

UNIFIED ACROSS THE HUMANITARIAN-DEVELOPMENT SPECTRUM

ANNEX B: GUIDING QUESTIONS WHEN CONSIDERING NGO FORUM MEMBERSHIP EXPANSION

INTRODUCTION

The following guiding questions are intended to form an easy and adaptable, yet comprehensive analysis to be undertaken by the humanitarian NGO forum director. The purpose of the final analysis is to support the decision-making process for the secretariat, steering committee, and members on whether to expand membership to include development NGOs.

Guiding questions are compiled from NGO fora lessons learnt and best practices from 13 NGO fora in four key areas:

- I. Why is the forum considering expanding membership to include development NGOs?
- II. Development NGO Mandates: Opportunities, challenges, and risks
- III. Forum structure and capacity
- IV. The way forward

The questions below are not all-encompassing and are meant to be adapted and expanded on to fit the uniqueness of each NGO forum.

QUESTIONS

- I. **WHY IS THE FORUM CONSIDERING EXPANDING MEMBERSHIP TO INCLUDE DEVELOPMENT NGOS?**
 - Changing Context. i.e., decreasing HRP funding, expanding Nexus/durable solutions programming, more Nexus focused interagency discussions, etc.
 - Secretariat/Steering Committee wants to have a better understanding of the issues across humanitarian-development spectrum.

- Request from within current membership.
 - If yes, what are the reasons?
 - Can the forum fulfill these expectations with an expanded membership of development NGOs in some capacity?
- Request from development NGOs to join forum.
 - If yes, have the NGOs given a reason(s) why they want to join/take part in the forum?
 - Can the forum fulfill their expectations?
 - Would these reasons compromise humanitarian principles?
 - If yes, can the forum mitigate the risks and how would this be done?
- Have informal discussions been undertaken with development NGOs to gauge their interest in taking part in the forum in some capacity?
 - If yes, why do they want to join/be part of the forum?
 - Can the forum meet their expectations/reasons?
 - Would there be risks to the forum, if yes, what are they?
 - How can the risks be mitigated?
- Are there other reasons for considering expanding?

II. DEVELOPMENT NGO MANDATES: OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES, AND RISKS

- Has a stakeholder mapping of development NGOs been conducted? If not, it is recommended to undertake one.
 - How many development NGOs would potentially join the forum?
 - What sectors/core areas of focus of the development NGOs? (i.e., peacebuilding, governance, system strengthening, human rights, etc.)
 - What are the areas of operation of the development NGOs?
 - Could development NGO activities and/or their relationships compromise the humanitarian principles of the forum?
 - If yes, how could they be mitigated?
 - How many and which NGOs work in the same areas of operation as the humanitarian response?

- For those working in the same areas of operation as the humanitarian response, could humanitarian principles be jeopardized in turn causing repercussions on the forum and/or its humanitarian members?
 - If yes, what are they and could they be mitigated?
- Are there other risks if development NGOs become members or take part in the forum in some capacity?
 - If yes, what are they and how could the risks be mitigated?
- Based on the identified risks, are they enough risks of concern that a risk management strategy be developed?
- What are at least three major operational and/or policy opportunities by having development NGOs take part in the forum in some capacity?
- What are at least three major challenges by having development NGOs take part in the forum in some capacity?

III. FORUM STRUCTURE AND CAPACITY

- Is the secretariat sufficiently staffed to manage additional members?
 - Consider all functions of the secretariat and the time currently spent on humanitarian issues, will staff have the time and capacity to meet increased demands?
 - Will the secretariat need to restructure to provide adequate support to all members?
 - If yes, will the restructure include non-humanitarian/Nexus technical specialist(s)? (Could this position also support the forum's multi mandated members?)
- If any new positions are required, is there funding available either within the forum's current funding portfolio, such as membership fees, or is there potential funding available?
 - If funding is required for a non-humanitarian technical specialist, is there eligible funding available?
 - Have conversations taken place with donors regarding the willingness to fund a non-humanitarian position?
- Does the advocacy/policy post holder(s) have the capacity (time, knowledge, etc.) to deliver non-humanitarian talking points, position papers, advocacy pieces, etc.?

- Consider the forum’s current humanitarian advocacy strategy—how could the forum maintain its principled advocacy portfolio while including priorities of development NGOs?
 - Will the advocacy strategy need to be adapted?
- Does the forum have robust advocacy sign-off procedures with enough options to get urgent humanitarian messages disseminated, such as ‘unbranded position papers’?
 - If not, review the advocacy sign-off procedures of peer NGO fora for examples of best practice.
- Will the SoGs need to be updated if development members become full members or observers, or take part in another way?
 - If yes, what will be the timeline for adapting the SoGs and ensuring they are signed by all members?

IV. THE WAY FORWARD

After analyzing the above information, reflect on what is the best way forward for your forum at this juncture in time. Should development NGOs be part of your forum in some capacity? If this is affirmative, decide what options you will present for including development NGOs into your forum, from various transition steps to observer status to full member.

Below are several suggestions for how to integrate development NGO actors into a forum that has previously been humanitarian-focused. Your forum may have other recommendations for including development NGOs which are not listed below.

- **Informal Meetings:** Organize ad-hoc meetings inviting development NGOs to seek humanitarian-development commonalities and work together on issues informally.
- **Nexus Working Group:** Create a regular working group where development members will be invited to attend—this could be a bridge to begin information exchange with current members towards achieving collective humanitarian–development operational outcomes.
- **Networking/Country Director informal events:** Organize Chatham House rules networking events/round tables where country directors from humanitarian and development NGOs can meet to discuss key issues affecting them.

- Addition to listservs: Information sharing as a first step towards building relationships.
- Observer: Open observer status to development NGOs. This would give development NGOs membership, but they would not have voting rights. It would provide an opportunity to start the networking process with the goal to strengthen relationships between full members and observers.
- Full Membership: Open current membership to development NGOs.

Finally, the NGO fora directors' own point of view as the 'coordination expert' is critical when presenting the entire analysis for consideration to the steering committee and membership. Don't forget to include your perspective and provide evidence from the analysis.