

OUR GOAL

Enhancing Ireland's contribution to the overall capacity for effective and efficient emergency response to sudden onset, protracted and forgotten humanitarian crises.



Ireland's Rapid Response Initiative

A Platform for Humanitarian Partnership

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Rapid Response Initiative Strategic Framework



1. Introduction

The Rapid Response Initiative is a central feature of Ireland's humanitarian programme. This document outlines Ireland's strategy for the Rapid Response Initiative. The strategy is the product of feedback from humanitarian partners, lesson learning from practical experience and the findings and recommendations of an independent review of the Rapid Response Initiative

Ireland's Policy For International Development

Irish Aid is the Government's official aid programme administered by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, working on behalf of the Irish people to address poverty and hunger in some of the poorest countries in the World.

Ireland's Policy for International Development (2013) *One World, One Future*, sets out a **vision** of "a sustainable and just world, where people are empowered to overcome poverty and hunger and fully realise their rights and potential."

Ireland's engagement in the International Development agenda is planned around three **goals**:

1. Reduced hunger, stronger resilience
2. Sustainable development, inclusive economic growth
3. Better governance, human rights and accountability

In order to deliver on the goals six **priority areas for action** are identified:

1. Global Hunger
2. Fragile States
3. Climate Change and Development
4. Trade and Economic Growth
5. Essential Services
6. Human Rights and Accountability

Ireland's Humanitarian Assistance Policy

The provision of humanitarian Assistance assistance, necessary to protect and sustain life, forms a vital part of Ireland's development cooperation engagement. It is fully coherent with the strategies for International development outlined in Ireland's Policy, *One World, One Future*.

Ireland's humanitarian support is guided by the updated Humanitarian Assistance Policy which affirms a commitment to the core Humanitarian Principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence. The overall goal of the Humanitarian Assistance Policy is to save and protect lives, alleviate suffering and maintain human dignity before, during and in the aftermath natural and man-made disasters.

Guided by this policy Ireland is committed to providing strategic and effective emergency response support in line with Humanitarian Principles and Good Humanitarian Donorship.

Ireland's Rapid Response Initiative is a vital and strategic component of this commitment. It is designed to enhance Ireland's response to humanitarian crises.

2. Background and Context

Humanitarian Context

Many of the advances made through development investments have been eroded or lost due to the increasing frequency and recurring nature of crises. It is predicted that the nature and intensity of natural hazards will continue to increase as climate change generates more severe weather-related events. The world also faces new types of hazards such as soaring food and fuel prices; the threat of pandemics; and increasingly complex conflicts.

International Humanitarian Response System

Humanitarian action has become a much more frequent form of assistance over the last 15-20 years, not only in response to natural disasters but also to conflicts. More often than not, the capacity of disaster-affected countries is outstripped and external support is required to effectively support the coordination of activities.

Normally, when external capacity is required, the stakeholders and processes within the 'international humanitarian system' are mobilised and deployed to support humanitarian response. In these situations, the United Nations (UN) coordinates and manages this external humanitarian assistance.

BOX 1:

The International Humanitarian Response System

The international 'humanitarian system' is not a formal structure. It includes a wide range of agencies and organisations as well as various mechanisms and processes which together aim to support and protect all those affected by an emergency. Three main parts of the international system can be highlighted:

- › **The United Nations:** Internationally, humanitarian assistance is undertaken by a range of UN agencies. The UN, specifically the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), has a particular role in the coordination of international humanitarian assistance on the ground.
- › **The Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement:** The movement operates with the primary objective of preventing and alleviating human suffering and protecting human dignity. It consists of three parts: the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the International Federation of Red Cross (IFRC), and national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies.
- › **Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs):** National and international NGOs represent a key group within the humanitarian community, particularly in implementing relief operations on the ground.

In states with few resources or fragile governments the international humanitarian system may work largely on its own together with national partners. In most modern contexts, the international humanitarian system works together with the **National Governments of the Affected States**. Communities and local organisations are often the first to respond to an emergency.

Humanitarian Reform

The Humanitarian Reform process was initiated by the United Nation's Relief Coordinator, together with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) in 2005 to improve the effectiveness of the international humanitarian response system through greater predictability, accountability, responsibility and partnership. Emergency response capacity has been reinforced at the global level according to an agreed division of labour under what is called the Cluster Approach.

The 'Transformative Agenda' is the current terminology being used to define the processes underway within the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) to address the operational challenges related to the 2005 humanitarian reform process. It also is meant to improve coordinated responses that meet the needs of, and are accountable to, affected populations.

Despite reform, inconsistencies and gaps in humanitarian response continue to occur. Some of the more well documented gaps and constraints of the humanitarian response system include: inadequate stocks of relief materials; limited capacity to deploy skilled staff quickly; a lack of investment in coordination of humanitarian action; inflexible funding mechanisms with very short time frames; insufficient linkages to support preparedness, early recovery and resilience building.

More often than not, the capacity of disaster-affected countries is outstripped and external support is required to effectively support the coordination of activities

Irish Aid stocks being dispatched from Brindisi.
Photo: © UNHRD



3. Ireland's Humanitarian Approach

Ireland's Current Humanitarian Approach

Ireland has put in place a broad architecture of support to help improve the response of the international humanitarian system to disasters. Some elements of Ireland's programme of support include:

› **Compliance with International Humanitarian Law and advocacy for humanitarian principles:**

Ireland's commitment to the humanitarian principles has led to Ireland being one of the major advocates of the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid and the Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD) initiative.

› **Support for coherent response mechanisms:**

Ireland has been prominent in the humanitarian reform process and supporter of the more recent Transformative Agenda in both policy and financial terms. Ireland has strongly supported the development of a Cluster System within the UN, is one of the primary funders of the UN's Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), and provides funding to Common Humanitarian Funds to support protracted and forgotten humanitarian crises.

› **Adjusting the way we do business:** Ireland has comprehensively reformed its own internal mechanisms in order to better respond to humanitarian emergencies. Irish Aid has put in place pre-positioned funding mechanisms with a number of significant humanitarian partners which provide predictable and flexible funding to sudden onset and protracted crises.

› **Focus on Resilience:** Ireland advocates and supports international efforts to better link emergency humanitarian aid with development assistance, drawing on Ireland's own unique development experience in the area of hunger, nutrition and food security. Forging stronger links between relief, rehabilitation and development was a priority area of focus during Ireland's Presidency of the European Union January – June 2013.

