

**INTERSOS STRATEGIC PLAN 2022 - 2024**

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## Acronyms

AAP: Accountability Towards Affected Persons
ANC: Antenatal Care
AU: African Union
BHA: Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance
BOQ: Bill of Quantities
CCCM: Camp Coordination and Camp Management
CHS: Core Humanitarian Standards
CMT: Crisis Management Team
CP: Child Protection
CPP: Comprehensive Planning Process
CSO: Civil Society Organisations
CBO: Community Based Organisations
CSP: Country Strategy Paper
CTM: Counter-terrorism measures
DEVCO: European Commission Directorate General for International Cooperation and Development
DoC: Duty of Care
Dpt: Department
DRC: Democratic Republic of Congo
ECHO: European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
ERP: Enterprise Resource Planning
FAO: Food and Agriculture Organisation
FP: Focal Point
FR: Fundraising
FRAPP: Fraud Risk Assessment Per Position
FTE: Full Time Equivalent

G&C: Grants and Compliance  
GISF: Global Inter Agency Security Forum  
HCT: Humanitarian Country Team  
HDN: Humanitarian-Development Nexus  
HEAT: Hostile Environment Awareness Training  
HoM: Head of Mission  
HQ: Headquarters  
HR: Human Resources  
HRP: Humanitarian Response Plan  
IAPG: Inter-Agency Procurement Group  
IASC: Inter-Agency Standing Committee  
IATI: International Aid Transparency Initiative  
ICRC: International Committee of the Red Cross  
ICT: Information and Communication Technology  
ICVA: International Council of Voluntary Agencies  
IDPs: Internally Displaced Persons  
IMP: INTERSOS Management Platform  
IMS: Inventory Management System  
INGO: International Non-Governmental Organisation  
ISP: INTERSOS Strategic Plan  
KPIs: Key Performance Indicators  
L&D: Learning and Development  
LNGOs: Local Non Governmental Organisations  
MEAL: Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability & Learning  
MENA: Middle East and North Africa  
MoH: Ministry of Health  
M&E: Monitoring & Evaluation  
NGO: Non-Governmental Organisation  
ORAF: Operation Risk Assessment Framework  
PAT: Project Appraisal Tool  
PHC: Primary Health Care  
PP: Procurement Plan  
PRIAMO: Priority Interventions Allocation & Monitoring  
PSEA: Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse  
PUI: Premiere Urgence Internationale  
RD: Regional Director  
RO: Regional Office  
ROI: Return of Investment  
RRP: Refugee Response Plans  
S&S: Safety and Security

SGBV: Sexual and Gender-Based Violence  
SME: Small and Medium Enterprise  
SO: Strategic Objective  
SOP: Standard Operating Procedure  
SR: Staff Request  
SRM: Security & Risk Management  
SV: Stichting Vluchteling  
TOR: Terms of Reference  
UN: United Nations  
UNHCR: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees  
UNHRD: United Nations Humanitarian Response Depot  
VAT: Value Added Tax  
WA: West Africa  
WASH: Water, Sanitation and Hygiene  
WFP: World Food Programme  
WHO: World Health Organisation  
WHS: World Humanitarian Summit

## **INTER SOS STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-24**

Welcome to INTERSOS Strategic Plan (ISP) 2022-24, which aims to provide strategic directions for the Organisation, its members and operations, for the next three years.

This Strategic Plan can be divided into two main sections. Firstly, it presents the framework in which we operate: from our values and principles, to the major trends that shape the humanitarian environment. Then, and in order to navigate this environment, it introduces INTERSOS' strategic framework, which delineates the four strategic objectives and related actions required to achieve them.

We have in mind clear operational and organisational ambitions we want to reach by the end of this three-year period, and we will look at this Strategic Plan to guide our actions and fulfil our goals. It is for this reason that the present document will not be just an operational tool: it will direct our work at Field, Regional and HQ levels. To monitor our progress, as well as any obstacles we may encounter on our path, we have set clear indicators and targets we aim to reach year by year, which take into consideration the resources and time required in each area/sector. Overall, this document is built on 30 years of experience and successes, but also of lessons learned, mistakes, and unfulfilled objectives. In delineating the Organisation's goals and Programmatic Framework, this Strategic Plan will be INTERSOS' point of reference, linking together all members in our ambitious mission of providing timely, vital and effective assistance to people in need.

