

FAQ about the CAP

Introduction

This “Frequently Asked Questions” has been developed over the past months, based on questions that people have asked about the CAP. The FAQ is work in progress in that it will be updated each time a new question arises, or each time the answer to a question changes. The CAP is not static: it evolves regularly in line with the changing context in which aid agencies work and in line with its overall goal: to ensure that the best available protection and assistance reaches people in need, on time.

What is the CAP?

The Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP) is a tool used by aid organisations to plan, coordinate, fund, implement and monitor their activities.

As a planning and programming tool, the CAP contributes significantly to developing a more thoughtful approach to humanitarian action.

As a coordination mechanism, the CAP fosters closer cooperation between host governments, donors, aid agencies, and in particular, between NGOs, the Red Cross movement, IOM and UN agencies. Working together in the world's crisis regions, they produce a Common Humanitarian Action Plan (CHAP).

What is the CHAP?

The Common Humanitarian Action Plan (CHAP) is a strategic plan for humanitarian response in a given country or region.

It provides:

- A common analysis of the context in which humanitarian takes place;
- An assessment of needs;
- Best, worst, and most likely scenarios;
- Identification of roles and responsibilities, i.e. who does what and where;
- A clear statement of longer-term objectives and goals; and
- A framework for monitoring the strategy and revising it if necessary.

The CHAP is the foundation for developing a Consolidated Appeal, and is as such part of the Coordinated Appeals Process (CAP).

What is a Consolidated Appeal?

A consolidated appeal is when several Agencies together appeal for funds for the same crisis. It is a snapshot of a situation and identifies who does what and where.

What is a Flash appeal?

The Flash Appeal is a tool for structuring a coordinated humanitarian response for the first three to six months of an emergency. The UN Humanitarian Coordinator triggers it in consultation with all stakeholders. The Flash Appeal is issued within one week of an emergency. It provides a concise overview of urgent life saving needs, and may include recovery projects that can be implemented within the timeframe of the Appeal.

When did the CAP start? How has it evolved?

The process of planning, preparing and tracking contributions to the CAP has evolved considerably since its creation by General Assembly resolution 46/182 in 1991. At first, preparation of the CAP was not much more than a consolidation of individual agency and sectoral projects. Even at that stage, however, the CAP improved upon the prior practice of each agency producing its own appeal, with little or no consultation. More recently, the CAP has become not only a more efficient fund-raising mechanism but also a much improved coordination tool.

When do we have a CAP?

- When there is an acute humanitarian need caused by a conflict or a natural disaster.
- When the government is either unable or unwilling to address the humanitarian need.
- When a single agency cannot cover all the needs.

How many Consolidated Appeals have been launched so far?

244 Consolidated Appeals and Flash Appeals since 1992.

How much money have they helped raise?

\$30 billion for NGOs, IOM, and UN agencies

Why is there a CAP?

To improve the aid community's capacity to provide the best available assistance and protection to people in need, on time. Furthermore, it helps the aid community improve accountability to people in need and to donors.

Who leads the process?

The Humanitarian Coordinator (HC). Each year, s/he triggers any inter agency appeal, and leads the process in collaboration with IASC Country Team and, at the headquarters level, the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC).

What is OCHA's role?

OCHA's role is to facilitate the process, both at field and at HQ levels. This can be by organising workshops to discuss key elements of the CAP cycle, such as context, or elaborate a Consolidated Appeal document, bringing together various organisations in a constructive manner, and consolidating information, among others.

Who participates?

The IASC

The IASC (Inter Agency Standing Committee) country team members: UN agencies, Red Cross Movement, NGOs, NGO consortia. All members of the team are encouraged to participate in developing the CHAP, although some participants (e.g. the Red Cross) might appeal for funds outside the CAP.

Donors

The donors participate in the development of the CHAP. They commit to Good Humanitarian Donorship principles, one of which is to allocate funding based on assessed needs. They encourage and support prioritisation, and commit to greater donor coordination. Donors give money directly to agencies or NGOs appealing for funds.

Host Governments

The CAP should be prepared in consultation with the host state, in particular with key line ministries with which operational agencies are working on a day-to-day basis.

Affected populations

Participating agencies should take affected populations' perspective into account at all stages of their work.

What does the Cluster Approach mean for the CAP?

The Consolidated Appeals Process is a tool for aid agencies to plan, coordinate, fund, implement, and monitor their activities together in order to provide people struck by disasters and emergencies the best available protection and assistance, on time. Implementing the CAP at the field level hinges on effective leadership by the Humanitarian Coordinator (who is supported by OCHA) and, among other issues, an efficient way of bringing together and organising the various UN and non-UN aid agencies. It is on this second point that the cluster approach can help the CAP considerably.

Each cluster is responsible for and expected to:

- i) identify key UN and non-UN partners in a particular sector or thematic area;
- ii) forge a common understanding of the needs and priorities, and advocate accordingly;
- iii) ensure that relevant capacities exist to implement the response;
- iv) prepare a prioritised strategy and plan for common response;
- v) apply standards and monitor performance;
- vi) report; and
- vii) ensure links with other clusters to support a more strategic approach to humanitarian action.

