

UNICEF Procedure for Level 2 Emergencies Annex 1 to CF/EXD/2013-003

This is the UNICEF Procedure for Level 2 (L2) emergencies, defined as a situation where the magnitude of the emergency is such that a Country Office needs additional and prioritized support from other parts of the organization (Headquarters, Regional and Country Offices) to respond, and where the Regional Office (RO) must provide dedicated leadership and support. It is designed for the UNICEF Country Programme's response (sectors and cross-cutting areas) to be timely, appropriately assessed, and designed and executed according to the Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action (CCCs).

The L2 procedure will enhance the response at country level by:

- 1) **enabling a number of additional simplifications and fast-tracking measures to complement simplifications already available** per existing UNICEF rules and regulations related to Human Resources, Administrative and Financial Regulations and [Supply emergency procedures](#)¹;
- 2) **securing prioritized, enhanced support** to a country-led response from the Regional Office and Headquarters and;
- 3) **bolstering the Regional Director's ability to mobilize and track support** from all Divisions and Offices.

This L2 procedure is a key component of the overall effort to enhance UNICEF's response to all emergencies, as defined in the CCCs.

A. DESIGNATION CRITERIA

As stipulated in CF/EXD/2011-001, an L2 is an emergency where *“the magnitude of the emergency is such that a Country Office needs additional and prioritized support from other parts of the organization (HQ, RO and COs) to respond and that the RO must provide leadership and support.”*²

Situations defined as L2 emergencies could be sudden-onset emergencies, a significant deterioration in an ongoing complex emergency which is not sufficiently addressed through the regular UNICEF Country Programme, or a situation where CCC-based emergency preparedness measures need to be urgently augmented to avoid imminent risks to children. In addition, L2 emergencies can be country-specific, cover a region or many regions within a country, multi-country and/or sub-regional in nature or potentially span more than one region.

In all cases, the determination of what constitutes an L2 is based on analysis of the same five criteria as those which are used to define Level 3 (L3) emergencies: **scale, urgency, complexity, capacity and reputational risk**.

B. DESIGNATION PROCESS

For each of the situations to be designated as an L2 emergency, a recommendation memo³ will be prepared by the Regional Director (RD). He/she can submit such a memo at any moment, based on analysis of the situation. Subsequent to the initial designation, an L2 emergency can be extended

¹ Such existing possible simplifications, which address a number of recurrent bottlenecks in the emergency response, are outlined in the 'Step-by-Step Guide to Emergency Response' which is available on the [UNICEF Emergency Portal](#).

² Note that this is a slight amendment to the definition contained in CF/EXD/2011-001 – scale is replaced by magnitude for the sake of clarity vis-à-vis the five definitional criteria, and the terms “and prioritized” are added.

³ See template recommendation memo – Annex 2.

based on a shorter version of the recommendation memo issued each time the designation is to be extended in conjunction with the trimestral update of the list of L2s (see below).

The recommendation memo will outline the analysis of the five criteria and explain why the emergency is justified as an L2 emergency. It will also include a succinct assessment of risks, with a focus on those risks that are likely to result from simplified procedures, and proposed measures to mitigate those increased risks. The memo will be submitted to the Office of Emergency Programmes (EMOPS) Director for endorsement⁴. Once he/she has endorsed the recommendation, the EMOPS Director will forward the recommendation memo to the Deputy Executive Director (DED) External Relations⁵ for consideration. If he/she agrees, the DED External Relations will seek the final approval of the Executive Director (ED). Once this approval is obtained, the DED External Relations will inform Global Management Team (GMT) members of the designation of this situation as an L2 emergency⁶. The process between submission of the recommendation memo by the Regional Director and the communication to the GMT, should occur within one week. Emergencies designated as L2 will be added to a list of situations designated as L2 emergencies, maintained by EMOPS. The list will be updated every three months and indicate which emergencies are continuing as L2 and which have been discontinued and will include any emergency newly designated as L2 during the previous three month period.

