

Section three: disaster response in the first 72 hours



eprhandbook.actionaid.org/section3

Section 03

KEY POINTS

- In **RED** and **ORANGE** alert level emergencies, ActionAid expects members/country programmes to respond. IHART mobilises and co-ordinates the federation's resources to support the response. In **YELLOW** alert level emergencies, members/country programmes are advised to respond.

The member/country programme should:

- **Activate Emergency Preparedness Plan (EPP).**
- **Conduct a rapid assessment** to gather basic information about the disaster and impact on the communities that ActionAid works with.
- **Trained EFAST member(s) can be deployed** within 48 hours to the disaster-affected country if required.
- **Commence relief activities focusing on saving lives and addressing the immediate needs of the most vulnerable groups, women and children. In addition to food, water, shelter etc, the immediate response also includes information, psychosocial support, accountability and policy linkages.**

In addition:

- **Information management:** in emergencies, IHART acts as the central co-ordinating body for information on the disaster and ActionAid's response. A situation report (sitrep) is to be completed within 24 hours of the disaster and at regular intervals after that.

- **International Programme Managers (IPMs)** have responsibility for emergency preparedness and response in a specific geographic region. In orange and red alert emergencies, IHART may deploy an IPM to support the member/country programme.
- **Management response:** in **RED** and **ORANGE** alert emergencies, IHART supports the disaster-affected member/country programme to establish a management response system to oversee and direct effective and efficient delivery of the emergency response.
- **Oversight Group:** formed of International Senior Leadership Team members (or their representatives), and chaired by the Head of IHART, an Oversight Group is formed in orange and red alert disasters to help guide and monitor the disaster response.
- **Review and update the security assessment and security plan.** Staff security must be ActionAid's top priority in disasters. All countries where ActionAid has a presence must already have security risk analysis and plans in place **before** a disaster strikes. If ActionAid responds outside its usual operating area, security analysis and plans must be developed.
- Members/country programmes should sign **a new MOU with all partners** (even existing partners with whom they have worked prior to the emergency) at the start of the response.
- **Fundraising** must be started within **72 hours** of a disaster. IHART co-ordinates emergency fundraising. In **RED** alert disasters, all fundraising affiliates are expected to launch public or supporter appeals. In **ORANGE** alert disasters, while fundraising remains a priority, it is not expected that affiliates will launch public or supporter appeals, although if they feel that there is a particular opportunity for these, they should discuss with IHART and International Fundraising.
- **Communications in emergencies: the first 24/48 hours of any emergency are crucial for media, communications and fundraising. ActionAid must be immediately visible at the local, national and international level.** If required, deployment of an Emergency News Officer can be made in the first 12-24 hours of a rapid onset emergency or at an appropriate time during a slow onset emergency.
- **Co-ordination with UN clusters and INGO/NGO platforms:** it is particularly important for ActionAid to engage with relevant clusters from the start of the disaster response. The member/country programme should also engage with other country level actors including INGO/NGOs.

About this section

This section describes the actions that should be taken in the first **72 hours** after a disaster. It explains what the member/country programme should do, as well as the support that should be provided by other parts of the organisation. This section summarises the key information and actions that are required, and contains references to the annexes where there are relevant templates and detailed guidance on each activity.

It is designed as a practical guide for staff across the organisation who have a role in responding to disasters. It should ideally be read before an emergency, but can also be used as a resource to refer to during an emergency response.

Summary of key actions

The following table summarises the key actions that should be taken in the first **72 hours** following a sudden onset disaster, or following a recognised spike (as assessed by the member/country programme and/or IHART) in a slow onset disaster. A fuller description of each activity is included in the text below. The RASCI matrix at: <http://goo.gl/asTkFk> sets out in detail the roles that individuals and departments across the organisation are expected to play, and where accountability lies for each activity. The key point to remember is that during disasters, it cannot be 'business as usual' – different ways of working and different priorities will be needed.

In case of red and orange alert level emergencies, the ActionAid standard operating procedure (SOP) expects members/country programmes to respond. However, in yellow alert level emergencies, members/country programmes are advised to respond. This section defines expectations of IHART in such circumstances.



Implementing disaster response

What the member/country programme does (ORANGE & RED alerts)	What IHART does (ORANGE & RED alerts)	What IHART does (YELLOW alerts)	What other parts of the organisation do (ORANGE & RED alerts)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • activate preparedness plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • deploy EFAST members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • deploy EFAST members 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conduct a rapid assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • deploy International Programme Manager 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • commence immediate relief activities 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • deploy national EFAST 			



Information management

What the member/country programme does (ORANGE & RED alerts)	What IHART does (ORANGE & RED alerts)	What IHART does (YELLOW alerts)	What other parts of the organisation do (ORANGE & RED alerts)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> share initial details of disaster with IHART 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> review and circulate sitrep 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> review and circulate sitrep 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Director of CoCo circulates orange alert level
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> complete sitrep 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> propose alert level to Director of CoCo or CEO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> propose alert level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CEO circulates red alert level
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> establish process for information flow between ActionAid, partners and communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> co-ordinate federation wide information sharing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Head of IHART circulates yellow alert 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> fundraising countries link with IHART on fundraising opportunities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> include information in monthly emergencies update 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> co-ordinate federation wide information sharing 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> circulate Oversight Group meeting minutes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> include information in monthly emergencies update 	



Management response

What the member/country programme does (ORANGE & RED alerts)	What IHART does (ORANGE & RED alerts)	What IHART does (YELLOW alerts)	What other parts of the organisation do (ORANGE & RED alerts)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> establish emergency programme management structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Head of IHART chairs Oversight Group 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Director of CoCo establishes Oversight Group
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sign partner MOUs 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Global Security Advisor supports development of updated security assessment and plan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> update the security plan in view of any changes in external/internal security environment 			



Funding and fundraising

What the member/country programme does (ORANGE & RED alerts)	What IHART does (ORANGE & RED alerts)	What IHART does (YELLOW alerts)	What other parts of the organisation do (ORANGE & RED alerts)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> reallocate internal funds and use national level contingency funds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> consider DPRF request and disburse funds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> consider DPRF request and disburse funds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CoCo and International Finance support on reallocation of funds at country level
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> apply for ActionAid’s Disaster Preparedness and Response Fund (DPRF) funds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> co-ordinate fundraising appeals and donor proposals across affiliates 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> apply for donor rapid response funds (e.g. DFID Rapid Response Fund (RRF), ECHO Primary Emergency, START fund) as available 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> affiliates submit donor Rapid Response Fund proposals (e.g. ActionAid UK submit DFID RRF and ECHO proposals as relevant)
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> affiliates launch fundraising appeals and donor proposals if appropriate



Communications

What the member/country programme does (ORANGE & RED alerts)	What IHART does (YELLOW alerts)	What IHART does (ORANGE & RED alerts)	What other parts of the organisation do (ORANGE & RED alerts)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> holding statement developed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> work with International Communications Team (ICT) and member/country programme to put in place Rapid Action Communications in Emergencies (RACE) deployment if needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> work with ICT and member/country programme to put in place RACE deployment if needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ICT helps to develop and disseminate holding statement and key positions, connects with wider ActionAid comms network, updates international website and circulates statements and press releases to international media
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> request RACE deployment 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> rapid assessment should include information and communications needs of communities 			



Co-ordination

What the member/country programme does (ORANGE & RED alerts)	What IHART does (YELLOW alerts)	What IHART does (ORANGE & RED alerts)	What other parts of the organisation do (ORANGE & RED alerts)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> establish contact with UN clusters and relevant government agencies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> link with relevant UN clusters at the global level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> link with relevant UN clusters at the global level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> link with relevant UN clusters at the global level.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> link with other responding I/NGOs in country on prospective response plans. 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> apply for donor Rapid Response Funds (e.g. DFID RRF, ECHO Primary Emergency, START fund) as available. 			

Activate preparedness plan

Who does this: member/country programme

All ActionAid countries, but particularly those that are disaster prone (to both natural disasters and/or conflict) – see <http://goo.gl/asTkFk> – should develop an emergency preparedness plan before a crisis. This sets out the basic information that is required to assess and prepare for likely disasters. It also provides an action plan for the member/country programme to ensure that ActionAid staff, partners and communities know what to do in a disaster and are ready to respond quickly and effectively. During the 2012-2017 strategy period IHART is working with 24 countries identified as the most vulnerable to disasters, to develop and implement emergency preparedness plans. See <http://goo.gl/asTkFk> for the list of prioritised countries.

The preparedness plan includes a range of information, including:

- Analysis of the likely threats in ActionAid’s working areas (see risk assessment guidance presentation: <http://goo.gl/f9Qz5X>)
 - Basic information that will be needed to assess the scale of humanitarian need and ActionAid’s response (e.g. population figures for ActionAid’s working areas, economic and social data, community access and preferences for communications channels etc).
 - Pre-planned response activities for likely disasters (e.g. what ActionAid would do in the event of a flood or earthquake).
 - Details of pre-qualified suppliers and procurement processes.
 - Contact details for relevant staff, partners and external institutions.
 - Action plan to build the necessary capacity among communities, ActionAid staff and partners.
- Implementation of the plan should start immediately after it is developed,

and the member/country programme should be working to build capacity before emergencies. In the event of an emergency, the plan will be activated and the pre-agreed response activities will be put in place to guide the response. Further information on developing and implementing a preparedness plan is included in **Section 6** and a template can be found at: <http://goo.gl/asTkFk>

Deploy IHART International Programme Manager (IPM)

Who does this: IHART

In orange and red alert emergencies, IHART may deploy an IPM to support the member/country programme to implement an emergency response. The IPMs are senior members of the IHART team, who have responsibility for emergency preparedness and response in a specific geographic region. Currently there are two IPMs – one for Asia, and one for Africa and the Americas.

