

Inter-Sector Working Group - Greece

Terms of Reference

Last updated: 17 March 2016

Background:

Over one million refugees and migrants have undertaken the perilous journey across the Mediterranean into Europe in 2015, the majority having crossed the Aegean Sea from Turkey to Greece.¹ Despite worsening weather conditions brought on by the onset of winter, movements have not subsided. These are mainly driven by the absence of political solutions to major conflicts in the Syrian Arab Republic (Syria), Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as the increasing number of refugee populations in neighboring countries of first asylum affected inter alia by deteriorating living conditions, leading to onward movements out of desperation.² Thus far, over 143,205 new arrivals were registered in Greece by 13 March 2016.

Border restrictions and closure in countries along the Western Balkan route have led to a large build-up of refugees and migrants in Greece. New sites are regularly being opened and operated by the Government on the mainland with some 42,000 people overnighing in different sites within the country. Around 1,800 daily arrivals were registered by the Government in February on average and several additional sites are currently being prepared by the Hellenic Army and the Ministry of Migration Policy to accommodate the steadily rising numbers of women, children and men arriving on the mainland.

Group Objective:

In line with the Refugee Coordination Model (RCM) and the RMRP, the Inter-Sector Working Group provides technical guidance and oversight to ensure the response is effective, coherent and predictable in support to the Government of Greece.

Principles:

The Inter-Sector Working Group will:

- Be grounded in the principles of inclusivity, predictability and transparency.
- Bring 'added-value' to the Sector Working Groups (SWGs) – focus on activities or processes that affect all or several sectors, but without duplicating their work;
- Promote a "Sector-Based Approach" in planning, implementation and reporting;
- Encourage consistency in information management products across the different sectors;
- Seek and promote consensus to support decision-making;
- Promote coordination of sectoral activities based on evidence and collective protection analysis, seeking feedback and participation from the affected population and reviewing strategies accordingly.

Geographical Coverage:

The Inter-Sector Working Group is a national technical body covering the mainland and the islands.

¹ For a more detailed breakdown of the data, please see: <http://data.unhcr.org/mediterranean/regional.php>

² The stalling of the Syria peace talks in Geneva early February 2016 indicate the complexity of some of these conflicts and the impossibility of identifying a 'swift solution' which would allow people to return home anytime soon. In addition, reports such as these document the deterioration of living standards in some of the countries of first asylum, <http://www.unhcr.org/54b685079.html>.

Core functions:

- Provide technical oversight and guidance to sector working groups;
- Guide and facilitate information management to support decision-making;
- Promote consistency in standards, processes, and capacities among sectors;
- Ensure cross-cutting issues are properly reflected in sector activities;
- Ensure emergency preparedness and contingency planning across sectors;
- Identify and elevate issues to the High-Level Inter-Agency Steering Committee for action, advocacy and/or guidance;
- Ensure that timely participatory joint inter-agency needs assessments are carried out with the specific aim of working with communities to identify and prioritize key protection issues, gaps in assistance as well as community capacities to address them;
- identify gaps and duplications in the response, including in Prevention of Sexual Abuse and Exploitation (PSEA), and work to ensure predictable and consistent service provision;
- Promote the systematic application of rights and community-based protection approaches in all sector response activities;
- Ensure accountability to populations of concern are an integral part of all interventions;
- Apply an age, gender and diversity (AGD) approach throughout the program cycle.

Membership & Chairing Arrangement

Participation to the group is limited to national Government counterparts, sector coordinators and co-chairs, including Communicating with Communities, Cash and IMO working group coordinator and co-chairs. The UNHCR Senior Inter-Agency Coordination Advisor chairs the group, but strives to transition to a chairman ship by the Government.

Reporting Lines:

The ISWG reports to the High-Level Inter-Agency Standing Committee. The Sector Working Groups have a functional reporting line to the ISWG.

SWG coordinators (chairs) will keep their sector members and their own organizations informed on the ISWG's activities in a transparent manner, especially where ISWGs activities imply resources or time commitments.

All ISWG members work closely with government counterparts and ensure sustainability of interventions by building on and working with existing local and national government entities.

Arrangement of the meeting

The ISWG meets on a weekly basis, every Friday, 8.30 hrs. Ad-hoc meetings may be called in addition when necessary with a 24 hrs notice.

A secretariat for the group will be provided by UNHCR and will be responsible for administrative support, including the preparation of agendas and draft minutes of meetings, follow up on action points and/or recommendations.

Terms of revision

The ToRs will be reviewed on a 6 months basis.