



# Data Responsibility in Humanitarian Action

Results and analysis for the survey conducted online from 27 February - 18 March 2020  
by the IASC Results Group 1 Sub-Group on Data Responsibility

*Published: 15 April 2020*

## CONTENTS

- Background
- Overview of Survey Respondent Demographics
- Principles and Themes
- Actions for Data Responsibility
- Resources and Templates
- Additional Feedback



# Background

*Who conducted the survey and how will the results be used?*

## BACKGROUND

The **Sub-Group on Data Responsibility in Humanitarian Action** was initiated in January 2020 under the auspices of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Results Group 1.

The Sub-Group is co-led by the OCHA Centre for Humanitarian Data, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

The resulting document will be submitted for endorsement by the IASC in late 2020. Once endorsed, this guidance will serve as a benchmark for key actions and accountabilities vis-a-vis data responsibility at the response level.

MEMBERS OF IASC SUB-GROUP ON  
DATA RESPONSIBILITY IN  
HUMANITARIAN ACTION



## OBJECTIVES OF THE SUB-GROUP



→ **Develop joint system-wide operational guidance on data responsibility** through a consultative process



→ **Secure IASC endorsement** of the operational guidance



→ **Devise a strategy for implementation** of the operational guidance following formal endorsement



→ **Build a community of practice** around data responsibility in humanitarian action

## GOALS OF THE PUBLIC-FACING SURVEY

- **Inform the development** of joint, system-wide Operational Guidance on data responsibility
- **Support the prioritization of key themes and areas of action** for inclusion in the Operational Guidance
- **Expand the network of practitioners** involved in shaping the Operational Guidance at the global and operational level, with emphasis placed on field-level colleagues



