



Inter-Agency
Coordination
Turkey

Inter-Agency Coordination South-East Turkey Coordinating Communication with Communities (CwC):

CwC Technical Taskforce for South-East Turkey Concept Note 24 April 2017

Background

On 10 April 2017, 33 participants from 16 agencies working across South-East Turkey came together to discuss how to more effectively coordinate and collaborate on Communication with Communities (CwC) activities.

The objectives of the inter-agency workshop were to come to a common understanding of the gaps and challenges in terms of CwC coordination in South-East Turkey; agree upon a proposed framework for coordination that would enable agencies to address collectively those gaps and challenges; and propose potential outputs and activities for collective action.

The workshop built upon earlier consultations with a number of actors and inter-agency coordinators on CwC coordination needs in South-East Turkey.

The outcomes of the workshop have been collated into this concept note, which proposes that agreed priority actions are taken forward with the support of a time-bound, output-oriented **CwC Technical Taskforce for South-East Turkey**. This note accordingly provides the consensus view on the objectives, gaps and challenges relating to CwC; and proposes a coordinated approach to CwC, including coordination structures, roles, responsibilities, and priority activities.

Objectives of CwC in South-East Turkey

The overall objective of CwC efforts in South-East Turkey is to **contribute to the protection and assistance of people of concern** (POCs). Two-way communications with POCs should empower POCs by helping them to make informed decisions about their lives; by communicating and informing them about their rights, obligations, and the services available to them, such interventions should contribute to their self-reliance. Targeted refugees and asylum-seekers should also ideally be involved in all phases of communications and information dissemination activities.

In order to be most effective, communication with communities should be **two-way, continuous, responsive, relevant and appropriate** in terms of target audiences, communication channels and

thematic issues; they should also be **consistent and coherent collectively**. A coordination mechanism for CwC in South-East Turkey will contribute to these objectives by providing a cross-sectoral, coordinated approach to CwC.

Challenges and gaps

There are a number of challenges and gaps impeding effective CwC-related efforts in South-East Turkey.

Among the challenges are the difficulties in accessing some POCs, particularly the most vulnerable; and communication barriers relating to language and culture. The diversity and number of outreach personnel working at the ‘frontlines’ of information dissemination to POCs also heightens the potential for inconsistent messaging, while there are also missed opportunities to involve field staff in reinforcing the messaging of other actors/sectors.

Additionally, POCs themselves often unintentionally share incorrect information. There is also sometimes a reluctance among beneficiaries to share information relating to assistance with each other, possibly out of belief that this would impede their own opportunities to access a finite pool of available assistance.

The gaps in coordination among actors conducting CwC-related activities in the South-East of Turkey limits the ability to address these challenges and to ensure that information sharing and two-way communication with communities is effective, coherent, relevant and timely:

- Multiple actors conduct multiple CwC activities through multiple information channels but without structured coordination:
 - Some information provision and two-way communication is not targeted and, within and across sectors, key messages are not standardized. This increases the potential for CwC efforts to become confused, scattered, and less effective collectively;
 - Duplication is not minimized, meaning that gaps in coverage may not be addressed and that beneficiaries may suffer information fatigue on receiving the same, or varied, messages from different actors;
 - Fast-moving misinformation and disinformation (particularly which are cross-sector and which relate to the mandates of more than one actor) is often challenging for actors to respond to, as they might not have the relevant information in a timely manner;
- Some actors across the South-East have received limited guidance on how to effectively communicate with communities;
- The information provided can easily become unreliable, outdated and confusing;
- Lack of disaggregated data/comprehensive knowledge on information and CwC asks and needs. This leads to discrepancies between what refugees want and need to know, what information organizations are able to provide and what organizations are mandated to convey, as well as how refugees prefer to receive information and the communication channels utilized by humanitarian actors.

Proposed CwC Technical Taskforce

To ensure that CwC efforts in the SE are coordinated and that CwC is two-way, continuous, coherent and relevant, several concrete, priority deliverables to support organization-specific and collective CwC have been identified.

In order to ensure that these deliverables are taken forward in a timely manner, it is proposed to establish an **inter-agency, multi-sector CwC Technical Taskforce** at the **sub-national, inter-sector level**.

The Technical Taskforce will be small, time bound, and output oriented. It will not be a forum for policy deliberation and discussion, but a group which coordinates and undertakes agreed tasks with the agreement of the IATF and/or the ISWG. Accordingly, it will hold no standing meetings; instead, the Coordinator of the Technical Taskforce will convene meetings of the small group when it is deemed necessary to discuss and move Taskforce activities forward.

