



## COI Coordinators Meeting Summary

### 13 November 2011

On 13 November 2011, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) convened a meeting of all the Community of Interest (COIs)<sup>1</sup> coordinators to discuss the current status of their thematic work, to ensure that all COIs understood the aims of each other, and to identify possible future steps (within the COIs) to help bring the traditional humanitarian entities and the digital humanitarians together in an optimized way.

#### Key Outcomes

Below are a list of summarized key outcomes and important developments.

1. The Volunteer & Technical Community (V&TC) is now being referred to as the Digital Humanitarians.
2. It was agreed by the group that a Management by Discovery approach versus the traditional Management by [strict] Objective approach should be continued within the COIs. The environment in which the COIs operate is very fluid and would be severely hampered with too much external control.
3. COI participants have been happy with the approach taken so far by OCHA, but there is a need to find resources to ensure work continues to move forward.
4. There is a need to regularly review overlaps between the COIs which raised need of inter-COI coordination. As outlined in the original COI Leader TOR example, each COI would regularly share their plans and progress with a central COI team who identify overlaps, synergies, cross-cutting themes and potential funding sources.
5. OCHA has intentionally not being prescriptive with COIs, but members noted that some coordination and informal guidance will be helpful to make it more likely for all the COIs to keep moving forward. Good infrastructure becomes invisible but essential and OCHA is in a position to do just that.
6. The group stressed the need for a COI web presence to better publicize their ongoing work [**update:** coming in Q2 2012 on a Ning platform].
7. The Humanitarian Standby Task Force (HSBT) is now called the Digital Humanitarian Network (DHN) and will have a web presence in Q2 of 2012. The DHN will be a network-of-networks (made up of entities) with a core team who receive support requests and find Digital Humanitarian entities who can come together as a solution team. Clear activation request protocols will be put in place.
8. There needs to be consideration given for the expansion of COIs beyond geospatial-based themes [e.g. policy, guidance, etc].

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<sup>1</sup> The Communities of Interest (COIs) were conceived in the [wash-up meeting organized by UN-OCHA, in June-2011](#), in regards to their collaboration with the Volunteer & Technical Community (V&TC).

9. The disaster affected community (DAC) is not well addressed in the COIs. There were a lot of question about how we should provide information or interact with the DAC within each COI or if there should be a COI for affected population. Such a decision was deferred to the [CDAC Network](#) and their current ongoing strategic review.
10. Each community will need to be self motivated and take the next steps. It's not up only to OCHA to keep the activities moving forward. Universities should be able to provide relevant research.
11. Funding. It was stressed that the COIs will need to be creative in finding funding sources such as the Humanitarian Innovation Fund, USAID Development Invention Venture, etc.

## Meeting Summary

The meeting spent a majority of its time going through the details of each COI and then a general discussion about the COIs overall (see Annex 1 for the Agenda). The meeting's objectives were to review the Terms of Reference (TOR) and Plan of Action of the COIs, to review status/work of the COIs to-date, to discuss the COI structure and coordination mechanisms (including: membership in Overall Coordination Team, collaboration platform for each COI, direction of COIs in general, expansion of participants/entities in the COI work), and to ensure all COI Leaders are familiar with all COI activity before the International Conference of Crisis Mappers 2011.

The COIs were discussed individually in alphabetic order<sup>2</sup> and thus their summaries below follow suit.

### 1. Cross Training



The overall aim of the COI is envisioned to build a bridge to help with transition from academia to field practice and to look at issues such as training quality assessments/accreditation that are being given by partners. The issues will be wide ranging including the review of what competencies, experiences, etc. are learned from each. At this time, the COI is simply having calls with interested parties who are doing trainings at all levels (academics, field, etc.) and has an open invitation for all to join or provide thoughts. For full details on the COI objectives and the Plan of Action, everyone is kindly asked to review the current [Terms of Reference](#).

