Remote Programming in Humanitarian Action

EMOPS 2012

unite for children
Preface

This guidance explains what we mean with the term ‘remote programming’, how to make a solid decision on if when and how to use remote programming modalities.

For the purpose of this guidance, remote programming is understood as programming without the presence of UNICEF staff due to unacceptable security risks or denial of access by authorities.

Part 1 describes why we use remote programming modalities and the normative framework that supports it, and the challenges of maintaining the humanitarian nature of our work when our staff have no field presence. It emphasises that remote programming is a last resort, and includes tips on how to lower risk so remote programming can be avoided.

Part 2 describes who makes decisions to use remote programming modalities (Representatives below $1 million, and Regional Directors above $1 million); and what process should be the basis for that decision, including the need for an exit strategy. It lays out the different assessments that should be completed and options that should be explored before making a decision.

Part 3 is the ‘how to’ and describes the most important implementation steps, like contracting modalities, doing needs assessments remotely, and setting up remote monitoring and evaluation. The section also covers how to discuss with donors the value-added of UNICEF when using remote programming modalities, including necessary cost discussions, as well as how to discuss elevated non-security risk levels.

Detailed guidance on the different elements of implementation are contained in the guidance, including a practical guide on how to assess non-security risk and how to link the Security Risk Assessments (SRA) and Programme Criticality in order to establish acceptable security risk levels; partner availability and selection and UNICEF partnership modalities; remote monitoring modalities; and how UNICEF should engage with partners on security, when security risk is transferred.

Annex 9 contains a useful Checklist for Implementation of Remote Programming that should be used when considering using remote programming modalities.

This is a guidance that is derived from field learning, and is expected to be updated on a regular basis. Support to Country Offices is available from Regional Offices as well as by contacting Genevieve Boutin, Chief, Humanitarian Policy Section, EMOPS, and through the Programming in High Threat Environments Community of Practice.
Contents

1. RATIONALE & BACKGROUND FOR REMOTE PROGRAMMING ......................................................... 3
   1.1 Introduction ................................................................................................................................. 3
   1.2 What Situations does this Programme Guidance Note cover? ................................................. 3
   1.3 Why do we resort to Remote Programming? .............................................................................. 4
   1.4 Normative Framework and Dilemmas for Remote Programming ............................................. 4
   1.5 Programmatic Rationale and Objectives for Remote Programming .......................................... 5

2. PREPARATIONS FOR REMOTE PROGRAMMING ........................................................................... 6
   2.1 Who decides? ............................................................................................................................. 6
   2.2 Steps towards a decision ............................................................................................................. 6
   2.3 Costing options .......................................................................................................................... 7
   2.4 Investing in National Capacity Development ........................................................................... 7
   2.5 Expected Duration and Exit Strategies for Remote Programming ............................................ 8

3. IMPLEMENTING REMOTE PROGRAMMING .................................................................................. 10
   3.2 Remote Programme Contracting Modalities .............................................................................. 10
   3.3 Needs Assessments, Monitoring and Evaluation ....................................................................... 10
   3.4 Explaining to Donors the Value-Added of UNICEF in Remote Programming ......................... 12
   3.5 Explaining the Cost Implication for Remote Programming to Donors ..................................... 12

Annex 1: Survey of Principles and Terminology ................................................................................. 14
Annex 2: Normative Framework .......................................................................................................... 17
Annex 4: Acceptable Risk .................................................................................................................... 23
Annex 5: Partner Availability & Selection .......................................................................................... 24
Annex 6: UNICEF Partnership Modalities .......................................................................................... 25
Annex 7: Remote Monitoring Modalities ............................................................................................ 26
Annex 8: Engaging with Partners on Security ...................................................................................... 28
Annex 9: Checklist for Implementation of Remote Programming .................................................. 29
Annex 10. Sanctions and Partner Engagement ................................................................................... 31
Annex 11: Remote Programme Modalities within the UN System ..................................................... 32
1. RATIONALE & BACKGROUND FOR REMOTE PROGRAMMING

1.1 Introduction

This guidance responds to priority needs emerging from experiences of UNICEF managers and staff working in country contexts where the level of insecurity or denial of access hinders UNICEF’s ability to reach children and women in need.

For the purpose of this guidance, remote programming is understood as programming without the presence of UNICEF staff due to unacceptable security risks or denial of access by authorities.

There is a rapidly growing understanding of the interplay between security management and overall management of humanitarian programming. Given the need to deliver services in high threat environments, UNICEF must manage its programming flexibly. Remote programming is the most drastic measure for reducing security risk to staff when security risks cannot be brought down to acceptable levels. The experiences so far with remote programming in UNICEF have been a process of learning by doing, and only limited guidance and lessons learned has been available to UNICEF managers and staff.

This guidance aims to fill the gap. It outlines examples from UNICEF’s past engagement in remote programming and outlines key principles, issues and threats to take into to consideration. It highlights good practices that can be utilised as a reference for designing and managing remote programming, and lays out the decision-making process in the organisation. It defines and analyses the broad legal and policy framework for utilising remote programming as a modality. The guidance does not provide a step-by-step blue-print for remote programming. Rather, it identifies methods for assessing if and when such an approach is appropriate, and ways to operate once remote programming modalities are being used.

This Guidance Note forms part of a series of recently completed guidance and tools to assist UNICEF staff and managers to deliver on the Core Commitments to Children in Humanitarian Action in high-threat environments, and is supported by a Community of Practice.

1.2 What Situations does this Programme Guidance Note cover?

This guidance applies to UNICEF’s humanitarian action as defined by UNICEF’s Core Commitment to Children (CCC) in Humanitarian Action:¹ preparedness for response, as well as response, including early recovery.

This definition of the scope of the guidance should not be taken to mean that UNICEF may not apply remote programming for other purposes than humanitarian action. The guidance may be relevant in non-humanitarian high-threat situations; the legal and policy frameworks related to ensuring due diligence in humanitarian action are relevant to UNICEF regular programming. However, approaches and acceptable risk levels may differ significantly in non-humanitarian environments. Therefore many elements of this guidance may be useful for remote programming in non-humanitarian situations.

¹ UNICEF Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action (CF/EXD/2010-02, April 2010)
The need for remote programming modalities to deliver humanitarian assistance has emerged due to increased targeting of UN staff over the last decade – including attacks in Iraq (2003) Algeria (2007) Pakistan (2009) and Afghanistan (2009; 2010; 2011). The 'Report of the Independent Panel on Safety and Security of UN Personnel and Premises Worldwide'\(^2\) which was commissioned by the Secretary General after the Algiers attack - states: “The fact is that, in many places, the UN is no longer seen as impartial and neutral. [...] For many people, this is reality, not a matter of perception.”\(^3\)

Where UNICEF staff access is hindered due to unacceptably high residual security risk or as a result of restrictions imposed by authorities or other actors, innovative approaches are needed to maintain programme delivery. While remote programming entails potentially increased non-security risks, negative consequences of suspending UNICEF activities may outweigh the (non-security) risks of implementing the remote programming modality.

1.3 Why do we resort to Remote Programming?

While remote programming decreases security risks for UN staff, it will not do much to address this ‘perception deficit’ (and may sometimes actually be counter-productive) – when humanitarian assistance becomes invisible, it does not contribute to increasing the acceptance of humanitarian actors, which is linked to communities seeing concrete benefits from the presence of humanitarian actors. Under normal circumstances, our proximity to affected populations and understanding of local contexts maximize the sustainability and accountability of the programmes we deliver. Remote programming therefore is a last resort, and we should always revert to regular programming modalities when security the risk becomes acceptable.

1.4 Normative Framework and Dilemmas for Remote Programming

UNICEF’s humanitarian action in conflict settings is guided by International Humanitarian Law, which provides special recognition and protection for humanitarian relief personnel. Annex 2 of this guidance lays out the basic knowledge that all UNICEF staff operating in high security threat environments should have about relevant legal and normative frameworks. Resources are also available through EMOPS’ Humanitarian Policy Section (and via EMOPS, through the Principal Legal Adviser in the Office of the Executive Director) for more in depth analysis and support.

A central challenge in remote programming is to maintain the humanitarian nature of UNICEF humanitarian action in the absence of UNICEF staff; and ensure that implementing partners retain the same protection under IHL. If implementing partner personnel are to remain protected as humanitarian relief personnel, they need to deliver humanitarian assistance in accordance with humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality and neutrality. UNICEF’s ability to ensure that these principles are observed by implementing partners becomes limited when interaction is restricted, and if implementers are non-humanitarian entities, like commercial companies.

