

Grand Bargain work streams

Summary of progress, December 2016

1) Transparency - World Bank and the Netherlands

Which concrete actions have you taken and/or are planning to take in the near future?

Starting in January, The Netherlands (NL) will work closely with Development Initiatives (DI) to carry out a baseline study into which organizations report to IATI and whether or not there are challenges to this process. NL and DI will reach out to all GB signatories as well as other interested stakeholders, conduct surveys, and identify and analyze any gaps that may exist.

A report summarizing the findings will be ready by the end of May, in time for the annual meeting in June (ECOSOC). The challenges identified will feed into the discussion on 'next steps'; for this reason NL expressed interest to wait until the report is out before working with IATI directly.

Have you taken, or are planning to take in the near future, any joint action with other work streams?

The Netherlands are currently exploring harmonized reporting requirements with ICVA and how IATI can join forces, but for now these have just been "prep phase" discussions and nothing has been signed. NL mentioned the possibility of Development Initiatives acting as a go-between between the actors, which would feed into their research for the baseline study.

NL is also working with the Red Cross family on open data reporting and how to link this with IATI.

2) Local actors – IFRC and Switzerland

Which concrete actions have you taken and/or are planning to take in the near future?

The planned work over the next year in the humanitarian sector on localization is vast, and IFRC's involvement in it is varied. Broadly, the various initiatives under localization can be divided into: 1) funding, 2) capacity, 3) coordination, and 4) measurement. Over the next year, the principal task of IFRC on localization will be to continue its coordination and co-champion role within the GB work stream on localization, and develop a "quality review" that will ensure the overall coherence of sector-wide work on localization. This review will address and define what quality funding, quality partnership, and effective and principled humanitarian action looks like for local and national humanitarian actors, as well as elaborating on the type of investment and capacities needed in local and national organizations. This will be done in consultation and partnership with a wide variety of international, national, and local stakeholders at both HQ/Capital and field level.

Switzerland has asked the Good Humanitarian Donorship group to lead the work on localization. This will facilitate the inclusion of other donors and allow progress of the work stream to be impartial.

Have you taken, or are planning to take in the near future, any joint action with other work streams?

For the moment no joint action has been taken, but IFRC and Switzerland noted that there were many opportunities for joint action so it is important for co-conveners to regularly update each other, in order to make linkages with other work streams as progress continues.

3) Cash – WFP

Which concrete actions have you taken and/or are planning to take in the near future?

The co-conveners are finalizing a work plan which will be shared with the participating members shortly.

On the UN side: WFP, UNHCR, UNICEF and OCHA have tested four country 'cash preparedness' initiatives to increase interagency cash readiness in those countries, and to jointly learn if and whether such a concept could be taken up more widely throughout the humanitarian sector. WFP has made available an online basic training package on how to do cash programming, mostly useful as a core introduction for smaller NGOs and civil society organizations. WFP has also commissioned some cost effectiveness type studies as well as some more policy and programmatic studies of cash in the context of shock responsive design.

Have you taken, or are planning to take in the near future, any joint action with other work streams?

In parallel, a number of activities and initiatives have been ongoing. In particular, the Good Humanitarian Donorship group has established a cash work stream, co-chaired by UK and Norway – a concept note is being prepared. DFID has commissioned a study by Development Initiatives to refine measurement of cash-based assistance and make recommendations on how to track cash in the humanitarian system. ODI have carried out a consultation post High Level Panel on cash and are finalizing case studies on cash scale up models (Nepal, Ukraine, Iraq, etc.) They have started sharing initial findings at a COHAFA event this month and will keep presenting findings.

4) Management Costs – UNHCR and Japan

Which concrete actions have you taken and/or are planning to take in the near future?

UNHCR and Japan plan to start concrete talks with the Grand Bargain signatory donor governments to reduce individual donor assessments and evaluations.

