Strategic Review

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WHAT IS A STRATEGIC REVIEW

GMS Workflow
Country - Based Pooled Funds
Standard Allocation

LEGEND
- Step 1: Submission of Proposal
- Step 2: Strategic Review
- Step 3: Technical Review
- Step 4: Final Approval and Signature
- Step 5: Disbursement
- Step 6: Implementation and Reporting
- Step 7: Project Closure

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**Strategic Review – Standard Allocation** This step of the process aims at identifying and prioritizing project proposals or concept notes considered best suited to address the needs identified in the allocation paper. The pre-selection of projects is intended to stimulate efficiency and allow for a rapid process that correctly targets identified needs. The strategic review stage applies to all standard allocations regardless of whether the submission of concept notes or full proposals was requested.

**Strategic Review – Reserve Allocation** Submission of projects and strategic review: Eligible implementing partners can prepare project submissions that address the priorities outlined in the **Operational Manual**. These take the priorities of the HRP as the starting point and identify priority sectors/geographical locations/target populations that the fund will support. The Operational Manual should also outline other criteria that will be used to select projects for funding. Projects can be submitted any time during the year, or when the HC activates the reserve allocation. Partners are required to submit full project proposals. Reserve allocations do not utilize project concept notes.

**HOW DO I CONDUCT A STRATEGIC REVIEW**

- **REVIEW BOARD** - The review committee participates in the strategic review and selection of a shortlist of concept notes. Depending on the funds not all will have a review board. Also, review boards do not have access to GMS as such, and do not fill out scorecards. The Cluster Coordinator (or HFU on behalf of the Cluster Coordinator) fills out scorecards.

- **CLUSTER COORDINATOR** - The Cluster Coordinator(s) will support CBPFs at the strategic level, by ensuring that there are linkages between the fund, the HRP and cluster strategies. Clusters operate according to the terms of reference agreed by the IASC and the Reference Module for Cluster Coordination at the Country Level. These documents contain references to the operation of CBPFs, and acknowledge that inter-cluster groups have a key role to play in prioritization and in providing recommendations for resource mobilization of the humanitarian operation as a whole.

- All CBPFs will apply standard prioritization matrixes with scoring in each of the following key areas: (i) strategic relevance, (ii) programmatic relevance, (iii) cost effectiveness, (iv) management and monitoring, and (v) engagement with coordination (see Annex 20 of the Global Handbook for CBPFs, Scorecards for project prioritization). Within each standard category, specific criteria will be agreed upon by clusters/sectors and OCHA. The same set of categories will be applied by all clusters/sectors. Whilst the standard categories and weighing are standard across all CBPFs, the specific questions can be revised by clusters/sectors and HFU before each allocation.

**HOW TO ADD COMMENTS**

1. Select the desired project by selecting the project by filtering and/or searching for the project on the Cluster Coordinator's GMS HOME Page
2. Once the desired project has been selected, click on the 'Edit' button next to the project, to open the project proposal.
Tasks Overview

3. On entering the project proposal, you can determine what is the project's current 'project status' by viewing the timeline

Whether the Cluster Coordinator is reviewing a project under 'Strategic Review' or 'Technical Review', the Cluster Coordinator can open up the project proposal, add and save comments (by 'Save & Stay' or 'Save & Exit Project' to return to this page later) If the Cluster Coordinator wishes the Agency/Partner to make revisions to the project proposal before the Cluster Coordinator determines whether or not they will make a recommendation, the Cluster Coordinator can click on the 'PP Re-draft' button to return the project proposal back to the Agency/Partner through HFU with the Cluster Coordinator's comments.

If the Cluster Coordinator is ready to make recommendations, the Cluster Coordinator can 'Send to TR Recommended' to move the recommended project proposal to the next step in the allocation workflow process.

If the Cluster Coordinator would like to print the project proposal with the Cluster Coordinator's comments, they can print out the project proposal in '.pdf', 'word' and 'html' format and select the amount of comments they would like to include.

