

Guidance Note: Inception Meeting

Purpose

The inception meeting is a key milestone that indicates the start of the project's implementation phase. It is organized by the ACT Secretariat and facilitated together with the Forum Coordinator, ACT implementing members and the Forum within seven days of approving the project proposal. The meeting serves several key purposes: to establish a clear understanding of the project scope, objectives, and deliverables; to outline the roles and responsibilities of requesting members; to review and finalize the project plan and timeline; and to address initial questions from members. By aligning all parties on these aspects, the inception meeting sets the stage for a successful project execution.

Objectives

1. **ACT Humanitarian Mechanism and Operations Manual:** Participants review the main elements of the humanitarian mechanism and associated Operations Manual.
2. **Discuss the Details of the Project Plan:** Participants review the approved project proposal in detail and finalize the plan to ensure that all aspects are clearly understood and agreed upon by all implementing members and the Secretariat. This includes RRF Project Outcome, Appeal Task Group and the Results Framework.
3. **Agree on Monitoring Schedule and Reporting Deadlines:** Participants establish a clear timeline for monitoring activities and set deadlines for appeal revisions and reporting to ensure timely and accurate tracking of project progress. Requesting members also agree on task group meeting schedule.
4. **Set Quality Standards:** Participants define and agree on the quality standards that the project must adhere to, ensuring that everyone is aware of and committed to these standards.

Participants

1. **Requesting Members:** The stakeholders who initiated the project play an active role in its execution. This includes key personnel involved in the project's implementation, such as project managers, field staff, Finance staff and other relevant team members.
2. **Appeal Coordinator:** The individual who will be coordinating the appeal. The person is selected by the requesting members, which can be the Forum coordinator.
3. **Secretariat:** The programmatic and financial support team is responsible for providing ongoing assistance throughout the project.

Facilitation

The inception meeting will be jointly facilitated by:

1. **Humanitarian Programme Officer:** Responsible for guiding the discussion on the response plan, ensuring that all operational aspects are covered and addressed.
2. **Humanitarian Finance Coordinator:** Responsible for financial matters, including leading on the budgeting, budget revision, expenditure tracking, and financial reporting requirements.

Agenda

1. Introduction and Objectives:

- Overview of the meeting's purpose and expected outcomes.
 - Overview of ACT humanitarian mechanism and operations manual covering the essential components of the manual.
2. Coordination:
- Members agree on a regular task group meeting schedule
 - Information sharing relating to response activities and updates from the cluster. Members can use the Forum EPRP to remind them of the coordination assignments.
3. Review the Response Plan:
- Detailed discussion on the project's goals, activities, and implementation strategy (Results Framework).
 - Detailed discussion on budget and approved budget lines and eligible expenses.
 - Review the Approved project proposal including the budget.
4. Monitoring and Reporting:
- Agree on the monitoring schedule, including the frequency and methods of monitoring, noting the differences between RRF and Appeals per their respective guidelines
 - Set deadlines for situation reports, interim reports, and final reports with a reminder that organisational reports need to be consolidated by the Appeal Coordinator.
 - If appeal target is more than two million US dollars, then an initial discussion on how the external evaluation will be managed.
 - Review the M&E policy, financial and narrative reporting template and associated guidelines.
 - Implications on non-compliance of programme and financial agreements include eligible cost & non-eligible costs
5. Quality and Accountability:
- Establish and agree on the quality benchmarks for project deliverables, including safeguarding, audit, complaints and feedback mechanism, communication and visibility.
 - Review key points from Core Humanitarian Standard and Sphere.
6. Questions and Clarifications:
- Open for any queries or additional clarifications as needed by the participants.
7. Next Steps:
- Summarize actions to be taken post-meeting.
 - Assign responsibilities for follow-up tasks.

Preparation

All participants should review the project proposal and humanitarian operations manual prior to attending the meeting. This includes reviewing necessary templates and guidelines for RRF and Appeals.

Follow-Up

Post-meeting, the following actions are required:

1. Minutes of the Meeting:
 - Document and circulate minutes to all participants, detailing key decisions made and actions assigned.
2. Action Items:
 - Ensure that all agreed-upon actions are assigned to appropriate individuals with clear deadlines.

By following these guidelines, the inception meeting will establish a strong foundation for the successful execution of the project, ensuring that all stakeholders are aligned and prepared for the tasks ahead.