On behalf of the UN procurement network (which covers 95% of UN procurement): UNHCR has contracted a consultant to identify possible and feasible joint procurement areas where large procurement takes place (non-food items, vehicles, medical items, IT equipment, services, etc.) 15 different procurement areas have been identified as areas with greater saving, a workshop to discuss the report recommendations took place last week, It is expected that the conclusions of the study be made available after the Procurement Network meeting March next year. Working towards a standard cost structure has been challenging due to the different structures present in different organizations, also making it hard to compare these to one another. There must be harmonization and this was highlighted by a June 2015 study on "Common definitions of operating costs for UN system organizations" by the Chief Executive Board.

Attempts have been made to find areas which can be harmonized and standardized, including within the NGO community UNHCR and Japan will advance on this discussion taking into account previous attempts made by both UN and NGO community.

Have you taken, or are planning to take in the near future, any joint action with other work streams?

As of now no joint action has been taken directly with other work streams, however UNHCR's scaling of biometrics registration system for refugees links to the cash work stream, with close collaboration from WFP.

UNHCR, UNICEF, and WFP are advancing in their joint work towards harmonizing partnership agreements including due diligence criteria and reporting formats amongst others. Different deadlines are in place for different aspects of the harmonization work. UNHCR also expressed interest in partnering with the Global Alliance for Humanitarian Innovation (GAHI) to quantify the impact of innovation.

5) Needs assessments – OCHA and European Commission (ECHO)

Which concrete actions have you taken and/or are planning to take in the near future?

As work stream co-conveners, OCHA and ECHO have engaged in bilateral discussions with key stakeholders in the area of needs assessment, including non-operational, specialist actors. OCHA has launched a flexible partnership for joint assessments to reinforce the collaboration on needs assessment, namely to support country operations in producing timely situation analysis after sudden onset disasters and trend analysis in protracted crisis. In its coordination role for the Humanitarian Project Cycle, OCHA disseminated Grand Bargain commitments and best practice to the HCT and HC with the view of strengthening the HNO for 2017.

Through the Enhanced Response Capacity (ERC) 2017 funding programme, published in November 2016, ECHO will support initiatives strengthening the capacity of the humanitarian community to conduct needs assessments in line with the Grand Bargain commitments.

ECHO has already reached out to specialist actors like ACAPS, REACH, and JIPS in order to come to a shared understanding of the gaps concerning needs assessments, and to identify steps forward ahead of a

ECHO and OCHA will organize a technical workshop early 2017 to collectively identify the current challenges and possible ways forward with each relevant actor contributing to the collective endeavor with its specific expertise, role and capacity. The workshop will also be used to prepare a baseline study in early 2017 to assess to which degree the needs assessments of the past years meet the criteria of the GB commitments on needs assessments and to define how to measure progress against the work stream commitments.

Have you taken, or are planning to take in the near future, any joint action with other work streams?

At this stage, no concrete joint action has been taken, but there are a number of strong links which should be established.

The Grand Bargain work stream on needs assessment explicitly states the need for transparency in terms of methodology and results of needs assessment. The co-conveners of the work stream will thus reach out to the transparency work stream.

From a donors perspective, the work on needs assessment is closely linked to the work stream on reporting requirements, especially if this work stream covers formats for proposal drafting as well.

6) Participation – SCHR and US

Which concrete actions have you taken and/or are planning to take in the near future?

SCHR and US have recently taken on the co-convenorship of this work stream and are in the process of developing a way forward, based on the commitments made. Broadly three sub-streams are anticipated:

The first aims at articulating what we mean by participation with the aim of achieving a consensus on a practical definition that can be used by all stakeholders to guide programming. This should be straightforward, as it would be based on existing work but we deemed it necessary as the word is being used by different stakeholders without necessarily a common meaning.

The second aims at facilitating and promoting the relevant commitments agreed upon, especially the development of an effective “participation” common platform for the collective humanitarian response (that can be adapted to specific contexts and which is integrated to the response, without adding a complex new coordination structure). We will propose recommendations to that incentivize organizations' buy-in.

The third aims at identifying incentives that can be used to promote for effective beneficiary “participation” at the collective as well as at the organizational level (for example, through existing IASC platforms and other Grand Bargain work streams).

No piece of work, additional to what is already committed to, is planned as a result of this work stream but it is important that this work be mainstreamed, wherever appropriate into the work of other work streams.

