



Action Suggestions for NGOs The NGOs and Humanitarian Reform Project

This action plan comes out of the research and experience of the first 18 months of the NGOs and Humanitarian Reform Project.¹ It outlines possible measures NGOs can take to enhance their own contribution towards improving the effective functioning of reformed humanitarian mechanisms. These messages are intended both for international NGOs and for national NGOs with significant humanitarian capacity.

1. Training and raising awareness of staff

Understanding and awareness of the main principles and structures of humanitarian reform is a first step towards ensuring that staff are able to engage effectively in coordination mechanisms and in debates related to humanitarian response. The following outlines activities that would contribute towards this:

- 1.1 Establish **humanitarian reform focal point/points** within the organization, responsible for training key staff on the main principles and mechanisms.
- 1.2 Carry out **training of trainers** on humanitarian reform and the mechanisms for coordination and humanitarian response in country for key staff; and ensure that follow up training sessions are held at least once a year.
- 1.3 Include humanitarian reform and overview of coordination structures in country as part of the **standard orientation package** for new staff.
- 1.4 Ensure that **hand over** packages between key staff include information on how to engage in coordination structures relevant to the position.
- 1.5 Ensure that all staff are aware of and practice the **Principles of Partnership** in humanitarian action.
- 1.6 Distribute the **Basic Information Leaflet series**² (on humanitarian coordination, financing mechanisms and Principles of Partnership) of the NGOs and Humanitarian Reform Project to humanitarian staff.

2. Clusters and participation in other coordination structures

Steps that could enhance the participation of NGO staff in coordination structures:

- 2.1 Ensure that cluster participation is included in **job descriptions of key technical staff** (national and sub national level), and that their performance on this is an integral part of their performance evaluation.

¹ See www.ngosandhumanitarianreform.org or contact ngosandhrp@actonaid.org for further details

² These are available on www.ngosandhumanitarianreform.org

- 2.2 Support **humanitarian partners** to participate in relevant clusters where appropriate.
- 2.3 Encourage **senior staff to** put their name forward to **participate** in provincial and national structures, such as Humanitarian Country Teams, and the Pooled Fund Review Boards.

3. Project and proposal development

- 3.1 Ensure that all **proposals** for humanitarian response projects **include coordination** as a particular activity; that an outline of what this consists of is clearly delineated and included in proposals; indicators are elaborated and inserted and that we report on progress and measure our coordination-related activities against established indicators.
- 3.2 Ensure that **responsibility** for carrying out coordination is **clearly delineated** in job descriptions of project staff.
- 3.3 Support the **organisation's humanitarian partners** to develop funding proposals and directly access pooled funds.

4. Working with humanitarian partners

Enhancing the ability of NGOs to engage in humanitarian coordination mechanisms and to rapidly access humanitarian funding can contribute towards ensuring more effective and efficient delivery of humanitarian assistance. It also builds capacity of civil society organisations and thus plays a role in ensuring sustainability and long term impact of interventions.

- 4.1 Support **your NGO partners** to participate in a specific cluster in which your organisation is active.
- 4.2 Share **copies of the Principles of Partnership (PoP)** with your humanitarian NGO partners and ensure key staff are familiar with the PoP and their implications for humanitarian action.
- 4.3 Carry out **training of current partners** on the humanitarian response system and the mechanisms for coordination and funding.
- 4.4 Ensure that such training is **included in the normal training package** of all partners.
- 4.5 **Document**, in a short (two page) case study, examples of how your organisation has partnered with others in humanitarian action.

5. Accountability to crisis-affected populations

Increased accountability to crisis-affected people is an important goal of many NGOs working in humanitarian response. In order to progress towards this consider the following steps.

- 5.1 Promote **discussion of accountability to affected populations within clusters** your organisation is a member of; encourage a cluster working definition or common understanding of accountability to affected populations and encourage the use of a short accountability framework; ensure the cluster has a functioning complaints mechanism.
- 5.2 Ensure that **affected communities are consulted** during needs assessments, elaboration of emergency response proposals and throughout the project implementation cycle, including monitoring and evaluation.