause of the breakdown and repair it if you can. If you cannot make the repairs, call for assistance.

Presenting procedures on a flowchart makes them easier to follow than reading through pages of text. In the above example, there are 44 words in the text statement of the procedure, but only 25 in the flowchart. This difference becomes more dramatic as procedures increase in complexity. However, users may need training to read the flowcharts correctly.

The UNHCR Handbook for Emergencies (2nd edition) incorporates flowcharts in several of its chapters as a graphic device to identify the components and their inter-relationships within a system, such as a sanitation system or a needs and resources assessment.
Generating Procedures

Because they are usually complex, procedures are normally best generated by experienced individuals or small teams. Large planning teams will quickly become bogged down in detail if they try to generate procedures as a group. Procedures should be submitted to the group for editing and correction. They are rarely static and need continual improvement as new problems are encountered.

Procedures greatly facilitate delegation of tasks but do not remove the need for skilled management. All procedures should specify clearly when the advice of others should be sought.

National Humanitarian Co-ordination Structure

Example of a Co-ordination Structure for Sierra Leone Complex Emergency, 1998
Emergency response operations have many stakeholders, all of whom will share some objectives and not others. They may even be at odds with one another.

Organisational co-ordination with the UN system in complex emergencies typically follows one of four models:

1. Lead Agency
2. Resident Co-ordinator/Country Team
3. Humanitarian Co-ordinator
4. Regional Humanitarian Co-ordinator

Participation of the various stakeholders in the response is required for satisfactory planning of the overall response.

One of the primary tools for the co-ordination of activities in the plan is the use of a Gap ID sheet or matrix.

Gap ID sheets may be more useful as emergency tools when the element of time is included in their design.

Objective setting for the planning process should also be participatory, to the extent possible, and will help in the ultimate co-ordination of the response.

Co-ordination of activities to be carried out by diverse partners and/or in different sites may be facilitated by the creation of formal procedures as a part of the plan.
Chapter 6
Self-Assessment Questions

Check T or F to indicate whether a statement is True or False

1. Co-ordination is less important in emergency operations than in other longer-term programmes.
   T F

2. All stakeholders in a humanitarian emergency operation will have more or less the same set of values and agendas for action.
   T F

3. In complex emergencies, the UN system does not try to co-ordinate its activities, as it does in other situations, since the agencies are all mandated to serve separate functions.
   T F

4. Gap identification matrices are most useful as planning tools when there are many operating agencies involved and extensive needs.
   T F

5. Participatory objective setting is too difficult to accomplish in the emergency setting.
   T F

Multiple choice. Mark ALL correct statements—more than one may apply.

6. Some of the risks of allocating tasks from the plan on a volunteer basis are:
   A Some people may underestimate the scale of the task
   B There may be some sectors for which no one volunteers
   C People are likely to resent being asked to participate to this degree
   D The least skilled may volunteer for the most important tasks

7. When the planning team meets for the first time, the planning manager should:
   A Define the overall objective(s)
   B Establish a timetable for the planning exercise
   C Define the hierarchy and competence of each of the team members
   D Delegate specific tasks to each member present in order to ensure that all objectives are met

8. Procedures, also called standard operating procedures:
   A Are written statements of the standard steps to be taken in specified circumstances
   B Promote unique approaches to similar problems in different areas
   C Inform all partners of the standards expected in carrying out the activities in the operation
   D Make it more difficult for managers to delegate activities to subordinates
9. Presenting complex procedures in flow-chart form generally:
   A. Changes the meaning of the procedures
   B. Changes the procedures
   C. Makes them easier to follow than purely text-based procedures
   D. Makes them harder to follow than purely text-based procedures

10. Likely stakeholders in a refugee emergency response operation would include which of the following?
   A. UNHCR
   B. Refugees
   C. Local community
   D. All of the above

As part of the plan to move refugees by truck from a temporary border site to a longer-term refugee camp, a rest site has been selected at a small town half way along the route. The plan is to use the town’s existing gravity water system to supply the rest site.

Which critical stakeholders should be consulted about this plan before it is finalised?
Planning an Emergency Response

Exercise Answer

The stakeholders to be consulted may include the partners expected to operate the site, the government, the beneficiaries, and the partners responsible for logistics and medical coverage. Critical stakeholders that must be consulted are the existing users of the water supply system in the local community. Will usage for the rest site cause local communities hardship? This is a group of stakeholders that is often overlooked.
Developing and Documenting the Plan

By studying this chapter, you will learn about:

- Factors to consider in developing and documenting your emergency operations plan
- Some basic formats and approaches to formalising the plan into a document that can be disseminated, including:
  - The Logical Framework (OMS Design Matrix)
  - Timelines
  - Gantt charts
  - Network diagrams

Plan Development

The “plan” here refers to the jointly designed and agreed actions that can be taken to achieve the agreed objectives. There is usually a range of implementation plans and activities that could be chosen to achieve any objective, and any number of ways that these activities may be assigned to the various organisations and agencies on the scene. When the plan is broken down into a number of sub-activities it becomes clear that the range of possibilities is very large indeed. Developing the plan and documenting it so that it can be disseminated is critical. This section of the module presents a few tools for developing and documenting the plan in a format that can be readily disseminated to all concerned.

In the development of the plan, there must be some guidelines for choosing among available options. Your emergency operations plan should meet four requirements:

- Feasibility
- Effectiveness
- Efficiency
- Flexibility

Possible plans and formats for presentation/dissemination should be considered in terms of these four requirements when selecting the most appropriate way to document the plan.
**Feasibility**

Feasibility is the first requirement for plan selection. Feasibility means that it is realistic to assume that the chosen objective can be achieved via the proposed plan. Knowledge of what is feasible in different circumstances may often be based only on experience. Local knowledge is very useful if determining whether or not a particular plan is likely to be feasible. A broad planning process, with the wider experience represented, is generally an effective way of assessing feasibility.

Refugees are to be moved from spontaneously settled sites on the border to a temporary settlement as quickly as possible. In planning the operation, it is quite important to make accurate estimates of the likely travel times for trucks and buses along the proposed routes.

**Example**

*Ideally, who should be included in the planning process to ensure that the proposed travel times are feasible along the routes in question?*

Ideally the planning team should include a partner experienced in operating trucks or buses along the routes such as an NGO or a local authority. Agencies with expertise should be able to judge if the proposed travel times are feasible, or if they should be changed to allow for other factors.

