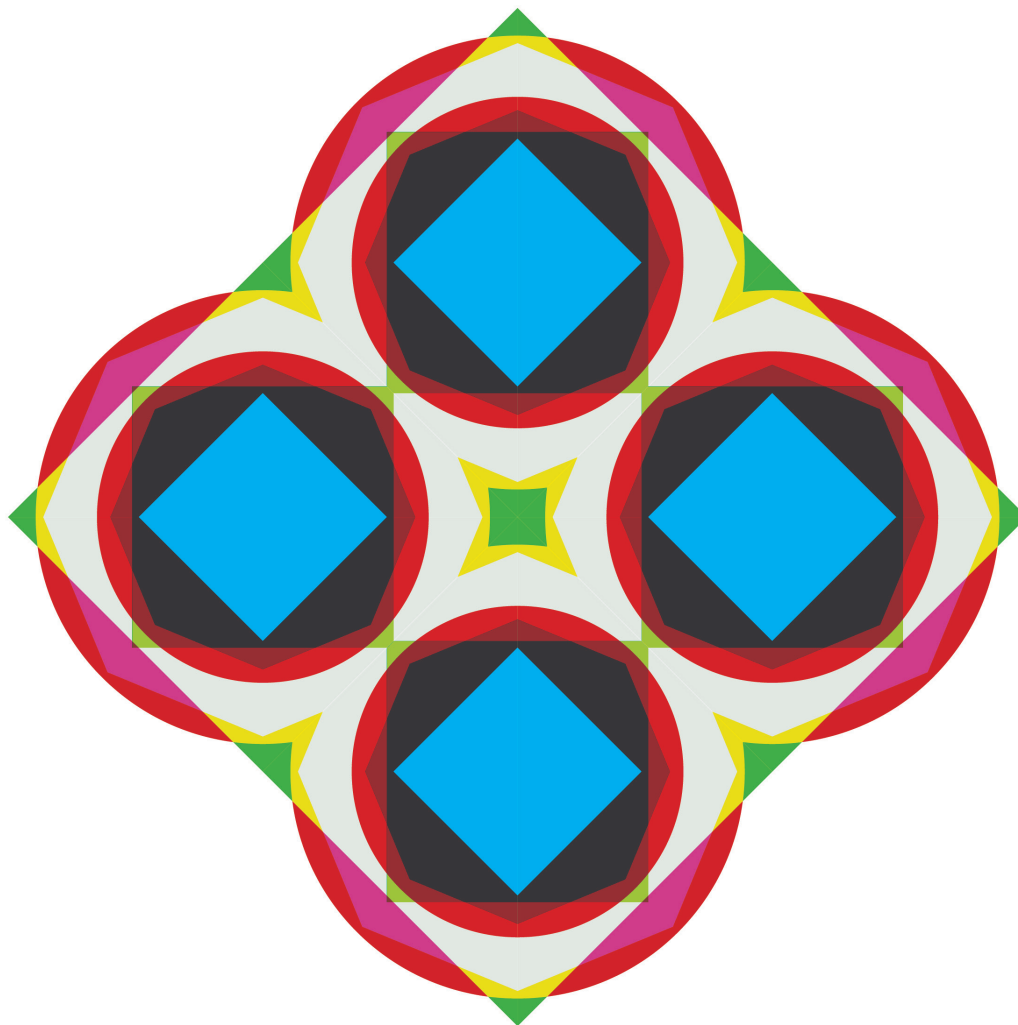


# RELEVANT FOR WHOM?



32nd Annual Meeting  
Concept note  
15 – 17 October 2019  
Berlin, Germany

**RESPONDING TO DIVERSE  
PERSPECTIVES AND PRIORITIES  
IN HUMANITARIAN ACTION**

 **ALNAP**

# The response that humanitarian actors are most prepared to deliver is not always the response most relevant to the needs of people in crisis.

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## Why are ALNAP Members meeting to discuss this topic?