*Presented by: Bartel Van de Wall, ISCRAM*

[Link to Terms of Reference](#)

### 2. Digital Humanitarian Network (DHN)



The concept of the Humanitarian Standby Task (original name of the COI) shifted directions since its original conception in June 2011. Now, the concept is to be a network-of-networks where a core Digital Humanitarian (DH) team knows the various network nodes (i.e. digital humanitarian entities such as SBTF, OSM-HOT, GISCorp, etc.) and can bring them together to solve a problem based on a request from a responding organization. The core team would need to understand the various entities, their input/output requirements, and how to communicate between the disparate groups involved. For a draft aim and plan of action for the COI, kindly see the [Terms of Reference](#).

Participants raised several great points including the possible need for a ticket tracking system, the need to be able to work with the requesting organization to make sure the problem is well articulated, the consideration of reviewing existing incident management processes, and the suggestion to piloting the request approach with a small number of organization and/or in a

<sup>2</sup> The Humanitarian Standby Task Force changed it name to Digital Humanitarian Network

simulation. The concept of the core team was raised and discussed with the idea of having a small core team being noted as the most likely appropriate model.

One participant noted that they now consider the DHN as the “operational arm or central core COI” because it is a natural testbed where lessons can be learned from real-time collaboration across various ecosystems. This collaboration (joint exercises and real-time deployments) will generate lessons learned that should be fed back and documented inside relevant COIs.

*Presented by: Patrick Meier, SBTF*

[Link to Terms of Reference](#)



### 3. Data Licensing

The COI is looking towards dedicated policy and legal frameworks to allow imagery and data sharing. How do you create a framework that will allow this information to be shared? John outlined the process, through the NextView license, that the US Government released imagery to OSM. Essentially that process worked based on the way that the legal wording of the license could be interpreted. The US Government is starting to see the value of the crowd which is moving licensing/sharing issues forward although the difficulty still remains around smaller emergencies where motivations to share data are less even though the need is real. It was suggested by a participant that perhaps the COI could look at compiling a list of the various licenses/partnerships that are currently being used to allow derivation of data from imagery.

For more detail on the aim and current plan of action for the COI, kindly see the [Terms of Reference](#).

*Presented by: John Crowley, Harvard Humanitarian Initiative*

[Link to Terms of Reference](#)



### 4. Data Scramble

The Data Scramble COI's main goal is to save time and energy in the early stages of an emergency. It aims to help coordinate multiple organizations during the very early phases of an emergency who are collecting very similar information (primarily vector geographical, but also other such as population statistics). As well, it wants to help avoid multiple requests to the same actors for the same datasets.

In the short-term, the COI wants to create awareness of who is scrambling for what data and perhaps define a standard division of typical tasks. In the longer terms, the COI will need to look at data licensing issues as well as the cleaning / processing of data. For more details on the COI's aim and current plan of action, kindly see the [Terms of Reference](#)

*Presented by: Nigel Woof, MapAction*

[Link to Terms of Reference](#)



## 5. Decision Makers Needs

There is no question that data is a requirement to help decision maker. The COI has a key focus of determining what digestible products and services are needed to give information that can be acted upon. In that regards, the COI wants to identify the general structure for decision making and makers as well as the hierarchies for decision making (who is making what decisions when and the related collaboration processes).

The COI has defined out several concrete activities such as defining a Decision Makers Timeline (broken down by decision maker types/levels) and research ideas around coding of crisis response documents and conjoint analysis. For more details on the COI's aim and current plan of action, kindly see the [Terms of Reference](#)

*Presented by: Jarrod Goentzel, MIT Humanitarian Innovation Lab & Helen Campbell, Independent Researcher*

[Link to Terms of Reference](#)



## 6. Impact Evaluation

At the core of this COI is learning and adaptation. How do we know if the work of the crowd is "impactful" and can we change its course mid-stream if we find something where it would add more impact? Ideally, the COI would produce a general framework that could be used by any requesting organization or the volunteer-based entity to help determine if the crowd's work is providing value. At the time of the meeting, Kenny Meester was undertaking a study into the Libya Crisis Map and the Haiti 4636 project to gain some insights and possible starting points.

It was noted that a proposal was put into the Humanitarian Innovation Fund (HIF) to help find funding for this work. **Update:** the HIF choose not to fund the project [no explanation had been given at the time of writing].