**Effectiveness**

Feasibility indicates whether a proposed plan is possible while effectiveness measures how useful the proposed plan is for reaching the objectives.

In the above example, one partner suggests that local minibus taxis be hired instead of bringing in a fleet of trucks and buses. A cost comparison indicates that both approaches would have approximately the same cost. Estimates of the time for each approach suggest that, although both operations could start at the same time, it would take twice as long to complete the operation with hired minibus taxis.

**Example**

*Which approach would be more effective, and why?*

*Question*
One of the requirements given previously was that the operation be carried out as quickly as possible. As using a truck and bus fleet would be faster than using a hired minibus fleet, this is more effective at meeting the objective.

**Efficiency**

Efficiency and effectiveness or efficacy are often confused. **Efficiency**, however, is a measure of the effectiveness of a given plan when compared with the cost of that plan. The most efficient plans are those which achieve the greatest effect for the least cost. Sometimes there is a conflict between the most effective plan and the most efficient one.

Continuing with the above example, after the rejection of the first offer, the taxi operators made a new bid costing one third less than their first bid.

**Which option (taxis or buses and trucks) is now most effective.**

**Which one is most efficient?**

The relative effectiveness of the two plans has not changed. Using the fleet of trucks and buses would still be a more effective approach. Using taxis now appears to be a more efficient approach, as it will cost one third less to move people by taxis. The planners now have a difficult choice to make. This choice may depend on other factors. For example, the government may veto using taxis, if it will delay the operation.

**Flexibility**

The final factor to consider is flexibility. In emergencies, plans may have to be changed at the last minute because of insecurity, or because better information becomes available. Whatever plan is chosen, it should allow for such changes. **Flexibility** is the measure of how useful the plan will continue to be if planning assumptions change.

**In the transport choices given above, which approach is more flexible—using local minibus taxis or the fleet of trucks and buses?**
Each approach offers some degree of flexibility. Your choice depends on which aspects of flexibility you consider to be the most important. Using your own fleet of trucks and buses means that you would have the resources to meet other transport needs after the initial moves are over. As this fleet could be directed to where it was needed, it might be possible to reposition it more quickly than the taxi fleet, where further negotiation might be needed. The flexibility of the transport contract with the taxi operators will depend on the way in which the contract is written.

If the contract is well written, it can give a great deal of financial flexibility, in that the cost per refugee moved will stay fairly constant. This is generally true of well-written contracts. With the fleet of trucks and buses, the high fixed cost would mean that the cost per refugee would fall if more were moved, and would rise if the numbers fell.

There is no right answer here. The choice would have to be made in terms of the flexibility needed relative to the risks inherent in the situation. If the number of refugees to be moved was not likely to change at all, then the financial flexibility of the taxi contract may have no advantage. Additionally, financial flexibility may be of little use if budgets are fixed.

In practice, it is very unusual to encounter solutions that are the most effective, efficient and flexible from all perspectives. Planners have to choose between the feasible plans, selecting the one that gives the best mixture of effectiveness, efficiency, and flexibility. Inclusive planning processes can lead to better judgement on such issues.

**Documenting the Plan**

While the Operations Plan outline presented in Chapter 3 is valid in most cases, the ways that information is presented within that outline may still take many different forms. Choosing the best format may be done using the same methods as are used to identify objectives. These methods are group interaction, brainstorming, and the nominal group technique.

*Which plan identification method is most likely to produce ideas that are feasible?*

Group interaction and the nominal group technique may produce the most feasible ideas. Brainstorming, which generates unrestricted ideas without initial review, is probably the most likely to produce controversial ideas. Brainstorming is still appropriate where creative ideas are needed or when there is little information on what may or may not be feasible.
Analysing the Plan

The number of possible plans increases as the complexity of the objective increases, or as the situation changes. One approach to such complex objectives is to break down the task into sub-objectives. In this way the planning task can be simplified.

In the plan to move refugees discussed earlier, the objective has been split into three parts. The three sub-objectives cover the following stages:
- the move from the temporary sites to the rest station
- processing at the rest station
- the move from the rest station to the new temporary settlement site

What aspects of flexibility may be sacrificed with these sub-objectives?
How can this be overcome?

If circumstances change or knowledge improves, the chosen approach may no longer be the optimal one. Although the plans chosen to reach the sub-objectives are all optimal for those sub-objectives, this does not necessarily mean that their combination is the best way to reach the overall objective. To avoid this problem, sub-objectives should ideally state the underlying overall objective.

Look at two example tables of contents taken from recent UNHCR operations. The first is from the first draft of the Plan of Operations—UNHCR in Rwanda, from 1994. The second is taken from the operations plan prepared for the massive voluntary repatriation of Liberian refugees from Guinea, Cote d’Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone in November of 1997. Compare the ways that the operational objectives and sub-, or sectoral objectives are described and the level of detail in the two plans. What reasons can you give for the increased level of detail in the Second Outline?
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   Shelters
   Community Services/Vulnerable Groups
   Education
   Agriculture
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   Information Tracking, Information Campaign, Information Dissemination
   Micro Projects/Income Generation
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Using the Logical Framework as a Tool for Planning

The Logical Framework was introduced in 1969 by USAID, and has since been widely adapted and considered as an essential planning tool by many international development and humanitarian organisations (such as CIDA, DANIDA, DFID, GTZ, ILO, USAID, WHO, World Bank, and many NGOs). There are many reference materials and training workshops on this methodology, often hosted by the organisations that use it in a participatory way with their local counterparts.

“The logical framework captures, in summary form, the hierarchy of objectives, performance indicators, means of verification, and assumptions/risks of projects and programmes. Once these elements of a programme and project have been defined, the logical framework supports the development of the work breakdown structures, workplans, responsibility charts, and budgets which are necessary for implementation to go forward in a systematic manner. …

Agencies have experimented with and adapted this basic framework in response to their own requirements and purpose. For example, in emergency contexts, the design matrix has been used as a work-in-progress tool for capturing design choices made in the context of a dynamic and complex planning environment. The Canadian International Development Agency has, for example, retained the use of the 16 box structure but modified the columns to complement its efforts to introduce results-based management. Other agencies have introduced other changes. The diverse adaptations and usages of the logical framework approach are indicative of its value and flexibility. The fact that software support for the logical framework approach is available in the commercial market is another element in its favour.”