If the Cluster Coordinator wants to view OPS Project Details, they can click on 'View OPS Details'.

If the Cluster Coordinator wants to view FTS Contributions Details, they can click on 'View FTS Contribution'.
ACCESS SCORECARD

A Cluster Coordinator can access a scorecard to score projects from their home page, by going to the Allocation > Project Scoring.

FILTERING SCORECARD

To filter the projects as required, fill in the desired filter fields

Filters available are:

- **Allocation Type**: List of all projects submitted in the GMS system with the allocation type and year for the pooled fund.
- **Scoring Type**: List of scoring types available for the pooled fund.

To further narrow down search, include the

- **Status**: Lists the type of allocation source and the name of the project status.
- **Cluster**: List of clusters defined for the pooled fund.

and click on the Filter Projects button.

Or

Select any of the pre-defined filters from the Cluster Coordinator Score Card Filters drop down box for the pooled fund.
A brief description of the columns is given below:

- **Check box**: Allows to select multiple projects for a common action like recommending selected projects or print selected project score.
- **Score this project**: Clicking on this will open the scoring page.
- **Print Projects**: Print Project Proposal
- **Recommend**: Displays the recommendation given to the project and by whom
- **Organisation**: Name of the organization
- **Project Code**: Displays the GMS generated project code
- **Budget**: Displays the budget allocated for the project
- **Project Status**: Displays the current status of the project in GMS.
- **Clusters**: Displays the cluster for which the project is for.
- **Update Details**: Displays the user details who have worked on this project.
• Category Codes (e.g. A,B,C,D,E): Displays the scoring received in the individual categories of the scorecard.
• Total: Displays the total scoring for the project

Click on the Print Selected projects score icon to print the project’s score after selecting the desired project from the filtered list.

Click on the Export Score Overview icon to export the scoring details after selecting the desired projects from the filtered list.

HOW TO RECOMMEND AND NOT RECOMMEND

Select the Score this project icon next of the desired project, to open up the 'Rank Project' screen.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Applicant organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project title</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project duration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fund Code</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary clusters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project budget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Comment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Updated by</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Updated Date</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A. Strategic Relevance (Strategic Relevance)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project Proposal (PP) is in line with the Strategic Objectives of the Response plan relevant for the Call for Proposals (Yes: 10 pts; no: 0)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PP targets the relevant Sector Objective(s) (Fully: 10 pts; Partially: 5 pts; No: 0)</td>
<td>Fully</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PP is aligned with the Allocation Paper priorities (Fully: 25 pts; Partial: 10 pts; No: 0)</td>
<td>Fully</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PP is submitted by an organization directly implementing activities in the field (Yes: 10 pts; No: 0)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Add Category Comment | 40.00 |
### B. Programmatic Relevance (Programmatic Relevance)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PP Logical Framework clearly links objectives with activities, outputs and outcomes (Yes: 10 pts; No: 0)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PP Clearly defines targeted beneficiaries disaggregating sex and age (not using fixed % population) (Yes: 20 pts; No: 0)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PP activities cover geographic areas targeted by the Allocation Paper with preference given to Resized and Hard to Reach Areas (Fully: 30 pts; Partially: 15 pts; No: 0)</td>
<td>Fully</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Add Category Comment: 

Total Score: 15.00

### C. Cost Effectiveness (Cost Effectiveness)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project requires limited start-up costs and/or builds on existing capacities already on the ground (Yes: 10 pts; No: 0)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PP budget is below $250,000 (Yes: 5 pts; No: 0)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Add Category Comment: 

Total Score: 15.00

### D. Management and Monitoring (Management and Monitoring)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project logical framework is SMART, (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound) (Fully: 5 pts; Partially: 2.5 pts; No:0)</td>
<td>Fully</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Logical framework includes risks and assumptions (Fully: 5 pts; Partially: 2.5 pts; No:0)</td>
<td>Fully</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indicators aligned with Standard Sector Indicators</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Add Category Comment: 

