

ReDSS COVID-19 Adaptation Strategy

To leave no one behind and mitigate impacts for displacement-affected communities

April - June 2020

Overview

Context: The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is being felt worldwide and there are growing numbers of cases in the East and Horn of Africa region. As governments struggle to contain the virus and enact emergency public health measures, humanitarian and development partners are also grappling with how to plan for and respond to the impact of COVID-19 on vulnerable refugees, IDPs and host communities. ReDSS is supporting members and partners in their response to COVID-19 as well as adapting its own strategy and work plan as presented below.

Focus: ReDSS adaptation strategy over the next three months (April - June 2020) is across two primary work-streams:

1. Support ReDSS members and partners to plan for and adapt to COVID-19 through coordination, cross-learning and adaptation based on evidence; and
2. Continue engagement on the broader durable solutions agenda to maintain momentum and stakeholder engagement to address long-term displacement and solutions issues.

This initial strategy is to support immediate COVID-19 responses plan and adaptation and its impact on the durable solutions agenda over the next three months. A medium-term strategy (an additional three to six months as needed) will be developed in the coming months in consultation with ReDSS members and partners.

Coordination and complementarity: ReDSS as a coordination and information hub will continue to bring stakeholders together and support multi-stakeholder engagement on COVID-19 and its impact on durable solutions. ReDSS will both strengthen internal coordination amongst its 14 NGO members at regional and country levels as well as support strategic engagement and contribute to coordination fora with key external actors. ReDSS complementary focus will be around the use of learning and evidence to inform programme adaptation and policy engagement across **five key themes**:

1. Strengthening engagement and mutual accountability with displacement-affected communities
2. Upholding rights and mainstreaming protection
3. Responding to vulnerabilities in camp, camp-like and urban settings
4. Strengthening area-based, locally led and integrated programming approaches
5. Ensuring a dual focus that addresses COVID-19 response with longer-term planning for protracted displacement issues

Ways of working: ReDSS staff at the regional and country office levels are following DRC procedures in relation to COVID-19 including telecommuting where required. All meetings and learning events for the coming months will take place online and ReDSS is working hard to respond to increased online learning demand on specific issues related to COVID-19 and displacement-affected communities.

ReDSS COVID-19 adaptation strategy

ReDSS recognises the enormous impact of COVID-19 in terms of the context and operating environment in the East and Horn of Africa region. Much like the durable solutions agenda, COVID-19 is a key humanitarian and development concern, which cuts across borders and demands a multi-actor and sector response that goes beyond the existing humanitarian agenda. The impact of COVID-19 will be long-term and planning needs to take into account the complex and potentially far-reaching impact of COVID-19 on displacement-affected communities (DAC) and the broader durable solutions agenda.

With the complex nature of COVID-19 as the starting point, ReDSS is applying our [adaptive management principles](#) to plan for and respond to the crisis. In the next three months (April to June 2020) ReDSS response strategy is across two work-streams:

1. Support ReDSS members and partners to plan for and adapt to COVID-19 through coordination, cross-learning and adaptation based on learning and evidence
2. Continue engagement on the broader durable solutions agenda to maintain momentum and stakeholder engagement to address long-term displacement and solutions issues

Each section captures key highlights per country and at regional level, and the strategy concludes with critical success factors, and ReDSS monitoring and accountability plan. Detailed country adaptation plans have also been developed to complement this overview, together with ReDSS COVID policy engagement plan.

ReDSS focus and value add

1. Support ReDSS members and partners to plan for and adapt to COVID-19 through coordination, cross-learning and adaptation based on evidence

In terms of support for ReDSS members and partners, the focus will be on using ReDSS' role as a coordination and information hub to bring members and other key stakeholders together to create space for dialogue around how to adapt to COVID-19. ReDSS will continue to support members and partners (including Durable Solutions consortia) and engage with governments to respond to COVID-19 through sharing lessons learned from programming and research to support evidenced-based and principled programme adaption. Priority activities over the next three months include:

Regional Office/cross-cutting activities across regional and country units

- **Increasing and tailoring online learning in response to COVID-19:** The Regional Office is coordinating across members to discuss ways that ReDSS can support members in relation to COVID-19 and responding through planning specific online webinars. The first COVID-19 webinar on community engagement and protection was held on 9 April and ReDSS is using feedback from participants and members more broadly to develop a series of webinars over the coming months tailored to informing COVID-19 responses.