### **1. MISSION AND VALUES**

#### **Our mission.**

INTER SOS intervenes in emergency and crisis situations, to help people, families, and communities whose lives are threatened by conflict, extreme poverty, natural or manmade disasters. It does so by providing assistance and protection during humanitarian emergencies, according to its operational and resource capacities.

In all its work, INTERSOS staff are guided by:

- Our Charter of Values;
- The humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence.

**INTERSOS' Charter of Values.**

Homo sum, nihil humani a me alienum puto.  
*I am human, I consider nothing that is human alien to me.*  
(Terenzio, 195-159 a.C.)

This is the synthesis of INTERSOS' leading principle, from which all other INTERSOS values descend, and it characterises every intervention. This affirmation emphasises the core position of the human being, the principles of equality, justice, peace, solidarity and therefore the duty of each individual to support all people in need, particularly those who are suffering, and to achieve this in a manner that is not conditioned by considerations and beliefs of any other nature.

INTERSOS is:

- **Borderless.** INTERSOS works in full coherence with the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the European Convention on Human Rights: it does not make any difference or discrimination whatsoever based on race, gender, religious belief, nationality, ethnic origin or class of people who are in need of help;
- **Impartial.** In the eyes of INTERSOS, the person in need must be the primary concern in every circumstance, irrespective of any political, religious or social differences or beliefs. Its humanitarian activities are implemented in an impartial manner in respect of whatever population or person at risk or in circumstances of serious need. This does not prevent INTERSOS from identifying those people or institutions responsible for specific disaster situations, whether man made or arising from natural hazards, and from taking a public stance on the matter;
- **Independent.** INTERSOS is not subjected to any political or ideological, national or international authority. This freedom of thought and opinion allows INTERSOS to report all human rights' violations and every form of injustice and breach, without being unduly influenced. The same principle of independence determines the standards by which financial donors, both private and public, are chosen;
- **Sensitive to local cultures.** INTERSOS develops its actions by establishing methods and behaviours that fully respect local cultural and religious traditions;
- **Attentive to local capacity.** INTERSOS always places the value and dignity of human beings at the centre of its activities. This is why it immediately involves the local population when implementing actions, developing and strengthening the capabilities and expertise of individuals and of the community, thereby gradually eliminating dependence on external help. Its relationship with local populations is based on openness, dialogue, respect and participation;

- Professional in solidarity. INTERSOS considers solidarity and professionalism to be two indispensable and indivisible components in its humanitarian work. They are essential elements in order to respond to the needs of a population with humanity, effectiveness and quality;
- Transparent. INTERSOS operates thanks to the funds from public and private donors. The budget for every single project is verified by public financial experts and certified by financial auditors. The annual budget is certified and made available to the public.

## **2. VISION**

INTERSOS carries out its assistance and protection interventions in order to build a world based on equality, justice, peace and solidarity, values in which it strongly believes. It operates to assist populations caught up in humanitarian crises where there is a high number of unmet basic needs.

## **3. HOW WE APPLY OUR PRINCIPLES AND VALUES**

As a humanitarian aid Organisation working in emergencies, we are used to complex environments and consequently to the risks they entail. In particular, we strive to defend our principles but we know that this is subject to many challenges. We know that there is no one-size-fits-all approach: each context is specific and requires careful and prior consideration regarding how best we can deliver assistance and protection while abiding by and respecting our core principles and values. Unfortunately, this is not always possible and in some cases we have to make compromises. We will always put the principle of humanity above all others, whilst respecting our red lines, which we will never cross.

