

Alliance Collaboration Agreement

Operating Model for Emergency Response

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Introduction

ChildFund Alliance is a global network of 10 child-focused development and humanitarian organizations, supporting nearly 36 million children and their families across more than 60 countries.

The purpose

The purpose of the Alliance Collaboration Agreement: Operating Model for Emergency Response is to establish a **clear, predictable, and unified framework** that guides how Alliance members work together to respond to sudden-onset emergencies. It defines the structures, processes, and shared commitments that enable members to **coordinate effectively, make collective decisions, exchange timely information, and mobilize complementary capacities and resources** in support of affected populations.

By outlining how collaboration functions in emergencies, the operating model strengthens the Alliance's ability to deliver **coherent, principled, and high-quality humanitarian action**, reduces duplication, and ensures that members act with **mutual accountability, transparency, and solidarity** when responding to crises.

This protocol applies to sudden-onset emergencies.

Scope

This operating Model applies to all Alliance Members Engaged in Humanitarian Response. It covers all Alliance member organizations participating in emergency response.

The scope includes the following mechanisms and outputs that support coordinated action:

- Emergency Information and Response (EIR) products (Flash Updates, Flash Appeals, Sitreps, Humanitarian Response Plans, Humanitarian Response Reports)
- Collective decision-making processes.
- Coordination with external humanitarian actors.
- Internal communication and information-sharing.

It defines how ChildFund Alliance Members coordinate emergency responses by setting out shared leadership, decision-making, and support mechanisms across three emergency situations:

- I. single member presence country.
- II. multi member presence country.
- III. and non-member presence countries.

This protocol outlines the mechanisms for coordinated humanitarian action among Members during sudden onset emergencies, defining the roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders.

ChildFund Alliance Members respond to emergencies in both presence and non-presence countries. These emergencies include sudden-onset emergencies, complex emergencies;

Natural hazards; conflict-related crises public health emergencies; mixed or multi-hazard events.

Guiding Principles

Alliance collaboration in emergencies is grounded in the **Humanitarian Principles** (Humanity, Neutrality, Impartiality, Independence) and **ChildFund Alliance values** (solidarity, mutual respect, transparency, and accountability) and ways of working (complementarity of capacities, collective responsibility, do-no-harm and conflict sensitivity, localization, and partnership and evidence-based decision-making).

Designation of Emergency Lead

The Emergency Lead is the Member designated to coordinate the ChildFund Alliance response in each emergency context, based on operational presence, capacity, and willingness to lead. The Member must communicate to the Secretariat its ability and willingness to coordinate and manage the Alliance response as soon as operationally feasible or within a reasonable timeframe given the emergency, indicatively within 24 hours.

The designation of the Emergency Lead follows different processes depending on the presence of Members in the affected country:

Single-Member Presence Countries:

- The Member present in-country assumes the role of Emergency Lead by default, provided it has the capacity and willingness to respond.
- The Member confirms its role as Emergency Lead to the Secretariat as soon as operationally feasible or within a reasonable timeframe given the emergency, preferably within the first 24 hours.
- If the Member is unable or unwilling to lead, the situation is treated as a non-presence scenario, in this case the Member needs to communicate its unavailability/impossibility to respond within the first 24 hours.
- The Member responding to the emergency can ask the operational support to other members if need. In this case the CSHA co-leads will support and will involve the Committee.

Multi-Member Presence Countries:

- Members present in-country, in coordination with their respective headquarters, jointly agree on the designation of the Emergency Lead as soon as operationally feasible or within a reasonable timeframe given the emergency, ideally within the first 24 hours.
- The decision is based on operational capacity, presence, technical expertise, and ability to respond¹.

¹ See Annex 5 – Capacity Assessment guidelines.

- Decision-making is led at country level, with involvement of relevant headquarters functions of the Members present, in line with the principle of subsidiarity.
- The CSHA Committee Co-leads may support and facilitate this process as needed. If consensus cannot be reached, the CSHA Committee facilitates the discussion, without replacing the decision-making role of Members.
- To ensure readiness for emergency response in Multi-Member Presence Countries, all Alliance members operating within the same country are encouraged to establish a pre-agreement outlining roles and coordination procedures to be activated in the event of an emergency.
- The Emergency Lead does not have authority over Members' independent operations present in the Country.

Non-Presence Countries:

- Situation Review and Recommendation — The CSHA Co-Leads promptly identifies which Alliance member is best suited to the function as the Emergency Lead, using the criteria previously agreed upon by the Committee. The co-leads notify the CSHA Committee of their recommendation, advising that they have 24 hours to express any objections otherwise the proposal is deemed approved.
- Submission to the Members' Council- The Secretary General submits the recommended Emergency Lead to the Members' Council (MC). The Secretariat provides guidance to the Member Council on whether to approve and move forward with the recommendation.
- Rapid Decision-Making -A fast consultation process is used to ensure the Alliance can decide **within 24 hours**, allowing for a timely and coordinated response.
- Ongoing Communication- Throughout the process, the CSHA Committee Chair keeps all committee members informed of progress and decisions to ensure clear transparency and accountability.

In all scenarios, the selection of the Emergency Lead considers operational presence, capacity of deployment, technical expertise, compliance with Alliance standards, and readiness to act².

Criteria for Response Decisions

The following criteria guide decision-making on determining whether to respond:

- **Scale:** magnitude of the affected area, population, children affected, infrastructure damage, and economic impact.
- **Urgency:** population displacement, conflict intensity, child protection concerns, and mortality risk.
- **Complexity:** humanitarian access challenges and political or security risks.
- **Capacity:** national response capacity and availability of other responding actors.
- **Visibility:** media attention and fundraising potential, as well as UN and government appeals.