- **Developing and regularly updating COVID-19 key messages:** ReDSS has developed a set of key messages based on learning and evidence from the durable solutions agenda including programming and research to inform and adapt responses and support strategic engagement by ReDSS members. These messages will then be contextualised and disseminated by Country Units.
- **Supporting regular coordination on COVID-19:** Adapting the ReDSS Regional Policy Working Group monthly meetings to a forum to discuss COVID-19 strategic engagement and coordination amongst members and partners. Responding to a request from members, ReDSS in late April/early May will also host a series of meetings at the regional level with members and partners on the longer-term implications of COVID-19 and developing a 'solutions orientated paper' with key recommendations.
- **Online survey to ReDSS members to understand how best to support them and ensure collective ownership and accountability of ReDSS COVID-19 adaptation plan:** This survey will focus on understanding how ReDSS can best support its members during this period. Feedback will be documented and shared out with members in order to monitor and be accountable to key action points suggested by ReDSS membership.
- **Proactively engaging with external stakeholders to support strategic engagement of NGOs in COVID-19 coordination and response:** ReDSS Secretariat will support members through undertaking a series of bilateral meetings with external stakeholders (UN agencies, humanitarian and development donors) to share our key messages and highlight the important role that NGOs must play in COVID-19 responses. ReDSS will share out opportunities and support members to engage in priority influencing opportunities at regional and country levels.
- **Include a standard section on COVID-19 on regional and country updates:** Regional and Country Units will share monthly updates on displacement and durable solutions with members and partners. Updates will include specific sections on COVID-19 responses, to share ReDSS updates, policy work and support the synthesis of information through sharing other useful resources.
- **Documentation of the adaptation process from the onset:** ReDSS will document its adaptation process to capture lessons learnt on how to respond to emergency as part of longer-term programming and policy work. The document will be updated on a monthly basis and shared with members to also inform real-time learning.

Somalia Country Unit

- **Support durable solutions partners and consortia in programme adaptation:** ReDSS will work with its members, partners and the various durable solutions consortia (Danwadaag, Durable Solutions Programme) to adapt their durable solutions programs.
- **Support government-led strategy and planning on COVID-19 that includes IDPs and vulnerable communities:** ReDSS will work with its members and partners to support the National Durable Solutions Secretariat COVID-19 Strategy. ReDSS will also provide technical support to authorities at both national and Federal Member States level to

strengthen their coordination capacity on emergency preparedness on COVID-19 efforts within existing coordination structures.

Ethiopia Country Unit

- **Programme adaptation and joint planning:** ReDSS will work closely with UNHCR, ReDSS members, UNHCR and partners on adapting to the current context. This will include contributing to a revised joint work plan for CRRF-related activities in Ethiopia in the coming months.
- **Common policy messaging:** Develop common messaging in consultation with members and partners on key policy issues related to COVID-19 and DAC.
- **Supporting existing government-led coordination structures:** ReDSS will continue to support existing coordination structures as they adapt and provide a collaborative platform for coordinated response to the current context. ReDSS will closely monitor COVID -19 related measures by the government and update members and partners, work with them on a better coordinated response and messaging informed by the ReDSS country COVID-19 strategy that is being developed.

Kenya Country Unit

- **Joint planning and adaptation within the Kenya ReDSS+ structure:** ReDSS will work closely with its members and partners on adapting to changes in the current context, and its implications on our joint work plan implementation.
- **Adapting subsequent bi-monthly ReDSS Kenya meetings:** ReDSS Kenya will adapt upcoming Kenya meetings to focus on COVID-19 strategic engagement and coordination amongst members and partners.
- **Support NGO engagement within existing coordination structures:** ReDSS will continue to engage in the Refugee NGOs subgroup, Kenya refugee donor group and other coordination structures to develop relevant key messages based on learning to support strategic engagement with government, UNHCR and other actors.