Participants noted a range of issues including the lack of connection to impact on the DAC, the focus of the work should also include some research and development rather than only operational tools, and whether or not we should be evaluating the impact of the volunteer groups.

The [Terms of Reference](#) for the COI is still very much in draft format.

*Presented by: Jennifer Chan, Harvard Humanitarian Initiative & Kenny Meesters, Tilburg University*

[Link to Terms of Reference](#)

## 7. Missing Persons

*The Missing Persons COI is not part of the group created from the OCHA Lessons Learned meeting. It existed well before then. Tim Schwartz was invited to present the COI, share his knowledge of establishing such COIs, and offering advice to the other COIs.*

The goals of Missing Persons COI are clear, but the way in which the actors are working together is not clear as it is loose collaboration of volunteers. Right now the COI is dealing with disasters and conflicts only.

The COI held a meeting in May 2011 and 3 challenging pieces were identified: 1) Data standards and sharing (no data sharing standard for missing persons information exists), 2) Privacy standards (storage policy vis-a-vis privacy is an issue and laws around privacy don't provide a perfect legal framework. Perhaps a common terms of service could be developed), and 3) Policy (when is a product launched, triggers, who is informed, how long to keep alive, etc.).

A few participants mentioned that policies exist internally within some traditional organizations. It was mentioned that the COI uses the 2009 Madrid declaration is used as a baseline on privacy policy.

*Presented by: Tim Schwartz*



## 8. Preparedness & Prioritization

The COI intends to focus on: 1) Developing a common humanitarian data schemes (HXL=Humanitarian Exchange Language), 2) the compilation of [Common and Fundamental Operational Datasets](#), and 3) field level Humanitarian Information Management training (e.g. MapAction simulation exercise of data preparedness). It was noted that the membership of the COI is open and ideas are welcome.

Participants noted that some other related initiatives are a "long-shot" and that focus on the current COD/FOD approach. As well, it is necessary to focus on metadata that we do have rather than getting bogged down with what we do not have.

For more detail on the COI, kindly see the [Terms of Reference](#).

*Presented by: Nicholas Chavent, OSM-HOT*

[Link to Terms of Reference](#)



## 9. Transition (of Volunteers)

Prior to the meeting, no one had volunteers to coordinate the COI on Transition. During the meeting. Willow Brugh noted that Geeks without Bounds would be interested in accepting this role based on further discussion.

Essentially the aim of the COI would be to put together a package of guidance materials for requesting organizations to leverage when thinking about how volunteer efforts could be transitioned/handed-over as they wind down their efforts. Participants cited existing examples or models (e.g. GISCorp materials and the TSF to Emergency Telecoms Cluster) to review. Involving local agencies will likely be key.

*Discussion lead by: Andrej Verity, UN-OCHA*

No Existing Terms of Reference



## 10. Volunteer Management

The group had developed a great summary of the COI in a [one-pager](#) and presented it to the group. The COI intends to 1) collect information about volunteer management best practices, 2) evaluate tools used by organizations in relation to the COI, and 3) create a handbook of online volunteer groups and their best practices/protocols/tools. For more information, kindly see the [one-pager](#) or the [Terms of Reference](#)

*Presented by: Anahi Ayala Iaucci*

[Link to Terms of Reference](#) | [One-Pager](#)

## Overall COI Discussion

The coordination team is currently made up of Jen Ziemke, Gisli Olafsson, Sanjana Hottotuwa, Suha Ulgen, and Andrej Verity. The group was asked if there were any additions/objections, but none were raised so the team will remain as-is for now. The participants suggested that the coordination team look at synthesis across COIs, help research funding sources, bring interested organizations into the COI umbrella, and possibly restate the goals of each COI so overlaps can be identified.

The coordination team could map what has been discussed since the June meeting (core 20 page document) for newcomers and to help show the trajectory of the initiative. This activity would allow us to avoid recycling through issues that have already been discussed or settled.

The affected communities should perhaps be tapped through the existing CDAC network (Communicating with Disaster Affected Communities). This meeting has been focused more on improving/coordinating the response. Yet it is critical to look at improving communication with DACs.

