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| **UNDAC**  **Plan of Action (template)** |  |

Note: When drafting the PoA, consider the following:

* Team composition, contacts, capabilities, possible roles and responsibilities, on-site
* support and the deployment plan.
* Clear and concise mission objective(s).
* Initial activities upon arrival, e.g., meeting with the RC/HC, OCHA, national authorities,
* Designated Official (DO) for safety and security, airport authorities, etc.
* Information management strategy, including reporting requirements and agreed
* information products with deadlines. See Chapter I.2 for more details on information
* strategy development.
* Internal and external communication plan.

**The PoA as a management tool**

Remember that the PoA is a living document that should be adjusted during the mission as the situation evolves. Keeping it dynamic, however, might be challenging as it is all too easy to create a written plan that remains on paper and is never turned into reality.

A PoA should be a **management tool and used for guidance**. A very rigid, detailed plan may be just as bad as an overly superficial one. The former may be too detailed and become obsolete before it is off the printer, while the latter may be too shallow to accurately reflect the situation and define what needs to be done. The challenge lies in finding the balance and creating a plan that provides enough of a framework to guide and structure the programme of work, especially in the first week, but flexible enough to adapt to (rapid) changes as they occur.

To ensure that the PoA remains dynamic and is used as a management tool, it may be useful to explore various display options and to define benchmarks to measure progress. This can be done in electronic format, using a different software, or by large sheets of paper displayed on a wall. Below is an example of a simple structure where mission objectives have been redefined as benchmarks on a timeline.

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The PoA should be kept short, simple and to the point, perhaps in bullet points, avoiding too

much detailed information that will change as the situation develops. The following content

should be included:

1. **SITUATION**

Should include a summary of known information on the disaster event, damage, national response, international response and projected developments in the emergency situation, including secondary risks.

1. **MISSION OBJECTIVES**

Should reflect the UNDAC ToR and be based on the directions of the ERC, the RC/HC, the Government, the emergency situation and in-country support requirements. The mission objectives should indicate the main focus of the mission, e.g., assessment support, information management, coordination, cluster coordination support, establishment of an OSOCC, liaison, field coordination, and the expected base(s) of the mission, e.g., in the capital with field trips or at the emergency site with liaison in the capital. It is very important that the mission objectives are SMART:

* Specific – Simply written and clearly define what is going to be done.
* Measurable – Can provide tangible evidence that objectives have been accomplished. While the overall mission objective(s) will be a measure for the mission, there are usually several short-term or smaller measurements which will need to be built in.
* Achievable – Challenging and appropriate to the situation, but sufficiently well-defined that they can be achieved. The team must possess the appropriate knowledge, skills and abilities needed to achieve the objectives.
* Realistic – A goal toward which the team is able to work, taking account of all the relevant factors and constraints.
* Time-bound – Linked to a timeframe by which they should be reached.

1. **ORGANIZATION**

Should include the organization of the team in functional areas depending on the mission objectives, as well as the assignment of individual responsibilities amongst the team members. A basic team structure should include not only the UNDAC team and support personnel, but also any other OCHA surge deployments, and should cover functions such as leadership and management (Team Leader and Deputy Team Leader), information management (assessment, analysis and reporting), operations (facilitation of coordination, liaison with disaster responders, cluster coordinators, etc.), logistics (transport, board and lodging) and support (administration and telecommunications). Team organization should also include the locations of team members (field and/or capital) and the base.

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1. **PROGRAMME OF WORK**

Should include a short description of the activities planned within the functional areas in order to achieve the mission objectives and the relation between these activities and the timeframe for their execution. It is important to define activities directly related to the mission objectives and to keep these activities updated.

1. **HANDOVER AND EXIT**

Should include an estimate of what mission activities should continue after the team’s departure, to whom they should be handed over, and what activities should be terminated. Although imprecise in the early stages of the mission, it is important to include this point for further development as the mission evolves. Remember that missions are usually short and closing the loop should be considered from the very beginning.

1. **IN-COUNTRY COUNTERPARTS**

Should include the RC/HC, under whose authority the team will work, as well as other important counterparts, e.g., Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) and other coordination mechanisms, national authorities including the national and local disaster management authorities, etc.

1. **LOGISTICS AND RESOURCES**

Should include information on team logistical arrangements in place or required, such as accommodation and transport, as well as team resources such as telecommunications equipment and mission support resources, e.g., office equipment and mission finances.

1. **MISSION SUPPORT**

Should include information on measures in place to backstop and provide remote support to the mission from OCHA regional office, OCHA headquarters, as well as information on various support /resources from other operational partners (see Section B.5.2).

1. **INFORMATION MANAGEMENT – FLOW AND REPORTING**

Should include procedures for communication between the team and the OCHA regional office, OCHA headquarters, field locations and the RC/HC. The first report to OCHA should always be sent as early as possible after arrival in the affected country. Thereafter, the team should send regular

situation reports/updates as applicable. This section of the PoA should clarify the flow of information both internally within the team and what will be required with counterparts, i.e., when to report, in what format and to whom. It will be important in each mission to also determine how the team should contribute to the RC/HC office’s situation reports at the country level and/or OCHA situation reports (from the regional office or globally). Section H.2 contains detailed information on development of an

information management strategy and Section J.1.1 on standard UNDAC reporting.

1. **SAFETY AND SECURITY**

Should include information on safety and security concerns in the affected country and at the disaster site, including instructions for team movements, e.g., a buddy system, reporting and identification. A separate template for safety and security planning is included in the UMS. Chapter G. contains detailed information on mission security.

1. **DEALING WITH THE INTERNATIONAL/LOCAL MEDIA**

Should include a communication strategy for international and national media, in consultation with the RC/HC, OCHA regional office and, in a large emergency, OCHA headquarters. The plans should include key messages agreed upon and updated daily. The team should nominate a spokesperson for

the international media (normally the Team Leader) and the agreed key messages should be shared with all team members on a daily basis. In emergencies with a high international media presence, deployment of trained OCHA media officers should be pursued. There may be a need to nominate a different spokesperson for the national media if the Team Leader is not fluent in the local language. Chapter K. contains further information on the development