—from the OMS working paper “Planning in UNHCR’s New Operations Management System”

UNHCR has modified the original Logical Framework by adding a column to the matrix to address the rationale for UNHCR involvement, in order to stimulate more careful problem analysis. It has also added a row at the bottom of the matrix to address specific aspects of financial management. An example of the resulting framework, called the OMS Design Matrix, is shown below. Its component analytical columns are described further throughout this text.

### OMS Design Matrix Format

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rationale for UNHCR Involvement</th>
<th>Hierarchy of Objectives</th>
<th>Measurable Performance Indicators</th>
<th>Monitoring and Co-ordination</th>
<th>Assumptions and Risks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall Problem</td>
<td>Goal of the Operation</td>
<td>Methods for qualitative and quantitative measurement</td>
<td>Methods for assessing performance against indicators</td>
<td>External factors required for success in meeting the goal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Core Problem by Sectoral Areas</td>
<td>Sector-Level Objectives</td>
<td>Description of effects of the core problem</td>
<td>Methods for assessing performance against indicators</td>
<td>External factors required for success in meeting the objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Causes</td>
<td>Outputs (specific deliverables)</td>
<td>Description of effects of the core problem</td>
<td>Methods for assessing performance against indicators</td>
<td>External factors required for success in creating the outputs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Related Activities</td>
<td>Activities</td>
<td>Work breakdown</td>
<td>Workplan</td>
<td>External factors required for success in carrying out the activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existing Resources</td>
<td>Inputs</td>
<td>Budget</td>
<td>Cash Flow Projections</td>
<td>External factors required for success in providing the required inputs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Timelines

Timelines are essentially calendars of planned events, matching dates with “milestones,” rather than the specific tasks to be achieved by that date. They are excellent planning tools for providing a rapid overview of planned activities. While timelines for contingency planning will show the number of days to implement an activity, timelines for emergency response planning should show both the elapsed days and the actual calendar date.

Building a Timeline

There are at least two ways of constructing timelines.

♦ Work from gross planning estimates of when it would be desirable and feasible to carry out activities. This process may be initiated by supervisory levels of management to assist the planning team in deciding what resources are needed to achieve the targeted times.

♦ Build up the total times from estimates of the time needed for each task. This may be initiated by field staff based on their experience.

Quite often, both approaches may be used. An initial timeline is established by making gross estimates and later is amended when estimates of time needed to complete each task are available.

Example

Setting up a rest station where refugees can spend one night is part of the plan for an operation to move refugees from spontaneous sites at the border to a temporary settlement. The first timeline is prepared as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Milestone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15 Aug</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Planning meeting for rest station</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 Aug</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Site visits completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 Aug</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Technical and environmental surveys completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 Aug</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Discussions with host community and government completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 Aug</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Formal site selection at general meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 Aug</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Begin clearing site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03 Sep</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Site ready for use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04 Sep</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Trial run</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06 Sep</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Beginning of full operation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Nov</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>End of operation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 Nov</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>Restoration of site, planting of trees on latrines etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Dec</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>Site cleaning complete</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What do you notice about the dates in this example?
At the beginning of the operation, the dates given are fairly close together, whereas later on the
gaps between events become wider. This is because time needed for activities in the near future are
clearer than those in the more distant future. It is correct and appropriate for a timeline to show
much more detail for the first few weeks, but only general targets for dates that are further away.

Timelines, being time-based rather than task-based, can also be constructed for needs or
resources. The following is a simple example of a needs table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Milestone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>04 Sep</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Food for 200 refugees (Trial Run)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06 Sep</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Food for 400 refugees per day (2,000 per week) until mid November</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Nov</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>End of operation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Timelines can be simply prepared and maintained using any computer spreadsheet program.
Preparing a timeline on a computer spreadsheet is greatly simplified when a column with the current
date, the start date, and the elapsed days since the start of planning is shown. The other dates, and
the timing of the event with respect to today’s date can be quickly generated by the spreadsheet
program’s date functions. Preparing a timeline in this way allows the rapid updating of the timeline
when the situation changes.

**Timeline for rest station**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Today</th>
<th>Milestone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 Nov</td>
<td></td>
<td>Today</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Aug</td>
<td></td>
<td>Start Date</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td></td>
<td>Elapsed Days To-Date</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Aug</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-80</td>
<td>Start of planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Sep</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>-57</td>
<td>Start of full operation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Nov</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>End of operation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 Nov</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Restoration of site, planting of trees etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Dec</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Site cleaning complete</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Using a Timeline**

Timelines are an excellent way of communicating the overall plan to all partners. Unlike Gantt charts
(described below), timelines generally show project milestones rather than activities (although
activities in the near future will be represented). The milestones in the timeline can represent activities
across a whole range of sectors or across a number of geographical sites.
Timelines are an excellent tool for monitoring the overall progress of the whole project because they can summarise the main features of a complex plan on a single sheet. The use of a timeline allows managers to rapidly identify departures from plan and concentrate their attention on those areas. Whenever any milestone on a timeline is not met, it is essential to examine what impact this will have on other milestones in the future.

**Gantt Charts**

Gantt charts, also known as bar charts, show the planned time-scale for activities against an overall calendar. The dates form the columns of the chart while activities form the rows.

A bar represents each activity. The bar for each activity starts at the point corresponding with the planned start date and its length shows the planned duration of the activity as depicted below.

The following Gantt chart shows the activity schedule for the preparation of the rest station.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planned task</th>
<th>August</th>
<th>September</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>24 25</td>
<td>26 27 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark trees to be preserved</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark site boundaries</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Install water pipeline</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build water points</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear scrub from site</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make access road for site</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking and unloading area</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set out site</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latrine construction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shelter and kitchen construction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff living area</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff training</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trial run</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final fix</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start of operation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How many days is staff training supposed to take?

Staff training will take place over a two-day period, from 1-2 September.
Preparation of the Gantt Chart

Gantt charts are easy to prepare manually with graph paper, or can even be made by drawing lines on blank paper. They are a common feature of project planning software, and any spreadsheet or sophisticated word processing program can be used to print out charts.

To prepare a Gantt chart you need to:

1. List the tasks that need to be done.
2. Estimate the time that each task will take.
3. Identify, for each task, other tasks that must be completed before it can begin.
   This is necessary to establish the earliest possible start date for any activity.
4. Check the resource implications associated with tasks that must be done at the same time.

Write in the dates along the top of the chart; draw a bar to represent the first activity. The end of the first activity marks the possible starting point for activities that are dependent on its completion.