› **Rapid Response Initiative:** Ireland's Rapid Response Initiative is an operational tool designed to contribute to Ireland's overarching humanitarian goal of saving and protecting lives by filling critical gaps in the international humanitarian system. It seeks to respond in a practical way by deploying highly-skilled personnel and sending emergency supplies to a disaster zone in the immediate aftermath of a crisis.

Genesis and Development of the Rapid Response Initiative

The Rapid Response Initiative is funded by Ireland's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, under the Irish Aid budget. It was first established in 2006 to support the broader Humanitarian Reform process and put the principles of Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD) into practice.

Since 2006 the Rapid Response Initiative has expanded and developed. It has two key elements:

› **Rapid Response Corps:** The availability of a roster of highly experienced and specialised personnel, for deployment at short notice to emergency situations. When deployed, roster members fill specific skills gaps identified by four Standby Partner organisations: (i) the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugee (UNHCR); (ii) the World Food Programme (WFP); (iii) the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA); and (iv) the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

Ireland is open to expanding the Standby Partnership to other UN agencies. Over the past number of years the roster has widened its human resource pool to include more technically specialised profiles, with a range of different language skills. Through the Rapid Response Corps Ireland has seconded specialists on over 200 occasions to UN operations worldwide within the sectors such as: protection; logistics; construction; water and sanitation; civil military coordination; information management and humanitarian coordination.

› **Stock Piling:** The pre-positioning and transportation of essential humanitarian stocks through the UN Humanitarian Response Depots (UNHRD) Network. The network consists of five strategically placed hubs, located in Ghana, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Malaysia, Panama and Italy. Hubs are strategically located near disaster-prone areas. Relief items can be delivered to affected areas worldwide within 48 hours.

In the early years of support Ireland provided funding for the set-up costs of the UNHRD Network and in particular, supported the construction of the premises and the running costs of the Accra Hub. Over the years Ireland expanded support, increased stock variety and levels and now pre-positions increased levels of emergency supplies in all five hubs.

BOX 2:**Independent Review of Rapid Response Initiative**

In 2009, Irish Aid commissioned an independent review of the Rapid Response Initiative. The overarching purpose of the review was to provide an independent assessment of how the Rapid Response Initiative performed and what it had achieved in the period 2006-2009. The review was also tasked with recommending whether or not the Rapid Response Initiative should be continued and if so, how best it might be improved upon.

Review Findings

The review of the Rapid Response Initiative found that it was relevant to the humanitarian context and that it achieved its core objectives. The initiative helped to address capacity gaps in the humanitarian system and made a valuable contribution to improved humanitarian response in a number of key areas.

Through the Rapid Response Initiative, Irish Aid maintained and strengthened its overall strategy of building partnerships and directing its resources via these in a flexible and timely manner. Assistance was targeted at some of the most serious crises situations in the world and helped alleviate suffering in a wide range of contexts both in sudden onset emergencies and in complex emergencies. Assistance was provided in an independent neutral and impartial manner.

More specifically, the review found:

- ▶ **Rapid Response Corps:** The need for Standby personnel arrangements such as the Rapid Response Corps is well established in humanitarian emergencies. The increasing demand from partner agencies for Ireland's roster members established that the personnel provided by Irish Aid are appropriate to the human resource needs of those agencies.
- ▶ **Stock Piling:** Irish Aid's decision to both financially support and to concentrate its stock in United Nations Humanitarian Relief (UNHRD) depots is both an effective and an efficient strategy for distributing critical emergency stock. The frequent dispersal and high turnover of stock demonstrate the relevance of these stocks and the value of being integrated within the UNHRD system.

Review Recommendations

The review team proposed a number of recommendations to enhance the performance, capacity, and capability of the Rapid Response Initiative. Key summary recommendations include:

- ▶ Retain and strengthen the Rapid Response Initiative and ensure it is in a strong position to contribute to both Ireland's and the International Community's response to emergencies.
- ▶ Define specific objectives for the overall Rapid Response Initiative and for each of the components of the initiative.
- ▶ Ensure that all Rapid Response Corps deployments are as strategic and effective as possible.
- ▶ Continue supporting the UNHRD Stockpiles with at least the 2009 level of financing and that they are distributed as widely as possible in the UNHRD network, while maintaining the bulk of the stocks at locations close to Africa.

4. The Rapid Response Initiative Strategy

Overall Goal

The overall goal of Ireland's Rapid Response Initiative is the "enhancement of Ireland's contribution to the overall capacity for effective and efficient emergency response to sudden onset, protracted and forgotten humanitarian crises."

The Rapid Response Initiative is an operational tool designed to contribute to this overall goal by addressing capacity and resource constraints in the international humanitarian response system.

Specifically, Ireland will work collectively with UN partner organisations, other international donors and non-governmental organisations to achieve this goal. Through the Rapid Response Initiative Ireland has Standby arrangements in place so that operational experts and relief supplies reach crisis affected communities quickly.

Contribution to Ireland's Humanitarian Assistance Policy

The Strategy for Ireland's Rapid Response Initiative is underpinned by Ireland's Humanitarian Assistance Policy. The Rapid Response Initiative is therefore designed to contribute to the goal of Ireland's Humanitarian Assistance Policy which is to save and protect lives, alleviate suffering and maintain human dignity before, during and in the aftermath of natural and man-made disasters, as well as to prevent and strengthen preparedness for the occurrence of such situations.



Syrian refugees volunteer carrying tents at a UNHCR distribution centre at the Zaatari refugee camp in Jordan. Photo: © UNHCR / J. Tanner



Case Study

Irish Aid Rapid Responder, Donna Corcoran, working with refugees in Buramino Camp, Ethiopia
Photo: © T. Mukoya / Australia for UNHCR

DEPLOYMENT OF INFORMATION MANAGEMENT EXPERTS

How does managing information in a disaster help save lives and reduce suffering?

One of the profiles prioritised by Ireland for Rapid Response Corps deployments is Information Management Officers.

Managing information during a humanitarian emergency is a crucial part of any operation. Ireland recognises the importance of gathering reliable data. Quick, reliable information on the locations of people in need, disaggregated by age, gender, and diversity, what they urgently need; who is best placed to assist them is crucial for effective and timely humanitarian assistance.

