

Requesting service packages from standby partners

13 February 2025

Key points

- Emergency standby partners are able to deploy service packages (i.e a set of equipment, usually supported by deployees to manage or install it).
- A service package can be a tented 'base camp', a fully equipped deep field staff accommodation and office solution, as an interim solution until more sustainable solutions are identified. More durable structures such as prefabricated or constructed modules for accommodation, offices for UNHCR or UNHCR-run UN Hubs are also available options implemented by standby partners.
- The availability of a service package will depend on the standby partner's funding as well as the availability of the required equipment and staffing.
- A country operation that has identified a need for a Service Package or a potential project, can contact the Emergency Preparedness, Deployments and Partnerships Section (EPDPS) in the Division of Emergency, Security and Supply (DESS) at hqdeploy@unhcr.org, keeping the Senior Occupational Safety Officer in copy.

1. Overview

In order to improve the efficiency and predictability of an emergency response, UNHCR has concluded a number of standby partnership agreements with Government agencies, NGOs, and private sector organizations whose specific expertise and capacity complement UNHCR's internal emergency and surge capacity. Emergency standby partners are organizations or entities that maintain a capacity of personnel or equipment on standby, which can be rapidly deployed upon request, to enhance UNHCR's capacity to respond to humanitarian crises. UNHCR's emergency standby partners offer two kinds of services: deployment of personnel and service packages.

A service package is a pre-defined set of operational support equipment that can be deployed upon request and mutual agreement between UNHCR and a standby partner. They often include the deployment of a dedicated support team that helps to set up the service package and train UNHCR staff on its use. Examples of service packages include light base camps, base camps, prefabricated facilities, accommodation and office space, as well as information and communications technology (ICT) modules.

The following entry covers service packages only. For more details on the deployment of standby personnel, please refer to the dedicated entry on standby partners available [here](#).

2. Relevance for emergency operations

Service packages can be requested from UNHCR's emergency standby partners when UNHCR faces one of more of the following situations:

- UNHCR lacks the capacity to provide a particular technical service;
- The demand for a service exceeds the capacity of UNHCR and partners in the field;
- UNHCR is unable to meet the demand for a service at short notice.

A country operation can contact DESS for initial inquiries or questions. The availability of a service package will depend on the standby partner's funding (taking into account geographic or thematic priorities), as well as the availability of the required equipment and staffing. While delivery timelines are outlined below, service packages can have a longer implementation period, depending on the nature of the request and the operational context (availability of land, customs clearance process, building security fencing, etc.). A standby partner might undertake an initial assessment mission to ensure that the modules are fully tailored to the specific context.

3. Main guidance

A service package is a pre-defined set of operational support equipment that, upon request and mutual agreement between a UNHCR country operation and a standby partner, is deployed to support an emergency. Service packages often include the deployment of a dedicated support team that installs the equipment and trains the UNHCR operation on its use.

Service packages can consist of:

- Light Base Camps: Tented facilities to provide short-term and rudimentary working and living conditions in emergency operations (Lifespan: 2-8 weeks);
- Base Camps: Tented facilities of high quality that provide comprehensive offices and accommodation, including all necessary equipment and services; it can also serve as a transit centre (Life span: 3-12 months);
- Prefabricated facilities: For office, accommodation, kitchen and sanitary facilities, tools and equipment, water purification and distribution, power supply and distribution, etc. (Life span: 2-5 years).
- Construction of durable structures for offices, accommodation or UN hubs. Accommodation

- and office space as part of longer-term construction projects;
- ICT modules, including systems to enhance connectivity for forcibly displaced and stateless people;
- Civil or mechanical engineering modules;
- Logistics support, including transport capacity, light vehicles, armoured vehicles, etc.