The resource constraints, described in point four above, tend to have a bigger impact on activity duration than on starting dates. In the above example, the construction of the water points could have started while the pipeline was being installed, but the planner was aware that the work was to be executed by the same team. The planner could have split the team, but this would have more than doubled the time needed for both the pipeline installation and the water point construction. The problem of balancing resource allocation and of remembering precedence of tasks, in point three, can become quite difficult in complex projects.

Planners can include the cost of each activity, or sum of all activities, in a column on the Gantt chart. Resources such as vehicles or staff may also be included.

Using a Gantt Chart

While timelines can best provide an overview of an operation, Gantt charts are more useful for detailed planning. They are particularly effective for monitoring activities and assessing the effect of delays on other components. Gantt charts are easier to understand than network diagrams (see below) and are likely to be more accessible to a broader range of users than more sophisticated tools.

Many types of Gantt charts can be developed to various degrees of sophistication. Simple charts, as depicted in the example above, are probably best for emergency response operations. Where a more sophisticated approach is needed, network diagrams or computer based planning tools are probably more appropriate than manual Gantt charts.

There have been a number of delays in the installation of the water project as part of the preparation for the rest station:

- It took ten days instead of six to lay the water pipeline. Some opposition came from the local community, as they were not sufficiently involved in the planning process. The same team built the water points as soon as they finished the pipeline.
- Latrine, shelter and kitchen construction was done a day ahead of schedule.
- The duration of other activities remains as originally planned.
- A trial run is scheduled for two days. The refugees will be transported to the rest station on the first day and to the new temporary settlement on the second day. Due to the delays, the planning team concluded that the actual operation could begin on the second day of the trial. This means that the “final fix,” or the correction of any problems that arise during the trial run, must occur between the departure of those on the trial run in the morning and the arrival of the first main operational run in the evening.
- The trial can only begin when the other activities are completed.
Refer to the previous Gantt chart. Prepare an amended chart that reflects the following changes:

- The new start date for the operation
- How the planners decided to save a day

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planned task</th>
<th>August</th>
<th>September</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mark trees to be preserved</td>
<td>24-25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark site boundaries</td>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Install water pipeline</td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build water points</td>
<td>28</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear scrub from site</td>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make access road for site</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking and unloading area</td>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set out site</td>
<td>1-2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latrine construction</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shelter and kitchen construction</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff living area</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff training</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trial run</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final fix</td>
<td>8-9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start of operation</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Uses and Limits of Network Diagrams

Network diagrams show the interrelated tasks needed to complete a project in graphical format. They show all tasks that need to be completed to finish the overall project and the relationship of the tasks to each other or the order in which tasks have to be executed. For example, the vehicle fleet will have to be purchased or hired before it can be used to move the refugees. While this is obvious, network diagrams can reveal relationships that are not obvious within complex projects.

While simple tasks may be executed by a single agency one task at a time, this very rarely applies to complex projects or to projects that are executed by more than one player. Network diagrams are an excellent tool for managing projects where a number of tasks will be executed simultaneously.

Time and Network Diagrams

The most commonly used types of network diagrams show the duration of each task, so that the total time for the completion of the project can be estimated. The diagram can be analysed to:

- Identify tasks that would delay the whole project if there were any delay in the completion of them. These tasks form the “critical path.”
- Identify how long other tasks could be delayed without delaying the overall project.
- Clearly establish the interrelationship between different project tasks.
- Identify the tasks (on the critical path) where additional resources may lead to a shorter overall execution time.
- Identify (when resource data is provided for each task) the level of resources (e.g. people, vehicles etc.) which will be required at different stages of the project.
The critical path is composed of tasks that must be completed to avoid delaying the entire project or operation. The most common form of network diagram analysis is the Critical Path Method. There are other variants of network diagrams and analysis, but all have essentially the same components and arrive at a common answer for the same problem.

Network diagrams are extremely useful tools for planning projects where timing is critical. They clearly show the possible consequences of delays in task execution, and allow the consequences of different patterns of resource allocation to be tested.

**How can network diagrams be of use in project execution?**

**Question**

Network diagrams can be used during project execution to monitor the likely effect of delays in the completion of any one task on the overall project. They are an excellent tool for selecting and planning a recovery strategy when unexpected problems are encountered.

**Collecting the Information Needed**

In all types of analysis, the quality of the input information determines the quality of the analytical output. This also applies to network diagrams. All necessary tasks must be clearly identified and reasonable estimates made of their duration for the network diagram to be effective.

Simple network diagrams can easily be prepared manually. More complex diagrams can be prepared and analysed on any computer using commercially available project planning software. Such software programmes can normally present tasks as either a critical path diagram or as a Gantt chart. Presentation as a Gantt chart is often easier to understand for users who are unfamiliar with network diagrams.

Whether a network diagram is prepared manually or by computer, the same information is needed. The three essential information components are:

- A list of the tasks which need to be executed to complete the project.
- The duration of each task.
- The precedence of tasks (that is, the tasks that must be completed before the subsequent task can be started).

When computer software is used for preparing the network diagram, the following data may also be collected:

- The relative likelihood of a different duration for each task (rather than a single duration)
- The resources needed for each task

Manual analysis can be very tedious when more than one or two resources are considered. The information needed for planning can be collected as described in previous lessons.
The Network Diagram Components

While the ordering of tasks can be indicated on a Gantt chart, the chart will quickly become unreadable as the complexity of the project grows. Network diagrams are more useful for complex planning. They are generally comprised of two components:
- arrows
- nodes (boxes or circles where the arrows intersect)

There are two types of network diagrams, depending on whether tasks are represented by arrows or by nodes. In this lesson, boxes represent tasks and the arrows show the order of the tasks. The task to which the arrow points can only begin when the preceding task is completed.

The number shown in the first part of the box is the expected duration of the activity in days.

In the above example, if these were the only two activities required to complete the operation, how long would the whole operation take?

The first task takes 30 days; the second takes 90 days; the whole operation will take 120 days.

Chart Rules

The Critical Path Method requires that certain rules be observed in creating the network diagram.
- The network begins with an initial task and ends with a final task. In most projects these tasks are a task with zero duration such as “Begin Project” or “Project Complete.”
- Except for the initial task, every other task must have at least one arrow pointing to it.
- Except for the final activity, every other activity must have at least one arrow pointing from it. If not, it suggests that the task is not necessary to complete the project.
- No loops are permitted within the diagram. Loops suggest that a task could not start until it was itself completed.

