

UNEG – Humanitarian Evaluation Interest Group (HEIG)

The Humanitarian-Development nexus: What do evaluations say about it?

Terms of Reference for a HEIG-commissioned study

November 2016

To note: These Terms of Reference were drafted jointly by FAO, UNHCR and WHO and reflect comments received from HEIG-members (IOM; UNDP; UNFPA; UNICEF; UNWOMEN; UNRWA; and WFP) on the draft version. These Terms of Reference will be used for a call for Expression of Interest (Eoi) for external consultant to carry out this study, which will be managed by a sub-group of HEIG members (FAO; UNHCR; WHO) on behalf of the broader HEIG membership.

Background and rationale for the study

1. Humanitarian and development actors have different objectives, counterparts, and instruments, even though more and more both development and humanitarian interventions take place in same countries supporting by same donors. However, there is an evolving discourse that speaks to the nexus¹ between the humanitarian and development endeavours and advocate for a “new way of working” (WHS, 2016:1) to enable progress on the Agenda 2030 and follow up to the commitments made at the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS).
2. The WHS statement of commitment speaks of managing crisis risks and reducing vulnerability as much as a “*humanitarian imperative*” to save lives as a “*development necessity*” to ensure progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for the more than 125 million people affected by humanitarian crises today. (WHS, 2016:1).
3. Transcending the humanitarian-development divide is one of the areas of commitment to action made at the WHS and signed by eight UN agencies’ Principals² aiming at meeting people’s immediate humanitarian needs while at the same time reducing risk and vulnerability.
4. The need to transcend the divide is not new and many initiatives / approaches in the past have attempted to address it more or less successfully. The SDGs provide a common framework for both humanitarian and development actions and 7 of the 17 goals have explicit humanitarian targets³.
5. In 2013, 4 of the 10 highest recipient countries of humanitarian aid were also among the first 10 highest recipients of Overseas Development Aid⁴. How is then the humanitarian- development divide resolved in these countries? Are the challenges and effects relating to the humanitarian-development interface ever addressed in a significant manner in evaluative work?
6. It is with these perspectives in mind that the UNEG Humanitarian Evaluation Interest Group (UNEG-HEIG) decided to commission a review and analysis of the body of evaluative evidence generated by agencies working in countries confronted with this divide: to potentially contribute

¹ For the purpose of the study we refer to the humanitarian –development nexus acknowledging that terminology is not consistent as humanitarian-development “interface” and “divides” are also used. This point may be examined more in-depth as part of the study (see section II of this concept note on key questions for the study).

² The commitment to action was signed by the UN Secretary General and by the Principals of FAO, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR UNICEF, OCHA, WFP and WHO. It was also endorsed by the World Bank and IOM.

³ Some of the Sustainable Development Goals (e.g. SDG 16) looks at governance in the context of fragility, which is also relevant to the topic of this study.

⁴ OECD Development Aid Committee data 2013.

to knowledge of the issue itself, as well as to its evaluation. The study is thus expected to bring an initial contribution to the evolving global and agency-specific conversations around the 'nexus' by mapping and synthesizing evidence from evaluations that have examined this topic either from a humanitarian angle branching towards development either the other way around.

Purpose

7. In the context of the Agenda 2030⁵ and the follow up to WHS commitments⁶, the overall purpose of this UNEG-HEIG initiative is to provide the UNEG members, interested donors and governments and other stakeholders, such as evaluation networks, with: i) a mapping and analysis of evidence from evaluations that have examined this topic either from a humanitarian angle branching towards development either the other way around; and ii) and a better understanding of how the humanitarian-development nexus has been evaluated, highlighting best practices, challenges and opportunities
8. In line with this overall purpose, the specific objectives of the study are to:
 - (a) Mapping and synthesizing evaluative evidence related to the nexus from both humanitarian and development perspectives including gaps in the evidence reviewed and possible good practices; and
 - (b) Providing an overview and analysis of the evaluation approaches used to describe and analyse the nexus, and the main similarities and differences in how humanitarian and development evaluations do so.
9. The study can then be used to inform HEIG members' work planning around this topic into next year, as well as feeding into a broader methodological, evaluative and policy debate. This study can thus be seen as a starting point for a possible longer term work stream for HEIG members' engagement.
10. This study is expected to be exploratory in nature considering that some of the issues around definitions, conceptual boundaries and frameworks for analyzing the topic of humanitarian-development nexus continue to be debated from different angles (policy / strategic / operational / programmatic / contextual).

