

Emergency rosters and Deployments

Standard Operating Procedures for the management of emergency rosters and deployment of emergency roster team members and standby partner staff

Geneva, Switzerland
2020

Introduction

UNHCR has put arrangements in place to deploy emergency staff when sudden surges in demand occur during emergency situations. These mechanisms enable emergency operations to manage when their staff resources are insufficient.

Emergency rosters

There are five emergency rosters and stand-by capacity mechanisms currently in place to support the emergency operation with critical staff deployments.

1) Permanent standby teams of UNHCR DESS – Emergency Services

The DESS Emergency Standby Team is a multi-functional team of experienced emergency professionals who can be deployed as a team or individually to provide leadership as well as technical support in assessment and response to declared emergencies and other circumstances where deployments are exceptionally sought for situations that are in the process of being analysed and considered for a declaration of an emergency level or based on corporate reasons (priorities) as decided by the Director of DESS.

The team is led by the Principal Emergency Coordinator (D1) and consists of 6 members (P5x2, P4x3 and P3x1). For an Emergency Level 3, the team may be deployed while their deployment is recommended by the Director of DESS in consultation with the regional bureau for other emergency levels or exceptional circumstances. For either situation, they are deployed with TORs outlining well-defined reporting line, responsibilities, authority and scope of work.

Mobilization. Within 72 hours.

Period. Up to 2 months.

Extension. Depending on the requirements, one month (up to 3 months overall).

Costs. The receiving operation covers the costs of DSA and travel.

Activation. Director DESS in consultation with the concerned regional bureau.

Reporting. When deployed individually, the members of the DESS Emergency Standby Team will report to either the most senior UNHCR staff in the country or the regional bureau, depending on the context (with an exception to P3 Emergency Protection Officer (SGBV) who will be reporting to the relevant senior colleague in charge of protection). When deployed as a team for an Emergency Level 3, the reporting line of the Principal Emergency Director will be determined by the Director of DESS and the Regional Bureau Director prior to the departure.

Replenishment. The members are appointed on the respective standard positions based at HQs in Geneva.

2) Senior corporate emergency roster (SCER)

The SCER is a pool of up to 20 UNHCR staff at the P5 level and above, who are on standby for deployment to senior roles in emergencies or, to be deployed to Operations as senior staff in leadership roles. Its activation is recommended by the Director of DESS, in consultation with the regional bureau, and with endorsed TORs.

Mobilization. Within 72 hours.

Period. 2 months.

Extension. Exceptionally, missions may be extended to a third month.

Costs. The receiving operation covers the costs of DSA and travel.

Activation. Deployment is triggered by DESS Director, regional bureau and/or AHC-O.

Reporting. When deployed, the members of SCER report to the most senior UNHCR staff in the country (in case of no presence in the country, to the Regional Bureau).

Related training: Senior Emergency Leadership Programme (SELP)

Replenishment:

- Annual basis.
- No call for application as DESS approaches regional bureaux and Divisions bilaterally to explore the release of identified staff for the training and to join the roster.

Current status: The replenishment process for 2021 is ongoing.

3) Roster of UNHCR's internal Emergency Response Team (ERT)

The emergency response team (ERT) is a pool of UNHCR personnel who are on standby for emergency deployment. Roster members are drawn from duty stations in the field and sections at Headquarters. The ERT roster includes staff from GS6 to P4 level and covers almost all profiles, except certain technical specialists.

Mobilization. Within 72 hours.

Period. 3 months.

Costs. The receiving operation covers the costs of DSA and travel. The receiving operation may also cover the deployee's salary deployment for the third month.

Activation. Following a request by the emergency operation, in consultation with the regional bureau and after clearance by ES. Bureau, Divisions, and ES may also propose or recommend the deployment of specific profiles.

Reporting. When deployed the members of the ERT report to field managers in the operation (in line with the TORs)

Related training: Workshop for Emergency Management (WEM), which usually takes place three times a year. In some cases, some candidates deemed to have the right profile may join the roster without participating in the WEM.