Building a Network Diagram

The network diagram is built on the basis of the task list. The task list must state the duration and the relative importance of the tasks to other tasks. If one task can begin before the present task is ended, it will be necessary to break up the present task into two parts: the part that must be completed before the other task can begin, and the part that can be carried out concurrently with the other task. Dummy tasks, with zero duration, may be added to simplify the appearance of the diagram and to avoid having too many arrows crossing over each other.
### Task List for Preparation of the Rest Station

**Example**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Preceded by</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Start</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B Mark trees to be preserved</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Start (A)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C Mark boundaries of site</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Start (A)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D Install water pipeline</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E Build water points</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Pipeline (D)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F Begin clearing scrub</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>B+C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G Complete scrub clearing</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H Make access road on site</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Parking and unloading area</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J Set out site</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K Latrine construction</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>G, J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L Shelter and kitchen constr</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>G, J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M Staff living area</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>G, J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N Staff training</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O Trial run reception</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>E, I, K, L, N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P Trial run dispatch</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q Final fix</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R End of preparation — start of operation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>P, Q</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Question**

*Compare this task list to the Gantt charts earlier in this chapter. Which of the tasks have been divided up and why?*

The task of clearing the scrub and the trial run have both been subdivided because subsequent tasks may begin before these tasks are complete. One day of scrub clearing will be enough for other activities to start. The reception task of the trial run will already indicate items that can be corrected while the dispatch task of the trial run is in progress.
Network diagram for Preparation of the Rest Station

Start site

1 Start operation

Start site

1 Start operation

Why has a dummy task been added?

The “start construction” is a dummy task that has been introduced to avoid having lots of arrows crossing over each other at this point.
Planning with Network Diagrams

While the network diagram is a useful tool on its own, analysing the data presented can further enhance its usefulness. This analysis can be divided into three parts:

- The “forward pass” through the network—identifies the earliest start and finish times for each task, and the total time for the project.
- The “backward pass” through the network—identifies the latest time at which each task can possibly finish without delaying the overall completion.
- The critical path identifies which sequence of activities will take the longest time.

The identification of the critical path is often followed by an analysis to see where additional resources might be applied so as to speed up the whole project.

The Forward Pass

The forward pass begins at the start activity and moves in the direction of the arrows noting two time values for each activity:

- The earliest start date for the task, which is written at the top left hand corner of each box.
- The earliest finish date for each task, which is written at the top right hand corner of the task box. It is calculated by adding the expected task duration to the earliest start date.

The earliest start date for any task that has only one arrow pointing to it is equal to the earliest finish date for the preceding task. When a task has more than one arrow pointing to it, the earliest start date for that activity is the latest of the finish dates for the tasks from which the arrows originate. You can only assign an earliest start time for an activity if you have already calculated the earliest finish times for all of the preceding activities.

The earliest finish date for the final activity gives the expected duration of the project. The expected duration of the project diagrammed above is 13 days.

The Backward Pass

The backward pass is the second stage in the analysis. Working back from the final task (or the task you wish to analyse) going against the arrows, two more numbers are added to the diagram:

- The latest finish time, which is written at the bottom right hand corner of the task box.
- The latest start time, which is written at the bottom left hand corner of the task box. It is calculated by subtracting the activity duration from the latest finish time.

When only one task follows the task you are analysing, the latest finish time for that task is the latest start time for the following task. When a number of tasks follow the task you are analysing, the latest finish time for that task is equal to the earliest of the latest start times for the following tasks. Again, you can only assign the latest finish time to a task if all of the following tasks already have the latest start time calculated.

The backward pass starts by putting the latest finish time for the final task equal to the earliest finish time of the final task and working back from there. If the backward pass is correctly executed, the latest start and finish times for the initial task will be the same as the earliest start and finish times for that task.
Complete the Forward Pass in the above example. What is the expected duration of this project?
The earliest finish date for the “Start Operation” task is day 14, so the expected duration is 14 days. Your completed diagram should look like the following:
In the above network diagram, some tasks have latest start and finish times that differ from the earliest start and finish times. What does this imply?

The tasks with different earliest and latest start and finish times can be delayed, either in starting or in the execution, up to the latest start and finish times without delaying the whole project. The difference between the earliest and the latest times is called the “float.”
Identifying the Critical Path

The critical path is the path of tasks along which any delay will affect the overall completion of the project. This is the sequence of tasks that have zero “float.” In the following example, the critical path is indicated by the bold nodes and arrows.

Why is it useful for the planner to identify the critical path?

Dealing with change

A change in the duration of a task may lead to a change in the critical path. This may happen when tasks that are not on the critical path take longer than expected, or when tasks that are on the critical path take less time than expected.

Reducing the project completion time by speeding up the tasks on the critical path (sometimes called “crashing the path”) is only effective to the point where the critical path changes because of the changes in task duration.

Manual Versus Computer Analysis

Manual analysis becomes very tedious once projects grow in complexity. Computer programmes for project planning are generally needed for larger projects. Such computer-based tools are excellent for dealing with changes in task duration or resource conflicts.
What is the largest “float” that you can see on the network diagram? What significance does this have?

None of the tasks shown on the diagram have a float of more than one day. This means that if any of the tasks takes more than one day longer than planned, the critical path will change and the whole project will be delayed.
Plan development should be based on a consideration of the following attributes:

- Feasibility
- Effectiveness
- Efficiency
- Flexibility

The Logical Framework provides a comprehensive approach to planning. The matrix format is useful in seeing the overall logic and hierarchy of objectives throughout the plan.

Timelines are essentially calendars of planned events, and are extremely useful in presentations of emergency response plans since, by definition, time is of the essence in such plans.

Timelines may also be used to further clarify input needs of the plan as well as activities.

Gantt charts are bar charts which show the planned time scale of activities against an overall operational calendar. They are useful in presenting the importance of time sensitive activities.

Network diagrams combine elements of Gantt charts, timelines, and work breakdown structures to clearly show time, resources, and dependency of some activities on others in the operation.

All of these planning tools are only as good as the information collected and the estimates of time and cost which support them.

The network diagram is built on the basis of the “task list” or work breakdown structure of the operation.

Activities are estimated by their duration and the other activities or tasks in the workplan which must be completed before they can begin. Once these types of diagrams are made, analysis can be made of the entire plan, and bottlenecks and problems areas can be seen more clearly.