To mitigate this risk, UNICEF managers and staff must:

- Fully understand the normative framework of humanitarian principles

---

\(^2\) Ibid, paragraph 269, page 70
• Help implementing partners understand the legal and normative framework of humanitarian action - this is especially important when using non-humanitarian partners
• Communicate effectively the humanitarian intent of our remotely delivered programming to authorities, belligerents, donors and recipients.

1.5 Programmatic Rationale and Objectives for Remote Programming

UNICEF’s core humanitarian policy, the Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action (CCCs), forms a framework for humanitarian action, including preparedness, response and early recovery. The CCCs promote predictable, effective and timely collective humanitarian action, putting forth clearly the results that UNICEF commits to achieving. The April 2010 revision of the CCCs brings policy up-to-date with changes in global context for humanitarian action, including new evidence and best practices, as well as humanitarian reform, in particular the cluster approach. The CCCs include specific commitments to establish and support coordination mechanisms, with interagency assessments and strategies being critical. The commitments combine cluster/sectoral, operational, and cross-cutting issues. The CCCs also bring a stronger results focus to UNICEF’s humanitarian work while at the same time aligning UNICEF commitments to global standards such as SPHERE Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response and the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) Minimum Standards in Education

The CCCs provide UNICEF with clear and well-defined programmatic objectives and is used as the basis for developing and implementing humanitarian activities using remote programming modalities.

Summary of Key Issues

• The programme guidance applies to situations with no UNICEF staff presence due to unacceptable residual security risks or denial of access by authorities
• The programme guidance covers UNICEF's engagement in humanitarian action. However, the guidance may be relevant for non-humanitarian programming.
• Remote programming must be delivered according to the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality and neutrality.
• The CCCs is the basis for designing and implementing humanitarian programmes using remote programming modalities.
2. PREPARATIONS FOR REMOTE PROGRAMMING

When residual security risk is unacceptable (i.e. after all security risk mitigating measures have been applied), activities that rely on UNICEF staff in the location must be suspended, or delivered through remote programming modalities.

The decision-making process on whether to utilise remote programming depends on the level of (non-security) organisations risk it creates for the organisation. UNICEF recognises that there is always a degree of risk involved in our programmes, but also that the risk varies according to the strength and nature of the management systems and controls of the implementing partner, and that it can be managed appropriately. In accordance with the ERM policy, “major risks that cannot be adequately treated must be escalated, and brought to the notice of the UNICEF manager with sufficient authority to deal with the risk and take appropriate decisions.”

Box 1: How to re-design Programmes to Reduce/Mitigate Security Risk

Before taking a decision to moving to remote programming, all other measures to maintain staff presence should be considered. This guidance will not in detail describe design measures to lower security risk. Some options for re-designing programmes are:

- **Adhere to humanitarian principles**: Adhering to humanity, neutrality and impartiality is critical.
- **Limiting programme interventions and taking a humanitarian poise**: At times, some programmes may be curtailed to enhance the acceptability of the organisation.
- **Increase acceptance**: If acceptance can be increased, through re-design of delivery modalities or through communication and endorsement, security risk may be lowered.
- **Increased investments in security measures**: it may be possible to increase investments in security for specific activities.
- **Increasing visibility or ‘de-branding’**: reducing or increasing visibility may reduce risk, depending on the context. In some contexts more visibility increases acceptance; in others, it increases targeting.
- **Staff profile**: staff from certain nationalities may be more acceptable to some belligerents.
- **Reducing staff movement**: For example, local travel can be reduced by conducting meetings, distribution or training from safe locations only.

2.1 Who Decides?

Representatives should escalate decisions that have significant organisational risks beyond the Country Programme to the Regional Director. In monetary terms, Representatives should always seek the approval of the Regional Director when remote programming modalities are used for programmes is greater than $1 million in value. (When using remote programming modalities for less than $1 million, the Regional Director should be informed.) The Regional Director should make a decision based on a structured risk analysis conducted with the support of the Director, EMOPS. EMOPS will act as a focal point to collect and structure inputs from all relevant Divisions at HQ, so that all organisational risks are considered in a decision. A method to assess non-security enterprise risks of remote programming is laid out in Annex 3. Risks related to proscribed individuals and entities should be understood referring to Annex 10. Please note that there is no formal agreement.

---

4 CF/PD/PRO/05-011
with donors on risk sharing, and elevated risk levels related to fraud are less likely to be acceptable to donors than other risks.

2.2 Steps towards a decision

Deciding when to use remote programming can be summarized in a series of steps, which should be comprehensively documented to ensure full transparency in the decision process:

a) The first step is to link the Security Risk Assessments (SRA) and Programme Criticality Reviews to determine the maximum acceptable residual risk for activities that require UNICEF staff presence (see Annex 4 for more details). This is an inter-agency process that is part of the UN Security Management System.

b) A solid analysis of the political context, conflict dynamics and stakeholder interests must be conducted. This should also include an analyzing the implications of transferring security risk from UNICEF to partners and identify possible security risks management measures partners could take (although UNICEF is not responsible for partner security management).

c) A cost analysis of options is needed. This should include, where relevant, options to increase investments in security to avoid using remote programming modalities. Costing of remote programming options should include the cost of third party monitoring; increased costs of partners (including security) and if any, increased UNICEF staff costs. Costing should also consider national capacity development strategies and options.

d) Non-security risks of remote programming need to be mapped. When programming exceeds $1 million, an organisation-wide risk assessment is made, led by the Regional Office with technical support from EMOPS.

e) Exit strategies from remote programming modalities should be included at the onset, so Country Offices can work towards exiting remote programming modalities as soon as possible.

f) When the value of the remote programming exceeds $1 million, the Regional Director makes a final decision based on the inputs above on how to proceed. When the value is less than $1 million, the Representative should inform the Regional Director.

2.3 Costing options

Programming in high-threat environments is very expensive. To ensure the best possible (and adequate) returns on investment, options should to be clearly articulated and costed, and compared. Options may include maintaining modalities and lowering security risks through increased investments in security measures, scaling back partially or wholly, moving to remote programming, or any combination of the three. By using remote programming, UNICEF direct operational costs can be significantly reduced, through closure of field offices and reduced spending on security measures; staff costs may also be somewhat reduced by posting staff outside non-family duty stations, through higher productivity and easier recruitment.

On the other hand, overhead costs in contracts will significantly increase, as partners will need to build in their own increased operational costs. The costs of operating in such settings can include both capital investment in upgrades of office facilities, but also importantly recurrent costs, such as international and national guards to secure office facilities, maintenance and running costs, additional cost to monitoring missions, which in many cases is only feasible by air travel, etc.
UNICEF will additionally be relying on separate partners to monitor programme activities, and may have to establish multiple layers of monitoring as a substitute for “being there”.

When working in areas where proscribed groups and individuals operate, the cost of additional due diligence measures must also be considered both in regards to vetting and monitoring of partners.

Box 2: Example of Security Cost in High Security Threat Environments:
UNICEF Afghanistan in 2011 decided to continue to maintain a strong field presence. This resulted in an increased of security costs from US$ 400,000 to US$ 3.8 million. Increased usage of remote programming could reduce these costs, but increase non-security programmatic risks.

2.4 Investing in Capacity Development

Where remote programming modalities are necessary, UNICEF is also likely to be working with partners with lower technical, financial and material capacities. Practical ways for UNICEF to support and strengthen the capacity of partners to effectively deliver services on behalf of UNICEF need to be carefully considered (for guidance see Capacity Development for CCCs in humanitarian action). There is a wide range of cost implications related to capacity development in remote programming. Supporting national capacity development can strengthen civil society's capability to constructively engage in peace building and provide an exit strategy, but may lead to short term loss of efficiency.

An analysis of the gains from engaging in capacity development with national partners (government, CSOs and sometimes commercial entities) could include:

- Time required to build the capacity of national partners vs. urgency of programme delivery
- The anticipated duration and demand for the programme output, i.e. one time programme delivery or continuous programme delivery, and
- The anticipated positive impact of the capacity development intervention

2.5 Expected Duration and Exit Strategies for Remote Programming

Remote programming is a last resort. The visible absence of UNICEF staff may itself contribute to future security risks when staff members return. To reduce the length of the absence, it is therefore critical for UNICEF managers and staff continuously to assess the situation on the ground, to determine how and when to return to regular programme delivery modalities. Through partner monitoring and assessment activities UNICEF should obtain relevant information that support decisions on when to re-establish staff presence, or conduct missions and engage in dialogue.

The figure illustrates how to incorporate exit strategies from remote programming as an integral part of the programme management cycle.

