



A GLOBAL NGO NETWORK
FOR PRINCIPLED
AND EFFECTIVE
HUMANITARIAN ACTION

Humanitarian Financing Working Group Summary Meeting Notes

Tuesday 22 January 2019 15:00-16:30

ICVA Conference Room, 26-28 Avenue Giuseppe-Motta, Online webinar

NGO Member Participants included: Christian Aid, HI, ICMC, ICVA, IMC, INTERSOS, MDM, NRC, Oxfam, Plan, SCUUK, STC

1. Update on HFTT changes

- The IASC has been going through structural changes, led by the IASC Secretariat and Principals, which affects the different Task Teams (TTs). ICVA is the co-chair with OCHA of the Humanitarian Finance TT.
- The TTs are going to become Results Groups. We have been waiting for some time to hear the final approval of these structural changes, and are informed that the final plan is still awaiting OCHA senior executive sign-off.
- The impact on the existing groups is uncertain, and we expect that there will be a new process for selecting group co-chairs. The HFTT has an existing workplan that goes through 2019.
- The basic assumption is that we will do another HFTT retreat on 25 March, to go along the ICVA Annual Conference.
 - **ICVA will provide an update when new structure is approved**

2. ECHO and Swiss NGO FPAs

- ECHO partners were notified on December 21, 2018 that they will no longer be able to direct funds at Organisations that are not EU-based. This affects mostly Swiss organisations that had an exception policy allowing them to apply for ECHO funds. The change is reportedly a result of EU policy changes linked to the Brexit process. This presents a significant challenge and a possible loss of funding for Swiss NGOs.
- We are in dialogue with Voice, another NGO network, who leads the discussion with EU/ECHO on NGO partnership.
- The letter was received 21 December and was targeted solely towards Swiss NGOs. Notably, FPAs for UK-based NGOs were extended. The guidance appears to come from higher EU levels.
- Under the existing policy, UK organisations would be able to claim eligibility in case of a hard Brexit, which led to the reversal of the exception given to Swiss NGOs. UK NGOs got earlier warning and they have a promise from DFID to compensate for the lost funds.

- Meeting between Swiss NGOs 23 January with ECHO. Unlikely to change position, but maybe will be willing to give grace period. The Swiss NGOs will also discuss with the Swiss government.
- Swiss NGOs are working very close together. Also with ICVA. We will keep tracking. ICVA will request UK NGO members to keep us posted how things continue with them, especially in the case of a hard Brexit, as they will be in a similar situation to Swiss NGOs.

3. UN Harmonization

I. SEA T&Cs

- In the final quarter of 2018, there was a big discussion on contracts, especially SEA requirements in Partnership Agreements, with implementation of a UN Protocol on SEA Allegations involving Implementing Partners. Primary discussion was with UNICEF, UNFPA, and UNHCR added towards the end.
- We did not have final feedback from UNICEF, where there have been changes in the staff recently. The discussion went quite well, but we are hoping to get a copy of the final T&Cs they came with after feedback from NGOs.
- We have not received UNICEF's final version of the contract. However, a South Sudan country team said they received a new PCA with the SEA language, and they are getting significant pressure to sign in the country. So it seems there is rollout without a word from UNICEF globally.
 - **ICVA to contact UNICEF regarding updates on PCAs**
- UNHCR has presented a document with a much better language, and there was no significant amount of concern. From talking with them, they are still in the final stages of getting approval. Suggested language changes from NGO partners seem to have been accepted, and they are mostly working now on higher indirect cost allowances for National NGO Partners.
 - **Follow up on UNHCR final version**
 - **Send revised UNHCR with new SEA language.**
- It is notable that UNHCR is prepared to discuss indirect cost allowances for national NGOs. Potentially they saw it as important to reverse this policy, as they have many national NGO partners. Also, there is increasing recognition that policies like PSEA require funds to implement correctly. They will also include HR in the 20% flexibility between budget line items.
- Regarding UNFPA, we did have word before end of the year that they are interested to have a consultation with NGO partners, such as the one we did with UNICEF. They generally followed in the steps of UNICEF with the language in their contracts.
- Apparently, UNFPA is open to feedback from NGOs and modification, similar to what UNICEF did after initial rollout.
 - **ICVA will make sure that Eva Bokhart from UNFPA will get the latest feedback that UNICEF received and see what she is open to.**
- One of the challenges with the discussion over 2019 Partnership Agreements is that we were approached very late in the year, and the idea is to engage much earlier this year and get closer to the agencies.

- An NGO group initiated by Oxfam is doing contract analysis and suggesting language. Important to have as many of us in the group in order to show a unified front. Important to act quickly.
 - **Group is open to participation.**
 - **Will share details with ICVA and ICVA will share with members.**

II. UN Partner Portal

- There have been some issues with the proposition on the new UNPP. The UNHCR PP was rolled into the new UNPP which is supposed to be a common platform, but there seems to be some issues with agencies correctly listing calls for expressions of interest on the common UN Portal site. Some new calls from UNHCR continue to be listed on the old UNHCR Partner Portal rather than the new UNPP.
- NGO partners are encouraged to share feedback on the UNPP to ICVA, in addition to any direct feedback to UNHCR, so that ICVA can address consolidated issues with UNHCR as well.
- According to UNHCR, all new calls should go on the new portal, and they will maintain the old UNHCR portal for archival reasons.
- So far, no UNICEF or WFP calls have been posted on the new Portal. We need to ask both agencies when they intend to put their calls there, as the rollout was November. Will the portal include a notification function to receive notice when there is a new call, even according to filter?
- The 3 agencies have a monthly call on NGO partnership issues, will follow up with them.
 - **ICVA to follow up.**

III. UNICEF-NGO consultations

- UN harmonization is emerging as a key area of focus for 2019.
- In early stage of development – UNICEF has a new unit (Humanitarian Operational Partnerships) based in Geneva that is looking to be the entry point for consultation with partners, that then will be communicated to the right department, led by Luc Chauvin.
- UNICEF came to ICVA with a request to look into a more rigorous consultation process with NGOs, and they agreed to finance an independent consultant to scope this and recommend a way forward.
- Looking into how to better engage NGOs over time, starting later this year.
- The consultant, Mirela Shuteriqi will engage with members and other NGOs.
 - **ICVA will update more as we make progress.**
 - **ICVA will share Luc's contact.**

4. AOB

- I. DFAT PSEAH policy– feedback from partners**
 - **Will share the email to the group**
- II. NGO CBPF Dialogue**

- NRC: OCHA-NGO CBPF Dialogue platform meeting will be held on 6 of March in Juba in South Sudan, and invitations will be sent soon.
 - **Add to ICVA Calendar**

III. Provide HFWG Agenda and focus points for 2019

- UN Harmonization and how we can push that further
- Please send a note for points that we could raise and focus on this year.

Next Meeting: Monday 18 February 2019