Key questions for the study

11. The study is expected to address the following key questions below. Possible sub-questions are expected to be refined in the inception phase of the study.
12. **Key study question 1 – To what extent and how have humanitarian and development evaluations looked at the topic of the nexus⁷? Can we observe significant differences in how evaluations have been covering the topic of the nexus in the past 5 years⁸?**

⁵ <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/development-agenda/>

⁶ <https://www.worldhumanitariansummit.org/key-documents#chairsummary-linking>

⁷ Even a cursory scan of the literature reveals a growing use of the expression 'humanitarian-development nexus' indicating a shift from the older phrasing of 'humanitarian development divide'. Search criteria used in the study will need to take this into account to minimise the bias in sample of evaluations selected for the study.

⁸ The suggested time limitation for the inclusion of evaluation reports to be included in the study may need to be adjusted to factor in some earlier evaluations that comprehensively focused on issues connected to the 'nexus'. This is for example the case with the Tsunami Evaluation Coalition (TEC) LRRD evaluation volume (Christoplos, I., 2006) and the SIDA-commissioned 'Long term perspectives on the response to the Indian Ocean tsunami 2004 - A joint follow-up evaluation of the links between relief, rehabilitation and development (LRRD)' (Brusset et. al., 2009).

Sub-questions will explore differences with regard to:

- 1.1 Who commissions the evaluations (UN agencies; Red Cross movement; Governments; International Financial Institutions; International / National NGOs) and at which level and scope;
 - 1.2 How prominent is the focus on the nexus (e.g. primary or secondary area of inquiry and analysis), which type of evaluation questions are asked, and evaluation criteria – such as connectedness – are used to analyse this topic;
 - 1.3 How the nexus is presented, defined and delimited as an area of inquiry and analysis in the sample of evaluations selected for the study;
 - 1.4 The angle from which the nexus is approached – that is from a humanitarian angle branching out towards development or vice versa or a mix (e.g. in the context of post-conflict interventions and recovery); and what are the strengths and weaknesses identified in each approach?
 - 1.5 Are there significant differences on how the nexus is framed for evaluations of different sectors (e.g. education, social protection, shelter, health, environment, WASH, livelihoods, agriculture, food and nutrition security) and type of operations (humanitarian, development, recovery)?
13. **Key study question 2 – Which type of evaluative evidence has been generated about the humanitarian-development nexus?**
- 2.1 Are evaluations linking the nexus debate with resilience and preparedness or other debates e.g. around humanitarian and development response in the context of state fragility, protracted and chronic crisis situations? If so how?
 - 2.2 In which areas has evaluative evidence been mostly generated and which kind of categories can be extracted? – E.g. around the topic of partnerships; role of national governments; capacity strengthening; coordination and coherence; needs assessments; funding mechanisms?
14. **Key study question 3 – Does a preliminary mapping and description of the evaluative evidence from the sample selected for the study point to significant gaps, good practices and lessons?**
- More specifically:
- 3.1 Does the evidence from the sample of evaluations selected for the study help clarifying some of the definitional and conceptual issues⁹ that surround the nexus?

Preliminary scoping considerations

15. This study will focus on the analysis of a duly selected and limited set of evaluation reports. The final selection of the sample may need to be taken after an initial search and scan of evaluation literature using broader search criteria (e.g. including UN-commissioned evaluations and evaluations commissioned by other actors) to then narrow and sharpen the focus to finalise the list of evaluations to be analysed more in depth for the study.

