

Requesting deployments from emergency standby partners

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Key points

- UNHCR has agreements with several emergency standby partners that are able to deploy individual experts in a wide range of functions for an average of 6 months (with possible extension), often supported by the standby partners' own resources (considered as in-kind contributions).
- Country operations under emergency declarations (L1, L2, L3), or at high risks of emergencies, and/or covered by IASC systemwide Scale-up, can request deployments from standby partners.
- Country operations and HQ divisions can also request deployment(s) from standby partners if they require specific profiles or expertise that are not internally available to pursue organizational strategic priorities.
- To request a deployment from standby partners, contact the Emergency Preparedness, Deployments and Partnerships Section (EPDPS) in the Division of Emergency, Security and Supply (DESS).
- Deployment requests from standby partners need to include TORs endorsed by the Representative. There may be cases where the partners do not have funds / suitable candidates to support.

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 entities 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 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.

Through the deployment of standby personnel, qualified experts are made available for short periods, often as an in-kind contribution to UNHCR. Emergency standby partners can provide a wide range of skills, such as technical experts (in shelter, site planning, WASH, energy & environment, etc.); protection specialists (child protection, gender-based violence, accountability to affected populations etc.), or have skills in cluster/sector coordination or information management.

A service package is a pre-defined set of operational support equipment that, upon request and mutual agreement between UNHCR and a partner agency, is deployed to a UNHCR operation. Packages often include the deployment of a dedicated support team that helps to set up the package and train UNHCR staff on its use. Examples of service packages are base camps for offices or staff accommodation (tented or prefabricated facilities), construction of durable structures (accommodation, operational facilities), ICT module (including systems to enhance connectivity for forcibly displaced people), civil/mechanical engineering modules or logistical support. Standby partners that provide service packages are specialized in governmental crisis management and are open to discuss various types of support requests.

The following entry covers the deployment of standby personnel. For detailed information on [internal deployment mechanisms](#). For detailed information on the deployment of [Service Packages](#).

2. Relevance for emergency operations

The deployment of standby personnel is meant to temporarily complement UNHCR staffing, especially in emergency operations. Therefore, it should be used strategically and should not be used to fill regular staffing gaps.

The possibility to secure a standby deployment depends on the standby partner's funding (Standby Partners usually have their own geographic or thematic priorities), availability of suitable roster members and thematic/strategic interest of partners. It takes several weeks to secure such deployments, usually up to 8 weeks.

3. Main guidance

Requesting Deployments from Standby Partners

In general, standby deployments can be requested when UNHCR operations meet one or more of the following criteria:

- UNHCR operations need emergency staffing that are not internally available, and are in one or more of the following situations:
 - (i) under UNHCR's declared emergencies (Level 1/2/3)

- (ii) rated at high risk of emergencies (ERM risk register)
- (iii) covered by [IASC systemwide Scale-Up](#)
 - UNHCR operations and HQ divisions require specific profiles or expertise that are not internally available to pursue organizational strategic priorities.

Standby partner deployment requests from declared emergency operations will be prioritized among all the requests. The average duration of the standby deployment is 6 months, with possible extension. The deployment duration may be shorter (e.g. 3 months) in certain circumstances, depending on the needs on the ground.

UNHCR currently has Standby Partnership Agreements with [20 Standby Partners](#).

They are the following:

- CANADEM, International Civilian Response Corps, Canada
- CISCO Crisis Response
- Danish Refugee Council (DRC)
- Danish Emergency Management Agency (DEMA)
- Directorate for Civil Protection and Emergency Planning of Norway (DSB/DCPEP)
- Dutch Surge Support, Netherlands Enterprise Agency (RVO - DSS Water/MHPSS)
- Emergency.lu, Luxembourg
- Ericsson Response
- Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO)
- German Center for Peace Operations (ZIF)
- German Federal Agency for Technical Relief (THW)
- International Humanitarian Partnership (IHP)
- iMMAP Inc.
- Irish Aid, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
- NORCAP - A part of the Norwegian Refugee Council
- RedR Australia
- Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB)
- Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (SDC)
- Veolia Foundation
- White Helmets Commission

The standby partner deployees are considered as 'UN expert on mission' and support emergency response within the UNHCR's office structure in the country and should be given equal access to security, office space and accommodation as international professional staff.

