

Outcomes Document:

Country Consultations for the Development of Guidance on Information Management Systems in Refugee Settings November-December 2021

Contents

1. Overview	2
2. Country Consultations	2
2.1. Structure of the Country Consultations	2
2.2. Country Consultations: Questions & Prompts	3
2.3. Main Themes which Emerged in the Consultations	4
2.4. Principal Finding	4
2.5. Key Findings	4
3. Key Recommendations & Way Forward.....	7
4. Conclusion and Next Steps.....	8
5. Annex: Overview of Participating Agencies.....	9

1. Overview

Under the leadership of UNICEF and UNHCR and with the direct involvement of the CPIMS+ Steering Committee member organizations, country level consultations were held to gather feedback on how to better understand the current ways of working, challenges, and opportunities with regards to the use of CPIMS+¹ and proGres V4² in refugee settings.

The consultations aimed to inform the development of a guidance note originally intending to provide increased clarity and predictability for all relevant role-players and stakeholders involved in the roll-out of CPIMS+ and/or proGres V4 in refugee and mixed refugee/IDP settings, with the ultimate goal to promote timely, efficient and effective coordination in the deployment of case management information management systems and appropriate data sharing.³

Between 15 November and 16 December 2021 UNHCR and UNICEF jointly hosted six 3-hour virtual workshops for country consultations with Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Ethiopia (Gambella), Kenya (Dadaab) and Bangladesh. Due to scheduling and connectivity issues, country consultations with Sudan and Somalia were not ultimately feasible; as an alternative, they shared some inputs in writing.

The consultations convened over 80 inter-agency stakeholders and other role-players (see the Annex for a list of participating agencies) involved in child protection case management programming in locations where both the CPIMS+ and proGres V4 are deployed, or are planned for deployment, concurrently or sequentially. The consultations did not have a strong representation of local NGOs, rather they were constituted mainly by international NGOs and those that participate in global inter-agency forums such as the CPIMS+ Steering Committee and Case Management Task Force of the Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action.

The consultations, as further explained below, highlighted the need to focus the Guidance and efforts on overall on information management for case management in refugee settings rather than focus on the use of specific information management systems.

2. Country Consultations

2.1. Structure of the Country Consultations

Each Workshop covered the following 3 key themes:

- Core principles of information management for case management (IM4CM) work as highlighted in Global Standards⁴ and ongoing work in this area

¹ Primero is an open-source software platform that helps humanitarian and development workers manage protection-related data. Primero hosts the following modules: CPIMS+, GBVIMS+ and MRMIMS+. Learn more about CPIMS+ on the cpims.org

² proGres is UNHCR's registration and population management database. It is a tool to facilitate protection for persons of concern to UNHCR. The latest version of proGres deployed in 2018 (proGres V4) includes a dedicated Child Protection case management module for Best Interests Procedure (BIP). Learn more about proGres V4 on the [PRIMES Support Page](#)

³ This activity is part of the UNHCR-UNICEF Blueprint for Joint Action for Refugee Children, overseen by the Data Working Group constituted under the Blueprint. Learn more about the [Blueprint for Joint Action](#).

⁴ Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action (CPMS), Standard 5 and 18. [Access the CPMS here](#).

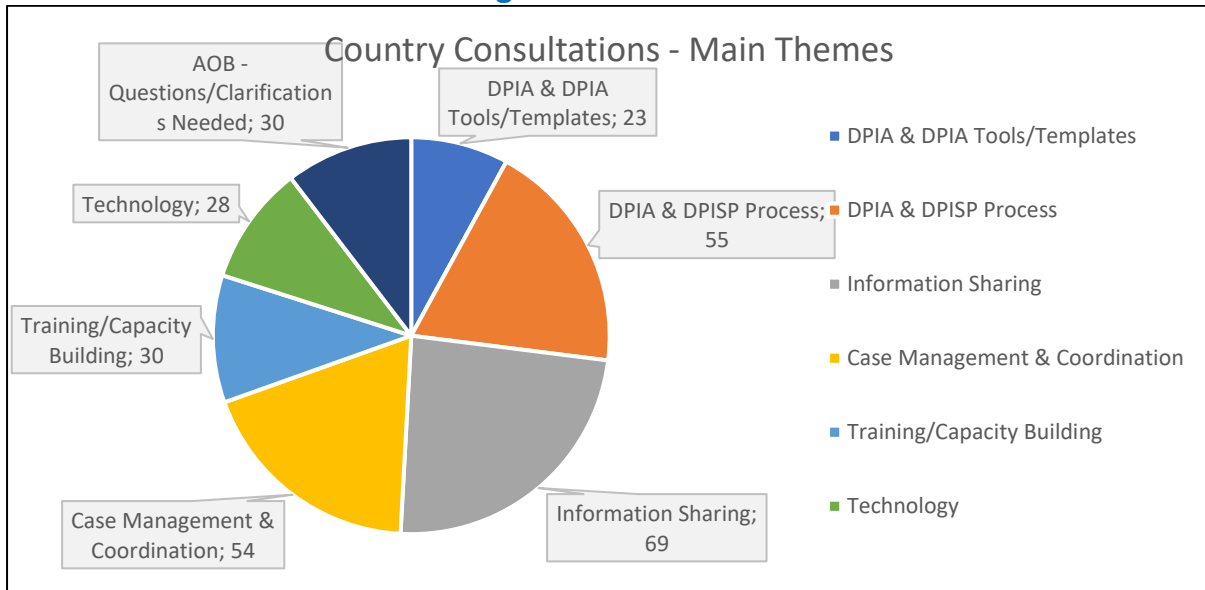
- Introduction to explain the intention of the Guidance Note and its conceptual evolution, showing the first outline
- Brief description of proGres V4 and how it operates within the PRIMES ecosystem for refugee protection case management

