FRAMEWORK FOR DATA SHARING IN PRACTICE

Summary Report, Part II

Co-hosted by OCHA and the PIM Team

PIM — Protection Information Management
For Quality Protection Outcomes

OCHA

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I. Introduction

A Framework for Data Sharing in Practice, Part II, is a collective outcome document from two meetings held in 2017, one in New York in May and a follow-up in Copenhagen in December. The meetings were held with support from OCHA's Centre for Humanitarian Data.

The objective of these meetings was to develop a framework for data sharing by which the humanitarian community can facilitate safe, responsible, and purposeful data and information sharing for stronger humanitarian response and protection outcomes.

The December meeting brought together practitioners and thinkers from HHI, NRC, Netherlands Red Cross, IRC, IOM, WFP, JIPS, DRC, OCHA, ProCap, ICRC, UNICEF, and UNHCR who worked to further refine key elements of the *Framework for Data Sharing in Practice*.

The first part of this document is a report on the discussions and agreement arising out of the December working meeting as well as the collaborative review of this document. The second part of this document presents the results of this work, offering the *Framework for Data Sharing in Practice* (hereafter the '*Framework*'). The document concludes with an annex on 'Shared Definitions and Concepts' which defines a minimum set of terms required to support a normative discussion on data and information sharing.

II. Background

Background information and initial outcomes from the first meeting on this *Framework* are available online at: **pim.guide**.

III. Objective: Articulating the Elements of a *Framework for Data Sharing in Practice*

The development of the *Framework* included multiple important discussions. There was debate, for instance, as to whether the *Framework* should be limited to 'data' or also cover 'information'. Note that the *Framework* uses the term '**data**' to describe '*A collection of facts, such as numbers, measurements, or observations*', while the term '**information**' is used to describe '*Facts or details about a subject*'.[1]

Discussions also took place around whether the *Framework* is intended to apply to situations solely of displacement or of humanitarian settings in general. To further clarify this point, references to, 'in support of humanitarian response' have been included under the 'objectives' of this document, as well as within the *Framework* itself.

Another point of discussion was the scope of participation within the *Framework*, which it was agreed would be open to participants from within the humanitarian community and beyond.

It was also discussed and agreed that this *Framework* is not intended to be legally binding.

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[1] | Please see '*Commonly used Protection Information Management Terminology* **(Dec. 2015)**', 2016, pp. 16 and 30, respectively, for additional details. The intent is for the *Framework* to cover both data and information.

Rather, it will work to establish and facilitate a practical level of trust and best practices around data sharing. Stakeholders with an interest in a data sharing arrangement may use portions of or the entire *Framework*, or point to the document as best practices for safe and responsible data sharing. The *Framework* will continue to be a living document, which will be challenged, tested, and further refined through use in the field and ongoing learning in this area.

Additional points of discussion have been noted alongside the corresponding elements of the *Framework* below. While valuable questions were posed during the revision of the *Framework*, several of these pushed beyond the original intent of establishing the *Framework* and have not been included in this document.

IV. The Elements of a *Framework for Data Sharing in Practice*

Colleagues have agreed that the purpose of the *Framework* is twofold: to work toward an overall reduction in the risk of sharing or not sharing; and illustrating the benefits of sharing through the use of shared minimums in terms of concepts, principles, methods, and processes that can be built upon by colleagues within their specific context.

When we talk about the **shared** components of the *Framework*, it was agreed that this means that two or more parties engaging in the *Framework* agree to operate according to the minimum standards outlined in detail, in Sections A through E, below.

Briefly, the elements of the *Framework* are as follows:

First, the *Framework* starts by offering a common '**trust statement**'. This indicates a commitment to act in accordance with the *Framework*, signalling that 'I as a person' and/or 'we as an organisation' will behave in accordance with the trust statement and the minimum standard outlined in the *Framework*. The objective of the trust statement is to articulate the elements of a trustworthy and overall better data sharing environment, either within an organization or between organizations. For example, if you are in the process of negotiating a data sharing agreement, you may still need to refer to the *Framework* for steps that need to be completed or considered in that process and mutually agreed.