Replenishment:

- Triennial basis.
- A call for applications to join the ERT roster and to participate in the WEM is issued 3 times a year. The call for applications is issued approximately 12 weeks before the training. The WEMs usually takes place in February/March (call for applications issued in November/December, for roster starting in March or April), June (call for applications in April, for roster starting in July) and September/October (call for applications issued in June/July, for roster starting in October).
- There are 40 slots available in each WEM, while an undetermined number of participants may join without participating in the WEM.

- The selection and enrolment for the ERT roster is a labor-intensive and complex process, involving the Partnerships and Deployment Unit, multiple HQ divisions as well as a DESS selection committee, and requiring significant administrative follow-up including with the medical service and HQ travel units. More details are available on the updated SOPs on the ERT.

Current status: Current roster valid until end March 2021. All ERT roster members were automatically extended up to March 2021 through a broadcast from the AHC-Operations issued in June 2020 in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Next replenishment is expected in April 2021.

4) Functional rosters in the areas of Admin/Finance, Human Resources, Registration, Supply, IM and Interagency Coordination

The functional rosters have been established to complement the ERT mechanism. It is a pool of UNHCR personnel, who have either undergone training or obtained a certification in a specific function, and who are on standby for emergency deployment. Roster members are drawn from duty stations in the field and sections at Headquarters. These rosters which are managed jointly by ES and Divisions, include staff from GS6 to P4 level, and cover the HR, Supply, Registration, and Admin/Finance profiles.

Mobilization. From 72 hours (Registration roster) to 2 weeks (other functional rosters).

Period. 2 months; or several shorter missions not to surpass three months in a calendar year.

Costs. The receiving operation covers the costs of DSA and travel. If an operation extends a deployment for a third month, it may also cover the deployee's salary.

Activation. Following a request by the emergency operation, in consultation with the regional bureau and after consultation between the Functional Unit and ES. Bureaux, Divisions, and ES may also propose or recommend the deployment of specific profiles.

Replenishment: Varies from one roster to another and depends on roster capacity. Should a potential gap in a certain profile become apparent (to be flagged by the roster monitoring tool as described below), it would prompt a review meeting with the relevant Division. Should there be less than 5 roster members available from that profile, the ES would flag it to the concerned Division and schedule a review meeting.

Reporting. When deployed the members of the functional rosters report to field managers in the operation (in line with the TORs).

a) Registration roster

Mobilization: 72 hours.

Commitment: 9 months.

Period: 2 months, with possibility to extend for a 3rd month

Related training: Training on Emergency Registration (TER).

Replenishment:

- Annual basis.
- Replenishment occurs through the TER which is organised every year, and usually takes place in July/August.

- The need to replenish the roster is discussed at least once a year through a bilateral meeting between DESS and the Global Data Service / DIRS, and as needed depending on roster capacity (as flagged by the roster monitoring tool described below).
- The meeting should be scheduled at least three months before the current roster elapses (usually in April). On that occasion, statistics on the registration deployments are to be prepared, including both those deployed from the functional roster and the ERT roster, in order to better assess the need to replenish the roster.

Current status: The last roster elapsed in April 2020 and the 2020 TER was cancelled due to COVID-19. DESS and DIRS have been working on the replenishment of the roster by approaching previous members of the roster to seek their re-enrollment. The next replenishment is expected in 2021 (date to be confirmed).

Division focal point: Jallah Faciann, Registration Officer, DIRS/Global Data Service, based in Copenhagen

Reporting to: Andrew Hopkins, Chief of Section, DIRS/Global Data Service, based in Copenhagen

b) Supply roster

Mobilization: 2 weeks

Commitment: 2 years

Period: 2 months; or several shorter missions not to surpass three months in a calendar year.

Related training: Emergency Supply Roster Training.