Total Score: 15.00

On the Rank Project screen
The Cluster Coordinator can rank the project based upon the questions defined in the categories. For each question and category, the Cluster Coordinator can provide comments. Strategic review is carried out on the basis of criteria outlined in a prioritization matrix (scorecards). Some of the key areas:

- strategic relevance
- programmatic relevance
- cost effectiveness
- management and monitoring
- engagement with coordination

In the Project Comment section, one can add comments by clicking on the icon. To view all comments made for the selected project, click on the icon. In the Recommended section, select the recommendation to be given for the project from the dropdown list provided.

Click on the icon to add remarks for the reason of giving the selected recommendation. Select the checkbox to create a version of the ranking.

At any point of time, one can partially save the project scoring by clicking on the button or to save and continue click on the button. Clicking on the button situated on the top right corner, would redirect the user back to the earlier screen of filtered projects.

HOW TO EXPORT PROJECT SCORES

To export project scores, click on either of the two options present on the top right corner of the filtered projects list.

- Click on the icon to print the project’s score after selecting the desired project from the filtered list.
- Click on the icon to export the scoring details after selecting the desired projects from the filtered list.

HOW TO SUBMIT A SCORECARD

If the Cluster Coordinator has multiple projects to recommend, after filtering based upon the desired criteria, select the checkbox of the projects for which the cluster coordinator wishes to submit a recommendation. By clicking on the first checkbox, all projects will be selected. If you wish to only recommend only a few projects, select the individual checkboxes alongside the desired projects. After selecting, Click on the button.

After selecting the recommendation and entering the remarks if any, click on the button.

PRE-STRATEGIC REVIEW
Pre-Strategic Review is not meant to be a comprehensive review of the project, which the HFU will carry out during Technical Review. Pre-Strategic Review is instead meant to ensure that the proposal is duly filled out and is ready for Strategic Review. HFU should not send back to the partner with substantive comments (again, this comes later during Strategic Review), should only send back if key sections are not duly filled out, or information is incomplete or not in compliance with the allocation paper.

**HFU:**

As HFU, if you have set up your country's allocation window to also include a Pre-Strategic Review stage (Pre-SR), after an Implementing Partner has submitted their initial project proposal, the project proposal will be sent to you for review 'Under Pre-SR'. During this stage, the project proposal is in read-only mode for HFU (only the Implementing Partner can make changes to the project proposal draft). At this stage the HFU have three options:

1. **Project Rejected** – which will reject the project proposal at this stage.
2. **Send to IP for Re-Draft** – HFU has the ability to make comments to the project proposal, and send the project proposal back to the Implementing Partner for re-draft.
3. **Send to SR** if HFU believes the project proposal looks favorably as is, they may send the project proposal to Strategic Review by the click of this button.
Making Comments:

Users with read-only rights to a project proposal can make comments at the project level as well as at the project proposal tab level.

To make comments at the project level, the user is to first log into GMS, and select the desired project within their Home Page. Once within the desired project proposal, click on the [Add Comments] hyperlink, located at the top left corner of screen. Once you have clicked on this link, a Project Comments window will appear. Add your comments in the space provided and press [Save] when done.
'Add comments' hyperlink to add comments at Project Level.
To add comments at the tab level, either go to the bottom of the tab and enter the comments within the comments section provided. Or click on the comments icon located on the lower right margin of the screen.

Once you click on the comments icon, a comments window will appear, enter comments within this window and press [Save]. After comments are made, do not forget to press [Save].
Viewing Comments:

Users can view comments that have been made on the project proposal by clicking on the 'More Comments' hyperlink to review 'Workflow Status Comments'.
Or at the bottom of each project proposal tab, view the comments trail provided within. The comments trail will provide you with who made the comment, the date and time stamp of the comment, the workflow project status in which the comment was made, and the comment itself.
STRATEGIC REVIEW
Under SR (yellow boxes of the above workflow), the role of HFU is to facilitate the review and, if necessary, to fill out the scorecards on behalf of the CC.

