



Evaluation of Ethiopia Drought Response 2011/2012

Using Oxfam GB's Global Humanitarian
Indicator Tool



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Photo: Tim Foster

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Abbreviations

CLT	Country Leadership Team
CFW	Cash for Work
DEC	Disasters Emergency Committee
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EFSL	Emergency Food Security and Livelihoods
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
HCGG	Humanitarian Consortium Governance Group
HCT	Humanitarian Country Team
HIT	Humanitarian Indicator Tool
IO	Oxfam Intermon
MEAL	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning
OA	Oxfam America
OC	Oxfam Canada
OGB	Oxfam Great Britain
OI	Oxfam International
PHE	Public Health Engineers
PHP	Public Health Promoter
PLWHA	People Living With HIV/AIDS
PSEA	Prevention of Sexual Exploitation & Abuse
RTE	Real Time Evaluation
SGBV	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
WASH	Water and Sanitation and Hygiene

Evaluation of Oxfam's Ethiopia Drought Response

1 Background of the Ethiopia Drought Response

The Drought

In 2011, two consecutive seasonal rains failed in Ethiopia. The result was severe drought affecting the southern, eastern and north-eastern parts of the country (Somali, Afar, East and Southern Tigray, Southern Oromia and SNNPR). By July 2011, the Ethiopian government estimated that an acute livelihood/food security crisis was affecting 4.5 million people (an increase of 40% since its estimate in April that year). The most severely affected regions were Oromia (1.8 million people affected) and Somali region (1.4 million). Tigray was also drought-stricken with estimates of nearly 400,000 affected.

Many motorised water supplies were already non-functional. Other sources of water for human consumption, such as hand dug wells, were severely depleted. Many of the preferred water sources for animals (birkhads, earth ponds and subsurface dams) had also dried completely increasing the stress on human water sources. As a result, many families were walking up to 25kms in search of water, rationing their consumption to well below the recommended survival levels.

Severe water shortages increased the risk of water borne diseases. Moderate to severe malnutrition was widely reported in children and lactating mothers. Excess livestock mortality was reported across the region, with mortality levels as high as 60-80% percent in localized areas. The multiple and devastating impacts of the drought were exacerbated by high local cereal prices, local conflicts and restricted humanitarian access in some areas.

In addition, the drought and conflict in Somalia led to an influx of Somali refugees into Ethiopia. According to OCHA, by July 2011, 228,014 refugees had arrived with some 2,000 new arrivals a day.

The Response:

Oxfam GB had been working in Ethiopia for 30 years, implementing both development and humanitarian response projects. It was already working in the Oromia and Somali regions focusing on pastoralist livelihoods and commercializing agriculture. Oxfam affiliates also had a long-term presence. Oxfam Canada (OC), Oxfam America (OA) and Intermon (IO) all worked with local NGOs and Ethiopian civil society on development and humanitarian programmes including civil society capacity building, sustainable livelihoods, disaster risk management, WASH and livelihood programmes and humanitarian preparedness, agriculture, climate change and gender. Between them, the Oxfam affiliates had a presence in all severely drought-affected regions.

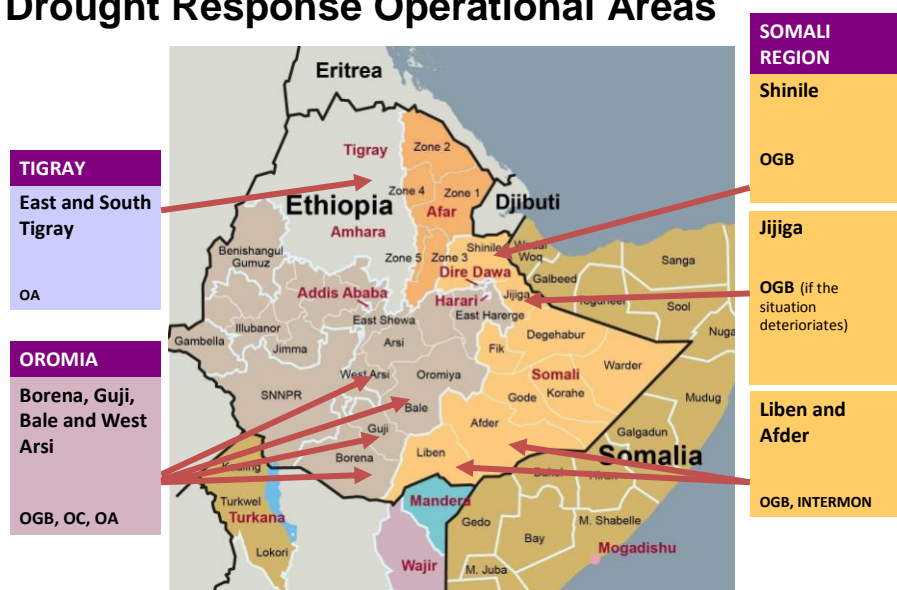
Oxfam GB, Oxfam Canada, Oxfam America and Intermon began scaling up their response in early 2011. Significant scale-up began in July 2011. Oxfam Canada, America and Intermon responded through their existing partners. Oxfam GB's response was directly operational. It is Oxfam GB's response that is the subject of this evaluation.

Oxfam's immediate goal was to contribute to saving lives and minimizing the negative consequences of the drought on the livelihoods of affected communities in Somali, Oromia and Tigray regions and to support Somali refugees fleeing conflict and drought in the refugee camps of Dolo Ado. The planned beneficiary target was 1.5 million.

The programme response focused on water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), Emergency Food Security and Vulnerable Livelihoods (EFSVL). Advocacy was the third main planned programme objective. Oxfam GB's main project areas for the scaled up response were Borena zone in Oromia region and the zones of Shinile, Liben and Afder in Somali region. Oxfam GB provided WASH for the refugees in Hiloweyn, the 4th Dolo Ado camp in Ethiopia's Somali region.

The Oxfam International combined response covered the following areas:

Drought Response Operational Areas



Per

The focus of this evaluation is Oxfam GB's Category 1¹ emergency scale up during the period July 2011 to January 2012.

2 The Humanitarian Indicator Tool (HIT)

In 2011, Oxfam GB supported 6.5 million people in humanitarian crises, responding to 47 emergencies in 31 countries. Despite the scale, breadth, and complexity of its work, Oxfam is committed to strengthening its ability to capture and communicate its effectiveness and strengthen its accountability to a wide range of stakeholders. Furthermore, as humanitarian work accounts for the largest share of Oxfam's expenditure, Oxfam considers it necessary for the organisation to be better at measuring the quality of its emergency responses. To this end, Oxfam GB has initiated a series of evaluations to assess the quality of all its large humanitarian responses with respect to a set of global, pre-defined benchmarks.

¹ Emergencies defined by Oxfam GB as Category 1 are large-scale high-profile disasters which exceed the response capacity of an existing country programme. They require a joint, co-ordinated response from Oxfam's country team, its Regional Management Centre and the Humanitarian Department in Oxford.

The Humanitarian Indicator Tool (HIT) contains twelve humanitarian performance benchmarks used to measure whether Oxfam's responses have met its standards for:

- Timeliness
- Coverage
- Use of technical standards (such as Sphere)
- Use and measurement of indicators
- Functioning feedback and complaints systems
- Engagement of partners throughout the project cycle
- Addressing dignity and protection measures
- Addressing gender and specific needs of vulnerable groups
- Exit strategies or recovery plans
- Utilisation of contingency plans
- Addressing advocacy issues
- Linking the programme to Disaster Risk Reduction

Methodology of the HIT Evaluation

Each large humanitarian programme selected for a HIT evaluation is rated against the twelve benchmarks by examining the documented evidence provided by the country in the form of reports, proposals and strategic documents. The evaluation is normally carried out as a desk study with possible telephone communications with the country teams. The approach is informed by guidelines, provided by Oxfam GB, outlining the core evaluation protocol which specifies the type of evidence required to support the standard. The performance of the programme with respect to the twelve standards is assessed as Met, Partially Met or Not Met. Final scores and an explanation of the evidence (and quality of the evidence) are presented in a final evaluation report.

