

# 1 ORGANISATION, ROLE AND FUNCTION OF THE WASH CLUSTER

Chapter One relates to the following WCC responsibilities:

- ✓ Managing coordination at national and sub-national level amongst WASH Cluster partners and other actors outside the WASH Cluster;
- ✓ Promoting inclusion.

The chapter is split into the following five sections:

<b>1.1</b>	Getting started and the WASH Cluster Coordinator role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Immediate priorities for establishing the cluster</li> <li>▪ Planning activities for the WASH Cluster</li> <li>▪ The WASH Cluster Coordinator (WCC) role</li> </ul>
<b>1.2</b>	WASH Cluster structure and functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ WASH Cluster coordination structure</li> <li>▪ WASH Cluster organisational structure</li> </ul>
<b>1.3</b>	UNICEF and the role of the Cluster Lead Agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Role of the Cluster Lead Agency (CLA)</li> <li>▪ UNICEF: headquarters and regional</li> <li>▪ The UNICEF Country Office</li> <li>▪ Operational support for the WCC</li> <li>▪ WCC reporting and accountability</li> <li>▪ UNICEF guiding principles and protocols</li> </ul>
<b>1.4</b>	Key Cluster actors and building relationships with them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Strategies for promoting the Cluster Approach</li> <li>▪ Working with national and local government</li> <li>▪ Role of WASH Cluster partners</li> <li>▪ Identifying potential Cluster partners</li> </ul>
<b>1.5</b>	Coordination with other Clusters and groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Inter-Cluster coordination</li> <li>▪ Other coordinating bodies</li> <li>▪ Relationships with peace-keepers and the military</li> </ul>

## 1.1 Getting started and the WASH Cluster Coordinator role

### Key strategies in getting started

- ✓ Engage experienced WASH actors as early as possible;
- ✓ Build on and work within existing structures and mechanisms;
- ✓ Plan the immediate and week one activities needed;
- ✓ Be proactive in gathering contacts.

### 1.1.1 Immediate priorities for establishing the Cluster

The decision to appoint a WCC will be made by the CLA. In a rapid onset emergency this may be done before the formal introduction of the Cluster Approach by the RC/HC.

The WCC is likely to arrive in country two to five days after the onset of a sudden emergency. Before arrival a representative of the CLA will need to cover the WCC role. In the case of UNICEF this may be the Chief of WES.

### Essential information for preparation and self briefing

- ✓ Bring a good map of the country and affected areas.
- ✓ If a national contingency plan exists try to get a copy as soon as possible.

For background information, try the following websites:

- <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>
- <http://countryanalysis.eiu.com/>

The 24-hour checklist below outlines typical priorities for a new WCC on arriving in-country, in getting started, and establishing the WASH Cluster. The actual details will vary depending on the nature and scale of emergency and timing of arrival. In addition, a detailed **Mission Readiness checklist** can be found under Resources at the end of this section.

24-hour checklist for Cluster priorities	Handbook sections
1. <b>Arrange briefing</b> from the CLA representative (normally Country Representative) and the temporary WCC.	1.3
2. <b>Meet representatives of key WASH sector actors</b> who are present in-country (UN and INGO).	1.4
3. <b>Locate and talk to government partners</b> (relevant line ministries and/or focal departments) and get details of existing structures, systems, capacities, and key informants.	1.4; 1.2
4. Attend (or convene) a <b>general coordination meeting</b> , such as the Inter-agency coordination meeting chaired by the RC/HC or UN OCHA, and establish contacts.	1.5; 2.2
5. <b>Arrange Security briefing</b> . Can be arranged in advance.	1.3
6. Set up <b>initial WASH coordination meeting</b> e.g. agenda, poster with contact information, venue.	1.1; 2.2
7. <b>Review current information</b> about the situation, e.g. Sit Reps, assessments, national contingency plans.	3.1 2.4
8. Establish <b>data management system</b> (in collaboration with UNOCHA), e.g. contacts, information sources, capacity information.	3.2; 4.1
9. Find out about, and input to, <b>initial assessment processes</b> e.g. what is being organised, by whom, where, what capacity is available?.	1.1
10. <b>Plan immediate and week one actions and priorities.</b>	

### ***Initial contacts: what do you want to know?***

- ✓ What is the current emergency situation and state of the response?
- ✓ What role is government taking and who are the principle government stakeholders in WASH?
- ✓ Who are the best sources for relevant, up-to-date information?
- ✓ What are the existing forums for coordination and who is leading them? Is there an existing inter-agency contingency plan?
- ✓ Who are the key players in the WASH response, where are they?
- ✓ What information is already available and where can you find it?

### ***The first WASH Cluster meetings***

The first WASH Cluster meeting needs to be organised as soon as possible. If possible get assistance from the CLA in finding a venue, making contact with key WASH sector actors, etc. A **contact poster** for the WASH Cluster Coordination team will help in establishing contact with potential Cluster partners (see further details under *section 2.3*).

### Strategies in managing the first WASH Cluster meetings

Some of the problems encountered in the first meeting may include:

- \* Challenging and limited understanding of the Cluster Approach;
- \* Diverse priorities and demands for information and action;
- \* Poor support from government;
- \* Highly conflicting information and forecasts of needs and response requirements;
- \* Managing large numbers of partners;
- \* Language difficulties.

These can be managed initially through:

- ✓ Establishing immediate contact with government partners and meeting them before the WASH Cluster meeting;
- ✓ Requesting that the government chair the meeting or, if they prefer, arrange to co-chair;
- ✓ Briefing people in advance of the meeting (agenda, IASC Guideline on the Cluster Approach, etc.);
- ✓ Establishing immediate ground rules;
- ✓ Displaying available information on who is doing what, where, and updating and adding to this. Avoid going round the room and asking for updates from all partners;
- ✓ Inviting new agencies and partners to briefly explain who they are and what they are doing;
- ✓ Directing partners to previous meeting notes and, briefing papers (e.g. IASC Guidance Notes) for background information on the WASH Cluster and decisions taken to date. Avoid spending time going over previous discussions and decisions.
- ✓ Being clear about the expectations of the WASH Cluster from, to, and between partners;
- ✓ Reaching early agreement on the on-going cluster coordination mechanism to facilitate rapid decision making.

The agenda for the first few meetings will be similar and some of the items may be covered in separate committee or working group meetings. A **sample agenda** is included under Resources at the end of this section.

Further guidelines on managing WASH Cluster meetings can be found under *section 2.2*.

### Agenda items for the first meeting(s)

- ✓ **Welcome** and introductions (if feasible, given no. of attendees).
- ✓ Outline **purpose and expectations** of WASH Cluster.
- ✓ Govt/WCC briefing on emergency situation and **immediate actions required**.
- ✓ Exchange **WWW information** and outline on-going info. requirements.
- ✓ Identify known information and WASH response **gaps**.
- ✓ Make arrangements for separate meetings (e.g. to consider Cluster coordination mechanisms, or to organise the **rapid assessment** process).

## 1.1.2 Planning activities for the WASH Cluster

### Timeline for week 1

Having an outline of required activities for the first week or so helps to ensure that priorities are not overlooked. Some activities may already have been undertaken or started by the temporary WCC, and the timeline will need adjusting daily once in country.

Activities to be completed by the first week of arriving in country	Approximate timing after disaster onset						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Orientation</b>							
Briefing on emergency situation, local context, government and donor strategies, key national policies and standards							
<b>Building relations with Cluster stakeholders</b>							
On-going meetings with stakeholders: government (line ministries, focal departments), donors, INGOs, local actors							
Inter-agency meetings							
Collection of WASH actor profiles and initial mapping of Who What Where When (4W)							
<b>Establishing the Cluster</b>							
Setting up first WASH Cluster meeting							
WASH Cluster coordination meetings							
WASH Cluster steering meetings							
Outlining Cluster structure and staff requirements							
WASH Cluster ToR, finalising and disseminating							

coordination mechanism and structure								
<b>Establishing operational systems</b>								
Logistics: Communications (internet, phone, radio, etc., transport, accommodation, etc.)								
Set up appropriate communication and contact management systems (email lists, Google group, website, etc.)								
Establish data management system								
Sourcing staff, translators, etc.								
<b>Planning and reporting</b>								
Drafting of initial (three to four week) WASH response plan with principle strategies, objectives, indicators								
Drafting and disseminating daily sit reps and inputting to inter-Cluster sit reps								
<b>Assessments and resource mobilisation</b>								
Preparation for an initial rapid assessment								
Qualifying baseline data, assessment proposals, and Flash Appeal/CERF requirements with HC and Humanitarian Country Team								
Meta-analysis of WASH actors assessment data								
Initial rapid assessment process								
Input to Flash Appeal, CERF								

### ***Longer-term activity planning***

Developing a longer-term activity plan as early as possible will help in prioritising a multitude of tasks, identifying the skills and capacities required, and providing clarity of direction for Cluster partners. This process should be complementary to the response planning activities being undertaken (see chapter 5) to ensure that operational aspects of the Cluster are put in place in line with requirements for coordinating the WASH response, e.g. data and information management systems, sub-national level communication and coordination structures, etc.

The checklists below provide a guide for planning the WASH Cluster activities in the first month of a chronic or rapid-onset emergency situation. In addition, a detailed **30 day WASH Cluster timeline** is incorporated into the Appendices. Additional examples of WASH Cluster timelines used in Bangladesh can be found under Resources.

Checklist for Month 1 activity planning in a chronic emergency	Checklist for Month 1 activity planning in a rapid onset emergency
Specific activities will depend on whether you are based at national or sub-national level.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify key partners: government, UN agencies, NGOs, donors, private sector.</li> <li>▪ Establish / strengthen the existing Cluster steering group.</li> <li>▪ Comprehensive situation analysis.</li> <li>▪ Gap analysis.</li> <li>▪ Develop medium-term Cluster response plan and strategic operational framework (see <i>sections 5.1 &amp; 5.2</i>).</li> <li>▪ Establish technical or working groups.</li> <li>▪ Agree and assign roles and responsibilities.</li> <li>▪ Set Cluster principles and standards (see <i>section 8.1</i>).</li> <li>▪ Establish on-going process for monitoring and review.</li> <li>▪ Address requirements for emergency and contingency planning and transition of the Cluster.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify key partners: government, UN agencies, NGOs, donors, private sector.</li> <li>▪ Establish Cluster steering group.</li> <li>▪ Establish coordinated Information Management systems/tools.</li> <li>▪ Coordinated rapid needs assessment (inter-Cluster).</li> <li>▪ Gap analysis and prioritisation.</li> <li>▪ Flash Appeal / CERF proposals.</li> <li>▪ Develop medium-term Cluster response plan and strategic operational framework (see <i>sections 5.1 &amp; 5.2</i>).</li> <li>▪ Establish technical or working groups.</li> <li>▪ Agree and assign roles and responsibilities.</li> <li>▪ Set Cluster principles and standards (see <i>section 8.1</i>).</li> <li>▪ Coordinated comprehensive (WASH sector) assessment.</li> <li>▪ Formulation of advocacy messages.</li> <li>▪ Establish on-going process for monitoring and review.</li> <li>▪ Address requirements for emergency and contingency planning and transition of the Cluster.</li> </ul>

### 1.1.3 The WASH Cluster Coordinator (WCC) role

The purpose of having a dedicated WCC is to facilitate improved coordination and equal partnership between all actors involved in responding to WASH sector needs.

