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MANAGING CLUSTER COORDINATION

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Chapter Two relates to the **following WCC responsibilities**:

- ✓ Managing coordination at national and sub-national levels among WASH Cluster partners and other actors outside the WASH Cluster;
- ✓ Reporting.

The chapter is split into the following **five sections**:

2.1	Coordination essentials and common challenges	▪ A progressive approach to effective coordination ▪ Common barriers to coordination
2.2	Managing and facilitating Cluster meetings	▪ Planning and preparation ▪ WASH Cluster coordination meetings ▪ Facilitating meetings ▪ Managing information for meetings
2.3	Managing contacts and communication	▪ Communication systems ▪ Managing contact information
2.4	Reporting	▪ Reporting requirements, and why reporting is important ▪ Reporting responsibilities within WASH ▪ Reporting formats
2.5	Negotiation, consensus building and conflict resolution	▪ A collaborative approach ▪ Negotiation skills within the WASH Cluster ▪ Consensus building in Clusters ▪ Conflict resolution

2.1   Coordination essentials and common challenges

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Principles for Cluster coordination

✓   All Cluster partners are equal and have an equal voice.
✓   Needs of the most vulnerable are prioritised.
✓   Individual Cluster partners are willing to adjust their programmes, and work on priorities agreed collectively by the Cluster.
✓   Relevant information is shared within the Cluster (horizontally and vertically) in a timely manner.
✓   Cluster partners are accountable to affected communities, to each other, to donors and to the HC.
✓   The comparative strengths and complementarities of different Cluster actors are recognised and drawn on to maximise the effectiveness and impact of the WASH Cluster response.
✓   A clear separation from military and political interests and operations is maintained.

Adapted from www.clustercoordination.org

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2.1.1 A progressive approach to effective coordination

Coordination is teamwork, make each Cluster partner feel part of it. Without being too strict about the sequence, you can adopt a progressive approach.

i.   *As a start, have the partners sharing information on*

- mandates, objectives, roles, and responsibilities,
- resources and capabilities,
- areas of operations, projects, and priorities,
- sources of data and perception of the general context.

ii.   *As a next step, have the partners work together at*

- assessing needs, setting standards, and mobilising external resources,
- ensuring access to the beneficiaries,
- building local and national capacities, and training their own staff.

iii.   *In a more advanced phase, you will find that the team can share plans and resources through:*

- joint planning: contingency, strategic, and operational,
- implementing joint operations,
- sharing their experts, security systems, and logistics.

Key strategies for effective coordination

✓ **Be inclusive** – involve and encourage all key WASH actors, including local organisations and authorities.
✓ **Build relationships** – network, communicate, and address any negative attitudes to the Cluster Approach.
✓ **Complement and strengthen** existing coordination structures, standards, and guidelines.
✓ **Respect differing** mandates, priorities, approaches and resources, and ensure that local knowledge is harnessed.
✓ **Act as an Honest Broker** and build trust through transparency and openness.
✓ **Share information and collaborate** in key coordination activities, e.g. assessments, planning , standard setting, monitoring, and review.

However, there are often challenges and barriers to coordination which WCCs have to overcome,[7] such as:

Common barriers to coordination	Tips to overcome them
Autonomy is threatened: The perception that coordination will reduce partners' freedom to make decisions and run their own programmes.	Have frank and open discussions about mutual goals for the coordination efforts and build these into a WASH Cluster Strategy (see *section 5.2*). Demonstrate that collective problem solving can still allow freedom of action within programmes.
Too many players involved: Concern that too many decision-makers or organisations will complicate the process and make any consensus and/or agreement, difficult to achieve, or so broad that it becomes meaningless.	Establish a smaller steering or advisory group representing all stakeholder groups. Consider a range of forums for different activities, e.g. information sharing, decision-making, and problem solving, and involve all Cluster actors as appropriate.

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[7] Adapted from Coordination Challenges for Clusters, IFRC and B3 Associates, www.clustercoordination.org

Poor commitment and failure of decision makers to attend meetings:

Meaning some agencies constantly have to refer to headquarters before committing resources etc.

Clarify where and when decisions need to be made; communicate clearly and set up an appropriate forum (as above).

Establish decentralized coordination mechanisms at country and field levels. Establish deadlines for decisions .

Unilateral actions:

Cluster partners ignore established coordination mechanisms and processes.

Consult and agree ToR for the Cluster with all partners, and reinforce agreed guiding principles.

Engage the Cluster in finding solutions to overcome such unilateral actions in future.

Ineffectual or inappropriate coordination leadership:

Decisions are imposed without a transparent process of involvement; certain organisations dominate.

Ensure equitable representation of Cluster stakeholders in the steering/advisory group and encourage broad involvement in technical and working groups.

Periodically evaluate satisfaction levels within the Cluster coordination and decision-making process, e.g. through the Performance Review process.

Involve partners in the coordination process, e.g. rotate the chair.

Coordination process not working well:

Cluster has unclear objectives, and is seen to waste time without obvious benefits to those participating in it.

Provide useful information and services.

Provide clear objectives that can be followed up.

Monitor agency actions to identify delivery failures.

Improve clarity of Cluster response plans and operational arrangements as needed.

Cluster agencies protect their domain:

Cluster actors contest the involvement of other organisations, selection of beneficiary groups, priorities, and programme approaches, and compete over visibility and areas of geographic or thematic focus.

Adopt a systematic process for response planning with transparent steps for prioritization, allocation of areas and thematic responsibilities, etc. (see *section 5.2*)

Develop an agreed policy framework such as the SOF (see *section 5.1*).

Ensure broad representation in decision making through working groups, etc.

Consider bi-lateral funding opportunities in addition to pooled funds.

Knowledge, language and working practices are assumed:

Cluster actors will have different levels of knowledge, technical expertise, working practices, and command of language, affecting decision making.