For the purposes of this update every three months, RDs will present their analysis of the five criteria for the emergencies already designated as L2s during previous periods and for which they would like to maintain L2 designation in a shorter version of the recommendation memo⁷. The next updates will be: 1 March 2013, 1 June 2013, 1 September 2013⁸⁹. The EMOPS Director will review these recommendations, and the DED External Relations will issue the list of L2 emergencies within one week of the pre-defined deadline for submissions, after receiving approval from the ED.

In the event that a disagreement between an RD and the EMOPS Director regarding a specific humanitarian situation cannot be resolved within one week after receiving the RD's recommendation memo for either a new L2 or for a continuation of a given L2, the DED External Relations will recommend a final decision for approval by the ED. This arbitration should not delay the issuance of the updated L2 list.

Besides recommendation memos on individual emergencies to be designated as L2, and/or the extension of L2 status through the scheduled update of the list, the other ways to include a situation on the list of L2s are as follows:

- 1) When a previously activated L3 emergency is de-activated, the situation will automatically be designated as an L2 at that time, and its status will be re-assessed at the next update of the L2 list. This will be documented through the same procedure as outlined above.
- 2) If a new major sudden onset emergency is being considered as a potential L3 but the assessment does not result in the activation of the L3 Corporate Emergency Activation Procedure (CEAP), it can be considered as an L2 and subsequently be added to the list at any time, through the procedure described above.

When a proposed L2 emergency spans countries within more than one Regional Office, the RD in the region containing most of the affected population will take the lead in the analysis of the five criteria and the preparation of the recommendation memo and will coordinate all other concerned RD(s) to

⁴ The memo submitted by the EMOPS Director to the DED External Relations should be copied to the other DEDs for information.

⁵ The other UNICEF DEDs should be copied on this communication.

⁶ See template text for communication to the GMT – Annex 3

⁷ Emergencies that may have been added to the list of L2 through a recommendation memo endorsed within 8 weeks of a scheduled update of the list will automatically be continued until the following update.

⁸ Timed to inform the revision of the HQ fast-track list

⁹ See template text for communication of the updated list of L2s to the GMT – Annex 4

sign off on the analysis and proposed measures contained in the recommendation memo. This applies to new emergencies as well as the updated quarterly list.

There is no formal deactivation process. Instead, the RD will re-assess on trimestral basis the emergencies designated as L2 based on the five criteria, in consultation with the Country Offices (COs) in question. If a designated L2 emergency is no longer assessed as an L2 when the scheduled update takes place, it is removed from the list. GMT members will be kept apprised of these changes by the DED External Relations.

Designation as an L2 emergency is to be considered an exceptional measure. It will apply to a limited number of situations.

A given emergency should not remain on the list of L2 situations for longer than one year in total. To avoid this, any situation that has already been on the list for nine months in total will be reviewed by the RD, EMOPS Director, and OED to determine appropriate measures to be taken to build capacities and exit from L2 status. Adequate measures to support COs to fulfil their commitments per the Country Programme Document and the CCCs without the exceptional L2 measures should be put in place as soon as possible after designation by the RD in consultation with the Regional Emergency Management Team (REMT).

C. SIMPLIFICATIONS PUT IN PLACE BY L2 DESIGNATION

Upon issuance of the L2 list, fast-track procedures and simplifications available to L2 emergencies will apply to all such designated situations automatically and with immediate effect. This includes all measures outlined in the table below.

Procedures	Simplifications that apply to L2 emergencies
Automatic application of fast-track human resource procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As per EXD CF/EXD/2010-005: ‘Recruitment and staffing in emergency situations’
Quick and easy application of Programme Cooperation Agreements (PCAs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Head of Office is authorized to disburse funds to implementing partners with Direct Cash Transfers (DCT) outstanding for periods over six months but not exceeding nine months. In exceptional situations, authorization can be provided by the Regional Director for disbursements to partners with reports outstanding for periods over nine months. The Head of Office is authorized to release cash transfers to implementing partners for periods up to three months at a time. A second three-month cash transfer can be released on request from the implementing partner, towards the end of the first implementation period, including in situations where financial reporting has not been provided by them to UNICEF for the first three-month transfer, provided that monitoring and assurance activities have been undertaken on the activities corresponding to the transfer issued for the first period. Where required and applicable, funds can be disbursed to an NGO’s offshore account primarily when the NGO does not have a local bank account or local banking facilities are not operational (payment to be processed through the Inter Office payment facility). The Head of Office is authorized to re-programme unutilized funds as relevant/possible in the context of the revised work-plan priorities. The due date for the submission of the FACE is extended for the duration of the agreed implementation period (three months or

