

# EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS & RESPONSE WORKING GROUP

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

May 2024

### INTRODUCTION

The Terms of Reference (ToR) refers to operationalizing mechanisms of the Cox's Bazar Emergency Preparedness and Response Working Group (EPR WG) within the broader framework of the Inter-Sector Coordination Group (ISCG). Operating across all relevant sectors, this group incorporates the anticipated contributions from humanitarian and development agencies and sector and network coordinators, collaborating closely with government counterparts.

In alignment with a thorough risk analysis, this Working Group serves as a platform for sector coordination, including representation from youth and women to strengthen emergency preparedness and response and Anticipatory Actions (AA). The overarching objective is to enable collective efforts for a swift and effective readiness and response to multiple disasters affecting the Rohingya Refugee camps and Bangladeshi communities in Cox's Bazar district. It recognizes that Bangladeshi communities and Rohingya refugees' common and dissimilar vulnerabilities are shaped by several factors. The WG focuses on various disaster risks generated from multiple natural and human-made hazards such as cyclones, landslides, heatwaves, fires, floods, drought, and pandemics. The WG aims at increasing sectoral engagement on the effectiveness of humanitarian responses, building resilience and adaptive capacities through disaster risk mitigation and response to the Rohingya crisis which will also address the risks, and vulnerabilities of the local Bangladeshi population.

### KEY OBJECTIVES

1. **Build an inclusive platform** for emergency preparedness and response (EPR) and anticipatory actions (AA) **community of practice** under the realm of disaster risk management (DRM) with increased synergy and convergence of EPR results.
2. **Facilitate EPR/AA innovations through the sharing of information** that includes lessons learned, best practices, new knowledge, methodologies, and tools.
3. **Support WG members to contextualize policies, guidelines, harmonized reporting, and advocacy approaches** to ensure that the voices of affected communities are heard by the policy and decision-makers.
4. **Initiate integrated approaches at the district-upazila-camp levels** for effective emergency preparedness, community readiness, anticipatory actions, response planning, and service delivery for the Rohingya and Bangladeshi communities, including the youth and women.

### CORE FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Emergency Preparedness and Response require an integrated and holistic approach mainstreamed across all sector's programs and plans. As such, the Working Group has been established under ISCG to ensure the achievement of the objectives on EPR and AA approaches in the DRM cycle. The responsibility for developing humanitarian response plans and implementing humanitarian responses in the refugee camps and Bangladeshi communities remains ultimately with the Government of Bangladesh under the leadership of the DC and RRRRC, supported by the ISCG. The overarching role of the ISCG is to ensure the functionality of the platform, building synergies and convergence of results, guided by EPR, AA, and DRR/DRM policies, plans, and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) at the national and those jointly prepared for the Cox's Bazar district, with specific attention to the affected Rohingya and Bangladeshi communities, including the youth and women in Ukhiya and Teknaf. **The primary functions and responsibilities of EPR WG members are as follows:**

### EARLY WARNING SYSTEM – FORECAST ANALYSIS, WARNING MONITORING & DISEMINATION

- i. Contribute and support in strengthening the efforts to establish inclusive community-based EWS in the Rohingya refugee camps and Bangladeshi communities to improve the existing systems for evidence-based emergency preparedness and response planning and anticipatory actions.
- ii. Support the establishment of a communication system to disseminate accessible forecasts and warnings (easy to read, as well as visual) to the intended receivers for timely dissemination among Rohingya and Bangladeshi communities, including youth and women.
- iii. Disseminate early warning bulletins or any warning messages/forecasts from the Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD) on weather-related hazards with advisory guidance on potential operational implications on camps and Bangladeshi communities' operations.
- iv. Share learning, best practices, and innovations relevant to improving multi-sectoral community-based, and community-driven EWS initiatives.
- v. Contribute to preparing advisory messages for emergency preparedness and anticipatory actions.

- vi. Support EWS lessons learned workshops to understand and analyze the information needs and preferred communication channels of the affected communities, including youth and women, identify gaps concerning accountability and community participation, and assess and document the forecasting and EW communications environment/landscape.

## **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS**

- i. In consultation with the working groups, other humanitarian actors, and the government, contribute to the EPR WG to conduct the yearly review of the joint multi-hazard, exposure, sensitivity, vulnerability, and risk analyses for Rohingya Refugee Camps and local communities of Cox's Bazar District.
- ii. Participate in the review of the multi-hazard response plan, inter-sectoral contingency plans, 72-hour response plans, the Joint Need Assessment (JNA), Sectoral assessments, preparedness checklist, and any relevant EPR guidelines to ensure operational readiness measures, are in place.
- iii. Ensure prepositioning of minimum resources and capacities to ensure major components of EPR are ready and operational during the actual response.
- iv. Contribute to the preparation, roll-out, and operationalization of relevant EPR policies such as the MHRP, SOPs, guidelines, and contingency plans/AA protocols.
- v. Support the harmonization of the EPR coordination mechanism consistent with the MHRP and EPR policy documents produced/approved by the group.
- vi. Take initiative for emergency preparedness and anticipatory actions to mitigate the negative impact of disasters and emergencies on refugee populations and the host communities. This includes aligning with the Joint Response Plan, Multi-Hazard Response Plan (MHRP), the National HCTT Humanitarian Preparedness and Response Plan, and relevant EPR, AA, and DRM plans.
- vii. Leverage existing expertise to strengthen inter-sectoral efforts and promote inclusion while identifying opportunities for cross-learning and capacity-building training within the humanitarian communities to bridge knowledge gaps.
- viii. Support knowledge exchange, documentation of lessons learned, and best practices to promote evidence-based decision-making.
- ix. Ensure regular field monitoring, coordination, and follow-up with Government partners, and appropriate agencies on preparedness and contingency stocks including prepositioning, and consequently facilitate effective information flows and inter-linkages between all EPR stakeholders.