2.6 Conflict Analysis & Opportunities

---

5 For a detailed discussion see Non-paper on policy issues affecting UNICEF humanitarian action in complex threat environments posted on the UNICEF intranet.
Remote programming decisions should be guided by sound conflict analysis so humanitarian assistance does not reinforce patterns of inequity or the root causes of conflict. Conflict analysis helps programmers avoid negative impacts and maximize positive impacts.

UNICEF’s Technical Note on Conflict Sensitivity and Peacebuilding can further assist programmers to choose the right framework for conflict analysis and strengthen its application in remote programming situations.

Summary of Key Issues

- Before deciding on using remote programming modalities, non-security risks must be analysed in a structured manner.
- Risk decisions must be made at the right level in the organisation.
- Exit strategies from remote programming should be formulated at the outset.
- Cost analysis needs to be part of the decision-making process.
3. IMPLEMENTING REMOTE PROGRAMMING

This section provides guidance on some of the steps necessary for implementing remote programming.

3.1 Partner Availability & Selection for Remote Programming

Typically the range of available partners with adequate capacity is limited in high security threat environments. Available partners who are able to operate effectively in the affected areas should be mapped; this should not be limited to government and NGOs, but also include commercial partners where appropriate. UNICEF can conduct assessments according to the PCA guidelines to provide critical information on potential partners’ capacity to effectively manage resources; but assessment also need to be conflict sensitive, including an analysis of partners’ position in the conflict dynamic. A detailed discussion is available in Annex 5.

3.2 Remote Programme Contracting Modalities

Using remote programming, contracting options for UNICEF are the same as used in contracting in regular programming. However, particular thought has to be put into contracting modalities in remote programming, where clarity and accountability are more important than ever. In particular, the use of PCAs or SSAs with NGOs should be approached carefully. Distinct from partnership agreements, the delivery of services to, or on behalf of, UNICEF, at cost or for a service fee, should be governed by an SSA. These constitute vendor relationships, anchored in competitive tendering and procurement. The simultaneous use of a PCA and an SSA with the same partner is possible when the two relationships are clearly distinguished and mutually understood to be entirely separate.\(^6\) As stated earlier, the availability of partners may be limited when doing remote programming, and single-source contracting may be required more often. It may at times be easier to contract for service delivery using a PCA, rather than using a single-source SSA. However, we should always strive to use the correct contacting modality, even if this entails single-sourcing an SSA.

Annex 6 describes a range of partnership modalities and how they can be applied in remote programming. The section additionally outlines some of the potential benefits and disadvantages these modalities.

3.3 Needs Assessments, Monitoring and Evaluation

Conducting needs assessments, programme monitoring and evaluation remotely mainly relies on non-UNICEF staff. Overall monitoring should be guided by UNICEF’s Humanitarian Performance Monitoring system. Additionally, useful guidance to performance can be found in the Programme Commitments of the CCCs in Humanitarian Action.

An overview of remote monitoring methods and their advantages and disadvantages are listed in Annex 7.

Conducting evaluations in remote programming settings do in principle not differ significantly from methods used in regular programme settings. However consideration should be made for:

\(^6\) December, 2009, Guidelines UNICEF Programme Cooperation Agreements and Small Scale Funding Agreements with Civil Society Organisations
- Evaluation standards when faced with paucity of data and access to programme areas.
- Critical issues that may only arise during evaluation due to weaker monitoring mechanisms.
- The high cost of conducting in-country evaluations in high security threat environments. Evaluation costs should be planned for from the outset of programme design.

**Box 4: Lessons Learned From Monitoring in Remote Programming**

UNICEF has significant experiences with utilizing a wide range of monitoring modalities in countries such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan and Somalia:

- Investments must be made in capacity of national partners to monitor activities.
- Data needs to be evaluated carefully taking into consideration capacities of collectors. ‘Means of Verification,’ how the data is gathered and checked, should be both realistic and transparent.
- The range of data that can be collected is limited. As data is collected by partners, community members or third parties, indicators should be clear and simple.
- User feedback should be collected when possible, including through electronic means.
- Monitoring remote programming needs multiple mechanisms - including the use of local population and local service providers contracted through SSFA, CICs, etc. Multiple means of verification should be used, including video, pictures, GPS etc.; and information from the beneficiaries (video clips/statements).
- CBOs should be considered when possible, and investments should be made in these capacities.
- Joint monitoring with other UN funds and programmes can save money and human resources.
- Third party monitoring significantly increase programme costs.

**Box 5: Good practice of Monitoring in Remote Programming**

**Iraq** - UNICEF contracted an Iraqi company, which managed UNICEF contracts in Iraq through a number of ‘facilitators’. The facilitators worked and lived in Iraq, and were not part of the UN Security Management System. Some facilitators were assigned to specific sectors. For security reasons communication between UNICEF and the contractor took place through anonymous email accounts and cell phones. For security reasons, the facilitators did not have identification linking them to UNICEF (which also complicated their work with counterparts). Facilitators were in direct contact with UNICEF staff once a year, when visiting Amman.

**Pakistan** – To lower the non-security risks from remote programming, UNICEF Pakistan has established a Quality Assurance Team, consisting of certified auditors, embedded in the Programme Section to provide support on remote programming. The team is contacted through an Institutional Contract, which also makes the additional cost of remoter programming visible.

**Afghanistan** - UNICEF Afghanistan has contracted a local accounting company to pre-qualify potential partners, to enable faster processing of contracts, and reducing staff time needed to process contracts.
3.4 Explaining to Donors the Value-Added of UNICEF in Remote Programming

In remote programming, donors may perceive UNICEF as an unnecessary administrative layer. UNICEF Country Offices should actively engage so donors have a clear understanding of the value-added of UNICEF, in close collaboration with PARMO/HQ. Communication should focus on what makes UNICEF a unique partner in delivering programmes in high security threat environments as defined and guided by UNICEF’s CCCs in Humanitarian Action. The value-added to donors in remote programming environments should emphasize UNICEF’s ability to deliver:

- Integrated multi-sectoral programmes
- High quality and relevant technical expertise
- Effective capacity development approaches
- Strong relations with relevant stakeholders in specific countries
- Good management of resources

This can be done by:

- Developing information material explaining UNICEF’s role in remote programming
- Regularly briefing donors on UNICEF’s programme approaches in remote programming
- Sharing of analysis of key programmatic risks and how UNICEF addresses these – note that there is no formal agreement on risk-sharing with donors.
- Having a clear and articulated exit strategy that includes capacity development for partners.
- Ensuring that the whole organization is delivering the same message – HQ/RO/CO coordination is critical!

3.5 Explaining the Cost Implication for Remote Programming to Donors

A common understanding of the operational context and the programmatic options available and the cost implication should be created with donors. UNICEF Country Offices should explain to donors the rationale for using remote programming modalities (including showing that all options have been considered and costed) and why UNICEF will be facing additional costs while operating with remote programmes in high security threat environments. As explained in previous sections, these range from additional costs related to conducting: needs assessments, programme implementation and quality assurance.

UNICEF HQ can play an important role in reinforcing the dialogue with donors related to the increasing operating costs and the value-added by UNICEF in remote programming. A coordinated approach will support UNICEF to convey its messages more effectively.

Several actions should be taken by UNICEF to establish full transparency for the cost implications of shifting to remote programming:
• The UNICEF Country Programme Document (CPD) should identify key concerns and rationale for remote programming, and include an analysis of capital investment and recurrent costs from remote programming.
• The UNICEF Country Programme Action Plan (CPAP) should specify activities anticipated to be implemented with remote programming modalities and specify the expected cost implications, and include specific budget lines related remote programming modalities and security costs.
• The UNICEF Annual Work Plan(s) (AWP) should clearly specify costs of remote programming and the partnership/contracting modalities to be used in programme implementation, e.g. SSFA, CICs, ICCs.
• UNICEF Donor Proposals should explain the costs of operating in high security threat environments, and be clearly specified in the budget. This includes CAP proposals.
• Regular, structured dialogue with donors locally and at HQ level should be considered.

3.6 Engaging with Partners on Security

Remote programming reduces UNICEF staff security risks. UNICEF should engage in responsible partnerships and should not expose partners to unnecessary risks. It is therefore important to engage with partners to increase their understanding of security risks and mitigate these to the extent possible. A further discussion on this is available in Annex 8.

Summary of Key Issues

- The right partners and contracting modalities must be used. This may involve single-source SSAs.
- Monitoring and evaluation may require innovative approaches, and must be designed realistically, taking into account ground conditions.
- In areas where UN and bilateral sanctions apply, special planning measures must be taken to ensure compliance.
- UNICEF must pro-actively demonstrate value-added to donors, and also be transparent with donors on added costs.
- To be effective, messaging to donors must be coordinated internally in the organisation.
- UNICEF must engage with partners on security management.