WASH Clusters reviews to date<sup>1</sup> have highlighted:

- the time required in effectively managing the Cluster coordination role;

<sup>1</sup> Global WASH Cluster Learning project, Implementation of the WASH Cluster Approach : Good practice and lessons learned, Oct 2008, ACF

- the importance and challenge in maintaining separation between roles where the WASH Cluster Coordination post-holder takes on this role in addition to an existing role within the UNICEF Country Office, e.g. within the WES team.
- The value in having a dedicated WCC to address these issues, as demonstrated in Uganda, Bangladesh, and Myanmar.

#### a) **Major challenges of the WASH Cluster Coordinator role**

##### ***Responsibility without authority***

The WCC's primary role is to facilitate the WASH co-ordination process, and contribute to a more effective humanitarian response. However, this responsibility comes without the authority to enforce compliance with the Cluster coordination requirements.

This can only be achieved through the meaningful engagement of key WASH sector actors, and the pro-active support of the CLA in both working within the parameters of the WASH Cluster and providing operational support.

##### **Strategies to assist in generating support from the CLA (UNICEF)**

- ✓ **Sensitising staff in the UNICEF Country Office to the Cluster Approach.**
- ✓ **Determining clear roles between WES and the WCC** (where all are present). This will help clarify responsibilities and procedures for WASH project prioritisation and selection, management of funding which is channelled through UNICEF and project M&E, and mitigate the problem of UNICEF/ WES staff entering unilateral agreements with Cluster partners without going through the cluster mechanism, and
- ✓ **Finding an ally in UNICEF** to help navigate necessary procedures e.g. access to funds for procurement, security clearance, authority to travel, etc.

Achieving the desired results will also depend on clarity of direction, collaborative leadership and continuous negotiation, effective information exchange, and supporting WASH Cluster agencies in achieving their own objectives.

Effective collaborative leadership demands a shift in mindset and practice from authoritative leadership to a collaborative approach, e.g.

<i>from...</i>	<i>to...</i>
✗ leading based on line authority...	✓ leading based on trust, relationships, services
✗ unilateral decision-making.....	✓ shared decision-making and consensus management
✗ command and control.....	✓ facilitate, network, and enable
✗ implementing partners.....	✓ equal partners
✗ focus on agency interest.....	✓ focus on broader sector and emergency as a whole
✗ being out in front.....	✓ to facilitating and networking “behind-the-scenes”

### ***Role as an Honest broker***

The role of the Cluster Lead Agency (CLA) is to facilitate a process of equal partnership aimed at ensuring well-coordinated and effective humanitarian response.

To be successful, therefore, the WASH Cluster must function in a way that respects the roles, responsibilities, and mandates of different humanitarian organisations. This explicitly recognises the diversity of approaches and methodologies that exist amongst the WASH Cluster’s different actors.

To enable this, the WCC must remain independent and impartial, and must be prepared to act as an ‘honest broker’, i.e. without the biases or prejudices of parent agency affiliation, when negotiating and arbitrating on behalf of the WASH Cluster.

This approach implies that the WCC has no operational programming or fund-allocating role within their parent agency, and that they are also employed full-time in coordinating the WASH Cluster. Clearly, this will depend on the type, scale, and phase of the crisis. However, the initial assumption should always be that the roles are separated.

Particular areas of sensitivity include the selection of projects for inclusion in collaborative funding appeals, allocation of resources, and the degree of influence of the CLA within the cluster decision making structure.

The WCC’s credibility is, to a large extent, founded on his or her ability to act as an ‘honest broker’. One of the most effective ways of achieving this is to ensure that all humanitarian actors be given the opportunity to fully and equally participate in setting the direction, strategies, and activities of the WASH Cluster.

### **b) WASH Cluster Coordinator Terms of Reference**

The WCC responsibilities are based broadly on those for the CLA as set out in the table below. The priority tasks can be summarized as follows:

- ✓ Managing coordination at national and sub-national levels
- ✓ Assessing needs
- ✓ Avoiding gaps and duplication
- ✓ Developing a Cluster strategy and response plan
- ✓ Managing information content and flow
- ✓ Applying appropriate technical standards
- ✓ Monitoring performance
- ✓ Building capacity
- ✓ Mobilising resources
- ✓ Reporting

Exact responsibilities will depend on the nature and scale of the emergency, and the role and capacity of national government and the international community. The complete **WCC ToR** is included under Resources below.

WASH Cluster Coordinator responsibilities	WCC skills identified <sup>2</sup>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Inclusion of key humanitarian partners.</li> <li>2. Establishment and maintenance of appropriate humanitarian coordination.</li> <li>3. Coordination with national/local authorities, state institutions, local civil society, and other Cluster actors.</li> <li>4. Participatory and community-based approaches.</li> <li>5. Attention to priority cross-cutting issues.</li> <li>6. Needs assessment and analysis.</li> <li>7. Emergency preparedness.</li> <li>8. Planning and strategy development.</li> <li>9. Application of standards.</li> <li>10. Monitoring and reporting.</li> <li>11. Advocacy and resource mobilisation.</li> <li>12. Training and building capacity.</li> <li>13. Provision of assistance or services as a last resort.</li> </ol>	<p>Management.            Relational skills (networking, integration, motivation, moderation).            Planning and organization.            Strategic thinking.            IT and Information Management skills.            Communication (written and spoken).            Understanding of WASH sector.            Familiarity with relevant country context.</p>

<sup>2</sup> Through feedback from WCCs and the Implementation of the WASH Cluster Approach : Good practice and lessons learned paper, Oct 2008, ACF

## Resources

- 📖 Cluster **Work Planning Checklist** (30 days)
- 📖 WASH Cluster, **Coordination Work Plan** (3 month), Bangladesh, Feb 2008
- 📖 Mwaniki, P., **WASH Cluster Process - 60 day timeline**, Bangladesh
  
- 📖 Emergency Shelter Cluster **mission deployment checklist**, IFRC, 2006
- 📖 Cluster **meeting agenda**, ESC sample, Yogyakarta
- 📖 **'How to Contact Us'** poster, ESC sample, Yogyakarta
  
- 📖 IASC (2006), **Guidance Note on Using the Cluster Approach** to Strengthen Humanitarian Response
- 📖 Mwaniki, P., **WASH Cluster Coordination - Report and Tools**, Madagascar, 2007
- 📖 WASH Cluster Coordinator Terms of Reference
  
- <http://www.clustercoordination.org>  
*Practical tools and advice for Cluster Coordinators*
- <http://www.humanitarianreform.org/Default.aspx?tabid=301>  
*Emergency Shelter Cluster toolkit*
- <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>  
*Essential background information for country briefings*
- <http://countryanalysis.eiu.com/>  
*Essential background information for country briefings*

## 1.2 WASH Cluster structure and functions

### 1.2.1 WASH Cluster coordination structure

Appropriate Cluster coordination arrangements will depend on the scale, phasing, and anticipated duration of the emergency. Other factors to consider include government, UN and NGO response capacity and the presence and effectiveness of existing coordination mechanisms. Whatever the structure adopted, it must be flexible enough to suit all stages of the emergency response e.g. expanding during intensive relief activities and scaling back as the Cluster merges or phases out (see *section 5.1* for further details of Phasing Out).

In a **large-scale emergency response**, such as the Pakistan earthquake, coordination is likely to take place at three levels:

- **National level** - primarily high-level liaison and strategic decision making.
- **Regional level** - primarily for technical and advocacy activities.
- **Sub-national level(s)** - primarily for coordination of planning and response activities.

In a **smaller-scale emergencies**, such as the conflict in Georgia, coordination may take place entirely at one level. All levels of coordination rely on efficient communication and information flow between them to be effective.

#### Effective coordination between WASH Cluster levels in DRC

Review of the WASH Cluster in DRC found that the effectiveness of WASH sector coordination improved considerably under the Cluster Approach because of direct links between provincial-level coordination, national-level coordination, and the Humanitarian Coordinator which had not been there in the past.

Actors at all levels were better informed of the changing response priorities and were able to engage in coordinated planning, resource mobilisation, and interventions.

Source: Review of the WASH Cluster in DRC, June 2007

**a) National-level coordination**

National-level coordination will focus on strategic aspects of WASH Cluster programming and contributing to the coherence of the overall emergency response. It involves:

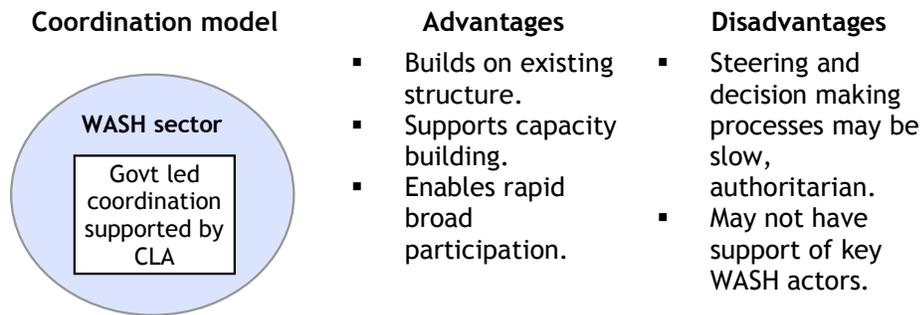
- ✓ Regular input to the overall government/Humanitarian Country Team coordination function;
- ✓ Support for joint assessments;
- ✓ Negotiation and agreement with government and other Clusters on policy guidelines, overall priorities, and resource allocations;
- ✓ Interpreting and establishing technical guidelines relative to international and national standards.

Identifying an appropriate coordination structure at national level will depend on the government structures and coordination mechanisms that are already in place.

A number of options have been used in practice, as illustrated in the models below.

**Example i) Existing government coordination supported by WASH Cluster**

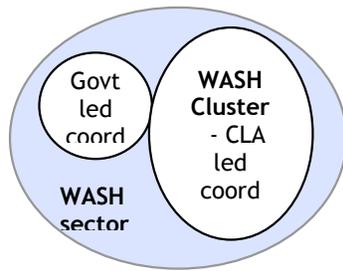
This assumes WASH Cluster coordination will be undertaken through an existing government-led coordination mechanism, with the WASH CLA providing support.