It should be **based out of Gaziantep**, covering the SE of Turkey.

Technical Taskforce roles vis-à-vis other entities: IATF, ISWG and the ‘community of practice’

- Act as a **technical group for the IATF and ISWG**: provide technical support to the sectors on CwC, but without assuming/replacing sector responsibilities and functions (i.e. sector-specific CwC messaging remains within the sector);
- Act as the **secretariat/focal point of a CwC ‘community of practice’**: provide electronic updates on CwC Technical Taskforce activities and outputs, as well as share CwC materials of interest (e.g. new reports and best practices) with the ‘community of practice’. The CwC community of practice in South-East Turkey will be open to agency staff who have a specific interest in, and/or are working in areas directly relating to communicating with communities (e.g. communications, information dissemination, outreach, community-based protection, and accountability). This community of practice, which will be email-based, will enable functional staff at agencies to be directly aware of CwC coordination activities and keep abreast of latest developments in the CwC-related field.

Technical Taskforce responsibilities and expected outcomes:

- Provide guidance and technical advice on what is timely, reliable and consistent information – but without vetting information;
- Identify information asks and needs of population of concern, propose ways to reduce information overload/fatigue, and provide guidance and advice to ensure CwC is comprehensive, responsive, structured and needs-based;
- Improve information targeting and dissemination and identify additional areas for improved communication channels;
- Support inter-sectoral and sectoral efforts to ensure CwC efforts are coordinated, duplication is minimized, gaps in reach and scope prevented and information delivery optimized.

Coordination arrangements and membership:

Membership in the Technical Taskforce is open to actors that are actively engaged in CwC-related activities – with expertise either directly or through programme implementation in CwC service delivery and communication channels. Taskforce members are responsible for the following:

- Contribute to Technical Taskforce deliverables, including through active participation and engagement in joint initiatives, activities, action plans, assessments, training, etc.;
- Follow up on action points, timelines, etc.;
- Provide regular inputs and share regular information on respective organization's activities, challenges, etc.;
- Support sector activities as necessary and, as much as possible, align organization's activities with task-force plans and strategies (as and if applicable);
- Attend and participate in Technical Taskforce activities and meetings.

The CwC Technical Taskforce would welcome an NGO Technical Advisor with commitment and technical expertise in communication, information dissemination and outreach.

Coordination of the Technical Taskforce will be carried out by UNHCR Associate CwC Officer. The Associate CwC Officer is based in Ankara but will travel regularly to the South-East. The CwC Technical Taskforce Coordinator will:

- Coordinate and guide CwC activities and ensure outputs and deliverables are met;
- Coordinate the development of technical tools to provide technical support and guidance on CwC;
- Coordinate the development CwC plans and strategies if/as necessary and needed;
- Chair the CwC Task Force;
- Represent the CwC at the ISWG and other inter-agency coordination forum to ensure CwC is mainstreamed.

Information management support will be provided by the UNHCR Associate IM Officer, based in Gaziantep. Following the technical lead of the CwC Technical Taskforce Coordinator the IM officer will:

- Provide IM services to the group including data collection, analysis and information sharing;
- Support the mapping of existing CwC activities including 4Ws, focal points, and information pathways/channels;
- Support the mapping of CwC resources, needs and gaps.

Priority activities:

- Map existing CwC actors, activities (CwC 4Ws), and channels (including but not limited to humanitarian actors);
- Identify what is currently available in terms of information relating to POCs' information needs and channels in use;
- If necessary, based on whether the identification of information above satisfies needs, carry out a survey to understand what information refugees want and need, and how they want to received it;

- Establish a CwC resource bank/database/repository (both in terms of information materials such as leaflets and booklets; and CwC guidance documents such as survey data, reports and tools);
- Develop guidance notes, tools, and materials on CwC.

These initial activities may be supplemented in due course with additional initiatives, upon the agreement of the Technical Taskforce and ISWG. These would potentially include creating key messages in collaboration with the relevant functional/thematic inter-agency entities; joint information products (including printed and audiovisual materials available in different languages); assessments on the effectiveness of information already disseminated; the assigning of focal points for each location for information gathering and dissemination; and flagging to the relevant and competent inter-agency entities avenues for advocacy and coordination that goes beyond the competence of the Technical Taskforce.