When Ireland deploys an Information Management Officer to UN partner organisations he/

she immediately starts working with key partners to produce standard information products to support coordination of all the humanitarian organisations and the response operation. These include the Who What Where (3W) databases, contact lists and meeting schedules. Tools such as the information needs assessment and maps are made available to support better relief planning and action. Often the information is presented in easy-to-use formats, such as maps or tables, to support swift decision-making at all levels. The network of users includes people affected by the emergency, as well as relief organisations, governments and media.

A clear information management structure also ensures that all the organisations involved work with the same or complementary information, and that this information is as relevant, accurate and timely as possible. The data collected and analysed is used as a foundation for situation reporting and for crafting public information messages. In addition, properly collected and managed information during the emergency phase can benefit early recovery and disaster preparedness activities later.

5. Strategic Objectives

Two Strategic Objectives have been identified as areas of focus for the Rapid Response Initiative. These have been formulated to contribute to the improvement of the ability of the international humanitarian system to deliver reliable, accountable operations at the field level.

Strategic Objective

1

Strengthen and enhance Irish Aid's and humanitarian partners' collective human resource surge capacity for effective and efficient emergency response to sudden onset, protracted and forgotten humanitarian crises

The intended outcome of objective one is the "deployment of the right person, to the right place and the right time to enable UN Standby partners to respond to humanitarian crises."

The Challenge

In any large-scale sudden on-set emergency, the demand for experienced relief workers far outstrips the supply. This is because such periods of demand are quite short, and the system cannot support the cost of maintaining all of the emergency personnel during the quieter periods between major emergencies.

Likewise, in protracted and complex emergencies there is a constant demand for experienced and skilled personnel. This is because of constant personnel turnover given the arduous and/or hazardous work environments and the longevity of crises.

The need to meet the increase in demand for personnel during emergencies is called *surge capacity*. The need for surge capacity is a particular problem for UN agencies, as their bureaucratic hiring procedures can take a long time to complete. The solution adopted by the UN agencies to this has been the development of standby agreements with different donor partners for the deployment of experts.

Ireland's Response

Providing the right people at the right time takes focussed recruitment, targeted human resource development as well as close liaison with UN partners on capacity needs and gaps.

Irish Aid established the Rapid Response Corps to recruit and develop a human resource pool of highly experienced and specialised personnel that can be made available as surge capacity to respond effectively to the demands of selected operational partners in both sudden onset and protracted crises situations.

Today Ireland's Rapid Response Corps Roster includes members who are specialised in a range of skills such as those outlined below:

- › Logistics and Transportation
- › Cluster Coordination
- › Civil-Military Coordination Officer
- › Gender and GBV Adviser
- › Protection Officer
- › Nutritionist
- › Child Protection Officer
- › Information Management (GIS) Officer
- › Cash and Voucher Programme Officer
- › Construction Engineer
- › Water and Sanitation Engineer

Strategic Objective

2

Strengthen and enhance Irish Aid's and humanitarian partners' collective capacity in strategic stockpiling for effective and efficient emergency response to sudden onset, protracted and forgotten humanitarian crises

The intended outcome of objective two is the "immediate and effective delivery of critical emergency stock in response to humanitarian crises."

The Challenge

Non-food items are vital to people's survival, to provide them with shelter, to provide protection, and to maintain health, well-being and dignity. In a sudden onset or large scale emergency, there is a huge demand for essential non-food items such as tents, water storage, blankets, jerry cans and household kits.

When a disaster strikes, the lack of availability of essential supplies or the slow pace in mobilizing them may cause emergency responses to be ineffective and result in increased human suffering and loss of life.

One way the humanitarian response system can enhance its capacity and preparedness for emergencies and ensure that there is quicker availability of relief supplies is by pre-positioning, or stockpiling inventory.

Particularly when responding to sudden onset disasters that occur without a transitional phase (such as earthquakes or tsunamis), an established pre-positioning network is most beneficial as it eliminates the procurement phase of the response that otherwise would have to take place after the onset of the disaster. In addition stockpiling is inherently efficient as it means that stock can be purchased on the most favourable terms and used when their cost would otherwise be higher due to increased demand.