The scores reflect the programme's standards with respect to recorded data. There may be many cases in which the programme or specific projects addressed more elements of a standard than are reflected here. If they were undocumented, or not made available to this evaluation, they cannot be included in the report.

3 Summary of the Results

Number	Quality standard	Met (score 4)	Partially met (score 2)	Not met (score 0)
1	Timeliness – rapid analysis within one day of getting reports of raised alarm, assessment within one week and assistance started within one week of assessing need to response		2	
2	Coverage – 25% of the total affected population but in exceptional circumstances then: Total number of beneficiaries is at least 5% of the disaster-affected population and selected areas the most-affected or marginalised		2	
3	Technical aspects of programme measured against Sphere and Oxfam quality standards			0
4	Indicators (both process and impact) in place and being measured		1	
5	Feedback/complaints system in place and functioning and documented evidence of consultation and participation		1	
6	Partners fully engaged in all aspects of the project cycle	Not Applicable		
7	Programme reflects measures to address dignity and protection issues		1	
8	Programme delivery addresses gender and specific needs of vulnerable groups		1	
9	Exit strategy/recovery plan in place			0
10	Evidenced utilisation of contingency plan in last humanitarian response			0
11	Programme addresses advocacy issues			0
12	Programme is linked to/will be linked to DRR interventions in area		1	
	Total Score		9	

A brief description of the evidence:

Overall, the Ethiopia 2011 drought response partially met seven of Oxfam GB's humanitarian response standards. The detailed findings (assessed by project area) demonstrate variations in standards; some benchmarks amongst those which were partially met on average (such as timeliness and feedback/complaints) were actually met in specific projects. Considerable effort was invested to respond to the needs and demonstrate accountability. All projects however struggled to articulate Oxfam's internal and external standards in the context of Ethiopia and to integrate practices that would benefit the affected communities beyond the immediate relief period. This is in part due to the relatively short time frame of this evaluation (6 months into the response) and partly due to the particularly challenging nature of the Ethiopian context. Vast distances, unreliable beneficiary figures, slow procedures between NGOs and the Government of Ethiopia, dispersed pastoralist

communities and hydrogeological constraints made the achievement of timeliness, coverage and exit strategy benchmarks in particular, difficult.

The evaluation was carried out through secondary documentary review and hence can only measure what was recorded. Given that the HIT process is a new initiative, staff would have been unused to the type and level of documentation required which may have limited the availability of relevant information to assess the response. The following sections outline the evaluation findings per benchmark; detailed analysis follows in section 4.

Timeliness:

The timeliness of the response varied according to the project. Hiloweyn responded rapidly. Borena partially met the standard for WASH but not for EFSL. The Shinile response was very slow and did not meet the standard. Overall, the standard was partially met. The Ethiopian context did not favour speed. On the other hand, it does appear that there was sufficient evidence for engaging in a significant scale up in May, rather than in July 2011.

Coverage:

Using the available data, Oxfam International²'s coverage after 6 months was 11%; therefore the standard was not met. Figures available are at zonal level, so if coverage was higher at woreda level, it is not reflected. It is also unlikely that this % is an accurate reflection of actual figures, as total numbers affected were (contested) estimates and Oxfam struggled to establish accurate beneficiary numbers.

Overall, the coverage was low, except in Hiloweyn refugee camp where coverage was 100%.

The coverage benchmark is therefore not met, unless Ethiopia is considered an exceptional circumstance (for which 5% coverage is the benchmark). The context was certainly challenging: a high degree of population movement, poor coordination and information sharing and very spread-out communities over vast distances. Clearly Oxfam made considerable efforts at times to establish accurate data. Beneficiary templates were provided, sitreps requested weekly figures. Oxfam did attempt to target groups overlooked by other assistance or those affected in extremely remote areas (Intermon in Afdar); in this sense coverage was met, exceeding 5% in exceptional circumstances. For this reason, the standard is partially met. Overall, due to the apparent lack of reliable data, in many ways this benchmark cannot be assessed at all.

Measurement against Sphere and Oxfam Quality Standards:

Sphere and some other quality standards are almost always stated as an intended programme framework in proposals but they are not proposed in any detail and clearly did not provide any meaningful framework for programme design. Technical strategies make limited or no mention of Sphere. There is no evidence of its applied use in the monitoring documents and sitreps or mid-term donor reports. The standard is therefore not met.

² This benchmark alone assesses the combined OI response, as Oxfam GB planned its coverage in the context of all affiliates present

Indicators in place and measured:

Considerable effort by Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) staff was made to establish monitoring frameworks. There is evidence of some use of the templates but limited evidence of consistent or systematic monitoring or of the systems actually being used. Overall, based on written evidence, the Standard is Partially Met. There are process and outcome indicators in some of the logframes but there is little documentation of progress measured against the indicators.

Feedback and Complaints Systems:

The MEAL staff provided a comprehensive framework for feedback and complaints which included a complaints flow chart, word and excel templates for recording feedback/complaints and a database for tracking actions with clear identification of each individual responsible. From the documentation, Borena used the system actively. The Shinile project also implemented the system, although it is not clear how active it was. Dolo Ado/Hiloweyn had initiated some form of complaints mechanism but no evidence was viewed of systematic use.

It clearly takes time to establish the systems and over time, participation appears to increase. In summary, the standard was met in Borena, partially met in Shinile, and not met in Dolo Ado/Hiloweyn. Overall, partially met.

Partners fully engaged:

Oxfam GB carried out its scale up response as a direct operational programme, working closely with other Oxfams. It did not work through (Ethiopian) partners. Therefore this quality standard does not apply.

Dignity and Protection issues:

There are some protection indicators in the proposals but the sitreps contain few references to programme protection issues. Most references concerning protection relate to planned assessments. Dignity is included occasionally as an objective or indicator, but how this was implemented is not detailed. The Dolo Ado programme incorporated a number of protection measures, which were integrated into programme design. Elsewhere, the analysis and reporting of protection concerns is weak. The standard is therefore not met in Borena and Shinile but met in Dolo Ado. Overall, partially met.

Gender and Vulnerable Groups

Assessment and technical strategies are weak on gender and the identification of vulnerable groups. The proposals all state a clear intention to identify and respond to the different needs of vulnerable groups, differentiated by gender, but are largely standard paragraphs that reflect Oxfam's gender strategy or the gender specific considerations demanded by the proposal format. Because the sitreps focus almost entirely on activities with little reference to objectives or indicators, it is difficult to find evidence of differentiated programming that target particularly vulnerable groups and account for gender-specific needs. Overall, the programme was weak in documenting its gender analysis but over time increasingly addressed the needs of particular groups, women in particular. Hence the standard is partially met.

Exit Strategies:

No overall or project-specific exit strategy was identified for this evaluation. Proposals and technical strategies include some references, but there is no evidence of specific exit planning in the reports or proposals. The chronic drought and poverty in the response areas of Ethiopia, combined with severe technical limitations, add to the challenge of a smooth transition to recovery and exit. However, the reasoning and possible strategies are not evidenced. Hence the standard is not met.

Utilisation of Contingency Plan:

Although a contingency plan existed, it had not been updated since 2010. A scenario plan was developed in early 2011 and updated in May and July but addressed only programme scenarios; it did not include, for example, a contingency plan's coverage of management or programme support. The proposals and sitreps do not refer to contingency plans. As of March 2012, the contingency plan is being updated.

This standard is therefore not met – the contingency plan was not updated and there is no evidence of use.

Address Advocacy Issues:

No Ethiopia country advocacy strategy was provided for the evaluation. Advocacy activities were clearly part of the intended response and there is a regional advocacy action plan with Ethiopia objectives and a media, advocacy and campaign strategy which includes a number of plans for Ethiopia. The sitreps do mention Oxfam's participation in a number of influential meetings, although they are not tied to any explicit strategy. There is no record of the impact of Oxfam's advocacy activities hence whether Oxfam had an influence on policy and practice is unrecorded. The standard is therefore not met.