The co-convenors will be reaching out to the GB Sherpas to ask interested parties to join the work stream, and are in the process of determining whether a one day workshop bringing them together would be helpful.

The co-convenors have agreed that US will take the lead in engaging with the following signatories to the Grand Bargain: donors and US-based NGOs. SCHR will take the lead with European based NGOs and UN Agencies. SCHR and the US will maintain a close dialogue to ensure consistency and coherent progress.

Have you taken, or are planning to take in the near future, any joint action with other work streams?

Nothing specific at this stage, although the co-convenors will need to determine the most appropriate approach to influence the adoption of incentives for effective participation in the relevant work streams.

7) Multi-year planning and funding – UNICEF and Canada

Which concrete actions have you taken and/or are planning to take in the near future?

UNICEF and Canada are new co-conveners of the multi-year funding work stream (took over from US/FAO) so they will put together a 1-page action plan that lists their activities from now until June, and share this to get input and guidance from other stakeholders. Since many studies and reports already exist on MYFP, the first action will be to do a baseline mapping of which actors are already involved in MYF. This will inform future lines to take and provide feedback on best practices.

UNICEF/Canada have expressed interest in broadening the discussion of MYFP to include the US, Norway, Australia, FAO, UNDP, NRC, ICRC, and OCHA. They also plan to see how to relate MYFP to IASC humanitarian financing.

UNICEF mentioned that they would look into how their appeals can become multi-year appeals and align them to existing multi-year HRPs. This would mean working closely with OCHA.

As a donor, Canada plans to build on the relationship with the GHD group to look into donor approaches to MYFP.

UNICEF/Canada is looking into having a side-event during the ECOSOC meeting in order to share their updated annual report by June.

Have you taken, or are planning to take in the near future, any joint action with other work streams?

While UNICEF and Canada have not yet looked into joining other work streams through the Grand Bargain, both actors recognize the importance and opportunity of doing so. Some possible links can already be made with the needs assessment, reporting, and humanitarian-development nexus work streams.

UNICEF and Canada agree that they must look into how best to use existing platforms to advance the work on MYFP and bring it all together in a way that avoids duplication. Possible platforms mentioned are the HFTT and pooled-funds platforms.

Canada mentioned links to localization, flexible funding and the humanitarian-development nexus work streams, as well as the added value of sharing progress made between the different signatories especially when it comes to pilot countries, as perhaps a few work streams can be piloted together.

8) Earmarking – ICRC and Sweden

Which concrete actions have you taken and/or are planning to take in the near future?

Sweden and the ICRC have divided the workload in a way that brings added value to their respective competences: ICRC is exploring possible avenues with humanitarian actors while Sweden is doing the same with donors. Both have prepared a baseline questionnaire on the situation of earmarking, sent out to donors on December 9th.

The questionnaire for Humanitarian Actors (Multilaterals, INGOs, National and Local NGOs) will look at three aspects of earmarking:

- 1) The situation right now – does the Humanitarian Actor receive earmarked funding; what type of earmarking is most prevailing; has there been an increase/decrease of earmarking in the last 5 years?
- 2) Agencies' behavior – what they can do to encourage donors to earmark less; explain situations where they have not been able to do an activity because of earmarked funds
- 3) What the conditions are for smaller NGOs – How much do humanitarian actors earmark when they, in turn, fund other actors?

The ICRC will work with the Federation and ICVA to forward the questions to national societies and NGOs.

As a donor, Sweden will take a different approach and look at what are the impediments to increased flexibility among donors. The questionnaire will look at what types of policies and actions would help to reduce earmarking/increase flexibility by focusing on a) reporting, b) transparency and allocation models for flexible financing, and c) visibility requirements that would allow donors to be flexible. They would also like to open a discussion on how to reduce earmarking for direct contributions by sharing the SIDA model with donors, asking for feedback, and getting other donors to share good funding models. Since the questionnaire will be in-depth and qualitative, it is not yet clear how the data will be summarized.