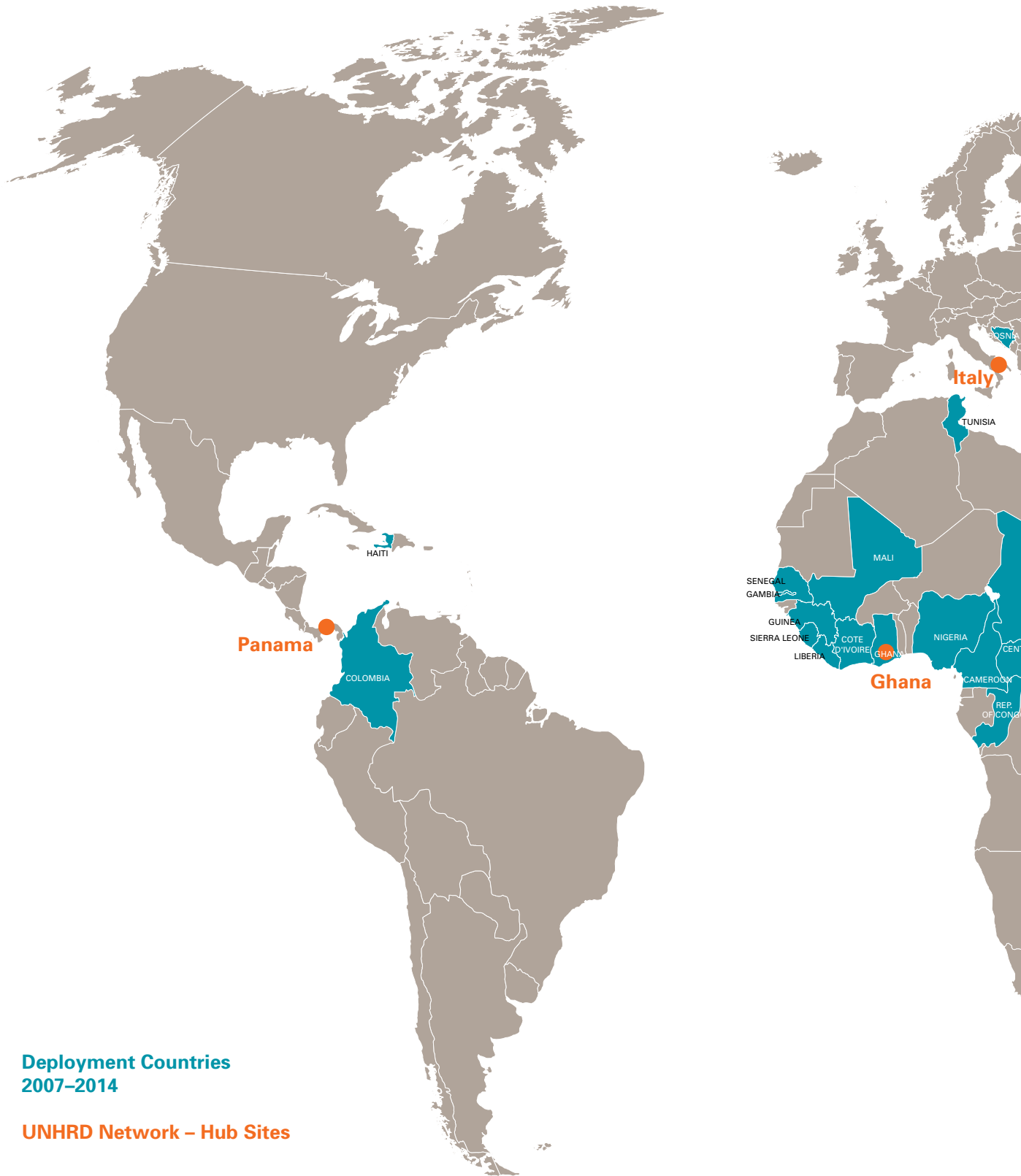
Ireland's Response

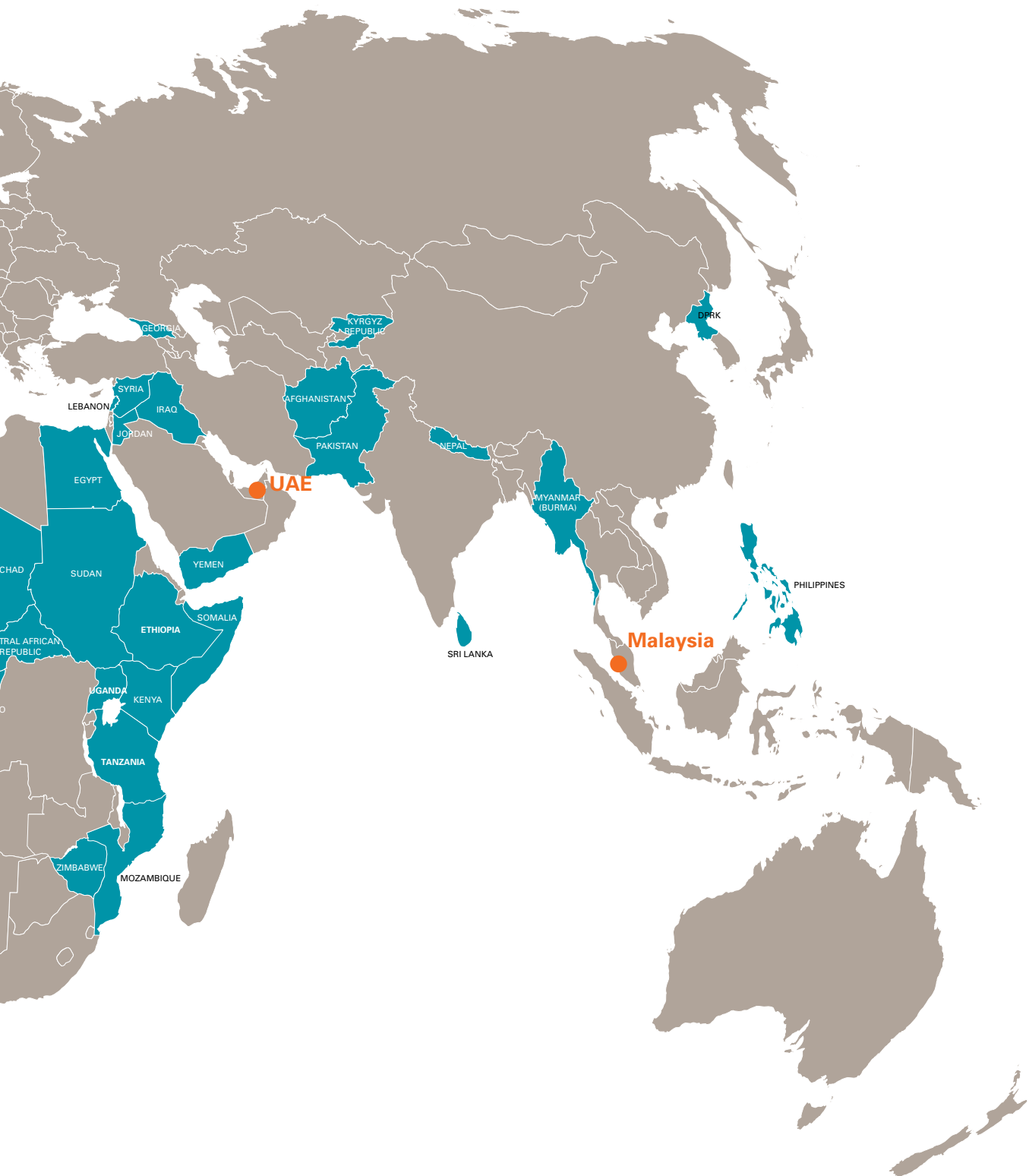
Irish Aid established a stockpiling component as part of the Rapid Response Initiative to enable Ireland to deploy essential non-food items rapidly and effectively in a humanitarian emergency response. Ireland's humanitarian supplies are pre-positioned at the UN Humanitarian Response Depots (UNHRD).

The UNHRD Network, managed by WFP, is a preparedness tool that supports the strategic stockpiling efforts of the wider humanitarian community. Recognised as a leader in pre-positioning, storage and handling of emergency supplies and support equipment, the Network manages strategic emergency relief stocks, including medical kits, shelter items, ready-to-use foods, IT equipment and operational support assets, for a growing base of user organisations – all designed to strengthen and enhance organisational response efforts at the onset of an emergency.

The UNHRD Network consists of five strategically placed hubs, located in Ghana, UAE, Malaysia, Panama, and Italy (with a satellite hub in Spain). Hubs are strategically located near disaster-prone areas, within airport complexes, close to ports and main roads. Because of this pro-active positioning, when emergencies strike, relief items can be delivered to affected areas worldwide within 48 hours.

