OCHA'S ROLE IN HUMANITARIAN DATA MANAGEMENT

OCHA plays an important and unique role in humanitarian data management. Whereas other humanitarian organizations process data primarily for their own use, OCHA's data management is mainly focused on aggregation and analysis for the wider humanitarian community.

In most responses, UN agencies, funds and programmes, and non-governmental organization (NGO) partners collect cluster/sector-specific data, such as data on shelter requirements or food consumption, to inform their own response activities. OCHA brings together data from these different partners to create a common operational picture of a humanitarian situation. This service helps avoid duplication, and supports decision-making by operational and policy leaders in the field and at headquarters.

OCHA also plays a critical role in coordinating data and information management activities across a diverse group of stakeholders. OCHA's role is to connect partners to one another through the provision of services such as common standards and cloud-based infrastructure for storing and transferring data responsibly. In the age of digital data, OCHA must take into account the risk of hosting or acting as a passthrough for sensitive data. OCHA must also assess risks from the use of new and emerging technologies in its work. The Guidelines are designed to support this role.

PRINCIPLED DATA MANAGEMENT

OCHA's data management is guided by two sets of principles. The IASC Operational Guidance contains principles that reflect the collective commitment of humanitarian actors to data responsibility at the system-wide, cluster/sector and working group, and organization levels. They were agreed through an inter-agency process, and are based on a review of existing principles for data management across the humanitarian and development sectors.[12]

In most situations the sets of principles from the IASC Operational Guidance and the UN Secretariat Data Protection and Privacy Policy complement and reinforce one another. Reach out to the Centre for Humanitarian Data for support on how to implement these principles in practice.

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[12] A complete list of the documents compiled and analyzed by the IASC Sub-Group on Data Responsibility in 2020 to inform the drafting of the Principles is available in Annex D to the IASC Operational Guidance on Data Responsibility in Humanitarian Action.