	<p>exceptionally, up to six months).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CO can decide to adopt a flat, uniform, percentage of PCA indirect costs at any level up to 25 per cent of total operating costs instead of parsing through each relationship to determine individualized percentages.
<p>Simplified operational (financial and administrative) procedures</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Head of Office has the authority to sign an office, guesthouse or warehouse lease agreement¹⁰ for periods up to six months, without prior approval of Division of Finance and Administration(DFAM), Administration Management, although consultation is encouraged, but it must comply with all of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Consult with the Regional Office since it has primary responsibility for oversight of this in an L2 emergency. ○ Give preference to sharing premises with other UN agencies. ○ Obtain security clearance from the UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS). ○ Confirm funding availability to meet the financial commitments of the lease and Minimum Operating Security Standards. ○ Use the UN standard lease agreement approved by UN Office of Legal Affairs. ○ Have the lease reviewed by the contracts review committee (CRC) if it exceeds local CRC limits. ○ Promptly notify DFAM (Deputy Director Administration Management) of all such leases. ○ Identify and acquire adequate facilities. • In emergency situations, staff can arrange travel, on reimbursable arrangement, with airlines directly if a travel agency is not accessible, making all efforts to obtain lowest airfare. This arrangement should be done only at the express request of the receiving CO or supervising RO. Authorization to procure own ticket should be noted in the travel authorisation. No travel should be undertaken without prior security clearance. • If the system cannot be accessed directly or remotely for financial management and accounting purposes, the Head of Office can: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Revert to manual accounting system to prevent delays. This includes the use of manual, basic cash books, cash verification reports, cash request vouchers, deposit slips and statement of receipts. These must be sent to the nearest office (safe haven) and should be recorded promptly. ○ Delegate to another office a specific budget allotment as to allow issuance of requisitions/commitments. • Third party cash providers (including other UN Agencies and well-established organizations) may be used to make payments or to replenish cash accounts with approval from DFAM (Deputy Director Finance). In situations where there are no banking facilities, cash accounts must be replenished with banknotes brought in from another area (another UNICEF country office in the region or from well-established organizations). • Bank accounts: In instances where there are less than three staff members with delegated financial authority, a single signatory bank account can be used with DFAM approval.

