



Note on Multi-Year Frameworks: the Why, the How and the What

This note outlines the rationale and broad practical steps for ECW Multi-Year Frameworks.

FOR INFORMATION

The Why:

- The World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) called for a new way of working. One of the major changes is to shift focus towards multi-year planning and joint-programming in crisis and emergencies. Multi-year frameworks allows ECW and our stakeholders to address immediate needs, while also plan for at least three years ahead. This, in turn, provides the time and depth required to invest in local ownership and the thereby linked capacity-development of communities, systems and institutions in parallel.
- This leads us to the Grand Bargain, another outcome of the WHS. It expects the aid community to work in cooperation with local stakeholders and empower national partners (governments, civil society and communities, alike) and to trace the chain of funding unto results. Only multi-year frameworks provide the framework for such capacity-development and generation of outcomes, since traditional humanitarian responses are largely geared at delivering immediate aid (most often without building local capacity and ownership).
- The WHS also called for a shift from funding to financing. Multi-Year Frameworks are the vehicle for catalyzing financing. By having a three-year plan, an instrument for pooled funding is created. It allows budgeting for needs during a three-year period against a total amount required over the programming cycle period. Donors and other financing partners can then contribute against the plan in its entirety and make a three-year commitment. This in turn offers predictable funding.
- In the same vein, Multi-Year Frameworks provide a vehicle for Joint programming, which is another call of the WHS. Through Joint programming implementing partners (Governments, UN Agencies, NGOs and communities) come together in a cooperative and coordinated fashion, dividing responsibilities according to added value, towards a shared and collective outcome. In crisis, Direct Execution (DEX) is applied, meaning that a UN agency or HACT approved NGO manages the funds (Grants/Fund Manager), having the overall responsibility for disbursement to partners in the Joint Programme (through a steering committee).

The How:

- ECW is ultimately accountable for the results and money spent from the ECW fund. This requires oversight of and active engagement with grants managers and implementing partners to ensure that that ECW's five core-objectives are translated into action and results in the field. ECW, therefore, undertakes rapid assessment missions to countries selected for ECW funding. ECW does not assess

education sector needs, as this is the prerogative of in-country partners with far more in-country experience and context-specific knowledge (and numerous assessments already undertaken). ECW assessment missions are meant to ensure that the ECW Theory of Change and five core-objectives are integral to any ECW funding. This requires from ECW to serve a catalyst, bringing partners together, and providing support and technical assistance, as per the ECW core-objectives.

- Prior to such rapid assessment mission, ECW invites select partners to join. In this regard, ECW needs to keep ECW Joint Missions manageable without creating a sense of exclusion. Promoting joint missions and collaboration is at the heart of ECW's missions (and one of the five core-objectives). ECW Joint Mission are preceded by desk-reviews and joint mission planning, including all participants who develop the TORs and/or Agenda together.
- During mission planning, the ECW Director or the ECW Focal Point in the ECW secretariat or in-country liaises with the Humanitarian/Resident Coordinator. The ECW Focal Point also liaises with the Education Cluster leads, UNHCR in refugee situations, the potential Grants Manager agency, GPE and the Education Commission. It is common practice and courtesy to always inform the country's UN leadership of senior mission in advance. In doing so, ECW also prepares them for the mission, ensures that the Government is informed and included, secures the necessary support for logistics and security/access, mission schedule, as well as meetings with Government, the UN and Humanitarian Country Team, other coordination forum's, Development partners and civil society.
- If ECW is to move education to a higher and more central level in crisis, ECW Joint Missions need to engage the Humanitarian/Resident Coordinators, Heads of Agencies and Government. This is an important entry point for mobilizing their political support or commitment to education, which is imperative to accessing humanitarian funding mechanisms attached to the humanitarian coordination architecture. Engagement with EXCOM Members' representatives in-country is equally important. However, more practical mission details are discussed with the ECW immediate counterparts in-country, i.e. the government, the Global Cluster Lead and the potential UN agency grants-manager.
- Once in-country, a large part of the ECW Joint Mission revolves around intensive consultations and in bringing humanitarian and development partners together, which also includes civil society, refugees, IDPs and affected communities. This can be done through various formats (workshops, bilateral and larger meetings). ECW needs to ensure that when the schedule is being prepared, it leaves room for (a) an initial and collective briefing to stakeholders to explain the objective of ECW and the objective of the mission at the outset; (b) a debriefing before the Joint Mission departs. Throughout the consultations, the ECW Joint Mission's objective is to identify/confirm the partners with capacity to manage the grant depending on comparative advantage, and engage stakeholders to plan for a joint programme.

