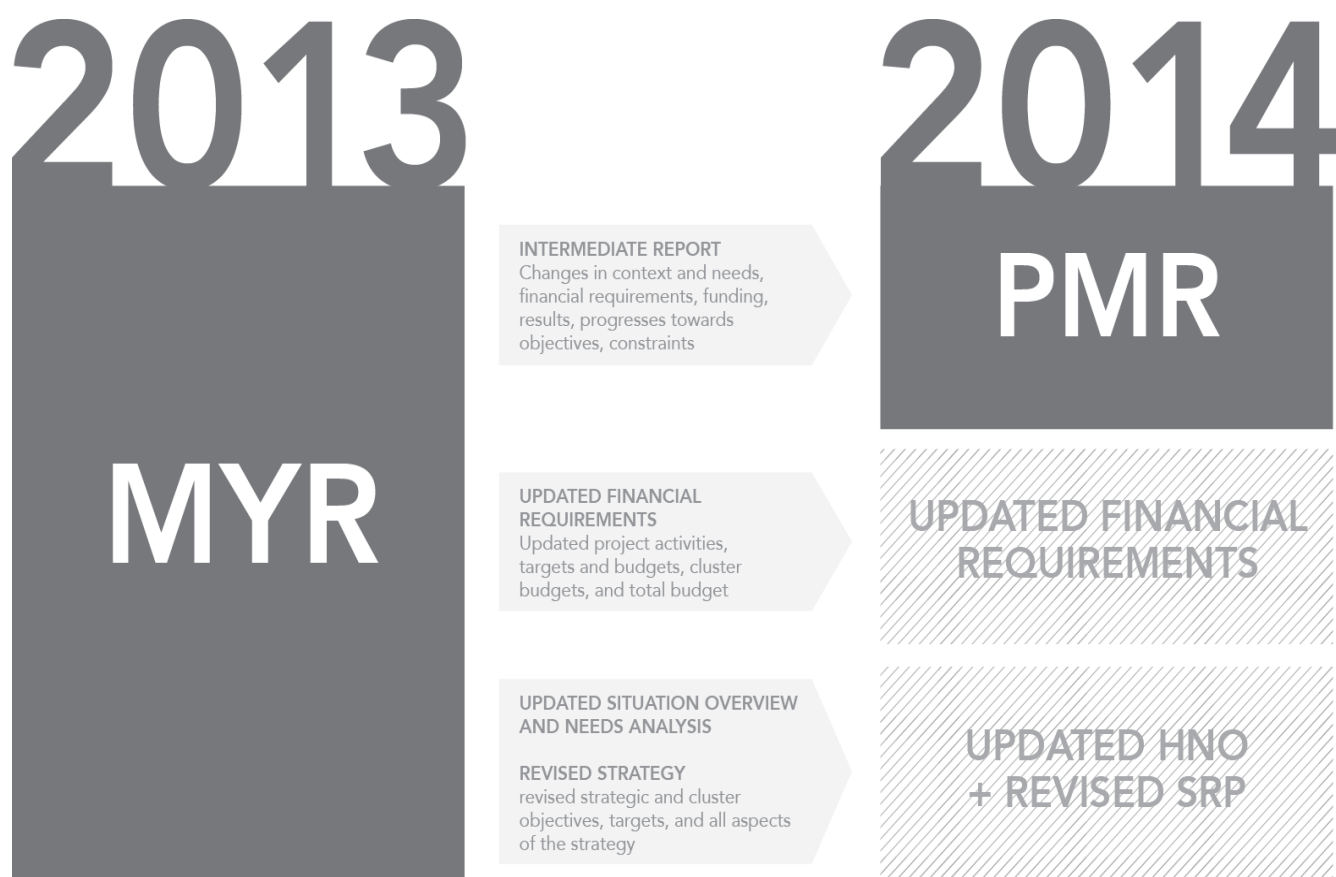


REPORTING AGAINST, UPDATING OR REVISING A STRATEGIC RESPONSE PLAN: WHEN AND HOW?

Significant changes to the humanitarian programme cycle (HPC) have been implemented in 2014, including to the previously called “CAP Mid-Year Review”. This note presents an overview of options on how to report on the implementation of a strategic response plan, and to manage its update or revision, when required.

A: What happened to the Mid-Year Review?

In a country with a strategic response plan, changes in the context or a sudden emergency may trigger the need to **update** or **revise** the strategy that was set at the beginning of the planning cycle. In the past, all countries were required to produce a mid-year review at the same time. **Given the different contexts in emergencies and the distinct pace of the evolution of crises, a flexible approach to reporting, updating and revising is now being introduced, one that can be tailored to different needs.** The changes for this year are illustrated below:



As illustrated above, previously a “CAP Mid-Year Review” was undertaken as one process and resulted in a new publication at mid-year. It consisted of adapting the strategy, strategic objectives, cluster plans and projects if there were any significant changes in needs or context, and reporting on results towards the stated objectives. Going forward, this will be broken down into a number of recommended steps. HCTs are advised to prepare a periodic monitoring report to present progress made against the objectives, indicators and targets set in the strategic response plan. Based on the findings of the periodic monitoring report, a HCT may decide to revise its strategic response plan. It will then organise a separate process that will lead to the release of a document called “revised strategic response plan”. A review of the humanitarian needs overview could be undertaken at whatever point that is relevant for the context. The sections below explain these steps in greater detail.