¹⁰ Whether formal review of office structure is needed should be determined by CO in consultation with RO/DFAM.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In L2 emergency situations, a UNICEF Representative can change the way the Contract Review Committee (CRC) works to help expedite the review process including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Location: A sub-CRC can be convened at a zone office. ○ Composition: The composition of the CRC can be changed by the UNICEF Representative to include as members/alternates any appropriately experienced staff member that joined the country office following the emergency. ○ Quorum of CRC: It must have three voting members even in emergencies; but members can be “polled” (by email) to approve contracts. The emergency submission must be submitted to the next meeting to be recorded. ○ Frequency of meetings: As frequently as needed in an emergency. ○ Other UN Agency staff members can be included as members of the CRC when securing a quorum proves difficult or there are insufficient qualified staff members (UNICEF is encouraged to provide the same service to other UN agencies). The emergency submission must be submitted to the next meeting to be recorded.
<p>Automatic issuance of a US\$2 million EPF</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The allocation (to the CO or RO) is to be used for the UNICEF programmatic response. A portion of the allocation (to be determined by consultation between the EMOPS Director, the relevant RO and CO, upon issuance) should be used to build CO capacity for cluster coordination, information management and humanitarian performance monitoring. • In the case of multi-country emergencies, there is only one automatic US\$2 million EPF allocation for the whole emergency. The RO receives the funds and allocates to COs based on priorities, clearly communicating to COs reimbursement procedures and tracking where funds are allocated. The RO should also inform EMOPS of country allocations. • The automatic allocation will not apply to countries that have received an EPF allocation during the six weeks preceding their designation as L2 emergencies, and/or countries that appear on the list of L2 emergencies for a second or third consecutive time, as well as those emergencies being downgraded from L3 to L2. In such cases, the CO must apply for an EPF allocation, if needed, under normal procedures. • If the automatic allocation is not sufficient and additional funds are required, a normal EPF application is necessary, based on existing guidelines. • The automatic US\$2 million EPF is reimbursable by the concerned office as funds become available. Uncommitted funds will automatically be recovered after three months.
<p>Deployment of RO staff, ERT or similar capacity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The RO will make staff available within 48 hours as needed and possible, using regional rosters, RO staff, standby capacity, etc. • The CO will be offered possible deployment of ERT or equivalent capacity for minimum of one week during the first few weeks of the response. The deployment should be agreed in dialogue between the RO, receiving office, and EMOPS. The deployment is paid for by the receiving office, and could come from the US\$2 million EPF allocation. • This capacity can be deployed to RO or CO.

D. OTHER MEASURES PUT IN PLACE BY L2 DESIGNATION

Although all emergencies require support from HQ Divisions and Regional Offices, the list of L2 emergencies will become an overall tool for prioritization, enhanced support from RO and HQ, access to fast track procedures, as well as application of the simplifications listed above and the requirements outlined below.

In addition:

- i. CO leadership remains accountable for the response to an L2 emergency.
- ii. The RO's role in leading the coordination of support and in having oversight over the CO(s) is also unchanged but will be reinforced by the L2 designation. The support provided by the RO to the CO is enhanced in comparison to the support regularly provided to emergency preparedness and response.
- iii. HQ Divisions are required to organize themselves to provide enhanced and prioritised support and coordination to the RO and CO. This could entail: (a) prioritisation of support to L2 emergencies in allocating capacity and staff time, (b) enhanced role of the RO in quality assurance, and (c) rapid response time for requests from COs (a maximum of 24 hours). This is already in place in Supply Division, where support to emergencies is included in most staff job descriptions. The same is in place in Division of Communications.
- iv. A Regional Emergency Management Team (REMT) bringing together relevant HQ Divisions, RO and CO should be established to cover L2 emergencies. The RD's ability to exercise his/her existing authority will be strengthened through this mechanism as it will facilitate the mobilization of support from all concerned Divisions. The RD or his/her designate, will lead this mechanism. It will be the main vehicle to mobilize the required support and oversee the response. The frequency and level of participation will be agreed between the RD and the EMOPS Director with meetings taking place on at least a monthly basis. This will be indicated in the recommendation memo and should be tailored to each situation. HQ Division Directors have the option of requesting an ad hoc REMT meeting through the EMOPS Director if they feel an issue must urgently be addressed outside of the scheduled REMT. It is good practice to convene an REMT early in the response to discuss elements of an integrated programme strategy.
- v. HQ divisions have a role to oversee and provide support so that critical gaps in the emergency response are addressed. The RD tracks follow up of CO/RO requests to RO/HQ in the REMT, where key actions and deliverables are reviewed and specific follow up actions and accompanying accountabilities are determined. EMOPS has a coordinating role in delivering requested HQ division support to COs/ROs.
- vi. It is clear that the capacity to respond and coordinate will depend on resource availability and personnel. If additional capacity needs are identified, surge should be prioritised both to affected COs as well as the relevant ROs.

In L2s spanning several countries within more than one Regional Office, the RD/RO who had taken the lead in developing the analysis and the recommendation memo will be responsible for providing support to the emergency response, including in the COs from other regions. The Regional Emergency Advisors (REAs) from the other concerned regions should be part of the REMT and copied on Situation Reports and other communications.

