

LESSONS LEARNED DURING THE OPS PROCESS

Please see below some lessons learned that have gathered over the past two years by OCHA Geneva, and which should be useful in managing the OPS database during the revision of the Response Plan over the next weeks.

Some suggestions and also some examples of most common problems/mistakes are listed below. Your careful attention to these points will minimize errors and save time when you enter your projects online on the database. The OPS Guidelines are attached for reference.

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The OPS Guidelines may also be useful



OPS online manual
August 2011.pdf

1. OPS access is limited to organisations that are submitting projects in the revised Response Plan

OPS is a tool to facilitate the uploading and the review of projects for those organisations that are taking part in the CHAP 2010 appeal preparation process. It is not intended for donors, journalists, external users. These specific categories will have access to projects from FTS once the appeal has been finalised.

2. Register your organization in the OPS (if not done already)

Access to OPS is by registration. If your organization is not already registered in the OPS database, please register your organization well in advance so that you can familiarise with the database before submitting projects. It will make it easier for OCHA to follow up on organisations that need assistance and clarifications to complete the registration process.

3. Be clear on roles to avoid registration mistakes

Roles can be divided into 2 major groups that mirror the different phases of the preparation and finalisation of the Response Plan.

- Field-based roles that are responsible for preparing the appeal and its projects, including:
 - field programme officers
 - OCHA staff in the field
 - field cluster leads
 - the HC/RC
- HQ-based roles that are responsible for reviewing and finalising the appeal for publication
 - HQs of UN agencies and NGOs,
 - OCHA Desk officers
 - OCHA CAP Section

All organisations submitting projects must sign up as 'Field Programme Officer'. The national cluster lead must sign up as 'Cluster Lead.' Edit functions in the database depend on roles therefore it is very important that the registration is done correctly.

If you have made a registration mistake, please go on line and EDIT your profile and then SUBMIT a new registration to get a new corrected access link.

4. Registrations are not automatic, so ensure that you complete the entire registration process (if you have not already done earlier)

Once the registration request has been submitted a message will appear indicating that the administrator will verify it before sending the access link.

- Users will need to wait for the administrator's e-mail containing the access link.
- To complete the registration process, users will need to click on the access link (or cut and paste the full link into their browser) to activate it.
- **If you do not copy the full link, the link will be broken and it will not work!**

5. OPS project template

The project sheet template that can be used as a guidance to prepare the information required for the online submission in advance.



OPS project
template.doc

Cutting and pasting from a Word template into the OPS is straightforward, but it has been known to cause some problems.

- Be careful to remove commas in the numerical fields (beneficiaries and budget) as the system cannot accept them.
- Some fields have a maximum number of characters. Make sure that sentences are not cut when copied into the OPS.
- Cluster leads: if it is being used please ensure that the priority has been filled/checked. This is not a mandatory field therefore it might remain empty.

If mandatory fields (those with red stars) are not filled, the project will not be saved and a warning message will alert the user on the missing fields.

- Budget lines cannot be expanded. 5 budget lines maximum are allowed.
- Projects should be in the same language of the appeal narrative.

6. Deleting projects

OCHA field and cluster leads can reject a project, but projects can be deleted from the database only by CAP Section. Please let OCHA know if you need to delete a project (entered by mistake etc) and it will be done by Geneva.

- Cluster leads: please ensure that there are no pending rejected projects when the appeal is finalised in-country. This helps the transparency of the process for all participating organisations but only in the preparation phase.

7. Uploading projects for other organisations (which might have poor connectivity)

If needed, OCHA field and the field cluster leads can assist partner organisations.

Example: OCHA creates a project for Oxfam

- 1) Click on create a project,
- 2) THEN click on ADD Appealing Organisation in the project template.
 - This is necessary because by default the project will have OCHA as the appealing organisation. Select and add the organisation for which you are submitting the project (Oxfam).
- 4) Only then you can click on REMOVE OCHA as organisation.
- 5) Fill the budget for Oxfam in the corresponding organisation budget.
- 6) Save it.

8. Review process phases

The arrows at the top of the projects are supposed to guide users on the different phases. Access to projects will change according to roles and these phases. This again mirrors the usual CAP process.



There is a progressive restriction of edit rights. In the final phase, only the CAP section will have access to projects in order to finalise them and produce the financial tables that go into the appeal.

- The appeal projects will go through all FIELD phases first:
 - field submission (by appealing organisations)
 - Cluster (review and approval)
 - HC (final review and approval)
- Project owners put their projects into draft by initiating the revision (i.e. clicking on revise). That would make the project blue. Thereupon the cluster lead will be able to approve/reject/edit it. Cluster leads can do that to any project in their cluster, once the revision has been initiated by the project owner.
- Please note that once the project is approved by the cluster lead, the submitting organisation will no longer be able to edit it.
- When the final field draft of the revised Response Plan is sent to the CAP Section in Geneva, the CAP section will also move all projects in the appeal to the next phase (Agencies HQ). At that time, all users with field roles will no longer have edit rights on the projects. They can only view them.
- The revised Response Plan narrative will be sent out by mail to agencies' HQs for review, whilst the projects will be reviewed on-line by the respective agencies at HQ level (standard IASC practice).

9. Any problems or questions? Be specific on the problem you are reporting to the helpdesk

CAP Section Geneva is there to support during the process, but to make sure that they can quickly solve the problems, please make sure you provide them with details. If you have a complaint like "OPS does not work" this will not help to identify the problem. Examples of common problems (and their solutions) have been listed are:

- *broken links*: this is an IT problem that can usually be fixed quickly by CAP Section
- *access link that has not been activated (see point 4 above)*: applicant should click on the link in the confirmation email s/he received
- *roles end edit rights (see point 3 above)*: if an applicant has requested the wrong role, this will impact upon his/her edit rights
- *phases and edit rights (see point 8 above)*: different roles have access to the system at different phases (i.e. once an appeal has moved to HQ Review phase, participants in the field (field/programme officer) will no longer have edit rights on projects).