We will strive to abide by the following:

- The do-no-harm principle;
- We will leave if we realise that our efforts have stopped bringing relief to the beneficiaries, or are becoming damaging to the populations we assist;
- When our work becomes enmeshed with other agendas that have clear economic, political or military interests.

#### **4. INTERVENTION LOGIC**

INTERSOS' logic of intervention revolves around three main pillars: emergency response, proximity to the people we assist and our community-based approach.

##### **Emergency Response**

Emergencies never stop occurring. In addition to internal and international conflicts affecting primarily civilians, natural hazards are now happening with more and more frequency and intensity. Because of this, entire populations are exposed to huge suffering, deprived of their rights, their basic needs unmet and their lives often in danger.

The progressive increase of conflicts caused by competition over scarce resources – particularly water – together with climate change and desertification, are increasingly causing population movements that are having a devastating impact on affected populations, with significant consequences for hosting regions and countries, often poor and dealing with the same challenges. INTERSOS was created precisely to respond, efficiently and immediately, to these situations.

##### **Proximity**

We want our projects to have an immediate and positive impact on affected populations. This requires preparedness and a fast response to humanitarian emergencies, in order for us to be on the front line. To this end, INTERSOS intends to deal with crisis management in the following, articulated, manner:

- By preparing ourselves to respond quickly and effectively to emergencies;
- By bringing to affected populations a response to basic needs including water, shelter, protection and medical assistance;
- By reducing the risk that populations are affected by disasters and, when a disaster does occur, by diminishing its impact. This we will do by:
  - Working with local communities and authorities to reduce the level of vulnerability, increase their awareness and support their training and response capacity; and by
  - Working with them to reduce the potential impact that disasters can have in particularly vulnerable zones, according to our guidelines and principles.

##### **Community-Based Approach**

Communities' are involved at all stages of analysis and planning, including annual planning and review of each country's programme. At the country, regional, and global level INTERSOS ensures that communities are physically (or virtually) consulted and involved at all stages, including needs assessments. The organisation keeps ownership of the process but shares ownership of the activities; by doing so, it accepts that activities may vary according to needs and priorities expressed by communities.

To do so, the organisation enhances both its reach to communities, focussing on quality and accuracy, and the level of exchange with interagency actors and other stakeholders, ensuring that actual field realities are correctly represented and the appropriate actions are identified, feasible and, to the maximum extent possible, implemented.

By doing so, INTERSOS aims to reduce the gap between identified needs and adequacy of the response.

## **5. CURRENT HUMANITARIAN CONTEXT, TRENDS AND CHALLENGES**

To be a humanitarian organisation that operates in emergencies requires us to keep pace with external developments. We must be aware not only of social, political, and economic contexts and the overall humanitarian situation, but also of the risks of intervening in specific environments. Thus, an analysis of the current international challenges facing humanitarian actors, as well as of the extent to which politics, economics, and other factors constantly shape the world in which we operate, is a high priority.

The humanitarian situation in the world is becoming worse, with millions of people in multiple protracted crises such as Afghanistan, Central African Republic, Central Sahel, Syria and Yemen suffering from violence, stigma, discrimination and unequal access to basic services and living conditions. Overall, the UN have estimated that in 2022 a record 274 million people<sup>1</sup> will need assistance, more than 16% increase since 2021<sup>2</sup>. Forced displacements caused by conflicts, persecution, violence and human rights violations is at the record level and currently stands at 82.4 million<sup>3</sup>. Essentially, more than 1 percent of the world's population is now displaced, of which 42 percent are children.

The combination of new and old protracted conflicts, the growing impact of climate change, increasing food insecurity, corruption and poverty, lack of access to services, discrimination and stigmatization of different marginalized groups, and many other issues, continue to drive migrant individuals and families to leave their home countries, and make perilous journeys, often using illegal and unsafe criminal smugglers networks, in a hope to find safe and economically stable lives in new countries. Thousands of people from the African continent, Middle East and Central America regions continue to migrate in search of a more dignified life in other countries. In an effort to discourage further arrivals, the mixed migration trends have triggered various measures from the “receiving” governments, ranging from building of walls or fortifying the existing barriers, providing extremely poor reception facilities without even the most basic structures for shelter, hygiene or access to health services, and/or providing billions of dollars to third countries to keep the migrants and potential asylum seekers away from their territories. Such practices lead to dangerous situations with people resorting to desperate and often deadly journeys.