# Overview

*Who responded to the survey?*

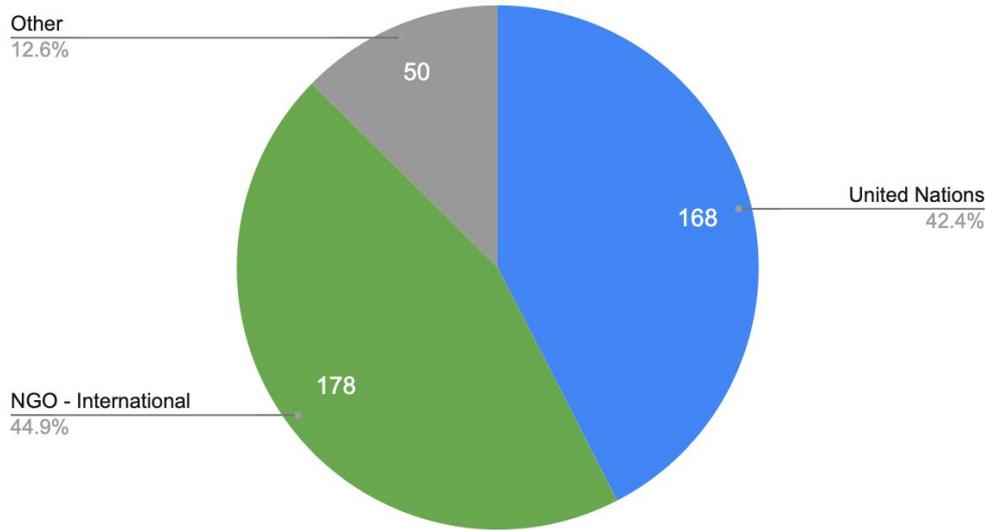
**15** survey questions

**396** responses

**78** countries represented

# Organization

*What type of organization do you work for?*



## **TYPE OF ORGANIZATION**

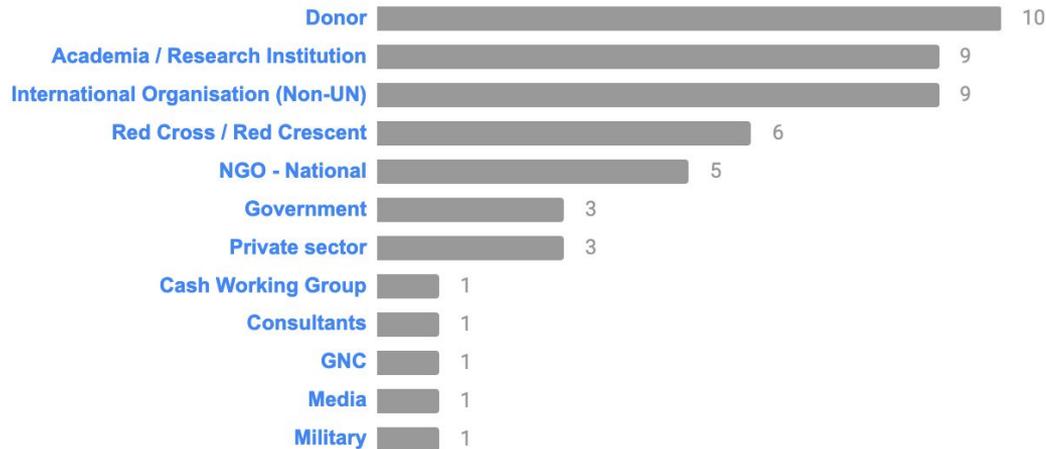
International NGO staff represented the greatest proportion of respondents (44.9%), followed by staff from United Nations entities (42.4%).

The remaining respondents (12.6%) were split across donors, academic/research institutions, the Red Cross and Red Crescent movement, other international organizations (non-UN), and national NGOs.

**UN and international NGO staff represented 87.3% of the total respondents.**

# Organisation (“other”)

*What type of organization do you work for?*



*Number of total respondents from different organization types categorized as “other” in previous slide.*

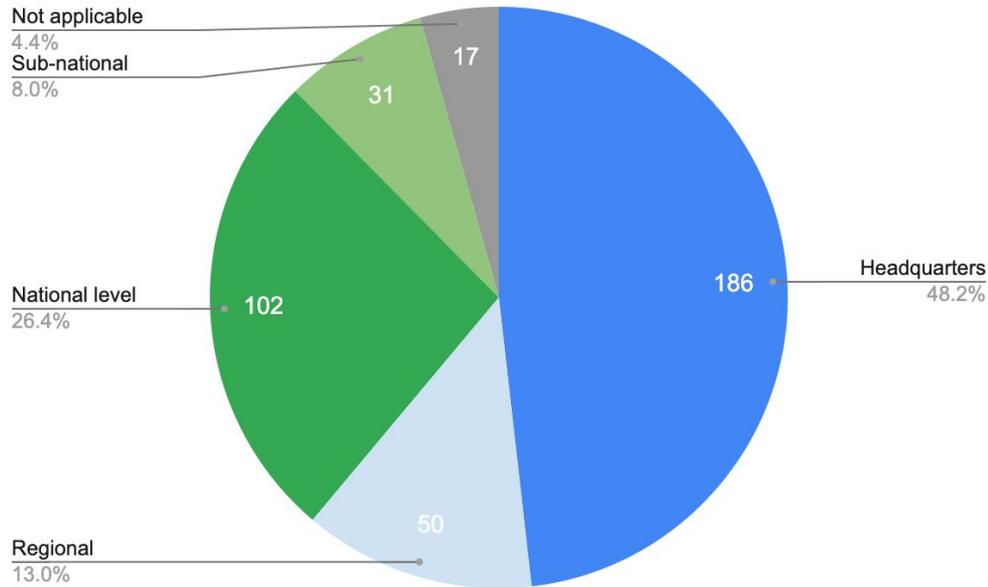
## **TYPE OF ORGANISATION**

The remaining respondents (12.6%) represented a variety of organization types.

Donors, academic/research institutions, and International Organisations (Non-UN) made-up the majority of this group. The Red Cross and Red Crescent movement was also well represented.

# Type of Office

*What type of office do you work in?*



*Sample size, and % of total respondents*

## TYPES OF OFFICE

Nearly half (48%) of respondents came from Headquarters offices, with the next largest proportion of respondents coming from Country - national level offices (26%).

Country-level (national and sub-national) colleagues represented one third (33.8%) of all respondents.

The 4.4% of respondents represented as "Not applicable" indicated a variety of office types, including "home-based", "stand-by partner", and "remote-working".

Colleagues from various field office locations accounted for 46.4% of all respondents.