The legal framework for UNHCR's collaboration with emergency standby partners is the Emergency Standby Partnership Agreement which covers the deployment of standby personnel and service packages. Standby partner staff deploying to implement a service package are treated according to the same terms and conditions applicable to [standby partner deployees](#) (as outlined in the Emergency Standby Partnership Agreement). The specific terms and conditions for a particular service package deployment should be specified in a Letter of Agreement (LoA). The LoA is signed directly between the standby partner and the country operation. Service packages are recorded as in-kind contributions to UNHCR at field level as part of the country operation's (OPS) budget, in coordination with the Division of External Relations (DER).

The following emergency standby partners offer service packages to UNHCR operations:

- CISCO Crisis Response
- Danish Emergency Management Agency (DEMA)
- Directorate for Civil Protection and Emergency Planning of Norway (DCPEP)
- Emergency.lu, Luxembourg
- Ericsson Response
- German Federal Agency for Technical Relief (THW)
- International Humanitarian Partnership (IHP): An informal umbrella organization for multinational cooperation between governmental emergency management agencies active in the field of humanitarian assistance. The IHP member agencies are: The Crisis Management Centre Finland (CMC), Danish Emergency Management Agency (DEMA), UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), Norwegian Directorate for Civil Protection and Emergency Planning (DSB), The Luxembourg Rescue Services Agency (ASS Lux), Estonian Rescue Board (ERB), Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB) and German Federal Agency for Technical Relief (THW).
- Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB)
- Veolia Foundation

More details on service packages are available at the following link: [Service Packages](#) (accessible to UNHCR staff only)

Advice to request service packages:

To request service packages, country operations can contact UNHCR DESS Emergency Service (Emergency Preparedness, Deployments and Partnership Section / EPDPS – hqdeploy@unhcr.org) indicating “service package” in the subject title, copying the Regional Bureau and the Senior Occupational Safety Officer of the Division of Human Resources. Requests should contain the following information:

- Type of service package required
- Brief description of the emergency situation (displacement numbers, affected people's

needs, UNHCR response)

- Area, location and expected duration of the operation and possible longer-term plans
- A brief description of the UNHCR team on the ground
- A description of safety and security issues
- The required lead time for deployment

For the base camps specifically:

- Number of staff (to be accommodated in the Base Camp)
- Site specifications
- Types of facilities: office, accommodation, electricity, etc; and
- Need for security installations.

EPDPS/DESS contacts standby partners to seek their support. If interested, a standby partner, or several in cooperation, may send a rapid technical field assessment mission to the area concerned. If the country operation and partner agree, they proceed directly to transfer the service package based on a formalized Letter of Agreement (LoA).

Standby partner employees implementing service packages will complete the same formalities and procedures as other individual standby partner employees, except that teams may not be fully integrated in UNHCR's office structure and deployments are shorter. Like individual employees, team members will be accorded the status of 'UN expert on mission' and must be fully integrated in the applicable UNSMS.

Service packages are usually delivered to the point of entry only. In country, the country operation will have to provide logistical support, including customs clearance processes, to the standby partner, and secure land and necessary documentation, in-country transport to the location and security/fencing to the facility as required by applicable UNSMS.

Post emergency phase

Service packages such as tented base camps are deployed to provide support in an initial emergency phase, with a limited lifespan depending on weather conditions as well as wear and tear (from 2 weeks up to a year, as stated above). This capacity is deployed with the understanding that the country operation will look at establishing more sustainable accommodation and/or office arrangements, should it be required. In some circumstances, service packages can also consist of longer-term construction projects for accommodation, office or operational facilities in emergency or protracted crises contexts. The country operation should therefore consider the requirements from the onset as well as the next phases.

4. Links

[Accessible for UNHCR staff only: Emergency Preparedness and Response Portal – S... IHP Office and Accommodation Handbook](#)

5. Main contacts

Contact to discuss or request a service package, contact the Emergency Preparedness, Deployments and Partnerships Section (EPDPS) in the Division of Emergency, Security and Supply (DESS) at hqdeploy@unhcr.org