IOM Corporate Emergency Activation

Overview

IOM is expected to immediately respond to the needs of migrants, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and other affected populations during humanitarian crisis situations. In determining the scale of institutional response (L1, L2 or L3), IOM uses similar criteria that the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) uses for determining a system-wide "scale-up":

Scale	Size of the affected area/number of affected or potentially affected persons/number of countries involved.
Urgency	Time criticality for live-saving interventions/magnitude of population displacement/intensity of armed conflict.
Complexity	Multi-layered emergency/multiple countries affected/multitude of actors/humanitarian access or lack thereof/security risks to staff.
Capacity	National response capacity/weak or fragile state/IOM office capacity.
Reputational Risk	Media and public attention and visibility, Member States expectations/donor expectations/public, national stakeholders and partners perception.

Description

Emergency Classification Levels

Level 1: National Emergency Response

A National Emergency Response is where IOM Country Office (CO) can respond to the crisis with its own staff, funding or fundraising mechanisms, along with usual support from the Regional Office (RO) and HQ. Any CO with an active emergency response portfolio is in effect at de facto L1 response status unless otherwise officially communicated that it has been elevated to a higher level of institutional involvement. There is no formal declaration of an Level 1 emergency; as such framework does not entail a variation in reporting lines and management responsibilities from normal practice. **The coordination structure will remain similar to as before the crisis. The Regional Technical Specialist (RTS) and Preparedness and Response Division (PRD) will be updated regularly on the progress of the emergency response led by the CO.**

Level 2: Regional Emergency Response

This level of emergency corresponds to either of two potential scenarios:

1. Regional Emergency Response, where the scale and nature of IOM's response needs are such that the CO is not in a position to respond adequately within its existing resources and capacity thereby requiring support from other parts of the Organization (RO, HQ, other CO); and/or,

2. The nature and scope of forced displacement resulting from the disaster or conflict is such that there must be a regional dimension to the emergency, which cannot be handled entirely within the bounds of a single CO, regardless of the strength of its resources and capacities.

In L2 emergencies, the concerned RO is expected to lead the coordination of the emergency response. Some of the mechanisms that are in place for a Level 3 emergency response, such as the mobilization of the Migration Emergency Funding Mechanism (MEFM), the establishment of a dedicated Emergency Management Team (EMT) and the deployment of a Rapid Response Team (RRT), can be activated for L2s based on the specific needs of the affected COs, but there is no change in reporting lines. Coordination will be mainly between the RTS and the CO with PRD in copy in case additional support from headquarters is needed.

L2 emergencies are subject to a formal declaration by the DG, upon advice from the Director of Department of Operations and Emergencies (DOE) and in coordination with the concerned Regional Director, via staff advisory. L2 emergencies are in principle activated for three month periods, subject to extensions.

Level 3: Global Emergency Response

The scale of the emergency is such that the response far exceeds the RO capacity and an organization-wide mobilization is required. In this case, the DOE provides leadership and support. Within 24 hours of an L3 declaration, the DG appoints a **Migration Emergency Coordinator (MEC)** who will hold this position for the duration of the L3 activation and will report directly to the DG. The MEC is responsible for managing and overseeing the implementation of IOM's response to the emergency and coordinating with the Human Resource Management (HRM) division and PRD on the deployment of a **RRT** to the affected area(s). **Coordination will be mainly between PRD/DOE and the COs with the RTS in copy to support as needed.**

An IOM internal L3 declaration and an IASC system-wide scale-up, while closely linked, remain separate processes. Generally, within 48 hours of a large-scale sudden onset emergency, the IASC Principals will hold an initial meeting to decide whether the context requires activating a Humanitarian System-Wide Scale-Up. As long as each IASC agency is able to meet its humanitarian obligations under a system-wide scale-up (mostly in relation to cluster responsibilities), an IASC system-wide scale-up may be activated without IOM declaring an L3 for its internal response. Under this rationale, the opposite is also acceptable, whereby IOM declares an internal L3 emergency response, without there being an IASC system-wide scale-up declared.

It is important to note that the Administration reserves the option of unilaterally declaring a migration emergency an L3 that requires extraordinary internal resource allocation. This internal decision-making may be in advance or in parallel to inter-agency crisis definition and determination.

For more information on system-wide scale-ups, go to the Emergency Protocols entry. To date, IOM has always declared an L3 activation when a system-wide scale-up (or system-wide L3, as they used to be called) was activated.