The IPM will be deployed within 48 hours, and will help the member/country programme start response activities in the first critical days after the disaster. She or he will also help to set up systems to manage the longer term response. The IPM will remain in country until the response can be handed over to the member/country programme team – deployments normally last between one week and one month.

Once a disaster has been declared as an **ORANGE** or **RED** alert, IHART will contact the member/country programme to arrange deployment of the IPM. IHART will arrange logistics for the deployment and will cover all the IPM's costs. The member/country programme will be expected to provide logistical support, for example in providing visa invitation letters and arranging local transport and accommodation.

If more than one orange or red alert crisis happens in the same region simultaneously, IHART will make additional staff available for deployment, either from the IHART team or the EFAST roster.



Conduct a rapid assessment

Who does this: member/country programme, with support of IHART

The purpose of a rapid assessment is to gather basic information about the disaster and the impact on the communities that ActionAid works with. It should describe: what has happened, who is affected, what help is required. The rapid assessment has several purposes:

- to allow ActionAid to make a timely decision on what scale of response (if any) is required
- to identify the needs of affected communities and the type of support they require
- to build relationships with communities affected by disasters
- to identify what additional capacity the member/country programme will require to respond
- to inform fundraising decisions around the need for public appeals and wider fundraising activities
- to inform communications to external audiences and for media
- to inform policy positions and advocacy work at various levels.

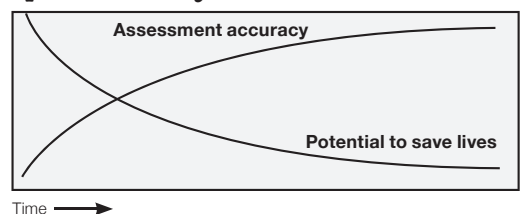
The rapid assessment is different to the detailed needs assessment, which should be conducted later in the process (see **Section 3**). A needs assessment generates detailed and specific information about the needs of disaster-affected communities, and is used to develop a detailed Emergency Response and Resilience Building Plan (ERRP). The rapid assessment should focus on gathering 'just enough information' to inform decisions on whether to respond and what the immediate priorities should be.

When should a rapid assessment be done?

The rapid assessment should start as soon as possible

after the disaster and be completed within 72 hours or sooner. The information may not be perfect or complete, but it is critical to have the basic information within the first two to three days. This is because the quicker ActionAid can start responding, the higher the chance of saving lives. The assessment can be updated and more detailed information added later – the rapid assessment only has to provide 'just enough' information to enable us to start responding

Speed vs accuracy



From a fundraising perspective, it is also important to have basic information quickly. For example, the DFID rapid response facility requires that applications be submitted within 12 hours of the call being made (usually very soon after a disaster hits), whilst ECHO primary emergency funding applications need to be submitted within 72 hours of the call for proposals being issued, in order to secure funding for the first one to three months of the response. These funding mechanisms are described below under fundraising.

What information needs to be gathered in the rapid assessment?

The rapid assessment should describe what has happened and what the impact has been. Much of it is common sense. Imagine you are the first person to arrive at the scene of a disaster – if you had to explain to your colleagues back at the office what you saw, what kinds of information would you think were important? You would probably tell them: what sort of damage you could see; how many people had been killed and injured; what help those people were asking for. The rapid assessment simply provides a framework to guide you in collecting this kind of basic information and communicating it in a way that is easy to understand and use.

Key questions include:

- How many people have been affected? In what ways are they affected (killed, injured, houses damaged, houses destroyed, crops destroyed)?
- What does the community identify as their immediate needs?
- What support is already being provided/planned by other actors and the communities themselves?
- How do communities expect the situation will develop over the next month?
- What has been the specific impact on women?
- What are the information needs of the community, and what communication channels are operational after the disaster?

The checklist in **Annex 3** sets out suggested detailed questions to be asked for a rapid assessment.

Compare these two pictures of Kenya:



The picture on the left would allow you to make a detailed description of the boy. But, by seeing only half the picture you would miss the most significant thing that is going on – the Kenyan drought. The picture on the right gives you a much better idea of the whole story.

The golden rule is:

half the whole picture is better than the whole of half the picture!

Boy stands in front of livestock lost to the drought, Kenya.
PHOTO: PIERS BENATAR/PANOS PICTURES/ACTIONAID

Who should ActionAid work with to conduct the rapid assessment?

In an emergency, it is likely that other humanitarian actors will be working in the affected area (community based organisations, local or national government, other INGOS, national NGOs, UN agencies, etc). ActionAid should work together with other actors where possible to avoid duplication and to maximise the information that is generated on the impact of the crisis. If the UN clusters are activated, ActionAid should share rapid assessment data with other cluster members, and participate in joint assessments where possible.

How should the information be gathered?

Secondary data

The rapid assessment can include estimations, based on pre-collected data and past experience. For example, the Emergency Preparedness Plan (EPP) will include data on how many people live in certain areas, including how many people fall within vulnerable groups. You can use this to estimate how many people may be affected, based on your sample. It is important to define what is data that has been collected from communities, and what are assumptions.

You should also consult secondary sources that are available, for example rapid assessments produced by the government or other NGOs, Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) situation reports, information updates from the UN clusters, media reports etc.

These can provide important information about the national or regional situation, which can supplement and contextualise data from ActionAid's working areas. Information can be collated from a range of sources such as internet searches, social networks, donor networks, phone conversations with local partners, etc. Conducting some research before going to the community also allows the assessment team to share information on the disaster and what support is available. For example, they may be able to alert the community to relief that is on its way, or inform people what level of compensation they are entitled to from the government. For orange and red alert disasters, IHART's Information Officer (contact details **Annex 4**) will also support the member/country programme to identify and analyse secondary data at the global level.

Primary data

The rapid assessment should include information gathered directly from the community. As time and human resources will be limited, you should consider selecting a representative sample of communities from the affected area. When selecting villages, consider the following factors to ensure you have a representative sample: different ethnic communities, distance from the road/towns, distance from the centre point of the disaster, etc. For reasons of practicality you may have to select based on accessibility (for example it may be impossible to reach certain areas due to flooding or conflict). The rapid assessment report should make clear how the sample was selected.

A range of participatory tools can be used to collect this data. Possible methods include transect walks, maps, calendars and time lines. It is highly likely that there will be people within the country team who have expertise on participatory methodologies who should be consulted on best practice. A book which is highly recommended for reading is *Methods for community participation*, by Somesh Kumar. While it may be difficult to conduct participatory surveys in disaster-affected areas, some of these tools may be useful in giving a quick sense of the scale of the disaster. You will need to consider that communities are under high stress when responding to these surveys. It is important that any information collated during a rapid needs assessment is triangulated and validated.

Links to additional reading materials for rapid assessments can be accessed here: <http://goo.gl/wCKl4q>
In orange and red alert disasters, IHART's International Programme Manager will be responsible for co-ordinating the rapid assessment process and drawing together the information collected.

How should the information be shared?

The data and conclusions of the rapid assessment should first be shared with the affected communities. Before leaving, the team should feed back to community members (particularly women) how they have understood the situation and what they understand as the needs and priorities of the community. They should also explain what will happen next – how the information will be used, when ActionAid will return and what the community can expect. It is important to be careful about managing expectations and not promising things that ActionAid cannot deliver. The team should emphasise that ActionAid will work with the community to respond to the disaster, and will support the community to be the primary responders.

The results of the rapid assessment must also be sent as quickly as possible to IHART, who will share this information across the federation. The rapid assessment checklist in **Annex 3** can be used as a template for writing up the rapid assessment. This is designed so that the information is easy to use for the different end-users (member/country programme staff responsible for designing the response, fundraisers, communications staff, IHART etc). However, information gathered in the rapid assessment does not always need to be communicated in a long, formal report. It can be shared through emails and phone calls if this is more convenient. The most important thing is for the information to be shared quickly – if this means putting it in an email or phoning IHART (contact details **Annex 4**), please do this! The report can follow later.

Guidance on conducting a rapid information assessment (to identify lifesaving information needs, communications channels available etc.) can be found at <http://infoasaid.org/diagnostic-tools>

Country level media landscape guides developed by the Infoasaid project are also available online for 22 countries. They provide comprehensive and detailed information on the media and telecommunications landscape, including details of coverage and community usage of radio, television, newspapers, mobile phones etc. <http://infoasaid.org/media-and-telecoms-landscape-guides>

**FURTHER READING AND RESOURCES**

More about the RASCI matrix: <http://goo.gl/asTkFk>
List of countries ActionAid has graded as disaster-prone:
<http://goo.gl/asTkFk>
Preparedness plan template: <http://goo.gl/asTkFk>
Rapid assessment checklist: **Annex 3**

IHART information officer contact details: **Annex 4**
Links to additional reading materials for rapid assessments:
<http://goo.gl/wCKI4q>
Country level media landscape guides:
<http://infoaid.org/media-and-telecoms-landscape-guides>

**Commence immediate relief activities****Who does this: member/country programme**

There is no standard set of activities that constitute emergency response – it depends on the context and the needs of the community. The response should start as soon as possible; it can even start in parallel to the rapid assessment if certain needs are evident. For example, if it is clear that there has been widespread damage, when visiting communities to conduct the rapid assessment you could distribute emergency supplies of food, water and emergency shelters to sustain people through the first days of the emergency until the response programme can be started at scale.

During the first 72 hours, the focus should be on **immediate lifesaving activities**. Examples of such activities include:

- Distribution of emergency food supplies (these should be culturally appropriate and based on the normal food consumed by local communities). Think about how the community will prepare the food – if people have no cooking utensils or fuel you will need to either provide these or provide ready prepared meals, or food that can be eaten without cooking.
- Provision of emergency drinking water supplies.
- Distribution of emergency shelters (tarpaulin sheets, tents) and blankets.

