

OCHA DONOR SUPPORT GROUP (ODSG)

Work Plan for the Spanish Chairmanship

OVERVIEW

The unprecedented volatility of the international situation and the new humanitarian ecosystem—defined by a proliferation of actors and complex conflicts and natural disasters—requires, more than ever, coordinated interventions. This humanitarian response must also be principles-based, equitable, and adapted to the specific needs of the population, while, at the same time, ensuring that no crisis is overlooked, and no one is left behind.

OCHA, based on the provisions of UN General Assembly Resolution 46/182, is uniquely positioned within the United Nations and the global humanitarian system to act as a reliable coordinator of humanitarian response, playing a key role with agencies, civil society, governments, donors, and international organisations.

As a neutral and non-operational agency, OCHA has earned a robust reputation as an honest broker, thought leader and global advocate, providing support to the humanitarian system.

With the overall goal of supporting OCHA in its role, the OCHA Donor Support Group (ODSG) acts as a sounding board and a source of advice for OCHA on policy, management, and financial questions. Furthermore, the group plays a key role in donor consultation and exchange of views on OCHA's strategic priorities and their implementation at the global, regional, and country levels.

Moreover, Spain considers the ODSG Troika as an element of continuity for ODSG discussions and work, and will incorporate the vision of previous chairmanships into its own priorities.

SPAIN'S VISION AND PRIORITIES FOR THE ODSG CHAIRMANSHIP

This work plan, drafted in consultation with ODSG members and OCHA, seeks to ensure that ODSG discussions are balanced between strategic/thematic priorities and management/operational issues.

In line with the valuable work done by previous chairmanships, a particular emphasis will be placed on providing support to OCHA's field operations, notably in the implementation of OCHA's five core functions of coordination, advocacy, policy, humanitarian financing, and information management.

I. Strategic Priorities

Over the last few years, the ODSG has played a supportive role in OCHA's change management process and throughout the development of OCHA's 2018-2021 Strategic Plan, while providing support to OCHA in leading an effective and principles-based global humanitarian response.

Spain's chairmanship comes at a significant moment, when OCHA reform is being consolidated. The ODSG will continue to support OCHA on tracking progress towards achieving the 2018-2021 Strategic Plan's objectives and priority results. The ODSG will also be part of discussions on the Strategic Plan Midterm Review, which aims to deliver timely analysis and assessment of OCHA's performance in accordance with the Strategic Plan.

OCHA, consistent with the Grand Bargain initiative, also advocates for improving the effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian action, through collective efforts and in complementarity with other stakeholders and humanitarian boards. In this regard, special emphasis will be given to the interconnection between OCHA and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), considering its new structure.

Focus areas:

- Contribute and assist OCHA in the roll-out of its Monitoring and Evaluation Plan and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).
- Support the Strategic Plan Midterm Review, focusing on progress and challenges regarding strategic and management objectives.
- Strengthen the implementation of OCHA's core functions, recognising its principal role in terms of advocacy, policy, and information management. Actions involve promoting humanitarian diplomacy and respect for international humanitarian law (IHL), ensuring leadership on humanitarian policy, and continuing to act as a reliable provider of information management services.
- Ensure robust synergies with humanitarian boards, and other coordination mechanisms to avoid duplication and to optimise messaging and advocacy.

2. Thematic priorities

In line with the valuable approach introduced by previous chairmanships, Spain will continue to identify, together with OCHA and in consultation with ODSG members, thematic issues that may be of special interest to the membership. Thus, the ODSG looks forward to increasing its understanding of specific themes, not only from a technical viewpoint but also with regards to their impact in the field.

The selection of possible themes to be discussed and included on the ODSG's agenda will be an on-going process. Nevertheless, potential issues could include in-depth discussions on what are termed the “forgotten” or “least visible” crises, gender streamlining in humanitarian action, and emergency response preparedness. Moreover, the ODSG will continue its discussions on needs assessments, the humanitarian-development nexus, civilian-military coordination, compliance with IHL, and cash-based interventions.

Focus areas:

- Least visible crises. Encourage humanitarian stakeholders to defend an effective and principled humanitarian action, by all and for all, ensuring that no crisis is overlooked. The ODSG will explore the best approach towards the least visible crises, not only in terms of mobilisation of funds but also in terms of methodology, terminology, and awareness-raising among the international community.
- Gender mainstreaming in humanitarian action. Gender has been flagged as a crosscutting priority by humanitarian stakeholders, and gained a higher profile on the international agenda. The ODSG is well aware of this trend, and its members have often demonstrated their commitment to addressing this topic holistically, assisting OCHA to consolidate its privileged position in gender mainstreaming over the entire humanitarian cycle, and also in terms of policy and advocacy.
- Emergency response preparedness as part of a more predictable humanitarian system. Support OCHA to strengthen the humanitarian program cycle, particular enhancement awareness on its work on emergency preparedness response, promoting OCHA's tools and mechanisms, while reinforcing local and regional capacities.

3. Management issues

Bearing in mind the challenging change management process conducted by OCHA in the last few years and the current need to further embed its structure at field level, the ODSG will help OCHA consolidate its status as an effective, efficient, and adaptable organisation. Therefore, a priority is the implementation of its management objectives: ensuring that OCHA is fit for the future and enhancing the sustainability of its financial resources.

Focus areas:

- Assist OCHA in the consolidation of its change management process, looking at the interaction between headquarters and field presence.
- Act as a source of advice for OCHA's budget process.
- Promote coordination among donors, ensuring predictable, multi-year funding commitments and exploring innovative financing mechanisms.
- Help OCHA to explore ways to broaden its donor base and, by doing so, bringing more diversity to the ODSG.

4. Operational issues

Due to its internal reform, OCHA is increasing its imprint and shifting service focus to the field. The organisation has a new structure, and the decentralisation process is underway. Effective operations at country and regional level are critical for the achievement of OCHA's objectives, and emphasis must now be placed on field performance. In this context, the ODSG can strengthen this strategic move, and support OCHA within its mandated role.

Focus areas:

- Contribute to enhancing coordination between headquarters and the field, and decision-making processes in the field.
- Review how OCHA ensures a more effective coordination in the field, making sure that country and regional offices support the strategic objectives.
- Enable operational and practical discussions within the ODSG, with field staff as well as with desk officers and experts at headquarters.

ODSG'S ORGANISATION ISSUES

As outlined in the Terms of Reference (ToR), the Chair will act as a facilitator to consolidate input to OCHA on various activities undertaken throughout the chairmanship. Spain will work closely with OCHA, the Troika, and ODSG members, supporting the fulfilment of OCHA's mandate, and will remain open to incorporating issues of interest identified by donors during its chairmanship. These activities will include:

- Holding meetings in New York and Geneva, according to the particularities that each headquarters offers.
- Ensuring a suitable symmetry for the different kinds of meetings, including a minimum of two expert-level meetings (ELM) and two high-level meetings (HLM), as well as keeping the idea of organising *ad hoc* technical workshops on strategic or thematic issues.
- Framing discussions on the aforementioned thematic issues, with the Chair providing OCHA with common donor messages on relevant themes.
- Disseminating timely information and minutes of ODSG meetings.
- Consolidating a final report of the chairmanship, which can help monitor the ODSG's work, ensuring continuity with future chairmanships.
- Organising one or two ODSG field missions, jointly with OCHA, to assess the work at field level, deciding the final location(s) by taking into consideration OCHA's strategic priorities and the thematic lines identified in this Work Plan.

Last but not least, in the near future, Spain will establish together with OCHA an indicative and preliminary schedule of meetings.