At the same time, we live in a world where the rising inequality in wealth has reached extraordinary proportions, with the richest 1% of the global population enjoying more wealth than the rest of the world

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<sup>1</sup> <https://gho.unocha.org/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/global-humanitarian-overview-2021-enarfres>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.unhcr.org/figures-at-a-glance.html>

combined. According to the latest joint FAO/WFP Hunger Hotspots report, an estimated 161 million people face acute food insecurity in 2022, including almost 34 million being at emergency levels. The protection situation continues to deteriorate, especially with regards to sexual and other forms of physical and psychological violence, particularly impacting women and children.

The above brief, albeit depressing, summary of humanitarian needs has to be understood within increasingly difficult and dynamic political, conflict and economic contexts that are throwing an array of challenges to the humanitarian community, requiring very serious and careful approach to operating in conflict situations, with a continuous need to balance refined approaches in engaging with multiple stakeholders in access negotiations, while at the same time overcoming complex legal, financial and security barriers.

Below are some key factors, trends and challenges with profound influence on humanitarian action:

- **The nature of conflicts** over the past decade have become both more complex and longer in duration, characterised by serious levels of violence and brutality against civilians. These protracted conflicts often paint a blurred picture that involves multiple non-state armed groups, as well as national, regional and international actors, and often include terrorism and extremism as one or more of its elements. Civilians and civilian facilities are bearing the brunt of violence in these conflicts, both in terms of number and scale, while humanitarian workers and organisations continue to be frequently targeted for violence and kidnapping in a blatant breach of IHL and international law. These growing attacks are seriously hampering the ability of humanitarian organisations to deliver humanitarian assistance and protection, requiring increased investment in comprehensive and context-specific access negotiation and risk management approaches. **Humanitarian access** continues to be extremely hard to achieve, in some situations almost impossible. In today's reality, it is unimaginable to achieve proper humanitarian access without investing a far greater amount of time and resources to analyse and understand complex conflict environments, to negotiate access with multiple warring factions and authorities, as well as to manage the safety and security of humanitarian workers and of the communities we serve.
- The impact of **climate change** has been affecting us for a number of years now. Climate-related disasters, including floods, droughts, hurricanes, forest fires, and other disasters are occurring more frequently, impacting people's lives, their habitats, food security and livelihoods. People and communities living in forced displacement situations in conflict areas, already impoverished, exhausted and stressed by their current predicaments, are particularly vulnerable to these increasing risks. Climate change is also a major driver of migration and forced displacement, likely to increase as climate change events intensify. Many experts agree that we must urgently invest more of our collective efforts, time and resources to anticipate these events and put in place adequate preparedness and response plans. **Urbanisation** is growing fast. It is estimated that in 30 years nearly 70% of the global population will live and work in cities, putting enormous pressure on ecology, access to energy and clean water, access to adequate infrastructure to support this growth, including health, social support, and employment, especially for the growing poor populations. As a humanitarian organisation, INTERSOS is aware that the environment is intrinsic to sustainable humanitarian actions and that climate change threatens the access of the people we assist to food, water and livelihoods. Due to INTERSOS' choice to intervene in conflict and war-torn areas, which are often also affected by the effects of climate change, the organisation is committed

to follow the good practices as detailed in Intersos' environmental policy in all its operations and in all of its humanitarian programming.