United Nations Humanitarian Response Depot (UNHRD) Network – Hub Sites





6. Implementation

This section sets out how Irish Aid will operate, the partners it will work with and the modalities it will use in implementing the Strategic Objectives of the Rapid Response Initiative.

Strategic Objective

1

Strengthen and enhance Irish Aid's and humanitarian partners' collective human resource surge capacity for effective and efficient emergency response to sudden onset, protracted and forgotten humanitarian crises

In working towards this objective, Irish Aid will undertake the following actions:

1. Standby Partnership Agreements

Irish Aid will maintain and strengthen the formal bilateral Standby Agreements with four key UN humanitarian agencies:

- › the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
- › the World Food Programme (WFP)
- › the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)
- › the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

Ireland is open to expanding the Standby Partnership to other UN agencies, such as United National Development Programme (UNDP), who leads on the early recovery cluster and UN Women who have a responsibility to ensure consistency and sustainability in addressing gender equality in humanitarian emergencies.

The Standby Partnership Agreements commit Irish Aid to maintaining a Standby Roster of personnel with general skill profiles and other specialised qualifications that match the requirements of the UN Partner Agencies and who can be available at short notice for deployment.

UN Partners provide Irish Aid with required job categories, generic Terms of Reference and associated skill profiles, and Irish Aid will provide the UN Partner Agencies with its categories of expertise. Job categories and profiles of expertise will be reviewed once a year.

Standby Roster members shall be deployed to the UN Agencies' humanitarian operations upon the written request by these Agencies in accordance with the specific terms of the Standby Agreements.

Under exceptional circumstances, Irish Aid will consider on a case by case basis, ad hoc deployments with other UN Agencies.

2. Coordination

The UN's Standby Partnership Programme (SBPP) is an unusual entity – it is a partnership, but one composed of multiple bilateral Agreements between a number of surge providers – the 'partners', composed of NGOs, donors and government agencies – and a number of UN agencies who request and receive personnel. Each participating organisation is independent but works collectively to pursue a common agenda.

Coordination is formally conducted through Bi-annual Consultation meetings (and bi-monthly teleconferences) and informally through bilateral discussion and collaboration. Other information sharing is done through ad-hoc meetings when required for a large scale emergency, periodic newsletters, email exchanges and updates.

The Annual Consultations focus on sharing information, strengthening relationships and discussing emerging profiles, challenges, strategies and improvements for the future. The meetings are led by the four main UN SBPP partners and are open to all interested partners. Other UN Agencies interested in the SBPP are invited (e.g. World Health Organisation (WHO) and Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO)).

An Irish Aid representative participates in the Consultation meetings, presenting trends and policy shifts within Ireland's humanitarian and development portfolio that may have recruitment implications.

Much of the partnership management takes place through bilateral contacts. On occasion, Irish Aid will visit specific UN agencies to discuss their needs and strategies. In addition, Irish Aid engages in ad hoc communication with like-minded partners. The sharing of information on capacity and policy priorities helps strengthen effectiveness

and offers opportunities for sharing resources, such as training.

3. NGO Consultations

Irish Aid engages in consultations with Irish humanitarian NGO partners through the Dóchas Humanitarian Aid Working Group (HAWG) and through this forum will regularly share information on the Rapid Response Corps. Irish Aid will also consult and update NGO partners through bilateral contacts.

Irish Aid will remain willing on a need basis to provide surge capacity personnel to Irish NGOs in the case of large scale sudden onset crises.

4. Recruitment and Induction

New members for the Rapid Response Corps are recruited to the Standby Roster through a comprehensive recruitment process in which candidates are screened, interviewed, reviewed and tested prior to deployments. Roster Members are required to hold an appropriate technical qualification and possess relevant professional experience in a humanitarian context, demonstrate a commitment to humanitarian values, and be in a position to deploy at short notice for periods of three to six months. Roster members are required to renew their membership every three years.

Irish Aid arranges a mandatory induction training course specifically designed for newly recruited Rapid Response Corps members. Induction training is divided into two modules:

A dust storm around Bokolmanyo refugee camp in Ethiopia. Photo: © UNHCR



Module 1 is delivered by Irish Aid and includes:

- › a general orientation on humanitarian response;
- › consideration of the role and mandates of the main humanitarian organisations;
- › an explanation of humanitarian principles, codes and standards;
- › gender and protection in humanitarian action;
- › an exploration of personal effectiveness and cultural awareness.

Module 2 is delivered in partnership with the Defence Forces at the Military College in the Curragh Camp. It focuses on:

- › Personal Safety Awareness Training for working in hostile environments;
- › Security Awareness and Hazardous Environmental Training involving experiential learning to prepare rapid responders for the challenging and difficult environments they may have to work in to.

In addition, all candidates must pass the UN's internet based security in the field trainings prior to inclusion on the Rapid Response Corps roster.

5. Deployment, Support and Training

The selection of roster members for deployment is undertaken by the UN agencies by matching skills, experience and competencies with the vacancy. When an Irish roster member is selected by the UN Partner, Irish Aid makes all the necessary travel and preparatory arrangements (visa, travel, insurance and medical). All individual members of the Rapid Response Corps who are deployed are required to comply with Irish Aid's Child Protection Code of Conduct and to sign an undertaking to state they have read and will comply with the code.

Support, capacity building and monitoring are the cornerstones of the Standby Roster's human resource development.

Prior to deployment roster members are carefully briefed. The briefing primarily focuses on administrative and practical issues and includes a review of the Terms of Reference for the assignment. More detailed briefings on the operation and field security situation and regulations take place in the field with the UN agency.

Irish Aid maintains occasional contract with roster members during deployment to provide support and receive updates on the humanitarian context.

On completion of an assignment, a debriefing is undertaken within one month after the roster member has arrived home. The aim of the debriefing is twofold: a) to evaluate and conclude the deployment together and to give the deployee a chance to highlight issues – positive and negative – related to the deployment; and b) to provide Irish Aid with the opportunity to learn from the deployee in order to improve procedures, communication etc.

Roster members are offered opportunities for on-going personal and professional development through participation in various trainings and workshops. Irish Aid coordinates, hosts and supports specialised humanitarian training with partners through the Standby Partnership Programme. Ireland will continue to prioritise support for training on civil-military coordination and prevention of, and response to, gender-based violence.

6. Partnership with the Irish Defence Forces

Irish Aid has a strong and valued partnership with the Irish Defence Forces guided by a Service Level Agreement between the Department of Defence, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Defence Forces.