## **COORDINATION OF EMERGENCY RESPONSE**

- i. Support the implementation of an emergency response plan (72 hours and beyond) according to the contingency plans, SOPs, MHRP, and AA protocols.
- ii. Ensure coordination and participation in the Joint Needs Assessments (JNA), Sectoral, or any other relevant assessments.
- iii. Exert efforts for the timely delivery of harmonized life-saving response and humanitarian services to the affected population, including specific targeting of the elderly, pregnant and lactating women, persons with disabilities, and children consistent with SOPs and humanitarian protocols.
- iv. Actively participate in the emergency response coordination mechanisms and support the activation/functionality of disaster management structures at all levels.
- v. In a case of low-scale emergency, coordinate and support the immediate phase of the response in close collaboration with the sector lead agencies, Sector Co-coordinators and EPR Focal Points from relevant agencies, and camp DMCs for which incidents be reported to the ISCG EPR Unit for further reporting to the ISCG Senior Management, ROCT, and SEG.
- vi. In the event of a large-scale emergency affecting both the camps and the Bangladeshi communities, the EPR WG may play a key coordination role in the holistic response in Cox's Bazar, in coordination with Government-led efforts through the coordination of the ISCG EPR unit.

## **POLICY ADVOCACY & LIAISON**

- i. Strengthen partnerships between government bodies, the military, UN agencies, local, national, and international NGOs, the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, donors, and other stakeholders.
- ii. Support to develop/update relevant policy guidance tools, policy briefs on EPR issues, and workshop proceedings.
- iii. Increase reciprocal engagement between humanitarian actors and Government counterparts on EPR and Disaster Risk Reduction and Bangladeshi community issues, and advocate for and support the development of a technical coordination mechanism.
- iv. Through the Sectors provide inputs to the situational reports (SITREP) produced during emergencies in close coordination with the ISCG EPR Unit.

- v. Through the Sectors provide support (e.g. provision of data/evidence and needed information) during the preparation of the emergency response flash appeals in close coordination with the ISCG EPR Unit.

## MEMBERSHIP AND LEADERSHIP

### COMPOSITION

#### 1. Members

All agencies, organizations, and networks, including youth/women/disability-led organizations working in the DRR/EPR/AA field within and outside the camps in Cox's Bazar, will be treated as members of the EPR WG. The WG will consist of dedicated EPR/DRR/DRM/AA focal persons from agencies, organizations, and networks with demonstrated capacity and have a DRR/DRM/EPR/AA portfolio of programs and projects, particularly in the Rohingya Refugee Response and the host communities.

The membership structure is designed for agencies, organizations, and networks, including youth/women-led organizations, not individuals. Organizations must nominate their Emergency Preparedness and Response (EPR) / Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)/DRM or AA focal person, along with an alternate/backup person, to be part of the Working Group (WG). The nominated representative shall be able to provide technical guidance and advisory recommendations on the plans, strategies, policies, and initiatives of the EPR WG. Efforts will be made to ensure gender, DRR/EPR/AA technical, and contextual knowledgeable members balanced group. All members will be registered in an email group for regular updates, technical discussions, and decision-making processes.

Furthermore, issues raised by the WG members may be escalated to the Inter-sector coordination, Refugee Operation Coordination Team (ROCT), and then the Strategic Executive Group (SEG) for final endorsement.

#### 2. Coordinator

The EPR Officer (EPRO) of the ISCG assumed the coordinator function of the EPR WG. The coordinator is responsible for initiating, and convening meetings, facilitating discussions, organizing venues, and coordinating the members during non-emergency and emergencies. In addition, the coordinator ensures the achievement of the community of practice objectives and the annual planned targets and deliverables. Advise the ISCG Deputy Coordinators, ISCG Senior Management, and ROCT on preparedness priorities and response initiatives as well as gaps concerning access, logistics, pre-positioning stocks, civil-military coordination, coverage, and other issues, and build consensus on possible solutions.

### MEETING FREQUENCY

#### Preparedness (non-emergency)

- The WG will meet once a month or more frequently if necessary, as decided by the EPR Coordinator and WG members.
- For seasonal preparation, the WG meeting shall be organized frequently before, during, and after the monsoon or cyclone season, as decided by the EPR Coordinator and overall community of practice/WG members.
- Meeting durations may vary according to the agenda items.
- Briefings for the ROCT and SEG co-chair will be periodic and specifically upon the advice of the ISCG Deputy and Principal Coordinators.

#### Emergency

- The EPR WG will conduct special and frequent meetings, including meetings on the necessary coordination that may be needed in activating the field-level coordination mechanisms (Upazila DMC and CDMCs) during emergencies as required.

### MEETING DYNAMICS

- The EPR focal point may invite other agencies' technical colleagues to attend meetings for technical support based on needs.
- Non-members may be invited to join the group on an ad-hoc basis, including representatives of the DRRO/DC office, and colleagues from outside Cox's Bazar, such as for national-level and regional efforts.

### RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER COORDINATION PLATFORMS:

**1. Inter-Sector:**

ISCG EPR unit will attend every inter-sector meeting on behalf of the WG and brief on the latest updates, recommendations, and actions.

**2. Dhaka based platforms:**

ISCG EPR unit will closely coordinate with the Dhaka-based coordination platforms on Emergency Preparedness and Response like HCTT, Anticipatory Action WG, Early Warning for all initiatives, and so on for getting regular updates from the country level as well as to harmonize the coordination and ensure the host community emergency response initiatives are coordinated. The SOP developed jointly by the ISCG and HCCT/ICCG for the coordination and operation modalities on EPR will be an integral part of the EPR WG ToR.