When an Implementing Partner submits their project proposal, the draft go to ‘Under Pre-Strategic Review (SR)’. At this stage, HFU can reject the project proposal (‘Pre-SR Rejected’) or move the project proposal forward ‘Under SR (Strategic Review)’ so the project proposal can be further evaluated by HFU and the Cluster Coordinator(s).

Under SR, the Cluster Coordinator has the opportunity to evaluate the project proposal by reviewing the project proposal and providing comments. In addition, the Cluster Coordinator(s) evaluate the project proposal by submitting a scorecard. (To know more about scorecards, please read the previous sections of this article).

After comments are made by the Cluster Coordinator and HFU, the project proposal is pushed to ‘SR Assessed’ by the HFU, before being submitted to the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) for review and endorsement. After HC's endorsement, the project proposal is pushed to Technical Reviews by HFU.

* Please Note, the Strategic Review process is slightly different depending on the Allocation's type, i.e. Standard or Reserve. The process described above represents the Standard Allocations' SR procedure. Reserve Allocations' SR procedure is swifter, and does not involve the Humanitarian Coordinator at this stage (his/her endorsement comes in after Budget Clearance).

**HFU:**

Under Pre-SR, if HFU is satisfied with the project proposal for it to move forward to the Strategic Review stage, click on [Send to SR].
Upon clicking on [Send to SR], HFU will be prompted to enter comments (not mandatory). Whether or not a comment is made, click on ‘Yes.’ If comment is made, press the save button before clicking Yes.
Next, the project proposal will be sent to 'Under SR'. During this stage, the Cluster Coordinator can perform his/her review.
Cluster Coordinator:

Under SR, the Cluster Coordinator can review the project proposal.

Making Comments:

Users with read-only rights to a project proposal, can make comments at the project level as well as at the project proposal tab level.
To make comments at the project level, the user is to first log into GMS, and select the desired project within their Home Page. Once within the desired project proposal, click on the 'Add Comments' hyperlink, located at the top left corner of screen. Once you have clicked on this link, a Project Comments window will appear. Add your comments in the space provided and press 'Save' when done.

To add comments at the tab level, either go to the bottom of the tab and enter the comments within the comments section provided. Or click on the comments icon located on the lower right margin of the screen. After comments are made, please do not forget to press 'Save'.

Once you click on the comments icon, a comments window will appear, enter comments within this window and press 'Save'.
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Users can view comments that have been made on the project proposal by clicking on the 'More Comments' hyperlink to review 'Workflow Status Comments'.

Or at the bottom of each project proposal tab, view the comments trail provided within. The comments trail will provide you with who made the comment, the date and time stamp of the comment, the workflow project status in which the comment was made, and the comment itself.
After the Cluster Coordinator is satisfied with comments made, they can press on [SR Considered]. After clicking on this button, they will be prompted to make comments. It is not mandatory. Whether or not a comment is left here, click [Yes] to send the project proposal to HFU.

The project proposal will be sent to HFU and will be under ‘SR Assessed’ project status step.

HFU:
Depending upon the country office's internal processes, during the SR Assessed stage, HFU may have a Review Board review the project proposals that have been considered under the Strategic Review stage. Either way, at this stage, HFU has two options, to 1. Send to RB Review or 2. Send to HC Endorsement.
After the HFU user has clicked on 'Send to HC Endorsement', they will be prompted to leave a comment. Whether a comment is left or not, select 'Yes' if you are sure you want to send this project proposal to 'HC Endorsement.'
Next, you will see that the project proposal is **Under HC Endorsement**.
Besides the Project being rejected at various stages of its evaluation, the Implementing Partner may choose to withdraw the project for any given reason, therefore there are various stages within the review process to withdraw a project proposal, in which the project proposal will go no further. Partners have to communicate to HFU, who will withdraw the projects. Partners themselves don't have the option to withdraw projects.

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