# Real time reviews (rtr)

# **Guidance note**

Plan International has been building its humanitarian profile over the last few years and is now increasingly recognised by peers, UN and donors as a humanitarian agency. During this time Plan International has also been building and strengthening its humanitarian human resources capacity. As we continue to develop and grow as a humanitarian agency there is a need to ensure we learn from our current operations so we continue to strengthen our work in future crises.

## Why We Conduct Real Time Reviews

Real Time Evaluations are a specific type of evaluation that focus on assessing the delivery, structures and processes as well as risks in the early stages of a response in order to enable operational managers to revise their emergency work and mitigate risks early in the operations. The term evaluation denotes an in-depth analysis of a programme and its achievements, requiring time and data. In the early stages of an emergency this is not possible, and therefore Plan International refers to a **Real Time Review (RTR)**, providing managers with support and guidance in further strengthening their response.

RTRs are most effective and relevant when conducted in the early stages of a crisis and are a **light touch** management tool to provide real time information to country level senior management, the Regional Office and IH to ensure the emergency programmes are aligned with Plan International’s [Global Strategy 2017 - 2022](https://planet.planapps.org/strategy/strategy/_layouts/15/WopiFrame2.aspx?sourcedoc=/strategy/Strategy/Global%20Account%20Management/7.%20Final%20Docs%2c%20Public/GLO-100_Million_Reasons_Global_Strategy_2017_2022-IO-Final-Eng-Nov16.pdf&action=default) and [DRM Implementation Framework](https://planetteams.planapps.org/drm/team003/_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=/drm/team003/DRM%20Team%20Site%20Library/GLO-DRM_Implementation_Framework-Final-IO-Eng-Jul17.docx&action=default) as well as the [The Core Humanitarian Standard](https://corehumanitarianstandard.org/the-standard) An RTR provides an opportunity to obtain an independent view of the initial response enabling a CO to make immediate changes to strengthen the emergency operations.  The RTR is also the primary mechanism for learning about our processes and support in our humanitarian response as a whole, enabling the organization to prioritise system level improvements. The review remains light touch so as not to distract country office staff from scale up activities and to prevent a negative impact on the delivery of assistance to girls, boys, their families and communities.

## When to conduct an RTR

Plan International will conduct an RTR for Orange 2 emergencies that have a response budget of more than 500,000USD and all Red level emergencies.

## RTR Team Composition

The RTR team should normally be composed by a Senior Plan International staff member at CD (or equivalent) level of responsibility and experience. In addition it is recommended that an external consultant be hired to support the review. At least one member of the RTR team must have significant humanitarian experience. Staff members involved in an RTR should be from outside of the region and not have been involved in the response operations or discussions in order to maintain a level of independence within the review and to prevent any conflict of interest.

## RTR Framework

The RTR will consider how the Country Office and the wider organisation has responded to a crisis and will use the CHS quality criteria as the framework for any findings identified. These quality criteria are;

* Humanitarian response is **appropriate and relevant**
* Humanitarian response is **effective and timely**
* Humanitarian response **strengthens local capacities** and **avoids negative effects**
* Humanitarian response is **based on communication, participation and feedback**
* **Complaints** are **welcomed** and **addressed**
* Humanitarian response is **coordinated and complementary**
* Humanitarian actors **continuously learn and improve**
* **Staff are supported** to do their job effectively, and are treated fairly and equitably
* **Resources are managed** **and used responsibly** for their intended purpose.

In addition the RTR should consider the level of ambition of a response compared to the level of need as well as the level of funding available.

Gender is a critical element of all Plan International emergency response programmes. The RTR will review to what extent the response is gender aware or gender transformative. This will be done by considering the following questions;

* Are the different needs of girls, boys, women and men identified?
* Does the response address these identified needs?
* Is the programme carried out in ways which promote gender equality in the communities where Plan International works?

As preparedness and readiness is also a key element of Plan’s approach to humanitarian work, the RTR needs to also consider if the CO was ready for a response. An RTR should not only consider how the CO has responded, but also how systems have helped or hindered a response, and whether the RO, IH and NOs have mobilised sufficiently to support the humanitarian response. and whether the response is aligned with the Plan International Global Strategy, DRM Implementation Framework and Plan International’s Areas of Global Distinctiveness.

## RTR Outputs

The RTR does not seek to provide recommendations but to identify key findings linked with RTR Framework detailed above. The CO is best positioned to identify how best to address any findings in a way that is appropriate and relevant for the operational context.

A short concise report will be developed to provide management with an independent review of the current operations and areas where further consideration is required.

## Management Response

The Country Director is responsible for coordinating and finalising the management response to the RTR and where appropriate and possible real time changes will be implemented. Where findings relate to global, regional or NO issues IH, the Region and NOs will be requested by the CD to provide input to the management response. COs/ ROs, IH and NOs are not under any obligation to act on the findings, but are responsible for providing management feedback on each finding and whether it is accepted or not. If accepted, details on what steps will be taken should be provided. If not accepted, the reasons as to why should be provided.

The report and management response will be sent by the Country Director to the Sub-Regional Director for management accountability.

## What Happens to the RTR?

The RTR and management response will be shared with colleagues in the CO, RO, IH and NOs by the CD or SRD. The report will also be a key document for use during any internal audits. The report provides line management with a tool to support ongoing improvement in emergency operations.

In January of each year an annual synthesis of the key findings from RTRs conducted in the previous year will be conducted by IH DRM. This synthesis will identify work priorities for the following financial year.

All [Real Time Reviews](https://planetteams.planapps.org/drm/team004/Pages/Real-Time-Evaluations.aspx) will be uploaded to Planet and can be found together with the annual synthesis reports. In the interests of transparency and accountability RTRs will be publically available and will be posted to [ALNAP: Humanitarian Evaluation and Learning Portal](http://www.alnap.org/resources/).

## RTR Timeline

An RTR will normally be conducted around weeks 6 - 8 following the classification of an orange 2 or red level emergency and the start of programme implementation. By this time it should be expected that programme response has started, surge capacity mobilised and initial funding secured. Funding to conduct an RTR needs to be included in all funding submissions to institutional donors.

To enable real time changes to emergency operations the entire review process must be concluded within a 3 week period;

* RTR conducted over 1 week in country with verbal debrief to CO CMT with key findings prior to departure of the RTR team from Country, providing the CO with an opportunity to provide corrections/ clarifications.
* RTR draft report finalised and submitted within 1 week of departing country
* CO/ RO / IH management response prepared and finalised 1 week after receiving the report (real time changes can be implemented immediately and do not need to wait of finalisation of the management response).

## Support

Further support on RTRs can be obtained by emailing the Head of Disaster Response in IH at colin.rogers@plan-international.org