# Geography

*In which country are you based?*



## **GLOBAL REACH**

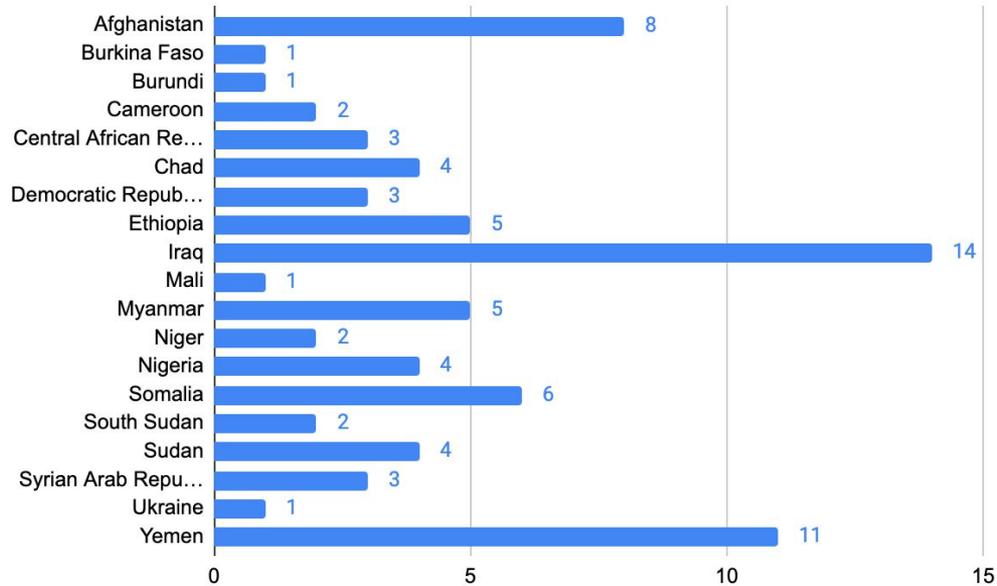
Respondents from 78 countries completed the survey.

The top five countries with the most respondents were the United States (n=51), Switzerland (n=35), the United Kingdom (n=34), Kenya (n=17), and Iraq (n=14).

Colleagues from HRP countries represented 20% of all survey respondents.

# Geography

*In which country are you based? [HRP Countries]*



*Number of respondents per location*

## **HRP COUNTRIES**

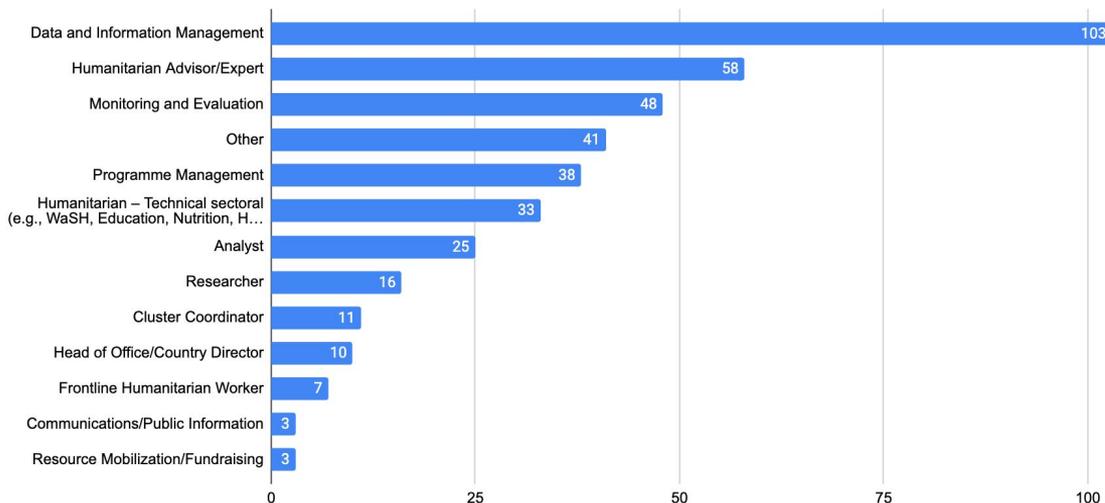
Respondents from 19 of the 23 HRP countries completed the survey.

Iraq and Yemen had the highest number of respondents within this group of countries.

Colleagues from HRP countries represented 20% of all survey respondents.

# Role or Focus Area

*How would you describe your role or area of focus?*



*# of respondents (out of a total 396 responses)*

## ROLES

Data-oriented staff represent a significant proportion of respondents (26%), however there is strong representation from humanitarian advisors/experts (14.65%) and program management staff (9.6%).

41 respondents identified themselves as 'other', with a variety of roles identified that spread evenly across the other roles / functional, areas indicated in the survey.

Overall, there was a balance between data-oriented staff (data & IM, M&E, Analyst) and staff in the various other humanitarian functions listed.