**Example ii) WASH Cluster coordination alongside government**

This arrangement assumes that government are unable or unwilling to provide the coordination necessary for effective management of the WASH response. Or that they refuse to recognise legitimacy of international actors.

**Coordination model**



**Advantages**

- May be necessary initially if govt will not work with CLA and existing coordination is very poor or excludes particular groups or locations.

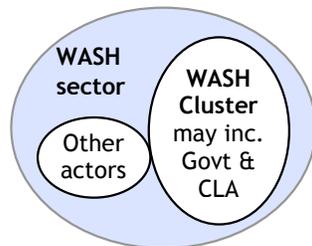
**Disadvantages**

- Duplication.
- Undermines government role and capacity.
- Limits involvement of national and local actors.

**Example iii) Coordination established through the WASH Cluster**

This arrangement assumes that there is no pre-existing coordination mechanism. The WASH Cluster is established and led or co-led by national government, depending on their capacity and willingness to be involved.

**Coordination model**



**Advantages**

- Rapid coordination and decision making.
- Impartiality and more equitable involvement of all actors.
- Good capacity building opps.

**Disadvantages**

- Time and effort needed in identifying and getting WASH actors on board.
- May be a tendency for international orgs to dominate.

**b) Sub-national level coordination**

Sub-national level coordination focuses on the detail of planning and implementation of WASH related activities, i.e. who is doing what, where. It is also at this level that early recovery, emergency preparedness, and capacity building measures can practically be achieved. An effective Cluster coordination structure at sub-national level will help facilitate effective information exchange, monitoring of the emergency situation, progress of the WASH response, and adherence to agreed standards.

Depending on the nature, scale, duration, and phasing of the emergency, there may be a requirement for dedicated field coordination staff (see the **WASH Field Cluster Coordinator ToR**, under Resources). Alternatively, government or WASH Cluster agency representatives may act in the capacity of sub-national level Coordinators or Focal Points. These tend to be identified by default (e.g. due to

presence or experience in a particular location) rather than personal choice, and they may be established UNICEF WES posts that have been in place, and operated in a certain way, for many years.

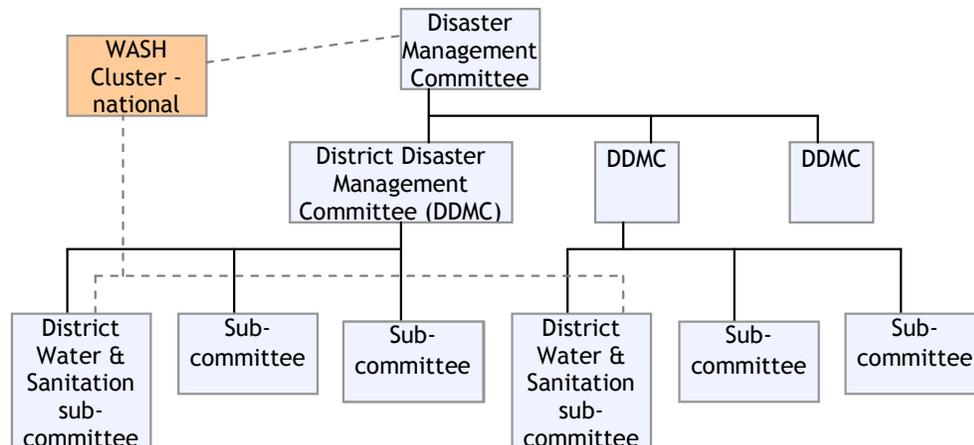
These challenges can be mitigated through:

- ✓ Building on existing communication and coordination structures as far as possible;
- ✓ Ensuring that communication and information exchange is two-way so that Coordinators and Cluster actors at sub-national level are well informed;
- ✓ Keeping information demands to an absolute minimum and adopting communication and reporting media that address the needs and constraints of those in the field (see *section 2.3*);
- ✓ Valuing and acknowledging the contributions from sub-national level WASH actors;
- ✓ Recognising the importance to actors at sub-national level of active community involvement in all aspects of the response.

A range of coordination structures has been used in practice, as illustrated below.

**Example i) Uganda**

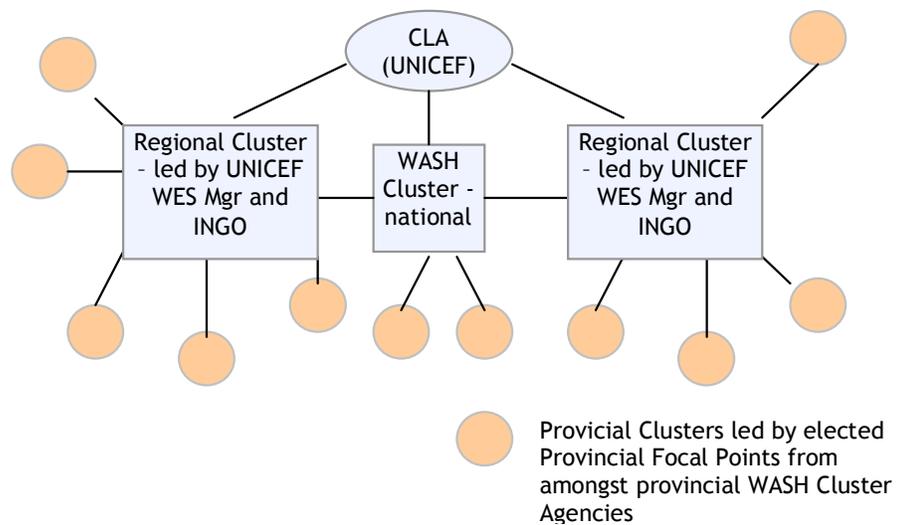
In Uganda the WASH Cluster at district level is integrated with the local government system, which has helped to foster buy-in and ownership of international, national, and local actors and establish an effective working relationship with the government disaster management structure.



Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Built on existing structure.</li> <li>▪ Chaired by government.</li> <li>▪ Strong participation of local actors, inc. Ugandan Water and Sanitation NGO Network members.</li> <li>▪ Supports phase out / transition.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Limited government resources for coordination / monitoring.</li> <li>▪ Poor supervision and quality control.</li> <li>▪ Significant challenge in channelling large amounts of information from field to national level.</li> <li>▪ Limited local authority support for implementation - restricted to coordination.</li> <li>▪ Close links with government not reflected at national level.</li> </ul>

**Example ii) DRC**

In DRC the WASH Cluster is highly decentralised. with 13 provincial Clusters supported by three regional Clusters (including the national Cluster in Kinshasa. which acts as a regional coordination hub). As there are no dedicated WCCs, the regional Clusters are co-led by a UNICEF WES staff member and an INGO representative. Links with government at national and regional levels are weak, but representation of local and national actors at provincial level is high due to the field based focus of coordination.



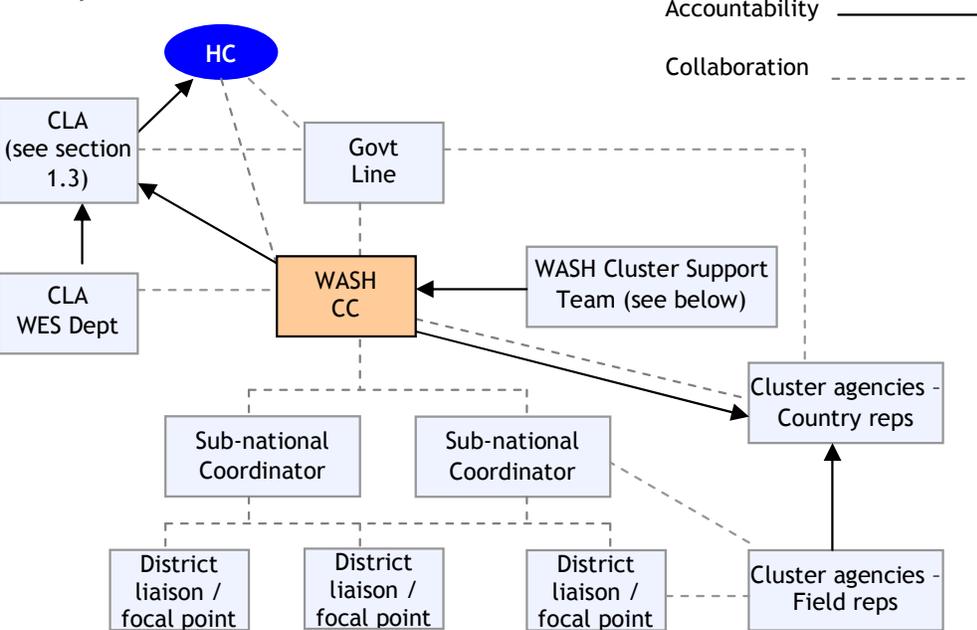
Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Good Cluster coverage in all affected areas through 13 provincial WASH Clusters.</li> <li>▪ Facilitates assessments and monitoring.</li> <li>▪ Good participation by national and local actors.</li> <li>▪ Supports broad representation by Cluster partners through electing and rotating provincial Focal Points.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No link to government structures.</li> <li>▪ Problem in engaging agencies and donors outside the Cluster Approach.</li> <li>▪ Absence of a clear overall WASH strategy.</li> <li>▪ Weak participation or representation in the national-level Cluster.</li> <li>▪ Regional Clusters dominated by UNICEF, although they were co-led by the UNICEF Regional WES Manager and a WASH Cluster agency.</li> </ul>

### 1.2.2 WASH Cluster organisational structure

Outlining the Cluster organisational structure can help in explaining the relationship between cluster partners and highlighting where accountabilities lie. Details of reporting requirements (e.g. WWW information) to enable coordination within and between Clusters are illustrated in *section 2.4*.

#### a) WASH Cluster inter-organisational relationships

The diagram below illustrates the principle WASH Cluster relationships at Country level.