2. Continue engagement on the broader durable solutions agenda to maintain momentum and stakeholder engagement to address long-term displacement and solutions issues

Given the long-term nature of COVID-19, it is important to continue, in parallel to preparedness and emergency response, dialogue and engagement to address long-term and structural displacement and solutions issues. Adopting a dual approach, ReDSS will continue with its key priorities given the need to maintain momentum around the broader durable solutions agenda in the East and Horn of Africa region. Priority activities over the next three months include:

Regional Office

- **Update of ReDSS Agenda:** ReDSS is currently updating its [2016 Agenda for Humanity and Sustainable Development goals](#) aligned to the four areas of the [ReDSS pledge](#) (area-based and locally led, measuring outcomes, rethinking displacement financing and regional and cross-border engagement). The updated agenda will also be based on new

learning and evidence including key recommendations from two recent studies: [Advancing Multi-Stakeholder Engagement to Sustain Solutions](#) and [Unprepared for \(re\)integration](#).

- **Finalising ReDSS Policy engagement strategies and quarterly key messages:** ReDSS is continuing to engage members and partners in the development and roll out of the 2020 policy agenda. This includes developing regional and country specific policy engagement strategies for prioritised themes and a first round of quarterly key messages. At the regional level the endorsed priority themes for 2020 are: (1) local integration, inclusion and protection (return and (re)integration); (2) Post GRF agenda; (3) IDP agenda; and (4) Displacement financing. ReDSS will finalise the development of regional and country level policy engagement strategies in April.
- **Strategy development at regional and country levels:** The Regional Office continues to support the updating and finalisation of relevant regional and country office strategies (Research, Capacity Development, etc).
- **Continued work plan activities related to ‘displacement financing’:** In particular over the next three months, ReDSS will continue with key work plan activities related to the priority regional thematic focus area of displacement financing. This will include a consultative process to develop an initial ToR for a mapping exercise and coordination with key external actors (UN, World Bank, IFC, etc).
- **Continued consistent engagement with ReDSS members:** In particular, ReDSS will send an internal update to members to ensure continued engagement during this period. The quarterly core group meetings will take place online in the form of 2 hour discussions focused on particular thematic areas.

Somalia Country Unit

- **Invest in research dissemination and uptake to inform programme adaptation:** Two studies are currently being finalised (Aspirations Survey and Land Governance) and will be launched and disseminated online through a special update on the ReDSS mail chimp platform. An online webinar is currently being planned for in May for the Land Governance study featuring Prof. Ken Menkhaus and Rift Valley Institute (RVI) researchers to discuss findings and implications of the analysis and recommendations to inform programme adaptation and policy dialogue in Somalia around land governance issues.
- **Continue support on durable solutions programme learning:** ReDSS will explore innovative ways of continuing to support the various durable solutions consortia with internal programme learning to inform programme implementation and adaptation. For example, ReDSS is planning an online workshop on HLP and addressing forced evictions for Danwadaag partners at the end of April. This is a critical workshop as it will support Danwadaag partners in the planned HLP interventions and integrated settlement planning for new sites in Barwaqo (Baidoa), Heliwa/Garisabaley (BRA) and Luglow (Kismayo).
- **Prioritisation of strategy development for the Somalia Unit:** ReDSS will prioritise to develop and finalise a number of the strategies: Policy engagement with specific key messaging; Research strategy with specific research themes and a Capacity development strategy.