- **The COVID-19 pandemic** has exacerbated global vulnerability, with people's livelihoods, access to basic services severely affected, with limited access to other health services, while protection risks skyrocketed, due to limitations of movements, and the stress caused by financial and economic insecurity, resulting in negative coping strategies. COVID-19 also highlighted the long forgotten public health experts' view that the risk of pandemics is real, and that, given that new viruses can circulate around the globe in a matter of days, a new pandemic, perhaps one with greater ability to wreak havoc, could occur at any time. Investing in multi-sectoral preparedness to respond is essential.
- In their mission to deliver assistance and protection in some of the most difficult contexts in the world, humanitarian organisations face many legal frameworks linked to highly complicated **Counter Terrorism Measures (CTM)**. Working in protracted humanitarian crises, often in areas that fall under sanctions or other forms of international restrictions, and navigating through a complex conflict stakeholder landscape and conducting sensitive humanitarian access negotiations with a range of different parties to the conflict, in some cases – designated as terrorist organisations, is a massive responsibility and challenge. Like all other humanitarian organisations, INTERSOS continues to invest much time and resources to strengthen systems, tools and approaches, in order to keep up with complex donor compliance requirements, while ensuring delivery of timely and appropriate assistance.
- While the total global requirement in 2022 is estimated to be the highest ever with USD 41 billion required to assist 183 million people<sup>4</sup>, a clear indicator of the increase in humanitarian needs, the humanitarian funding trends over the past years, with few exceptions, seem to indicate that the humanitarian system is thinly stretched over many different crises, with overall cumulative funding coverage averaging less than 50% of the total 2021 funding requirement<sup>5</sup>. Despite harrowing humanitarian indicators, some major country crises, such as Burkina Faso, Chad and DR Congo, have obtained only between 30 and 40% of their funding requirements<sup>6</sup>. In this regard, INTERSOS remains heavily challenged in responding to the ever-growing humanitarian needs against the backdrop of decreasing humanitarian funding.
- Ever since the World Humanitarian Summit in 2014, donors and the entire humanitarian system have been calling for a greater collaboration **between humanitarian and development actors**, an approach that increasingly makes sense given that the average duration of today's conflicts is a decade or longer, with aid funding limitations, and the fact that humanitarian action simply cannot address all the vulnerabilities created by conflicts in countries that already had deep structural development deficits. However, despite the need for more development investments in the affected countries and to support durable solutions for displaced populations and host communities, the international aid community is yet to see concrete results in this area. One of the main obstacles for

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<sup>4</sup> <https://gho.unocha.org/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://fts.unocha.org/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://fts.unocha.org/appeals/overview/2021>

operationalisation of the nexus lies in the overall system that has not adapted to operational realities, with development stakeholders reluctant to work in conflict settings due to, among others, security constraints. While in theory better cooperation between development and humanitarian actors is a welcome idea especially in countries recovering from conflict, in practice the nexus risks undermining humanitarian principles in open conflict situations. One size does not fit all and caution is required when there is a risk of humanitarian action being instrumentalised by political or military actors.

- **Localisation** has emerged as another important priority from the World Humanitarian Summit. Indeed, being from the affected communities, local NGOs and CSOs are ideally placed to contribute towards better humanitarian outcomes. As they better understand community vulnerabilities and priority issues, they are part of local preparedness efforts, and given their immediate proximity to crises they are able to respond quickly, thus enhancing speed, scale and scope of the response. So far a limited progress on localisation has been achieved, as the donors remain reluctant to channel funds directly to local organisations. INTERSOS is committed to build on its existing partnerships with local organisations and further enhance its localisation priorities in each of its operational contexts, based on principles of complementarity, and leveraging of different capacities and know-how with the purpose of enhancing the humanitarian response.
- Although engaging with communities through community-based approaches has been part of the humanitarian action for many years, the system's commitment to **Accountability to Affected People (AAP)** has only been strongly affirmed in recent years. Accountability to affected people is an opportunity for designing humanitarian programmes in line with community contextual challenges and needs, ensuring relevant, inclusive and accessible assistance to the most vulnerable communities and individuals, while also ensuring that we are being held accountable for the quality and relevance of assistance we provide. Since its inception, INTERSOS has been working in close proximity to affected populations in many challenging operational areas, with a view of obtaining acceptance from the population, both in terms of tailoring the assistance to their needs, and to obtain good operational access. Recognising its importance, AAP approach has been identified as one of INTERSOS' central strategic priorities for the next three years, both in terms of designing relevant programming based on community priorities, and in terms of advocacy towards the humanitarian system to enhance this priority.
- The total amount of **cash-based assistance** as a preferred method of humanitarian assistance has tripled from 2bn USD in 2015 to 6.3bn USD in 2020<sup>7</sup>. In countries where the system can support it, cash is an increasingly important tool in humanitarian response, and an essential part in saving lives and in challenging the system to provide better, faster, more relevant and cost-efficient assistance, as it provides vulnerable populations with a choice to decide themselves what the most important priorities are they will tackle through cash assistance. At the same time, it is important to stress that, although cash assistance is a great modality for aid, it is not feasible in all contexts. Afghanistan is the most recent reminder of how cash assistance can be inappropriate, given the collapse of the banking system linked to the existing sanctions. Similarly, in parts of South Sudan, it is more appropriate to provide in-kind assistance due to the non-functionality of local markets and lack of