Disaster Risk Reduction:

Some of the plans and strategies refer to DRR outcomes and Oxfam GB's pre-scale programme included DRR objectives. However, for the scale-up response of 2011, DRR initiatives or integrated risk reduction approaches do not appear to have been implemented. Although the RTE recommended that the WASH response should be "linked to long term development programmes and Disaster Risk Management interventions" there is no evidence of this occurring by early January 2012.

This standard is therefore partially met – there is mention of DRR but no evidence of actual plans or activities.

4 Detailed Results per Benchmark

Benchmark 1: Timeliness

*Timeliness – rapid analysis within **one day** of getting reports of raised alarm, assessment within **one week** and assistance started within **one week** of assessing need to response*

The standard will be partially met if the initial assessment took place within one week, and assistance within two weeks of the assessment.

The date of the raised alarm, as determined by Oxfam GB, is **7th July, 2011**, the date that the Horn emergency was declared a Category 1 by the Humanitarian Consortium Governance Group (HCGG).

Location	Rapid Analysis within 1 day/by July 8th	Assessment within one week/by July 14th 2011?	Concept Note date	Assistance Started	Score

	2011?				
Borena	No	Yes July 10 – 16 th 2011 (Borena and Guji) Within 1 week of raised alarm	June 2011 [national , not zonal]	WASH: 1 st August. Within 2 weeks of end of assessment EFSL: 22 nd -30 th August 2011 (cash distributions) End of assessment plus 37 days	Partially Met Not met
Shinile	No	No 21-29 th July 2011 2 weeks after raised alarm	As above	PHP: week of 2 nd -9 th September (> 5 weeks after assessment). PHE: week of 20 th August-1 st sept (> 3 weeks after assessment). But see note – likely later than this. EFSL: CFW distribution 7 th September 2011 (@ 6 weeks after assessment). But see notes below – perhaps much later.	Not met
Dolo Ado Hiloweyn Camp	No	Yes – before raised alarm June 29 – July 7 th , 2011 (Liben and Afder, includes Dolo Ado)	As above	Week of 15-22 nd July (WASH): end of assessment plus one week [EFSL assessed but no response implemented]	Met

Oxfam GB's response to the Hiloweyn refugee camp met the timeliness benchmark. According to sitrep number 2 of July 8th – 15th, within a week of the July 7th alarm date Oxfam GB had received permission to work in Hiloweyn. By the following week, WASH teams and equipment had arrived and trench digging for latrines had started.

Borena and Shinile were assessed within one and two weeks respectively of the July 7th alarm date, but took several more weeks to actually provide assistance.

It is extremely difficult to determine the exact date when assistance started in Shinile. The existing Oxfam GB programme was already implementing WASH, food security and DRR projects and hence some activities are reported, but it is unclear whether they related to the new or existing caseload. According to the RTE, the Shinile pastoralist programme developed an emergency response proposal in early 2011. Although it did not get funding until April 2011 and the team faced delays through slow government approval, nonetheless some operational work was taking place and may explain the mention in sitreps of some WASH activity during August. However, as the subject of this evaluation is Oxfam GB's scale up, timing should focus on new related activities. An indicator for this is the first mention of new scale up beneficiaries in sitreps, supported by the narrative. These are the dates used above in Table 1. Nonetheless, it should be noted that the MOU with local government to implement WASH activities in Shinile was still delayed by October 7th.

New EFSL figures of 1440 Cash for Work (CFW) beneficiaries are noted in the sitrep of 12th August, but this indication of response is unclear in the narrative. According to sitreps, by the 1st September “the main [EFSL] achievements have been the verification of 4837 target households and the signing of the MOU with the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia, ensuring that the team can begin cash delivery on the 5th September”. Hence a more reliable start date appears to be the 7th September 2011 (about 40 days after the assessment) when CFW distributions started and new beneficiary figures begin to appear. Arguably, for EFSL, it is impossible to respond within a week of an assessment, given the detailed type of assessment it requires. Certainly considerable preparation activity took place throughout August.

In Borena, by the 29th July, the team was ready to begin with water tankering and was awaiting approval from the local authorities, received on August 1st. It appears that water tankering and hygiene promotion started immediately (Borena sitrep August 1st), albeit with continued delays due to the poor availability of tankers. WASH assistance therefore began August 1st. Much of early August was occupied with establishing the teams but by the week of August 13th, an EFSL rapid market assessment was nearly completed. The first cash distributions took place in late August; this is the date used as the beginning of (new) EFSL assistance in Borena.

Overall, the lists of activities found in the sitreps demonstrate a marked implementation curve that peaks late November – some 4 months after the alarm - with evidence of considerable activity.

On aggregate, Oxfam GB partially met the timeliness benchmark. Specifically, Hiloweyn met, Borena WASH partially met and Shinile did not meet the standard.

Constraints:

Considerable delays were created by the slow process of approval and MOU agreements for Oxfam GB's proposals by local and national government (particularly in Shinile). Borena appears to have been ready to respond earlier than the MOU date of August 1st. In addition, the affected areas of Ethiopia are immense, creating extremely challenging conditions with respect to travel times, logistics and accessibility. The geology of many areas made drilling boreholes and digging latrines difficult or impossible. Government of Ethiopia (GOE) objections to international staff, slow local recruitment processes and the poor availability of local trucks and vehicles in adequate conditions further slowed the response.

Further Timeliness Issues

For the purposes of evaluating the timeliness benchmark, a fixed alarm date has to be selected; this evaluation is scored against this date, July 7th 2011. The fixing of start dates for slow-onset emergencies is always difficult but it is relevant to note the internal organisational context and background to the raised alarm date: that of the declaration of a Category 1 emergency.

Given that the predicted major trigger for severe drought would be failed rains in March following the failed rains in September 2010 ((which is what occurred), July 7th 2011 is arguably late to raise the alarm. Could and should the HCGG have declared a Category 1 earlier, or the Region at least provided substantial support to the Ethiopia team much earlier? This evaluation considers the following facts:

All dates are for 2011:

- The Oxfams began scenario planning in January; revised April

- March 23rd, the Ethiopia team produced a Concept Note which included a worst case scenario of 870,000 drought-affected beneficiaries. Though by no means an adequate operational plan, its proposals are broadly in line with the humanitarian situation to come and Oxfam GB's actual response (with respect to the drought's impact, affected zones and types of response activity) with the exception that the refugee influx was not envisaged.
- Government of Ethiopia (GOE) revised its Humanitarian Requirements significantly upwards to 3.2m in April
- May: The Oxfam GB Humanitarian Director visited Ethiopia and the HCT flagged the emergency as a Category 2. According to the September Real Time Evaluation (RTE), several OI drought proposals were produced.
- June: Significant preparation was undertaken (HSPs deployed, proposals written). A new Concept note *Programme Overview and Concept Note OI La Nina Episode Drought Response in Ethiopia June 2011* was produced – at least 6 versions. It's purpose was “to make a case for an immediate humanitarian response scale-up by the four Oxfam Affiliates in Ethiopia and ask for an Oxfam GB HQ underwrite in the amount of GBP 1,695,900
- 15th June: Jeremy Loveless, Oxfam GB's joint Deputy Humanitarian Director, forwarded the June Concept Note to the Director, suggesting that “we approve this concept and the underwriting proposed, in principle. However no money should be disbursed until they have submitted solid operational plans”
- 16th June: Email from Jane Cocking confirming a commitment to scaling up but assessing the concept note as (still) lacking essential programme and management information which “as it stands doesn't allow us to move on from where we are. so I'm sorry but I can't approve underwriting at this point”.
- 14th July: an email from Graham Mackay, Oxfam GB's joint Deputy Humanitarian Director, states “Provisionally we will allocate £2m to each country as catfund underwriting. This will enable programmes to start and get funded”. This was taken as an authorisation.