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# Principles and Themes

*What principles and key themes were identified as most relevant to the Operational Guidance?*

The twelve principles below received the highest number of votes in the survey.

- 1 Data Confidentiality
- 2 Data Security
- 3 Do No Harm
- 4 Data Quality
- 5 Informed Consent
- 6 Accountability
- 7 Respect for Data Subject's Rights
- 8 Transparency
- 9 People-Centred and Inclusive Approaches to Data
- 10 Risk Prevention and Mitigation
- 11 Fair and Legitimate Data Processing
- 12 Competency and Capacity for Responsible Data Management

# Principles

*Please select the ten most important principles for ensuring responsible approaches to data in the field.*

Principle	%	Principle	%
Data Confidentiality	72.7%	Competency and Capacity for Responsible Data Management	41.7%
Data Security	71.5%	Purpose Specification	41.4%
Do No Harm	64.1%	Proportionality and Necessity of Data Activities	40.9%
Data Quality	63.1%	Lawful Data Processing	30.1%
Informed Consent	62.4%	Data Retention and Destruction	29.8%
Accountability	59.3%	Impartiality	29.0%
Respect for Data Subjects' Rights	55.8%	Data Minimization	28.8%
Transparency	46.2%	Neutrality	26.5%
People-Centred and Inclusive Approaches to Data	44.7%	Respect for and Adaptation to Context	24.7%
Risk Prevention and Mitigation	42.9%	Humanity	23.5%
Fair and Legitimate Data Processing	42.2%	Independence	23.5%

*% of total respondents who identified each principle as 'most important'*

## **PRINCIPLES FOR DATA RESPONSIBILITY**

14 of the 22 principles presented to respondents received a considerable number of 'votes' (between 40% - 72.7% of all respondents).

Data Confidentiality and Data Security were selected by the highest proportion of respondents (72.7% and 71.5% respectively) as most important.

*All of the principles received at least 23.5% of respondents' 'vote', showing the perceived importance of the entire set of options.*

# Principles by Role

Please select the ten most important principles for ensuring responsible approaches to data in the field.

Roles	Data Confidentiality	Data Security	Do No Harm	Data Quality	Informed Consent	Accountability	Transparency	People-Centred and Inclusive Approaches to Data	Risk Prevention and Mitigation	Fair and Legitimate Data Processing	Competency and Capacity for Responsible Data Management	Purpose Specification	Proportionality and Necessity of Data Activities	Lawful Data Processing	Data Retention and Destruction	Impartiality	Data Minimization
Analyst	64%	84%	56%	68%	52%	56%	64%	48%	36%	52%	36%	48%	24%	20%	8%	44%	16%
Cluster Coordinator	82%	64%	64%	82%	73%	55%	73%	55%	36%	36%	45%	27%	55%	36%	27%	27%	0%
Data and Information Management	69%	71%	55%	63%	56%	56%	50%	45%	43%	51%	42%	48%	47%	26%	32%	24%	34%
Country Director	80%	60%	90%	90%	50%	80%	40%	40%	40%	30%	10%	10%	50%	20%	20%	50%	0%
Humanitarian – Technical Sectoral	73%	64%	67%	58%	70%	73%	39%	61%	39%	33%	36%	45%	33%	24%	24%	30%	30%
Humanitarian Expert	64%	67%	74%	59%	69%	55%	41%	52%	52%	38%	52%	36%	48%	22%	33%	31%	21%
Monitoring & Evaluation	77%	75%	60%	71%	60%	63%	48%	31%	42%	33%	42%	44%	29%	40%	38%	21%	38%
Programme Management	76%	74%	63%	61%	63%	61%	45%	45%	39%	45%	47%	37%	45%	45%	18%	34%	26%
Researcher	81%	81%	75%	75%	88%	69%	50%	31%	38%	31%	50%	25%	50%	6%	38%	25%	38%
Other	81%	72%	69%	52%	61%	54%	33%	41%	46%	43%	35%	44%	35%	43%	37%	30%	35%

% of respondents within each 'role' group who identified a principle as 'most important'

# Principles

*If there are any other principles you believe are missing from the list above and should be included, please suggest them here.*

- The majority of free-text suggestions are addressed by the definitions of the principles that respondents were asked to choose from
- Some of the suggestions were too specific to include in general operational guidance
- Several suggestions are covered by other content in the draft operational guidance, such as the specific actions at different levels of a response

The eight themes below received the highest number of votes in the survey.