In particular, network diagram analysis reveals a “critical path” of activities within the operation or activity that is central to the overall time needed to complete the work.
Chapter 7
Self-Assessment Questions

Check T or F to indicate whether a statement is True or False

1. Network diagrams rarely show task duration.  
2. Although excellent for planning, network diagrams are of no use during implementation.  
3. Computers are needed for the preparation of even the most simple network diagrams.  
4. Efficiency is the measure of the effectiveness of a given plan when compared with the cost of that plan.  
5. Timelines are essentially calendars of planned events.

Multiple choice. Mark ALL correct statements—more than one may apply.

6. A network diagram for a project shows
   A. The relationship of the overall project with preceding projects
   B. The structure of the organisation
   C. All of the tasks which need to be completed to finish the project
   D. All of the above

7. The critical path is the
   A. Sequence of tasks whose late completion would delay the project
   B. Part of a planned route where trucks might be subject to delays
   C. The set of tasks which can be extended without delaying the project
   D. The set of tasks which are most sensitive to outside criticism

8. Gantt charts are good tools for showing:
   A. Percentage of budget inputs for each sectoral area
   B. Percentage of completion of planned activities against overall goals
   C. Planned activities against a calendar
   D. Who is responsible for what activities
9. The two components of network diagrams are
   A. Tasks and durations
   B. Arrows and nodes
   C. Arrows and durations
   D. Boxes and nodes

10. Which of the following is not true of network diagrams?
   A. Except for the initial task, every task must have at least one arrow pointing to it.
   B. The diagram must begin and end with only one task.
   C. Logical loops are permitted if properly marked.
   D. Except for the finish activity, every other activity must have at least one arrow pointing from it.

Using the example from the chapter, what will be the effect if all the following are expected?

- Construction of the latrines is estimated to take 8 days instead of 6 days.
- A second grader will be available so that construction of both the access roads and the parking area take 3 days instead of 4 days.
- The water team will take only 3 days to lay the pipeline by using a nearer source suggested by the villagers.

Analyse the network diagram shown here and estimate the time needed to complete the project and find the new critical path.
Exercise Answer

The new overall duration is 15 days, an increase of only one day because the increases were off of the existing critical path. (See diagram at right.)

The critical path has changed quite substantially. The highest level of float is four days on the access road and parking area. Such a high float may mean that the resources for these tasks are more than sufficient. The overall duration could be shortened if resources could be diverted from the roads and parking to the latrines.
By studying this chapter, you will learn about:

- The need for—and the central importance of—monitoring for UNHCR emergency operations and emergency operations planning
- Two primary levels to consider—impact and performance
- The relationship between monitoring and evaluation of emergency plans
- The monitoring cycle
- The use of meetings and first-hand field assessment in monitoring
- The uses of evaluation of emergency planning
- Evaluation with partners

Monitoring and Evaluation in Relation to Planning

Monitoring is defined in the OMS as the ongoing review by managers to ensure that protection and assistance activities are proceeding according to objectives set out in agreed operations plans within agreed time frames, including the monitoring of staff performance and co-ordination with others. Monitoring provides management with the means to improve performance and to better control activities and outcomes for the beneficiaries concerned.

In practice, monitoring is the process of applying indicators to check regularly and frequently whether situations are improving or deteriorating; determining whether benefits are reaching intended target groups and implementation is proceeding according to plan; and identifying and taking early corrective action.

Monitoring occurs at the level of the organisation as a whole, and the evolution of its range of mandated concerns world-wide, at the level of operations and the situation of the caseload or theme they are designed to address, at the level of the project and the strategy for applying resources to a given objective—in relation to a prioritised problem and the targeted groups of actors or beneficiaries—and when needed at the level of the site, in which a comprehensive view is taken of all conditions and factors contributing to the protection and well-being of a population of concern” (OMS working paper “Monitoring in the Operations Management System”).
It is important in the wider discussion of monitoring within UNHCR to include a distinction of monitoring at two primary levels; impact and performance. Impact monitoring occurs at the level of objectives and seeks to analyse and identify the change, either positive or negative, that is the result of an activity, project, operation, or strategy. The information collected from impact monitoring is useful in designing future plans and operations as well as in correcting plans for longer-term ongoing operations. Performance monitoring occurs at the level of outputs and is useful in determining whether or not the specified outputs are being achieved, for example, by counting shelters built, local health-care workers selected and trained, etc. Performance monitoring is useful to help keep ongoing programmes on track and to facilitate corrections to ongoing systems and arrangements for achieving desired outputs.

Impact was defined in Chapter 2 as “the higher level effect achieved through implementation of activities to meet goal and objectives. Within a normal UNHCR country operation, impact refers to the quality and intended change in a programme (1) Example: By achieving the sector objective to provide sufficient quantities of cooking fuel to all segments of the refugee population in a given camp, higher level impacts are achieved in the following areas: a) positive contribution to the nutritional status of the population; b) reduction of sexual violence in connection with fuelwood collection; c) mitigation of environmental damage around the camp. UNHCR seeks to develop operational strategies which have the broadest impact.” — IOM-FOM/90/99

Evaluation is defined in the OMS as the analytical reassessment and information-sharing process by which UNHCR managers, operational teams and partners learn to achieve greater impact in addressing the problems of concern to the organisation in relation to objectives and levels of resources committed.

UNHCR evaluations examine as objectively as possible the appropriateness of operational aims and the extent to which they are being achieved. In most instances, they also examine whether activities are having the desired impact and are being carried out efficiently and cost-effectively.

The difference between evaluation and monitoring is essentially one of intensity, immediacy and depth reflected in viewpoint, timing, coverage and focus. Monitoring in itself includes an element of continuous evaluation and a readiness to identify needs and opportunities for more in depth evaluation where a more fundamental reassessment may be called for (OMS Working Paper “Evaluation in the OMS”).

As described in earlier chapters, monitoring is the on-going review of the effectiveness of implementation activities and is a critical step in the management of operations for both corrective action and reporting. Monitoring responsibilities exist at all management levels but are particularly crucial at the locations where protection and assistance are directly provided to those in need.