Replenishment:

- Biennial basis.
- Replenishment occurs through the training, usually taking place in September/October.
- The need to replenish the roster is discussed annually through a bilateral meeting between the Emergency Service and SMS.
- The meeting should be scheduled at least three months before the current roster elapses (usually in October), and as needed depending on roster capacity (as flagged by the roster monitoring tool described below). On that occasion, statistics on the supply deployments are to be prepared, including both those deployed from the functional roster and the ERT roster, in order to better assess the need to replenish the roster.

Current status: The last roster elapsed in October 2020 and the 2020 training was cancelled due to COVID-19. Extension of previous roster members who were not deployed was sought by DESS management with a few members extended till end March 2021. The replenishment of the roster is expected in April 2021 through a remote training.

Division focal point: Silva Alkebeh, Chief of Section, Supply Logistics, Supply Management Service (SMS)/DESS, based in Budapest

Reporting to: TBC, Head of SMS, SMS/DESS, based in Budapest

c) Admin/finance roster

Mobilization: 2 weeks.

Commitment: 2 years.

Period: 2 months; or several shorter missions not to surpass three months in a calendar year.

Related training: No training.

Replenishment:

- Annual basis.
- No call for applications. DFAM approaches a selection of admin/finance colleagues and their management bilaterally to enquire on their interest to join the roster.
- The need to replenish the roster is discussed annually through a bilateral meeting between DESS and DFAM, and as needed depending on roster capacity (as flagged by the roster monitoring tool described below).
- The meeting should be scheduled at least three months before the current roster elapses. On that occasion, statistics on the admin/finance deployments are to be prepared, including both those deployed from the functional roster and the ERT roster, in order to better assess the need to replenish the roster.

Current status: Current roster valid until end 2021, new roster expected to start early 2022.

Division focal point: Stefan Delov, Snr Finance Officer (Change Mgmt), CMFSS/DFAM, based in Budapest

Reporting to: Leonel Guzman, Chief of Service, Change Mgmt Fld Support / DFAM, based in Geneva

d) HR roster

Mobilization: 2 weeks

Commitment: 1 year

Period: 2 months; or several shorter missions not to surpass three months in a calendar year;

Related training: No training. Initially, the first cohort was based on a training on HR in emergencies, but this is no longer the case.

Replenishment:

- Annual basis.
- No call for application as DHR approaches eligible HR colleagues and their management bilaterally to enquire on their interest to join the roster.
- The need to replenish the roster is discussed annually through a bilateral meeting between DESS and DHR, and as needed depending on roster capacity (as flagged by the roster monitoring tool described below).
- The meeting should be scheduled at least three months before the current roster elapses. On that occasion, statistics on the HR deployments are to be prepared, including both those deployed from the functional roster and the ERT roster, in order to better assess the need to replenish the roster.

Current status: The last roster elapsed in October 2020, and the new roster is expected to start in early 2021.

Division focal point: Fariba Emami, Head of Emergency & Temporary Staffing Unit, ATMS/DHR, based in Geneva

Reporting to: Julia Schtivelman-Watt, Head of Service (A & CM), ATMS/DHR, based in Geneva

e) **Interagency Coordination roster – 2021 pilot**

Mobilization: 72 hours.

Commitment: 12 months.

Period: 3 months, or 2 shorter support missions with a combined duration of up to 3 months

Related training: Interagency Coordination Learning Programme (IACLP).

Current status: The first cohort Interagency Coordination roster will be eligible for deployment as of 1 June 2021. The IACLP workshop will be held virtually in May 2021. The next replenishment is expected in 2022 (date to be confirmed).

Division focal point: Guido Van Heugten, Inter-Agency Coordination Officer, Partnership and Coordination Service (PCS)/ Division of External Relations (DER), Based in Geneva

Reporting to: Annika Sandlund, Head of Service, PCS / DER

UNHCR Global Clusters:

Protection: William Chemaly

Shelter: Brett Moore, Miguel Urquia, Angel Pascual

Camp Coordination and Camp Management: Dher Hayo

f) **Information Management roster – 2021 pilot**

Mobilization: 72 hours.