1 Data Protection

2 Data Ethics

3 Assessing Benefits,  
Risks and Harms of  
Data Management

4 Data Sharing

5 Data Management  
Procedures and  
Processes

6 Data Security

7 Roles and  
Responsibilities for  
Responsible Data  
Management

8 Competency and Capacity  
Requirements for  
Responsible Data  
Management

# Themes

*Based on your understanding of data responsibility and the purpose of this operational guidance, please select the seven most important themes that you believe should be included.*

Theme	%	Theme	%
Data Protection	75.0%	Competency and Capacity Requirements for Responsible Data Management	51.0%
Data Ethics	67.7%	Technical Tools for Responsible Data Management	46.2%
Assessing Benefits, Risks, and Harms of Data Management	67.2%	Data Governance	42.7%
Data Sharing	66.2%	Data Rights	41.4%
Data Security	59.6%	Legal and Regulatory Issues	33.3%
Data Management Procedures and Processes	54.3%	Data Classification	22.2%
Roles and Responsibilities for Responsible Data Management	54.0%		

*% of total respondents who identified the themes as 'most important'*

## **THEMES FOR THE OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE**

Of the thirteen themes or topic areas presented, eight themes were identified by at least 50% of respondents as important to include in the Operational Guidance.

The clear priority themes were Data Protection (75%), Data Ethics (67.7%), Assessing Benefits, Risks and Harms (67.2%). And Data Sharing (66.2%).

**All of the themes received support from at least 22.2% of the respondents.**

# Themes by Role

Please select the seven most important themes that you believe should be include.

Roles	Data Protection	Data Ethics	Assessing Benefits- Risks- and Harms of Data Manag..	Data Sharing	Data Security	Data Management Procedures and Processes	Roles and Responsibilities for Responsible Data Mana..	Competency and Capacity Requirements for Respons..	Technical Tools for Responsible Data Manage..	Data Governance	Data Rights	Legal and Regulatory Issues	Data Classification
Analyst	72%	84%	52%	72%	60%	60%	40%	40%	56%	52%	36%	20%	20%
Cluster Coordinator	64%	55%	82%	64%	73%	82%	73%	36%	55%	27%	27%	27%	27%
Data & Information Managem..	65%	58%	63%	72%	61%	62%	54%	52%	50%	48%	30%	30%	34%
Head of Office	70%	80%	40%	60%	50%	30%	40%	40%	30%	70%	60%	10%	50%
Technical Experts (Sector)	85%	73%	79%	61%	67%	36%	52%	48%	42%	42%	39%	27%	24%
Humanitarian Advisor	84%	72%	72%	59%	57%	55%	50%	59%	52%	41%	40%	41%	10%
Monitoring & Evaluation	71%	67%	60%	71%	60%	60%	58%	52%	52%	31%	44%	29%	25%
Programme Management	82%	68%	74%	74%	50%	50%	61%	53%	39%	39%	55%	32%	13%
Researcher	63%	88%	69%	75%	63%	44%	63%	63%	31%	50%	56%	31%	0%
Other	85%	65%	72%	54%	59%	46%	54%	46%	35%	39%	52%	52%	17%

% of respondents *within each 'role' group* who identified a theme as 'most important'

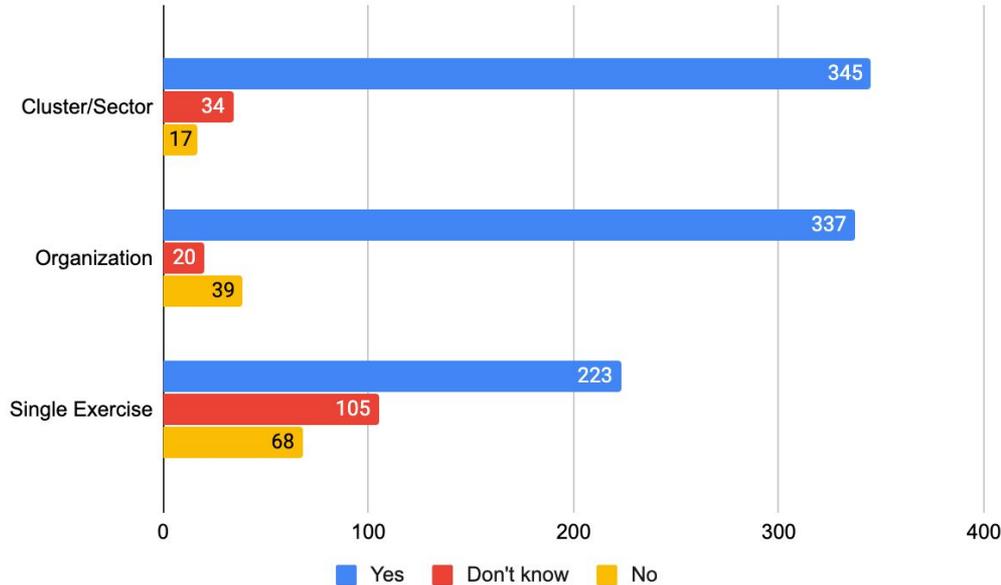
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# Actions for Data Responsibility

