



PROTECTION SECTOR
COX'S BAZAR, BANGLADESH



Protection Mainstreaming Guidance Note Cox's Bazar Protection Sector: September 2022

Protection mainstreaming is imperative for all humanitarian actors engaged in the Joint Response Plan, as it ensures that a protection lens is incorporated into operations. It is a way of designing and implementing all programs considering protection risks and potential violations and ensuring that the **protective impact of aid programming is maximized**.

By incorporating protection principles into aid delivery, humanitarian actors in Cox's Bazar ensure that their activities target the most vulnerable individuals, enhance safety, dignity, and promote and protect the rights of refugees, encouraging inclusiveness without contributing to or perpetuating discrimination, abuse, violence, neglect, and exploitation. It is **not a one-time activity but a continuous exercise**, while interventions are designed, implemented and evaluated.

To mainstream protection, actors need to understand who is at risk, from what or whom, and why, and the consequences their actions or inaction may have on the threats people experience and their vulnerability and capacity vis-à-vis these threats. This includes knowing how and where to refer people in need of specialized support to prevent or recover from violence and exploitation and understanding when, how, and to whom to refer specific protection issues.

When mainstreaming Protection into the program cycle, the following **FOUR PRINCIPLES** must be considered in all humanitarian activities:

- 1. Prioritize Safety and Dignity and Avoid Causing Harm:** Prevent and minimize as much as possible any unintended adverse effects of your intervention, which can increase people's vulnerability to both physical and psychosocial risks.
- 2. Meaningful Access:** Arrange for access to assistance and services in proportion to need and without discrimination, gender, disability or age-related barriers. Pay special attention to individuals and groups who may be particularly vulnerable or have difficulty accessing assistance and services, e.g. Persons with disability, elderly, children, etc.
- 3. Accountability:** Set-up appropriate mechanisms through which affected populations can be involved in all participatory aspects of project cycle from design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation and establish measures for affected populations to measure the appropriateness of interventions, and organizations can address concerns and complaints.
- 4. Participation and Empowerment:** Support the development of communities' and individual capacities and assist people to claim their rights, including – not exclusively – the rights to shelter, food, water and sanitation, health, and education.

To mainstream protection, additional **PROTECTION ELEMENTS** should be taken into consideration:

- Protection integration involves **incorporating protection objectives** into the programming of other sector specific responses (i.e. beyond the protection sector response) to achieve protection outcomes. Integrated protection programming requires all humanitarian actors to commit, wherever feasible and appropriate, to protection objectives in the design of their activities. It can therefore support the system-wide commitment to the centrality of Protection because it relies on different actors (i.e. Protection and non-protection) to work individually and together as part of a multisector humanitarian response. As a wholesome approach, Protection (including GBV and Child Protection) is also mainstreamed by **including the above elements in the general project management** as central to delivering humanitarian aid **AND** through **Protection mainstreaming indicators for each sector**.

- **Joint responsibility.** All humanitarian actors share an ethical responsibility for mainstreaming Protection across the Joint Response Plan, including general and sector staff, programming staff, advocacy staff, design, monitoring and evaluation staff, and their managers. Sector lead agencies and partners are responsible for ensuring that activities within their respective sectors are carried out with a “protection lens”, and in particular for ensuring that their activities integrate protection principles. Protection Sector in Cox’s Bazar can provide advice, guidance and training on Protection mainstreaming. Mainstreaming Protection within Sectors and Working Groups does not require specific protection expertise. Here below are some recommendations set forth for the different coordination forums and partners in the Cox’s Bazar context:

ISCG	Ensure Protection mainstreaming (including GBV, see 2015 IASC Guidelines for Integrating Gender-based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action; and child protection) remains central to the response and the coordination work of the ISCG. Ensure that a practical, collective approach is adopted by all Sectors and Working Groups to put Protection mainstreaming into practice. Support and facilitate the integration of protection principles in joint risk assessments, joint analysis, planning and monitoring under the Humanitarian Programme Cycle. Ensure the centrality of Protection in the response, when engaging with donors for fund allocation process and with government authorities.
Protection Sector	Conduct and compile comprehensive Protection Analysis that details the main protection threats, vulnerabilities, and coping strategies of the refugee population to inform decision and programming. Provide the technical lead and support in ensuring Protection mainstreaming is both regularly discussed at the ISCG meetings and put into practice. Protection Mainstreaming Focal Points will continue to be active within other Sectors with close supervision from Protection Sector, together with the GBV and Child Protection sub-sectors. Efforts will be scaled up to integrate protection principles into the delivery of assistance and services so that Sectors and service providers can ensure response activities are inclusive, targeting the most vulnerable, enhance safety, dignity, and promote and protect the rights of the beneficiaries in line with the “DO NO HARM” principle and without inadvertently contributing to, or perpetuating discrimination, abuse, violence, neglect and exploitation. Protection Sector aims to provide guidance, trainings, and technical advice on Protection mainstreaming to Sector staff and Sectorial partners through Protection Mainstreaming Focal Points who will be guided by the PWG Task Team in actively supporting and engaging with existing Sectors, in the regular delivery of assistance and during emergency interventions.
All Sectors	Mainstream Protection in the sector strategy to address risks and support the mainstreaming of Protection in sector-specific programming through advice, guidance and training. Make use of existing Protection mainstreaming tools, guidance and resources, in particular utilizing the

