UN agencies and Non Government Organizations (NGOs) use situation reports, or sitreps as they are commonly known, to disseminate information to and from the field in a crisis. The World Health Organization puts out very regular sitreps on COVID-19 and these updates provide the latest information on the pandemic and the response to it. They include information like updated numbers of infected people and locations, and actions that WHO and other partners are taking in response to the disease.

Sitreps are a key feature of information sharing in any crisis and can be a great source of stories for journalists. While at a first glance, these reports may be intimidating and full of complex UN jargon and terminology, this handy guide will help you to find creative story inspiration amongst the dry organizational updates.

5 Tips for finding stories in situation reports

1. **DON’T TREAT SITUATION REPORT LIKE A PRESS RELEASE**
   A sitrep can lead you to a story, but it is not the story itself. Always conduct interviews and research to verify information and find the human story behind the report.

2. **WHAT’S BEHIND THE NUMBERS**
   Find stories in numbers, graphs and charts. Go beyond the numbers of cases and deaths to see how the impact has changed over time, look for anomalies like groups or regions that are affected differently.

3. **UNDERSTAND SITREP TERMINOLOGY AND JARGON**
   Familiarise yourself with related terminology, recheck glossary, reach out to your source of information and clearly explain them in the audience-friendly report.

4. **USE VISUALS TO TELL THE STORY**
   Create more engaging content by using data visualisation to explain complex figures. Data visualisation can grab the readers’ attention, highlight key information and add context to complex figures.

5. **FOLLOW THE MONEY**
   Ask donors, governments and related agencies how the financial resources have been spent. Do investigative reporting by tracing the actual players behind them.