*What types of recommended actions should the Operational Guidance offer at different levels of humanitarian response?*

# Levels of Action

*In addition to Response-Wide guidance, should the Operational Guidance recommend actions for data responsibility at the following levels?*



*Total respondents who selected each option at the different levels.*

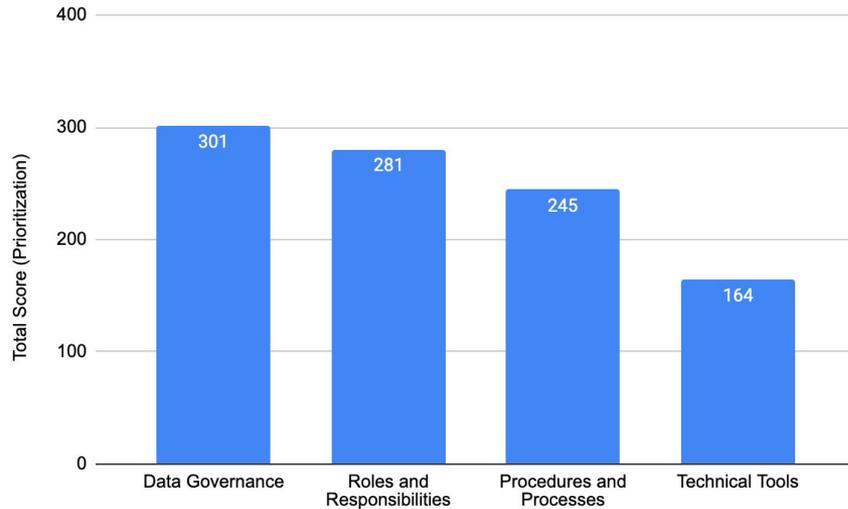
## LEVELS OF ACTION FOR DATA RESPONSIBILITY

Overall, respondents saw value in the Operational Guidance presenting recommendations for actions that support data responsibility at all three levels (cluster/sector, organization, and single data management exercise).

However, while the utility of cluster/sector-level and organization-level recommendations is clear, nearly 45% of respondents either weren't sure ('don't know') or did not see the value of recommendations at the level of a single data management exercise.

# Response-Wide Actions

*Please rank the different areas or categories of recommended actions for data responsibility in order of importance (1 = most important, 4 = least important).*



*Scores were calculated using weighted ranking to generate an overall prioritization.  
A ranking of 1 = 1 point, 2 = .75 points, 3 = .5 points, and 4 = .25 points.*

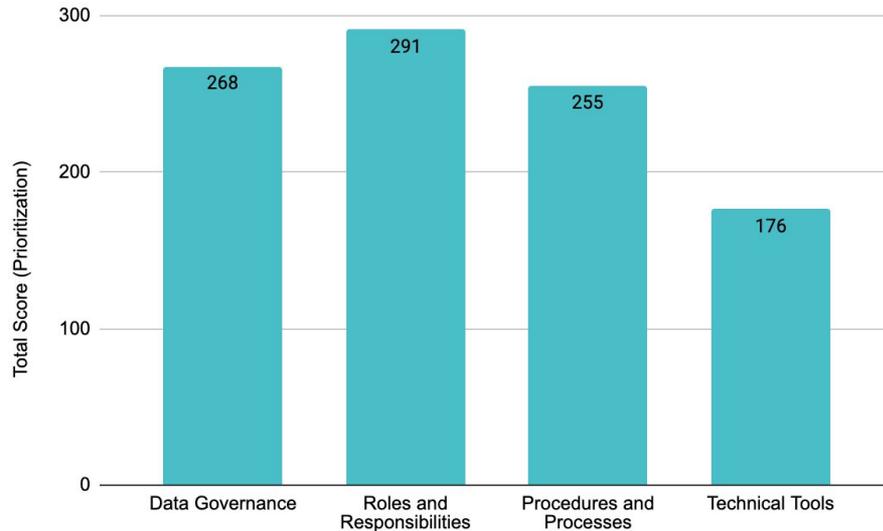
## **PRIORITIZATION**

At the Response-Wide Level, respondents identified **Data Governance** as the clear priority area. Roles and Responsibilities and Procedures and Processes followed in order of importance. Compared to these other areas, Technical Tools were seen as least important at this level.