E. REQUIREMENTS FOR L2s

A few actions /deliverables are to be considered mandatory in newly designated L2 emergencies. These are:

Deliverables	Responsibility	Consult/Engage	Approval/Clearance
ToRs for REMT (adjusted from the standard ToRs), including the frequency of meetings defined initially in the recommendation memo following agreement between RD and EMOPS Director.	REA	CO EMOPS HQ divisions	RD
Integrated Programme Response Plan, supported by Operational Staffing Matrix (OSM) and Supply Plan	CO Rep	EMOPS PD SD Other REMT members	RD
2-3 Advocacy Priorities are defined and shared	RD	CO RO EMOPS PARMO PD GMA PFP DOC	RD
L2/3 Humanitarian MoRES (humanitarian performance monitoring) implemented including SitReps with at minima monthly monitoring and reporting. Adaptations to format of reports to be agreed by the REMT¹¹	CO Rep	RO EMOPS	RD
Updated Key Messages and UNICEF Statement	CO Rep	CO RO DOC PD EMOPS OED as needed	RD

¹¹ Level 2/3 Mores in Humanitarian Situation should combine: high frequency data collection on few priority indicators that allow coverage estimates; systematic qualitative field monitoring on issues of access and use of services and other dimensions of quality; and where UNICEF is Cluster Lead Agency, tracking of key coordination process milestones.

Annex 2 - Level 2 Emergency [NAME]

Recommendation Memo

*[Specify if this situation is a proposed new addition to the L2 list,
or a situation to be maintained on the L2 list]*

Memo to: Director of EMOPS
From: Regional Director [region]
CC: [in the case of multi-country emergencies spanning more than one region, include here any other RDs that were consulted]
Date: [enter]
Subject: Recommendations for Designation or Continuation of Level 2 Emergencies in [region]¹² and endorsement by the EMOPS Director

1. Situation Assessment

In half a page, this section will summarize the assessment of the situation which has been conducted by the Regional Office in consultation with the Country Office and other affected Regional Offices (as applicable).

It should clearly spell out the scope of the situation considered by the Regional Office (e.g. is it a whole country, a region or many regions within a country, multiple countries, etc.). It should include an assessment of the following criteria: Scale; Urgency; Complexity; Reputational Risk and Capacity. In this assessment, reference can be made to the variables outlined in a comparative table, available on the emergency portal.

2. Justification for the Level 2

In this section (no more than half a page for new Level 2s (L2), one paragraph for a situation to be maintained on the list), the Regional Office should draw out the identified gaps and/or specific support needs, as well as any other justifications for declaring the situation as an L2. Note that the main justification stems from the analysis of the criteria itself, and capacity gaps should be highlighted in section 1, so this is more about narrating how L2 status will enhance UNICEF's response in this particular situation. The measures to be applied will be as stipulated in the L2 Procedure. However, this section can be used to highlight context specific support requirements.

In addition, this section is used to briefly note the indicative composition and frequency of the REMT, the initial proposed frequency for Situation Reports and other administrative measures proposed to support the L2 including the proposed timeframe for completion of the Integrated Programme Response Plan, advocacy priorities and updated key messages and UNICEF statement.

3. Risk Management

In this section (half a page to one page for new L2s, one paragraph updating risk management for a situation to be maintained on the last), the Regional Director will demonstrate that additional risks arising from the scaling-up of the response and/or the simplification of procedures have been assessed, and that mitigation measures are being put in place. Where the organization chooses to accept some residual risk, this should be highlighted. This section should also highlight additional measures to be put in place and the support required in this regard. See example below:

¹² Include only situations that are recommended as Level 2 emergencies, not those where an assessment has been undertaken but where country is not included for inclusion in an L2 list.