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<sup>7</sup> <https://devinit.org/documents/1008/Global-Humanitarian-Assistance-Report-2021.pdf>

availability of basic commodities. Therefore, depending on the contextual appropriateness, cash assistance will continue to grow in the future and INTERSOS is looking to identify how it can increase its cash-based interventions.

- Considerable critical debate has emerged over the last few years about the need to **decolonise the aid system**, or in other words – to move away from old-fashioned Western-dominated imposed ideas. The ongoing discussion essentially calls the aid system to tackle the power imbalance. It remains to be seen though how the power balance can be achieved, given that the source of the vast majority of humanitarian and development funding is the Global North. At the very least, what the system could achieve is to increase the diversity of its workforce, an idea already at the core of localisation and closely related to AAP, where one of the priorities is to find more participatory ways in all stages of decision making. However, diversity is still lacking considerably from senior decision-making positions. INTERSOS plans to further diversify its workforce over the next 3 years, and to increasingly build its capacities with local talent and resources, thus making its assistance more relevant, sustainable and closer to the communities it aims to serve.
- Following a number of scandals in the aid sector that uncovered the scale of abuses of vulnerable populations, the entire humanitarian system radically increased its attention to serious abuses occurring within the humanitarian system, often including the actual or attempted sexual exploitation and abuse of vulnerability of people that may require humanitarian assistance. Guidelines, systems and trainings for **Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)** were put in place to tackle this problem, and this important issue remains one of the central focus of humanitarian policies in recent years. INTERSOS follows strict recruitment policies and procedures in compliance with PSEA for all staff members and will invest further efforts to strengthen these systems.

The above analysis of the international context plays a significant role for an organisation like INTERSOS that focuses on saving lives and on being on operational frontlines to provide fast and effective responses to emergencies. In order to continue ensuring strong operational responses, INTERSOS must fully understand potential threats that can make our work harder. Suffice it to say that being on the frontlines creates increased exposure to insecurity, especially in the increasingly complex environments. Therefore, we must strengthen our readiness to better handle such situations, starting from enhancing stronger capacities, sound tools and systems, and especially our access negotiation skills. On the other hand, we must not accept compromises of the principles that must remain the central guide to our interventions. Therefore, we will keep as our *conditio sine qua non* the importance of abiding by the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence. We will maintain as our first imperative the necessity of providing prompt humanitarian responses. This will remain the centre of our attention in the years to come.

## 6. PROGRAMMATIC FRAMEWORK

INTER SOS will continue to apply the concept of Core and Ad-hoc projects:

- **Core projects** will be the priority in our humanitarian response, with a continued investment both in responsiveness to emergencies and in the ability to maintain and develop programmes in conflict situations;
- **Ad-hoc projects** allow for a planned and sustained engagement, enabling programmes to tackle specific areas where our interventions can make an important difference to populations that find themselves completely neglected. Due to the sea of needs, these projects need to find the fine balance between ensuring a response that remains significant in terms of output while maintaining investment at a manageable size and proportion within our overall programmes portfolio.