⁹ See for example DANIDA/Mojwee, Garrasi, Poole (2015) for a recent overview on some of evolving debates around definitional and conceptual boundaries around the topic of humanitarian-development nexus / interface. See also HDAG with CIC (2016).

16. Some of the preliminary scoping decisions that are needed to guide the selection of evaluations to be included in the study sample will include the following:
- a) **Aid flows / resource allocation** – Overlap between recipients of international humanitarian assistance¹⁰ and priority countries on development agenda. Humanitarian aid is increasingly provided to support protracted and lasting crises. In 2013, 66 percent of it went to crises that had been going on for eight years or more, and an additional 23 percent to crises that had lasted three to eight years¹¹. Only 11 percent of humanitarian aid was directed to crises of less than three years. Six of the 10 largest recipients in 2013 had been in the “top 10 group” at least eight times in the previous decade (Devictor et al., 2016: 106-107).
 - b) **Type of contexts** – There is growing recognition that recovery, reconstruction, assistance interventions in fragile contexts, economic development, environmental responses, transition and/or resilience activities carried out by external humanitarian and development agencies need to be context specific. The study should therefore cover a range of different countries, ranging from middle-income countries affected by climate-change related events to protracted and complex crises where the role and capacities of the government and national institutions and actors may vary.
 - c) **Crisis qualifiers** – Crisis qualifiers are closely related to context specific analysis but the study should analyse the differences posed by different types of crises and hazards, ranging from climate-related sudden onset and slow onset events, other natural hazards (earthquakes and tsunamis), armed conflict of different intensity, health-related events, disease outbreaks (e.g. Ebola) and epidemics, animal diseases (HPAI) and trans-boundary pests and diseases (such as locusts). It should also include what kind of development factors or disruption in development dynamics can lead to crisis, noting that economic degradation, loss of basic social/democratic rights or weak governance and corruption can contribute to trigger new or exacerbate crisis situations. The qualifier for inclusion or exclusion of the crisis types should be based on the intensity and severity of the event and whether it warranted an ‘emergency’ response. Multiple crises types/complex examples will also be considered.
17. If needed other qualifiers will be defined by the research team during the inception phase to ensure that the study includes a meaningful set of evaluations conducted over a reasonable period of time and covering a representative number of countries. This is why the sampling strategy that will guide and bring consistency to the selection of evaluations to be included in the study will be finalised during the study inception phase. The scoping and selection protocol will also include some basic criteria relating to evidential quality¹². However, the study is not expected to produce an in-depth quality review and detailed assessment of the evidence from each of the evaluations that will be scoped in the sample.

About the UNEG-Humanitarian Evaluation Interested Group

18. The UNEG-Humanitarian Evaluation Interest Group (UNEG-HEIG) was established in 2015 in response to a perceived gap within UNEG of a space (for discussion, peer learning and guidance development) that could bring together humanitarian evaluation practitioners within the broader UNEG network. The Interest Group aims at identifying, signaling and improving practice on the

¹⁰ Ten largest recipients of international humanitarian assistance: Syria, West Bank and Gaza, Sudan, South Sudan, Jordan, Lebanon, Somalia, Ethiopia, Afghanistan, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (GHA (2016) based on OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) and UN Central Emergency Response Fund data).

¹¹ Consideration to funding allocated to so-called forgotten crisis may also provide useful insights for the analysis of the nexus as it may be appear weaker, and evaluated in a different light in those contexts.

¹² See Knox-Clarke and Darcy (2014).

specificities that characterise the Evaluation of Humanitarian Action to ensure they are adequately considered in UNEG’s work (particularly at normative level).