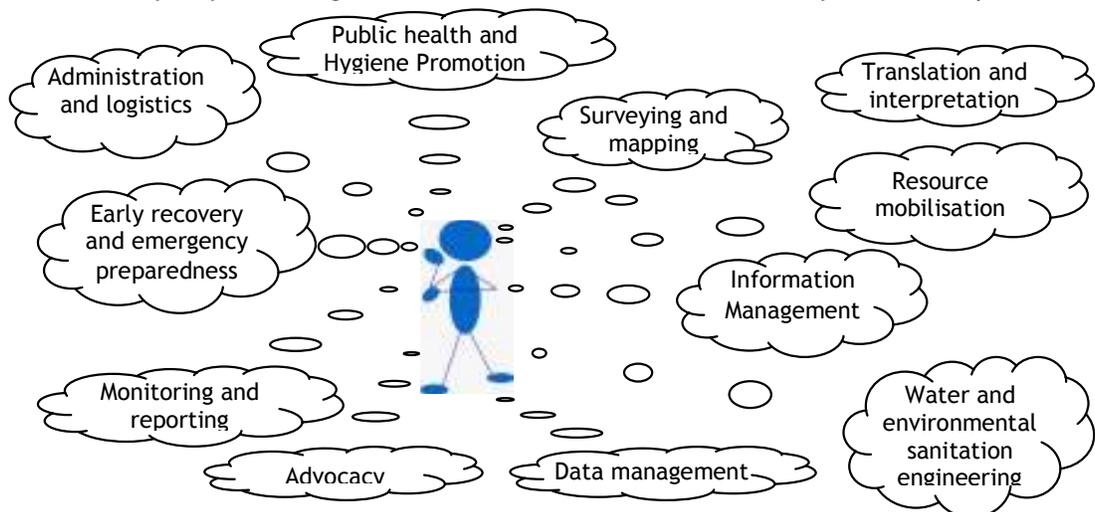
A detailed **WASH Cluster organogram** from Bangladesh detailing the inter-organisational arrangement between the CLA and government counterpart is incorporated under Resources below.

In smaller emergencies, the HC is likely to be directly involved in coordinating assessments, planning, information exchange, resource mobilisation and response activities between the Clusters, and, in chairing inter-Cluster coordination meetings (refer to *section 8.2* for full details of the HC role).

In a large-scale emergency this coordination role is taken on by UNOCHA and may involve the UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination Team (UNDAC - see *section 8.2* for further details). An OCHA Inter-Cluster Coordinator or designated staff member has responsibility for managing inter-Cluster coordination and will liaise directly with the HC as required (see further details of OCHA's role in *sections 1.4 and 3.3*). Direct liaison between the government and HC is still maintained, as indicated in the diagram above.

## b) WASH Cluster support team

The only way to manage the WASH coordination role effectively, is with help!



This may be provided through:

- dedicated WASH Support Team posts, e.g. Information Management,
- the support of individual WASH Cluster specialists, e.g. Hygiene Promotion or GIS,
- or the collective support of technical or working groups.

The principal functions needed in a large-scale emergency are highlighted in the **Functional Relationship Chart** in the Handbook Appendices.

### ***Information Management***

Large scale emergency response will require the support of a full-time dedicated IM professional. See the sample **Information Manager ToR** below and *sections 3.2 and 3.3* for details of WASH Cluster IM and GIS support requirements.

### ***Administrative / financial / logistical staff support***

Daily administrative and logistical support will be needed for a wide variety of tasks, such as reporting, data management, finance, logistics and procurement, translation, driving, etc. and may be best addressed through the CLA or local staff.

Persistence may be required in getting the support needed from the CLA, and a range of strategies are outlined under *section 1.2* for obtaining this support.

### ***Technical support***

Specialist technical support may be needed in relation to environmental sanitation, solid waste, water supply, hygiene promotion, and vector control. In such cases, detailed standard setting, planning, and coordination is undertaken most effectively through smaller technical groups. The Cluster steering group can identify a focal point, usually a specialist in the subject, to set up and lead the working group.

It is important, however, to ensure these issues do not become pigeon holed as something to be dealt with by experts. This can be addressed by ensuring that the outcome of discussions in relation to technical issues are fully integrated in the agenda and discussion during WASH Cluster meetings.

## **c) Steering or advisory groups**

Setting up a smaller steering or advisory group can assist in facilitating decision making, providing a balance between the need for rapid decision making and effective management, and the need for broad participation.

The group should involve all major stakeholders. As the response progresses, it is important to strive for **equitable** representation for both those **affected** by WASH Cluster actions, and those responsible for **implementing or resourcing** them.

**The most effective strategy for achieving equitable representation is to rotate both the chair and membership.**

In many cases, the language and meeting/decision-making style is determined by international actors, which can constrain national and local stakeholders in ensuring that their interests are fully considered.

### ***Examples of Steering or Advisory arrangements used in practice***

Group composition	Advantages	Disadvantages
<p><b>Example i) Strategic Advisory Group (SAG)</b> Used in Bangladesh and Myanmar Well suited to large scale emergencies</p>		
<p><b>National/local (3-4):</b> Government focal point, national NGO rep, national Red Cross/Crescent Society rep, Military liaison. <b>International (10-14):</b> WCC, Donors (2-3), INGOs (2-3), IFRC, Early Recovery Cluster, other related Cluster reps, OCHA inter-Cluster Coordinator, ICRC, International military or peace keeping liaison.</p>	<p>Builds strong links with donors. Rapid decision making. Facilitates guidance from more experienced actors. Facilitates development of concise, clear plans and operating procedures (see Strategic Operating Framework in <i>section 5.1</i>).</p>	<p>Limited national/local representation and capacity building. Risks weakening cluster participation.<sup>3</sup> Can reinforce NGO concerns about Cluster serving elitist interests.</p>
<p><b>Example ii) Shared CLA and Government steering of WASH</b> Used in Uganda, Somalia Well suited to smaller-scale emergencies or long-running conflicts where there are well-established government-led coordination mechanism in place.</p>		
<p>Decisions taken within the main WASH Cluster forum and through delegated responsibility to sub-committees. Broad cross-section of actors involved. N.B. Generally more effective collaboration and shared decision making found at field, rather than national, level</p>	<p>Builds strong links with government (may link to or strengthen disaster preparedness structure) Good input in relation to the local context. Encourages local ownership and capacity building. Same structure can be used down to district level.</p>	<p>Risk of bureaucracy, slow decision making. Experienced NGOs may 'break away' and set up own coordination. Can undermine impartiality, risk exclusion of particular groups (e.g. those opposed to gov't)</p>

<sup>3</sup> The WASH Cluster review in Bangladesh found Cluster participation declined after setting up the SAG, leaving no mechanism for broader endorsement of decisions taken by the SAG.

Whatever the advisory or steering group arrangement, it should support the WCC in:

- ✓ Agreeing on the steering group composition and ways of working;
- ✓ Agreeing the ToRs for Cluster partners;
- ✓ Forging and maintaining national-level partnerships and equitable representation of diverse WASH sector interests within the Cluster;
- ✓ Providing strategic guidance;
- ✓ Keeping the response moving, i.e. proactively review and adjust;
- ✓ Collectively representing the WASH Cluster interests and position including advocating for necessary resources and provisions;
- ✓ Setting performance standards and indicators (based on advice from technical working groups as appropriate).

#### d) Technical working groups and sub-groups

Technical, working, or sub-groups are useful in analysing problems, resolving concerns, and formalising principles and responsibilities, e.g. setting standards, defining technical specifications, Information Management, quality assurance, as consensus is more easily achieved within a smaller group.

##### **Example: Technical Working Group in Pakistan**

The WASH Cluster in Pakistan (NWFP Province) assigned Oxfam to lead in standard setting for latrine construction in coordination with the WASH and Camp Management Clusters.

Oxfam helped all the Cluster partners to understand the designs. Latrine spacing in the camp, and cleaning and disinfection. Oxfam was not leading the Cluster, but leading in technical standards setting. This was a good way for the Cluster to manage who should lead in water quality, water supply, sanitation, and hygiene, because different Cluster partners have comparative advantages that can add value to the implementation of WASH activities coordinated by the Cluster.

Example provided by Mahboob Ahmed Bajwa, Chief WES, UNICEF Laos

To establish a group, the Steering Group identifies a focal point with responsibility for establishing the group and feeding back on their activities and recommendations, either to the Steering Group, or all WASH Cluster partners. Once decisions are agreed or standards set, these need to be reflected in Cluster response plans and strategy development. A group's life-span will be determined by its purpose. See Resources below for a **sample Technical Working group ToR**.

Partners can self select, although special expertise may be required. They may be drawn from within or outside the WASH Cluster, e.g. government, academic, and professional institutions, and civil society or private sector organisations may be able to assist.

***Examples of Technical or Working groups used in practice***

Composition and purpose	Advantages	Disadvantages
<b>Example i) Technical Working group (TWG)</b>		
Used in Bangladesh and Myanmar		
Led by a focal point appointed by the SAG. Oral and written reporting through the SAG to the WASH Cluster. Self selecting but fewer than 15 members. Set up sub-groups if needed. Purpose is to develop policy guidelines and technical standards.	Specific ToR with clearly defined outputs. Limitations on group size and lifespan promote efficiency. Clear lines of responsibility and reporting.	Leadership is pre-defined. Limited lifespan limits opps for partnership and capacity building. Limited focus on technical issues, rather than sharing operational resp's.
<b>Example ii) Sub-groups and Sub-committees</b>		
Used in Uganda		
Mix of international, national, and local actors. Lead / chair shared amongst different organisations. Substitute for central 'steering' function. Covered issues such as coordination, mapping and monitoring, standards and guidelines, capacity building, advocacy, and resource mobilisation.	Facilitates active participation of all Cluster actors in Cluster planning and decision making. Addressed different aspects of WASH Cluster responsibilities. Provided opportunity for building capacity in steering different issues.	Groups were difficult to disengage once established. Some complaints of too many meetings and groups. No guarantee of quality or expertise in group decisions. Communication between groups and the Cluster was challenging.

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## Resources

-  WASH Cluster Organogram, Sidr Response, Bangladesh, March 2008
-  WASH Cluster Functional Relationships chart, Sidr Response, Bangladesh, 2008
-  WASH Cluster - Field Cluster Coordinator ToR, Sidr response, Bangladesh
-  WASH Cluster - District Coordination Facilitator, Sidr response, Bangladesh
-  ToR for WASH Cluster Information Manager
  
-  IFRC Terms of Reference Cluster Strategic Advisory Group (SAG), B3 Associates, Nov 2006
-  WASH Cluster ToR for Technical Working groups (TWG)
  
-  Global WASH Cluster Learning project, Review of the WASH Cluster in Bangladesh Sidr Response, March 2008
-  Global WASH Cluster Learning project, Review of the WASH Cluster in Uganda, Nov 2007
-  Global WASH Cluster Learning project, Review of the WASH Cluster in Democratic Republic of Congo, June 2007
-  Interagency Global WASH Cluster Review of the Watsan Cluster in the Java Earthquake Response, Aug 2006
-  McCluskey, J., Summary Report, Visit to UNICEF Liberia, Roll-Out Country for the Cluster Approach, July 2006
-  Lessons learnt WATSAN Cluster CSZ Drought Response 2006

## 1.3 UNICEF and the role of the Cluster Lead Agency

### 1.3.1 Role of the Cluster Lead Agency (CLA)

At country level, the Cluster Approach aims to ensure a more strategic, coherent and effective humanitarian response through coordinated mobilisation of sector actors under the lead of a designated Cluster Lead Agency (CLA).