Second, the *Framework* articulates **a minimum level of shared principles** to guide data sharing for humanitarian response. A handful of colleagues expressed reservations around referring explicitly to 'protection' principles, due to a concern that this may exclude the private sector or non-humanitarian colleagues in participating in the *Framework*. There was also quite a bit of debate around which principles to refer to. However the majority of colleagues strongly and repeatedly called for reference to the PIM Principles, which they argued are clear and accepted principles by colleagues while also supporting the overall objective of the *centrality of protection*[2] in humanitarian action. Colleagues further requested that the full list of PIM Principles be included in the *Framework*, without which they argued they had no way to assess the actions or intent of a data sharing counterpart. The use of principles in this document is intended to set a shared minimum and does not exclude or seek to replace other principles that may be relevant, which colleagues may refer to or build upon as they see fit.

Third, the *Framework* sets out a **process for data sharing**, open to two or more parties

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[2] *The Centrality of Protection on Humanitarian Action, Statement by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Principals*. Endorsed by the IASC Principals on 17 December 2013. Available for download at: **https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/principals/content/centrality-protection-humanitarian-action**; accessed 19 Feb. 2018.

inside and outside the humanitarian community (e.g. affected populations,[3] development and peacebuilding actors, academics, private sector, media), based on the needs of a given data sharing situation. Recognition of a defined process allows for a structured approach and clear communication and understanding regarding what work is being done, while providing a minimum structure from which to assess a request or given response. The intent is not to have everyone adapt their entire information management process but for a clearly defined minimum process and approach to support good practice. The shared process is further reflected in the key **questions** to ask and **actions** to take when undertaking a benefit-and-risk assessment for a given data sharing arrangement under Section E.

Fourth, colleagues agreed that the *Framework* includes a set of minimum **competencies** required for safe and responsible data sharing in humanitarian response. Organizations involved in data sharing should ensure that staff members possess the required skills, knowledge, attitude, and mindset to undertake safe and responsible data sharing.

Fifth, the *Framework* provides a series of **definitions and concepts** to improve the mutual understanding required for conversations between the wide variety of actors often involved in data sharing.

Sixth, mapping the **data ecosystem** encompasses not just the data but also the data subjects, data providers, and data users, as well as the ways in which the data is processed, stored, and shared. Together, these components constitute the data ecosystem. Neither benefit nor risk can be assessed without understanding this ecosystem, which is typically wider than the data sharing proposed.

Seventh, the *Framework* offers an approach for undertaking **a joint Benefit and Risk Assessment**, operating within the shared minimum principles, competencies, and process as articulated in this document. Such an assessment explores the benefits and risks of sharing specific data or information within a given context, after which stakeholders can make an informed decision on if and how to proceed with the sharing arrangement. For any individual data sharing scenario, two or more stakeholders would come together and undertake a joint assessment based on their context and situation, and decide whether to proceed based on a shared analysis of benefit and risk.

For a data sharing process under the *Framework*'s joint benefit-and-risk assessment, the parties enter the arrangement knowing that each partner has the same competencies, concepts, and principles. They also know that their data has been collected and handled according to key principles and actions within a similarly shared (but not necessarily joint) process for data management. Parties do not need to conduct the entire process of data design, collection, etc. together, prior to sharing.

V. Next Steps

The objective is to have a draft *Framework* that colleagues from UNICEF, HHI, DRC, OCHA, UNHCR, and others have expressed their intention to test in December, in whole or in part. Such testing will explore the *Framework* and its elements, such as the trust statement and the benefit-and-risk assessment, in their respective organisations and field operations.
From there, as a community we will compile lessons learned and further refine or develop the elements of the *Framework* as required within the next six months to a year. The PIM team

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[3] The use of the term 'affected populations' refers to: [...] 'all those living in the nation state whose lives have been impacted as a direct result of the crisis. [...] Characteristics of the category population affected include:

- being (geographically) in close proximity to a crisis;
- being physically/emotionally impacted including being exposed to a human rights' violation/protection incident;
- experiencing personal loss or loss of capital and assets as direct result of the crisis (family member, house/roof, livestock or any other asset);
- being faced with an immediate threat from a crisis [...]

PIM Common Terminology, Dec. 2015, p. 5.

would encourage colleagues who use aspects of the *Framework* to actively share feedback and lessons learned from that application and use.

The *Framework* will be available for **download and use** on the PIM website and available for use, dissemination, and posting by any and all colleagues within the community.

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