Interestingly, this is the highest ranking for Data Governance and the lowest ranking for Technical Tools across the four different levels of response that survey respondents were asked to consider.

# Cluster/Sector-Level Actions

*Please rank the different areas or categories of recommended actions for data responsibility in order of importance (1 = most important, 4 = least important).*



*Scores were calculated using weighted ranking to generate an overall prioritization.  
A ranking of 1 = 1 point, 2 = .75 points, 3 = .5 points, and 4 = .25 points.*

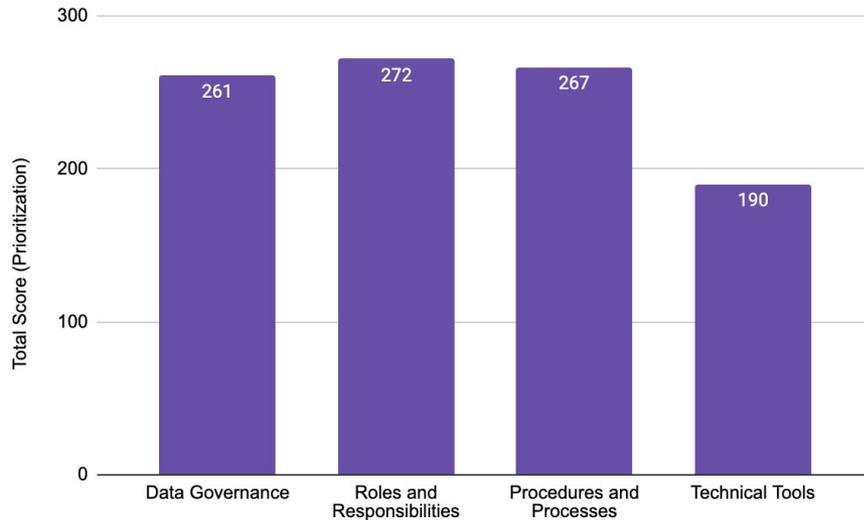
## **PRIORITIZATION**

At the Cluster/Sector-Level, respondents identified **Roles and Responsibilities** as the most important area for recommendations. Data Governance and Procedures and Processes followed in order of importance.

Not surprisingly, given the nature of data management at the Cluster/Sector level and the role that the Clusters/Sectors play, **Technical Tools** were seen as least important at this level.

# Organization-Level Actions

*Please rank the different areas or categories of recommended actions for data responsibility in order of importance (1 = most important, 4 = least important).*



*Scores were calculated using weighted ranking to generate an overall prioritization.  
A ranking of 1 = 1 point, 2 = .75 points, 3 = .5 points, and 4 = .25 points.*

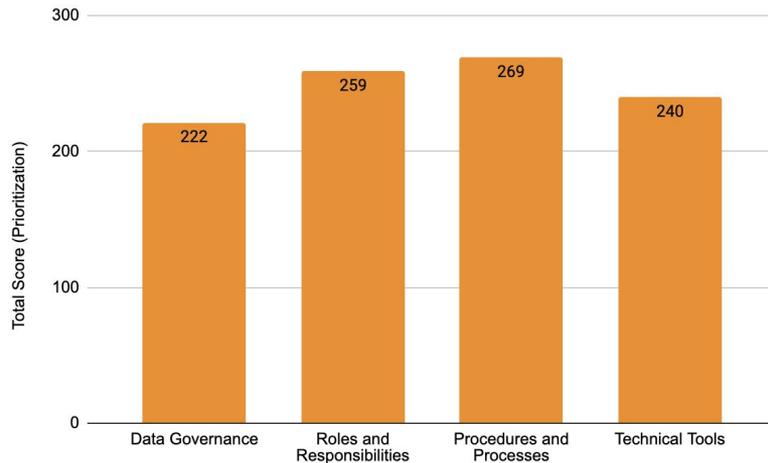
## **PRIORITIZATION**

At the Organization-Level, respondents again identified **Roles and Responsibilities** as the most important area for recommendations. **Procedures and Processes** and Data Governance followed in order of importance.