Conclusions

- Remote Programming allows UNICEF to deliver humanitarian assistance to children when staff security risks are unacceptable.
- Remote Programming is a last resort, because of the resulting increased exposure to non-security risks.
- Expenditure exceeding $1 million through remote programming must be approved by the Regional Director, based on a risk assessment supported by EMOPS. All decisions must be carefully documented.
- The Regional Director should be informed of expenditure below $1 through remote programming.
- Remote Programming experiences have seen many innovative approaches; innovation can overcome security risk obstacles.
- Partnership management becomes all the more important when using remote programming modalities. It is critical to select good partnership modalities.
- Humanitarian action using remote programming must be delivered according to the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality and neutrality.
Annex 1: Survey of Principles and Terminology

**Complex Emergency:** A humanitarian crisis in a country, region or society where there is total or considerable breakdown of authority resulting from internal or external conflict which requires an international response that goes beyond the mandate of any single agency/or the on-going UN Country Programme (IASC 1994).

**Due Diligence in Remote Programming:** While due diligence is well establish concept in International Human Rights Law and in private sector world of business and finance, currently there is no clear standard for due diligence for remote programming. Due diligence in remote programming includes a comprehensive appraisal conducted by UNICEF to ensure proper planning and implementation of humanitarian assistance. The process includes thorough assessment and scrutiny in the selection of external third parties to deliver assistance for UNICEF to amongst others ensure selected parties are not part of international or national sanction regimes; documentation and scrutiny of financial transaction; and proper monitoring and evaluations of programme activities and results, to ensure humanitarian assistance is reaching the intended beneficiaries.

**Emergency:** A situation that threatens the lives and well-being of a population and requires extraordinary action to ensure their survival, care and protection (UNICEF PPPM 2009, and CCCs as per CF/EXD/2010-02, 2010)

**Effects on Programme Efficiency and Accountability:** Utilization of remote programming typically results in a reduction of programme operations. This, however, does not automatically result in a cost-savings to UNICEF, due to the additional costs related to ensure proper communication lines, travel costs and additional security costs involved with programme delivery and monitoring. Critical to UNICEF is also the issues of accountability to donors and beneficiaries. [more]

**Effects on Programme Quality and Effectiveness:** It is general agreed that remote programming can have a negative effect on the programme quality and effectiveness. Partners, i.e. NGOs, private contractors and/or authorities may lack UNICEF’s level of high quality technical expertise. It is therefore critical that a programme criticality level exercise as part of the move to utilise remote programming, in order to assess the types of programme activities that should continue under the new modality.

**Humanitarian Access:** The parties to conflict must allow and facilitate rapid and unimpeded passage of humanitarian relief for civilians in need, which is impartial in character and conducted without any adverse distinction, subject to their right of control.  

**Humanitarian Principles:** humanitarian assistance must be provided in accordance with the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence.

**Non-State Entities:** In armed conflict, an armed non-state entity is distinct from a governmental force. Its structure may range from that of a militia to rebel bandits. Other attributes may include independence from state control, the use of violence for political purposes and effective control over a territory/population.

Programme Assessment Exercise: There is currently no guideline for doing programme assessments. These guidelines are being developed by DSS as part of the SRA. However, it is critical to understand that what is meant by the term is not assessment of UNICEF programmes and activities, but of activities by UN staff (office support, field trips etc).

Programme Criticality framework: The PC framework is used to determine the criticality level for specific activities within a given geographic location and timeframe. This PC level determination is used in the Acceptable Risk Model. The framework also allows country-level programme managers to design programmes and activities to be within predictable, known acceptable risks. PC is only applicable to activities with UN personnel.

Remote Monitoring Arrangements: Monitoring is a continuing function that uses systematic collection of data on specified indicators to provide management and the main stakeholders of an on-going development intervention with indications of the extent of progress and achievement of objectives and progress in the use of allocated funds. In high security threat environments, UNICEF staff is often hindered by lack of access to the affected areas, to conduct the required level and high frequency and broad coverage of monitoring activities.

Risk: The combination of the impact and likelihood of harm, loss or damage to the United Nations system from the exposure to threats. Risks are categorized in levels from Very Low to Very High for their prioritization (UNDSS).

Risk assessment / analysis: A structured analysis the threats to an organisation, and their impact and likelihood.

Risk Management: The attempt to reduce risks (incl. contextual, programmatic and institutional risks) by identifying, monitoring and tackling key risk factors. It also involves balancing risk and opportunity, or one set of risks against another. Risk management should be seen as an enabling process, not simply a precautionary one (INCAF, 2009).

Risk Transfer: Remote programme derives from the decision to minimize the security risk imposed on UNICEF staff. Utilising remote programming modalities result in a shift of the risk faced by UNICEF staff to the UNICEF partners. These partners typically can implement similar activities while facing lower risk than UNICEF staff.

Reputational / Institutional Risk: While UNICEF, through utilizing remote programming modalities, is able to transfer risk to partners, the reputational risks continues to reside with UNICEF. Reputational risks are both upwards to donors and downward to beneficiaries.

Residual risk: The inevitable risk remaining after all appropriate risk reduction and mitigation measures are taken (as no security approach can remove all risk).

Threat: Any factors (actions, circumstances or events) which have the potential or possibility to cause harm, loss or damage to the United Nations system, including its personnel, assets and operations (UNDSS).

---

11 OECD Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management
12 UNDSS: Policy and Conceptual Overview of the Security Risk Management Process
13 Ibid
Annex 2: Normative Framework

International Law

International law is the body of legal principles that govern relations between States, set out in writing in treaties, conventions, and other international agreements; or identified from custom and practice, and can in some cases be inferred from statements or pronouncements by intergovernmental bodies (in particular, organs of the UN); these are referred to as “customary international law”. Customary international law has evolved over time and continues to evolve. The decisions of the UN Security Council taken expressly under the Council’s authority in Chapter VII of the UN Charter have the effect of creating international law.

International Humanitarian Law (IHL)

IHL applies in situations of armed conflict, which can be “international” or “non-international”. An “international” armed conflict is normally self-evident. Determining a “non-international” armed conflict for the purposes of IHL is more complex, however, and politically very sensitive. Any determination by UNICEF that a particular situation is a “non-international armed conflict” will be made by New York Headquarters (Office of the Executive Director, Legal Office, and EMOPS).

IHL, as reflected in relevant international instruments, is binding on states that have ratified those instruments. The principal instruments are the four Geneva Conventions (1949) and their two supplementary instruments, the two Additional Protocols relating to the protection of victims of armed conflicts (1977). A seventh instrument is vitally important for UNICEF’s work: the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict (2000). IHL as reflected in custom – that is, a general practice that is accepted as law even in the absence of a treaty – is binding on all parties to an armed conflict and to individuals. This is referred to as “customary international humanitarian law.”

While most rules of international humanitarian law apply only in “international” armed conflicts, some rules also apply in “non-international” armed conflicts. Both Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and Additional Protocol II of 1977 are specific to non-international conflict. Each one calls for the humane treatment of all combatants, the care of the wounded and sick, and confirm the right of impartial humanitarian bodies to assist affected populations.

Additional Protocol II also obliges parties to a conflict to distinguish between civilians and combatants, and calls for the protection of civilians against all acts of violence and reprisals. It includes specific provisions for the assistance and protection of children, including access to education, and bans the recruitment of children under 15 years old as combatants. Additional Protocol II also calls for impartial humanitarian relief for civilians in need.

Both treaty-based and customary international humanitarian law are understood to establish a “right of initiative” whereby, as part of their humanitarian mission, humanitarian organizations may

---

14 There are additional relevant instruments which are not addressed substantially in this Note, including the Biological Weapons Convention (1972); the Conventional Weapons Convention and its five optional protocols (1980); the Chemical Weapons Convention (1993); the Ottawa Convention on anti-personnel mines (1997); and the Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and its two protocols (1954).

15 The “Common Articles” of the Geneva Conventions are those articles that are common to all four of the Conventions.

16 This is expressed to be subject to consent of the state involved. Consistent with principles of customary international humanitarian law (see footnoted 10-12), that condition is now recognised to mean that a state cannot withhold consent, and that any restrictions or conditions imposed in giving consent must relate solely to matters such as ports of entry, routes of passage, and the like, but cannot purport to restrict the proper discharge of the humanitarian mandate by, for example, seeking to compromise the principle of neutrality an universality.
offer their humanitarian services to all parties to armed conflict, subject to the parties’ consent, which cannot be arbitrarily refused.

In remote programming contexts such clear delineations are less obvious due to UNICEF’s use of partners, consisting of national authorities, civil society organizations and private contractors. The key challenge for UNICEF will be to ensure that humanitarian assistance is delivered under the standards of IHL.