² In line with the Capacity Assessment Guidelines (see Annex 5).

These criteria are used in combination to support rapid and informed decision-making, and do not require all elements to be met.

The level of response should be proportionate to the scale and urgency of the crisis, while remaining feasible based on available capacity and operational constraints.

The analysis should remain simple and time-bound to enable timely decision-making.

Post-Decision Actions

Following response activation, the Emergency Lead and, when relevant, Participating Members will assess:

- initial funding and human resource commitments.
- fundraising prospects and donor engagement.
- technical and capacity support required.

The designated Emergency Lead must inform the Secretariat of all coordination arrangements and maintain ongoing updates to the Members Council throughout the response cycle.

Roles and Responsibilities

Emergency Lead Member:

- Coordinates joint assessments and response planning at Alliance level. The Emergency Lead is responsible for coordinating the collective response under the Alliance framework, including joint planning, resource mobilization, and reporting.
- Supplies and ensures regular information sharing among ChildFund Alliance through EIR Products, and communication materials (including photos and videos) for ChildFund Alliance-wide use.
- Involves and coordinates other members present in the affected country (if it is the case) in the development of the EIR Products.
- Engages donors in-country and participates in relevant humanitarian coordination mechanisms.
- Manages funds and oversees monitoring and reporting.
- Facilitates deployment of Member staff and consultants if requested or needed.
- Support coherence in external communication and positioning of the Alliance, where applicable.
- May facilitate exchanges among ChildFund Alliance Members on operational approaches, needs, and priorities.
- Supports Advocacy action and provide red lines for any advocacy or communication possibly affecting the security of the staff, the affected populations, and/or the operations.

Participating Members:

- Mobilize funding from home-country donors.

- Launch public appeals in their respective home countries as needed and inform the lead member of the appeal and expected outcome.
- Participate in joint assessments when present in-country.
- Provide deployable staff and technical support.
- Manage institutional grants and ensure compliance in line with donor requirements.
- Contribute to Alliance-level information sharing and communication products, including providing input to EIR products when present in-country.
- Support visibility of the emergency and contribute to communication, advocacy, and positioning in their home countries.
- Respect red lines set by the Lead Member for any advocacy or communication possibly affecting the security of the staff, the affected populations, and/or the operations.

Alliance Secretariat:

- Coordinates Alliance-wide communications and advocacy.
- Represents ChildFund Alliance Members at global level with its regular external stakeholders, in close coordination with the Members, particularly the Emergency Lead and, in case, with the other(s) Alliance Member present in the affected country.
- Supports partner selection in non-presence countries.
- Facilitates communication among Members and the Member Council.
- Supports identification of available funding and development of funding proposals.
- Provide updates on the Alliance Response to relevant global networks and forum and at the same time informs members of any global initiative relevant for the ongoing emergency.
- Resolves misunderstandings and provides arbitration support.
- Ensures Members follow Alliance procedures and standards.
- Disseminate all EIR Products as per the HACU protocol.

Child-Sensitive Humanitarian Action Committee:

- Supports the Capacity Assessment of the Member(s) present in the affected country.
- Supports the deployment of staff in strengthening to the emergency response in coordination with the Emergency Lead.
- Provides technical support in coordination with the Emergency Lead.

Members Council:

- Oversees coordination mechanisms and ensures alignment with humanitarian principles.
- Validates decisions in non-presence contexts based on recommendations from the Child-Sensitive Humanitarian Action (CSHA) Committee Chair and provides strategic guidance during large-scale emergencies.
- Consults with their technical emergency staff (CSHA Committee) as needed.

ANNEXES

1. Procedure for Response in Single-Member presence country
2. Procedure for Response in Multi-Member presence country
3. Procedure for Response in Non-presence country
4. Alliance Emergency Classification
5. Capacity Assessment Guidelines
6. Emergency Information and Response (EIR) products and their indicative templates (Flash Updates, Flash Appeals, Sitreps, Humanitarian Response Plans, Humanitarian Response Reports)

WORKFLOW

EMERGENCY

Is any Alliance Member present in the affected country and willing to respond?

Responsibility: CSHA Committee
Tool: Alliance Emergency Classification

ONE MEMBER PRESENCE

Capacity Assessment & willingness

Emergency Lead & other Member(s) Supporting (in case)

MULTI MEMBER PRESENCE

Capacity Assessment & (previous) in-country agreement

Emergency Lead & Member(s) participating

NO-MEMBER PRESENCE

Is any Alliance Member willing to respond?

YES:
One/Multi member presence Modality

NO:
No Response or third organization identified

Responsibility: CSHA Committee
Tool: Capacity Assessment Guidelines

Decision: Member Council
Upon CSHA Committee proposal

INFORMATION ON THE RESPONSE COLLECTED & SHARED

Responsibility and information flow: Emergency lead – Secretariat – HACU
Tool: Emergency Information and Response (EIR) products + COMS Materials (photos, videos and interviews)

RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

Responsibility: Participating Members & Secretariat
Tool: Public Appeal and Home-based donors
Information flow: members willing to participate promptly inform the Emergency Lead and the Secretariat.

ADVOCACY & POSITIONING

Responsibility: Emergency lead
Tool: Statements, Position Papers and Studies
Communication flow: Emergency lead defines red lines and key messages. Members participating in advocacy and positioning with home-based relevant stakeholder in compliance with red lines and key messages defined. The Secretariat will support in global positioning in close coordination with the Emergency Lead.

REPORTING

Responsibility: Emergency Lead
Tool: Response Plan Updates and Internal Webinars

The Emergency Lead and any other Member participating in the response will provide specific Reports to comply with specific donor requirements upon ad hoc agreements signed with relevant member(s).