According to UNHCR’s Operations Management System, Representatives and staff at different locations in the country will identify the appropriate monitoring indicators and techniques for their own areas/situations and must undertake actual first-hand monitoring activities. Monitoring is a core function of UNHCR and should not be delegated. Monitoring is carried out to assess progress toward objectives in the first instance and should not be seen as simply a prelude to reporting. Monitoring is regular and on-going and should oversee all components of an operation;
Performance and cost form the two faces of monitoring. Equal emphasis should be placed on both. Monitoring and eventual evaluation will determine the extent to which managers at all levels have achieved their objectives and how efficient the offices have been in pursuing them. UNHCR monitoring includes, inter alia:

- expenditures and cash use by DRM
- administration of personnel by HRS
- progress toward objectives by the Representative, Situation Manager, Director of Operations and relevant support Divisions
- major developments and critical events by the Situation Manager, Director of Operations and other relevant Divisions
- use of resources (material and human as well as financial) by relevant Divisions
- special protection concerns by DIP
- implementing partner agreements by DOS and DRM
- results of actions against norms and standards by DOS, DIP and HRS

**Relation of Monitoring to Evaluation**

In practice, some aspects of monitoring may be combined with evaluation. As with all planning activities, the level and cost of monitoring (and evaluation) should be proportional to the risks involved and to the benefits of that monitoring.

**Give an example of how monitoring and evaluation might overlap?**

When problems in implementation are revealed through monitoring, flaws in the plan’s objective may also become apparent. Examining and re-aligning the plan’s objective is normally part of the task of evaluation, but corrective steps can also be made during monitoring.
Monitoring Cycle

Monitoring follows the traditional feedback cycle (like planning) of observation, analysis and action. All three components can be integrated into the planning cycle. Observation must be built into the implementation phase of the operation. Analysis of the observations and action based on this analysis can be integrated into the (ongoing) emergency operations plan design.

In the example from previous chapters, you plan to incorporate monitoring into the plan for the refugees moved.

Example

How could you do this for the number of refugees moved?

Question

Monitoring can be incorporated by making it a part of daily reporting. The daily report ensures that the agencies have needed information for scheduled meetings. This is one example of the way in which external monitoring (by all the partners together at the meeting) can encourage internal monitoring by the implementing agencies.

The Daily Meeting

Many operations will require a daily meeting to monitor activities. All operational partners should attend this meeting. Operations with a longer and less critical time-scale may have less frequent meetings. Among the roles of the meeting are

- information gathering and sharing
- analysis of the available information for decision making and policy setting
- resolving problems and reviewing objectives
- amendment of broader plans/operation review
- setting the plan for the following day

From the perspective of planning and monitoring, what are the chief advantages of a daily meeting?
The advantages include:
- integrating monitoring into the planning and implementation cycle
- encouraging internal monitoring by partners
- inclusion of partners for information sharing, analysis, and planning
- timely responses to problems

Monitoring and the Daily Meeting

The daily meeting allows the rapid collection of information—the first component of monitoring. It can also be used to carry out the other two components of monitoring, analysis and taking corrective action. A reasonably accurate analysis should be possible at the meetings. This is particularly important at the start of an operation, when unexpected difficulties may lead some partners to suggest inappropriate responses. Such responses may range from abandoning the operation, to waiting until vastly increased resources are available. While such responses are sometimes valid, it is rarely appropriate to react in this way as a response to the initial difficulties that are common at the start of implementation.

An important benefit of the daily meeting is that the representation of all of the major players at the meeting should ensure that all the partners agree upon changes in the plan.

Field Level Presence

Daily meetings, however, do not substitute for a field level presence or for field visits. Direct observation by project staff is always critical for ascertaining the actual status of a project’s implementation and the welfare of the refugee population. Especially in the area of UNHCR’s central mandate of protection, the first rule is to be there, see for yourself. This is central to UNHCR’s activities and cannot be delegated to others.

Self-Evaluation

Evaluation can be a more sensitive activity than monitoring. This is because monitoring may be perceived as simply a routine part of project management. Evaluation, however, often calls for value judgements about the quality and appropriateness of implementation. The constraints imposed by emergencies may lead to solutions that are less than optimal. The goal of the evaluation process is to identify problematic objectives and implementation plans.

The UNHCR Inspector General’s Office, separately or jointly with other Headquarters units, will carry out selective inspections of operations, using procedures and tools appropriate to its role as an independent check on the operational activities of the Office. In addition to such exercises, which will be conducted over a multi-year cycle and will focus on operations according to priorities set by the High Commissioner and the Senior Management Committee, each operation should be evaluated from within, by staff involved in its planning and implementation, at least once a year. The latter type of evaluation, referred to as self-evaluation, is an integral part of the OMS process, and should be conducted according to the needs of those at the field level who are most directly responsible and accountable for operations, typically country offices and sub-offices.

Inspection is another term often used within UNHCR which should be understood as distinct from evaluation. Inspection is the comprehensive, systematic, and timely assessment of the management of UNHCR operations and review of impact in given countries and regions, focusing particularly on those factors, both internal and external to the organization, deemed essential to the effective and efficient achievement of organizational objectives.
The primary purpose of self-evaluations is to provide immediate and direct feedback of lessons learned to managers in the field on adjustments needed to ongoing operations, so as to improve their design and efficiency. Self-evaluations are distinct from, but complement, the consultations and analyses conducted for the purpose of setting overall goals, strategies and objectives.

Self-evaluations, to be effective, should be conducted by operations staff themselves. They may also include selected staff from outside the operation, who could serve as facilitators and bring to bear practical experience and knowledge gained in similar operations or situations elsewhere in the world. Normally, self-evaluations should be carried out (for ongoing programs) between September and November, so that the results feed into the annual objective-setting and CMS processes.

In a given operation and as with the objective setting and design processes, self-evaluation exercises should begin at the level closest to the actual implementation of operational activities, and then take place at next higher level. In situations involving delivery of protection and assistance to large caseloads, the initial level will typically be a Sub-Office or Field Office, but in some circumstances could be a country office. If an operation is defined in thematic terms, for example capacity building or promotion, the initial level will typically be the country office. The process should culminate with an exercise held at the country level, if this is the basic framework for that operation, or at the multi-country situation level, if the operation has been planned and executed in a multi-country framework.

The Evaluation and Policy Analysis Unit and other units are responsible for providing, on request, guidance, tools and advice on how best to conduct evaluations on specific topics. For example, they may have reference standards, checklists of questions, manuals, training and guidelines on self-evaluation techniques or rosters of staff with proven experience in relevant other operations who could participate as facilitators or resource persons if deemed necessary by those organising the self-evaluation exercise.

Involving Partners

Partners may sometimes be reluctant to participate in the evaluation process.

Can you suggest some reasons why this might be the case?

