

Data responsibility in humanitarian action is the safe, ethical and effective management of personal and non-personal data for operational response. It is a critical issue for the humanitarian system to address and the stakes are high.

The OCHA Data Responsibility Guidelines ('the Guidelines') offer a set of principles, processes and tools that support data responsibility in OCHA's work.<sup>1</sup> The Guidelines were first agreed in October 2021 and were revised in October 2024 to align them with UN Secretariat policy and IASC guidance. The revision also takes account of the direct experience and feedback from OCHA offices in adopting the Guidelines over the past several years.

The audience for the Guidelines is OCHA staff involved in managing data across OCHA's core functions of coordination, advocacy, policy, humanitarian financing and information management, with a primary focus on the field. The Guidelines apply to all operational data managed directly by OCHA, managed on OCHA's behalf, or managed by humanitarian actors within activities coordinated by OCHA in different responses. This includes the following types of data:

- **Data about the context** in which a response is taking place (e.g., political, social and economic conditions, geospatial data, infrastructure, etc.) and the humanitarian situation of focus (e.g., security incidents, protection risks, displacement patterns and forecasts, drivers and underlying causes/factors of the situation or crisis).
- **Data about the people affected by the situation** and their needs, the threats and vulnerabilities they face, and their capacities.
- **Data about humanitarian response actors and their activities** (e.g., as reported in the Who, What, Where (3Ws) Operational Presence and similar response tracking tools).

Common operational data management activities for OCHA include situational analysis, needs assessments, 3W/4W, communicating with affected populations, access monitoring, and response monitoring and evaluation.

The Guidelines do not apply to OCHA's management of corporate data, such as human resources and financial data. OCHA's management of corporate data is regulated by applicable UN Secretariat rules. OCHA offices should consult the Data Protection and Privacy Policy for the Secretariat of the United Nations<sup>2</sup> ('the UN Secretariat Data Protection and Privacy Policy') and ensure their management of corporate data complies.

The Chief of the Information Management Branch and Lead for the Information Management Function is accountable for the adoption of the Guidelines across OCHA.

The Guidelines will be revised as needed.

<sup>1</sup> As an Office within the United Nations Secretariat, OCHA is subject to applicable policies and directives of the Secretariat. For the purposes of the OCHA Data Responsibility Guidelines, the term Office is used to refer to OCHA. However, references to principles and actions for data responsibility within and across 'humanitarian organization(s)' apply to OCHA as an Office of the UN Secretariat.

<sup>2</sup> UN Secretariat, Secretary-General's bulletin on Data protection and privacy policy for the Secretariat of the United Nations, ST/SGB/2024/3 (2024).