International Criminal Laws

The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (2002) articulates the elements of international criminal law. It confirms that it is a war crime – to murder, enslave, torture, forcibly transfer, sexually assault, or deprive of liberty, any civilian populations. Moreover, the Rome Statute specifically provides that knowingly enlisting, conscripting, or using persons under 15 years of age to actively participate in hostilities is a war crime. The principles of the Rome Statute apply in both international and non-international armed conflicts. The International Criminal Court has jurisdiction over individuals only, not groups as such. More information about UNICEF’s engagement with the International Criminal Court is set out in Executive Directive 2005/006 (25 April 2005), “UNICEF and the International Criminal Court”, available on the intranet.

In remote programming environments UNICEF continues to be committed to supporting the work of the International Criminal Court; however such collaboration may be complicated by the fact that UNICEF is relying on partners, which can compromise the accuracy of information within the Court’s jurisdiction. In the case UNICEF is requested to provide support, assistance or cooperation to the International Criminal Court assistance, Country Offices are to be referred to the Office of the Executive Director, in New York Headquarters.

International Norms - Resolutions of UN Organs

The UN Security Council (UNSC) has repeatedly called attention to the importance of allowing and maintaining humanitarian access in armed conflict. Simultaneously, the UNSC has created mechanisms to combat terrorism through a sanction regime initially targeted at members of the Taliban and, later, of al-Qaeda under Resolution 1267 (1999) acting under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. Resolution 1267 requires all UN Member States to freeze the funds and other financial assets of the individuals and entities designated on the Consolidated List. Critically to UNICEF, Res. 1267 does not provide a humanitarian exemption that is applicable in all circumstances. It does however provide a basis on which a listed entity may apply for a limited form of humanitarian exemption. Following the 9/11 2001 attacks in the US, the UNSC enacted Resolution 1373 under its Chapter VII powers, expanding the scope of the counterterrorism regime by requiring UN Member States to prevent and suppress the financing of terrorist acts. Central to UNICEF, Resolution 1373 also requires UN Member States to “refrain from providing any form of support, active or passive, to entities or persons involved in terrorist acts”. In remote programming environments, it is critical for UNICEF senior managers and staff to ensure compliance and exercise due diligence with regards to sanctions and other relevant Resolutions, while taking into account applicable IHL standards.

National Norms

---

17 As a footnote mention give examples of this.
18 Specify the other resolutions here
20 UNSCR 1373 (2001)
National Criminal Laws

UN Member States have enacted national counterterrorism regulations that may affect humanitarian assistance in high security threat environments. Both donor and programme countries have this legislation, and the impact is best examined on a case-by-case basis. Of particular importance is the US Supreme Court ruling of June 2010, making it a federal crime to “knowingly provid[e] material support or resources to a foreign terrorist organization”. Material support is to be understood in the broadest sense, including, property, services, training, expert advice or assistance and personnel. It is essential to note that the statute provides a basis for US prosecutors to exercise jurisdiction over any person. While the statute provides a basis on which humanitarian organisation can apply to be exempted from prosecution “if the provision of that material support or resources to a foreign terrorist organization was approved by the [US] Secretary of State with the concurrence of the Attorney General.”

It therefore makes the issue of ensuring due diligence in humanitarian assistance, and in particular the selection of UNICEF partners, essential. UNICEF offices must ensure that due diligence is undertaken when engaging with donors that have national sanctions in place to fully understand the ramifications of such national criminal laws on UNICEF’s programming and operations in remote programming environments.

Human Rights Laws (HRL)

Convention on the Rights of the Child

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is the first legally binding international instrument to incorporate the full range of human rights—civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights. In 1989, world leaders decided that children needed a special convention just for them because people under 18 years old often need special care and protection that adults do not. The leaders also wanted to make sure that the world recognized that children have human rights too.

The CRC sets out these rights in 54 articles and two Optional Protocols. It spells out the basic human rights that children everywhere have:

- The right to survival; to develop to the fullest
- to protection from harmful influences, abuse and exploitation, and
- to participate fully in family, cultural and social life

The four core principles of the Convention are:

- Non-discrimination
- Devotion to the best interests of the child
- The right to life, survival and development, and
- Respect for the views of the child

Every right spelled out in the CRC is inherent to the human dignity and harmonious development of every child. The CRC protects children’s rights by setting standards in health care; education; and legal, civil and social services.

By agreeing to undertake the obligations of the CRC (by ratifying or acceding to it), national governments have committed themselves to protecting and ensuring children’s rights and they have

---

22 18 USC 2339B - Providing material support or resources to designated foreign terrorist organizations
agreed to hold themselves accountable for this commitment before the international community. States parties to the Convention are obliged to develop and undertake all actions and policies in the light of the best interests of the child.

In remote programming environment the CRC is a powerful advocacy instrument that should be to the fullest extent by UNICEF to protect children from abuses of their inherent human rights.

Before making a decision to use remote programming modalities, a systematic approach must be taken to understand potential non-security risks. These risks should be assessed and prioritised in accordance to UNICEF’s Enterprise Risk Management\(^23\) (ERM) and guided by UNICEF’s Risk Management Framework (RMF). It may be useful to structure this analysis by rating the likelihood and impact of each threat on a 1-5 scale, illustrated below (this is the same methodology as in the SRA). Key threats whose risk should be examined are suggested in this guidance, but the list is not exhaustive.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-security threat risk assessment example:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Decision:</strong> Contract national NGO to conduct rapid assessment in location x for all emergencies for 1 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Threat:</strong> National NGO is will not sufficiently capture gender dimensions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Risk:</strong> Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Impact/Likelihood</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unacceptable - 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very High - 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High - 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium -2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low - 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

> **Threat:** Donor relations are negatively impacted by use of remote programming. Remote programming increases the risk for these donor agencies, e.g. lower quality of implementation, monitoring and evaluations. Donors may also not see the value added of UNICEF when most activities are contracted out.

Mitigation measures:
- Share with donors a structured risk analysis that clearly documents threats and risks.
- Establish a common understanding with donors on the acceptable risk level for specific non-security risks, with reference to the Busan Declaration commitments to “manage rather than avoid risk, including through the development of joint risk management frameworks with providers of development cooperation.”
- Regularly engage with donors on risks from the design stage to programme implementation and evaluation
- Make UNICEF’s value-added role in assembling partners clear.

> **Threat:** UNICEF funds benefit individuals and entities subject to anti-terror legislation and sanctions. Sanctions and listings of individuals and entities may create increased risks for

\(^{23}\) Enterprise Risk Management - intranet link
humanitarian agencies using remote programming modalities. Donor governments have over the past years increasingly made humanitarian funding conditional on assurances that it is not benefiting listed individuals, entities or organisations. UNICEF may as a consequence of relying on partners get exposed to liability risks through partners.

Mitigation measures:

- Establish a common understanding with donors on due diligence requirements. This should be done in close consultation with UNICEF HQ.
- Establish comprehensive vetting procedures of local partners in collaboration with members of the UNCT.
- Ensure that all staff members are familiar with current sanctions regimes, and that relevant information on the issue flows between staff members at different levels.

➢ Threat: UNICEF funds are misappropriated and programmes do not reach the intended beneficiaries. Remote programming transfers programme implementation and monitoring from UNICEF staff. This inevitably decreases UNICEF’s direct oversight over implementing partners; and may increase risk of misappropriation.

Mitigation measures:

- Use of sureties and bank guarantees returnable upon completion of deliverables;
- Use of partners with sufficient financial resources to re-pay any misappropriated supplies or funds;
- Use of appropriate contracting modalities with clear benchmarks and deliverables, and clear means of verification adapted to third party monitoring capacity.
- Establishment of Quality Assurance Teams to monitor financial management under remote programming;
- Utilisation of multiple monitoring modalities to oversee programme implementation, including overt and stealth monitoring; verification including films and pictures;
- Wide consultation, including with local community groups, in the design and implementation of remote programming, to ensure accountability of resources; and
- Information sharing within the UNCT/HCT on performance of relevant partners used in remote programming

➢ Threat: UNICEF is unable to obtain reliable and unbiased information and assessments. Remote programming entails immediate reduced security risks to UNICEF staff, but may significantly limit UNICEF’s ability to assess humanitarian needs in affected localities.

Mitigation measures:

- Train partners on methods and standards for good qualitative data collection
- Critically evaluate data once collected, including data cleaning
- Use standardized methods of information collection
- Invest in good data management in the office, including GIS.
- Use innovative technological solutions, like data pens, audio-visual materials, SMS and GPS where capacity of partners allow.
- Use multiple independent sources of information
- **Threat: Loss of visibility.** UNICEF will be less visible and partnerships with donors, local and national authorities, local communities, and non-state entities.