It is our intention in the next three-year period to have Core projects representing 80% of our activities, thus leaving the remaining 20% to Ad-hoc projects. While response to *core* situations remains our priority, maintaining a significant and balanced investment in Ad-hoc projects allows us to:

- Save large numbers of lives of particularly vulnerable and neglected populations outside war settings and punctual emergency interventions;
- Maintain a healthy volume of programmes while developing and reinforcing capacity in specific fields (Primary Health Care, Human Rights, know-how, strategies, protocols, etc.) in order to better react to emergencies and other Core projects;
- Reinforce identity (e.g. migration projects) beyond conflicts and natural catastrophes.

The programmatic choices made by INTER SOS are guided primarily by the nature and extent of the humanitarian needs of populations in crisis, the cause of the crisis and the extent of the response of other actors. As a result, we will:

- Prioritise interventions that respond to the humanitarian needs of people in areas of active and chronic conflict;
- Focus on responding to the humanitarian needs of populations affected by violence and abuse where normal mechanisms of protection fail;
- Seek to have independent and relevant humanitarian interventions;
- Act in response to natural disasters and certain epidemics where we can have a significant impact on human survival and where the response capacity of other actors is insufficient.

These programmatic choices need to be underpinned by an understanding of the crises in which we intervene, of the humanitarian needs that prevail and of our own capacity to provide a relevant and effective response. This field analysis determines the response and drives our action.

Lastly, we will plan our **Exit Strategy** when conditions are such that no more impact or added value comes from INTER SOS programmes or when strategy objectives are met.

## 7. STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

An organisation-wide reality-check process conducted between July 2020 and November 2021, thoroughly analysed and discussed external contexts, trends and challenges, identified and discussed INTERSOS positive achievements from the past several years, and most importantly - identified and discussed new and ongoing organisational weaknesses. The outcome of these highly participatory exercises, consisting of two external evaluations, a number of perception surveys, and a variety of internal workshops and meetings – have helped the Organisation to identify what the key priorities are where the Organisation should focus its attention and resources in order to **deliver more focused, relevant and better targeted humanitarian assistance and services in the next 3 years.**

The result of this soul-searching is captured in the **new ISP 2022-2024<sup>8</sup>**, which continues to be anchored in the organisational approach of assisting the most vulnerable categories of populations in challenging and hard-to-reach contexts, where the humanitarian needs continue to be greatest and where there is a weak humanitarian presence, with life-saving humanitarian assistance including protection, health, nutrition, and WASH activities.

Simultaneously to delivering its assistance and services, the Organisation will focus on 4 key strategic objectives (SOs):

- SO1: Strengthen our community-based approach
- SO2: Reinforce our organisational and operational capacities to be fit for responding to evolving humanitarian challenges
- SO3: Enhance our relevance as a humanitarian actor
- SO4: Consolidate our efforts to be an accountable and transparent Organisation.

### **SO1. Strengthen our community-based approach**

This is a central strategic objective to INTERSOS, aimed at strengthening the quality and relevance of its humanitarian activities and services. INTERSOS will work to enhance its reach to the communities, where through a structured system of community engagement, each INTERSOS Mission will identify ways to **put the communities at the centre of the response** and guarantee legitimacy and adequate community representation of community individuals. Wherever possible, in planning of assistance, INTERSOS will ensure that the communities, especially minorities and particularly vulnerable groups, will identify their own assistance needs. For this challenging objective to be successful at country, regional and global levels, INTERSOS will advocate towards humanitarian decision-makers, including the UN and the donors, to make sure that the voices of affected communities are indeed incorporated in humanitarian response planning, reflected in Humanitarian Response Plans (HRPs) and Refugee Response Plans (RRPs), and community priorities truly addressed.

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<sup>8</sup> The new ISP process was planned to be elaborated during 2020 (for 2021-23). However, the onset of COVID-19 pandemic forced INTERSOS to delay this process and prioritise adapting our operational modalities to ensure the continuation of our operations, while guaranteeing the compliance with health safeguarding and staff protection measures.