Each cluster's achievement of these components would make a considerable contribution to the Humanitarian Coordinator's ability to manage to the CAP, and would contribute to a more predictable, effective, and accountable response to protection and assistance needs.

What is the Good Humanitarian Donorship Initiative?

With the aim of enhancing humanitarian response through strengthened co-ordination, effectiveness and accountability, donors endorsed the Principles and Good Practice of Humanitarian Donorship and elaborated an Implementation Plan. One of the Good Humanitarian Donorship principles is to allocate funding based on assessed need.

Can Governments appeal for funding in a Consolidated Appeal?

No. Governments have other mechanisms to seek funding from the international community.

Can NGOs appeal for funding in a CA?

Yes. Both local and international NGOs can appeal for funds in consolidated appeals, or in flash appeals, as long as their project is in line with priorities defined in the CHAP.

How can NGOs benefit from participating in the CAP?

1. Broaden their donor base :
Since 1992 over 400 donors have given \$30 billion directly to organisations appealing for funds in consolidated appeals or flash appeals.
2. Increase their visibility :
Consolidated appeals and flash appeals are sent to every donor government, foundations, rich individuals, media outlets, NGOs, international organisations, and so forth. (You can still push your proposal with your usual donors while listing it in a consolidated appeal – it's not one or the other.)
3. Shape the agenda and priorities :
Do you have a mandate to defend? A particular population of concern? An issue at heart? NGOs in consolidated appeals or flash appeals have a voice during discussions on strategy, coordination, and priorities.
4. Partake in advocacy :
Consolidated appeals and flash appeals reach a global audience and gain considerable media coverage.
5. Expand your credibility :
Many donors see participation in consolidated appeals or flash appeals as a "stamp of approval."
6. Save time :
Some donors accept the one-page project sheet in consolidated appeals, or the project box in flash appeals, in place of a full proposal.
7. Coordinate with others :
Donors want to see aid agencies working together, efficiently. Consolidated appeals and flash appeals are the mechanism for bringing together aid agencies. By being part of these appeals you can show that your NGO is serious about collaboration and, at the same time, maintain your identity and independence.
8. Hold donors accountable for funding humanitarian action :

Fragmented, competing proposals and appeals in any given crisis make it unclear how much aid is needed to help people in a given crisis, and whether donors have met their responsibility to fund according to need. Uniting proposals in one appeal makes donors' performance clearer, and gives humanitarian organisations more leverage.

9. Get timely support :

OCHA supports Humanitarian Coordinators in the field and the Emergency Relief Coordinator globally. OCHA has a dedicated team of professionals in Geneva working on consolidated appeals and flash appeals, available to advise and support NGOs, answer their questions, and receive their feedback.

10. Receive free training :

OCHA offers training about the CAP, i.e. the process of:

- i) context analysis and scenario building;
- ii) needs assessment and priority setting;
- iii) response planning;
- iv) resource mobilisation; and
- v) monitoring and reporting.

Why should NGOs register project proposals in CAPs?

Because: (1) it's easy and free publicity; and (2) it makes it likelier that donors can be held accountable for supporting all priority humanitarian actions. If half of humanitarian actions are not counted in the joint appeal, then it is impossible to assess whether needs are covered sector by sector, and whether donors are doing their job. The registration of planned projects helps to publicise the full scale of humanitarian action and resource needs in a given crisis. As such one can gain a more complete picture of need and cost of programmes addressing need. It also helps coordination between all actors. The CAP increases donors' confidence that appealing agencies' projects are linked to the humanitarian community's collective strategy and goals in a given crisis.

How can my NGO get involved in the CAP?

Ask the representative of the NGO in the field to contact the UN Humanitarian Coordinator, or OCHA Office. If the NGO is not present in the field, it needs to establish a presence (or have the money and intent to do so) in order to participate in the CAP.

If an NGO puts a project in the appeal, can it still send the proposal directly to its usual donors?

Definitely. The CAP is not a funding channel. All appealing agencies, UN and NGO, should follow up directly with their donors.

If NGOs put a project in the appeal, does it mean they will get the money?

The CAP is not a funding channel. All appealing agencies, UN and NGO, should follow up directly with their donors.

Why should we ensure involvement of local NGOs?

- For capacity building
- For sustainability

How does it work?

The CAP is a programme cycle which help aid agencies:

- Analyze context
- Assess needs
- Build scenarios
- Set goals

- Identify roles and priorities
- Plan the response
- Appeal for funds
- Implement a coordinated programme
- Monitor and evaluate
- Revise the plan
- Report
- (back to analyse...)

Project prioritisation

Teams in the field decide, in accordance with the local context, to evaluate projects in light of:

Organisational criteria:

the appealing organisation has the technical expertise in country, capacity, and mandate to implement the project.

Demographic criteria:

the project will address a priority need, as determined by the IASC Country Team.

Geographic criteria:

the project will be implemented in a region that is considered to be a priority.

Sectoral criteria:

the appealing organisation's project helps to achieve the response plan's objectives.