  Mitigation measures:
  - Ensure supplies are labelled.
  - Explicitly discuss with partners ways to communicate UNICEF’s contribution, and build this into contracts if necessary, including with specific budget lines.
  - Use information technology creatively.
  - Communication with all parties to conflict takes place, either directly or indirectly, possibly outside the area of operations (please refer to UNICEF Programme Guidance Note on Engaging with NSEs in Humanitarian Action)

- **Threat: UNICEF supported activities are not implemented to technical standards and humanitarian principles.** A key challenge in remote programming is to ensure that quality is maintained and standards maintained. With limited or no interaction between UNICEF staff members and partners, it can be very difficult to maintain quality and humanitarian principles.

  Mitigation measures:
  - Before using remote programming modalities, systematically map available partners who are able to operate effectively in the affected areas.
  - Work closely with partners on their staff selection. In some settings, former UNICEF staff members have been employed by partners.
  - Ensure contracts include resources for partner staff capacity development and training, and work closely with partners to develop staff capacity, including an understanding of humanitarian principles.
  - Support partner HR management to support staff retention.
  - Ensure frequent electronic communication takes place between UNICEF staff members and partner staff.
  - Ensure UNICEF staff members have good communication skills.

- **Threat: UNICEF partners suffer security incidents.** UNICEF is not responsible for partner security management. However, partner security incidents could have negative impact on UNICEF programme delivery and partnerships, as well as damage to UNICEF reputation.

  Mitigation measures:
  - It is extremely important to communicate clearly to partners the extent of UNICEF liability and support partners can and cannot expect from UNICEF.
  - Create routines to communicate clearly externally -when incidents happen to partners-, that this is not a UNICEF incident. This is to avoid a perception that UNICEF is being targeted.
  - Ensure that the Saving Lives Together (SLT) framework is fully understood and utilized by staff members.
Annex 4: Acceptable Risk

How to link the Security Risk Assessments (SRA) and Programme Criticality

If there is a possibility that programmes and activities will not proceed due to unacceptably high security risk to staff, it is essential to consult with UN Security Management System (at country level) to interpret the SRA in relation to developing programmes and activities. The diagram below shows the link between Security Risk Assessments and the Programme Criticality Framework. The SRA determines the security risk, while the Programme Criticality framework determines the PC level of an activity. Together they determine the maximum acceptable risk.

It should be noted that while currently the practice by DSS and the SMT/DO in many locations is to perform geographical SRAs only (i.e. assessing the security risk for areas or countries), programmers need to understand that activity-specific SRAs may need to be performed in some instances. Activity-specific SRAs take into account any particularities of an activity that may affect the risk level positively or negatively, and can take into account specific mitigation measures taken in programme design or special circumstances. For example, if a non-state entity that otherwise constitutes a security threat after UNICEF advocacy welcomes a particular activity, this may give that activity lower security risk than the geographical SRA would indicate. This creates a strong incentive for programmes to pro-actively include measures to reduce the security risk in their programme design.

The illustration shows how the Security Risk Assessment is used to determine the risk of an activity, ranging from low to unacceptable. This is the residual risk after all possible mitigation measures have been taken. The Programme Criticality Framework is used to determine the criticality level of an activity ranging from PC1 (highest) to PC4 (lowest). The arrows in the illustration point to the maximum acceptable security risk for each PC level. If the security risk is unacceptable, remote programming should be considered. It should be noted that even if security risks are deemed unacceptable by the Acceptable Risk Model, it may still be advisable to consider using remote programming modalities, because placing staff in higher categories of security risks may create other risks of programme failure.

How is it done?
The SRA is usually led by the Designated Official and the Country Security Adviser. The Programme Criticality exercise will usually be led by the Resident Coordinator’s office. The Programme Criticality exercise uses a tool that identifies UN priorities, and considers (1) how much individual activities contribute to the different priorities, and (2) the likelihood of success of each activity. This information combined will produce the Programme Criticality levels of each activity.
Annex 5. Partner Availability & Selection for Remote Programming

Typically the range of available partners with adequate capacity is limited in high security threat environments. Available partners who are able to operate effectively in the affected areas should be mapped; this should not be limited to government and NGOs, but also include commercial partners where appropriate. UNICEF can conduct assessments according to the PCA guidelines to provide critical information on potential partners’ capacity to effectively manage resources; but assessment also need to be conflict sensitive, including an analysis of partners’ position in the conflict dynamic.

- Identification of potential partners

The below table highlight key issues in relation to working with different partners using remote programming modalities, and outlines key advantages and disadvantages.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Presence at field level</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Potential Advantages</th>
<th>Potential Threats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **International NGO**        | UNICEF funds international NGO through a PCA, SSFA or ICC                    | • INGOs may have technical expertise to implement complex programmes  
                                |                                                                              | • Financial oversight and programme results may be stronger  
                                |                                                                              | • Likely to share values with UNICEF  
                                |                                                                              | • INGOs may face operational restrictions similar to UNICEF  
                                |                                                                              | • Less national capacity development  
                                |                                                                              | • Donors may not see the value-added of UNICEF  
                                |                                                                              | • More likely to suspend activities if staff are targets of violence |
| **National NGO**             | UNICEF funds national/local NGO through a PCA, SSFA, or ICC                  | • Stronger national capacity development and sustainability  
                                |                                                                              | • May have lower costs  
                                |                                                                              | • May have limited technical capacity and financial management  
                                |                                                                              | • Possibly weaker understanding of humanitarian principles |
| **National or local government authorities** | UNICEF develops AWP with national or local authorities specifying outputs and activities to be implemented | • Promotes development of national capacity to deliver emergency relief  
                                                                                                      |                                                                              | • Strong sustainability  
                                                                                                      |                                                                              | • May undermine neutrality and impartiality, if government is a party to the conflict  
                                                                                                      |                                                                              | • Government may not have local support and access to deliver humanitarian assistance  
                                                                                                      |                                                                              | • Financial oversight may in some cases be weak |
| **Community Based Organisations** | UNICEF funds CBOs or local leaders to implement portions of the UNICEF programme through ICCs or CICs | • Partners have strong interest in the proper implementation of activities  
                                                                                                      |                                                                              | • Promotes community participation  
                                                                                                      |                                                                              | • In-depth knowledge of the local context  
                                                                                                      |                                                                              | • Community capacity may be weak  
                                                                                                      |                                                                              | • Scalability may be impossible  
                                                                                                      |                                                                              | • UNICEF may face communication difficulties to engage with local communities, negatively impacting monitoring  
                                                                                                      |                                                                              | • Financial oversight may be weak |
| **Private contractors**      | UNICEF establishes a service agreement with the private sector through ICCs or LTAs | • Possible to ensure high technical level of expertise  
                                                                                                      |                                                                              | • Easy to structure contracts against deliverables  
                                                                                                      |                                                                              | • Easier recourse for non-delivery  
                                                                                                      |                                                                              | • Possible higher cost  
                                                                                                      |                                                                              | • Minimum incentive to engage with local population in programme delivery – lack of incentives to promote for equity  
                                                                                                      |                                                                              | • Difficult to adhere to humanitarian principles |
Annex 6 UNICEF partnership modalities and how they can be applied in remote programming. The section additionally outlines some of the potential benefits and disadvantages these modalities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Partnership/ Contracting Modalities</th>
<th>Key Advantages</th>
<th>Key Disadvantages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Partnership Cooperation Agreements (PCA)²⁴ | • Possible to adjust PCA to scale, and complexity by utilizing either “light” or “more complex” formats  
  • Possible to implement large scale programmes  
  • Agreement to work for common goals, with share risks and responsibilities, resources and benefits  
  • Can be used to build the capacity of national partners  
  • Confirms that parties are not only accountable to their respective donors and stakeholders, but also to those whom they are intending to assist  
  • By referring to CRC and the CEDAW, the PCA clarifies that the cooperation is integral part of UNICEF’s HRBA  
  • Bidding not required  
  • UNICEF is not liable for the safety and security  
  • By referring to CRC and the CEDAW, the PCA clarifies that the cooperation is integral part of UNICEF’s HRBA  
| Small Scale Funding Agreements (SSFA)²⁵   | • Can facilitate supporting partners to assist hard-to-reach and marginalized groups  
  • Flexibility to meet the needs and build capacities of community groups, who do not possess the managerial capacity to handle elaborate administrative and financial procedures  
  • Lowers the transaction costs, with light process  
  • UNICEF is not liable for the safety and security  
  • Due to the financial limitation, SSFAs cannot implement large scale programme interventions  
| Institutional/Corporate Contracts (ICC)²⁶ | • ICCs can be used for a wide range of services, i.e. TA, warehousing, surveys, development of specialized training material, monitoring, evaluation services, and is hence a relevant modality in remote programme  
  • Contracts managed against deliverables  
  • UNICEF is not liable for the safety and security  
  • Single-sourcing is more difficult  
  • Costs to establish ICCs with international commercial contractors can be significant  
  • Local vendors may not have the required technical and material capacity to compete for ICCs  
  • More difficult to promote equity  
| Consultants and Individual Contractors (CICs)²⁷ | • UNICEF is able to rapidly recruit external technical expertise  
  • Flexibility in contract terms, can be negotiated  
  • CICs are covered by UN SMS  
  • CICs not able to handle UNICEF money  
| Long Term Agreements (LTA)²⁸          | • LTAs save time and resources by eliminating repeated bidding, thereby shortening the lead time for customers  
  • Establishes longer-term predictability on the fixed unit price(s), quantity, quality and availability, of required inputs  
  • LTAs can be used both for goods and services  
  • Complex procurement process to establish LTAs  
  • Hard predict services required for remote programming  
  • Difficult for commodities/services without well-defined specifications  
  • Local vendors may face difficulties entered into LTA  

