



Returns Sustainability Framework (RSF)

What is the RWG Returns Sustainability Framework (RSF)

In line with the 2016 Strategic Objective 3 of the Iraq Humanitarian Response Plan “to support voluntary, safe and dignified return” by monitoring and reporting on conditions in return areas and providing targeted assistance to highly vulnerable returnees, the Deputy Special Representative to the Secretary General/Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator DSRSG/RC/HC established a Returns Working Group (RWG) to be Chaired by IOM.

Durable solutions in the Iraqi context acknowledge the multi-faceted dimensions of returns and aim at ensuring long term safety and security; non-discrimination; adequate standard of living; access to livelihoods and essential services; access to documentation; family reunification; participation in public affairs; as well as access to justice and effective remedies, including restoration of housing, land and property rights, at the same level as those in the return community who were not displaced. Durable solutions are achieved when IDPs no longer require specific assistance and can enjoy their human rights without discrimination as a result of their displacement.

The RWG is an operational platform, which develops overarching principle documents to guide the humanitarian community in providing principled assistance to returns. Its Returns Sustainability Framework (RSF) constitutes the basis for cluster specific guidelines, especially in the event that humanitarian actors may be required to provide life-saving assistance to any other form of returns that are not voluntary and/or based on free and informed choice.

Rationale for proposing the below mechanism, rests in the need for a principled approach to cover and articulate the three steps (safe, voluntary dignified) evidencing sustainable returns. This approach intends to be **effective** as it considers the design of assistance to match the expectations and the concerns of IDPS enabling durable solutions to the resolution of displacement.

This approach intends to introduce return via real data information strategy and trends analysis, which sediments the logic created for the HRP; It aims to guide partners in a logic of preparedness (pre-return assessment and activities) and response (mitigate risks of humanitarian action doing harm); foster consistent responses and promote best practices on programming in return areas. Give options to families to live in Iraq in dignity and safety.

The RWG will support as the body mandated to determine to what extent durable solutions are achieved for returnees, through the analysis of assessment, data and response monitoring.; The RWG’s key objective is to provide a multi-stakeholder platform to establish coherence of information, data and analysis, strengthen coordination and advocacy, give guidance on activities related to key return areas, and enhance complementary action among its partners with the overarching goal of supporting and reinforcing the national response to Iraq’s coming reintegration challenge.

How is information gathered and from whom?

The RWG team is composed of the National platform (Chaired by IOM and Co-Chaired by an INGO) and a Field Roving RWG Coordinator. The Roving Coordinator facilitates information at the field level, working towards timely support to partners’ need for coordinated humanitarian planning, response and engagement with authorities at the field level.

The RWG network is divided in key return priorities governorates (experiencing high influx of returns; current areas are: Anbar, Diyala, Ninewa and Salah Al Din). In every governorate, the RWG has identified NGO Area Focal Points (AFP) who support the RWG Roving Coordinator in mapping humanitarian actors working or willing to work in areas of returns. Therefore, each organization has staff willing to support information sharing in key areas experiencing/or expecting return movement.

When information of a possible return movement or already unfolding return dynamics is communicated through key informants (NGO AFP, NGOs, Clusters, NCCI Field Coordinators, IDP Call Center etc.), the RWG supports Clusters in sharing this information. Clusters may proceed to secondary data collection to assess the conduciveness of IDP return in targeted areas, while cross referencing the information with partners operating at displacement site level, who monitor the intention and voluntariness of IDPs to return to said area.

Information gathered may be enough for intervention and does not necessitate initiating further primary data collection assessment (for instance through the RNA – Rapid Needs Assessment¹). The information gathered is simply referred between Clusters for immediate action. If otherwise, the RWG can support the Clusters in suggesting NGOs and agencies responding in the field, to deploy their team to trigger an assessment (such as RNA) assessing conduciveness of return in the area of concern².

The RWG Roving Coordinator has the responsibility to support information sharing between partners and work with Clusters to ensure gaps, duplication and/or strengths in partners' response is identified. This in turn helps coordinate governorate level returns plans, and supports partners and Clusters in the use of **common standards for programme implementation in areas of return**.