The What:

- Bringing the humanitarian and development actors together is the very first step. Since the WHS stressed the need for a holistic approach, this also means that actors beyond education be engaged. The bottom-line is that all expertise that can strengthen quality education in a holistic manner, and lend political and financial support, has the capacity and added value to do so, be engaged.
- During and following substantive consultations, the next step is to develop an outline of the joint plan/programme and a costed Results-Resource Framework (RRF). This should be done based on

discussions, consultations and brain storming with in-country stakeholders and in alignment with in-country assessment and national sector plans (if such exists). This will allow in-country stakeholders to guide the ECW Joint Mission in the development of the RRF, estimate the costs and total budget.

- In parallel to drafting the RRF, the ECW Joint Mission should preferably begin outlining the narrative of the Joint Programme document during the mission. Once the mission departs, the full narrative can be completed via e-mail together with a Task Force, the Education Cluster, including Grant’s Manager, Lead Agency, in-country EXCOM representatives, and others who are participating in the Joint programme.
- Our colleagues in-country will know where the needs are the greatest and most urgent, and the avenues for investing in more medium- and long-term capacity building. Once these are identified, these will form part of the RRF. During the drafting process of the RRF, activities, outputs and outcomes are defined and clustered as either immediate delivery of activities or as medium/long-term capacity-development/institution building. In bridging relief and development, immediate activities are designed so that these cater to urgent needs, while also laying the ground for medium- and long-term. Importantly, they run in parallel. The INEE Guidelines serve to guide consensus based policies and approaches.
- On completion, the RRF will be composed of activities for three years that provides immediate responses, running in parallel with system/policy and institution building. Both humanitarian and development actors will have contributed to the analysis, and be part of the implementation. The RRF will thus form the conceptual vision and implementation of a joint programme that bridges the relief and development gap. The narrative will then outline the context, the objectives, the strategy, risk-management, administrative set up, governance and other programmatic guidance, including substantive analysis, division of labor and accountability.
- The completion of the Joint Programme document will need to be done fairly fast and efficiently on arrival back in NY, so that ECW keeps its commitment to “humanitarian speed with development depth.” Once process is systematized, its duration between mission and funding disbursement should not exceed eight (8) weeks.

Buy-In for Financing

- During consultations and drafting process in-country, it is imperative to engage the government, as well as the donors, and secure their sense of ownership and support for the Joint Programme. As for the government, the immediate counterpart is the Minister of Education. If there exists a national sector plan, the Joint programme would need to link to it. Engagement with the Prime Minister’s Office and the Ministry of Finance are important to build political commitment to allocate resources to the national budget for the education sector (which is a challenge in crisis countries). As for the donors, they have their in-country funding portfolio for the country concerned and will be the primary natural partners in matching or catalyzing ECW seed-funds.
- The total budget for the three years does not need to be fully covered immediately. If there is strong donor interest, ECW may mobilize full funding at the outset. But normally, there will be a gap which will serve to spur continued resource mobilization – both in-country and globally – for this particular country’s ECW-funded Joint programme. So, if the total budget for three years is 30 million, ECW puts in \$3 million in seed-funds, and three donors put in \$5 million each, the gap to

fill will be \$12 million in the coming year or two. This money will come. When financial partners see action and results on the ground, they want to join.

- Finally, Multi-Year programming in crisis can be extended every three years, updated and revised as necessary. In this way, they also offer a solid framework for cooperation and investments that will last as long as the crisis remains. It does not exit and close down as soon as the crisis is over as this is not a linear shift. Rather, bridging the relief and development gap through multi-year programming means responding to the immediate humanitarian needs in parallel to making early development investments all through the recovery phase until the premises for sustainable development take hold.