²⁴ The UNICEF Partnership Cooperation Agreements Guidelines is available at the UNICEF Intranet  
²⁵ The UNICEF Small Scale Funding Agreements Guidelines is available at the UNICEF Intranet  
²⁶ Guidelines for establishing Institutional/Corporate Contract is available at the UNICEF Intranet  
²⁷ Human resources manual for Consultants and Individual Contractor is available at the UNICEF Intranet  
²⁸ Supply Division guidance on LTA at UNICEF Intranet
### Annex 7: Remote Monitoring Modalities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Web-based remote project monitoring** | As a response to high security threat environments, organizations such as UNHCR and the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) have developed Project Tracking Databases, i.e. a computer system to monitor project activities in Iraq (UNHCR) and Somalia (DRC) undertaken by local partners. Rather than sending staff out to see the outputs of the programme activities that houses, local partners can take pictures that are uploaded with GPS info (UNHCR) and submit concerns via SMS, which will be sent to the programme staff concerned (DRC). Evidence-based monitoring of construction, costs, and deliveries take place before, during, and after construction, and payments are tied to the photographic evidence. | • Information regarding UNICEF remote programming activities can be shared in real time with all relevant partners  
• Beneficiaries have a direct line of communication, with the accountable organisation, and is thereby able to report any irregularities  
• A web-based remote monitoring system could be applied at scale and linked to corporate monitoring systems | • Setup costs of such systems are high, however if done at an organisational level, economy of scale could justify such an investment  
• Such systems require a high level of technological awareness of local partners and availability to the required internet facilities the areas of operations  
• The system relies heavily on input from local population, with little quality control available to check the actual situation on the ground |
| **Quality Assurance Teams (QAT) for remote management accountability** | Establishment of QATs with solid backgrounds in relevant technical fields, e.g. auditing, programming, protection, WASH, education, etc., who have access to the operational areas to monitor programme activities. QATs can also provide technical support to partner to identify critical issues related to remote programming. Depending on the security situation, such teams can be contracted through LTAs, CICs or ICCs. | • QATs can in a flexible manner bring highly skilled national staff from different sectors on a short/medium/long basis and effectively strengthen UNICEF’s and partners’ monitoring capacity | • Assurance teams can face similar access restriction as UNICEF staff if hired under a CIC  
• Contracting of specialised technical experts can have a significant negative cost implication on the UNICEF programme delivery |
| **Third party monitoring** | Third party monitoring can provide UNICEF with an independent and honest account of progress on programme activities, as the contractors are detached from the project implementation. UNICEF, WFP and UNHCR have been using third party monitoring in a number of contexts, including Afghanistan, Iraq, and Somalia. | • Provides UNICEF with an independent and critical assessment the quality of implemented programme activities  
• Is a critical data source, which also can be used to assess beneficiary needs in the operational areas (if combined with other types of data source) | • If used alone it is neither effective nor efficient  
• High cost implications for utilizing third party monitoring due to reliance on scarce and expensive consultants  
• Monitoring typically takes place after the activities have taken place, leaving little or no management influence to correct malpractices  
• Due to the difficulty related to contractual oversight by UNICEF, there is a moral hazard risk involved in third party monitoring |
| **Beneficiary/local community group monitoring/local government officials** | UNICEF can through SSFAs or CICs contract a number of local community group or beneficiaries to monitor, in real time, or once the activity has taken place, programme activities. | • Provides UNICEF with a evidence base of beneficiary perspectives in relations to programme activities  
• Provides UNICEF with local knowledge of the situation on the ground  
• Generates a local ownership and accountability of the | • Local population can be co-opted by parties of the conflict and hence not provide objective monitoring  
• By involving beneficiaries/local community groups in monitoring, UNICEF can expose them to unwanted risks, e.g. seen as close affiliated with UNICEF  
• Requires that UNICEF dedicates time and resources to national capacity development |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Triangulated monitoring</td>
<td>In areas where access is impossible for its national and international staff alike, UNICEF and International and National NGOs have used a combination of vendors, local government officials, and community members for programme quality and accountability assurance, wherein all parties have to sign off on each project activity.</td>
<td>• UNICEF is able to utilise key strengths of monitoring instruments to verify programme activities&lt;br&gt;• Provides information on programme implementation from different levels of the operational environment</td>
<td>• The setup requiring a proper oversight mechanisms are in place within UNICEF to guide such a complex monitoring instrument&lt;br&gt;• Requires contracting of multiple parties, which can have significant cost implication on the programme budget&lt;br&gt;• Exposes UNICEF to a wider range of programme management risks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Annex 8: Engaging with Partners on Security

As explained, remote programming is a way to reduce UNICEF staff security risks. UNICEF should engage in responsible partnerships and should not expose partners to unnecessary risks. It is therefore important to engage with partners to increase their understanding of security risks and mitigate these to the extent possible.

UNICEF is not responsible for partner security management. It is very important to be up-front on this with partners, so they can fully understand their own risks. Partner security incidents can have a negative impact on UNICEF programme delivery. UNICEF should work with partners to reduce their security risks by considering the following:

- Where appropriate, include relevant partners in planning activities. Local partners may have better knowledge of the security threats on the ground than UNICEF staff.
- Local partners can be included in analyzing and assessing threats and security risks in the areas where it will be operating.
- Basic security awareness training can be provided to local partners, on a case-by-case basis.
- Budget for appropriate logistical and security communication.
- Establish clear procedures for reporting security incidents to UNICEF.

One initiative is the Inter-Agency Standing Committee’s framework for improving security arrangements among IGOs, NGOs and the UN in the field – Saving Lives Together (SLT). SLT is a framework of non-binding recommendations for UN and INGO security collaboration. SLT is derived primarily from best practices in risk management developed over decades of field work and is a collaborative effort to increase the security of all humanitarian workers. SLT consists of recommendations complemented by a precise framework to guide their implementation, in terms of "who does what, when and how":

1. Convening broad-based forums for field security collaboration and information sharing, including NGO/I0 engagement with the UN SMT
2. Meeting Common Security-Related Needs and Sharing Resources, including in the Consolidated Appeals or other fundraising mechanisms
3. Facilitating Inter-Agency Emergency Telecommunications
4. Collaborating and consulting on the development and delivery of contextually based security training
5. Identifying minimum security standards on the basis of agency or organization-specific SRA model
6. Seeking adherence to Common Humanitarian Ground Rules
### Annex 9: Checklist for Implementation of Remote Programming