The RWG collects and analyse these assessments to establish baselines indicators for principled and sustainable returns, establish specific indicators in monitoring mechanisms (DTM, HLP, PMT, RRM, etc). and develop ongoing recommendations promoting longer term area based interventions.

Why do it?

- Lack of systematic feedback loop between displacement site and area of return;
- Need to understand intentions to return and IDP voluntariness to return (camp level) and measure against conditions in return areas (safety) to ensure return is dignified. (Objectives 1,2 and 3 of the HRP);
- Need to develop *generalistic* information, results of assessments are not used to stigmatize or profile certain groups of population in camps;
- Information needs to be informed by intentions of individuals and reverted back in the area of concern.
- Iraq is set in both a conflict and post conflict setting; this framework is the pillar catering to humanitarian partners operating in emergency setting. The Multi-Sectorial Reintegration Framework is the pillar, which caters to partners operating in a post-conflict environment. Both Framework operate in synergy. A **post-return monitoring** framework is being developed to ensure both pillar feed into the next HNO/HRP.

Strategy suggested

- Disseminating information at camp management level
- Roll out of intentions survey to create a general perspective on how the IDPs feel about return, motivation, limitations and concerns;
- Create a feedback loop when the information is triangulated with information obtained from assessment in areas of origin and fed back to IDPs. This ensures IDPs make a free, informed choice on whether to return (or not). In the event that IDPs decide not to return, are able to provide practical information behind their choice, which in turn allows for a more specific set of intervention on part of humanitarians. Response becomes more targeted and effective;
- This systematization of evidence-based information supports a free and informed choice by IDPs but also attempts to mitigate the probability of premature or forced returns;
- Coupling the above with a monitoring of conditions in Areas of Origin, ensure IDPs make an informed decision as to whether to return, while also allowing partners to prioritize vulnerable areas, or mitigate risks of push/pull factors in areas deemed unsafe.
- Partners are able to cover immediate needs as well as mid and longer-term elements necessary to allow people to permanently return to their place of origin in a safe, dignified and voluntary manner.

What does it NOT do?

- Duplication with existing referral mechanisms
- Provide operational guidance on the RNA tool itself.
- In charge of the response.

¹ Rapid Needs Assessment (RNA) is an assessment developed by ICHA and REACH Initiative to address the need for a coordinated area-based rapid assessments tool to be used in villages and mixed-population urban neighborhoods. The RNA was developed with the input of all clusters and is to be used in the Mosul response, and remainder of Iraq, to provide a rapid, coordinated understanding of the situation and prioritize immediate response according to needs. This assessment can also be used in return areas as the RWG has provided input on return/reintegration indicators.

² A "returns activity checklist" is available for partners; this includes a repository of activities per Sector, and per Cluster line response. It is designed to form any sort of multi-sectorial response matrix, based on a given scenario (preparedness, movement, arrival). The checklist also comprises activities relevant in the scope of a 24 Months intervention, informing on potential interventions to be designed should the environment be conducive to the implementation of the Durable Solutions Framework.



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When should it be rolled out?

The RSF is rolled out when information is shared on return movement or impending returns, or return that has already unfolded (influx) in area. Baseline for RSF roll out includes IOM DTM's Returnee Population Tracking, newly accessible areas recorded as per OCHA's ICCG IM, NGO networks, NCCI field Coordinators, Sub-National Clusters and partners creating an early warning system by reporting on the "RWG Obstacle to Return and Reintegration Tracker", to a possibly significant number of spontaneous or premature return movement in a given area and key informants alerting to local, primary duty bearers (ex: municipality) requesting humanitarian actors' support areas of return perceived still, as unsafe. Examples of critical return movement include: returns to newly accessible areas where safety and security risks are high, deportation and forced evictions from displacement site with the intention of returning IDPs to their areas of origin; stranded IDPs prevented from returning to their area of origin.

Who should coordinate it?

Clusters lead the coordination. NGO Area Focal Points are identified in key "cluster return areas" to support the RSF roll out as first responder.

Who will consolidate and analyze findings?