The latest edition of *The State of the Humanitarian System report* shows that although humanitarian agencies are able to identify and prioritise those basic activities that are most important for keeping people alive in acute crises situations – health, clean water, etc. – they are less good at identifying and programming for the most relevant assistance and protection activities once the initial phase of the crises has passed. The system is also poor at identifying the specific needs and vulnerabilities of population groups.

In this light, the 32<sup>nd</sup> ALNAP Annual Meeting will explore the diversity of needs and perspectives involved in achieving relevance and how people affected by humanitarian crisis can get the support that is most important to them.

Culturally-specific attitudes and practices shape the priorities of crisis-affected people, yet traditional humanitarian actors are generally poor at understanding and accommodating socio-cultural issues in a response. Similarly, demographic factors such as gender, age or disability can significantly affect the vulnerabilities and capacities of crisis-affected people,



yet there is little clarity on the best ways in which humanitarian programming should take account of these differences without risking reductionist and potentially biased approaches.

The different environments in which recent crises are taking place – such as urban landscapes and middle-income countries – are testing the appropriateness of traditional humanitarian ways of working. And a larger share of humanitarian funding has gone to protracted crises in recent years, drawing attention to challenges in prioritising between long-term and short-term needs.

At the same time, there are new opportunities to improve the relevance and appropriateness of support to people in crisis. Greater steps towards engaging with affected populations, and the increasing role of local and national actors, offer opportunities for ensuring

that priority needs are based on the views of crisis-affected communities and local expertise. Improved technology and disaggregation of data allows for better understanding of how demographic factors shape a person's needs and shifts towards cash-based assistance, and a recognition of a wider range of needs (e.g. psychosocial, education), provide more programming choices for humanitarians. However, the factors affecting their relevance need to be better understood.

These challenges and opportunities raise practical and philosophical questions around how priority needs are defined and who decides which needs matter in a humanitarian response.



# The aim of this year's Annual Meeting is to get a shared understanding of how diverse perspectives and priorities affect the relevance and appropriateness of humanitarian response and to share learning on the most effective approaches to ensuring humanitarian support is, and stays, relevant to the people it is committed to assist.