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guiding Principle</th>
<th>Issues</th>
<th>Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Programme Criticality Review</strong></td>
<td>Establishing the acceptable security risk for staff working on various activities</td>
<td>Identification of programme activities and justification for remote programming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Analysis of the impact of suspension or complete withdrawal of UNICEF Country Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The justification for implementing under remote programming should be review on a regular basis and aligned to other planning tools as appropriate - at a minimum on a yearly basis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-security Risk Assessment</strong></td>
<td>Assessment of the non-security risk of UNICEF’s shift to remote programming</td>
<td>Conduct structured risk assessments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Implication of risk transfer to Partners</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conflict analysis</strong></td>
<td>A solid analysis of the political context, conflict dynamics and stakeholder interests, the implications of transferring security risk from UNICEF to partners is needed.</td>
<td>Conduct conflict analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cost Analysis</strong></td>
<td>Assessment of the cost implications of shifting to remote programming</td>
<td>Analysis of costs implication on the overall budget envelope for transitioning to remote programming and the required capital investments and recurrent costs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Acceptable non-security risk</strong></td>
<td>The Acceptable Risk Framework tells us the maximum acceptable security risk, but there is no equivalent tool to tell us the maximum acceptable non-security risks are. This is an internal UNICEF management decision, which must be based on strong analysis.</td>
<td>Regional Director makes decision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Exit Strategy</strong></td>
<td>Exit strategies from remote programming modalities should be included at the onset, so Country Offices can work towards exiting remote programming modalities as soon as possible.</td>
<td>Establishment of a national capacity development strategy can play a critical role to exit from remote programming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Donor Dialogue</strong></td>
<td>Sensitization of donors on UNICEF approach to remote programming</td>
<td>Presentation to donors on the rationale and justification for the shift to remote programming. This should as a minimum include: ✓ Remote programming approach ✓ M&amp;E approach ✓ Cost Implications ✓ UNICEF value-added (national capacity development, knowledge management and sharing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Due Diligence</strong></td>
<td>Vetting of partner’s material, technical and financial capacity</td>
<td>Ensure compliance to international and national sanction conditionality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Checking of partners in relation to international and national sanction lists</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Analysis of implication of working with NSEs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contracting Arrangement</strong></td>
<td>Ensure appropriate contracting arrangements are used to replace presence of UNICEF staff</td>
<td>Identification of appropriate contracting modalities for the types of programming activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Needs Assessments</strong></td>
<td>Identification of alternative data sources to be included in initial and ongoing needs assessment</td>
<td>Ensure to always triangulate assessment through utilization of a wide range of information sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Monitoring</strong></td>
<td>Identification of monitoring modalities appropriate for the area of operation</td>
<td>UNICEF should ensure to utilize a mix of remote monitoring instruments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evaluation</strong></td>
<td>Identification of the types and scope of</td>
<td>Identification and assessment of contractors available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guiding Principle</td>
<td>Issues</td>
<td>Actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>evaluations possible in the remote programming environment</td>
<td>to conduct evaluations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Humanitarian Principles** | Partners involved in remote programming need to understand and adherence to humanitarian principles | Identification of partners with similar values as UNICEF  
Sensitize partners on humanitarian principles as part of partner orientation sessions |
| **Accountability to beneficiaries and donors** | Upward and downward accountability to donors and beneficiaries | Involvement to the extent possible of beneficiaries in the programme design and implementation  
Ensure regular dialogue with donors throughout programme management cycle |
| **Assessment of Local Partners** | Partner capacity assessments need to be carried out to determine appropriate level of implementation responsibility | Identification of capable and trusted partners and contractors, with the required potential to operate effectively in the affected areas  
Establishment of a national capacity development strategies |
| **Communication Strategies** | Communication strategies are needed to mitigate the negative effect of absence of UNICEF staff, reduced visibility | Review communication and advocacy strategies to ensure they address UNICEF’s approach and value-added in remote programming  
Strengthening of local partners knowledge of UNICEF CCCs in Humanitarian Action |
Annex 10. Sanctions and Partner Engagement

The below figure illustrates key processes that programmers should take into consideration when implementing activities remotely in places where sanctions are an issue.

Remote Programming Implementation Considerations

Generally, UNICEF must comply with sanctions, both UN sanctions and bilateral sanction regimes. UN sanctions are governed by the UN Security Council Sanctions (UNSC) Committees. The UNSC, under Chapter VII of the Charter, can enforce measures to maintain or restore international peace and security. Such measures range from economic and/or other sanctions not involving the use of armed force to international military action.

Practical steps to ensure compliance with UNSC sanctions should include:

- Implement clear due diligence requirements in the Country Office.
- Systematically check that partners, i.e. civil society organizations, private contractors and individuals, engaged in partnerships with UNICEF are not listed in any sanctions imposed by the UNSC.

UNICEF is additionally facing a new set of challenges when receiving funding from Members States that have enacted national counterterrorism laws, which may sanction material support to a wide range of groups, organizations, private contractors and individuals. Such sanctions have implications for the contracting language, vetting requirements and technical restrictions for UNICEF.

Further information is available from EMOPS Humanitarian Policy Section.

---

29 Detailed information on each sanctions committee, including relevant measures, lists, Committee Guidelines and comprehensive documentation, is available on webpages that can be accessed through the UN Security Council Sanctions Committees.
Annex 11: Remote Programme Modalities within the UN System

**OCHA:** In February 2011, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) published the study “To Stay and Deliver: Good practice for humanitarians in complex security environments”. The study identifies and documents how humanitarian organisations have applied new strategies and practices over the past years to enable them to maintain effective operations in contexts characterised by high security risks.

The key findings of the study is based upon field studies in high security threat environments, interview with humanitarian practitioners and policy makers, surveys of large number of national staff members, and desk-based review of organisational literature and case-based evidence.

The following key issues and messages emerge from the research:

- Maintaining effective presence through risk management;
- Alternative to bunkerisation;
- Duty of care and responsible partnership;
- Secure access requires sustained humanitarian dialogue; and
- Humanitarian principles matter.

OCHA defines remote management programming (or limited access programming) in the study “As an adaptation to insecurity, the practice of withdrawing international (or other at-risk staff) while transferring increased programming responsibilities to local staff or local partner organisations.”

**UNDP:** The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is currently in the process of developing a guidance note on remote programming.

UNDP’s approach remote management (i.e. programming) is overall guided by the need to continue operational activities in insecurity environments. This can at times require UNDP to establish time-bound management arrangements to manage UNDP operations from a distance by relocating international and/or national staff to safer or otherwise more appropriate sites. The development and management of UNDP programmes will subsequently be delegated to staff remaining on the ground, i.e. local partners or third parties.

UNDP envisages operating with various types of remote programming modalities, which will require different levels of delegation of authority and considered progressively complex from the point of view of programme monitoring and quality assurance:

**Remote control:** This is mainly applicable in situations where UNDP expects to return to the country within a foreseeable limited period of time. This is seen as a reactive measure alternative to closure of operations. In remote control, all or nearly all decisions are taken by international managers relocated to a safe environment.

**Remote support:** While the overall decision-making, guidance and support is retained at the Country Office outside of the country, a larger number of authorities, including assurance and oversight, is delegated to national staff on the ground.

**Remote partnership:** This type of remote management envisages that no UNDP staff are on the ground. It is based on an equal partnership approach with a near complete handover of day-to-day

---


31 Ibid page XV
implementation responsibility to the national partners or contractors. The Country Office also maintains a financial and strategic oversight role in order to ensure due diligence and accountability to beneficiaries and donors. In remote partnership programme monitoring is carried out mainly by third parties, such as NGOs or private firms.

**UNHCR:** The Office of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is similar to UNICEF faced with the challenge of operating in high security threat environments such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan and Somalia. UNHCR is similar to UNDP in the progress of reviewing operational modalities and adjusting these to meet increasingly complex challenges.

UNHCR notes that while constrained humanitarian space and insecure conditions in the past would have been considered temporary, current trends indicate humanitarian action in high security threat environments have become permanent features that require a systematic modification in the organisations approach.

UNHCR is currently deliberating on how to modify its programmatic framework to enabling the organisation to continue the effective discharge of its mandate and inter-agency responsibilities, particularly in high security threat environments. Current the key suggested adjustments evolved around four key and particularly inter-linked areas:

1. staff and beneficiary security management;
2. targeted human resources management;
3. enhanced partnerships with national actors, and
4. modified operational approach.

**WFP:** The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) is similar to UNICEF faced with the challenges of operating in high security threat environment such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan and Somalia. WFP has a large field presence, which in general is seen as an opportunity to generate humanitarian space for both WFP’s operations and partners, in the delivery of aid and promotion of rights and protection. In conflict and high security threat emergencies WFP is faced with a range of constraint in their operations, and have in the past implemented programme activities remotely through partners. This is seen as creating considerable challenges for programme quality and overall accountability.

WFP assesses that the organisation has been able to generate humanitarian space for the wider humanitarian system through the use of a range of coordination mechanisms, e.g. UNHAS by providing logistical access to remote areas.

WFP however notes that programming in conflict and complex emergencies is a significant challenge for the organisation due to security constraints and limited access. This has caused that WFP is heavily relying on data and analysis provided by cooperating partners. In such environments WFP additionally have limed ability to exercise quality control over the whole distribution process, from assessment to monitoring and evaluation. Since 2007, WFP has for example in Afghanistan taken a number of measures to strengthen assessment and monitoring activities in UN no-go-areas to a third party (international private organisations) to minimise these risks and improve the overall management of projects on the ground. WFP has additionally over past years significantly invested in staff security through amongst others the deployment of significant numbers of international and nation security officers.