Call for Expressions of Interest

Lessons from responses to drought for humanitarian implementers

Deadline: 16 June 2024

Applications should be sent by email to alnap@alnap.org by midnight UK time on 16 June. Only short-listed candidates will be contacted for interview.

Interviews will be conducted on a rolling basis and ALNAP may recruit for this position before the deadline.

For queries, please write to alnap@alnap.org.

1. Background

Since 2001, ALNAP has been publishing lessons papers with the aim of improving humanitarian action by synthesising and presenting lessons from previous responses in a concise, readable, actionable and timely manner. The last comprehensive ALNAP drought lessons paper was published in October 2011. Since then, there have been numerous drought crises, and new lessons and insights have emerged. In 2018, ALNAP developed a methods note to improve and guide the quality of lesson papers by reducing the space for author bias, improving the grounding of evidence and enhancing transparency of the methods used. This method was further developed in 2021. We are now looking to revise the 2011 drought paper to bring it up to date with the latest learning and apply more rigorous methods in line with the methodology revisions.

2. About the assignment

ALNAP is looking to contract a researcher or a team of researchers to conduct research to identify lessons from responses to drought, in accordance with ALNAP’s methodology for lessons papers. The researchers are expected to produce one long form, comprehensive paper detailing the relevant lessons. The researchers will also be expected to provide feedback on, and quality assure short communication outputs developed by ALNAP based on the long form paper.

ALNAP is planning to publish several lessons papers over the next year, and if successful, the contract could be extended to include at least one more lessons paper, on either floods or cyclones/hurricanes/typhoons.

3. Aim and Scope

The purpose of this lessons paper is not to provide a definitive answer on ‘what works’ but rather to highlight critical issues that humanitarian agencies must consider when designing and implementing response programmes in a drought-affected area. The research will aim to identify lessons that are applicable at different stages of drought response:

- Diagnostics: useful lessons for decision-makers ahead of an expected drought, including monitoring, assessing needs, data collection and early warning.
- Response: useful lessons for decision makers designing and implementing a drought response, including early/anticipatory action, effective response modalities, and cross-cutting themes.
- Recovery and resilience: useful lessons for decision makers looking at integrating recovery and resilience activities and preparedness for the next drought into the response.

As the paper is focused on response to drought, the lessons should be specifically related to drought response as...
opposed to other types of crisis response. However, recognising that drought often occurs in conjunction with other severe pressures (conflict, extreme poverty, etc.), the lessons should consider nuances in context and type of drought.

The research will draw from various sources, including a review of evaluations and other types of learning reviews (grey literature), and academic literature. The research will use the 2011 drought paper as one source of literature, capturing learning prior to 2012. The rest of the source material will be publications from 2012 onwards, in order to capture more recent learning.

ALNAP is currently exploring if and how AI could be of use when conducting this research. The researchers will potentially be working with ALNAP and a third party to pilot and test out the use of AI to screen and extract data from relevant resources.

4. Target audience

The primary audience for this paper is humanitarian ‘implementers’ - particularly agency and NGO staff (including country leads and technical leads) who design and implement responses to drought. The secondary audience is humanitarian policymakers and funders who can help the primary audience make changes to the shape of a response.

The humanitarian sector is increasingly grappling with the limits of its mandate and its ability to secure funding. Therefore, the sector is calling for increased investment by development actors to tackle chronic needs among marginalised communities and those in fragile settings. As such, the paper will also seek to highlight which lessons could be relevant to development- or dual-mandate actors, where possible.

5. Research questions

The main research question is as follows:

What lessons can be learned for humanitarian implementers from evaluations, documented research and expert opinion on responses to drought globally?

The following sub-questions have been identified:

1. Diagnostics:
   a. What learning has emerged on the effective use of early warning systems for response preparedness and mitigation of severe impacts of drought? What were the challenges and opportunities?
   b. How can organisations best monitor and react to the progression of vulnerability in a drought-affected or drought-prone area?

2. Early/anticipatory action and response:
   a. What learning has emerged on the effective application of early/anticipatory action?
   b. What forms of relief are the most effective for saving lives and alleviating suffering at the various stages of drought response? What makes them successful/less successful? (e.g. cash, food security and livelihoods, WASH, market-based interventions, a multi-sectoral approach).
   c. Are there any useful lessons specific to drought response on any of the following cross-cutting issues:
      i. Localisation/locally-led action
      ii. AAP
      iii. Protection
      iv. Gender
      v. Inclusion

3. Recovery and resilience:
a. What learning has emerged on accurate monitoring and assessment of resilience to drought?
b. How can humanitarian response support the resilience of communities and reduce vulnerability to future drought episodes?
c. What learning has emerged on effective approaches to DRR and drought?

4. How is **climate change** expected to affect droughts and thus impact current learning about the effectiveness of drought responses?

The main research question and sub-questions will be explored and further developed in the inception report. The research questions can be adjusted if necessary.

6. Timeline

The contract will span between June 2024 and early 2025, with the bulk of the work undertaken between June and November 2024. Please note that the timeline is preliminary and subject to change. The total number of work days for this assignment is 60 days to be distributed among the different team members.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Approximate timing</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Startup meeting</td>
<td>June 2024</td>
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<tr>
<td>Submission of draft inception report</td>
<td>July 2024</td>
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<tr>
<td>Revision of inception report</td>
<td>July 2024</td>
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<tr>
<td>Submission of final inception report</td>
<td>July 2024</td>
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<td>Identification* and screening of literature, data extraction, analysis,</td>
<td>August 2024</td>
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<td>draft long list of lessons</td>
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<td>Share lessons with Delphi panel (round 1)</td>
<td>August-September 2024</td>
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<td>Revise lessons based on Delphi panel feedback</td>
<td>September 2024</td>
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<td>Share lessons with Delphi panel (round 2)</td>
<td>September-October 2024</td>
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<td>Write up the final paper</td>
<td>October-November 2024</td>
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<td>Final draft</td>
<td>November-December 2024</td>
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<td>Publication</td>
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*Some resources have been pre-identified, and these will be shared with the researchers.

7. Qualifications

ALNAP’s priority is to work with researchers based in countries affected by crises, and we will not consider bids from research or consultancy teams based solely in global minority (Global North) countries. We are particularly looking for researchers with lived experience of countries affected by crisis.

**Required**

- Experience conducting research in humanitarian contexts.
- At least 1 member of the team has a demonstrated track record in evaluation synthesis or a closely related type of product, i.e. systematic review, evidence synthesis.
- All members of the team have a demonstrated track record in timely delivery of high-quality analysis and writing, verifiable through referees.
- Successful experience working as a remote team.
- Proven track record of delivering large, complex projects to deadline.
- Proven track record of conducting research collaboratively.
- Able to write, in English, in a clear and consistent style, adhering to the agreed document length.
**Desired**

- Prior experience using MaxQDA or similar software to code transcripts/documents as part of a research project.

8. Application process

Candidates are expected to submit the following documents:

- CVs outlining relevant experience of all team members (each CV shall not exceed 4 pages)
- A brief proposal (max 3 pages) which outlines how you would approach the work and describing the composition and location of the proposed research team, as well as previous experience in conducting similar work. Proposals should indicate whether these relationships are pre-existing or new for this proposal and should indicate who will act as the ‘lead’ researcher.
- Estimates of days & budget for each activity/deliverable
- Two references for the lead researcher from professional assignments undertaken in the last 5 years. The assignments must be thematically relevant to the scope of work of this assignment.

Interviews will be conducted on a rolling basis and ALNAP may recruit for this position before the deadline.