In line with the localisation agenda, and using learning from the present localisation initiative in Chad, Lebanon and South Sudan, INTERSOS will **strengthen and build new partnerships with local NGOs and CBOs/grassroots organisations** in further operational contexts, to collectively enhance our emergency responses based on the principle of complementarity. As part of this, INTERSOS will invest further in enhancing and strengthening capacities of local partner NGOs and CBOs, in a tailor-made manner and in accordance with assessed requirements.

## **SO2. Reinforce our organisational and operational capacities to be fit for responding to evolving humanitarian challenges**

In order to strengthen its ability to respond to new emergencies in fast, effective and timely manner, INTERSOS will be making further investments into **strengthening its preparedness capacities and crises response tools and systems**, as well as improving our operational response through better analysis and stronger medium- and long-term planning, strengthening of MEAL capacities and systems. As INTERSOS wants its projects to have an immediate and positive impact on affected populations, INTERSOS will invest in improved needs assessments, with further emphasis given to better engagement with affected communities.

More efforts and investment will be placed upon **strengthening the organisational model to improve efficiency and management of responses, improved internal communication, and promoting horizontal ways of working**. As part of decentralisation efforts, increasing our strategic regional approaches and bringing technical and management support closer to country Missions, Regional Directorates will be established in Amman, Dakar and Nairobi, composed of all key organisational functions that are supporting operational management. These Regional Directorates will also serve as technical hubs to provide certain global services to the organisation, such as HR or Logistical services.

**In terms of Human Resources**, more investments will be made towards increased internationalisation and diversity of the Organisation, and the Organisation will work to increase national staff capacities in the framework of inclusion, diversity, and strengthening of organisational capacities. We will also invest more resources into enhancing minimum standards for Duty of Care, ensuring its rollout in all our Missions.

**Safety and Security management** is another organisational priority where we will invest more time and resources. We will ensure that crisis preparedness work is an essential, continuous and participatory process where all aspects of risk management will be re-energised and fully integrated at all levels of the Organisation.

We will invest more capacities in **developing donor relationships** with the view of increasing our multi-year funding to enhance our ability to plan our interventions and increase our agility to respond to changing needs.

### **SO3. Enhance our relevance as a humanitarian actor**

INTER SOS will further strengthen its **participation in NGO platforms and networks, and in humanitarian coordination structures**, and ensure that we provide our contribution using our own operational experiences.

To help tackle the growing challenges related to humanitarian intervention, **advocacy will become a growing priority at country, regional and global levels**, through agreed messages and positions, rooted in INTER SOS operational evidence. INTER SOS will also look to enhance advocacy partnerships with other NGOs, based on shared views, objectives and goals. To support our messages and advocacy, the Organisation will also strengthen its communication capacities at Missions level and globally.

As a cross cutting priority that incorporates all aspects of INTER SOS work, more resources will be dedicated to strengthen organisational Communications work. This will include: standardising brand strategy and visual identity; investing in country-level communications capacities, with the view of supporting enhanced level of content production, rooted in operational data and experiences; strengthening our participation in Italian and international events; carving out more space in national and international public media; increasing our relevance on digital and social platforms, as well as INTER SOS participation and support to NGO platforms and networks awareness and advocacy campaigns.

### **SO4. Consolidate our efforts to be an accountable and transparent Organisation**

With many changes afoot, and given the growing number of financial and management compliance issues, more efforts are needed both to maintain the functioning of the Organisation in terms of transparency and accountability, but also to face an increasing number of new requirements. For this reason, INTER SOS will further invest in **strengthening internal management and financial control systems** at every level of the Organisation, to ensure transparent management and accountability. Furthermore, INTER SOS will **update its existing internal systems and policies (whistleblowing, PSEA)**, as well as better define the communication and sharing of information in relation to prevention of abuse.

Using our own operational data, INTER SOS will also invest into **enhancing its internal and external communications** to better communicate our work, approaches and humanitarian perspectives.