The RWG consolidates analysis post-immediate response to:

- Promote evidence base advocacy and recommendations on sustainable returns through snapshot reports, monthly returns trends overview, advisory notes, etc.
- Help coordinate governorate level return plans and support their alignment with the national framework.
- Advise on the inclusion of returnee specific indicators in existing monitoring mechanisms in Iraq
- Develop a comprehensive advocacy strategy, in support of operational plans and strategic frameworks for returns.
- Establish with the participation of the protection as well as the emergency livelihoods and social cohesion clusters, and other relevant stakeholders, a special mechanism to ensure that protection and social cohesion principles are mainstreamed throughout the returns policies and response and that will feed into the inter-cluster coordination group for support

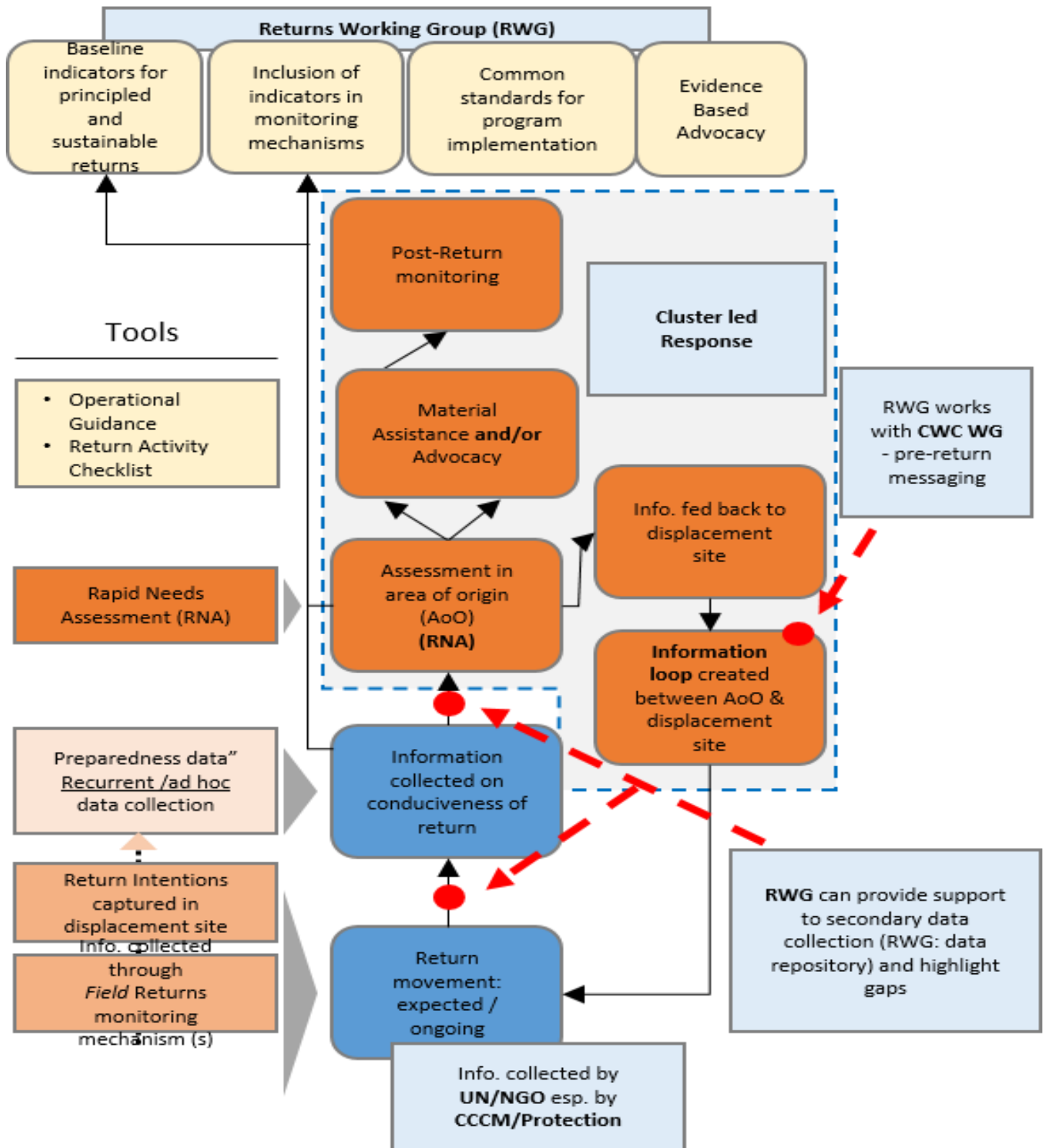
PREPARDNESS

DATA REPOSITORY			
	INTENTIONS	PUSH / MAGNET FACTORS Area of displacement	PUSH / PULL FACTORS Area of return
CAMP / CCCM	Camp profiling Rapid RASP Formal Site Monitoring Tool Activity Info	Camp profiling Protection Monitoring	?
Non Formal Sites	RASP AD HOC CCCM non formal site assessment	RASP AD HOC +CCCM Non formal site assessment Protection Monitoring	?
Out of Camp	Multi Cluster Needs Assessment OTHER	MCNA Protection Monitoring OTHER	REACH's Hard to Reach / Area of Origin Studies Rapid Needs Assessment Multi Cluster Needs Assessment Rapid Protection Assessment OTHER
Returns Phases & corresponding Data Sourcing			
TRIGGER	IDPs intend to returns now / 3 months		DATA
	YES	NO	
	Why leave? Who leaves? What would change your mind? Why now? Current needs?	Why remain? What would change your decision? Who does not want to leave? Current needs?	CAMP PROFILE SITE PROFILE Multi Cluster Needs Assessment Rapid Needs Assessment Obstacles To Return and Reintegration Tracker
MOVEMENT	Volume? What are returnees bringing with them? Going in one or several movement routes? How do returnees afford journey? Transport / Route? Needs?	N/A	Displacement Tracking Mechanism (DTM)
ARRIVAL	Needs?	N/A	Area of Origin (REACH) Hard to Reach Study (REACH) Rapid Needs Assessment Rapid Protection Assessment OTHER



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RESPONSE



ANNEX

This document is part of an overall set of supporting tools, which constitute the Common Returns Framework:

- **Operational Guidance to the provision of assistance to Returns in Iraq:** this is the overarching document to the common returns framework the RWG developed for HCT's reference, and Clusters/partners' use.
- The **"Returns Sustainability Framework" (RSF):** a SOP, which encourages Clusters/ Partners to coordinate their intervention and close the information loop between displacement sites and areas of return (triangulation exercise)