The concept note (seemingly abandoned), initial response preparations such as international recruitment, and several of the main proposals preceded the assessments³ and the alarm date used for this evaluation, raising questions about the date used and hence the value of the scoring.

According to the RTE a specific categorisation of the emergency in country was never done, despite the drought strategies produced by the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) and the March concept note and “Information regarding the potential Cat 2 emergency which was discussed in May was never formally communicated to the HCGG, which could have triggered an earlier reaction and response. An OGB drought strategy produced in May took six weeks to get approved by the OGB Regional Office”.

From the documentation, it does appear that there was sufficient evidence for engaging in a significant scale up in May. Slow support from the Region, a bottleneck over a weak concept note, poor communication between the HCT and the HCGG led to what was, in effect, a delay of over 2 months before the response system fully activated. Viewed from this context, the entire scale-up did not meet the timeliness benchmark.

Benchmark 2: Coverage

Coverage – 25% of the total affected population but in exceptional circumstances then:

³ No rapid analyses for the affected regions have been provided; all those received are (later) assessments

Total number of beneficiaries is at least 5% of the disaster-affected population and selected areas the most-affected or marginalised

Note: Whereas the evaluation of all other benchmarks relate solely to Oxfam GB, coverage is calculated as an OI combined figure, since Oxfam GB planned its beneficiary numbers, locations and types of response vis a vis the other Oxfams.

Reliable coverage figures cannot be calculated. On this basis, the benchmark has to be scored at 0. This requires qualification as the Oxfam affiliates were not alone in struggling to establish accurate data. Uncertainty about government figures, the progressive emergence of new beneficiaries in slow-onset emergencies and the impossibility of accurately assessing all those affected across such vast distances means that the figures used were unreliable and a moving target.

For the purposes of planning, the July GOE/UN⁴ figure of 4,567,256 affected people was used by Oxfam plus 280,000 refugees; this figure remained the total throughout the year.

Planned coverage Oxfam International:

The 15th July sitrep states a planning target of 1,388,160 (30% of GOE total affected in July)⁵. The RTE (September) states that the target is 1.5 million (corroborated by other documents which state 1,514,930) = 33% coverage. By October 4th this had been revised to 1,146,339 (30% coverage).

Planned by zone revised figures⁶:

	Affected	Planned OI beneficiaries ⁷	% Coverage	
Oromia:	1,889,267	664,889	35	
Somali (inc refugees)	1,438,826	470,060		33
Tigray	399,373	11,390	3	
TOTAL	3,847,466	1,146,339	30	

Actual Coverage:

According to sitreps, cumulative beneficiary totals and coverage were:

	Total OI beneficiaries	Coverage %
18 th August	19,480	0.5
26 th October	60,465	1.6
9 th September	151,803	4
12 th December	296,821	8
9 th January 2012	425,514	11

It is not possible to calculate coverage at a zonal or woreda level, nor by sector. This is partly due to the absence of detailed beneficiary totals at woreda level and partly because by the end of September, the sitreps cease identifying beneficiary numbers by location, reporting only by sector. Reported beneficiary numbers are often inconsistent and confusing (e.g. duplication of single sector beneficiaries and confusion between weekly and cumulative totals). In August the *Brief EFSL Update: 08 August 2011* notes "Estimate budget and

⁴ GOE [revised] Humanitarian Requirements Document July 11 2011

⁵ This figure may be an error – it is not the total of the table's zonal figures (actually 1,258,410), hence coverage could be calculated at 27%

⁶ *ibid* for zonal figures

⁷ Sitreps July

beneficiaries constantly changing but planned beneficiary figures are 184 023 people (30671 households) in 9 districts in three zones (Borena, Guji and Shinille)".

The RTE notes in September that "the actual number of beneficiaries that OI is currently meeting their needs is not yet clear". Oxfam clearly struggled to produce reliable beneficiary figures; sitreps in October comment that "It is not clear to what extent the PHE and PHP overlap so for now the higher figures is being used for the single count" and "Although new beneficiaries have been added to the EFSL line, information on overlaps with PHE is not yet available so these have not been added to the single count".

The assessments do not provide coverage figures. The June Concept note does not calculate coverage, stating that the response will target 544,000 beneficiaries (actually 17% of the 3.2 million GOE April figure).

Using the available data, Oxfam International's coverage after 6 months was 11%. It is unlikely that this is an accurate reflection of actual figures. The exception is Dolo Ado camp figures, collected by UNHCR⁸. Oxfam's coverage in WASH for Hiloweyn was all of the refugees, hence 100%. In November the total was 25,100 people, revised downwards due to UNHCR's capping of the camp at 40000.

The coverage benchmark is therefore not met, unless Ethiopia is considered an exceptional circumstance. The RTE comments on the confusion amongst staff of Oxfam's actual target: "Reasons for this are related to context volatility (Liben and Afder), a high degree of population movement, lack of coordination and sharing of information from different actors, including within Oxfam, logistic challenges (very spread communities), and unreliable information from the rapid assessments". Clearly Oxfam made considerable efforts at times to establish accurate data. Beneficiary templates were provided, sitreps requested weekly figures. By 26th July, the Regional report notes that "Systems for calculating beneficiaries are currently in development for all responding countries – once these are in place, more specific breakdowns will be reported". This did not appear to happen in Ethiopia. The geographical spread, population flux and unreliable or absent consolidated figures mean that it would be impossible to establish accurate figures. Oxfam did attempt to target groups overlooked by other assistance (EFSL) or those affected in extremely remote areas (Intermon in Afder); in this sense Coverage was at least partially met, as it was exceptional circumstances and exceeded 5%. Strictly speaking, due to the apparent lack of reliable data, in many ways this benchmark cannot be assessed at all.

Benchmark 3: Meeting Technical Quality Standards

Technical aspects of programme measured against Sphere and Oxfam quality standards

To meet the standard, staff are trained in the use of the standards and programmes demonstrate the use of technical and quality minimum standards.

This was assessed through documented reference in proposals and strategies to Sphere, considered in the context of the response, and evidence of Sphere's application in logframe indicators, advisor's and other reports. Evidence was sought of an applied analysis of gender and the use of MEAL minimum standards and other Oxfam International minimum standards for public health and emergency food security and livelihoods. Any accountability

⁸ UNHCR Dolo Ado Statistics August 23rd 2011

strategy was checked for reference to internal OI standards and external standards including HAP and One World.

The proposals preceded a detailed assessment of needs and as a result contain objectives and results which are typically broad and subject to further assessment. There are few references to internal or external standards. Where standards are mentioned, given the lack of assessment information, they mostly refer to intended use, rather than actual use for planning and design purposes.

For example, the Borena WASH proposal states that “SPHERE humanitarian principles will be applied by working closely with community groups, local government and implementing partners”. The logframe contains one Sphere indicator (litres of water per person per day), but otherwise is not based on Sphere and does not refer to any standards. The EFSL proposal for Borena similarly notes that Sphere “will be adhered to”. Sphere standards and indicators are not mentioned again nor are they reflected in the logframe. The DEC phase I proposal aims to “meet the Sphere Standards, Humanitarian Accountability Partnership – International (HAP-I) Standards and Oxfam’s guideline for WASH and EFSL activities” and states that indicators will be adapted to the context (giving reduced water quantities as an example). The objectives do not incorporate Sphere standards. Other proposals examined (such as Bandid) are more like concept notes and do not contain any detail regarding objectives or standards.

The Shinile and Guji zone CIDA proposal mentions Sphere and the Red Cross Code of Conduct but again, there is no mention of specific standards in the text nor of how the standards will be met.

The Hiloweyn refugee camp proposal refers to specific Sphere indicators for the latrines and also mentions the 15 litre water quantity target. The latter is adjusted to 5 litres in the logframe, which is a context-specific adaptation to the drought context (this is not explained in the logframe, but elsewhere, for example in the PIP, the DEC proposal and in sitreps).