These agencies are assigned by the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) or Resident Coordinator (RC), in collaboration with the Humanitarian Country Team and relevant global CLA, and are aligned, as far as possible, with the CLAs at global level. Further details of the global CLAs and process for formalising the Cluster Approach, can be found in *section 8.2*.

The CLA at country level has responsibility for appointing a Cluster Coordinator, and any other support staff as required, for effective functioning of their Cluster. Each CLA is accountable to the HC for facilitating effective sectoral coordination (see 1.3.5 below for further details). Full **ToR for the CLA** are provided under Resources below, and form the basis for the Cluster Coordinator ToR.

#### ***Provider of Last Resort (POLR)***

Perhaps the most difficult and controversial aspect of the CLA role is that of 'Provider of Last Resort'. As agreed in the IASC principles underpinning the Cluster Approach, CLAs (as the POLR) are responsible for addressing critical life-saving needs in circumstances where no other agency is able to do so.

#### **Example: UNICEF as Provider of Last Resort**

UNICEF was the WASH Cluster Lead Agency in Tajikistan, and although they had no WES program, the UNICEF Education programme was reasonably familiar with WASH interventions from their WASH programme in schools. As POLR for the WASH Cluster, UNICEF had to turn to their education programme to perform complex WASH interventions that no one else within the WASH Cluster was able to undertake.

Being the POLR does not mean UNICEF (or the WCC) must do everything, but should limit themselves to interventions that are absolutely necessary and within their technical and management capacity.

Example provided by Peter Wallis, UNICEF, Tajikistan

This requirement is subject to reasonable access, security, and availability of funding, and the HC and ERC have an obligation to support the CLA in mobilising the necessary funding needed. A detailed explanation is given in the **IASC Operational Guidance on the Provider of Last Resort**.

### ***WASH Cluster Lead Agency***

In most countries where the Cluster Approach has been implemented, UNICEF has been the Cluster Lead Agency (CLA) for WASH. Exceptions include shared responsibility with OXFAM in Zimbabwe, and the lead role taken by PAHO/WHO in the Dominican Republic.

If UNICEF capacity in country is weak, another organisation may be given delegated authority by UNICEF, as the Global WASH Lead Agency, to take on the role as CLA at country level.

Similarly, if UNICEF are CLA at country level but have limited capacity in some affected parts of the country, they may delegate authority for Cluster coordination to other agencies at sub-national level. This will need to be formally acknowledged through a Letter of Understanding. UNICEF will ultimately remain accountable to the HC for the effectiveness of the overall WASH Cluster response.

### ***Other Cluster Lead Agencies key to WASH***

The WASH CLA works in close collaboration with a number of other CLAs. In particular Health (WHO), Nutrition (UNICEF), Protection (UNHCR/OHCHR/UNICEF), Emergency Shelter (UNHCR/IFRC), CCCM (UNHCR/IOM) and Education (UNICEF/SCF UK). **Matrices** outlining mutual roles and responsibilities, and principle guidelines used in these clusters, can be found in the Appendices.

## **1.3.2 UNICEF: headquarters and regional**

The WCC is likely to have contact with UNICEF at all levels and can approach different parts of the organisation for support:

### **Global level:**

- ✓ Global WASH Cluster Advocacy and Support Team based in UNICEF WES section (see section 8.3).
- ✓ Office of Emergency Programmes (EMOPS): coordination of response, humanitarian information, humanitarian policy, early warning and preparedness, disaster risk reduction, recovery, and humanitarian partnerships.
- ✓ UNICEF's Operations Centre (OPSCEN) is a 24-hour, 7 days-a-week information gathering and dissemination hub within EMOPS.
- ✓ UNICEF resources [http://www.unicef.org/wes/index\\_documents.html](http://www.unicef.org/wes/index_documents.html).

### **Regional level:**

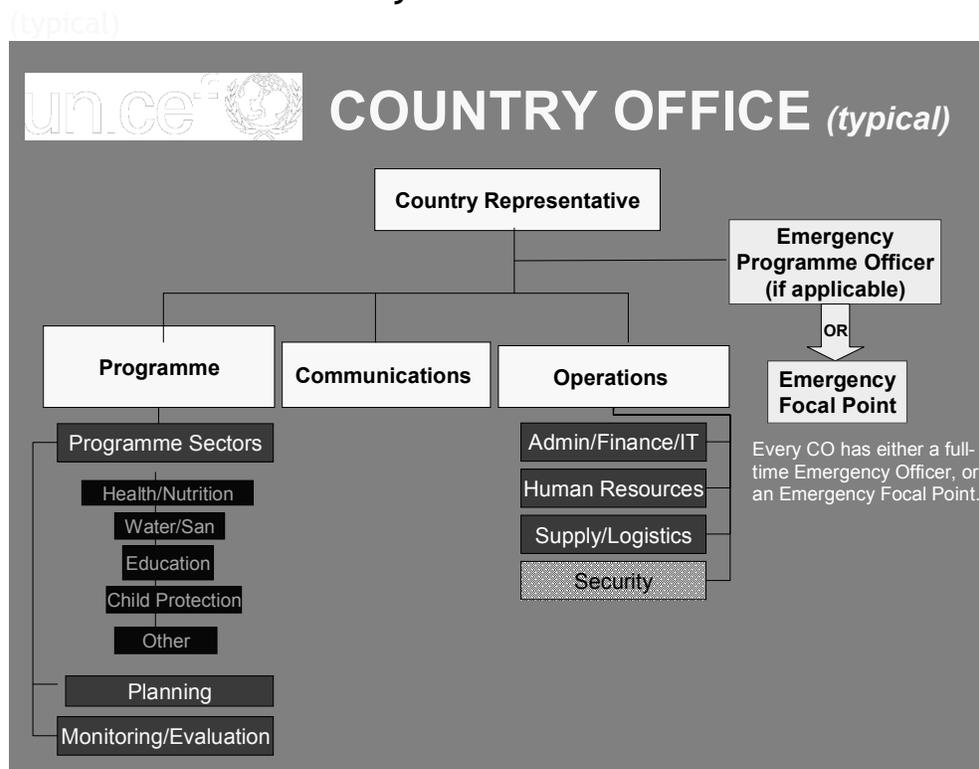
- ✓ Technical and advocacy support through regional offices in Switzerland, Panama, Thailand, Kenya, Jordan, Nepal, and Senegal.
- ✓ Linking Global WASH initiatives with country Clusters and support with Cluster coordination and local capacity building from Regional Emergency WASH Advisers (REWAs) (see *section 6.2*).

#### Country level:

- ✓ UNICEF Country Office for technical support in relation to health, nutrition, water, sanitation, hygiene, education, and protection, and administrative and logistical support for Cluster coordination - see details below.

Comprehensive details about UNICEF can be found at [www.unicef.org](http://www.unicef.org).

### 1.3.3 UNICEF Country Office



Within the Country Office support may be needed, and sourced from all departments, e.g. Programme, Communications, and Operations. CE

### ***Emergency management***

Every Country Office has an Emergency Programme Officer or part time focal point. This may be a staff member with another role within the office.

The Emergency Programme Officer is responsible for providing internal briefings and arranging security briefings and updates. WES or health staff can provide local knowledge about the country context, background information about WASH and in-country WASH capacities, and assist in making contacts and sourcing information.

Further guidelines on planning and operational aspects of UNICEF emergency programmes can be found in the **UNICEF Emergency Field Handbook** under Resources below.

The WCC will have contact with, and need to cooperate with, a diverse range of existing and temporary staff, and short-term consultants within the UNICEF Country Office, many involved in emergency-related activities.

Staff can be re-deployed from UNICEF HQ, regional offices or other country offices to assist in the response to a major emergency. Additional personnel may also be brought in as consultants, or through UNICEF's stand-by arrangements (see section 6.2.5 for further details).

### ***WES Programme***

WASH projects undertaken directly by UNICEF are the responsibility of the WES (Water, Environment, Sanitation) section within the Country Office. In some countries this may be within the Health section. The CLA role as POLR is most likely to be undertaken by the WES section.

The WCC will need to work in close collaboration with this team, both as a key WASH Cluster actor and a source of technical support and guidance. In some situations, particularly at sub-national level, WES staff will be responsible for managing both UNICEF programmes, and Cluster coordination.

It is important to guard against giving priority or showing preference for WES initiatives, as this will seriously undermine the WCC role as an honest broker. Equally, ensure that the WES team are aware of the need to work through the Cluster coordination mechanism, rather than approaching other agencies directly.

### ***Communications***

The UNICEF communications staff can support Cluster advocacy through existing links with the media and donors and expertise in drafting advocacy communications. They are likely to focus on advocacy in relation to fundraising rather than rights, but will still be a valuable resource for the WCC. See *section 7.5* for further details.

## ***Operations***

Establishing early contact with UNICEF Operations staff will be key to setting up the Cluster. In particular:

<b>Administration</b> -	for secretarial and IT support, meeting facilities, access to office systems, etc.
<b>Finance</b> -	for operating budget, rental and lease contracts, grant management requirements, etc.
<b>Supply</b> -	for transport, office space, communications, supplies, etc.
<b>HR</b> -	for recruitment of local staff, salaries, insurance, etc.

### **1.3.4 Operational support for the WCC**

Getting support and supplies from the Country Office may prove difficult in practice, particularly as the WCC has no direct access to, or authority over, financial, human, and material resources. Difficulties have been experienced in getting access to vehicles, direct phone lines, email accounts, and general administrative and logistical support.

The following strategies can help to overcome these barriers:

- ✓ Try to clarify requirements in advance and make arrangements for critical items on arrival, e.g. security briefing, ID card, email address, and mobile phone number for the WASH Cluster contact poster (see *section 1.1*);
- ✓ Ask the Country Representative to clarify your role and authority amongst UNICEF staff;
- ✓ It may be useful to attend management team and staff meetings within the Country Office in order to build relations with the staff;
- ✓ Facilitate a briefing for UNICEF staff on the Cluster Approach, the role of UNICEF as CLA, and the role of the WCC;
- ✓ Advocate for separate - but fully equipped - office accommodation (ideally close to other CCs) to promote your role as an ‘honest broker’;
- ✓ Advocate for employing dedicated local administrative and logistics staff;
- ✓ Detail and agree a specific budget for the Cluster coordination function.

### ***Pre-deployment support***

The type of operational support available to a WCC will depend on the emergency situation and the nature of the WCC contract. This will usually be a short-term consultancy contract. See <http://www.unicef.org/about/employ/index.html>. **Practical checklists** for personal and **mission pre-deployment** items can be found under Resources below.