It is up to the communities represented here to take the next steps. It is not up only to OCHA. Funding may prove to be challenge, but we need to be creative on how we get this work done. There are several innovation related funds available and Universities should be able to provide relevant research.

## Annex 1 - Agenda

9:30	Coffee. Participant arrivals and informal conversation
10:00	Opening remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• OCHA</li></ul>
10:10	Ground Rules for the day
10:15	COI Briefings (in alpha order) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Current TOR;</li><li>• Short-term and long-term plan of actions;</li><li>• Work that they have undertaken to date;</li><li>• Funding availabilities, proposals, or possibilities that they will target;</li><li>• Membership</li></ul> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Cross Training</li><li>2. Data Licensing</li><li>3. Data Scramble</li><li>4. Decision Makers Needs</li><li>5. Humanitarian SBTF<sup>3</sup></li><li>6. Impact Evaluation</li><li>7. Missing Persons</li><li>8. Preparedness &amp; Prioritization</li><li>9. Transition</li><li>10. Volunteer Management</li></ol>
12:30	Lunch [ <a href="#">Catered</a> ]
1:30	COIs continued <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Continue the morning session from where it paused for lunch</li></ul>
2:30	Overall COIs <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discuss the COI structure and coordination mechanisms including:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ Membership in Overall Coordination Team;</li><li>◦ Collaboration Platform for each COI;</li><li>◦ Direction of COIs in general;</li><li>◦ Expansion of participants/entities in the COI work;</li></ul></li></ul>
3:00	Coffee Break
3:45	Closing Remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Everyone welcome to make any brief final remarks</li><li>• OCHA to provide final summary and closing remarks</li></ul>
4:00	<a href="#">Informal, voluntary drinks</a>

## Annex 2 - Participants

<sup>3</sup> The Humanitarian Standby Task Force changed its name to Digital Humanitarian Network

Entity	Name	COIs
Crisis Commons	Heather Blanchard	-
Crisis Mappers	Jen Ziemke	OCT
Geeks Without Bounds	Willow Brugh	T
GISCorp	Shoreh Elhami	DHN, DS, VM
Harvard Humanitarian Initiative	Jennifer Chan	DMN, IE
Harvard Humanitarian Initiative	John Crowley	DMN, IE
HOT [OSM]	Kate Chapman	DL, DS, PP
HOT [OSM]	Nicolas Chavent	DL, DS, PP
ICT4Peace	Sanjana Hattotuwa	DMN, IE
Independant	Tim Schwartz	MP
Independent Consultant	Phoebe Wynn-Pope	NGO Rep
Independant Researcher	Helen Campbell	DMN
Internews	Mark Frohardt	-
ISCRAM	Bartel Van de Walle	CT, DMN, IE
MapAction	Nigel Woof	DMS, DS, PP
MIT Humanitarian Innovation Lab	Jarrod Goentzel	DMN
NetHope	Gisli Olafsson	DHN, OCT
SBTF	Anahi Ayala Iacucci	DHN, VM
SBTF	Patrick Meier	DHN
Tilburg University	Kenny Meesters	IE
UN Foundation	Adele Waugaman	-
UNHCR	Shelley Gornall	-
UN-OCHA	Andrej Verity	OCT
UN-OCHA	Andrew Alspach	OCT
UN-OCHA	CJ Hendrix	DL, DHN, DS, PP
UN-OCHA	Kristina MacKinnon	CT, DS, PP
University of Munster (Institute for Geoinformatics)	Carsten Keßler	DS

University of Munster (Institute for Geoinformatics)	Holger Fritze	DMN
University of Munster (Institute for Geoinformatics)	Minu Limbu	DMN
UNOSAT	Lars Bromley	-
US State Department (HIU)	Benson Funk Wilder	-
Woodrow Wilson Center	Lea Shanley	DL, DMN, IE

CT	Cross Training
DL	Data Licensing
DHN	Digital Humanitarian Network
DMN	Decision Makers Needs
DS	Data Scramble
IE	Impact Evaluation
MP	Missing Persons
OCT	Overall Coordination
PP	Preparedness & Prioritization
T	Transition
VM	Volunteer Management