B: Periodic monitoring report

A periodic monitoring report is an internal management tool, which is designed to help HCTs regularly take stock of the collective humanitarian response. This new tool will be the main vehicle for reporting on the collective humanitarian response in a country. The accompanying documents, the periodic monitoring report template and guidance and the “key messages on the periodic monitoring report”, provide detailed information on this new product. This report template includes:

- ✓ An update on context, needs analysis, response capacity, constraints / challenges;
- ✓ Information on intermediate results, progress towards cluster and strategic objectives;
- ✓ A review of requirements and funding to date;
- ✓ Recommendations from the inter-cluster coordination group to the HCT for improving the humanitarian response.

The first three elements above were part of the previous mid-year reviews. The main difference lies in the fact that the periodic monitoring report does not include a revision of the strategy, and does not systematically require that an update of the financial requirements be conducted prior to the report.

For 2014, it is recommended that a country produce at least one periodic monitoring report over a 12-month period, whenever the timing seems appropriate, but ideally not too long before the next planning cycle starts. The release of a periodic monitoring report may help an HCT to decide whether or not to conduct an update or revision of the strategic response plan, and it will also inform planning for the upcoming cycle. The following sections outline the two most common scenarios.

Recommendation 1: The former mid-year review is no longer required. Instead, an HCT should produce one or several periodic monitoring reports, according to a schedule set by the HCT.

C: Minor to moderate changes: updating the financial requirements

If there have been no major changes in the context, needs analysis, response capacity, or challenges encountered, there may not be a need for a full revision of the strategic response plan. However, an update of the following items may be considered:

- Including new organizations and/or projects;
- Increasing projects targets and budgets, following an increased need, or improved access to affected people in a certain region;
- Decreasing projects' targets and budgets, as the situation in a region is better than anticipated or external actors have taken on part of the caseload.

This can be done through a light **update of the financial requirements**: an OCHA coordinated process that involves participating organisations, cluster coordinators and the HCT. The process should be informed by available needs assessment data, but can occur without conducting a full revision of the humanitarian needs overview. It will result in updated targets and budgets, at the project level, and cluster level, therefore allowing an update of the overall budget. The changes (projects' revised requirements and narratives) are visible on the Financial Tracking Service (FTS), and in the summary financial tables. These revised requirements should better reflect the situation in the country, and may be used for financial analysis, advocacy and resource mobilisation products for donors.

There is no need to change the strategic response plan document, which remains the overall strategy. Strategic decisions taken by the HCT can be reflected in HCT meeting reports.

How to organise an update of the financial requirements:

Two options are possible:

1) Minor changes: Continuous updates

If a limited number of updates are required, these can be done along the year in a continuous way. An OCHA field office may then facilitate a **continuous update** of projects and financial requirements: Organizations can modify their projects at any time during the year as needed.

- Organizations may be added / removed in OPS

- Projects may be added / removed / revised (budgets or narratives) in OPS

These changes should be vetted / validated one by one by the relevant cluster coordinators, reviewed by headquarters, and **approved** by the HC before being reflected in FTS

2) Moderate changes: Coordinated update

If a substantial number of projects and financial requirement updates are necessary, it might preferable to have them done all at the same time. In such a situation, an OCHA field office should organise a **coordinated update**:

- A timeline is set with all actions required for the coordinated update;
- Discussions are held at the cluster and inter-cluster level on the updates needed;
- The revision of projects in OPS follows agreed deadlines. All actors can add, cancel or modify their projects within the agreed timeline;
- Cluster vetting committees/cluster coordinators validate the changes, and a headquarters review process occurs;
- After the HC's final approval, all changes are reflected at once in FTS

D: Major changes: revise the strategic response plan

When there are serious changes in the context / needs analysis / response capacity / challenges encountered, the HCT may decide to undertake a **strategic response plan revision**.

The decision to make a revision may be triggered by obvious context changes, or by the results of a periodic monitoring report. The revision will include three steps:

Revision of the humanitarian needs overview:

This should take place prior to any revision of the strategy.

Revision of the strategy:

Discussions are held, at the inter-cluster level and in the HCT, on possible changes in the parameters of the strategy: strategic objectives, targets, cluster objectives and activities, priorities, intervention criteria, methods of intervention, strategic issues, advocacy policy, etc.

Coordinated update of the financial requirements:

See explanations above

These processes will be reflected in a revised humanitarian needs overview and a revised strategic response plan. Countries wishing to undertake a revision of their humanitarian needs overview and strategic response plan should contact PSB for further support and guidance.

E: When to report / update / revise?

As previously stated, HCTs determine when a periodic monitoring report is needed, and/or an update of financial requirements, and/or a revision of the strategy. In doing so, the following milestones should be taken into account:

- CERF will use existing reports and FTS data as of early June to inform the underfunded window.
- Pooled funds, to inform the second round of allocations, will use existing reports and FTS data as of a certain date, often in July, depending on each country's specific pooled fund calendar.
- OCHA Headquarters (PSB) will produce a global mid-cycle funding update in July using existing reports and FTS data as of end June.

Recommendation 2: HCTs should determine when a report, and/or an update of the financial requirements, and/or a revision of the strategic response plan are needed, based on the country situation and calendar, while also looking at the calendars of CERF, country-based pooled funds, and the global mid-cycle funding update produced by OCHA/PSB.