2.2. Country Consultations: Questions & Prompts

The following questions and prompts were included in all the consultations as a minimum:

1. Reflecting on the implementation of the Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) and the development of the Data Protection and Information Sharing Protocol (DPISP) for your country context, please consider the following:
 - Were these processes communicated to be inter-agency processes related to the implementation of child protection case management, not in relation to one specific digital information management system?
 - Did these processes help bring about a better understanding on how the CPIMS+ and proGres V4 work as separate but complementary systems?
 - Was or is there clarity on how information sharing protocols (inter-agency); data sharing agreements (operational partners) and the UNHCR Annex C (implementing partners) come together?
 - How would you describe the dynamics between donor and implementing partners with relation to information sharing and use of specific digital information management systems?
2. What is your understanding of how CPIMS+ users should share information with UNHCR and vice versa? How is this done in your context?
 - How would you describe the dynamics between case management service providers in the inter-agency fora in relation to information sharing and use of specific digital information management systems?
3. What could help clarify how CPIMS+ and UNHCR and proGres V4 can both work well simultaneously and/or collaboratively in any context?

2.3. Main Themes which Emerged in the Consultations



2.4. Principal Finding

There is no urgent need for guidance on the interplay of proGres V4 and CPIMS+ in refugee and mixed settings. Rather there is a clear and urgent need for overall guidance on information management for child protection case management, and particularly data protection and information sharing in refugee and mixed settings. Equally, guidance is need for all humanitarian settings, but this exceeds the scope of this guidance note.

2.5. Key Findings

1. DPIA/DPISP Process are not always clear, including, who needs to be involved?

Participants frequently raised a lack of clarity on the process of initiating, developing and finalising the DPIA and DPISP. This included confusion over who or what body leads the process, the duration of the process, and how the process is concluded. More practically, participants described issues around the designation of focal persons participating in the DPIA/DPISP process – that it was unclear who would be the most appropriate focal person and matters of staff turnover resulted in delays or the process losing momentum.

Further, because the most commonly designated staff to be involved in the process are child protection and case management staff, instead of legal or data protection specialists, the focal points had a gap in knowledge, skills and expertise required to fully engage with and understand the process and the substance of the tools being used. Moreover, participants noted that the process was time-consuming, confusing, and drawn out, and therefore, require more time or investment than they could dedicate considering their numerous competing priorities.

2. DPIA/DPISP Tools/Templates are not easy to apply especially with local actors; they are also hard for inter-agency actors to understand and roll-out – what are the

“right” templates? Where does one find them? How does one use them? What is the process and timeline?

Participants raised that the tools and templates for the DPIA and DPISP themselves contribute to some of the confusion and lack of clarity. There is not one single template, and often different versions picked up from different operations enter into circulation for consideration. This can compromise the quality of the process and products as the example from another country may not be fully aligned to best practice or key requirements in terms of balancing the standard or legal text and contextualisation of the tools and content. It was unclear to participants which ‘standard global templates’ they should use, and the templates they had were lengthy and unclear in both structure and content. It was also unclear which sections of the tools were optional or adaptable, and which parts were legal text or were recommended not to be changed.

3. Information Sharing is a major concern, there is a lack of clarity and confusion at field level on what can be shared and what should not be shared - what information must be shared? What information must not be shared? Under what circumstances? By whom? To whom? How?