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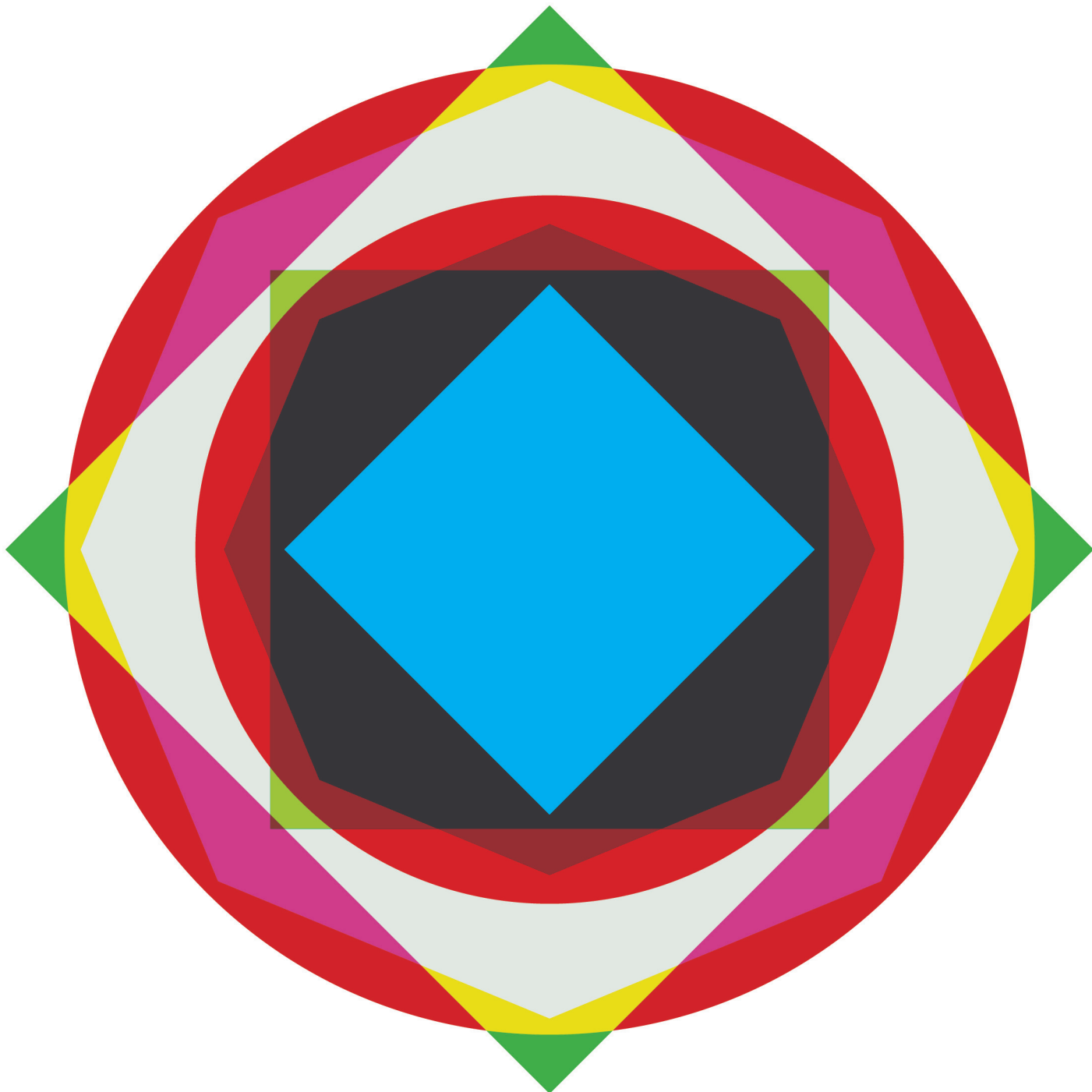
## Format and structure

This Meeting – to be hosted by the German Federal Foreign Office – will build on the success of formats from previous ALNAP Annual Meetings, while also introducing new elements to encourage debate and discussion. The Meeting will include:

- A background paper that will be presented at the meeting and will inform the meeting structure
- Presentations, breakout discussions, storytelling and debate
- A mixture of plenary and smaller interactive exercises to explore the theme of the meeting and its influence on humanitarian action
- Networking opportunities
- An 'Agora' (marketplace of ideas) highlighting work from the ALNAP Membership and beyond.

## Questions we expect to discuss:

- How can humanitarian actors most effectively address the needs of different demographic groups?
  - What role do culture and context play in shaping what is considered to be a priority need?
  - How can humanitarians treat people equally while recognising how they are different – and understanding how this shapes their basic needs?
  - Given resource constraints, what is the appropriate way to balance across competing priorities in meeting the needs of different populations, or in addressing long-term and short-term issues?
  - What approaches are most effective at delivering support that is relevant for diverse populations?
- How do new technologies and ways of working help humanitarians incorporate a wider range of perspectives into their decision-making?
  - What are the sector-specific challenges and opportunities for relevance across different sectors?



# Further information about the Meeting

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The Meeting will be open to all staff of ALNAP Member organisations. As places at the Meeting are limited, each ALNAP Member will be guaranteed at least one place. The Secretariat will try to accommodate Members who wish to send more people. A limited number of places will also be available for external participants.

Participants will be requested to pay a conference fee of £150 (for ALNAP Members) or £250 (for non-Members). These fees partially contribute to the costs of the Meeting.

The Secretariat also has a limited amount of funding available to assist attendance at the meeting.

As in previous Annual Meetings, ALNAP will host a **Skills-Building Day** on 14 October and a **Members Day** on 17 October.