Once in country, immediate arrangements will need to be made for secure office space with administrative and secretarial support, communications (telephone, mobile, VHF radio, Thuraya, etc.), transport, translation, meeting, and photocopying/printing facilities. A useful **'Office-in-a-box' checklist** for stationary and other office requirements, developed by the Emergency Shelter Cluster, is included under Resources below.

#### Quick checklist for pre-deployment items

- ✓ Short term Service Agreement (SSA)
- ✓ Confirmation of DSA entitlements
- ✓ Cash advance and banking arrangements
- ✓ Visa / residency permit
- ✓ Security / government / police clearance
- ✓ ID / security clearance / pass (involves an e-exam taken before departure)
- ✓ Medical report (completed)
- ✓ Email account and internet access
- ✓ Authority to use UN transport and internal flights (as applicable)
- ✓ Permission to use UN guest house facilities
- ✓ Submit request for a mobile phone with international roaming facility

### 1.3.5 WCC reporting and accountability

As CLA, UNICEF has responsibility for ensuring that the obligations for Cluster leadership are fulfilled and is accountable to, and should report to, the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) on all issues related to the WASH Cluster.

Accountability and reporting responsibilities generally rest with the UNICEF Country Representative in major rapid-onset emergencies. However, authority may be delegated to another member of UNICEF programme staff, such as the Emergency Programme Officer or Focal Point, the Chief of WES, or to the national level WCC. Such arrangements are likely in on-going emergencies or countries with an established UNICEF emergency programme.

#### **Example: WASH Cluster accountability arrangements in Sri Lanka**

In Sri Lanka, the WCCs at national and sub-national levels report to the Chief of WES, rather than the UNICEF Country Representative. Furthermore, the UNICEF Emergency Focal Point is responsible for reporting to the HC on behalf of UNICEF in its role as CLA for both WASH and Nutrition.

Example provided by Kelly Naylor, WASH Specialist, UNICEF, DRC

The national-level WCC is accountable to, and, required to report to, the UNICEF Country Representative or designated UNICEF (CLA) representative, on all issues related to the WASH Cluster and UNICEF's ability to fulfill its obligations as WASH CLA. In practice, the WCC may also report directly to the HC through inter-Cluster coordination meetings, etc., where the designated UNICEF (CLA) representative is not present.

The WCC is also responsible to the WASH sector, and accountable to the affected populations that the WASH Cluster is trying to serve. *Section 1.4* provides details of the mutual roles and responsibilities of WASH Cluster members.

At sub-national level, the WCC will often be an existing member of UNICEF WES staff. Or in locations where UNICEF is not represented or has limited WASH capacity, sub-national level WCCs may be representatives of other WASH Cluster agencies, such as Oxfam, CARE, Medair, CRS, etc.

### 1.3.6 UNICEF guiding principles and protocols

UNICEF is likely to be working in-country before an emergency occurs, and this role continues independently of the Cluster Lead role. UNICEF's role in emergencies is to protect women and children, and a typical country programme may cover protection, child and maternal health, education, and nutrition, in addition to WASH.

#### *Core Commitments to Children in Emergencies (CCC)*

The CCC outline the minimum requirements for the design and delivery of UNICEF programming in emergencies, to ensure adequate child protection and improved child survival. These commitments are complementary to Sphere, the only difference being that they focus on women and children. A brief **booklet setting out the CCC** can be found under Resources below.

Any projects implemented by, or through, UNICEF under the WASH Cluster, e.g. via a Flash Appeal or the CERF mechanism, are required to support the objectives of the CCC. This can create conflict, as the WASH Cluster mandate is to equitably assist all those affected by an emergency, not only women and children.

#### *UNICEF WASH strategy 2006-2015*

The **WASH strategy** provides a guiding framework within which UNICEF country programmes can prioritise their activities. There are three strands, covering:

1. Countries with high child mortality and low WASH coverage,
2. Emergency countries,
3. All other countries where UNICEF is active.

In emergency countries, the focus is on meeting the CCCs as a minimum and meeting coordination obligations as a CLA.

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## Resources

- 📖 IASC Generic ToR for Sector / Cluster Leads at Country Level
- 📖 IASC Operational Guidance on the Provider of Last Resort, June 2008
  
- 📖 Emergency Shelter Cluster mission deployment checklist, IFRC, 2006
- 📖 Emergency Shelter CC Personal pre-deployment checklist, IFRC, 2006
- 📖 Emergency Shelter Office in a box checklist, IFRC, 2006
  
- 📖 UNICEF Core Commitments to Children in Emergencies
- 📖 UNICEF WASH Strategy 2006-2011
- 📖 UNICEF Emergency Field Handbook, 2005
  
- <http://www.unicef.org>
- [http://www.unicef.org/emerg/index\\_33578.html](http://www.unicef.org/emerg/index_33578.html)  
*EMOPS website*
- <http://clustercoordination.org>

## 1.4 Key Cluster actors and building relationships with them

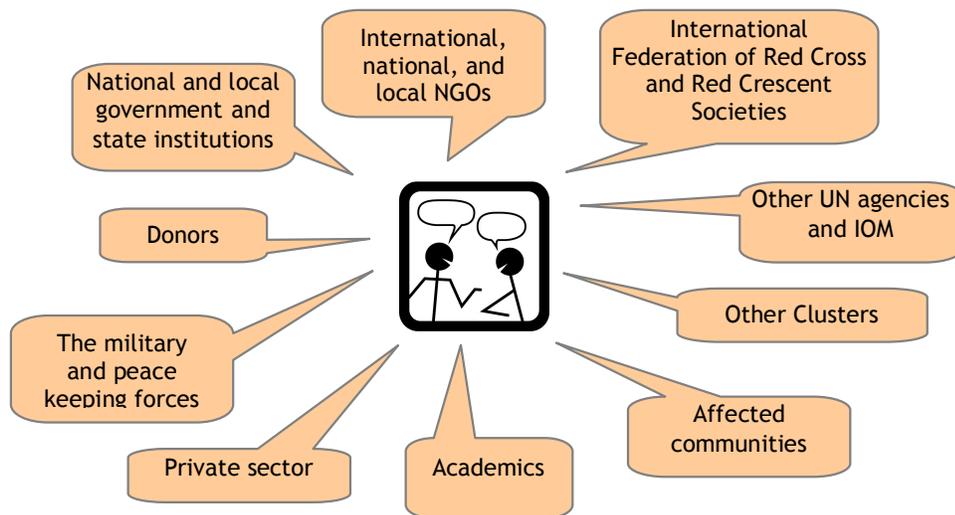
### 1.4.1 Strategies for promoting the Cluster Approach

The Cluster Approach has been described as an organisational tool to promote improved coordination and partnership; an analytical tool for collective management of all aspects of WASH programming; and a service-delivery tool to improve the quality and effectiveness of WASH services.<sup>4</sup>

#### *Who are the key WASH actors?*

Humanitarian partnerships may take different forms, from information sharing, through cooperation, to joint collaborative programming. Often, this entails setting up formal or informal loose associations based on the need to avoid duplication and enhance complementarity.

Successful establishment of the WASH Cluster depends on demonstrating the benefits of participation to key WASH sector actors. It cannot function without their support.



<sup>4</sup> Learning from the WASH Cluster Approach - Good Practice and Lessons Learned, 2008, ACF

## Key points in advocating the Cluster Approach

### **What is it?**

- ✓ A dynamic approach that aims to optimise emergency response capacity through joining forces, supporting the intervention strategy of the authorities, and filling gaps where needed;
- ✓ a pre-determined structure for rapid organisation of relief efforts;
- ✓ a flexible approach, recognising that each emergency is unique.

### **What is it not?**

- ✗ It is not an attempt to undermine the government response, but strives to help strengthen government coordination;
- ✗ It is not UN-centric, depending on the active participation of all IASC members, i.e. UN agencies, the Red Cross Movement, and NGOs.

### **What does it offer?**

#### **To all:**

- ✓ a structured approach improving predictability and quality of response;
- ✓ resources and capabilities to respond quickly and effectively;
- ✓ a process for avoiding, and filling, gaps in the humanitarian response.

#### **To government:**

- ✓ Continued control with improved speed, coverage, and quality of response;
- ✓ Clear terms of reference and streamlined communications through pre-designated Cluster Lead Agencies;
- ✓ Reduction in workload through Cluster role in organisation and coordination of efforts;
- ✓ Critical external experience and technical expertise;
- ✓ Opportunity for attracting additional resources and popular support.

#### **To INGOs:**

- ✓ Access to technical support and clarity on standards of response;
- ✓ Reduced risk of duplication or conflict between agencies or beneficiaries;
- ✓ Increased networking and means to engage with donors and government;
- ✓ Collective power in advocacy, mobilising resources, etc.;
- ✓ Reduced risk of lone decision making and improved accountability to the affected populations.

#### **To donors:**

- ✓ More strategic and evidence-based rationale for funding;
- ✓ Greater consistency and reduced duplication between proposals;
- ✓ Closer dialogue and access to a range of implementing partners;
- ✓ A more active role in response planning.

#### **To local actors:**

- ✓ Increased chance of involvement in the response;
- ✓ Access to resources and capacity building opportunities;
- ✓ Better understanding of the international aid process, standards etc;
- ✓ Access to donors and potential partners;
- ✓ Means of promoting local interests and initiatives;
- ✓ Better organisation and access to information at local level.

### ***What challenges can be expected in promoting the WASH Cluster?***

From the perspective of Cluster partners, Cluster participation may be seen as more work and reduced autonomy, with no guarantee of additional resources. Concerns expressed include:

- × It undermines government authority in coordinating the humanitarian response;
- × Seen as UN centric, favouring the interests of UN agencies;
- × The CLA (UNICEF) will not be objective, particularly in the allocation of resources;
- × Seen as duplication of coordination, a parallel structure;
- × It will be time consuming: too many meetings, demands for information, etc.;
- × It will oppose organisational priorities or mandate, e.g. ICRC, MSF requirement for independence;
- × Lack of confidence in the tangible benefits, e.g. improvements in predictability, effectiveness, and accountability of response;
- × NGO fear of competing or limiting opportunities to generate direct funding through traditional donors;
- × Unwillingness to accept the quality of, or work with, other Cluster actors.

## **1.4.2 Working with national and local government**

As required by international Human Rights, Humanitarian, and Refugee law, it is the **primary responsibility of the state to provide assistance to peoples affected by disaster or armed conflict** within its own territory, when they no longer have the capacity to cope.

The Cluster Approach aims to help government and local authorities in doing this, through identifying who to approach in relation to the different sectoral needs.