- Supporting community committees to organise search and rescue activities (if this is not being organised by specialist agencies or government). Ideally this expertise would have been built as part of the preparedness plan and necessary equipment and skills provided at community level, but it may be necessary to provide tools and equipment identified by the community.
- If you can, community representatives should be involved in selecting samples and in procuring items from local markets. But in situations where this cannot be done immediately (e.g. if villages are cut off from markets or where markets are not functioning) it may be necessary to take quick decisions on behalf of the community and provide urgently needed items to bridge the first few days until the bulk of procurement and distribution can be started.
- Establishing two-way communications channels and providing lifesaving information to communities. This could include key messages to help communities avoid risk (such as health and hygiene messages, information on aftershocks following an earthquake etc) and information on assistance available from ActionAid and other agencies (such as planned relief distributions, registration points, government assistance announcements).

- Establish basic accountability mechanisms to ensure accountability to disaster-affected communities – these should be in place right from the start of the response and can be very simple things. For example, provide information on how communities can provide feedback or raise complaints (such as a phone line, complaints box, community focal points etc). Also provide information on the organisation and our response (including what will happen with the rapid assessment findings, selection criteria for who is receiving aid, what the next steps are) – this can be through community meetings, display boards or simple leaflets.

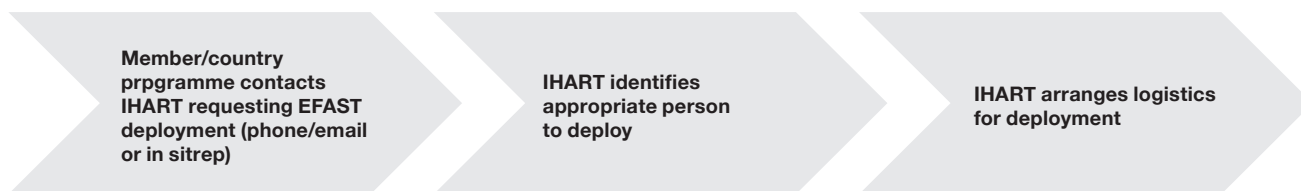
As you will see from the list above, these activities are highly dependent on context (geographic location, time of year, type of disaster etc). For example, it would not be a priority to distribute blankets in very hot weather, or to distribute temporary shelters if there was not widespread damage to housing. The most important thing is to follow the three Cs:

- **Context:** make decisions based on your (or partners’) knowledge of the local situation, and as soon as possible through consultation with the community. This means being aware of cultural or religious factors (providing clothing and food that people are familiar with and that they will be able to use), thinking about the disaster and the type of impact that is likely to have occurred (e.g. is it a low lying area where houses are likely to have been destroyed by flooding, or an exposed mountainous area where temperatures will be cold at night?).
- **Common sense:** emergency response is not a mysterious art completely different from your everyday experience and expertise. Based on your knowledge of the context and the information available, use your judgement to apply the key principles, and take the decisions that make the most sense at the time. You might not be right every time, but using common sense will almost certainly do better than if you try to follow a ‘cut and paste’ approach that has been designed elsewhere.
- **Consistency:** right from the outset, it is important to build trust with the community and follow the principles that ActionAid applies in its overall work. For example, we prioritise women’s leadership in the response process, we are accountable to the communities we work with, and we take sides with people living in poverty and exclusion. Consistency also means providing information to people about what ActionAid is doing (how the results of the rapid assessment will be used, when ActionAid staff will be returning, what resources we have available to support communities) and following through on promises made.

Deploy global EFAST members

Who does this: IHART

EFAST is a roster of trained practitioners across the ActionAid federation, who are available to provide additional capacity to members/country programmes in emergencies (**Section 1**). They can be deployed within 48 hours to a disaster-affected country.



The member/country programme can request an EFAST deployment by contacting IHART – this can be done by phone or email (contact details **Annex 4**) or by including a request in the sitrep (**Annex 5**). IHART will then match the requirements of the country programme to the list of EFAST members and identify the appropriate person. IHART will arrange the logistics for deployment (booking flights, linking with the member/country programme to arrange visas, pre-deployment briefings, etc). IHART will provide advice and guidance to the member/country programme on how to support the EFAST deployee while in country.

The costs for EFAST deployments (flights, accommodation, salary costs for deployee) can be met in different ways depending on the situation. If the member/country programme has funds available from existing budgets or reserves, they will be asked to cover the EFAST deployment costs. If the member/country programme is not able to cover the costs, then the deployment can be paid from IHART’s emergency response fund, the DPRF, (see **Section 3**). If subsequent appeal funds are raised, this money can be used to reimburse the deployment costs to the DPRF. IHART will discuss financing of the EFAST deployment with the member/country programme when a request is made.

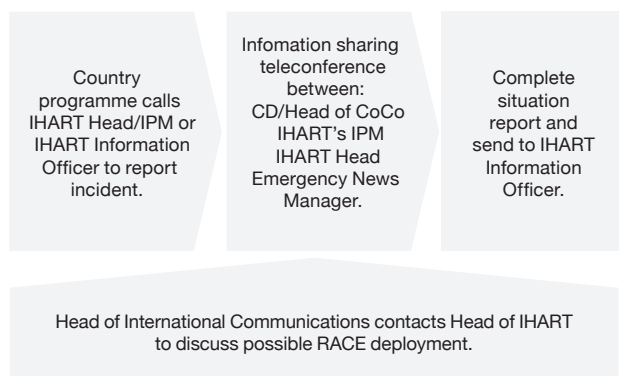
Deploy national EFAST members

Who does this: member/country programme

In addition to global EFAST (see above), ActionAid also has national EFAST rosters in some countries. This is a list of external consultants, volunteers and staff who are available to provide additional capacity to the member/country programme to support disaster response.

As part of the preparedness plan, it is important to consider arrangements for deploying national EFAST members, including consultancy contracts, insurance, security arrangements, line management and supervision by ActionAid staff etc.

The member/country programme is responsible for covering all costs relating to national EFAST deployments.



Information management

Ensuring the right information is available at the right time is critical to enable ActionAid to undertake timely, effective and accountable humanitarian responses, as well as to co-ordinate with others and capitalise on fundraising, media and influencing opportunities.

Managing information during a humanitarian emergency is a crucial part of any operation. Knowing what is happening, where, who is affected and why, the causes of the disaster, what affected people's needs are and what the policy and funding environment is like is essential to enable ActionAid to make decisions around the strategic direction of our response. Conversely, a lack of information can hinder our ability to initiate a rapid programme response, which may cost lives and increase suffering, and may mean we miss the vital window of opportunity for building our profile as a responding agency and raising much-needed income for response.

Share initial details of disaster with IHART

Who does this: country programme, linking with IHART

As per ActionAid's standard operating procedures for orange and red alert emergencies, (see **Annex 2**) a teleconference will take place in the initial aftermath of a disaster between the respective Country Director/Head of Country Co-ordination (latter in the case of multi-country disaster); the IHART International Programme Manager and the Head of IHART.

The purpose of the telecon is to share any information relating to the emergency, specifically:

- Scale and location of disaster.
- Type of disaster and cause of disaster.
- Likely impact of disaster on ActionAid LRP's, including on sponsored children and families.
- Immediate safety/security concerns of staff/partners.
- Immediate capacity gaps identified at country level.

This information will help guide further actions on operational response, alert level declarations and subsequent fundraising and communications activity.

Complete ActionAid situation report (sitrep)

Who does this: member/country programme, support from IHART

The situation report is an internal ActionAid template that is used to share information on the disaster across the organisation. The first sitrep should be completed within 24 hours of the disaster and sent by email to the IHART Information Officer and relevant regional IHART International Programme Manager (contact details **Annex 4**).

The sitrep includes the following information:

- description of what has happened and the impact of the disaster
- analysis of needs of the communities ActionAid works with
- ActionAid's planned response
- member/country programme's proposal for the alert level (yellow, orange, red)
- funding needs and request for DPRF funds
- request for EFAST deployments
- initial communications content
- overview of other actors' responses.

The sitrep template and guidance on how to complete each question is included in **Annex 5** and at:

<http://goo.gl/asTkFk>

When IHART receives the sitrep, the regional IHART IPM will review the information and ask for any clarifications from the country team. IHART will then use the information to make a recommendation on the alert level. IHART will also circulate the sitrep across ActionAid and make it available on the HIVE. The information will be used to inform various functions at the global level, including fundraising, communications, policy and advocacy.

Updated sitreps should be submitted regularly, as follows:

- For the first week following the disaster: every 24 hours in the case of red alert disasters, every 48 hours in orange alert disasters, weekly in yellow alert disasters.
- After the first week following the disaster (from day eight onwards): weekly in the case of orange and red alert disasters. Information requirements for yellow alert emergencies will depend on whether funds for response have been secured internationally (i.e. outside the disaster-affected country) and will be advised by the IHART Information Officer.

Establish process for information flow from affected areas to ActionAid and vice versa

Who does this: member/country programme

It is important to establish a system for receiving regular updates from the disaster-affected area/s, so that ActionAid is up-to-date with the latest situation, and can make informed decisions about the direction of our response. Additionally, establishing mechanisms through which disaster-affected communities can link directly with partners and ActionAid, to ask questions, complain, feed back on our programming, share their concerns etc. is a fundamental component of our accountability agenda and one that should be programmed into our emergency response from the start.

At the same time, it is critical to ensure that ActionAid is regularly linking with partners (and partners with communities) to share information on early warning/forecasts regarding whether the situation is likely to deteriorate or improve, as well as information on ActionAid's response plans and budgets. In addition, ActionAid can play an important role in providing information on where and how communities can access goods, services and information, both relating to ActionAid's programming and to the wider response of the government and other actors.

Two-way information flow systems should be activated in the immediate aftermath of the disaster, linking communities, partners, ActionAid in the disaster-affected country and IHART (who will link with the wider ActionAid federation).