One of the most frequently cited and stressed matters involved proper information sharing. The majority of participants felt not only confused but concerned by the lack of clarity on what information should or should not be shared, with whom, when and how. This can lead to tension and confusion over information sharing requests from UNHCR to implementing and operational partners, and a conflation of the role of UNHCR (donor, coordinator, service provider) which may have different impact on data sharing decision making in certain circumstances.

Further, concerns over how information is processed by UNHCR and the lack of familiarity by many partners with proGres V4 contributes to an atmosphere of opaqueness where participants expressed reluctance to share information with UNHCR due to a perception of lack of transparency about how the information would be used. For UNHCR, challenges in accessing information they ‘need to know’ from partners prevailed, with colleagues expressing concern over the refugee case load, and children with urgent and specific needs that can be met by UNHCR potentially being invisible to UNHCR.

4. Case Management Coordination is critical in the success of overall IM4CM good practices, but often the Case Management Task Force or the dedicated Coordination body is led by staff members who are not versed on IM4CM – Who is best placed to lead the process? What skills, expertise and knowledge do they need to do so?

Many participants noted that there is a lack of clarity on who should lead the process of developing a DPIA and DPISP – should it be the CMTF coordinator? UNHCR? UNICEF? The CPIMS+ lead in country?⁵ Without this clarity there is often a lack of “dedicated leadership” and the process can become drawn out or delayed due to numerous competing priorities, staff turnover in the CMTF and in the participating agencies themselves.

⁵ Information Management for Case Management (IM4CM) is not system-dependent, and appropriate practices and principles need to be in place (including the DPIA and DPISP) regardless of what information system is planned for deployment or in use, whether it is digital or paper-based, for example.

There is a notably high turnover of staff reported across the countries consulted, with international staff therefore often responsible for the process which can be overly lengthy and drawn out and sometimes not being there for the entirety of the process. Equally, high turnover is also true of national staff which limits the involvement of national counterparts in the process and therefore there is a perceived “revolving door” within some of the case management coordination mechanisms. This also relates to the loss of institutional or inter-agency knowledge and skills due to turnover which can too hinder the processes required to establish inter-agency data protection and information sharing procedures.

While all staff working in case management are generally well versed in aspects of data protection principles, information management for case management, and the use of specific digital or paper-based tools – experience in developing data protection and information sharing protocols of a legal or ethically binding nature and making informed decisions on data protection risks and mitigation is an acquired skill with dedicated learning and development required. There is a clear gap in this skillset across most contexts. Many staff have substantial experience in child protection, case management and coordination – but do not have the skills or expertise in data protection and information management, needed to put principle into practice in a systematic and sustained manner.

5. Training & Capacity Building on IM4CM is a gap which needs to be filled at all levels, this goes beyond the individuals who lead the process.

It was revealing to learn that many participants had not received any dedicated training on information management for case management, information management, data protection and the process of developing DPIA or DPISP at an agency or inter-agency level. This included both UNHCR and UNICEF staff. Many noted that they have not received sufficient capacity building and often it is a case of learning on the job or learning by doing. This too contributes to a lack of clarity in process and use of tools. There is a need for a dedicated inter-agency training on IM4CM which includes the following main components: Case Management Forms (as per contextual SOPs); Data Protection and Impact Assessment; Data Protection and Information Sharing Protocols; operation of the case management database that is in use.

6. Technology is not a specific barrier or concerns for field colleagues, but better understanding information sharing principles, practice and protocols is needed and familiarity with proGres V4 is helpful

Overwhelmingly, participants did not see the use of specific digital information management systems like CPIMS+ and proGres V4, and decisions about “which system” to use in a given context to be the primary issue of concern. In fact, there was little discussion on information sharing between CPIMS+ and proGres V4, while the matter of safe information sharing practices between case management agencies and UNHCR, as well as between agencies more broadly, including local authorities, was a notable concern.

Participants confirmed that there was not a particular or urgent need for guidance on the use of proGres V4 and CPIMS+ per se, but rather, that there was an urgent need for clear guidance on information management for child protection case management in humanitarian settings, including refugee settings, where there were particular concerns on information sharing to and from UNHCR as a donor, coordinator and service provider arise. Participants expressed that it was imperative for there to be capacity building on

information management for case management, including the DPIA and DPISP development process and products of these efforts and their safe implementation.

3. Key Recommendations & Way Forward

1. **Clarify that the DPIA and DPISP are information management for case management tools**, not CPIMS+ tools and therefore ensure these are recognized as key tools for case management, independent from the specific information management system being utilized (e.g. paper or excel based systems also require the use of these tools.)