Issue: As the response will initially be implemented largely in remote management mode in province x due to the very high residual security risks, misuse of funds by partners could jeopardize the realization of results for children as well as UNICEF's reputation with donors. The likelihood of this occurring is very high since national implementation partners have low capacity. The impact if this materializes is very negative for UNICEF. Mitigation measures put in place include a contract with two private companies who will conduct third party monitoring, covering about half of UNICEF's partnerships in the scaled-up response. A certain residual risk of financial loss, misappropriation or misuse remains. To further strengthen mitigation, the CO wishes to put in place a hotline for affected populations to reach UNICEF.

4. Final conclusion

Based on the analysis presented above, I am of the view that designating/maintaining this situation as an L2 emergency will enhance UNICEF's response. Any additional risks to the organization arising from the scale-up and/or the simplification of procedures can be partly mitigated. In any event, the benefits in terms of assistance to affected populations are assessed to outweigh the residual risk.

ENDORSEMENT: SECTION TO BE FILLED IN BY THE EMOPS DIRECTOR

In this section, the EMOPS Director will state his/her endorsement of the analysis presented by the RD. He/she may add any points of complement, notably those pertaining to inter-agency considerations.

The EMOPS Director will also here confirm the application of the L2 procedure as defined in **CF/EXD/2013-003**.

The EMOPS Director will note the composition and frequency of the REMT as agreed with the RD.

The EMOPS Director will refer to the next scheduled update of the L2 list, at which time the status of this situation will be re-assessed.

The EMOPS Director submits this to the attention of the DED External Relations and asks that the approval of the Executive Director be sought and that the GMT be subsequently informed accordingly.

[if a situation has already been on the list for 9 months in total, this section should mandate a discussion between the RD, EMOPS Director, and OED to determine appropriate measures to be taken to build capacities and exit from L2 status.]

ANNEX 3 – Sample of communication to the GMT when a new situation is designated as an L2

Dear members of the GMT,

This is to inform you that today the Executive Director has approved the recommendation submitted by [name Regional Director] and endorsed by [name EMOPS Director] on [insert date] according to which [name of emergency] is to be designated as an L2 emergency, based on an analysis of scale, urgency, complexity, reputational risk and capacity (see recommendation memo attached for your reference).

The L2 procedure as defined in CF/EXD/2013-003 applies as of today, and this will be revisited on [date of the next scheduled update of the L2 list, or, if this is in less than 8 weeks, the following one].

I thank you in advance to all for providing enhanced and prioritised support and coordination to [name of concerned RO(s) and CO(s)]. This could entail: (a) prioritisation of support to L2 emergencies in allocating capacity and staff time, (b) enhanced role of the Regional Office in quality assurance, and (c) rapid response time for requests from Country Offices (a maximum of 24 hours).

We have agreed that the Regional Emergency Management Team (REMT) will comprise of the following Offices/Divisions [state as appropriate] to be represented at an appropriately senior level. The REMT will meet every [state frequency, at minimum monthly]. Situation Reports will be produced and distributed on a [state frequency, at minimum monthly] basis.

Best regards,

Deputy Executive Director External Relations

ANNEX 4 – Sample of communication to the GMT when the list of L2 is updated, on a quarterly basis.

Dear members of the GMT,

This is to inform you that the list of designated L2 emergencies was updated as of today, as per the process stipulated in CF/EXD/2013-003, and approved by the Executive Director.

I draw your attention to the fact that [state number as appropriate] new L2 situations were added to the list [state names]. For these situations, I have approved the recommendations submitted by the respective Regional Directors and endorsed by the EMOPS Director based on an analysis of scale, urgency, complexity, reputational risk and capacity (see recommendation memo(s) attached for your reference). I also draw your attention to the fact that [name] situations, previously designated as L2 emergencies, no longer are on this list.

I thank you in advance to all for providing enhanced and prioritised support and coordination to all these emergencies. This includes: (a) prioritisation of support to L2 emergencies in allocating capacity and staff time, and (b) rapid response time for requests from Country Offices (a maximum of 24 hours).

[if a situation has already been on the list for 9 months in total, this section inform that a discussion will take place between the RD, EMOPS Director, and OED to determine appropriate measures to be taken to build capacities and exit from L2 status.]

Best regards,

Deputy Executive Director External Relations