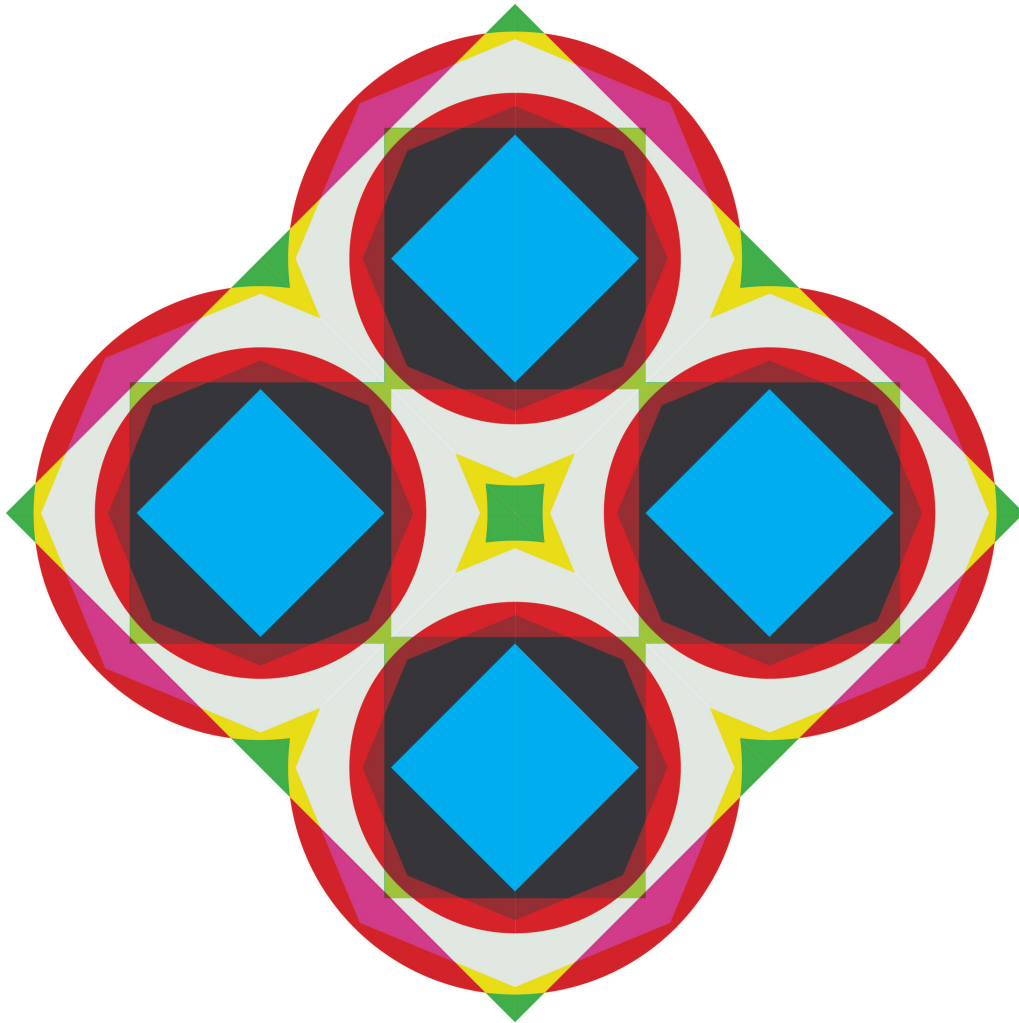
ALNAP will also invite Member organisations to contribute to the meeting. A call for ideas will open very soon.

Information on registration to the meeting, the **Skills-Building Day**, the **Members Day** and the submission of ideas will be available shortly at [alnap.org/32am](https://alnap.org/32am).

You can also find information on **Twitter**, **Facebook** and through our email updates.

We look forward to seeing you in Berlin





german  
humanitarian  
assistance

DEUTSCHE HUMANITÄRE HILFE



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