19. Moreover, the HEIG also serves as a resource for UNEG members by: **(a)** developing technical guidance on identified priority themes such as on reflecting Humanitarian Principles when evaluating Humanitarian Action; **(b)** providing links to relevant information and analysis on topical issues of interest to Humanitarian Evaluation practitioners within UNEG – and beyond – as in the case of the topic of Emergency-Development nexus.

Audience for the study

20. The primary target audiences for this study are the evaluations offices represented and more actively engaged in the Humanitarian Evaluation Interest Group. The identified secondary audience includes the broader UNEG membership, interested donors and governments, and other stakeholders, such as evaluation networks.
21. Additionally, the study can also be of interest and use to other operational actors and research outfits working on the data, and monitoring and evaluation agendas in connection to the SDGs.

Proposed approach and tentative timeline

22. The proposed approach with main tasks, deliverable (highlighted in **bold**) and suggested timeline is presented below

Phases	Timeline	Main activities and outputs	Responsibility
I. Preparatory	Aug-Oct. 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft / gather comment / finalise terms of reference to be used as a basis for consultancy EoI and as ToR. Identify co-financing partner among HEIG members and start the recruitment process to hire a team of 2 consultants (1 senior research lead and 1 junior/ research assistance). Start gathering relevant literature and set up virtual shared study folder to be populated 	Nexus study task team (FAO; UNHCR; WHO) with inputs from broader HEIG membership
	Nov. 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Select / hire study team 	Nexus study task team
II. Desk analysis and interviews	Oct-Nov. 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Start populating virtual library folder asking for input from HEIG members (to be completed by the consultants once selection / sampling criteria are clarified finalised at inception stage) 	Nexus study task team and consultants
	Nov. Dec. 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare a technical / inception note including a proposed analytical framework and outline for the study. 	Consultants
	Nov- Dec 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide comment on the technical / inception note (seeking comments and feedback from the broader HEIG membership) 	Nexus study task team with inputs from broader HEIG membership
	Jan 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalise inception note and start populating the sampling framework 	Consultants
	Feb-Mar 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review evaluation reports Populate the framework based on systematic and referenced extraction of information from the evaluation reports, including examples to illustrate major findings for use in the final study 	Consultants

Phases	Timeline	Main activities and outputs	Responsibility
	Feb-Mar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consult / interview recognised evaluation practitioners, experts and other key stakeholders on the issues analysed as they emerge from the document review. 	Consultants
III. Reporting and presentation of emerging findings	April 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare a draft study showing an overview on how the nexus (and /or related concepts as agreed during the inception phase of the study) have been addressed in evaluation. 	Consultants
	April/May 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide comments on the draft study 	Nexus study task team with inputs from broader HEIG membership
	May 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present emerging findings and conclusions to HEIG for comments and validation and Prepare presentation materials (e.g. Power point slide-deck) to present the emerging findings and results at the UNEG AGM the week of 15th May 2017 	Consultants
IV. Finalisation	June - July 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare final study based on the comments received from HEIG members and during AGM 	Consultants

Profile of the team

23. The study team should combine a mix of evaluation and research experience. The senior research / study lead should have experience of development and humanitarian work and be familiar with the specificities of humanitarian evaluation. Exposure and knowledge of issues relating to ‘resilience’ is desirable. The research support team member/s should demonstrate research analysis and synthesis skills.

Budget

24. The proposed assignment is budgeted as follows: 35 days for a senior research / study lead; and 45-65 (flexible) days for research support /junior study team member(s).
25. The contracting modality for this research will be via individual consultancy contract. Proposals from group of consultants are welcome, and each member of the study team will be contracted separately.

Contacts and deadline for submitting EoI

26. Expressions of interest for this assignment and accompanying CVs should be sent to Marta Bruno (FAO) Marta.Bruno@fao.org with copy to Francesca Bonino (UNHCR) bonino@unhcr.org
27. The deadline for submitting the Expression of Interest is **Monday 21 November 2016**.

References

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