Whilst second phase proposals (in the process of being funded at the time of writing) demonstrate considerably more knowledge and detail of the beneficiaries, those viewed for this evaluation do not use Sphere as a framework either. For example although the Hiloweyn Non Food Item extension states that Sphere standards and indicators will be adhered to throughout, there is no evidence of this in the text or in its objective and indicator. Similarly the Jijiga proposal to Oxfam Canada aims to meet Sphere and LEGS standards, but it is difficult to see this translated into the objectives and indicators.

This is not to say that the aims and means of monitoring lack relevance, rather to note that the key standards Oxfam GB has committed to are not a principal framework for project design.

The strategies are also (surprisingly) weak in terms of reference to standards. The PH Strategy (August 2011) does not refer to any standards, but does give a context-specific analysis of the particular challenges and programme considerations in Ethiopia. For example it explains that latrines are not a priority need for sparsely populated arid areas and that the population has developed resilience and coping mechanisms for water scarcity that should not be undermined. This is not directly discussed in the context of Sphere or other standards.

The “*Ethiopia EFSL Brief Situation analysis, Response analysis and Planning*” (the available EFSL strategy) similarly does not refer to any standards. Whilst aspects of the objectives and associated actions (such as ensuring that affected households can access at least 2100

calories per day) can be found in Sphere, the strategy is independent of any reference to specific standards.

The Oromia Strategy of July 2011 does not mention Sphere but does state that the “OI minimum standard for MEL and OI MEAL Strategy for Ethiopia will be the guiding documents for all the MEAL work in this response”

None of the assessment reports or concept notes mention either Oxfam internal standards or Sphere. The draft Gender strategy (October) contains no gender analysis of the programmes, but focuses on organisational, policy and human resource plans such as capacity building.

In conclusion, although Sphere and some other quality standards are mentioned, they are not proposed in any detail and clearly did not provide any meaningful framework for programme design. There is no evidence of applied use in the monitoring documents and sitreps or mid-term donor reports. The standard is therefore not met.

Benchmark 4: Use of Indicators

Indicators (both process and impact) in place and being measured

To meet this benchmark, there will be SMART indicators for process and outcome at each level of the logframe and in the monitoring framework. There is evidence that indicators reflect gender and are monitored.

Considerable effort by MEAL staff was made to establish monitoring frameworks. Templates (e.g. for sitreps, complaints and feedback, MEAL framework, logframes) were created for different programme sites. Training and support visits were carried out. Typically a folder of MEAL tools was created for Programme Managers and field teams. There is evidence of some use of the templates, particularly in the sitrep formats and creation of workplans; several projects carried out baseline surveys (e.g. Borena by October, Shinile November 2011).

There is however limited evidence of consistent or systematic monitoring or of the systems actually being used.

The degree to which objectives and indicators are SMART varies considerably. The main WASH PIP outcome is “Reduction in the risk of water borne disease for 80% of the targeted population”. The indicators are:

- No outbreak of WASH related diseases is reported in project areas
- Risk of water borne diseases reduced

The WASH logframe (RO3931) builds on the PIP indicator:

At least 75% of sampled beneficiaries report reduced incidences of diseases and an improved ability to cope with the current drought directly attributable to the WASH response activities of this project

The PIP and RO3931 indicator would be extremely hard to monitor: disease incidence is notoriously difficult to measure and attribute to a single intervention (Sphere – and usually Oxfam - focuses on indicators related to people’s knowledge levels and observable behaviour as proxies for protection against disease). The use of terms such as ‘improved ability’ ‘to cope’ are not sufficiently specific to measure. The logframe’s Results-level

indicators suffer similar problems. Although the indicators have a target (%), they are complex syntheses, not timebound and are poorly linked to the objective. However, the means of verification are clear and could be translated into a monitoring framework. The extent to which the methods and sources were used is unknown: the findings do not appear in the reports.

The CIDA Proposal Logframe does include process and outcome indicators:

90% of project beneficiaries have access to potable water

Majority of women and girls express satisfaction with the safety on route to and at the water point

A majority of randomly selected water point users can demonstrate how to clean their water containers by using the most appropriate locally available means

Although terms such as 'majority' are not specific, the indicators are both quantitative and qualitative and are a better measure of the objective, and include gender and protection elements.

Some livelihoods output indicators are much SMARTer. Though not gender sensitive or always timebound, they are relevant, specific and measurable.

Targeted household income increases by 25% a month

75% of cash for work beneficiaries report an increased ability to purchase essential food and non food items

At least 75% of targeted households report an increase in food consumption

The Hiloweyn logframe includes some gender sensitive indicators such as "*At least 80% of women and girls expresses satisfaction⁹ with the safety, privacy and accessibility of safe excreta disposal facility*" and some are SMART "*On weekly observation at water points at least 80% of jerry cans meet the criteria of a clean jerry can.*"¹⁰

Some indicators are adapted to context: For example "*At least 80% of the target population understand and practice hygiene behaviour that takes into account the reduced access to water*" (this is too vague to measure, but does aim to articulate a measurable standard adjusted to the context).

The extent to which the indicators were actually used as part of an active monitoring framework which influenced project design is hard to determine. None of the (national) sitreps even refer to the objectives or indicators. The "Progress against Objectives" section is dominated by lists of activity without any link to proposals/overall objectives and results, making progress even at an activity level difficult to determine. This could have been because the national sitreps failed to adequately reflect the content of project-level reports. However, sitreps from Borena and Shinile similarly do not report against programme objectives and results. For example the sitreps viewed use a progress report template and have inserted the logframe results tables, but the reporting is largely a list of activities without reference to progress or indicators. Results tables for reporting progress are often empty.

The Dolo Ado sitreps do report, where possible, against the response targets (e.g. of litres of water, latrine coverage and water quality). Hygiene message indicators are reported at activity or output level (e.g. the number of messages given, meetings planned, jerry can campaigns). There was clearly significant effort to promote hygiene awareness, but they are not linked to the results or objectives level or indicators. Activities appear as isolated

⁹ In terms of safety, cleanliness, privacy, dignity, accessibility, suitability, adequacy and other community defined indicators.

¹⁰ A definition of clean: no visible dirt, no cracks, lid intact

achievements without context. Overall, report-writers complete the weekly reports at an activity level. Reports such as “water trucking delivered over 115,000 litres to 11,256 people (2,730 new beneficiaries this week)” and “Hygiene promotion activities were delivered to 6,450” are typical. None of the sitreps seen completed the template’s Story of Significant Change. Although Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were a key recommended tool for monitoring feedback, they are rarely reported and appear mainly used for the baseline surveys carried out a few months into the response. However, the RTE refers several times to FGDs, suggesting that they were a common tool.

In terms of using monitoring to revise the projects, again this may have occurred but is rarely reported. Borena notes that due to the arrival of rains, there is a revision of water trucking needs. There are references to teams creating revised logframes¹¹.

The final report from the PH Coordinator in Dolo Ado notes that “The PHP team and the community mobilisers seem overwhelmed with many surveys and paper reports that they need to produce. Much of their time is taken in doing surveys, missing out on the opportunity to obtain qualitative information, validate and probe on some key hygiene and safe programming issues, etc. Obviously, the opportunity to get people’s perspectives about protection threat is also lost”. Whilst the proposals contained often ambitious monitoring outlines, it appears that monitoring too easily gets stuck at the activity level, takes a lot of time to implement and is undermined by a lack of PRA training or experience, rendering some of the effort meaningless.

Mid term reports reviewed suggest that the shortfall in meaningful monitoring was not a result of the sitrep writers omitting key content. The report to Banaid is a short narrative describing activities; there is no reference to standards, indicators or even the overall objectives. Hiloweyn’s mid-term report focuses on numbers (for example simply listing the number of hygiene promotion campaigns, trainings and cleaning kits provided). However, the report does refer back to the original indicators and intended results, showing progress. For example, “Women are now cleaning their jerry can when they come to fetch water” - which falls short of measurable monitoring against the quantified indicator but at least demonstrates coherence with the intended results.