Co-ordinate federation-wide information sharing

Who does this: IHART

In emergencies, IHART acts as the central co-ordinating body for information on the disaster and ActionAid's response. Information flow both from the disaster-affected country to the wider federation, and from the federation back to the affected country, is co-ordinated primarily through the IHART Information Officer, linking with other parts of IHART (Team Business Manager on fundraising and the regional International Programme Manager on programming and policy).

The IHART Information Officer is responsible for sharing information on the disaster and ActionAid's response with colleagues across the ActionAid federation – primarily communications staff, fundraising staff, colleagues from the Country Co-ordination and Programmes Directorates, SLT members and relevant Country Directors. This includes:

- Situation reports (or email updates in the absence of a sitrep), circulated daily for the first week following a red alert disaster or every other day in the case of an orange alert disaster; subsequently circulated on a weekly basis after the first week following the disaster.
- Oversight Group meeting minutes, circulated following each Oversight Group meeting.

- Monthly emergencies update email, a summary email circulated once a month sharing information on ActionAid's responses to disasters across different countries. The IHART Information Officer is also responsible for collating information requests from federation members, and either answering these directly or linking with the disaster-affected country for additional information. By channelling information requests in this way, IHART seeks to reduce the burden on the disaster-affected country and limit the number of email communications between multiple groups. IHART is also responsible for co-ordinating information on international fundraising opportunities, sharing these with the disaster-affected country and supporting subsequent development of fundraising proposals. Again, this co-ordination function, led by the IHART Team Business Manager, aims to reduce the burden on the disaster-affected country as well as keep relevant stakeholders across the federation up-to-date on the status of different funding opportunities.



Establish an emergency programme management structure

Who does this: member/country programme, with support from IHART

To manage the disaster response effectively, it is important that all ActionAid staff and partners clearly understand what tasks they are expected to carry out. The actions described below will help to ensure this happens. In orange and red alert disasters, the IHART IPM will be responsible for supporting the member/country programme to put this programme management structure in place. In yellow alerts, it is up to the member/country programme to decide if the emergency programme management structure is required.

Management response

As the disaster response progresses, the country programme will develop an Emergency Response and Resilience Building Plan (ERRP). This is described in the **Section 4**. However, there are certain processes and systems that need to be put in place in the first 72 hours to make sure that the programme is effective.

- **Appoint an Emergency Response Manager (ERM):** the ERM is a member of the ActionAid member/country programme staff who is responsible for the implementation of the disaster response programme. The ERM will have an existing role within ActionAid and will be expected to shift role when a disaster happens. In orange and red alert disasters, the IHART IPM will take on this role until a suitable candidate can be identified.

The Country Director is responsible for selecting and appointing the ERM, with the input of the IPM. Normally, the ERM will be chosen from senior members of the member/country programme team (for example the LRP manager) with experience in disaster response. The ERM will continue in this role until the disaster response is complete or until they can hand over responsibility to an external ERM who is recruited to manage the response in the longer term (this may happen in major emergencies). **Annex 6** contains a generic ToR for the ERM, which describes the main functions of this role, and the necessary skills and experience. This should be adapted for the specific context. If the country programme is unable to identify a suitable candidate for the ERM, they can request an EFAST deployment.

- **Establish an Emergency Response Team (ERT):** the ERT is the group of ActionAid staff and partners who are responsible for implementing the disaster response. The group is led by the ERM. The ERT would normally consist of four to six people and should be of decision-making level; they should also represent the different geographical areas where response is being implemented as well as different functions. Their role is to plan, co-ordinate and review the progress of the disaster response. The group should meet daily, either by phone or in person to share updates and plan activities. The ERT should agree on clear protocols for information sharing (internally and externally).

Annex 7 contains a generic ToR for the ERT, which describes its main functions and suggestions for membership of the group. This ToR should be adapted for the specific context.

• **Cover ongoing staff**

responsibilities: the Country Director should ensure that arrangements are in place to cover the ongoing responsibilities (i.e. planned activities not related to the disaster response) of staff who are engaged in the disaster response. It is the responsibility of the Country Director to decide on the most appropriate way to do this: he or she may decide to temporarily suspend non-emergency programmes; to bring in additional temporary staff; or to allocate additional responsibilities to staff not engaged in the disaster response. The Country Director should remember that ActionAid is obliged to respond to disasters that affect the communities that ActionAid works with, and that orange and red alert level disasters must take precedence over 'normal' programmes.

Country Directors should discuss with line managers in Country Co-ordination for advice on suspending or delaying work not related to the emergency (for example, deadlines related to country strategy paper development etc). Once decisions around re-prioritisation have been taken, the Country Director should communicate them widely (what is being stopped, deferred or reduced) within the country programme, to partners, to donors (if appropriate) and to the Secretariat (if appropriate) so the federation recognises that it is not 'business as usual'. This will ensure employees are not held accountable for work/outputs that were in their original plans.

• **Define responsibilities and accountabilities of staff:**

the functions of key members of staff should be clearly set out, including their authority levels and the processes of decision-making. These can be defined through ToRs, job descriptions or a RASCI matrix, as appropriate. Much of this can be done in advance of a disaster, and can form part of the emergency preparedness plan (see **Section 6**).

The pre-defined roles and responsibilities can then be reviewed and activated in a disaster. Also look at the START Network humanitarian competency framework, which describes the important competencies and behaviours for humanitarian workers – this can be used to write/amend job descriptions and develop competency-based questions for recruitment interviews (see <http://goo.gl/asTkFk>).

• **Link management structures to the Oversight Group:** in orange and red alert disasters, an Oversight Group will be established to guide and monitor the response. This is described in more detail below.



Establish MOUs with existing and new partners

Who does this: members/country programme

During disasters, it may be necessary to review existing partnerships and put in place new partnership arrangements. For example, members/country programmes may work with partners who are excellent in specific fields of long-term development; they may not, however, have the necessary skills to implement disaster response. For the majority of disaster responses, ActionAid will continue to work with existing partners. However in some cases, we may need to establish new programmes with existing partners, or establish new partnerships in areas where the disaster response is being implemented.

At the start of the response, members/country programmes should sign a new MOU with all partners (even existing partners with whom they have worked prior to the emergency). This MOU should outline new commitments regarding the implementation of the emergency programme. A template for an emergency MOU is currently being finalised.

As in the rest of ActionAid's work, partnerships in emergencies are based on shared perspectives, understanding and vision. They are based on mutual respect, accountability and complementarities. There will be clear roles and responsibilities, harnessing collective power to achieve common goals. Identifying and building relationships with potential partners in disaster-prone areas is an important part of ActionAid's preparedness work. According to ActionAid's partnership policy, the following documents are the core accountability documents that every partnership process should aim to formulate, review and approve. They should be accessible, and should be retrievable by management, programme and finance staff and auditors at any time during the partnership.

- **Partnership agreement** – this may be short- or long-term and may be a one-off agreement or renewable by mutual agreement. (See *Supporting partners in security risk management*: <http://goo.gl/bmGds3>)
- **Programme memorandum** (or project document) – this is an annex to the partnership agreement, detailing the mission-level objectives, specific activities, budget and monitoring/success indicators, with clear time frames and means of verification. It also includes a grant disbursement schedule.
- **Programme and financial reporting formats** – the format and content is agreed with the partners at the time of signing the partnership agreement. They may be dependent on donor reporting requirements, where ActionAid donors have specific information needs.



Review and update the security assessment and security plan

Who does this: member/country programme, with support from Global Security Advisor

Staff security must be ActionAid's top priority in disasters and must be an integral part of all disaster response programmes. All countries where ActionAid has a presence must already have security risk analysis and plans in place before a disaster strikes. If ActionAid responds outside its usual operating area, security analysis and plans must be developed as outlined below. Provisions for staff security should be guided by the global staff security policy, which is summarised here: <http://goo.gl/XOT2kf>

In the first 72 hours, the country programme must:

- **Conduct an updated security analysis:** at the very start of the disaster response programme, the security analysis should be updated to determine potential risks and threats to staff and assets. Disasters can dramatically change the security context and the safety of staff

implementing disaster response must be seriously considered. If the response is outside usual operating areas, security analysis must be conducted within 24-48 hours. A template for the security analysis and guidance on how to complete it can be found at <http://goo.gl/asTkFk>

- **Update the security plan:** based on the security analysis, appropriate mechanisms should be put in place to mitigate and manage security risks. The security plan must be in place before an emergency occurs, but is to be updated in the first 72 hours and shared with country programme staff and partners. This should be done in close consultation with the designated security focal point (this person should be identified and trained in advance of the emergency and should already have worked on putting minimum security standards in place). See guidance: <http://goo.gl/mH1Luk>

It should also be shared with the Global Security Advisor (contact details **Annex 4**). <http://goo.gl/asTkFk> contains a template for the security plan and guidance for how to complete it. When responding to an emergency outside usual operating areas, a security plan must be developed within the first 72 hours. The security analysis and security plan should be regularly reviewed and updated, and the implications for the delivery of the disaster response programme considered. This should be done with input from partners and formal sources, such as government and inter-agency mechanisms. ActionAid should also continue to share information on security risks with partners and with other humanitarian actors, for example through the UN cluster system.

Establish Oversight Group

Who does this: Director of Country Co-ordination, or Chief Executive Officer

The Oversight Group (OG) is a group of senior staff from across the ActionAid federation, which is formed in orange and red alert disasters to help guide and monitor the disaster response.

The purpose of the OG is to:

- Provide organisational risk management (including reputational, financial and staff security risks).
- Be accountable for the co-ordinated support of the ActionAid federation to the implementing country or countries.
- Approve the emergency response and resilience programme framework, to ensure effective collaborative efforts and synergies.
- Be accountable for making links to longer term development programmes.

The OG will be established within 24 hours of an orange or red alert level being declared. In orange alert disasters, the OG will be established by the Director for Country Co-ordination. In red alert disasters, the OG is established by the Chief Executive Officer. In both orange and red alert disasters, the OG is chaired by the Head of IHART.