Temporal criteria:

the projects can make a measurable impact in the time frame of the appeal (usually one year).

Other context-specific criteria:

e.g. projects that include a focus on HIV/AIDS; projects that help to build local capacity.

Following are the CAP sectors eligible for consideration:

- Agriculture
- Coordination and Support Services
- Economic Recovery and Infrastructure
- Education
- Family shelter and non-food items
- Food
- Health
- Mine action
- Multi-sector
- Protection / Human Rights / Rule of Law
- Security
- Water and sanitation

Complete guidance on project selection and prioritisation can be found on <http://www.humanitarianappeal.net>.

What if several agencies have similar projects?

They have to combine their projects (one project can have different agencies appealing for different amounts of money of the overall budget for the project), or decide which agency will appeal for all of the money.

The purpose of field workshops

The purpose of a workshop varies. In general it is focuses on agencies coordinating and planning efficiently, in order to have a common understanding of:

- Context, e.g., history, economic and political analysis, and future scenarios
- People's needs and priorities
- Who does what to address these needs, i.e. roles and responsibilities
- Costs

The Country Workshops should include the Humanitarian Coordinator, the IASC Country Team, and other relevant stakeholders such as government and donor counterparts.

Strategic planning

The CHAP utilises a “logical framework” approach. This approach has been adopted to ensure a rational and logical consistency between strategic priorities, sector objectives, project activities and indicators. Each goal will have its associated sector objectives that will be measured by observable and measurable indicators. Further, projects may be included in the CAP only if they relate to a specific sector objective.

Gender mainstreaming

A gender perspective in humanitarian action is vital. It is essential to keep these issues in mind both at the individual programming level in project design, and in the overall analysis and development of the CHAP. The overarching objective is not simply to add some gender-sensitive words in a document, but to strengthen programming and analysis, based on the different needs, concerns, capacities and contributions of women, men, girls & boys - in other words, to ensure appropriate design and targeting of our humanitarian response. A checklist done in accordance with IASC principles can be found at <http://www.reliefweb.int/cap/workshops/wkshop05/CAPToolkit2005/Gender%20%20Mainstreaming.doc>

Process

At the onset of the emergency, a Situation Report is issued. This report can cover from day 1 to week 2. In the meantime, a Flash Appeal can be prepared and launched. It covers week 2 to month 6. Then, a Consolidated Appeal can be issued.

How can people find the funding status of a project?

This is the aim of the Financial Tracking System – provide anyone with data on funding for past and present projects, inside or outside of Appeals. It can be found at: <http://www.reliefweb.int/fts>.

Funds can be marked as:

- **Pledge:**
A non-binding announcement of an intended contribution or allocation by the donor. Can be specific as to appealing agency and project, or specify only the crisis, or be unearmarked (to be allocated among crises at the recipient agency's discretion).
- **Commitment:**
Creation of a contractual obligation regarding funding between the donor and appealing agency. Almost always takes the form of a signed contract.
- **Contribution:**
The payment or transfer of funds or in-kind goods from the donor towards the appealing agency, resulting from a commitment.

At what time of the year is the Consolidated Appeal prepared?

Usually in September or October. Each year, Humanitarian Coordinators are responsible for preparing the Consolidated Appeals, launched globally by the UN Secretary-General in November.

How long does a Consolidated Appeal (CA) last?

For as long as necessary. A CA can be for one year or more. Projects included can be planned for more than a year but their budgets must be broken into 12-months periods. For example: UNDP / IDP Return / Jan 2006 - July 2007 / Total Budget: \$3 million / Total required for 2006: \$2.1 million / Total available already: \$400,000 (it is often 0) / Total required in this appeal for 2006: \$ 1.7 million.

And then what? Do we review the appeal during the year?

A Mid-Year-Review is presented to donors in July of each year.

What if the situation changes?

If the situation and needs in the field change, a revision to any part of an appeal can be issued at any time.

When can a project be changed?

A project in a CA can be added, removed, or modified any time.

When do we issue a Flash Appeal?

Whenever crises break or natural disasters occur, humanitarian partners develop a Flash Appeal to address emergencies in a timely manner.

How can the previous CAP, CAP reviews, and OCHA financial reports be used to facilitate the strategy development process?

It is important to build on the previous year's work. As we develop a longer-term experience with the CAP, the creation of the CHAP and CA should be increasingly easy and refined. It should be possible to draw upon the situation analysis from previous CAs, identifying how the situation has changed. Another important area of analysis is to review what has been funded and what has not been funded in previous CAs and why. Identifying and describing the impact of lack of funding will help set the stage for this year's priorities. It is also important to assess the currency, utility and value of goals, objectives, and indicators from previous CAs.

Short glossary

(A comprehensive glossary is available on <http://www.humanitarianappeal.net> click on "About CAP," and then on "Acronyms").

CAP	Consolidated Appeals Process
CHAP	Common Humanitarian Action Plan
MYR	Mid-Year Review
HC	Humanitarian Coordinator
IASC	Inter Agency Standing Committee
ERC	Emergency Relief Coordinator

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