The RTE does not specifically comment on the use of standards and indicators but states that “Oxfam in Ethiopia have an agreed OI MEAL strategy in place that was developed in August 2011. Most staff interviewed was clear about this and also had a good understanding of appropriate feedback mechanisms for beneficiaries providing examples of how this was being undertaken”. There is no detail on whether this meant that staff were using the MEAL strategy.

It seems that considerable effort was invested, but onerous form-filling, lack of time or experience undermined achievements. Sphere is notably absent. Notwithstanding the possibility that Sphere was not viewed by the teams as contextually appropriate, opportunities to at least use previously thought-out relevant indicators from Sphere instead of weak on-the-spot indicators seem to have been missed. The sitreps do not act as a management tool for decision making or programme or project revision.

Overall, based on written evidence, the Standard is Partially Met. There are process and outcome indicators in some of the logframes but there is little documentation of progress measured against the indicators.

¹¹ It is not possible to tell whether the logframes on OPAL are earlier or later versions

Benchmark 5: Feedback and Complaints Systems

Feedback/complaints system in place and functioning and documented evidence of consultation and participation

To meet this standard, all aspects and use of a full feedback and complaints system must be in place. This means an established system, logging of feedback/complaints, actions taken and changes to projects as a result. There must be evidence of community participation and consultation with the affected community.

The MEAL staff provided a comprehensive framework for feedback and complaints which included a complaints flow chart, word and excel templates for recording feedback/complaints and tracking actions using a database with clear identification of individuals responsible.

In September, the RTE comments that “Focus Group Discussions with communities on several occasions have however revealed that there was some confusion about how beneficiaries could feedback to Oxfam. Feedback was reliant on beneficiaries communicating through the various committees set up in the communities which lack confidentiality”.

By October, the Borena MEAL officer was recording all complaints gathered through FGDs (e.g. the community’s preference for cash instead of grain). MEAL followed up with meetings with the EFSL team, recorded the resolutions and fed back to the community. Complaint committees were established in all kebeles. The feedback was checked, followed up with monitoring of market prices and wider community surveys and resulted in changes in the project design: “based on the assessment and need of the beneficiaries the grain distribution was stopped and cash distribution continue in all sites expect the Gorile PA. In Gorile PA based on their preference both cash and grain is being distributing to the targeted beneficiaries”. The Borena complaints database seen had registered 42 complaints received and dealt with by late November 2011. In Borena, the standard was therefore met.

In Shinile, by late September, MEAL had established tools for the PH and EFSL teams. “The team is collecting feedback/ complaint through interview and focus group discussion with affected populations. The team is also collecting feedback/ complaint during the process of post distribution monitoring data collection¹²”. It is not clear how active the system was (the database shows only 4 complaints investigated in October. There are none entered after this date – possibly because none were received). A report is available on the resolution of a CFW complaint which led to the creation of cash for work management committees and the revision of the beneficiary list ratified through a mass community meeting.

MEAL officers note that the key enablers for success in complaints resolution was having a MEAL team in place since the beginning of the response and close collaboration between the MEAL and technical teams as well as timely monitoring of project implementation and progress. Due to the lack of evidence of consistent use of the system, the standard is partially met in Shinile.

In Dolo Ado, the PH Coordinator end of deployment report (end of 2011) notes that she had drafted a complaints mechanism for Hiloweyn camp which the team were assessing. The earlier Hiloweyn mid-term report (late September) states that sessions on protection and

¹² Implementation of Complaint/ feedback Mechanism – a success story from Shinile

accountability had been given to 50 Oxfam GB staff and there has been the “Development of mechanisms for beneficiaries to submit complaints and feedback to OGB, discussion about how these complaints and feedback will be handled within the project teams” but that they need to ‘set up a better feedback and complaint mechanisms system”. Due to the lack of evidence of an active system, the standard is therefore not met in Hiloweyn.

It clearly takes time to establish the systems and more progress may have been made than appears from the reports (in the 39 national and project sitreps examined, focus group discussions are only mentioned once, in Borena).. The level of investment required is high; this was recognised by Oxfam GB and MEAL staff were recruited for all projects (with, it seems, the exception of Hiloweyn). The Hiloweyn comparison suggests that the existence of MEAL officers was significant in terms of establishing systems. As evidenced by the thoroughness of Borena’s system, it is fairly demanding. Perhaps a lighter-weight system may be required, at least in the earlier phase of a response (for example by reducing the frequency of the bi-weekly FGDs). Certainly, whilst impressive, it would be difficult to sustain the level of narrative reporting (including graphics etc) produced by Borena.

The reporting of other forms of community participation which led to changes in project design is absent in the documents reviewed. The intention was certainly there. For example the CIDA proposal planned focus group discussions throughout the project cycle such that “The community is then involved in all stages of the project cycle: including planning, site selection, beneficiary selection, activity identification (in the case of cash for work), implementation, monitoring and evaluation”. The general lack of reporting of project adaptations and revision means that there is insufficient evidence to assess this approach. The Hiloweyn mid-term report does refer to its objective for “Increased participation (both qualitative and quantitative) of women in the project” but simply notes that “Women are really involved with Oxfam on WASH activities”, without explaining how.

In general, reports often mention the involvement of the community in the identification of beneficiaries and efforts to target the most vulnerable. Over time, participation appears to increase. For example, the 2012 EFSL proposal (unsecured) notes that “A community based targeting approach was used for beneficiary selection. Broad based community meetings were organised in each targeted Kabele where project objectives were shared with the communities. Communities elected a community development committee and agreed on selection criteria”. And that “suitable activities identified in consultation with women. Finally in recognition of the key role that women play in local markets, it is proposed to offer grants to small scale women traders to improve the functioning of local markets”. Again, it seems to take time for projects to develop the systems, relationships, capacity and skills to integrate participatory systems into the heart of a project.

In summary, the standard was met in Borena, partially met in Shinile and not met in Dolo Ado/Hiloweyn. Overall: partially met.

Benchmark 6: Engagement of Partners

Quality Standard: Partners are fully engaged in all aspects of the project cycle.

Oxfam GB carried out its scale up response as a direct operational programme. It did not work through (Ethiopian) partners. Therefore this quality standard does not apply. Oxfam GB worked very closely and often in direct partnership with other Oxfams (moving into Oxfam International’s Single Management System), but the OI relationships are not

considered under this standard. Other Oxfam affiliates did work through established partners but are not the subject of this evaluation.

Benchmark 7: Dignity and Protection Issues

Programme reflects measures to address dignity and protection issues

To meet this standard, assessments should look at safe access to services and other protection issues and there must be documented evidence that programmes responded to protection issues identified by Oxfam and other actors. Protection expertise should be called upon as required.

The OI HCT Strategy says that “Within the framework of a rights-based approach we have prioritized the right to life with dignity, as defined in Sphere standards”.

Assessments mention contextual protection issues, for example both the Borena and Guji mission report and the Liben and Afder assessment identify cultural practices such as genital mutilation and some security issues. The Shinile assessment identifies risks associated with cross border trading. Programme issues related to safe access are not raised. There is no protection strategy (at least none found).

The CIDA proposal includes a protection-sensitive indicator (the “Majority of women and girls express satisfaction with the safety on route to and at the water point”). The Dolo Ado proposal aims to ensure that “Those refugees are able to maintain dignity and security through access to appropriate infrastructure and knowledge”; there are no details about what this means. The project’s mid-term report states that “The project will give a due attention about Protection issues and activities will be designed in a way to minimize the risks for women beneficiaries for any SGBV” and notes that a Protection and Gender Assistant had been recruited, that family shared latrines were reducing the risk of SGBV and that Oxfam GB and the IRC had carried out a joint training on the protection issues for 24 people. The PH Coordinator’s final report notes a number of protection measures in the Dolo Ado programme and there is a gender and protection WASH analysis for Hiloweyn camp containing a clear analysis of the existing and potential protection risks. Some consideration is given to dignity, addressing latrines with respect to privacy. The report notes the difficulty of connecting their local findings and analysis with management such that protection issues can be followed up at interagency level. Technical team leaders in the team tended to a narrow technical outlook; this is contrasted with the protection-aware approach of the Addis PH team leaders. Borena’s proposal states that protection is mainstreamed, but again, the lack of detail precludes any analysis.