The OG normally includes the Country Director(s) of the affected country/ies, representatives from the Country Co-ordination Directorate, representatives from affiliates fundraising for the disaster response and representatives from International Secretariat functions such as communications, fundraising and policy. The membership of each OG is selected by the Director of Country Co-ordination in orange alert disasters and the CEO in red alert disasters, based on advice from IHART. The OG meets weekly in the initial stages of red and orange alert disasters. As the response progresses, the frequency of the meetings may reduce to monthly and then quarterly – this decision is taken by the Chair of the Oversight Group. The recommendation to cease the OG is taken by the group collectively; the decision is taken and finally communicated by the person responsible for originally initiating the Group (the CEO in red alert emergencies, or the International Director of County Co-ordination in orange alert emergencies). When this happens, responsibility for the management of the disaster response moves to the Country Director of the affected country.

Annex 2 contains a generic ToR for the Oversight Group, which sets out the scope and functions of the group and suggested membership. IHART is responsible for providing technical and administrative support to the group.



Fundraising

Reallocate internal funds and access national contingency funds

Who does this: member/country programme, with support of Country Co-ordination and International Finance

Fundraising in emergencies, particularly for smaller scale and slow onset disasters, can be a challenge and often the fastest and most appropriate source of funding for disaster response is at the national level. In most cases, the member/country programme is expected to make efforts to access national level funds before seeking funding support from the wider ActionAid federation or global donors. These sources can include:

- ActionAid country level contingency funds: members/country programmes are expected to hold contingency funds for disaster response, and these should be activated to fund immediate relief activities and the rapid assessment. The country programme should be clear before a disaster how these contingency funds are to be used and the criteria for accessing them.
- Reallocation of ActionAid budgets: if a medium-large scale (orange or red alert) disaster affects the communities that ActionAid works with, ActionAid is obliged to respond and prioritise the disaster response over existing programmes. If appropriate, the member/country programme should look at ways to reallocate existing budgets to support the disaster response. This should be done in consultation with Country Co-ordination, International Finance and, if necessary, donors.

- External country level contingency funds: if appropriate contingency funds exist at the national level (for example government or the UN), ActionAid should apply for these. To save time in a disaster response context and to increase chances of success, ActionAid should have identified in advance any external contingency funds, built relationships with the donor and ensured that they are familiar with the application requirements and procedures.

The member/country programme will be expected to demonstrate that they have attempted to access funds for disaster response at the national level (both internally and externally) before applying to other sources, such as the DPRF (see below). This is to make sure that ActionAid's central funds in the DPRF are used for the situations of greatest need, and to ensure that a strong argument can be made to external donors that their support is needed. However, in very large scale crises this requirement may be waived – if the scale of need is obvious and seeking funding at the national level would put an unnecessary burden on the member/country programme or pose a reputational risk for the federation, then international funds may be provided immediately.

Apply for DPRF funds

Who does this: member/country programme, with support from IHART

If the member/country programme is unable to secure adequate funds for disaster response at national level, then they can apply for funding from ActionAid's internal **Disaster Preparedness and Response Fund (DPRF)**. This fund is managed by IHART. A request for DPRF funding can be made immediately after a disaster, and funds can be released within one week (though it is often much sooner) of a request being approved. The request for funding can be made in one of the following ways:

- By completing the relevant section in the ActionAid situation report (see **Annex 5**). This should contain a brief outline of planned activities and a top line budget.
- By submitting a written or verbal request (by phone, email, SMS etc.) to the Head of IHART (contact details **Annex 4**). This should contain a brief outline of planned activities and a top line budget.
- Through mutual agreement between the Head of IHART and the relevant Country Director (or Head of Country Co-ordination in the case of a multi-country response) in cases of human resource (EFAST) deployments.

Decisions to disburse DPRF funding are made by the Head of IHART, based on the following:

a) Overarching criteria: applications to the DPRF must meet both of these criteria to be successful:

- The member/country programme must be able to demonstrate that they have used any contingency funds available for disasters at national level and have made attempts to find resources from within existing budgets. In exceptional circumstances, where the scale of the disaster and the response required is such that a lack of immediate response would carry a reputational risk for ActionAid, this criteria may be waived.
- The work must clearly relate to disaster preparedness or response.

b) Purpose of the work: applications to the DPRF must meet at least one of these criteria to be successful:

- The work must demonstrate potential for policy leverage, i.e. strengthening the efforts of ActionAid/partners to secure relevant policy outcomes.
- The work must contribute to increasing the visibility of the crisis and/or ActionAid's approach to emergencies.
- The work must respond to clear humanitarian needs within communities that ActionAid works with, that are not being met by other agencies.

c) Fundraising potential: applications to the DPRF must meet at least one of these criteria to be successful:

- The DPRF disbursement represents co-funding for a grant secured by an institutional donor (e.g. ECHO).
- The work demonstrates clear potential for leveraging further funds from external donors at the national or international level.
- The member/country programme must be able to demonstrate a strong likelihood they will be able to secure sufficient funding that will enable them to reimburse the money to the DPRF (for example evidence that a donor is prioritising the disaster response, verbal or written commitments/expressions of interest based on donor meetings etc).

Once a funding request has been approved, this will be communicated by the Head of IHART to the affected country with instructions on how to access the funds. An MOU outlining the mutual accountabilities for the funds and reporting requirements will also be sent. The Finance Officer working with IHART will ensure that International Finance make the appropriate internal disbursement and IHART's systems and the Surge Capacity Officer will maintain a database of disbursements.

A separate handbook on the DPRF is available, which describes in detail the different funding strands and the processes for applying for and managing funds, here:

<http://goo.gl/wrwp7Z>

Apply for priority institutional donor funds

Who does this: member/country programme and fundraising affiliates, with support from IHART

External donors may also make funding available for immediate response through rapid response mechanisms at the global level. These are funds that are released very quickly after a disaster, and provide funds to ensure that help reaches communities as quickly as possible. Whilst the information required in order to secure funding from institutional donors varies from donor to donor, there are a number of common areas:

- A strong rapid needs assessment, highlighting the rationale for our proposed geographical and sectoral areas of intervention.
- Prior links and an established relationship with the donor. Our intention to submit a proposal should be communicated to the donor as soon as possible – meeting with donor staff (either face-to-face or over the phone) also gives us an opportunity to find out more about their priorities, so we can tailor our proposal to the geographical areas and sectors that they are proposing to fund. If we haven't been in contact with the donor prior to the emergency, communication now is essential.
- Demonstrable co-ordination with other responding agencies. We need to be able to show that ActionAid is in contact with other agencies that are responding/planning to respond, to minimise the risk of duplication/overlap and help identify gaps.

The relevant ActionAid affiliate will be responsible for applying for funds from specific bilateral donors (e.g. ActionAid UK for DFID, ActionAid UK for funding from the European Commission Humanitarian Aid department (ECHO), ActionAid Denmark for Danida etc). Affiliates must co-ordinate with IHART before submitting proposals, and IHART will co-ordinate liaison with the member/country programme in the affected country. For multilateral donors and for bilateral donors that are not 'owned' by a specific ActionAid affiliate, IHART will co-ordinate the applying of funds with International Fundraising and the International Partnership Development Team in the International Secretariat, applying for the funds directly.

See **Annex 11** for a quick reference guide to emergency donors.

AusAID

AusAID channels its funding through accredited Australian NGOs, of which ActionAid Australia is one. Countries can rarely apply for funding directly, so members/country programmes are advised to contact ActionAid Australia if there are upcoming funding opportunities.

DFID RRF and in-country funding

DFID may make funding available for emergencies either directly from the in-country office, or through the DFID UK office, normally via the Rapid Response Facility (RRF). There is no set way for DFID to fund – in-country or RRF will depend on DFID internal discussions. Regardless, a dual approach is best whereby the member/country programme talks directly to DFID in-country, and ActionAid UK talks to the DFID UK office. Co-ordination between the member/country programme and ActionAid UK is still vital to ensure that all messages to DFID are consistent.

ECHO primary emergency financing decision

An ECHO primary emergency financing decision must be taken within **72 hours** of the onset of the disaster and the total funding available for allocation is a maximum of **EUR 3,000,000**. The duration of actions under a primary emergency financing decision is **limited to three months**. ECHO recognises that NGOs will not have a complete picture of the disaster nor our planned response within 72 hours. As such, in order to apply for primary emergency financing we should ensure we have at least enough information to satisfy the following minimum requirements:

- The essential elements required to understand the proposal and its rationale (needs assessment, ActionAid's strategy and presence in the affected country, results of rapid needs assessment).
- Main components of our proposed response (geographical areas of intervention, type and number of beneficiaries, logical framework).

- Means of implementation (human resources, implementing partners, financial overview).
- Key challenges relating to co-ordination, security (if relevant), etc.

ECHO may publish the primary emergency funding decision on their website –

see http://ec.europa.eu/echo/funding/index_en.htm – although in a primary emergency context this is often an unreliable source of quick information, so it is recommended that colleagues in the disaster-affected country link directly with in-country ECHO representatives in person or on the phone to check whether funding is being made available. Once written, the primary emergency financing decision proposal must be submitted by ActionAid UK (as the 'owner' of the ECHO relationship for the federation) using ECHO's online information exchange platform, known as 'Appel'. Note ECHO will not accept applications submitted directly by the ActionAid member/country programme in the affected country.

See <http://goo.gl/asTkFk> for guidance on what actions need to be taken by different parts of the federation in order to respond to the launching of an ECHO primary emergency financing decision.

Sida

Sida is not in a position to take on new humanitarian partners at present due to a lack of internal capacity, and ActionAid can therefore not access funds. However, Sida is reviewing its application guidelines and humanitarian partners so the situation may change.

See Annex 11 for further information on institutional donors.

