

INTER-AGENCY STANDING COMMITTEE  
AD HOC WORKING GROUP MEETING ON  
HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE REVIEW FOLLOW-UP

**- DRAFT -**  
**Generic Terms of Reference for  
Cluster Leads at the Country Level**

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The IASC-endorsed “cluster approach” operates at two levels. At the global level, the aim is to strengthen system-wide preparedness and technical capacity to respond to humanitarian emergencies by designating Global Cluster Leads who are accountable for ensuring predictable and effective inter-agency responses within the particular sectors or areas of activity concerned. At the country level, the aim is to strengthen the coordination framework and response capacity by mobilizing clusters of agencies/organizations/NGOs to respond in particular sectors or areas of activity, each cluster having a clearly designated lead, as agreed by the HC and the Country Team. To enhance predictability, where possible this should be in line with the cluster lead arrangements at the global level.

**The Humanitarian Coordinator** – with the support of OCHA – retains overall responsibility for ensuring the effectiveness of the humanitarian response and is accountable to the Emergency Relief Coordinator.

**Cluster leads at the country level** – in addition to their normal agency responsibilities – are accountable to the Humanitarian Coordinator for ensuring the following:

Identification of key partners

- Identify key humanitarian partners for the cluster, respecting their respective mandates and programme priorities;
- Identify other key partners, including national authorities, peacekeeping forces etc.

Coordination of programme implementation

- Ensure appropriate coordination with all humanitarian partners (including national and international NGOs, the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, IOM and other international organizations), as well as with national authorities and local structures;
- Ensure the establishment/maintenance of appropriate sectoral coordination mechanisms, including working groups at the national and, if necessary, local level;

- Ensure timely, effective and coordinated responses based on participatory and community based approaches which integrate cross-cutting issues such as human rights and HIV/AIDS, with due attention to age and gender mainstreaming;
- Secure commitments from cluster members in responding to needs and filling gaps, ensuring an appropriate distribution of responsibilities within the cluster, with clearly defined focal points for specific issues where necessary;
- Ensure that participants within each cluster work collectively, ensuring the complementarity of the various stakeholders' actions;
- Promote emergency response actions while at the same time considering the need for early recovery planning;
- Ensure effective links with other clusters (with OCHA support);
- Represent the interests of the cluster in discussions with the Humanitarian Coordinator on prioritization, resource mobilization and advocacy;
- Act as focal point for inquiries on the cluster's response plans and operations.

#### Planning and strategy development

- Ensure predictable action within the cluster for the following:
  1. needs assessment and analysis;
  2. identification of gaps;
  3. developing/updating agreed response strategies and action plans for the cluster and ensuring that these are adequately reflected in overall country strategies, such as the Common Humanitarian Action Plan (CHAP);
  4. drawing lessons learned from past activities and revising strategies and action plans accordingly.

#### Application of standards

- Ensure that cluster members are aware of relevant policy guidelines and technical standards;
- Ensure that responses are in line with existing policy guidance and technical standards;

#### Monitoring and reporting

- Ensure adequate monitoring mechanisms are in place to review impact of the cluster and progress against implementation plans;
- Ensure adequate reporting and effective information sharing (with OCHA support)

#### Advocacy and resource mobilization

- Identify core advocacy concerns, including resource requirements, and contribute key messages to broader advocacy initiatives of the Humanitarian Coordinator and other actors;
- Advocate for donors to fund cluster members to carry out priority activities in the sector concerned, while at the same time encouraging cluster members to mobilize resources for their activities through their usual channels.

Training and capacity building of national authorities and civil society

- Promote and support training of humanitarian personnel and capacity building of humanitarian partners;
- Support efforts to strengthen the capacity of the national authorities and civil society.

Provider of last resort

- As agreed by the IASC Principals, cluster leads are responsible for acting as the provider of last resort to meet agreed priority needs and will be supported by the HC and the ERC in their resource mobilization efforts in this regard.

**Cluster Members** at the country level are expected to be proactive partners in the elaboration and implementation of the cluster's priorities

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