Commitment: 9 months.

Period: 2 months, with possibility to extend for a 3rd month

Related training: Online training. Previously, it was done through the Training for Information Management in Emergencies (TIME).

Current status: There has been no TIME training since 2017 and the last roster elapsed in 2018. The new cohort of the functional roster for IM will be trained in March and eligible for deployment as of 1 April 2021.

Division focal point: Souleymane Geye, Chief of Section, ODSS /Global Data Service (GDS), based in Geneva

Reporting to: Volker Shimmer, Head of the GDS, based in Copenhagen

5) Personnel rosters managed by emergency standby partners

To strengthen its response capacity, UNHCR can call on external expertise to supplement its internal resources. Through its agreements with emergency standby partners, DESS has developed an extensive external deployment capacity, to be used for rapid upscaling of operations, to complement UNHCR internal deployments with a specific skillset or for a project or time-limited

related ToR. For more information, see Entry on 'Emergency Standby Partners' and UNHCR's Guide to UNHCR's Emergency Standby Partners.

Mobilization. From 1 week to 2 months.

Period. Usually a minimum of three months with the possibility of extension.

Extension. Requests for extensions are processed by the ES who receives the new TORs and performance evaluation documents. The ES liaises with the partner to request the extension on behalf of the operation. Some partners might request UNHCR to share the cost beyond the initial 3-6 months or may request UNHCR to fully fund longer deployments under a "reimbursable loan agreement" (RLA).

Costs. In principle, standby partners cover the costs for 3- 6 months (international travel, salary, 5 accommodation, insurance including medical evacuation). UNHCR covers regional and internal travel, and transport costs to designated rest and recuperation locations. No DSA or lump sums should be paid unless otherwise agreed.

Activation. Following a request by the operation, in consultation with the regional bureau, clearance by ES (in coordination with Divisions as applicable), and acceptance by the concerned standby partner.

Reporting. When deployed the members of the standby partners rosters report to UNHCR field managers in the operation (in line with the TORs).

Roster management tools

1) Roster monitoring tool

In order to monitor roster capacity, the ES uses the roster monitoring tool. The roster monitoring tool allows monthly reporting on the current internal capacity for each roster and for each profile / function and create possibilities to flag any foreseen gap and need for roster replenishment. The tool includes the following dashboards:

a) One table including breakdown of figures per roster:

- ERT
- SCER
- Registration roster
- Supply roster
- Admin/Finance roster
- HR roster

Significant depletion of any roster, down to less than 20 % capacity, will allow to flag the need for fresh mobilization, where feasible.

b) One table including analysis per profile, with the following breakdown:

- Grade
- ERT vs Functional roster
- Region of current work
- Roster member status

Significant depletion of any capacity in a certain profile, down to less than 20 % capacity, will allow to flag the need for fresh mobilization, where feasible. In the case this is a function where there is a functional roster, it would prompt the scheduling of a review meeting to discuss the urgent need for replenishment.

2) Deployments dashboard

In order to monitor deployments on a monthly basis, DESS produces a monthly dashboard on deployments. It includes the following:

- Total number of deployments during the month, with breakdown between internal surge deployments and standby partner deployments.
- Deployments by country.
- Deployments to declared emergency vs non declared emergency.
- Deployments by partner.
- Deployments by profile.
- Time-lapse between the emergency request and start date at the field level

Every month, the deployments dashboard is disseminated in the organisation and published on the Intranet page of the Emergency Services.