Ideally, coordination under the Cluster Approach should be a shared activity, led by government with support from the HCT and designated CLAs. In practice, this depends on the emergency context and the willingness and capacity of government actors to lead or participate in humanitarian activities.

In many cases it will come down to personal relations and even the interest and commitment of particular individuals. Perseverance may be needed in finding the most productive people to work with.

**The better the personal relationships, the better the coordination**

***Ways to promote partnership with national and local government?***

- ✓ Advocate for close collaboration amongst WASH sector actors;
- ✓ Supporting the government's response efforts, e.g. The Myanmar joint assessment (Refer to *section 4.1 Resources*) facilitated linking national priorities and Cluster recovery efforts.
- ✓ Adapt the Cluster Approach to government coordination structures.
- ✓ Advise on modification or application of national policy and standards, e.g. in Bangladesh, the WASH Cluster supported development of clearer national standards for pond cleaning and pond sand filtration.
- ✓ Exchange information with government actors so that they are fully informed of response planning, capacities, and results.
- ✓ Build government capacity through shared planning, decision making and review, and inclusion in training and learning activities.
- ✓ Advocate for impartiality in conflict situations.

**1.4.3 Role of WASH Cluster partners**

The WASH Cluster structure and its coordination mechanisms will need to accommodate the interests of all sector actors, whether or not they are participating, to:

- influence and engage in WASH Cluster response plans,
- share information,
- or simply to observe.

**What is expected of WASH Cluster partners?**

That they will:

- ✓ Endorse the overall aim and objectives of the WASH Cluster.
- ✓ Be proactive in exchanging information and reporting, highlight needs, gaps, and duplication, mobilise resources (financial, human, material), engage with affected communities, build local capacity.
- ✓ Share responsibility for WASH Cluster activities, including assessing needs, developing plans, and developing policies and guidelines through working groups.
- ✓ Respect and adhere to agreed principles, policies, priorities, and standards.
- ✓ Work as a team

The value of multiple stakeholder involvement is in the diversity of partners and the potential complementarities between them. The WCC role is to find the

strengths within this diversity and maximize the complementarities that can be drawn from it.

As WCC you may need to consider various forms of partnership: from shared assessments and joint programming, e.g. with agencies contracted to implement projects with funding administered through the CLA, to looser associations based on the need to share information, avoid duplication, and enhance complementarities. However, there are challenges to establishing and sustaining partnerships,<sup>5</sup> including:

- × **competition** - for visibility and funding;
- × **participation levels** in Clusters - not all Cluster partners can or want to engage in the Cluster in the same way;
- × engaging key humanitarian actors who have **sufficient and independent sources of funding**;
- × **including national and local actors** in Cluster proceedings, and building their capacity;
- × **diversity** - accommodating and engaging the wide-ranging interests and mandates of government, and national and international NGOs;
- × **working with national authorities** where government institutions are weak or are party to a conflict;
- × **managing conflict of interests** as WCC when your agency controls the funding and wants to control the priorities.

#### Recommendations for developing effective partnerships

1. Develop clear and jointly agreed ToR for the WASH Cluster as a whole to encourage Cluster partners to undertake their agreed responsibilities.
2. Avoid drafting individual ToRs or Letters of Understanding with individual Cluster partners unless a similar agreement is in place at global level.
3. Facilitate joint working and shared responsibilities, e.g. through local coordination arrangements, technical and working groups, joint project implementation, while recognising that government and NGO resources may be limited.

Extract from Implementation of the WASH Cluster Approach - Good Practice and Lessons Learned, 2008, ACF

<sup>5</sup> From Partnerships in Clusters - <http://www.humanitarianreform.org/humanitarianreform/Portals/1/Hom%20page/Training/Workshops/One%20day/Partnership.doc>

### *Accountabilities within the Cluster*

The Cluster Approach does **not require that Cluster partners be held accountable to the WASH CLA or CC**. Individual agencies can only be held accountable to the CLA when they have a contractual obligation e.g. as an implementing partner for projects funded through the CLA.

However, the WCC, in collaboration with government, may develop **WASH Cluster ToR** for endorsement by those agencies involved in implementation and decision making, to ensure that they are clear about WASH Cluster expectations, and committed to working within agreed principles, policies, and priorities. See an example in Resources below.

Conversely, the WCC and CLA are **responsible to the WASH Cluster partners**. Concerns or complaints about their performance can be taken to the HC, who will consult with the UNICEF Country Rep and Global WASH, and where necessary, propose alternative arrangements.

### **1.4.4 Identifying potential Cluster partners**

Alongside the need for equitable involvement of WASH stakeholders, there is also the need to be strategic, and certain WASH actors can be seen as critical to an effective WASH sector response. These include:

- ✓ Principal government partners at national and sub-national level;
- ✓ UN agencies and INGOs with established presence in country;
- ✓ INGOs, national and local organisations with proven experience in the sub-sectors of WASH that are key to a particular response;
- ✓ INGOs with reliable access to financial, human, and material resources without dependence on pooled funding;
- ✓ Other Clusters whose activities will complement, or potentially overlap with WASH;
- ✓ Donors with an expressed interest or tradition in supporting WASH.

#### *Strategies for engaging Cluster partners*

- ✓ **Source information about WASH sector actors** and donors through the relevant government ministry, existing coordination groups, NGO registration details, word of mouth, the RC/HC, or other Clusters.
- ✓ **Establish immediate contact with decision makers within strategic organisations** and keep them fully informed through personal contact.
- ✓ **Ask Cluster partners to complete a brief Agency Profile document**. This will provide basic information for assessing sector capacity and starting a WASH Cluster Contact List (see example below).

**WASH CLUSTER**  
Georgia  
IDP Emergency Response

**PARTNER CAPACITY**

<b>NAME OF AGENCY</b>	
<b>COUNTRY DIRECTOR</b> (Name & E-Mail)	
<b>WASH FOCAL POINT</b> (Name, Mobile, E-Mail, Location)	
<b>No. of STAFF</b> (National & International)	
<b>APPROX BUDGET</b> (inc % of Water, Sanitation, Hygiene)	
<b>DESCRIPTION OF OPERATIONS</b> (including Number of Beneficiaries by age and gender)	
<b>LOCATIONS OF OPERATION</b>	
<b>ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE</b>	
<b>FUTURE INTENTIONS</b> (2009)	
<b>ADDITIONAL RESOURCES REQUIRED</b> (Human, Financial, Material – if any)	

Date Completed & By Whom

- ✓ **Provide briefings and disseminate information about the Cluster Approach** and de-mystify concepts such as the Provider of Last Resort.
- ✓ **Widely disseminate details of the Cluster Support Team**, contact details and meetings through the HC, UNOCHA, and government channels, relevant web-sites, email lists, and **posters** in meeting places

(an example is included under Resources). Ensure that information is also available in local languages.

The mandate of agencies such as ICRC and MSF may prevent them coordinating with the WASH Cluster, but they are a key actor in the WASH response. In some previous emergencies they have also offered critical support to the WASH Cluster Agency and WCC in addressing gaps and resource shortages.

Although unable to formally coordinate with the Cluster, these agencies should be encouraged to participate informally in Cluster meetings and in the exchange of information.

### ***Engaging with local actors***

The 2007 Evaluation of the Cluster Approach highlighted weaknesses in the development of partnerships with national and local NGOs. Although improving partnership is the foundation of the humanitarian reform process, national and local NGOs had seen no significant improvement in opportunities for participation, partnership, or funding through the Cluster Approach.

National and local NGO involvement is often constrained by lack of funding or resources, language, organisational culture, access to information, and the overall organisational capacity of civil society.

Participation can be improved through:

- ✓ providing information and resources in local languages,
- ✓ maintaining simple Information Management and reporting tools,
- ✓ working within existing local structures,
- ✓ facilitating partnerships between more experienced Cluster actors and less experienced national and local NGOs through training, small scale funding, and shared Cluster responsibilities, and,
- ✓ providing meaningful opportunities for involvement in decision making.

A range of other institutions within and outside the WASH sector may also strengthen, or be influential to, the WASH Cluster response.

- **Traditional authorities, elders, religious leaders, etc.**, for example in resolving land and water rights, community mobilisation.
- **Academic and research-based institutions**, e.g. for expertise, information, personnel, equipment.
- **Civil society / professional associations**, e.g. umbrella orgs (women, youth etc) and professional institutions (for expertise, personnel, local knowledge, mobilising materials, equipment).
- **Faith based orgs**, e.g. missions (for accommodation, warehousing, staff, local expertise).
- **Police, customs, etc.**, for example in enabling access, security, clearances, etc.
- **Media**, e.g. radio, newspapers (for information dissemination, advocacy).

### Strategies used to get national and local NGOs on board

**Uganda** - working within an existing coordination structure enabled the WASH Cluster to establish links with over 150 NGO members of the Uganda Water and Sanitation NGO Network (UWASNET).

**Myanmar** - problems of access and an IASC team focused on partnerships placed strong emphasis on the engagement of local NGOs. Strategies used included:

- ✓ CLAs providing translation on demand;
- ✓ Establishment of a local NGO Resource Centre to facilitate meetings with local NGOs, provide bi-lingual note taking services for meetings, provide information and advice to local NGOs on the humanitarian process including the Cluster Approach and Flash Appeal and CERF funding mechanisms;
- ✓ Organisation of a UN/INGO/local NGO networking day;
- ✓ Promotion of the Principles of Partnership (see *section 8.1*) and a 'Good Partners' checklist among humanitarian actors.

**DRC** - reaching out to local organisations through a highly decentralised sub national coordination structure, and striving to increase pooled funding as a 'pull factor' in attracting national and local NGOs to the WASH Cluster.