UN funding opportunities

The UN system also has a number of opportunities for funding for NGOS. There are three types of pooled funds: the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), Common Humanitarian Funds (CHFs) and Emergency Response Funds (ERFs). While the CERF can cover all countries affected by an emergency, the CHFs and ERFs are country-based pooled funds that respond to specific humanitarian situations in currently 18 countries. You can download the overview at: <http://goo.gl/vrq9Ex>

Only UN agencies may access CERF funding, but in many cases the agencies rely on NGOs to implement projects and will sub-contract. CHFs and ERFs can allocate funds to international and national NGOs. The majority of ERF and CHF funds are now provided to NGO partners.

It is important for ActionAid to engage with the UN clusters at local/national level if these are activated in the disaster-affected country, as these co-ordination mechanisms provide access to UN funding sources (see section on co-ordination). If you are considering applying for UN funds, contact IHART and the UN donor co-ordinator for guidance (see contact details **Annexes 4 and 11**). Also see 'co-ordination' later in this section.

Public fundraising appeals

1. AGIRE

AGIRE is a network of 10 Italian NGOs (including ActionAid), which gather in times of humanitarian crises to mobilise private funding and ensure a timely and effective response to major humanitarian emergencies (see **Annex 11** for further information).

2. Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC)

ActionAid is one of 14 UK charity members of the DEC. Appeals are reserved for major disasters and emergencies that cannot be dealt with by the usual coping mechanisms within affected countries, and where DEC member agencies are in a position to respond quickly and effectively (see **Annex 11** for further information).

3. Launch ActionAid public fundraising appeals

Who does this: fundraising affiliates, with support from IHART and International Fundraising

In major disasters, fundraising affiliates across the ActionAid federation are expected to contribute to fundraising. ActionAid will identify a 'ball park' figure for fundraising (the cost of the programme action) as early as 24-48 hours after the disaster, which will then be revised over time. However, this figure will be used for initial contact with institutional donors and appeal fundraising. The Oversight Group will guide the organisation on the level of fundraising activity required for the response, and will direct the organisation on types of fundraising activity that will be undertaken. If public fundraising appeals (widespread appeals via television, radio, press advertisements etc) or supporter appeals (communication to existing ActionAid supporters) are to be launched, this should ideally be done within the first 72 hours following a rapid onset disaster. This ensures that funds can be raised as quickly as possible to support the critical early stages of the response. It also ensures that ActionAid's profile in the disaster response is established alongside other agencies.



Please refer to this website for DFID's Rapid Response Facility form and guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/rapid-response-facility>. Details of the ECHO and DFID funding decision process can be found at <http://goo.gl/asTkFk>. If in doubt, contact the ActionAid Emergency Funding Manager for advice. (see **Annex 11** for contact details and a quick reference guide to emergency donors).

RED alert level disasters

In red alert disasters, all fundraising affiliates are expected to launch public or supporter appeals. It is recognised that considerable costs are attached to launching a widespread public fundraising appeal, and it is up to the relevant affiliate to decide on what kind of appeal is most appropriate. However, at a minimum, all affiliates are expected to contact existing supporters to request funds and to feature a donation button on their websites.

When a red alert level disaster is declared, IHART will contact fundraising affiliates to gather information on planned appeals. Affiliates will be asked to estimate their fundraising targets and to keep IHART informed of progress – it is important that IHART knows when to expect appeal income so that they can help the member/country programme plan its response effectively.

- In advance of a disaster, it is good practice to establish a process for the development of public/supporter public fundraising appeals. This should cover:
 - Roles and responsibilities of different teams within the fundraising affiliate.
 - Clear timelines for sending the initial appeal communication and subsequent follow-ups.
 - Establishing relationships and service level agreements with relevant external suppliers, e.g. print-houses, to outline processes, roles and responsibilities around fundraising appeals. Where possible, this should include pre-printing of emergency appeal materials (e.g. letterheads and envelopes), so turnaround time can be minimised. Pre-designed email templates and SMS messages can also be established, for the same effect.

This will also give supporters a consistent design element for all emergency appeal communications.

- When developing content for appeals, affiliates should first consult situation reports circulated by IHART for background information on the situation and ActionAid's initial/planned response. All appeal content should be in line with ActionAid's planned response and should not suggest that we will be engaging in activities that are not outlined in the situation report/Emergency Response and Resilience Building Plan or communicated directly by IHART. As with all public communications, emergency appeals should communicate ActionAid's rights-based approach and not present those affected by the disaster as helpless victims.
- If affiliates have specific communications content requirements – e.g. photos, quotes from affected community members, etc. – they should link with IHART in the first instance to request such content. Note the ActionAid UK/ActionAid International Picture Desk function (contact Laurence.watts@actionaid.org), based in the UK, often has access to generic photos of the disaster through Alertnet, which can be made available for ActionAid public fundraising and web appeals. Best practice public appeal factors to consider are:
 - Compelling/emotional content from a person affected by the emergency, explaining how the disaster has affected them and their family and talking about what they need now to survive. For follow-up communications the case study should focus on a person who has benefited from ActionAid's emergency response, talking about how our response has helped them and their family.

- Strong photograph to accompany the case study.
- Direct quote from an ActionAid staff member in the country of the emergency, to explain first-hand the depth of the emergency and to show that ActionAid is working on the ground, and have close connections with the communities affected.

Income raised from public and supporter appeals should be transferred to the Disaster Preparedness and Response Fund (DPRF). This is an internal ActionAid fund for disasters, which is managed by IHART. Appeal income from all fundraising affiliates will be pooled in the DPRF and disbursed to the affected member/country programme by IHART. The member/country programme then reports on the use of appeal income from the DPRF, and IHART shares these reports with fundraising affiliates. This system is designed to reduce the burden on the member/country programme during disaster responses – instead of linking with several affiliates and having to manage and report on multiple grants, IHART liaises with the member/country programme on behalf of the federation and channels all appeal income through a single mechanism.

The DPRF handbook (<http://goo.gl/wrwp7Z>) describes in detail the processes for managing and reporting on appeal income through the DPRF.

When a public appeal is launched, IHART will maintain a record of all income, and targeted income, for the disaster and communicate this regularly to the affected country programme and Oversight Group for planning purposes. The affected member/country programme and IHART will have an MOU that outlines accountabilities for appeal income. Further support and guidance on running emergency fundraising appeals can be provided by IHART and International Fundraising (see contact details in **Annexes 4 and 11**).

ORANGE alert level disasters

In orange alert level disasters, while fundraising remains a priority, it is not expected that affiliates will launch public or supporter appeals, although if they feel that there is a particular opportunity for these, they should discuss first with IHART and International Fundraising. Instead, as a minimum, affiliates should concentrate on seeking funds from institutional donors and major donors, guided by ongoing gaps in funding for the overall Emergency Response and Resilience Building Plan (ERRP). Further support and guidance on running emergency fundraising appeals can be provided by IHART and International Fundraising (contacts **Annex 4**).



FURTHER READING AND RESOURCES

ActionAid's standard operating procedures for orange and red alert emergencies: **Annex 2**
Global Security Advisor contact details: **Annex 4**
IHART Information Officer and regional International Programme Manager contact details: **Annex 4**

A Sitrep template and guidance on how to complete each question: **Annex 5**
Generic ToR for the Emergency Response Manager: **Annex 6**
Generic ToR for the Emergency Response Team: **Annex 7**
Summary of ActionAid's global staff security policy:
<http://goo.gl/asTkFk>



Communications in emergencies

The first 24-48 hours of any emergency are crucial for media, communications and fundraising purposes.

The NGO arena is a crowded one. ActionAid must be visible from the word GO at the local, national and international level (including in media) so our supporters, donors, potential new supporters, decision makers, the public, etc. can associate us with the disaster – knowing we are there on the ground responding to people's immediate needs at the same time as protecting, promoting and fulfilling their rights. Success in funding our emergency programmes will depend greatly on our ability to build media and digital visibility quickly in the immediate aftermath of rapid onset emergencies, and launch fundraising appeals that can compete in crowded markets. In a slow onset emergency media and digital visibility could help tip the international community into a much-needed emergency response.

Being visible in an emergency can make donors (both voluntary/public and institutional) more likely to choose us. Rapid onset emergencies are fast paced news stories – because we live in the digital age – news organisations expect to get access to instant stories and images from an emergency-affected area. ActionAid's new communications approach will meet this need by enabling us to 'fast-track' a communications response, while programmatic responses are still being considered and planned.

ActionAid's brand essence 'the power in people' is about the individual and collective force of people in poverty creating change for themselves, their families and their communities.

People in poverty aren't waiting for change to happen; they're getting on with it themselves. ActionAid is a catalyst for that change. ActionAid will not compromise the dignity of rights holders when covering an emergency. However, we recognise that our brand values may be articulated differently during an emergency.

Our communication in emergencies will promote:

- ActionAid's priority of reaching out to the most vulnerable – women, children, the elderly, disabled people, excluded and marginalised groups – who may be left out of the mainstream emergency response.
- That ActionAid has worked in these communities for many years and works in partnership with local organisations who know the affected communities well.
- ActionAid's commitment to working with affected communities in the long term (we will remain in the area after the emergency is over), ensuring that people are able to rebuild their lives and livelihoods with dignity.
- That ActionAid strives to promote an alternative model which aims to address key gaps in the system through a focus on seven core components:
 - women's leadership in disaster preparedness and response
 - accountability to disaster-affected communities
 - local partnerships in emergency preparedness and response
 - combining scientific information with community experience and traditional knowledge
 - adequate funding and aid effectiveness
 - linking emergency response to longer term change
 - creating a loss and damage framework to enable disaster-affected people to claim their rights.

Who does what?

Currently ActionAid UK leads on media and communications on behalf of the ActionAid federation for all rapid onset emergencies and most slow onset emergencies. In the new strategy period, ActionAid will seek to establish a pool of lead countries across the federation who will take responsibility and collaborate globally to lead communications work during an emergency.