The reasons may vary but might include:

- The fear that their presence in the evaluation will imply their endorsement of any negative evaluation on the performance of their own organisation.
- The fear that a negative evaluation of another organisation’s performance may lead to poor relations with that organisation.
- Concerns about the usefulness or appropriateness of evaluation.
- The belief that only the positive aspects should be highlighted and that any comments which might cause a public loss of face should be avoided.

The last point refers to varying cultural acceptances of the concept of public evaluation. Despite these problems, it is essential that partners be involved in evaluation.
Why is it essential that partners be involved in evaluations?

Partners should be involved in evaluations for a wide variety of reasons including:
- the same reasons that they should be involved in planning (quality, commitment, etc.)
- evaluations and lessons learned will have a positive impact on future programmes
Monitoring is an ongoing activity of emergency response planning and implementation.

Monitoring should cover:
- Staff costs and performance
- Administrative components
- Supply of material inputs
- Achievements and costs of activities undertaken by contractual agreements

In practice some aspects of evaluation may be combined with monitoring although the two activities have different functions.

Monitoring, especially in emergencies is cyclical in nature, constantly feeding back information on which to revise planning.

Daily meetings in emergencies are a good window for monitoring many activities in a time-practical way. This does not, however, reduce the need for first-hand field visits as well.

Evaluation is typically more sensitive than monitoring since it judges the success of individuals, organisations and operations, rather than simply reporting on processes.

UNHCR requires self-evaluation of field operations.

Partners should also be involved in the evaluation process since they will have been involved in the initial planning. Also, the lessons learned through their participation in the evaluation should lead to organisational improvements for future operations.

Evaluations must examine the underlying assumptions and overall objectives, and do so in a way that generates positive lessons rather than just negative examples.
Chapter 8
Self-Assessment Questions

Check T or F to indicate whether a statement is True or False

1. In practice, it is easy to separate monitoring from evaluation, as both functions are very different.

2. Improving the internal monitoring systems of partners is one of the key ways in which co-ordinating agencies can improve their partners’ performance.

3. In an evaluation, lessons learned will have a much bigger impact if the implementing partners who will execute future programmes, as well as the co-ordinating agency, are learning these lessons.

4. Monitoring is so widely required and human resource dependent that UNHCR staff should delegate monitoring activities to implementing partners whenever possible.

5. Monitoring follows the traditional feedback cycle as described in the first chapter of this module as the planning cycle.

Multiple choice. Mark ALL correct statements—more than one may apply.

6. Monitoring is a regular and on-going process which should oversee all of the following components of an operation except:
   - A. Staff costs and performance
   - B. Supply of materials
   - C. The overall appropriateness of the plan
   - D. Administrative components

7. Monitoring follows the cycle of
   - A. Feedback and response
   - B. Observation, analysis, and action
   - C. Objective setting, plan selection, and implementation
   - D. None of the above
8. The role of the daily meeting for monitoring activities includes which of the following?
   - Information sharing and analysis
   - Problem resolution and plan amendment
   - Reviewing the overall objectives
   - Setting the plan for the following day

9. Evaluations should be carried out:
   - Only at the end of an operation
   - Only when there are major problems
   - Every two months in long running operations
   - To examine the appropriateness of operational aims

10. Self-evaluations are conducted by operations staff themselves. These exercises should:
    - Begin at the closest level to the actual implementation of operational activities
    - Should then take place at the next highest level
    - Should be carried out between September and November for ongoing programs
    - Should culminate in an exercise at either the national or multi-country situational level, depending on the formulation of the operation
In the example given earlier of a refugee move that has as its objective:

To ensure the security of the refugees by moving all of the 10,000 refugees now camped on the border to the new settlement site by 4 September at an average rate of 2,000 per week.

The sub-objectives were:

- To help ensure the security of the refugees by moving all of the 10,000 refugees now camped on the border to the rest station by 3 September at an average rate of 2,000 per week.
- To help ensure the security of the refugees by processing all 10,000 refugees moved from the border in a humane and dignified way at an average rate of 2,000 per week, with each refugee spending not less than 12 hours at the rest station.
- To help ensure the security of the refugees by moving all 10,000 refugees from the rest station to the new temporary settlement by 4 September at an average rate of 2,000 per week, with each refugee spending no more than 24 hours at the rest station.

Now, three weeks after the operation has begun, only 4,000 refugees were moved. There have been problems with all three stages of the operation, with refugees being unwilling to move to the rest station, overstaying at the rest station, and with the reception capacity at the new temporary settlement.

What considerations would you include in the terms of reference for an evaluation exercise to be conducted now by partners?
Exercise Answer

The terms of reference for the evaluation should:

- Focus on the way in which the plan can be improved rather than just cataloguing the failures to date.
- Provide a clear framework for the rapid and effective evaluation of the operation to date.
- Examine the objective, the plans, and the way in which the plans have been implemented.

In particular, the terms of reference should ask the evaluators to answer at least the following questions. While your summary will be different, it should reflect some of the main points in the questions listed below:

- Is the objective appropriate, realistic, and achievable? Have there been any changes that call for a revision in the objective?
- Do each of the sub-objectives meet this test?
- When taken together, do the sub-objectives fully express the central objective?
- Are the plans chosen for each sub-objective feasible, effective, and efficient?
- Have the plans proved flexible enough to cope with any changes?
- Has the implementation gone as planned, and if not why not?
- What could be changed in the plan to better achieve the objective?
- In what way should any such future operations be differently organised?
- What, if any, generic lessons have been highlighted by the operation to date?
- What specific lessons have been learned which should be incorporated in an amended plan?

The terms of reference should set out a timetable for the evaluation and for the presentation of the findings.
COURSE EVALUATION

COURSE: EP-02 – Planning and Emergency Response – UNHCR

Date you finished the course: _________________________________________________

What is your present position? _______________________________________________

How many years have you spent in disaster-related work? _______________________

How many years of formal education do you have?
☐ 0 to 6 years  ☐ 7 to 12 years  ☐ 12 to 16 years  ☐ more than 16 years

How was the content level of this course?
☐ too difficult  ☐ about right  ☐ too easy

Was the course material relevant to your work?
☐ yes  ☐ no

How useful were the self-assessment tests to you?
☐ very useful  ☐ OK  ☐ not useful

How valuable was the total course?
☐ very valuable  ☐ of some value  ☐ not valuable

Additional comments: ________________________________________________________
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