The ICRC and Sweden plan to hold discussions with key donors in January, collect the questionnaires by the end of January, analyze the data within the next month, hold combined workshops between donors and agencies around April, and present their conclusions to the Facilitation Group before the ECOSOC in June. On reaching the 30% target of non/softly-earmarked contributions by 2020, both actors prefer to start by policy discussions and wait on the results of the baseline questionnaire, which will inform future actions. For now moving things forward is in itself an objective.

Have you taken, or are planning to take in the near future, any joint action with other work streams?

The ICRC is working closely with the Federation and its national societies on the Localisation of Aid work stream. Sweden believes there should also be increased flexibility in terms of reporting. Ongoing actions also tie into the cash and localization work streams.

ICRC is working with the Federation and UNHCR on transparency. The three organizations coordinate and share information on their respective efforts to follow-up on their commitment to the transparency work stream. Sweden and the ICRC have expressed the need to better link the transparency and reporting work stream, as these go hand in hand. Furthermore, Sweden mentioned that donors feel more comfortable and open to flexible funding if there are better needs assessments, therefore should work closely with this work stream too.

9) Reporting – ICVA and Germany

Which concrete actions have you taken and/or are planning to take in the near future?

With support from Germany, GPPI has finalized a report with an analysis of reporting requirements and a proposed 10+3 reporting format. A workshop was held in Geneva on November 18th where Germany and ICVA reconvened Grand Bargain signatories to learn about this GPPI research proposal and develop a plan forward. Germany and ICVA have reached out separately to the GHD group and IASC to solicit feedback on the GPPI proposal, and recruit volunteers for a pilot.

The GHD will launch a process in January for donors. The IASC HFTT will hold a retreat at the end of January, to which donors will be invited for the session on taking forward the reporting work stream. Stakeholders will be reconvened periodically in the lead up to the end of 2018 to ensure the commitments are achieved.

Have you taken, or are planning to take in the near future, any joint action with other work streams?

ICVA and Germany have reached out to Development Initiatives (who are working for the Dutch on transparency and DFID on cash) to ensure linkages to these work streams and get feedback on the GPPI proposed template when considering IATI. The IASC HFTT has a whole work stream connected to IATI and FTS.

ICVA has supported ICRC in crafting a survey to be disseminated to agencies on earmarking that will be useful later on when exploring how to better report on un-earmarked contributions.

Under reducing management costs, ICVA has hosted a meeting with UN agencies working towards harmonization of agreements with NGOs. These agencies plan to be ready for consultations with NGOs in early 2016. ICVA/Germany are also supporting OCHA's work in the IASC HFTT to recalibrate approaches to partner capacity assessments.

ICVA is monitoring the localization marker discussions linked to the national/frontline responders work stream.

10) Humanitarian-Development nexus – UNDP and Denmark

Which concrete actions have you taken and/or are planning to take in the near future?

The agreement during the Bonn meeting was for work stream 10 to have a loose, information-sharing framework in which it primarily operates opposed to a detailed action plan. To advance this objective, UNDP and Denmark will be launching a knowledge-sharing platform by the end of the year that consolidates best-practice and information across the work stream. The aim is to have the GB partners utilize the platform as a repository for relevant documentation, as well as, an interactive discussion forum on specific areas related to this work.

The IASC Humanitarian-Development Task Team and the UN Working Group on Transitions held a first retreat in November to agree on an action plan to advance the humanitarian-development nexus. As a key outcome of the workshop, participants developed a roadmap for the two groups to better support field operations to conduct (to the extent possible) joint analysis, strategic planning and agree on collective outcomes for the short-, medium- and long-term, based on the specific comparative strengths. The two groups will identify areas of responsibility and follow up of activities and timelines for the roadmap in the coming couple of months. The premise for this work is to support country-level initiatives, which are being currently rolled-out and will be scaled-up next year. The work also links up with other partnerships, such as the UN/WB roll-out of the humanitarian/ development /peace nexus, where work is already on-going or in the pipeline for Yemen, Sudan, Somalia and CAR.

Have you taken, or are planning to take in the near future, any joint action with other work streams?

At this point in time, there has not been a specific discussion to advance joint studies or workshops with the other work streams, but this will be revisited at the beginning of next year.