	Sector specific Protection Mainstreaming Tip Sheets developed by Protection Sector: ensure that the tips are reflected in the project proposals during the PRT process, ensure that the tips are implemented and request partners to report regularly on implementation, challenges and best practices related to the tip sheets. Continue to work closely with Protection Mainstreaming Focal Points who are embedded within Sectors to mainstream Protection, GBV and Child Protection. Develop Protection Mainstreaming Action plans and devise measures to implement and monitor outcomes. Ensure the respect of protection principles during the implementation of COVID-19 preventive/responsive measures and in the emergency response (e.g. fire, monsoon and cyclone response). Communicate all relevant information on interventions and access to services in multiple accessible formats, taking into account persons with hearing, visual, intellectual and psychosocial disabilities.
Sector Partners	Mainstream Protection into all stages of their programs, in relation to refugees, implementing partners and staff. Support peer agencies, local partners and community-based structures to mainstream Protection including GBV and child protection in all stages of their program cycle and corresponding monitoring frameworks.

Sector partners are operational organizations within the 2022 Joint Response Plan. They should take into consideration protection principles within the Program Cycle through the following steps:

Step 1 NEEDS ASSESSMENT & RISK ANALYSIS

Identifies threats, vulnerabilities and assesses the community’s capacities and mechanisms to cope with those protection risks. This forms the basis for identifying prevention and mitigation measures to ensure protection principles are mainstreamed in the interventions. Information should be collected in a disaggregated manner, including e.g. people with disabilities and adopting appropriate identification tools.

Step 2 PROJECT DESIGN

Defines whether the project design (project proposal) is aligned with Protection mainstreaming principles and if staff knowledge and understanding of Protection mainstreaming is satisfactory. Those assessments may lead to readjustments of the proposed intervention. Important also to include indicators that help monitoring the involvement of diverse group in the response plan, including people with disabilities.

Step 3 IMPLEMENTATION

Outlines key prevention and mitigation measures identified in Step 1 and plans for the implementation of Protection mainstreaming activities. It details the resources necessary, and helps the organization track the implementation and monitoring of mainstreaming activities. Important to ensure the meaningful participation of all the diverse groups, including people with disabilities.

Step 4 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Monitors and evaluates whether Protection mainstreaming is taking place and what impact this has had on affected populations in terms of safety, dignity, meaningful access, accountability, participation and empowerment. Data to be collected and analyzed in a disaggregated manner (gender, age and disability). Evaluate the participation of and benefit received by all groups, including people with disabilities. Collect good practices on inclusive programs to disseminate among partners. As demonstrated in the above steps, the methodology proposed fits within the successive stages of the Humanitarian Programme Cycle. Each entity (ISCG, Sector, Working Groups, Service Providers) has specific roles and responsibilities in mainstreaming Protection throughout the HPC.

CROSS-CUTTING PROTECTION REQUIREMENTS: Mainstreaming cross-cutting issues ensures that such different factors or vulnerabilities impacting all sectors inform all aspects of humanitarian action and maximizes the quality and impact of the work that all humanitarians do. Some of these issues are: Age, Gender and Diversity, Child Protection, Gender-Based Violence, Housing, Land and Property, Mental Health and Psychosocial Support, Disability, and addressing issues of Gender Diverse Population. Protection programs are designed and adapted to ensure that they are inclusive of and accessible to everyone, including persons with disabilities. Protection Mainstreaming comprises the four key principles

of prioritizing safety and dignity and avoiding causing harm, ensuring meaningful access, accountability, and participation and empowerment. As such, the application of these principles allows for all the above-described issues to be reflected at all stages of the response. Protection should be mainstreamed with particular attention while responding during the COVID-19 pandemic and when designing and implementing emergency plans in case of natural disasters. Particular attention should be dedicated to all mechanisms to protect refugees from Sexual Abuse and Exploitation by humanitarian workers.

SUPPORT AVAILABLE FOR PROTECTION MAINSTREAMING

- ✓ Technical support by the Protection Sector including Child Protection and Gender Based Violence, Child Protection or Gender Based Violence Sub- Sectors and other technical protection Working Groups for all Sectors and Working Groups in Cox's Bazar.
- ✓ Protection Mainstreaming Trainings for Sectors and Working Groups
- ✓ Sector Specific Tip Sheets with measure to establish Protection Mainstreaming Action Plan.
- ✓ Based on existing TOR, 2 Protection Mainstreaming Focal Points (PM FP) are assigned to each Sector.
- ✓ PM FPs will also be dedicated to the Protection Sector so as to build the capacity of Camp Level Protection Focal Points (PFPs), camp level Sector Focal Points, members of the Protection Emergency Response Unit (PERU) and Rapid Protection Assessment Teams (RPA).
- ✓ An annotated reference list of Protection mainstreaming guidance, tools, and manuals.
- ✓ Protection Sector Information Management Products.

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