Once again, recommendations regarding Technical Tools were seen as least important at this level, perhaps because many organizations already have preferred tools and approaches for managing the technical aspects of data management.

# Single Data Management Exercise-Level Actions

*Please rank the different areas or categories of recommended actions for data responsibility in order of importance (1 = most important, 4 = least important).*



*Scores were calculated using weighted ranking to generate an overall prioritization. A ranking of 1 = 1 point, 2 = .75 points, 3 = .5 points, and 4 = .25 points.*

## **PRIORITIZATION**

At the Single Data Management Exercise-Level, respondents identified **Procedures and Processes** as the most important area for recommendations. **Roles and Responsibilities** and **Technical Tools** followed as the most important area for recommendations.

Data Governance was seen as the least important area for recommendations at this level. This may be due to the fact that individual data management exercises typically fall under Organization- or Cluster/Sector-Level governance frameworks.

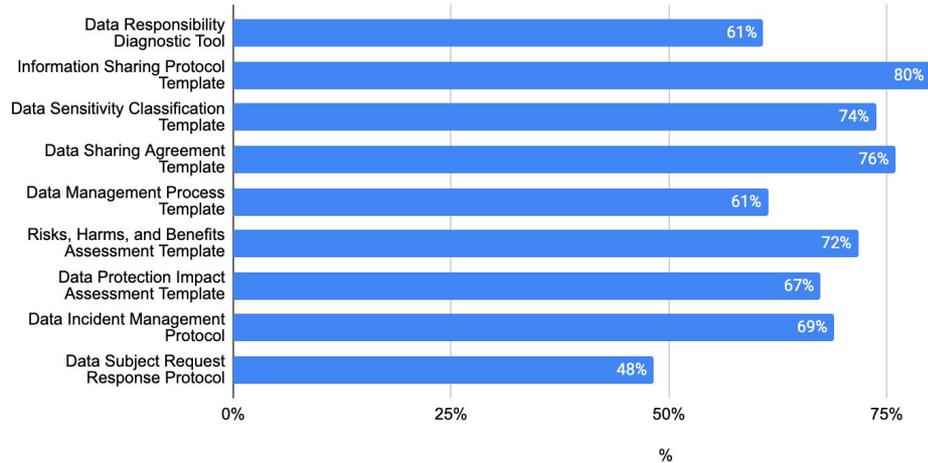
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# Resources and Templates

*What resources and tools/templates should  
be included or referenced in the  
Operational Guidance?*

# Resources, Tools & Templates

*What resources and tools/templates should be included or referenced in the Operational Guidance?*



*Sample size and % of total respondents*

## **DEMAND FOR RESOURCES, TOOLS, AND TEMPLATES**

All of the proposed resources, tools and templates received broad support (at least 60% or more respondents said every tool should be included, with the exception of the 'data subject request response protocol').

The most popular tools and templates (Templates for an Information Sharing Protocol, a Data Sharing Agreement, a Data Sensitivity Classification, and a Risks, Harms, and Benefits Assessment) are arguably the most broadly applicable in different response contexts.

# Resources to Inform the Operational Guidance

*What existing resources do you believe should be used to inform the development of the Operational Guidance on Data Responsibility?*

- Respondents shared a variety of resources, many of which were already included in the desk review conducted to inform the Operational Guidance.
- 12 of 85 suggested resources relate to national or regional privacy and data protection legislation.
- More than 50% (45 of 85) of the responses refer to guidelines and policies developed by humanitarian organizations.
- The sub-group will publish a resource list specific to data responsibility in humanitarian action later in the year.

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# Additional Feedback

*What additional comments or  
recommendations should the Sub-Group  
consider in developing the Operational  
Guidance?*

# Comments and Recommendations

*Please share any additional comments or recommendations you believe the Sub-Group should consider in developing the Operational Guidance on Data Responsibility.*

- 65 respondents offered substantive comments and recommendations.
- Roughly 20% of these related to communicating with and/or including affected people in humanitarian data management.
- A number of respondents pointed to the need for clear guidance on how to navigate the variety of regulatory frameworks to which different organizations are subject.
- Many respondents noted the importance of multi-stakeholder approaches and collective action on data responsibility, and also noted that the Operational Guidance should complement other inter-agency initiatives already underway.
- Some respondents suggested including examples and recommended strategies for implementing the operational guidance in the final document.

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# Questions?

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