

SCS Mission Statement

To help ensure predictable OCHA emergency response by addressing unforeseen and critical gaps in human resources in new or escalating crises and situations of force majeure, through the rapid and coordinated mobilization of adequate numbers of well-prepared surge personnel from internal and external resources.

SCS outputs and activities primarily contribute to Objectives 2.2, 2.3 and 3.2 of OCHA's Strategic Framework.

SCS Functions

- Surge deployments through ERR, SBPP, ASP and RESOs
- Central surge coordination and advice through HQ-processes and SCS field deployments
- Development of new surge methodologies and policies
- Surge staff development and support services

SCS surge services are part of a 'three lines of defence' structure: 1st line of defence is from OCHA Country Offices, 2nd is from the Regional Office/UNDAC and 3rd is from HQ-coordinated surge. Regular recruitment should normally follow if needed.

In 2011: Total of 113 deployments through ASP (25), ERR (42), SBPP (38), SCS staff (5) and 2 UNAMI secondments to 17 countries.

SCS 2012 Focus Areas

- Maintain and further improve existing surge services
- Improve surge for specific niche areas (e.g. senior surge, specific language skills)
- Intensify efforts to reduce "turn-over" and improve the transition from surge to regular staffing in collaboration with CRD and ASB
- Enhance surge quality and impact through a variety of measures prior to, during and after assignments
- Promote an enabling environment in support of surge

Surge Staff Development

The main aim of surge staff development is to contribute to the improved professional performance and personal well-being of surge personnel. A strategy with the objective to better support and strengthen the skill set of surge personnel, in particular national staff, is in place. It entails residential training courses, pre-deployment briefings and regular web-based seminars. The Field Response Surge Training (FIRST), primarily targeting ERR members is held twice a year in addition to three SBPP Induction trainings. Surge Staff Development also co-facilitates relevant training events with internal and external partners.

In 2012, SCS will address the organization's duty of care and develop a system to better brief (before deployment), support (during deployment), and debrief (after deployment) surge deployees. A final product, a Surge Package of Care, will be available before June 2012.

Emergency Response Roster (ERR)

2 rotations per year: April – September and October - March

The ERR is an internal emergency deployment scheme for surge purposes with each rotation being composed of 35 members from OCHA HQ and field offices (HAOs, Administrative support staff, IMOs, ICT specialists, CMCO, PIOs).

Deployment Duration: typically six weeks (three months exceptionally).

2011 highlights:

- 42 ERR members were deployed in 2011, the majority of the deployments were in response to the Libya crisis (21 between Egypt and Tunisia)
- In response to the Drought in the Horn of Africa, 5 ERR members deployed between Somalia, Kenya and Djibouti.
- In 2011, most deployments were to complex emergencies

Stand-by Partnership Programme (SBPP)

OCHA maintains MOUs with 12 Stand-by Partner agencies for the provision of "gratis personnel" in emergencies. 2011 saw one new agency come on board; the German "Center for International Peace Operations" commonly known as "ZIF".

Main profile in demand: Generalist HAO and IMO at P3 level

Deployment Duration: an average of 4 months

2011 highlights:

- OCHA deployed 39 Experts to 17 countries from 9 Partners
- RedR, NRC and Irish Aid were the largest contributors to the SBPP in 2011

Associates Surge Pool (ASP)

The ASP, introduced in October 2010, deploys mid-term surge to new crises and to fill critical staffing gaps in existing office structures. It aims to support OCHA in achieving more 'operational stability' by bridging the gap between the most immediate surge phase and the arrival of regularly recruited staff.

SCS currently maintains a pool of 86 members (P3-D1 levels) made up of HAOs who can deploy for periods of up to 6 months as well as IMOs and PIOs deployable for periods of 3 months.

2011 highlights:

- OCHA deployed 25 ASP members to 14 countries.
- The Libya crisis as well as the humanitarian situation in the Ivory Coast as a result of post-electoral violence were the largest recipients of ASP surge

Roaming Emergency Surge Officers (RESOs)

2012 will see the establishment of the RESOs within the SCS. The RESO modality will be comprised of three full time senior OCHA staff members, based in Geneva but expected to spend 80% of the year on deployment. The purpose of the RESOs is to strengthen senior surge within OCHA in new and escalating crises, thus contributing to one of the objectives of the IASC Transformative Agenda.