

ANNEX 2: CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

Cross-cutting issues intersect with various criteria and can be integrated into all stages of the evaluation process. Two are considered in this guide: inclusion and adaptiveness.

Table A 1: Cross-cutting issues explained

Cross-cutting issue	What it is	Why it is important in EHA
Inclusion	Inclusion means that humanitarian action focuses on those affected most by crises in terms of need, without discrimination (e.g. on the basis of nationality, race or ethnicity, gender, religious belief, class, disability, sexual identity and orientation). It also means that humanitarian action addresses the specific and diverse needs of different groups/individuals. This is where gender equality fits.	This value underpins humanitarian action. As such, it is elevated to being part of the coverage criterion. This ensures that EHA pays attention to who is included and who is excluded in humanitarian action. It is also a cross-cutting issue, which may be considered in relation to all other criteria. It includes and goes beyond gender equality to consider other patterns of marginalisation and discrimination as well, and, as far as possible, their underlying causes.
Adaptiveness/ adaptive management	Adaptive management refers to adaptations in response to changes in context or understanding that go beyond everyday good management. It implies an iterative rather than linear approach to planning, implementation and evaluation, with multiple decision points, better suited to complex and uncertain contexts. Adaptive decisions and practices should be evidence-based (see Buchanan-Smith and Morrison-Metois, 2021).	Adaptive management is key to effective and relevant humanitarian action. This is because of the dynamic and unpredictable nature of humanitarian crises, and also the fast-paced characteristic of humanitarian action, especially in the early stages of a crisis, or in a new crisis paradigm such as a global pandemic. Evaluators may look for evidence of this iterative approach to planning and implementation of humanitarian action in response to changing context and need.

Table A 2: Applying inclusion to the evaluation criteria

Criterion	Inclusion
Relevance	<p>Use an intersectional lens to facilitate analysis of the different needs and priorities of underrepresented and/or marginalised groups and communities (OECD, 2021).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Which cultural and social factors – such as gender, age, socioeconomic background, livelihood and existing caregiving and community roles – have been factored in by humanitarian agencies to ensure that their activities are relevant (Thu, 2024)?
Effectiveness	<p>Understanding and establishing variations in outcomes provides important nuances when evaluating effectiveness.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How might outcomes vary across different groups, communities or geographical areas? Pay attention to cultural and social factors such as gender, age, socioeconomic background, and livelihood. <p>Combine the evaluation of effectiveness with coverage and inclusion for in-depth analysis of outcomes and achievements across different population groups, to understand different needs and experiences of the crisis.</p>
Efficiency	<p>The most marginalised and vulnerable groups are sometimes the most difficult and most expensive to reach. When evaluating efficiency, consider if this was taken into account in resource allocation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Have sufficient resources been allocated to reach the most marginalised and vulnerable? <p>When evaluating operational efficiency, consider the inclusion of marginalised and vulnerable groups in decision-making.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Whose voices have been heard when making decisions, for example on how resources have been allocated? ● Have marginalised and vulnerable groups been given the opportunity to influence the decision-making process? For example, have affected women and girls been able to influence the process (OECD, 2021)?

Inter-connection	<p>Explore whether humanitarian action is linked to any long-term work addressing root causes of discrimination faced by marginalised and vulnerable people.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Does the humanitarian action connect with that work or is it siloed? ● Have connections been made between humanitarian actors and local actors representing marginalised or vulnerable people, for example local organisations promoting the rights of women and girls, people living with disabilities or people with diverse sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics (SOGIESC)? ● Have investments been made to strengthen the capacity of these actors to respond to a humanitarian crisis?
Coherence	<p>When evaluating policy alignment explore whether policies related to inclusion have been considered.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Have internal policies considered, for example, diversity, gender equality and/or disability? ● Have international and/or national norms and standards been considered? For example, humanitarian frameworks such as the CHS, or human rights commitments such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women or the Convention on the Rights of the Child (OECD, 2021)? <p>To consider inclusion when evaluating coordination, explore which actors were included in coordination.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Which local organisations have been included? Have local organisations been included who represent groups or communities whose voices traditionally are not heard? For example, organisations representing people living with disabilities or people with diverse SOGIESC, or organisations representing the interests of Indigenous people?
Impact	<p>Pay attention not only to what impact has occurred as a result of humanitarian action but also for whom (OECD, 2021).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How have different groups, communities or geographical areas experienced impact? Pay attention to cultural and social factors such as gender, age, socioeconomic background, and livelihood. <p>Combine the evaluation of impact with coverage and inclusion for in-depth analysis of impact across different population groups, to understand different needs and experiences of the crisis.</p>

Table A 3: Applying adaptiveness to the evaluation criteria

Criterion	Adaptive management/adaptiveness
Relevance	<p>Explore what information has been sought by, and has become available to, humanitarian actors that reveals the relevance of their humanitarian action over time. This may be from ongoing monitoring and/or directly from engagement with people affected by crisis.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To what extent has there been flexibility to fine-tune humanitarian action and its modalities as humanitarian actors gain deeper understanding of the needs and priorities of the affected population? ● To what extent has humanitarian action been adapted to the changing needs and priorities of affected people over time and as a crisis has evolved?
Coverage and inclusion	<p>Monitoring and other assessments, including feedback from affected people themselves, provides important data and information about who is being reached through humanitarian action, who is not, and how this relates to need.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What evidence is there of an adaptive and iterative approach to broadening and deepening coverage and inclusion based on this emerging information?
Effectiveness	<p>Adaptive management is key to the quality of humanitarian action.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To what extent have humanitarian actors demonstrated commitment to continued learning about the outcomes of their humanitarian action and what has determined those outcomes? ● How have actors applied this learning to continually adapt and improve humanitarian action to achieve better outcomes more aligned to the needs and priorities of people affected by crisis?
Efficiency	<p>Adaptive management based on good data and analysis (for example from audits, and from feedback from partners and peers) can potentially improve the efficiency of humanitarian action over time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Have resources (financial, human, technical, environmental etc) been used more economically over time? Has waste been reduced? ● Have processes and procedures been streamlined appropriately to be more cost-effective and efficient?

Inter-connection	<p>Adaptive management may be key to ensuring that the temporal dimension of inter-connection is taken into account.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Is there evidence that humanitarian action planned at speed and with a short-term perspective has been adapted as medium- and longer-term implications have emerged? <p>Adaptive management may also be key to the relational dimension.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How has the partnership between international and national humanitarian actors been adapted as it has become apparent which aspects of the partnership are working to support locally led humanitarian action and which are hindering it?
Coherence	<p>If it becomes apparent that different policies at agency or sectoral levels conflict, responses may need to be adapted to manage tensions and trade-offs, informed by an understanding of the context and crisis.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● For example, look for evidence that managers have recognised those tensions according to the best analysis available to them. <p>Ongoing coordination between actors may have revealed areas of duplication, or where complementarity could be enhanced.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To what extent has the actor (or actors in a multi-agency evaluation) adapted their humanitarian action in response to such information?
Impact	<p>The incentive to show that humanitarian action has had a positive impact (for example to funders) can mean that potentially negative impacts are overlooked.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To what extent has the humanitarian actor been curious about, and investigated, the wider impact of its humanitarian action? ● How flexible and adaptive has the humanitarian actor been to mitigate negative impact and avoid harm, and to strengthen positive impact?