3) Bilateral consultations with the Standby partners on roster capacity and needs

Once or twice a year, in September/October after ExCom and/or in February on the occasion of the Humanitarian Networks and Partnerships Week (HNPW), the Emergency Preparedness, Deployments and Partnerships Section holds bilateral consultations with the standby partners. These meetings usually cover organizational, thematic, and geographic priorities, and allows the section to brief the partner on ongoing internal processes (regionalization, for example), declared emergencies and situations on watch, deployment statistics (including countries receiving the most deployments), as well as on the profiles in particularly high demand. This process also provides an opportunity for the partners to identify potential areas of collaboration and to align their geographic priorities with those of UNHCR. It may also prompt them to increase their roster capacity for profiles in particular high demand.

The formal nature of these meetings varies depending on the context. If these are organised in September/October, technical focal points may be invited, in particular if technical/sectoral issues are to be discussed. The meeting usually takes place in a meeting room in the Office. If the meetings are held on the margins of the HNPW, participation usually only involves the Head of the Emergency Preparedness, Deployments and Partnerships Section and the Emergency Deployment and Partnership Officer.

Deployments

The following section describe the circumstances in which the aforementioned mechanisms may be activated, the services they offer, how the different rosters are managed, and the internal decision-making process within ES and how emergency operations can request deployees.

When and for what purpose?

When a UNHCR office has insufficient human resources to respond to an emergency DESS, DESS/ES can deploy additional personnel staff at short notice to lead, assess, assist or strengthen UNHCR emergency operations and respond to the needs of refugees, IDPs or other persons of concern.

Methodology

MOBILISATION OF EMERGENCY RESOURCES FOR EMERGENCIES

Upon the declaration of an emergency of any level, the accountabilities and procedures set out in the Policy on Emergency Preparedness and Response (the Policy) are activated and central emergency resources are made available for the concerned operations, including human resources.

The Policy also establishes that deployments may be sought at any time for a declared emergency¹. For an Emergency Level 3, multi-functional Emergency Services (ES) response teams, led by a Principal/Senior Emergency Coordinator with well-defined responsibilities, authority and scope of work, will be automatically deployed. These teams will be supported by additional technical staff in life-saving and other key sectors as required, to ensure a decisive and comprehensive response.

In exceptional circumstances, deployments can also be sought for situations that are in the process of being analysed and considered for a declaration of an emergency level or based on corporate reasons (priorities) as decided by DESS Director.

Stand-by partners deployments to non-emergency situations may be sought for special functional profiles that are not available at UNHCR internally.

THE HR CELL

The Policy stipulates that the Emergency Cell may decide to establish specialist or subject-specific cells to focus on and track required actions in the specific functional areas as needed - most notably, Human Resources cell.

¹ Human resources are made available by Emergency Services (ES) and DHRM through the Senior Corporate Emergency Roster (SCER), the functional rosters, the Emergency Response Team (ERT) Roster, standby partnership arrangements, affiliate workforce, technical staff from Divisions, former ERT members and other forms of shorter and longer term deployments.

The HR Cell is jointly coordinated by DHR as represented by the Senior HR partners in the concerned Bureau and DESS.

REQUEST

To initiate an emergency deployment, an operation submits a request to the Partnership and Deployments Unit, Emergency Services (ES). Requests must be accompanied by the documentation required (see below), and must be endorsed by the Representative and copied to the Bureau.

When a HR Cell is activated, the request is reviewed by the HR Cell (and in its absence the ES), which determines its relevance and decides whether to deploy staff from UNHCR's internal emergency rosters or request standby partners to nominate a candidate from their rosters. The review takes into consideration factors such as the profiles, availability, criticality and duration of the expected deployment. The different deployment schemes are generally considered to be complementary, rather than competing. At each HR Cell meeting the list of outstanding requests is reviewed to ensure that the nominations are followed up and the requests met.

TECHNICAL ASSESSMENT

Technical experts who form part of the roster are assessed in advance with the respective technical units. ES also closely coordinates with other Divisions on the deployment of 'technical experts' by Standby Partners.

NOMINATION OF CANDIDATE

Having reviewed the TORs, ES identifies the best equipped candidate and consults the country operation on the selection, keeping the Bureau in copy.

