

The Inter-Agency Minimum Standards for Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies Programming - FAQs

1. What is the purpose of the standards?

The objective of the Minimum Standards is to establish a common understanding of what constitutes minimum GBV prevention and response programming in emergencies. The 16 Minimum Standards aim to enhance accountability among GBV actors, improve programme quality, and guard against practices that may cause harm.

2. What does it mean to have Standards that are “Minimum”?

“**Minimum**” denotes services “**of adequate quality**”; for the purposes of this resource, adequate quality means (1) reflecting good practice and (2) not causing harm. Each Standard represents common agreement on what needs to be achieved for that specific programmatic element to be of adequate quality. When a GBV programme actor decides to implement a programmatic element outlined in the Standards, that intervention must be implemented according to the actions and guidance outlined in that Standard at a minimum.

3. Are all the Standards important for all emergencies?

Yes. The 16 Minimum Standards are interrelated and interdependent, and, therefore, designed to be understood as a comprehensive set of interventions. The standards are universal and relevant for all emergency contexts. It is important to note that individual GBV actors are not responsible for implementing all 16 standards. Most programme elements will require coordination with other partners. There may be situations where it is necessary for partners working on GBV to consider sequencing some interventions before others. For example, in the acute phase of an emergency, it is recommended to prioritize programme elements that are considered life-saving, such as GBV response services and risk mitigation activities. In a protracted crisis, where multisectoral services are in place, the Minimum Standards may be used to achieve or maintain adequate quality. At any point in a humanitarian setting, response services must be established before prevention activities are implemented. Prioritization does not mean that some standards are inherently more important than others, but means that the focus should be on reducing the risk of harm and addressing programme elements that are not in place or of adequate quality.

4. Who are the Standards for?

The resource is designed to be useful for all GBV practitioners, including those who have limited experience in implementing GBV programming. GBV programme actors are personnel who have received GBV-specific training and/or have experience working on GBV programming. The Standards may also be useful for those funding and coordinating GBV services. The Minimum Standards acknowledge a need for efforts to better engage with, empower and promote the work of local actors. Partnership with local women’s movements, women-led civil society and women’s rights networks offers an opportunity to support and sustain localized action to address GBV against women and girls in humanitarian action.

5. What areas do the standards cover?

They are grouped in three parts: Foundational Standards, Programme Standards and Process Standards. The **three Foundational Standards** are critical individually and form the foundation for the implementation of all the Minimum Standards. They cover GBV Guiding Principles, Staff

Care and Support and the Participation and Empowerment of Women and Girls. 10 **Programme Standards** provide guidance on how to respond to, mitigate and prevent GBV in emergencies. They reflect core GBV programming elements and cover a range of services from healthcare to economic empowerment of survivors. The three **Process Standards** provide guidance on critical processes for implementing elements of GBV programming and cover the ethical collection and use of GBV data, coordination between actors and monitoring the effectiveness of GBV prevention and response programming.

6. How do the Standards align with other international guidelines and Guidance on GBV in emergencies?

The Minimum Standards are based on international best practice and integrate existing global guidance and technical standards, including the Sphere Project and its *Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response*, *The Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action*, UNFPA's *Minimum Standards for Prevention and Response to Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies* and the *IASC GBV Guidelines*.

7. How can the Standards be used and applied?

It is expected that the *Minimum Standards* will be used:

- To establish common agreement and measurable expectations regarding the minimum quality of GBV programming in emergencies
- To enhance quality programming and monitor the effectiveness of interventions.
- To increase accountability among all stakeholders
- To train staff or partners
- To conduct advocacy.

***GBV programme actors may also use the Minimum Standards as a tool to fulfil commitments made under the Call to Action on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies.**

8. How can the Minimum Standards be adapted and applied for a specific context?

Contextualizing the Minimum Standards is important because adapting the Minimum Standards to a specific context will result in relevant GBV programming that is survivor-centred, of adequate quality and responsive to the evolving needs of GBV survivors. Furthermore, as a process, contextualization helps build a strong community of practitioners invested in the development and delivery of quality, accountable GBV prevention and response services.

The process of collectively identifying what must be initiated, sustained, strengthened or better coordinated is at the core of contextualization. During this process, GBV programme actors may identify interventions or “key actions” to be prioritized; these may require concerted effort and support, actions to assess and reduce risk, and funding.

All Standards contain a non-exhaustive list of Key Actions to: (1) achieve the Standard and (2) contextualize implementation. Although the Standards are applicable in all settings, all “Key Actions” will not apply to all settings or to all stages of a humanitarian response. Effective implementation of each Standard may require flexibility and/or adaptation of its Key Actions. However, the main statement of each Standard – the first sentence in bold – should not be



changed. In order to attain each Standard, it may be helpful to prioritize Key Actions or make additions to suit the context.