Action: UNICEF/UNCHR are co-leading the revision of the global standard inter-agency DPIA and DPISP templates as part of the work of the Case Management Task Force of the Alliance for CPHA - this process will be completed in 2023 including roll-out of these tools. The tools will include an overarching Explanatory Note which describes the process to safely implement the use of the tools.

2. **Define roles and accountabilities in the DPIA and DPISP development process** at both coordination level and at the agency level

Action: Defined roles and accountabilities to be included in DPISP/DPIA Explanatory Note (see above) and provision of technical assistance by Case Management Task Force members and related agency focal points for IM4CM

3. **Increase understanding of IM4CM** for both frontline staff engaged in child protection case management, as well as staff in inter-agency coordination roles.

Action: Updates to the Case Management Training for Case Workers/ Supervisors by IRC as part of the Alliance CMTF should include IM4CM principles and processes. The Alliance CMTF 2023 Work Plan will include the development of a specific IM4CM module led by UNICEF and UNHCR.

4. **Provide clarity on information sharing with and from UNHCR** for UNHCR implementing and operational partners, a major concern with lack of clarity is causing confusion.

Action: A specific section on information sharing with and from UNHCR in refugee and mixed settings to be included in the DPISP template to provide clarity, aligned to the revised Annex C as a product of the ongoing inter-agency work on the Technical Note⁶.

5. **Develop “interoperability in taxonomy”** between data from different sources would help overall information sharing

Action: A consultant has been hired to develop Guidance which defines data categories/ structures for child protection Case Management, this will be available in Q1 of 2023 and then disseminated with regional and country operations.

6. **Provide clarity on how to involve and support national counterparts in IM4CM processes**, such as local organisations and authorities.

⁶ InterAction and UNHCR technical note on the sharing of protection related data.

Action: To be included into DPIA/DPIISP Explanatory Note (see above) and provision of technical assistance by the Case Management Task Force members and related agency focal points for IM4CM

- 7. Interoperability between CPIMS+ and proGres V4** would ease some processes when it comes to refugee child protection case management and linkages to refugee protection case management. It is important to consult with colleagues in the country operations for the development and selection of future use cases.

Action: Interoperability work is on-going with an initial pilot of the referral functionality⁷ taking place in Gambella, Ethiopia, in 2022. Following the pilot, consultations on the next use case will commence.

- 8. UNHCR to increase familiarity with proGres V4**, situating the proGres V4 CP Module within the broader PRIMEs ecosystem and refugee protection case management processes.

Action: UNHCR is engaged in ongoing efforts to develop demonstrations, trainings and tools widely accessible online for agencies and actors to learn more about proGres V4 and the CP module⁸.

4. Conclusion and Next Steps

Following this set of country consultations, and after discussion with the CPIMS+ Steering Committee, UNICEF, UNHCR, and the Alliance CMTF, it was decided that the focus of the Guidance Note should shift in its objectives, to provide clarity on information management for case management rather than the interplay of the CPIMS+ and proGres V4. It was also agreed that based on this new scope, this activity would be best suited to be developed under the auspices of the Alliance CMTF as an activity in the Information Management for Case Management workstream. This has been agreed by the Alliance CMTF which will endorse the final version of the Guidance Note.

Finally, this was presented to the Data Working Group of the UNHCR-UNICEF Blueprint for Joint Action for Refugee Children where this activity originated included. UNICEF and UNHCR have also committed to addressing the other key recommendations highlighted above in coordination with inter-agency actors and colleagues in the regional and country offices.

⁷ Demonstration videos of the CPIMS+ and proGres V4 Interoperability Referral Functionality can be [accessed here](#) on YouTube.

⁸ UNHCR “proGres V4 CP and GBV Module How to Video Series” [available here](#) on YouTube (in English, French, Arabic and Spanish)

5. Annex: Overview of Participating Agencies

# by Case Management Task Force members and related agency focal points for IM4CM	Date	Country	Agencies
1	15 November 2021	Lebanon	UNICEF UNHCR Save the Children TdH Lousanne Plan International
2	22 November 2022	Iraq	UNICEF UNHCR Save the Children IRC
3	24 November 2022	Somalia	UNICEF UNHCR Save the Children
4	30 November 2021	Ethiopia, Gambella	UNICEF UNHCR Save the Children TdH Lousanne Plan International
5	2 December 2021	Kenya, Dadaab	UNICEF UNHCR Save the Children TdH Lousanne
6	16 December 2021	Jordan	UNICEF UNHCR TdH Lousanne Plan International IMC