The sitreps contain few references to programme protection issues. Sitrep number 6 notes that a gender and protection assessment was in progress in August and mentions Oxfam’s links to government awareness-raising of FGM and HIV in Shinile and that an Oxfam staff member joined an IRC gender assessment in Hilaweyn camp.

The RTE recommends that Borena assess the protection risks, suggesting that this had not been done, although the findings are not described. By October a training programme on the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation & Abuse Training (PSEA) was being rolled out, to be conducted in all locations between 24th - 28th Oct.

Overall, the analysis and reporting of protection concerns is weak, except in Dolo Ado. The standard is not met in Borena and Shinile but met in Dolo Ado.

Benchmark 8: Gender and Vulnerable Groups

Programme delivery addresses gender and specific needs of vulnerable groups

To meet the standard, a gender analysis will have been carried out and documented. Programme planning will have included attention to the needs of men and women and vulnerable groups with special needs been addressed in technical programmes.

The technical strategies are weak on gender analysis, probably because they were written before the programme had sufficient information about the affected population. Nonetheless, there is a surprising absence of broad gender considerations. For example the EFSL strategy does not differentiate at all beyond the household and community level. The PH strategy has little on gender but does consider different groups in its strategy for close integration of PH and EFSL, for example accounting for vulnerable families unable to undertake labour intensive (cash for) work. The OI HCT strategy for Ethiopia states the response will “Ensure that gender is mainstreamed so that the response is appropriate and takes into account the different needs of men, women and children”

Assessments contain little identification and analysis of vulnerable groups. Findings are rarely disaggregated by sex. The OI assessment in Liben and Afder does identify some vulnerable groups (e.g. women and children are the most malnourished) and carried out focus group discussions which, amongst other issues, identified the particular challenges for women as the water collectors. The Shinile assessment does not identify any particular groups, struggling with limited population data. There is more detail on the livestock. Borena and the 3rd Guji assessment contain some analysis of women’s needs (e.g. the distance walked for water and sexual harassment when visiting latrines). There is a detailed gender analysis/assessment of three woredas in Somali region, but it appears to have been carried out before this response and is not referred to in the response documents.

The proposals all state a clear intention to identify and respond to the different needs of vulnerable groups, differentiated by gender. Again, in the absence of detailed assessment knowledge, gender and vulnerability considerations are largely standard paragraphs that reflect Oxfam’s gender strategy or the gender specific considerations demanded by the proposal format.

The CIDA Shinile and Guji proposal “Although all age groups and both men and women are affected, women, children and the elderly are disproportionately affected and will be Oxfam’s priority”. In Borena and Liben “Oxfam will address and integrate gender in all stages of the intervention from the designing onwards. Gender disaggregated-data will be collected, analyzed and used for planning, targeting and setting performance indicators that ensure issues affecting the lives of women are well captured in the Action” and “the project will address the needs of women, men, boys and girls, it will focus particularly on women, people living with HIV and AIDS (PLWHA), the elderly and disabled people”. Participation of women on the WASH committees would be at least 50%.

The DEC proposal for Shinile similarly recognises that “women are being disproportionately affected by this crisis they are usually the first to feel the effects of water and food shortages as well as the last to be relieved”. And “Given that women are more vulnerable in these contexts, preference will be given to female beneficiaries”. The Shinile programme overall planned to target those who fell outside the Government’s Productive Safety Net Programme.

The Hiloweyn proposal has more specific gender and protection plans to address “gender based violence (GBV) and sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) of women and girls, Oxfam, in consultation with community representatives, local leaders and WASH COs, will try to identify safe and accessible times and sites for Cash for Work or daily labour. Workload for Cash for Work/casual labour interventions will also be considerate of the other productive and reproductive roles that women have. Poor women headed HHs will be given priority in targeting and on decisions on the amount of work they can do”.

A (national) gender strategy was drafted in October¹³. It is largely a theoretical document with little contextualised analysis of the Ethiopia programme. It plans to initiate gender assessments, start gender training and revise internal policies and procedures. The strategy presumably led to the roll-out of training in PSEA but is otherwise not evident in subsequent reported actions.

What happened in practice?

Because of the activity-focused reporting in the sitreps it is difficult to find evidence of differentiated programming that target particularly vulnerable groups and account for gender-specific needs. The particular needs of some proposed target groups, such as PLWHA, may have been subsequently assessed as requiring no particular project adaptations. Or they were targeted, but this was unreported. Either way, there is no mention of HIV in the sitreps.

Oxfam GB clearly consulted with women’s groups. In Shinile the EFSL team observed “that the [women’s] groups need support in preparing them for starting grain and other staples” and analysed the risk to women traders in the cross-border trading of staples in Shinele/Aysha. A joint EFSL-PH assessment tool was developed for 100 women in business.

“Comprehensive gender training, including training on prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, will take place for key staff across affiliates at country level between the 18th and 21st of October” and “Training on gender in emergency (GIE) and prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) will held from January 16-17 2012 in Addis Ababa”. In Dolo Ado, workshop sessions about Gender Sensitive Indicators and Disaggregated Data took place on 26th October.

The mid-term reports add little to the information available. The Hiloweyn mid term report is weak in its reporting of gender and participation, for example the objective that *Women and men have equal access to and control over project resources* is reported with a simple statement that “Women and men have equal access to water and sanitation facilities”. At mid-term, the projects were clearly only beginning to develop and implement targeted programming. In addition, the dominance of water trucking precluded opportunities for targeting and favoured logistical considerations in reports.

The RTE (in September) notes that “Overall the affiliates recognised the importance of gender in their programs and were making efforts to, as one interviewee put it, ‘have women at the centre of their program... Oxfam was also showing some innovative gender programming; especially with what was being planned in regard to supporting women’s committees, selling subsidized food in the Shinile region”. In Dolo Ado “Those interviewed felt that Oxfam’s work with the host communities was appropriate, especially as Oxfam was taking a lot of care in identifying communities whose coping mechanisms were at a higher level of deterioration than other communities and that Oxfam was not blanket targeting”. The RTE recommends “a more robust gender and protection analysis” to ensure risks are minimised for women and girls.

¹³ No final was produced or at least none was provided for this evaluation.

The Borena EFSL proposal for 2012 demonstrates that the programme had progressively identified particular groups and paid attention to their needs. For example it had been targeting “Households which are unable to provide labour (approximately 10%) e.g. elderly, disabled or female headed households with high dependency ratios are eligible for unconditional cash transfer which is equal to the amount paid to Cash for Work (CfW) beneficiaries. They receive payment at the same time as CfW beneficiaries”.

Overall, the programme was weak in documenting its gender analysis but over time, increasingly addressed the needs of particular groups, women in particular. Hence the standard is partially met.

Benchmark 9: Exit and Recovery Plans

To meet this standard, programmes will have an exit or recovery plan in place which is being used.

No overall or project-specific exit strategy was identified for this evaluation. Proposals and technical strategies include some references, but there is no evidence of specific exit planning in the reports or proposals.

The WASH strategy states that “One of the key considerations is to exit by placing some capacity at ground level to respond swiftly to public health risks in better way by identifying, training, linking and equipping volunteers to work with health extension workers, community health agents, WASHCOs and kabale leaders”. The exit strategy included working closely with government health structures at woreda and kabale levels to ensure follow up, to establish links and share learning with country (development, DRR and humanitarian) programmes to influence medium to longer term strategies and to advocate with UN organisations and government structures for new water points (where this is appropriate).