The lead country for emergency communications works on behalf of the ActionAid federation to lead the communications response to rapid onset and relevant slow onset emergencies. This response is media and digital led, with the objective of servicing fundraising and influencing needs.

During a rapid onset emergency the lead country and the International Communications Team's (ICT's) media and digital staff will work under a 'buddy system', sharing and delegating tasks as determined by the lead country. To ensure 24-hour communications support for the emergency and global reach, support countries will be identified to 'care take' the emergency communication response outside of hours of the lead country, thus creating a global project support team for the duration of the emergency.

During a slow onset emergency the lead country will in the first instance fill capacity, but can, where needed, request additional support from the International Communications Team. Where the International Communications Team cannot provide this capacity, it will source it from across the ActionAid federation.

In both rapid and slow onset emergencies, it is recognised that there is a need to integrate communications work into the response from the beginning, including inclusion within programme plans and frameworks developed from the

beginning of an emergency. This responsibility sits with the affected country, with support from the International Communications Team.

Both the lead country and the International Communications Team should be aware of and adhere to donor communications and visibility requirements. For example, certain donors (e.g. ECHO) have rules and regulations regarding communications and visibility for work undertaken with their funding.

Information flow and content gathering:

In a rapid onset emergency the lead country will appoint an Emergency News Manager, who will act as focal person for the federation's communications response and must be available 24 hours a day for the duration of the emergency. They can also nominate someone to deputise for them. The Emergency News Manager will line manage the Emergency News Officer (either a national level communications staff member in the affected country or a RACE deployment depending on need); channel all communications requests to the affected countries and alongside the ICT's media and digital teams produce statements, press releases, tweets, web content, co-ordinate interview requests, carry out media outreach, etc. Both the Emergency News Manager and Emergency News Officer take on international, federation-wide responsibilities, taking into account the country context and communications risks (provided via previous assessments), particularly in cases of conflict and/or political crises where communications work may carry high risks for ActionAid, our staff, partners and the communities we work with.

In a rapid onset emergency, where the external news machine is fast and borderless, information delivered through this relationship will be disseminated immediately without embargo across the ActionAid communications network, to press and social media. In a slow onset emergency, where content is being used to pique interest and exclusivity is needed to ensure impactful placement, the Emergency News Manager and ICT's International Media Manager will devise an international syndication strategy that services the media and communications needs of target countries.

Lead country responsibilities:

The Emergency News Manager will:

- 1) Field all calls and communications request to the Emergency News Officer in the affected country.
- 2) Hold a daily check-in with the Emergency News Officer to go over the daily message from the field, discuss what happened during the day and what the plan should be for the next day, as well as updating them on the international news agenda, media coverage and any requests from the broader federation.
- 3) Guide the Emergency News Officer on gathering stories, eyewitness accounts, facts, figures and other content to be used across channels.
- 4) Act as a security point for the Emergency News Officer, holding the daily check-in at the same time each day and activating a security tree should this not be met without fair warning.
- 5) Be the focal person for all international media requests to the affected country. (ICT's International Media Manager will take responsibility for federation requests and pass them to the Emergency News Manager as and when they come in for prioritisation.)

- 6) Brief all spokespeople based outside the affected country. This could include the Chief Executive or spokespeople in pan-regional press hubs.
- 7) Co-ordinate sign off of communications messaging, and share across the federation to ensure the whole of ActionAid is consistent with their messaging.
- 8) Develop press releases, quotes, Q&As, tweets, blogs, reports and other communications tools, alongside the ICT media and digital teams where needed.

NOTE: *all of the above can be shared with ICT's International Media Manager and/or Digital Manager depending on need.*

Digital

To ensure that all English written pages within ActionAid's federation no longer fall foul of duplicate content restrictions, and as fundraising is a core element of digital in emergencies, content will be hosted on www.actionaid.org.uk and then referenced appropriately across the English language international webpages. We require content that is being syndicated to include the appropriate link back to the original article. This would be in the form of a HREF `` located at the end of the article (in a smaller font).

This recently agreed way of working will be trialled over the coming months, and reviewed at a later date.

Remember that communicating with disaster-affected communities is a key part of the response from the beginning. See the 'commence immediate response activities' section above for guidance on initial activities.

Produce emergency communications content (RAPID ONSET EMERGENCY)

1) COMMUNICATIONS TIMELINE – RAPID ONSET EMERGENCIES

If the emergency meets ActionAid's criteria for a communications response the ICT and lead country will:

Responsibility of	Task
<p>WITHIN 1 HOUR</p> <p>ActionAid International/ Emergency News Manager</p>	<p>Contact made between Country Director, Head of IHART, IHART International Programme Manager for the region, Emergencies News Manager or International Media Manager (in the event that the Emergency News Manager is not able to attend) to determine:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What has happened? - Country Director's first impression? - Major concerns? - Do they have enough communications' capacity and would they like a RACE deployment? NOTE: the decision on whether to deploy someone thorough RACE is not made during this call, but during strategic Oversight Group or equivalent. - Names and contacts of spokespeople? - Key, non-controversial bullets (mainly on infrastructure) to enable ActionAid to start communicating. <p>NOTE: this information will also be passed to the Oversight Group, or equivalent, which the International Communications Advisor will also sit on, rather than the Head of Communications.</p> <p>All staff present on this call in the first hour should be responsible for producing an operational output. Strategic direction will be given at the Oversight Group meeting or equivalent.</p>

Responsibility of	Task
	<p>One objective of this call will be to determine if a RACE deployment is needed. Where it is not needed, the in-country Communications Officer will absorb the responsibilities of the Emergency News Officer. Note: these responsibilities will be agreed with all ActionAid emergency priority countries ahead of an emergency and are divided into 'national' and 'federation' capacity.</p> <p>The call will be voice recorded to aid immediate radio and podcast work. Meetings should be held at 1, 4 and 12 hours until an Oversight Group is held. In the first four hours of an emergency the ICT will pass any RACE requests to an Oversight Group or equivalent, which will outline a plan for the crisis, mapping out which ActionAid country programmes are operational/responding, which must be considered due to their country's political/military relevance, and identifying target media and fundraising markets.</p>
Lead country (production)	Holding statement written and signed off. Statement based on bullets from Country Director, pre-existing country data, reputable news sources.
ActionAid International/ lead country (dissemination)	Holding statement placed on www.actionaid.org, sent to ActionAid's communications network and disseminated via social media.
ActionAid International	<p>ICT completes an emergency communications report including: scanning press coverage; sourcing images; finding hash tags; identifying nearest press hub and journalists covering emergency; locating and contacting photographers (in or close to country), identifying digital trends, mapping what other agencies are saying, identifying where equipment is, etc.</p> <p>(NOTE: ActionAid Australia and ActionAid US may absorb this role if not during European daylight hours.)</p>
ActionAid International	Search engine optimisation (SEO) carried out to ensure ActionAid owns terms relating to a disaster on Google and other internet search engines.

Responsibility of

Task

WITHIN 2 HOURS

ActionAid International

Emergency communications report filled in and passed to Head of Communications and/or Director of Fundraising and Communications to take to Oversight Group. The emergency communications report will detail all of the above to give a first impression of the communications landscape and the communications needs of the country programme.

ActionAid International

IHART liaises with Head of Market Development and International Partnership Development, who scope federation fundraising interest and what communications products they require to support this, feeding this to ICT.

ActionAid International

ICT and lead country source and agree on potential RACE deployment.

ActionAid International

Press contacts and twitter addresses for journalists covering the emergency and/or international correspondents in-country collated and sent to Emergency News Officer and Emergency News Manager in the lead affiliate.

Responsibility of

Task

WITHIN 4 HOURS

ActionAid International

If RACE deployment is required before the Oversight Group meeting is held, the Director of Fundraising and Communications or International Head of Communications with Head of IHART and lead country Head of Media/ Communications can approve the RACE deployment.
Otherwise, as expected the Oversight Group will :
- Approve RACE deployment if requested (and logistics immediately activated).
Note: ActionAid International will work with IHART to dispatch an Emergency News Officer through RACE to the affected country. A RACE deployment can include national and international staff, contractors and/or freelancers who could be deployed within 12- 24 hours. This includes media officers, photographers, digital specialists and video operators.
- Determine and communicate the fundraising objectives and markets for the emergency (if possible).

ActionAid International

Section page created for the emergency on the ActionAid International website, to ensure URL and H1 in place for effective SEO. This would match the latest external 'title' for the emergency, i.e. 'West Africa drought', etc.

Responsibility of

Task

WITHIN 8 HOURS

ActionAid International

Digital fundraising activity initiated.

Responsibility of

Task

WITHIN 12 HOURS

ActionAid International

RACE deployment arrived or en route to affected country. NOTE: where a RACE deployment is not made, the in-country communications staff will take the role of Emergency News Officer and the federation duties assigned to it.

Lead country (production)

**ActionAid International/
lead country (distribution)**

Updated press release disseminated to ActionAid’s communications network, press and through social media. This will be a more detailed release that positions ActionAid more clearly in the emergency, including how much money we think we need to raise, who has been worst affected where, ActionAid’s main concerns, staff accounts and any additional information that builds a better picture about what’s happening on the ground and ActionAid’s response.

Lead country

Emergency News Manager in lead country connected with Emergency News Officer. NOTE: this can happen earlier if a RACE deployment has not been made.

**Lead country/
ActionAid International**

Emergency communications team in place: where possible Emergency News Manager and digital capacity relocated to sit with IS International Media Manager and Digital Manager to share tasks and co-ordinate global press work.

Lead country

Digital action launched if desirable (campaign and or policy ask based on country analysis and ideally linked to ActionAid’s multi country campaigns).