For nominations for profiles where there is a functional roster, the ES reaches out to the Division for the identification of the best suited candidate, as the rosters are co-managed by the ES and the Divisions. The focal point then recommends a candidate for a specific request, which the ES will then share with the requesting operation.

MOBILIZATION AND TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

If the deployment is from the internal emergency standby rosters (ERT, SCER, functional rosters), ES mobilizes the deployee and informs his or her supervisor. The requesting office provides the budget code for payment of travel and daily subsistence allowances (DSA). ES provides the releasing office with Emergency Travel Instructions, to prepare the travel authorization, and to arrange travel and payment of DSA.

The mobilization delays and deployment periods are different between the internal rosters as indicated in the introduction.

For external deployments (from a standby partner), ES liaises with the requesting operation, the standby partner, and the deployee. It ensures that the operation, the partner, and the deployee receive all the relevant documentation.

TRAVEL TO MISSION

In all cases, ES ensures that the requesting operation is kept informed of a deployee's arrival. The operation is responsible for airport pick-up and accommodation.

MISSION EXTENSION

If needed, the requesting operation contacts the ES if it wishes to extend a deployee's mission. ES liaises with the parties concerned to secure approval of an extension and make any necessary arrangements.

The four main deployment options are summarized below.

REMINDERS:

All the above deployments must be accompanied by the following documentation:

- Terms of Reference. On request, Emergency Services can provide standard or generic terms of reference (TOR) for certain functions; these should be adapted for the specific operation. The TOR should include clear reporting lines and the supervisor should be explicitly mentioned in those, bearing in mind that there is a likelihood that the supervisor might change during the deployment.
- Relevant operational updates.
- An official request form (internal or external). This can be provided in email format if preferred, and should contain the following information:
 - Mission location.
 - Security level/situation.
 - Visa requirements.
 - Mission length.
 - Language requirements.
 - Description of working conditions (availability of laptops and communication equipment, vehicles, internet access, etc.).
 - Description of living conditions (accommodation, electricity, food, water, etc.).
 - The budget code for travel and DSA: UNHCR internal Staff (ABOD), or International United Nations Volunteer (Project).

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- Official standby partner request form (external).
- Standby partner performance evaluation form.
- Guide to UNHCR's emergency standby partners at [link](#)
- Memorandums of understanding with standby partners at [link](#)

Need help?

UNHCR Emergency Services (ES, DESS), Emergency Partnership and Deployments Unit at hqdeploy@unhcr.org

Ms. Isabelle Mistic, Chief of Section (Emergency Preparedness, Standby Partnerships and Deployment) at mistic@unhcr.org

Ms. Natalia Micevic, Partnerships and Deployment Officer at micevic@unhcr.org

Ms. Catherine Meylan, Snr Emergency Deployment Associate at meylan@unhcr.org

Ms. Yodit Amdeselassie, Senior Emergency Deployments Associate at amdesela@unhcr.org

TOP TIPS

The five main mechanisms for emergency deployments include: the permanent standby teams of UNHCR DESS-Emergency Services (ES); the senior corporate emergency roster (SCER); the emergency response team (ERT) roster; the functional rosters and personnel rosters managed by emergency standby partners.

To request an emergency deployment, contact ES and the regional bureau. Emergency deployment requests from the internal standby rosters and from standby partners must be endorsed by the Representative, and must include request forms and TORs.

Staff on the ERT or SCER rosters are **mobilized** within 72 hours. The mobilization time for staff on the functional rosters and rosters of standby partners is between 72 hours and 2 weeks.

The DSA and travel costs of internal emergency staff are covered by the requesting operation.

When contemplating to request emergency deployees, immediately consider also the required support, such as office space and equipment, accommodation, etc. **Plan in a timely manner** for possible extension of deployees or mid/longer term staffing needs.

The TOR for the deployment should include clear supervisory /reporting lines and the supervisor should be explicitly mentioned in those, bearing in mind that there is a likelihood that the supervisor might change in the course of the deployment.