Due to the long term presence of Oxfam affiliate partners, exit strategies mentioned involve handing over to OI partners.

The RTE notes that “There were very mixed responses as to how connected the drought response is to Oxfam’s longer term development work and to how sustainable Oxfam’s activities are. There was a general consensus especially amongst the national staff that Oxfam needs to connect this response to the longer term program”.

The OI HCT planned to create an exit strategy in November 2011. This does not yet appear to have been done. The chronic drought and poverty in the response areas of Ethiopia, combined with severe technical limitations, add to the challenge of a smooth transition to recovery and exit. For example, options for shifting from water trucking to sustainably managed local water supplies are extremely limited given the hydrogeological conditions in the affected regions. However, the reasoning and possible strategies are not evidenced. Hence the standard is not met.

Benchmark 10: Applied Contingency Planning

Quality Standard: Evidenced utilisation of contingency plan in last humanitarian response

Although a contingency plan existed, it had not been updated since 2010. A scenario plan was developed in 2011, which included an actual/worst case scenario and predicted 870,000 + Afar (likely 1 million total) Oxfam beneficiary targets.

According to the RTE, it “was not widely used with many of those interviewed not knowing of its existence. Those who did know of it felt it was out of date and not relevant”. The RTE notes that whilst a scenario plan was developed in early 2011 and updated in May and July it was not a contingency plan, lacking planning for program support functions, management structures, security guidelines and Oxfam International ways of working. The RTE

recommends the creation of a new (complete) contingency plan but this has not yet been done. The proposals and sitreps do not refer to contingency plans.

This standard is therefore not met – the contingency plan was not updated and there is no evidence of use.

Benchmark 11: Advocacy

Programme addresses advocacy issues

To meet this standard, the programme will have an advocacy strategy in place and be able to demonstrate results.

No country-level Ethiopia advocacy strategy was provided for the evaluation. An Ethiopia *Advocacy Action Framework (within OI Horn Drought Campaign)* was drafted in August by the Region. Its objectives are access to aid and protection, the depoliticisation of aid and DRR. There is also a *Regional Media, Advocacy and Campaign Strategy* (June – October). It states a number of objectives, especially raising awareness and commitment from governments, donors, UN to scale up to recognised level of the crisis, enhanced coordination and the inclusion of long term needs, climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction.

Advocacy activities were clearly part of the intended response. The sitreps do mention Oxfam's participation in a number of influential meetings. Oxfam "has led the preparation of a lobby letter, submitted to the humanitarian coordinator on 8 July, challenging the new draft OCHA/ERF guidelines", briefed visitors from the US, UK and WFP and participated in UK lobbying which criticised European donors for funding shortfalls. In August, Oxfam advocated to the UN on issues of concern in Dolo Ado, such as the size of the camps and proximity to the border.

However, there is no record of the impact of Oxfam's participation or advocacy activity. Whether Oxfam had an influence on policy and practice is unrecorded. No advocacy analysis or assessment was provided to this evaluation.

The RTE makes several recommendations regarding advocacy but it does not evaluate the existing advocacy activities.

The advocacy standard is therefore not met as there was no strategy and no results recorded.

Benchmark 12: Disaster Risk Reduction

Quality Standard: Programme is linked to/will be linked to DRR interventions in area

To meet the standard, the programme will evidence Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) links, plans and activities.

The existing programmes in Ethiopia, prior to the July scale up, included some Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) programming (for example in cross border interventions in Jijiga and in Shinile). The June Concept Note includes DRR capacity building plans with local communities and institutions. Oxfam GB's WASH Strategy planned to "explore the

opportunity to coordinate and integrate drought response interventions with ongoing development programs especially DRR” and notes the intention for DRR to be more prominent. The HCT OI Strategy planned to mainstream DRR. The Shinile assessment proposed cash for work tree clearance, as a community-proposed strategy to stop trees reducing groundwater. Whether this was implemented or whether the potentially negative long term effects of deforestation were analysed is not reported.

The proposals sometimes reference DRR plans. The main WASH proposal (RO3931) aimed for the “Adoption of DRR by the local government as a strategy to mitigate the impacts of drought” but there is no reporting of subsequent actions to achieve this. DRR is not reported or analysed in the sitreps or mid-term reports.

Overall, there is little or no evidence of DRR linking and planning during the July-December response. Although the DEC phase II proposal notes that some CFW activities in Shinile were “geared towards improving communal assets like rangeland development, water point development” and states that “Throughout all of the project activities, Disaster Risk Reduction approach has been mainstreamed.” the ongoing reporting does not support this statement.

Later proposals clearly increase their DRR planning. The DEC phase II proposal plans DRR through “the planned construction of some additional drought-resistant water points, social water management including gender balanced water committees, the distribution of tools and more drought-resistant seeds to encourage food production activities”. Additionally, the EFSL programme plans to support alternative livelihoods via piloting of food production activities and hence reduce the need for the communities to produce charcoal and hence reduce the pressure on tree resources. The new ECHO proposal for Shinile also emphasises actions to increase resilience, enhance local capacity and support alternative and existing livelihoods.

For the scale-up response of 2011, DRR initiatives or integrated risk reduction approaches do not appear to have been implemented. Although the RTE recommended that the WASH response should be “linked to long term development programmes and Disaster Risk Management interventions” there is no evidence of this occurring by early January 2012.

This standard is therefore Partly Met – there is mention of DRR but no evidence of actual plans or activities.

5 Quality of the Evidence

The evaluation approach was entirely dependent on the availability and quality of written information. This always raises the concern that documents may be absent and the appraisal hence distorted. It should also be noted that the HIT evaluation is a new approach for Oxfam GB and staff will not have been aware of the need to document their work in the manner demanded by a HIT.

Oxfam GB provided nearly 300 documents and considerable effort was made to find and provide the necessary information. Difficulties were encountered at times in identifying dates and authorship; significant documents such as proposals were surprisingly difficult to identify and obtain. Many documents did not state authorship, were undated and had missing annexes.

Due to the relatively early date of this evaluation (the programme is ongoing), there were very few significant reports (for example to donors) and as a result a lot of the assessment of actual practice relies on the sitreps, the RTE and (3) brief mid-term reports. Deeper or more

specialised analysis that may normally be found in technical advisory and end of deployment reports are lacking. This may mean that some significant activity has not been reflected here.

The value of the sitreps viewed is also undermined by their emphasis on lists of activities, typically reported without the context of the objectives and results. Providing information for a wide range of stakeholders is challenging – some users may require (as does the HIT), detailed information, others require more strategic and headline information. Despite the evident effort invested and the impressive consistency with which the sitreps were produced, it is hard to see which users' needs are satisfied. Both the relevant detailed information and strategic information (such as overall progress, achievement against outcomes) are often lacking. The numbers and activity-orientated information may be suitable for some media communications, but it is weak as a management and decision-making tool.

Clear guidance might be required on a context-specific basis to clarify what kind of information is needed and by whom, and whether the programme and projects can reasonably be expected to provide it. Given that the cost and effort of producing weekly sitreps is significant, it would be valuable to assess who reads them, for what and whether their information needs are being met.

The challenge of providing a clearer sense of progress with respect to intended results was probably increased by the relevance of the proposals. Usually written before adequate information was available, they required considerable adaptation to the emerging context. Logframes were updated to an extent, but generally proposals were not revised. This would have significantly undermined the ability of the sitreps to report meaningful progress – given that the original results or objectives had often changed. The lack of proposal revision may in large part be attributable to the relatively short time span under review for this evaluation. It may also be administratively time consuming and complex, all the more so in a large programme. It would be useful to clarify and (if relevant) reduce the constraints and enhance the motivation for producing revisions during the life of the project.

Annexes

Sources

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Sitrep 9. 20 Aug – 1st September 2011

Sitrep 10 2-9th September 2011
 Sitrep 13 22-30th September 2011
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