Responsibility of

Task

WITHIN 24 HOURS

**Emergency News Officer
(production)**

**ActionAid International/
lead country (dissemination)**

First daily message from the field to Emergency News Manager. This will outline:

- Latest key messages from Country Director.
- Eyewitness accounts/first impressions (where possible with photos) from people in the field. Eyewitnesses do not need to know every aspect of ActionAid’s work. Their role is to give initial impressions of the impact of the emergency and hence help pre-position ActionAid as a go-to voice for the media. In the first 24 hours eyewitnesses should focus on visual descriptions: i.e. have the main bridges gone down? Is the electricity and water working? Are the hospitals overflowing? How do they feel about what’s happened?
- Activities for the next day including what can be expected for communications purposes. To include: how many people is ActionAid reaching? How many is ActionAid trying to reach, and where? When will we reach them? (NOTE: must distinguish between what has already been done and what will be done and by when.) How many sponsored children are affected? Can it be compared to a previous disaster? What does/will our outreach look like?
- Top headlines in country and main angles developing (i.e. aid delivery, borders, etc).
- Difficult questions being asked/risks identified.
- New spokespeople and contacts.
- What other agencies are doing, etc.

This would then be circulated by the Emergency News Manager to communications colleagues globally and form the basis of media and digital outreach.

NOTE: The the daily message from the field is distinct from the situation report. The former being more contextual, emotive and descriptive and the latter more facts and figures based. They should complement one another and reference the other when circulated.

Responsibility of	Task
Affected country (production) IHART (distribution)	Situation report sent to IHART Information Officer outlining ActionAid's programmatic response.
Lead country (production) ActionAid International/ lead country (distribution)	Updated press release signed off and disseminated to ActionAid's communications network, press and through social media. Note: updates every 24 hours thereafter based on daily message from the field where possible/relevant.

Responsibility of	Task
AFTER FIRST 24 HOURS ActionAid International/ lead country	DAILY: daily distribution of information and content to ActionAid's communications network, prioritising media staff, web editors, Stories Hub and Picture Desk. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outlining what coverage has been achieved, what content is available, news from the field and messages/activities/content available in the next 24-48 hours. • Monitoring and sharing all press and social media coverage/activity (this should also be shared with affected country and Emergency Communications Project Team). • Tweaking content where necessary for wider federation use. However the lead country should produce all content in a way that is packagable for communications staff in all target countries. • Requesting information from network regarding communications needs.

Responsibility of	Task
ActionAid International lead country	DAILY: update and collate international media contacts for the emergency on a daily basis and send to Emergency News Officer and Emergency News Manager.
ActionAid International lead country	DAILY: update the International website (adhering to any agreed sign-off processes) and ensure most current information highlighted. This includes curating and using content about the emergency (blogs, images, etc.) from across the federation.
ActionAid International lead country	WHENEVER REQUIRED: push all statements and press releases to international news desks and pan regional press hubs where appropriate and under the direction of the Emergency News Manager.

Produce emergency communications content (SLOW ONSET EMERGENCY)

Ongoing:

- IHART monitoring priority emergency countries for areas of interest, especially 'high interest' countries for media, such as Afghanistan, Pakistan, Occupied Palestinian Territory, DRC, etc.
- Stories Lab representative/UK media officer monitoring situation reports and chasing ongoing story leads for verification, development, etc.

When a story is sourced that may help tip international community into a fundraising response:

- International Media Manager convenes meeting with Country Director, Head of IHART and Head of Communications to determine whether to activate a RACE deployment.

When fundraising objectives seek case study based content:

- Meeting convened with Country Director, Head of IHART and Head of Communications to determine in country communications capacity.
- Where communications capacity exists, the national News Officer, ICT and International Fundraising teams will draw up a content brief to ensure all needs are being met.
- Where there is little or no communications capacity in country, an EFAST communications deployment will be made.

RACE

Rapid Action Communications in Emergencies (RACE) is a process that will enable the ActionAid federation to deploy an Emergency News Officer to an affected country in the first 12-24 hours of a rapid onset emergency or at an appropriate time during a slow onset emergency. The RACE deployee is responsible for connecting with the first wave of international correspondents covering an emergency, providing immediate communications support to the country programme, feeding daily updates to ActionAid's communications network on the latest facts, figures and developments and gathering media and digital worthy content for cross-channel use.

A RACE deployment may therefore take place before a red or orange alert is given and will almost certainly be before a programmatic response has commenced.

RACE is made up of communications professionals from ActionAid national and international staff around the world who can act as media officers, photographers, digital specialists and video operators and can be deployed within 12-24 hours during a rapid onset emergency.

Freelancers and contractors can be deployed under RACE as photographers, digital specialists and video operators for both slow onset and rapid onset emergencies. Freelancers can also be deployed as RACE media officers but for slow onset emergencies only, as rapid onset emergencies require a previous understanding of ActionAid internal organisation and relationships with countries. Therefore media officers for rapid onset emergencies will always be an ActionAid staff member.

As far as possible we will prioritise the deployment of staff – where the relevant emergency communications skills and experience are present – who have existing networks in the region, have a pre-existing understanding and awareness of the social and political context of the relevant country, and possess relevant language skills in order to ease their integration into ways of working with the existing country team

Management:

The Emergency News Officer is managed by the Emergency News Manager in the designated lead affiliate, with support and input from the International Communications Team.

The Emergency News Manager is responsible for fielding the Emergency News Officer's calls and having a daily briefing with them to discuss what's happened during the day and what the plan should be for the following day, as well as updating them on the international news agenda, coverage being achieved and any updates/requests from the broader ActionAid federation.

The Emergency News Manager has a duty of care to the Emergency News Officer, and should be contactable 24 hours a day and operate an open door policy for any story leads, new information, security or general concerns the Emergency News Officer may have.

The Country Director of the affected country has a duty of care for the Emergency News Officer while in country and should form a daily working relationship for purposes of local context, risk awareness and sign off.



Co-ordination

Engage with relevant UN clusters at national and sub-national levels

Who does this: member/country programme

Clusters are groups of agencies working in particular sectors of humanitarian response (e.g. education, WASH, shelter, protection etc). They were established as part of the UN process of humanitarian reform and are designed to strengthen co-ordination between humanitarian actors. Each cluster has a lead agency (normally a UN agency) that is responsible for running cluster meetings and supporting cluster members. In a major emergency, the UN humanitarian co-ordinator will activate the clusters, usually in consultation with the government and/or where an international appeal for assistance has been made. This decision will be communicated to all agencies that are registered as cluster members within that country. The cluster co-ordinator will contact members to inform them of plans and invite them to meetings. If the UN cluster system is activated, it is particularly important for ActionAid to engage with relevant clusters from the start of the disaster response. The member/country programme should make sure that appropriate staff are available to attend cluster meetings, both at national level and at sub-national level in areas where ActionAid is responding. It is important that the ActionAid representative who attends the cluster meeting is sufficiently senior that he or she can take decisions on ActionAid's behalf (e.g. he or she may be asked whether ActionAid is able to take responsibility for relief distribution in a particular area, or whether ActionAid will participate in a joint rapid/needs assessment).

Cluster meetings are often attended by many agencies, sometimes up to 200 organisations, and ActionAid's representative must have the technical expertise, confidence and language skills to get their point across. It is also important that ActionAid is able to share relevant and accurate information on the situation in their working areas and their response activities (e.g. sharing the results of rapid assessments). The member/country programme should decide which clusters are most relevant in the specific disaster context – this will depend on the type of disaster, the needs of the affected communities, and the type of response that ActionAid is implementing. However, based on ActionAid's organisational focus and areas of expertise, the Protection, Early Recovery and Food Security clusters may be considered priorities. These are the three clusters that ActionAid engages with at the global level to facilitate policy level discussions with partners, to develop common positions/guidelines on operational aspects of humanitarian response, piloting new approaches, joint indicators etc. If mechanisms are established to co-ordinate information and communication with disaster-affected communities, it would be advisable to participate in these also. ActionAid is a member of the CDAC (Communicating with Disaster-Affected Communities) Network at global level, and IHART will share any information on co-ordination or joint initiatives planned by network members with the country team. A brief introduction to the cluster system and a background to UN humanitarian reform is available at: <http://goo.gl/asTkFk>

Link with UN clusters at the global level

Who does this: IHART, with support from International Secretariat

At the global level, ActionAid is a member of three clusters: Protection, Food Security and Early Recovery. If the cluster system is activated in a country where ActionAid works, IHART or relevant representatives from the Programmes Directorate of ActionAid International will make contact with the global clusters and participate in relevant meetings/teleconferences.

IHART also sits on the Strategic Advisory Group of the Early Recovery Cluster, and in this capacity will input into decisions on the deployment of Early Recovery Advisors. IHART will communicate relevant information from these meetings to affected members/country programmes.

Engage with other responding I/NGOs at country level

In any emergency, it is likely that other I/NGOs will be responding. It is important to link with these agencies for a number of reasons:

- to ensure that ActionAid's planned response does not duplicate that of others
- to identify gaps in the response (in terms of sectors or geographical areas)
- to ensure co-ordination in rapid and needs assessments, to help reduce 'assessment fatigue' of disaster-affected people
- to share skills and expertise
- to show donors that agencies are co-ordinating in-country and are mitigating the risks of duplication.

Invariably, some form of local/national level I/NGO co-ordination forum will already be operational in the affected country. Where co-ordination mechanisms are not already in place, it may be possible to activate a group through existing consortia, e.g. through a donor-funded consortium project.

**FURTHER READING AND RESOURCES**

Guidance and template for security analysis:

<http://goo.gl/asTkFk>

Oversight Group ToR: **Annex 2**

Guide to ECHO and DFID funding decision processes:

<http://goo.gl/asTkFk>

Brief introduction to the cluster system and a background to UN humanitarian reform: **<http://goo.gl/asTkFk>**

Information sheet on emergency funding mechanisms:

<http://goo.gl/asTkFk>

ActionAid's minimum security standards:

<http://goo.gl/mH1Luk>

Supporting partners in security risk management:

<http://goo.gl/bmGds3>