Internal Coordination Between the Country Offices, Regional Offices and HQ in Emergencies

At the onset of an emergency, the CO immediately coordinates with the DOE RTS based in the RO and the DOE in HQ. For further information on coordination and breakdown of responsibilities, refer to the Guidance Note on IOM L1 and L2 Emergencies, available in the references and tools section.

It is very important to establish regular communication and coordination as soon as possible following the onset of a disaster. Both the RTS and DOE support the CO by providing updates on discussions (between humanitarian stakeholders) at the regional and headquarters level respectively. In addition to this, regular communication will ensure that the RO and HQ are able to better support the CO to provide assistance and augment the CO's capacity to respond as needed. For instance, rapid response officers or multi-sectoral rapid response teams can be immediately deployed to support the start up or scale up of emergency operations. The CO's analysis of the situation is particularly important to help the organization determine the applicable emergency level.

In the case of L3 Emergencies, coordination modalities change, in order to ensure that the CO is provided with the necessary support to address the emergency response requirements of the specific context faced by the IOM COs. For more information on coordination in L3 emergencies, see IOM's L3 Guidance Note and Standard Operating Procedures available here and in the Tools and References section.

One of the main tools for general coordination and information sharing at the beginning of an emergency is the internal situation report (sitrep). *See Sitrep entry for more details.*

In practice, coordination structures are often customized to best adapt to the context of the emergency and the capacity of the CO, RO and HQ. When in doubt, always be in touch with both the DOE RTS and PRD to seek further clarification and guidance.

Augmenting the Capacity of Country Offices to Respond to Crises

Immediately following the sudden onset of a crisis, inter-agency coordination mechanisms are activated, needs assessments are conducted and response activities should be implemented as soon as possible. These can all occur simultaneously and the COs must ensure that IOM meets its institutional obligations to respond to a crisis and provide life-saving assistance to the affected population. To this end, the COs need to be present at coordination meetings, participate in assessments and implement humanitarian activities as soon as possible. Below is a general checklist of the different activities that could occur that the COs would need to cover as soon as possible:

- Participation at the Humanitarian Country Team meetings
- Participation in Inter-Cluster Working Group meetings (if IOM is cluster lead)
- Participation in Cluster Meetings Participation in needs assessments
- Generation of internal situation reports
- Generation of external situation reports
- Development of a strategic response plan
- Development of an IOM Appeal
- Bi-lateral discussions with humanitarian donors
- Start-up of emergency operations and implementation of sector specific assistance – this includes scaling up of human resources to be able to carry out operations, finalizing logistic arrangements to enable the delivery of relief goods.

In some cases, the COs may not have sufficient resources or technical capacity to effectively respond to the crisis and provide life-saving assistance. Additional support from the ROs and/or HQ may be needed to augment the capacity of the COs. Depending on the designation level of the emergency (L1, L2 or L3) support will be provided from the Regional Offices and/or headquarters as required. It is important to ensure

that staff from the COs and staff deployed as rapid response officers / rapid response teams work together and establish harmonized structures within the COs taking into account: 1) the pre-existing COs structure, and 2) the additional resource requirements that need to be set up to effectively carry out humanitarian operations at the scale necessary to respond effectively. It is important that coordination processes and organizational structures within the COs are reviewed and, if necessary, adjusted taking into account the increase in human resources that will come into the country to implement humanitarian operations.

Relevance to IOM's Emergency Operations

Upon analyzing the situation using the five criteria (scale, urgency, complexity, capacity, and reputational risk), IOM will determine the internal level of the emergency and type of support and coordination structures that need to be activated to enable the most effective response to the crisis.

Links

- IASC Humanitarian System-Wide Scale-Up Activations and Deactivations

Contacts

For more information please contact the DOE RTS in your region or the Preparedness and Response Division: prdcore@iom.int.

Key Points

- In accordance with the IOM Constitution and IOM Strategy, the Organization is expected to immediately respond to the needs of migrants, IDPs and other affected populations during humanitarian crisis situations.
- In determining the scale of institutional response, IOM uses the same criteria as the IASC for assessing the level of an emergency.
- Emergency response classifications within IOM are divided in to three separate levels: Level 1, Level 2, and Level 3.

References and Tools

- IOM L3 SOPs
- L3 Emergency Guidance Note
- L3 Emergency Standard Operating Procedures and TORs
- L1 and L2 Emergency Guidance Note

Other Entries in this Topic

- Emergency Protocols - IASC 'Scale Up' Activation and IOM L3 Activation

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