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between the conditions of safety and security in area of return; while ensuring information on area of return is fed back to IDPs prior to return movement, so as to mitigate premature movement to potentially unsafe areas).

- The **Methodology doc.**, is a supporting tool for coordinated engagement if multiple partners respond to return in the same area.

- **Multi-Sectorial Response Framework for Sustainable Returns (Reintegration) Intervention in Iraq:** as the Mosul operation enters its final stages; Iraq is gradually transitioning from an acute emergency to a post-conflict setting. Thus, there is the need for humanitarian actors to adapt their interventions to the new context. As a result, a multi-cluster humanitarian returns and reintegration framework is being developed to guide our work. The RWG and the Emergency Livelihoods cluster are facilitating the development process to ensure that minimum standards are met to offer durable solutions and mainstreamed throughout the returns policies and response. Outputs are developed according to selected Durable Solutions benchmarks; these constitute a checklist for assessing to what extent durable solutions are achieved for IDPs in Iraq. On this basis, it is then possible to determine what areas of interventions require more attention and/or prioritization.
 - **Returns Parameters –activities checklist:** Repository of activities encompassing all types of interventions considered in the provision of assistance to returns, along first, second, full cluster line responses.
 - While all activities listed address the full spectrum of intervention to support safe, voluntary and dignified return, the majority of return movements in Iraq at the moment, are spontaneous, pressured/forced and/or hastily arranged by local authorities with serious concerns regarding voluntariness, dignity and safety. As such, this checklist serves as a repository of activities on which return scenario specific humanitarian interventions can be built.
 - The RWG encourages partners to take stock of the type of return dynamic unfolding prior to designing any set of coordinated intervention, through close interaction with the Protection Cluster.

- Overall, the RWG facilitates information sharing and provides recommendation, along the Durable Solutions (DS) Framework. Returns are only but one piece of the Durable Solutions puzzle. And while Iraq does not have a dedicated DS platform, the RWG aims to support sustainable reintegration for IDPs returning to their place of origin, while drawing partners attention to IDPs options to locally integrate or settle elsewhere in the country.