IT emergency standby partners

08 March 2023

Key points

- Confirm that UNHCR IT capacity is not available before requesting support from standby partners.
- Ensure your request has the required details and supporting documents (TORs) to facilitate quick follow-up by HQ.

1. Overview

To improve its response to emergencies, UNHCR has concluded standby partnerships with government agencies, NGOs, and private sector organizations that possess specific expertise and capacity complementing UNHCR's internal surge capacity. Several of these agreements meet information technology (IT) needs, such as:

- Technical expertise
- Data and voice connectivity, bandwidth
- IT equipment needs

Through these arrangements, qualified short-term deployees can be provided quickly, using simplified procedures. Sometimes, these arrangements are at no cost to UNHCR; in other cases, UNHCR jointly or fully finances them. This entry reviews these services and indicates how to request them.

2. Main guidance
When and for what purpose?

External deployment resources should be used in moderation; they do not replace regular staffing arrangements in UNHCR. External deployment arrangements should be seen as a short-term means to support and augment UNHCR’s operational resources when this is absolutely necessary. In general, external deployment resources should only be deployed when:

- UNHCR is unable to meet staffing needs at short notice.
- Specific profiles or expertise are required that UNHCR staff do not possess.
- Additional help is needed for a short period (three to six months).

Description and/or specifics

- **The Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB)** is able to provide personnel with a variety of specialities to support the assessment and implementation of IT services.
- **Emergency.lu**, a public-private partnership led by the Government of Luxembourg, provides rapid deployment satellite terminals (VSATs) and IT support personnel (including transportation) in the first hours following the declaration of an emergency.
- **The International Humanitarian Partnership (IHP)** offers a number of IT modules and emergency response teams that operate in locations where the communication infrastructure is limited. IHP often supports the establishment of base camps and interagency common services.
- **DSB (Norwegian Directorate for Civil Protection and Emergency Planning)** manages a pool of IT experts with relevant equipment.
- **RedR Australia** has an emergency roster that includes IT experts deployable for 3-6 months.
- **Irish Aid**, the Development Cooperation Division of Ireland’s Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, can deploy IT experts to humanitarian emergencies for 6 months.
- **German Federal Agency for Technical Relief (THW)** can provide IT equipment and IT support personnel, who are usually deployable for 4-6 weeks.

How to request/implement/seek support?

**Requesting IT deployees**

If a UNHCR office requires an IT deployee, it should submit a request to the DIST IT Emergency Preparedness and Response Section (EPRS) and the Regional Bureau IT Lead. EPRS will liaise with the Emergency Partnerships and Deployments Unit to formalize the request and identify a suitable Standby Partner.

The request, together with specific terms of reference (ToR), should include the following information:

- Profile required
Division of Emergency, Security and Supply (DESS) will request standby partners to identify candidates for the deployment. When candidates have been agreed, in consultation with EPRS, they will be deployed in accordance with the usual emergency deployment procedures (see Entry on How to request emergency deployees).

3. Links

Emergency standby partners (deployment of personnel and service packages)

4. Main contacts

- DIST IT Emergency Preparedness & Response Section (EPRS), at: ICT.Emergency@unhcr.org.
- Division for Emergency, Security and Supply (DESS), at: hqecmdpl@unhcr.org