Ethiopia Country Unit

- **Strategy development:** Finalise and share ReDSS Ethiopia strategies for policy engagement and a common research agenda, and engage with members and partners on opportunities to apply the strategies with key actors.
- **Research and dissemination in support of a common research agenda:** Finalise the dissemination and uptake plan for the ReDSS Ethiopia research synthesis report and host a webinar to share key findings. Develop a work plan with research consultants on research plans and focus areas in 2020.
- **Area-based planning and approaches:** ReDSS Ethiopia will share finalised area-based training tools with participants of ReDSS area-based pilot training recently held in Jigjiga, and conduct an impact assessment with participants five months after the training was held. A one-pager documenting area-based approaches in Somali Regional State will also be developed and shared with stakeholders.
- **Contribute to an IDP durable solutions agenda:** ReDSS will engage with key IDP actors in Ethiopia, and develop a context analysis of the current situation, identifying opportunities and risks in working towards a common IDP durable solutions agenda.

Kenya Country Unit

- **Development of a common learning and policy agenda in Kenya:** ReDSS Kenya will continue to support its members and partners based on the 2020 endorsed themes: (socio economic integration, area based planning and private sector engagement) to generate and use evidence to support refugee self-reliance and integrated programming.
- **Political economy analysis (PEA):** ReDSS Kenya has begun development of a term of reference to conduct a study looking at how the political economies of Garissa and Turkana counties would impact socio-economic integration, market-based systems, private sector, financial inclusion, and legal environment. The PEA will also include a comprehensive stakeholder mapping so as to better understand key actors influencing inclusion and how best to engage them, leveraging on complementarities and opportunities while managing potential risks.
- **Adapting long term solutions programming while addressing immediate needs:** ReDSS has been selected as learning partner for the DRC/NRC/ITC EUTF Consortium in Garissa. ReDSS will continue to work with the EU and partners towards adapting to the changes necessitated by the current situation (COVID 19, possible food insecurity in ASAL region etc.), while supporting area-based planning and approaches particularly looking at implications on socio-economic integration of refugees and host communities.

Monitoring impact and ensuring mutual accountability

Critical success factors

- ReDSS COVID-19 strategy developed and adaptation plan documented to inform real time learning and future planning to adopt dual programming focus (emergency/longer term)

- ReDSS adaptive management approaches used and documented by members and partners in their response to COVID-19
- Regular communication and information sharing with ReDSS members and partners
- ReDSS COVID-19 policy and influencing strategy developed, implemented and monitored
- Continued government-led, area-based, multi-stakeholder coordination which adapts to changing context and includes a focused COVID-19 response
- ReDSS supports its members and partners to ensure that DAC are engaged and community action plans updated with COVID-19 response

Monitoring and accountability

Focus	Indicators
Coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of ReDSS member agencies and external partners who stated that ReDSS COVID coordination added value to their work • # of existing coordination mechanisms with which ReDSS has engaged to ensure COVID-19 is included in their agenda • Monthly updates shared at regional and country levels • Analysis of online survey to members on support required and feedback on ReDSS COVID-19 adaptation plan and collective accountability
Cross learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of organisations stating that, and providing an example of how, evidence and learning from ReDSS has informed their understanding and decisions in relation to COVID-19 response with regards to area based processes, DAC engagement, protection and rights • # of stakeholders participating in ReDSS COVID-19 webinars
Adaptation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ReDSS Adaptation plan put in place and monitored • Adapted workplan and budget put in place and monitored • Documentation of ReDSS adaptation process from the onset - including reprogramming with consortia, etc
Dual approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusion of COVID-19 response into long-term durable solutions programming and policy processes • Progress made on displacement financing including on how the financial architecture should best respond to emergency such as COVID-19 as part of longer-term country level commitments (responsibility sharing) • Progress made on the post GRF agenda and support to IGAD regional platform including on COVID-19 response planning for DAC
Policy and influencing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ReDSS policy influencing strategy on COVID-19 response is in place with clear deliverables and indicators to measure impact • # of COVID-19 specific policy briefs/one pagers that have been produced and disseminated to external stakeholders • # of stakeholders that have used ReDSS messages to inform and adapt their policy and response plans (practitioners, authorities, donors)