### *Maintaining relations with Cluster partners*

Maintaining Cluster participation can be as big a challenge as getting actors on board at the outset. Learning from WASH Cluster experience has underlined a number of key points:

- ✓ Without the opportunity to express concerns and influence the Cluster, partners will soon lose interest. Offer meaningful **opportunities for involvement and feedback**, e.g. through technical and working groups.
- ✓ Cluster partners will resent excess decision making 'on their behalf'. **Devolve Cluster ownership and decision making**, e.g. rotate the chair, rotate membership of steering or technical groups, avoid creating a cluster 'elite'.
- ✓ As WCC, ask for, and **respond to feedback, and acknowledge the contributions** - big and small - of Cluster partners.
- ✓ Cluster partners will already have multiple and diverse demands for information - keep **information demands to a minimum**.
- ✓ Providing **interpretation, translated materials, accessible information and consultation forums at local level** will facilitate on-going participation of local Cluster actors

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## Resources

-  **CRD Desk Officers Toolkit, 2007**  
*Includes examples of advocating for the Cluster Approach with national authorities in Ethiopia and The Philippines (pp 6-9)*
-  **IASC Operational Note - Coordination with government / local authorities.**  
*Basic list of points to consider in engaging with government actors.*
-  **WASH Cluster - Terms of Reference for Cluster Partners, Bangladesh, Feb 2008**
-  **IFRC Terms of Reference, Emergency Shelter Cluster Partners, B3 Associates, Nov 2006**  
*Sample ToR which could be adapted for cluster partners*
-  **'How to Contact Us' poster, ESC sample, Yogyakarta**
-  **WASH Cluster Partner Profile document, Georgia, Jan 2008**
-  **Emergency Shelter Cluster, Partner Summary template, Yogyakarta**

## 1.5 Coordination with other Clusters and groups

### 1.5.1 Inter-Cluster coordination

#### a) Role of UN OCHA in inter-Cluster coordination

Once the decision to implement the Cluster Approach is taken by the HC (refer to *section 8.2*), **UN OCHA** plays a key role in supporting the HC and HCT in four key areas of competency:

- Coordination
- Information Management
- Advocacy and Resource Mobilisation
- Policy Development

OCHA's role is **NOT** to:

- × manage individual Clusters,
- × provide secretarial support.

#### *Coordination*

OCHA is responsible for addressing coordination needs and putting in place an appropriate coordination structure at all levels: national and sub-national (regional/provincial and district). Key activities include:

- **Supporting the HC and identifying partners** for the HCT and individual Clusters. Then working with these humanitarian actors to determine appropriate mechanisms for Cluster coordination and participation in inter-agency meetings.
- **Building and maintaining cross-cluster linkages** through chairing inter-Cluster meetings, establishing common Information Management systems, etc. to ensure that there is an effective mechanism for coordinating and streamlining individual Cluster operations, and regular strategic review of the overall situation.
- **Facilitating cross-Cluster strategic planning and assessment processes**, such as coordinated rapid assessment, pooled funding appeals, and contingency planning. Along with ensuring linkages between preparedness and early warning, emergency response, and longer-term recovery and development strategies.
- **Mainstreaming cross-cutting issues**, including advocating for adherence to relevant IASC policies (see the list of policy documents under Resources in *section 8.1*)

#### *Information Management*

**OCHA's responsibilities for Information Management** are set out in *section 3.3*.

### ***Advocacy and Resource Mobilisation***

- Working with partners to identify key **common advocacy concerns**.
- Supporting the HC in developing and **implementing inter-agency advocacy strategies**.
- **Advocating for donors** to fund Cluster partners in carrying out priority activities.
- Advising individual Clusters and the HCT on **funding mechanisms**.

### ***Policy Development***

- Advocating for **adherence to humanitarian principles, policies and standards** as defined in international humanitarian law, the Code of Conduct, etc. The WASH CLA is responsible for advocating for, and monitoring the application of humanitarian policies and technical standards among WASH Cluster partners (see *section 8.1*).
- Disseminating policy and **guidance on the Cluster Approach** and development in the broader humanitarian reform process.

OCHA expects that the WCC will:

- ✓ Understand and apply IASC policies,
- ✓ Support overall strategic objectives of the HCT,
- ✓ Lead and represent the WASH Cluster,
- ✓ Facilitate effective coordination within the WASH Cluster,
- ✓ Support OCHA by providing meaningful input to the inter-Cluster coordination process.

### **b) Principle inter-Cluster linkages with WASH**

The WASH Cluster has overlapping responsibilities with a number of other Clusters (in particular Health, CCCM, and Emergency Shelter). **Matrices** setting out agreed mutual roles and responsibilities have been developed at global level, and are included in the Appendices. These provide a framework for agreeing shared responsibilities at country level.

In addition, the following key reference documents for other Clusters are in the Resources section below:

- Camp Management Toolkit
- INEE Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies
- Handbook for the Protection of Internally Displaced Persons
- IASC Guidelines on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings
- Community based management of severe acute malnutrition

Cluster	Link with the WASH Cluster
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ shared surveillance and monitoring of public health indicators.</li> <li>▪ identify water, sanitation, or hygiene-related health issues/hotspots and outbreaks.</li> <li>▪ verify standards and support needed for WASH and health care waste management in health care settings.</li> <li>▪ agree coordinated strategies for vector control and hygiene promotion outreach.</li> </ul>
CCCM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ agree roles and responsibilities in camp settings with relation to WASH.</li> <li>▪ input to site planning, especially for adequate sanitation.</li> <li>▪ agree implementation and monitoring roles.</li> </ul>
Emergency shelter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ ensure adequate WASH planning for settlements, from emergency to recovery.</li> <li>▪ coordination of NFIs, including plastic sheeting.</li> </ul>
Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ ensure awareness of all protection issues, and design WASH facilities to ensure populations are not put at additional risk.</li> </ul>
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ include WASH in schools and child friendly or learning spaces.</li> <li>▪ child friendly designs and promotion of child participation in WASH programme planning, and hygiene promotion.</li> </ul>
Nutrition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ ensure effective WASH information collection and alerts from nutrition assessments and surveys.</li> </ul>

Maintaining inter-Cluster linkages will help facilitate the use of common Information Management processes and tools, sharing of useful assessment and monitoring data, and working to common standards. The document **‘Key Things To Know’** in the Resources section provides background information about all 11 Clusters, including principal partners, tools and support services, contact details, etc. Check [www.humanitarianreform.org](http://www.humanitarianreform.org) for the most up-to-date information.

The WCC or dedicated WASH Cluster focal points will need to attend the other key Cluster meetings and play a proactive role in promoting shared activities and information exchange. In Uganda, the WASH Cluster elected focal points who were also active in another Cluster, and therefore familiar with the requirements and constraints of working in both sectors, e.g. Oxfam in shelter.

### c) Inter-Cluster coordination meetings

Participation in inter-Cluster coordination meetings is a key part of the WCC role. Chaired by the HC or a UN OCHA Coordinator, these meetings are often daily in the early response, when a significant amount of interaction is needed in agreeing

baseline data, common indicators, planning and organising assessments, and coordinating Flash and CERF appeals.

Inter-Cluster meetings are also key to addressing matters of concern to all Clusters, such as priority cross-cutting issues, contingency planning, emergency preparedness, early recovery, and advocacy issues, e.g. import taxes, registration.

### 1.5.2 Other coordinating bodies

In situations where there is an existing sectoral coordination mechanism, particularly when government-led, difficulties may be experienced in introducing the Cluster Approach. If needed, get support from the HC and CLA, in order to build on this mechanism.

Working in collaboration with government disaster management mechanisms is particularly important. As seen in Uganda, basing field-level Cluster coordination within the district-level disaster management structure paid significant dividends in engaging and building local capacities. Despite the challenges, in the long term it is likely to be a more sustainable approach.

### 1.5.3 Relationships with peace keepers and the military

Coordination with the military or peace-keeping forces may be necessary in a complex emergency situation and should where possible be undertaken through UNOCHA and the inter-Cluster coordination mechanism. Any interaction must respect humanitarian law and serve the primary purpose of relieving humanitarian suffering and assuring protection and assistance for all non-combatants affected by conflict or disaster.<sup>6</sup>

It is important for all WASH Cluster actors to be aware of, and guard against, the risks of too close an affiliation with the military, or even giving a perception of the same, as it can:

- × Put the affected population and humanitarian workers at greater risk;
- × Compromise the independence, impartiality, and neutrality of the humanitarian response;
- × Increase tension and conflict;
- × Fuel discrimination and increase suffering for vulnerable groups.

In some situations, negotiations may be necessary to:

- ✓ ensure assistance and protection for vulnerable groups,
- ✓ gain access to affected populations,

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<sup>6</sup> Refer to the Sphere Humanitarian Charter and The Code of Conduct

- ✓ maintain and protect humanitarian space,
- ✓ provide critical additional capacity which cannot be drawn from civilian sources.

See Resources for the **IASC guidelines on Humanitarian Negotiations with Armed Groups** and **IASC Civil-Military Guidelines and Reference for Complex Emergencies**.

Particular care is needed in the use of military assets to support humanitarian action. This may include air and road transport, armed escorts, or joint humanitarian-military operations, and such measures should only be taken as a last resort when there is no civilian alternative. Further details can be found in the **Guidelines on the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets in Disaster Relief** below.

## Resources

-  **IASC Key things to know about Clusters**  
*Overview of key information about all 11 Clusters.*
-  **WASH & CCCM Roles and Responsibilities Matrix - Inter-Cluster mapping**  
*Sets out mutual roles and responsibilities between WASH and CCCM.*
-  **DRAFT Responsibilities and Accountabilities Matrix - Health, Nutrition and WASH (Water Sanitation Hygiene) Clusters, Feb 2008**  
*Sets out mutual roles and responsibilities between WASH, Health and Nutrition Clusters.*
-  **DRAFT Responsibilities and Accountabilities Matrix - Education and WASH (Water Sanitation Hygiene) Clusters, May 2008**  
*Sets out mutual roles and responsibilities between WASH and Education.*
-  **DRAFT Responsibilities and Accountabilities Matrix - Emergency Shelter and WASH (Water Sanitation Hygiene) Clusters, May 2008**  
*Sets out mutual roles and responsibilities between WASH and Emergency Shelter.*
-  **OCHA's Role in Humanitarian Response, Power Point, UNOCHA**
-  **Camp Management Toolkit, NRC, 2008**  
*Guidelines for interventions in CCCM.*
-  **INEE Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies, Chronic Crises and Early Reconstruction, 2006**  
*Guiding principles for interventions in education.*
-  **IASC Guidelines on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings, 2007**  
*Guiding principles and considerations for protection and mental health.*
-  **Handbook for the Protection of Internally Displaced Persons, Global Protection Cluster Working Group, 2007**  
*Guiding principles for protection.*
-  **Community based management of severe acute malnutrition, A joint statement by WHO, WFP; UN Standing Committee on Nutrition and UNICEF, 2007**  
*Agreed standards for managing acute nutrition.*
-  **IASC Humanitarian Negotiations with Armed Groups, 2006**  
*Guidance on the rationale and legal basis for negotiating with armed groups (ch 1-3), and negotiation tips on different issues (ch 4-6).*
-  **Guidelines on the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets in Disaster Relief, version 1.1, Nov 2007**
-  **IASC Civil-Military Guidelines and Reference for Complex Emergencies, 2008**
- <http://www.humanitarianreform.org>  
*Updated resources, guidelines, and tools for all Clusters.*

- <http://ochaonline.un.org/AboutOCHA/Organigramme/EmergencyServicesBranchESB/CivilMilitaryCoordinationSection/PolicyGuidelinesRelatedDocuments/tabid/4938/language/en-US/Default.aspx>  
*Resources on civil military cooperation.*