The Defence Forces provide support to Irish Aid in the recruitment, induction and training of Rapid Response Corps members. A number of serving Defence Force personnel are active members of the Rapid Response Corps.

As part of the cooperative relationship Irish Aid supports the attendance of Rapid Response Corps personnel at various Defence Force trainings such as the International Human Rights Course and the International Civil Military Cooperation (CIMIC) Course. In addition, Irish Aid participates in the Irish component of Exercise Viking in the Defence Forces Military College, Curragh Camp. This is one of the major joint civil-military-police 'Command Component Exercises' in the world with the aim to improving civil-military-police relationship within the different crisis management functions in UN mandated Peace Operations.

7. Partnership with UNDAC Advisory Board

Linked to the objectives of the Rapid Response Initiative is Ireland's support for and membership of the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC). As part of UN OCHA, the UNDAC system is an essential component of the international emergency response system for sudden-onset emergencies and designed to help the United Nations and governments of disaster-affected countries during the first phase of a sudden-onset emergency.

Ireland has a number of fully trained experts on the UNDAC team, a standby team of disaster management professionals who can be deployed as the first responders to carry out rapid assessment of priority needs and to support national Authorities and the United Nations Resident Coordinator to coordinate international relief on-site. Ireland is also a member of the UNDAC Advisory Board.

8. Monitoring and Measurement of Results

Key elements of ongoing monitoring and review of progress and achievements include:

- › UN Performance Assessment report of deployees
- › End of mission reporting by deployees
- › Irish Aid debrief with deployees
- › UN Standby Partners consultations and feedback
- › NGO consultations and feedback
- › Defence Force consultation and feedback
- › Bi-annual reporting by the Rapid Response Team to Senior Management on progress and achievements.

Strategic Objective

2

Strengthen and enhance Irish Aid's and humanitarian partners' collective capacity in strategic stockpiling for effective and efficient emergency response to sudden onset, protracted and forgotten humanitarian crises

In working towards this objective, Irish Aid will undertake the following actions:

1. Partnership Agreement with WFP

A Memorandum of Understanding between Irish Aid and WFP frames Ireland's approach to strategic stockpiling. Under the agreement, Ireland pre-positions essential humanitarian supplies within the WFP-managed UNHRD network.

Set up, procurement and management of Ireland's stockpiles are carried out on behalf of Irish Aid by the UNHRD. Ireland pre-positions critical emergency stock in the five hubs of the UNHRD network.

Since the signing of the first technical Agreement in 2006 between WFP and Irish Aid (agreement updated in 2014) for the use of the UNHRD facilities, the cooperation has grown exponentially and the partnership was refined to better meet the requirement of both parties. Irish Aid has adopted a number of decisions to respond in the most efficient and timely manner to emergencies by:

- › Prepositioning stocks of relief items across the entire Network,
- › Making available a cash advance to facilitate the procurement of goods and services,
- › Harmonising the specifications of stocks as per Cluster standards,
- › Embracing the non-branding approach, thus further enhancing the loan and borrowing approach.

In addition, Irish Aid provided financial contributions that enabled the expansion of the UNHRD Network, sustained its worldwide operating costs and contributed to building relief item stockpiles in strategic locations around the world. Irish Aid specifically invested in the establishment and construction of the West African HRD in Accra.

Ireland will continue to strengthen this partnership through active engagement in UNHRD network strategic workshops and monitoring and adaptation of support based on need.

2. Stock Piling and Stock Management

The items stored by Ireland have been selected in close consultation with the UN agencies. They have been selected (a) for their use in all emergencies, (b) no shelf life and (c) ease of

packing and transport. The differing needs of men and women, boys and girls are in the selection of stock.

Ireland maintains stock levels for a minimum of 55,000 beneficiaries, with the majority stored in the sites close to Africa. The items stored by Ireland have proven to be most in demand by people who have lost their most basic possessions when forced to flee their homes following conflict, flooding, earthquakes, etc.

Ireland's stock items include:

- › Blankets and mosquito nets
- › Water tanks and jerry cans
- › Tents, tarpaulin and shelter units
- › Squatting tray for latrines

Fetching water and provisions in Buramino Camp in Ethiopia. Photo: © UNHCR



- › Kitchen sets, soap and family kits
- › Spades and pickaxes

Stock utilisation is constantly monitored and adapted and stock is rotated on a two year cycle.

Ireland's partnership with the UNHRD Network ensures:

- › **Efficiency and effectiveness** of operations through the regional presence of UNHRD hubs which allows for speedier responses and dramatically cuts transport costs.
- › **Immediate mobilisation** of relief items within 24 to 48 hours from a request.
- › **Cost efficiency** through the use of single network to procure, host and deploy relief items of multiple users.
- › **Support to** users throughout the humanitarian supply chain—from procurement to delivery—through a centralised support office and via an integrated platform.
- › **Harmonisation of relief items** to maintain quality standards and facilitate an open marketplace for relief actors to lend and borrow items among themselves.
- › **Staging areas** at the onset of an emergency to decongest main entry points to crisis-affected areas and ease the flow of aid into the hands of those in need.
- › **Training facilities for humanitarian organisations and workers.** All UNHRD hubs also provide training centre facilities.

3. Release of stocks

Irish Aid authorises the release of stocks following a direct request for supplies from established humanitarian partners.

Under a special agreement, OCHA may request approval from Irish Aid for the release of appropriate stocks according to the results of needs assessments conducted on the ground. In some instances, the shipment will comprise

stocks owned by other donors who also stockpile within the UNHRD network. In this situation, OCHA also identifies a suitable agency to take charge of the stocks. The receiving agency or consignee tends to be another UN agency, a Non Governmental Organisation (NGO) or the local government authority.

UNHRD prepares and ships the stock, and delivers the shipment to the identified consignee on arrival in the affected country. Ownership of the goods then passes to the consignee.

4. NGO consultations

Irish Aid engages in consultations with Irish humanitarian NGO partners through the Dóchas Humanitarian Aid Working Group (HAWG) and through this forum will regularly share information on the stock piling component of the Rapid Response Initiative. Irish Aid will also consult and update NGO partners through bilateral contacts.

