

DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATION DIRECTORATE
DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE COMMITTEE

DAC Temporary Working Group on Refugees and Migration

Draft Summary Record: 4th DAC Temporary Working Group on Refugees

Main Highlights and Action Points from 4th Meeting of the DAC Temporary Working Group (TWG) on Refugees and Migration

10 March 2017
OECD Conference Center, Room 6, Paris, France

The following is a summary of highlights and outcomes from the fourth meeting of the DAC Temporary Working Group on Refugees and Migration, held on the 10th of March 2017.

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1. Sessions one and three: Presentation and discussion of the draft clarifications to the Reporting Directives on in-donor refugee costs

The two main sessions of the day were dedicated to the subject of clarifying the directives on ODA reporting of in-donor refugee costs. The sessions included a presentation on each draft clarification, providing for an in-depth discussion, and concluded by identifying areas in which there was general agreement between members and areas where proposals needed to be further elaborated. Prior to presenting individual clarifications, the Secretariat explained that no principal objections related to the technical feasibility of proposed clarifications had been expressed at the WP-STAT meeting on 28 February 2017. Members showed great interest in the details of the clarifications and expressed their approval of the overall approach taken by the Secretariat. Nevertheless, it was once again evident that the large variety and complexity in members' situations and reporting mechanisms exert an influence on their reactions to individual clarifications. It was observed that in general there was support for Clarifications One and Three, which reference the rationale and the 12-month rule, while Clarifications Two, Four and Five concerned with eligible categories of refugees, cost items and the methodology for assessing costs will need further adjustments.

Most members signalled agreement with the humanitarian rationale spelt out in Clarification One, but noted the need for more nuanced presentation, with a particular reference to protection obligations and a link to long-term development co-operation goals. Members advocated for context-specificity with regard to the legal status of, and assistance provided to, new arrivals in countries of asylum. On Clarification Two, several members argued for the inclusion of 'in-transit refugees', noting they were obliged to respond to their humanitarian needs. In this instance, the Secretariat recalled that the Reporting Directives make clear reference to recording assistance provided to 'refugees' and that the Clarification Two built on the accepted international legal definitions of 'refugees', 'asylum-seekers' and 'irregular migrants'. The Secretariat underscored that while providing assistance to stranded migrants (some of whom might eventually seek asylum in another country) was indeed the right thing to do from a moral point of view, it is not necessarily the case that this assistance could be categorised as in-donor refugee costs. A few members also signalled that, so far, they had not considered rejected asylum seekers as refugees and that including these costs would substantially increase their ODA. The Secretariat will work with a few members to better understand the impact Clarification Two could have on ODA volumes.

The vast majority of members welcomed Clarification Three on the 12-month rule, with the date of asylum application taken as the starting point for counting costs. The Secretariat clarified that beyond 12 months, refugees are considered residents and support is no longer considered cross-border, even for voluntary returns. Several members had questions and interventions on individual items on the positive and negative list in Clarification Four, for example, rescue-at-sea, secondary and tertiary education as well as administrative costs. Regarding Clarification Five, it was clear that there is a trade-off to be made between flexibility (reflecting the country context) and creating consistency and comparability of methodological approaches. The Secretariat will adjust Clarification Four and develop a more concrete proposal for Clarification Five to be discussed at the next meeting.

In its concluding remarks, the Secretariat reminded members that this process is an important collective effort that shall reflect the DAC's role as a guardian of ODA and invited members to approach the Secretariat bilaterally where further clarification is required.

Members were requested to share any additional comments to the proposal by the 17th of March. On the 18th April, the Secretariat will circulate a second draft of the proposal, with a deadline for written comments by 2nd May. This feedback will be incorporated into a revised draft to be validated at the next TWG meeting on 15th May.

2. Session two: Addressing priority areas for better programming to deliver comprehensive solutions to the refugee crisis

This session updated participants to the progress made on the guidance for programming in contexts of forced displacement. The Secretariat presented the four chapters of the paper, outlining conceptual frameworks, key donor agendas, introducing the main recommendations and showcasing how case studies will be used to put these recommendations into context. Further information was provided on the Compendium of Good Practice, the annexes and the Diagnostic Tool. Members suggested further examination of the role of conflict analysis as well as the inclusion of risk framework and highlighted the importance of reflecting on the feasibility of recommendations in the field, particularly with reference to better co-ordination and collaboration. They also noted the importance of reflecting on the role of new stakeholders including the World Bank Group and 'new' donors.

A second draft of the guidance document will be shared with members on March 20th, with a deadline for comments of April 3rd, timed to coincide with the Experts' Validation Workshop. The next draft will be shared on May 2nd in preparation for the 5th TWG meeting.

At the end of Session 2, EvalNet presented emerging lessons from evaluations on migration and refugees, citing the large number of evaluations to be found in the refugee context, yet highlighting that there are gaps in evaluations on programming in urban contexts, education and access to work or business opportunities. They noted that many evaluations highlight the gaps between humanitarian and development nexus and suggest that refugees are often most affected as they are situated at the centre of this gap. Once completed, this study will contribute to the evidence base of the TWG Guidance document.