If a standby partner is not able to fully fund a deployment, costs may be covered by the requesting UNHCR operation under a Reimbursable Loan Arrangement (RLA) on an exceptional basis. In this case, standby partners would submit a budget to be confirmed by the UNHCR country operation, prompting the operation to prepare a Letter of Agreement (LoA) that is to be signed by both parties. This modality can be used to cover the cost of an extension, should the standby partner not have funding available. Please note that not all partners are able to issue RLAs.

Requesting an emergency deployment from Standby Partners:

- Contact Emergency Preparedness, Deployments and Partnerships Section (EPDPS)/DESS and the Regional Bureau. The request must be submitted to EPDPS/DESS with TORs and a Request Form endorsed/signed by the Representative, keeping the Regional Bureau in copy. The TORs should be provided in Word format, while the request form should be provided in PDF format.
- **Profile:** The **TORs** should be specific and realistic, in line with the timeframe of the deployment. It is recommended to avoid using standard job descriptions given the shorter and temporary nature of these deployments. The more specific the TORs are, the higher the chance of identifying a candidate corresponding to the actual needs of the operation. UNHCR colleagues can find the TOR template as well as the Standby Partner request form on the [Emergency Response and Preparedness Portal](#).
- **Grade:** Given that the majority of standby partner roster members are at **P3** or **P4** levels, it is generally recommended to avoid requesting junior experts at P2 level. P5 roster members can exceptionally be identified for specific roles, but a longer processing time should be expected.
- **Feasibility and timeframe:** Success in securing standby partner deployments depends on several factors, including the availability of funding on the standby partner's side (often reflecting the partner's geographic or thematic priorities), as well as the availability of a suitable candidate in the standby partner's roster. Other UN agencies have similar agreements with the same standby partners hence UNHCR shares partners with other UN agencies and some profiles can be in high demand. Some experts can be particularly hard to find, such as a combination of technical profiles with a specific language requirement (e.g. Arabic, French or Spanish). The time it takes to secure a deployment varies. It may take from 6 to 8 weeks, depending on the context, profile and the partner, but could also take less time also faster. It is thus important for the country operation to consider alternative staffing solutions from the onset should the deployment request not be successful, especially in the emergency phase or if the need is urgent.
- **Administration:** The standby partner is responsible for the arrangement and payment of most administrative matters related to the employment cost including salary, daily subsistence allowance (DSA) and any other benefits. UNHCR is responsible for covering the cost of internal travel (excluding DSA) and travel to the designated Rest and Recuperation (R&R) location. More details on the administration of the deployment of standby personnel are available in the Standby Partners Deployments Information Note available on the [Emergency Response and Preparedness Portal](#).

Requesting Service Packages from standby partners

- Contact the Emergency Preparedness, Deployments and Partnerships Section (EPDPS)/DESS and the Regional Bureau for advice depending on the nature of the request. A formal request must be submitted to EPDPS/DESS with TORs and a Request Form endorsed/signed by the Representative, keeping the Regional Bureau in copy. Once a relevant standby partner has been identified and the service package defined, DESS or relevant divisions will support in drafting a Letter of Agreement (LOA) between the standby partner and the receiving country operation specifying the role of each party. Country operations should expect to support with the logistical procedures to move equipment into

the country.

- **Profile:** Standby partners will deploy specialized roster members for service packages on shorter missions and they are usually not available for longer-term deployments.
- **Timeframe:** Depending on the nature of the request, the implementation can be very quick for some packages or requires some time for larger projects. The standby partner might undertake an initial assessment mission to ensure that the service package is tailored to the specific context and follow up with missions for maintenance/upgrades.

Post emergency phase

Emergency operations may request deployments from standby partners at any time, during which they are covered by the funds associated with an emergency declaration (L1, L2 or L3). Standby partner deployments can also provide support in the post-emergency phase as well as in protracted crises as long as the deployments are considered as UNHCR's strategic priorities, and it does not have internally available human resources. The operations are encouraged to plan for mid and longer-term staffing requirements as soon as possible when an emergency is declared, including standby partner deployments.

4. Links

[Accessible to UNHCR staff only: Emergency Preparedness and Response Portal – St...](#) [Accessible to UNHCR staff only: Emergency Preparedness and Response Portal – Se...](#)

5. Main contacts

Contact to request a standby partner deployment and/or Service Package, contact the Emergency Preparedness, Deployments and Partnerships Section (EPDPS) in the Division of Emergency, Security and Supply (DESS) at hqdeploy@unhcr.org