5. Monitoring and Measurement of Results

Key elements of ongoing monitoring and review of progress and achievements include:

- › Annual activity report by UNHRD of Irish Aid stocks
- › Regular stock reviews by Irish Aid
- › Consultations and feedback with WFP and UN OCHA
- › NGO consultations and feedback
- › Partner reports on distribution and use of stocks
- › Bi-annual reporting by the Rapid Response Team to Senior Management on progress and achievements.

7. Maximising Our Impact

With humanitarian needs increasing worldwide and limited resources at our disposal, now, more than ever before, we must maximise the impact and results of humanitarian assistance. The Rapid Response Initiative will do this in a number of important ways.

Humanitarian Principles

Ireland has a strong commitment to the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and operational independence. Irish Aid will use the operational capacity and partnership dimension of the Rapid Response Initiative to advocate for these principles at all levels. In addition, Irish Aid will maintain a readiness to offer support to the implementation of humanitarian action and promote the use of Inter-Agency Standing Committee guidelines and principles on humanitarian activities.

A Platform For Partnership

The Rapid Response Initiative goes beyond the provision of emergency stocks and the supply of expert personnel to Standby Partners. Through the Initiative Ireland has become a strategic partner and an active player in driving positive changes within the humanitarian system. Ireland is committed to supporting the implementation of the Transformative Agenda around the three themes of Leadership, Coordination, and Strategic Systems. The Rapid Response Initiative contributes to the strengthening of the Cluster Approach by deploying Standby Roster members to positions in the UN organisations' Cluster lead sections; and by strengthening the capacities of the Standby Roster members to engage in the Cluster coordination in the field.

Irish Aid is supportive of the Protection Capacity Standby Project (ProCap) and the Gender Capacity Standby Project (GenCap) which are inter-agency resources to strengthen the humanitarian system's leadership and capacity in protection and gender. Irish Aid's Rapid Response Corps roster maintains experts with these profiles who can be deployed to countries in emergencies. Irish Aid also supports specialised Protection and Gender Based Violence training for members of surge capacity mechanisms.

Mainstreaming

Opportunities will be identified in the delivery of the Rapid Response Initiative to ensure that, where appropriate, decisions on strategy, planning, implementation and evaluation will be informed by and take explicit account of gender equality and protection. More specifically, the Rapid Response Team will:

- Identify opportunities and entry points for addressing these priority issues taking into account their relevance and appropriateness in the humanitarian context.
- Ensure that these are included as part of Irish Aid support to partner initiatives.
- Provide support for capacity building of partners to develop, implement and monitor policies and strategies to address the issues.
- Upgrade staff skills within Irish Aid and provide training and support for appropriate research and analysis to inform specific activities in humanitarian action.

Results Focus

Irish Aid is committed to working alongside the UN Partners to ensure that we work in ways that use resources efficiently and effectively, provide value for money and, most importantly, deliver results.

To help work in this way, a logic model and performance framework has been developed for the Rapid Response Initiative. This helps to plan strategically, manage risk, monitor progress, measure performance and evaluate results.

In parallel, Irish Aid will ensure that staff managing the Rapid Response Corps are trained in Results Based Management and that oversight systems support this focus on results.

Case Study

IRELAND FREQUENTLY DEPLOYS CIVIL-MILITARY COORDINATION EXPERTS

Why is Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination important?

When an emergency or natural disaster creates humanitarian needs, many countries will deploy their militaries or paramilitary organisations to respond. Bilateral support to disaster-affected States can also be provided through international deployment of foreign military actors and assets. When local and international humanitarian organisations are also involved in that response, it is essential that they can operate in the same space without detriment to the civilian character of humanitarian assistance.

UN Civil Military Coordination is a framework that enhances a broad understanding of humanitarian action and guides political and military actors on how best to support that action. It helps to develop context-specific policy based on internationally agreed guidelines, and it establishes humanitarian civil-military coordination structures, ensuring staff members are trained to make that coordination work. UN Civil Military Coordination is particularly

Storm clouds gathering over Buramino Camp. Photo: © UNHCR



essential in complex emergencies / high-risk environments in order to facilitate humanitarian access, the protection of civilians, and the security of humanitarian aid workers.

It is for this reason that Ireland supports United Nations Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination which facilitates dialogue and interaction between civilian and military actors, essential to protect and promote humanitarian principles, avoid competition, minimise inconsistency and, when appropriate, pursue common goals. Given their background in peacekeeping missions, current and retired Irish Defence Forces personnel are well suited to the Civil-Military Coordination Officer profile. A number have been deployed to UN agencies through the Rapid Response Roster over the past number of years and have developed a niche area of expertise, earning a good reputation for Ireland in this area of work.

Ireland supports the United Nations Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination which facilitates dialogue and interaction between civilian and military actors

8. Institutional Arrangements

Management Structure

Oversight of the Rapid Response Initiative is the responsibility of Director of Emergency and Recovery, Development Cooperation Division, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Implementation of the Rapid Response Initiative is the responsibility of a Rapid Response team within the Emergency and Recovery Section.

The following steps will be undertaken to implement the strategy:

- › Develop and maintain an up-to-date Standard Operating Procedures Manual.
- › Dissemination and communication of the Rapid Response Initiative plans, achievements and learning.
- › Active engagement of Rapid Response Team in design and implementation of Ireland's response to sudden onset emergencies and protracted crises.
- › Strengthen institutional capacity within Irish Aid and ensure that adequate resources, including appropriately trained and experienced staff are committed for effective implementation of the strategy.
- › Ensure ongoing learning and development through reviews and partner consultations.

Making Decisions on Who, What and Where to Fund

Ireland's humanitarian assistance is directed to where needs are greatest, with particular emphasis on targeting forgotten or silent emergencies. In order to ensure that Ireland's humanitarian funding allocations are directed to where needs are greatest, the Emergency & Recovery Section, Development Cooperation Division, carries out an annual 'categorisation of need' assessment which identifies the highest priority humanitarian crises based on an analysis of vulnerability and crisis indices from a variety of EU and UN sources.

This categorisation is used to guide funding decisions across the humanitarian portfolio, including the Rapid Response Initiative. The analytical process is undertaken at the end of each calendar year in preparation for the new funding year and is regularly updated during the year as the global humanitarian situation is constantly evolving. This process helps ensure that Ireland's funding decisions are based on the

most up-to-date information and remains focussed on the most acute humanitarian crises, including forgotten and underfunded emergencies.

Performance Management

The Strategy for the Rapid Response Initiative makes use of a logic model approach as a means of clarifying accountability and performance expectations around a set of agreed processes, expected outputs, outcomes and impacts. A schematic representation of the logic model is contained in Annex 1. It provides the basis for a performance measurement framework for the Rapid Response Initiative.

Personnel deployments and the release of humanitarian supplies will be appraised for their relevance to and consistency with Ireland's Humanitarian Assistance Policy and Ireland's Policy for International Development.

The strategy will be evaluated in periodic reviews and evaluations commissioned by Irish Aid.

Examples of good practice will be documented and disseminated. Lessons from reviews will be used to inform future strategy.

Performance management will include monitoring and review of progress in mainstreaming gender and protection issues.

Expenditure on the Rapid Response Initiative will be tracked to monitor trends and as an indicator of coherence with Ireland's broader humanitarian portfolio.

Ireland's funding decisions are based on the most up-to-date information and remains focussed on the most acute humanitarian crises, including forgotten and underfunded emergencies

Case Study

Stiofainin Nic Iomhaird, a member of the Irish Aid Rapid Response Corps, with a group of women at Dollo Ado Transit Centre in Ethiopia, during the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. Photo: © Stiofainin Nic Iomhaird



IRELAND HAS PRIORITISED THE DEPLOYMENT OF PROTECTION AND GENDER EXPERTS

Why focus on protection and gender in a humanitarian response?

Protection is about seeking to assure the safety of civilians from acute harm. While protection needs are of heightened concern in situations of armed conflict or protracted political situations, protection is also a concern during natural disasters and food security crises. In all these situations civilians are at risk of harm through displacement, violence, abuse or deliberate deprivation. Crises affect women, men, girls and boys in different ways, with statistics showing that women and girls suffer disproportionately.

The fundamental objectives of a protection and gender approach are to reduce these risks by minimising the level of threat or limiting civilian exposure to threats, or enhancing the opportunities civilians have to

be safe. Sufficiently skilled staff are required within programmes to undertake consistent analysis of the dynamics of the crisis, the risks civilians face and advise on programmatic responses. The specific programmatic activities overseen by protection officers have an important protective impact on beneficiaries. For example: separate latrines for males and females; disability access to services; lighting walkways for safety and security; bringing water points closer to communities, etc.

Ireland has prioritised the recruitment and deployment of protection officers and gender based violence specialists through the Rapid Response Roster. The experts on Ireland's roster have skills that include strong analytical

skills; good communication and diplomatic skills; the ability to talk, listen to and influence a range of actors; and the ability to transmit concerns effectively. In very difficult operational contexts they have demonstrated the capacity to adopt a long-term approach, a high degree of common sense and the commitment to pursue issues with patience and perseverance which has in turn enabled timely and effective responses to protection concerns.

Annex 1: Logic Model

<p>Overall Strategic GOAL of Rapid Response Initiative Enhanced Irish contribution to the overall capacity for effective and efficient emergency response to sudden onset, protracted and forgotten humanitarian crises</p>	
<p>Outcome 1 Deployment of the right person, to the right place and the right time to enable Standby partners to respond to humanitarian crises</p>	<p>Outcome 2 Immediate and effective delivery of critical emergency stock in response to humanitarian crises</p>
<p>Strategic Objective 1 Strengthen and enhance Irish Aid's and humanitarian partners' collective human resource surge capacity for effective and efficient emergency response to sudden onset, protracted and forgotten humanitarian crises</p>	<p>Strategic Objective 2 Strengthen and enhance Irish Aid's and humanitarian partners' collective capacity in strategic stockpiling for effective and efficient emergency response to sudden onset, protracted and forgotten humanitarian crises</p>
<p>Outputs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Best practice in identification and selection of RRC members › Strategic and effective deployments › Strengthened partnership between Ireland and humanitarian partners › Ireland's capacity to provide humanitarian assistance strengthened 	<p>Outputs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Effective pre-positioning, storage and handling of emergency supplies in strategic locations › Rapid dispatch of emergency supplies to disaster areas › Strengthened partnership between Ireland and humanitarian partners › Ireland's capacity to provide humanitarian aid strengthened
<p>Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Advertising and Recruitment process › Induction training (Irish Aid and UNTSI) › Deployment and support to partner and deployees › Partnership with Defence Forces (Service Level Agreement) › Partnership agreements agreed and implemented › Participation in Standby Partner annual consultations › Coordination on Training through the Standby Partnership Programme › Participation in UNDAC Advisory Board › NGO consultations › Monitoring and measuring results › Specialised humanitarian training for RRC and UNDAC members 	<p>Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Pre-positioning critical emergency stock throughout UNHRD network (in 2012: €500k running costs UNHRD network, €2m for procurement and delivery) › Authorise procurement of critical emergency stocks › Maintenance of stock levels (ceilings currently set at 55,000 beneficiaries) › Borrow and/ or lend critical emergency stocks within network › Respond to requests for stocks from UN and NGO partners › Participation in UNHRD network strategic workshops › MoU signed with WFP which frames the operational nature of the strategic stockpiling agreement › NGO consultations and agreements › Monitoring and measuring results
<p>Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Support the implementation of the transformative agenda around the three themes of Leadership, Coordination, and Strategic Systems, focusing on large-scale sudden-onset disasters that require a "system-wide" mobilisation › Maintain readiness to offer support to the implementation of humanitarian action and promote the use of Inter-Agency Standing Committee guidelines and principles on humanitarian activities › Use resources efficiently and effectively, providing value for money and strengthening results › Mainstream gender and protection 	
<p>Inputs – Financial and Human Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › RRI Team within Emergency and Section, Irish Aid · RRI dedicated budget line · Emergency & Recovery Section direction and oversight 	



**Deployment Countries
2007–2014**

Afghanistan	4
Bosnia	1
Cameroon	3
CAR	3
Chad	3
Colombia	2
DPRK	3
DRC	9
Egypt	2
Ethiopia	25
Gambia	1
Georgia	1
Ghana	6
Guinea	1
Haiti	18
Iraq	4
Ivory Coast	3
Jordan	11
Kenya	15
Kyrgyzstan	1
Lebanon	9
Liberia	1
Mali	3
Mozambique	1
Myanmar	1
Nepal	3
Nigeria	1
Pakistan	2
Philippines	12
Senegal	2
Sierra Leone	4
Somalia	23
South Sudan	14
Sri Lanka	5
Sudan	22
Syria	1
Tanzania	1
Tunisia	2
Uganda	4
Yemen	1
Zimbabwe	2
	230