Draw on technical input from respected third parties, e.g. national research and professional bodies, government departments, other Clusters, international experts.

Adopt simultaneous translation (see *section 2.3*).

CLA is not accepted as an honest broker.

See section 1.1

Focus on facilitation and supporting the government lead.

Ensure broad participation and transparent processes for sensitive decisions, e.g. allocation of response activities, project selection for funding appeals, etc.

Slow or insufficient mobilization of human, financial or material resources:

Limited ability to mobilize collective resources or capitalize on opportunities.

Invest in IT expertise, systems and tools for accurate details of resource requirements, and availability, and in advocating for support.

Seek external or third party advice on likely resource requirements, e.g. CLA, OCHA, other Clusters, and Global WASH.

Lack of authority to address poor performance

See section 1.1

Draw on authority of government partner.

Monitor WASH response.

Name and shame.

Lack of confidence:

Cluster actors are hesitant to share information, opinions or concerns in public, or have concerns over their legitimacy.

Maintain regular personal contact and provide opportunities for private and confidential feedback.

Encourage and acknowledge all contributions.

Ensure anonymity of assessment data.

Identify donors, the media, other Cluster reps, etc. in meetings.

See details under section 3.1.4

Information management constraints:

Quality and flow of information

Resources

- http://www.clustercoordination.org/

2.2 Managing and facilitating Cluster meetings

Meetings are essential to communicating in disasters, but they frequently produce limited outcomes. Creating a format and process that produces results is vital. Here are some essential questions to consider before any meeting:

2.2.1 Planning and preparation

WHY	What are the purpose and expected outcomes of the meeting? ▪ *Give or share information, feedback, reports* ▪ *Generate ideas* ▪ *Find solutions / solve problems / make decisions* ▪ *Develop trust, relationships, teams* Who needs to agree these objectives? What do partners want from the meeting? Is the meeting part of a continuous process?
WHAT	What topics need to be on the agenda? ▪ *Use the agenda to explain how different topics will be handled, and for how long. List what people need to bring.* Is the agenda circulated beforehand? Bring spare copies!
WHO	Who should attend? Are the right people available? Is there a protocol for invitations, e.g. to technical or working group meetings?
WHERE	Which is the best location and venue to suit everyone? Does it have the space, equipment, ventilation, catering needed? What is the best layout for the style of meeting: formal or informal?
WHEN	When is the best time for this meeting? Is there a clear start and finish time which is culturally acceptable to all, e.g. respecting prayer times? Avoid conflicting with other coordination or Cluster meetings. Is there sufficient time to achieve the objectives? What breaks will be needed? Will it be free from interruptions?
HOW	What is the best way to start, engage all cultures, encourage contributions, and clarify purpose and expectations? *For example* ▪ *Introductions, ground rules, ice-breakers* What translation and interpretation is needed? How will you record, clarify, and circulate decisions and actions? For example, on a flipchart or whiteboard, or in minutes?

Role of the WCC in meetings

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As WCC you will be required to attend a wide variety of meetings: Cluster coordination meetings, meetings with government, inter-Cluster meetings, etc. In each meeting your role may differ:

✓ **As the chair,** your role is to facilitate the meeting in such a way that the collective wisdom of the attendees is tapped into, while keeping discussions in line with the meeting's objectives.

✓ **As a partner,** your role is to prepare for, and engage constructively in meetings, so that results can be accomplished.

2.2.2 WASH Cluster coordination meetings

The quality of WASH Cluster coordination meetings will significantly affect continuing attendance of Cluster partners and the ultimate effectiveness of coordinating the WASH sector response.

> The WCC is often the only person being paid to be at WASH Cluster coordination meetings, for everyone else it is a **voluntary process** … and one of many.

Section 1.1 provides specific guidance on setting up the first few WASH Cluster coordination meetings. In addition, key learning points from the review of the WASH Cluster Approach and individual Cluster Coordinators include the need to:

General advice:

✓ **Advocate strongly for government involvement in chairing** or co-chairing meetings, particularly in the early response.

> One Note software can be used to **record and project live minutes** onto an overhead screen in one or more languages.

✓ **Provide refreshments** – this helps to create a positive atmosphere.

✓ **Develop standard templates** for agenda and meeting notes, to facilitate consistency and ease of cross referencing.

✓ **Make provision for simultaneous interpretation** during the meeting, and translation of the meeting agenda and meeting notes.

Meeting preparation:

✓ **Rotate the chair** – even if the venue cannot be rotated, rotating the chair helps to facilitate broad engagement and keep agencies involved.

✓ **Offer to rotate the meeting venue** – this needs to be agreed in the initial meetings and can help to keep agencies involved. However, maintaining the same time, and place, also avoids confusion and time for attendees. The hosting agency may also be responsible for chairing and / or producing the minutes, taking the burden off the WCC.

> Consider whether **venues are appropriate** for all Cluster actors, e.g. national and local agencies have experienced security restrictions, or felt uncomfortable attending meetings within UN compounds or in expensive hotels that are used mainly by expatriates.

✓ **Prepare people in advance** – circulate notes from the previous meeting and a clear **agenda** (see samples under Resources).

✓ **Engage and confirm attendance of decision makers** – encourage their involvement in meetings through maintaining regular, personal contact. If they cannot attend, ensure that key decision makers receive a brief (one page) written or verbal update of the meeting's outcomes.

✓ **Display updated visual representation of who is doing what, where, and when** in the meeting, e.g. maps, charts or matrices.

Key tips for a Meeting Agenda

✓ The agenda is what entices people to attend a meeting;
✓ State who needs to attend and identify which agenda items are for information sharing, which are for discussion, and those around which a decision will be made;
✓ Outline the purpose of each agenda item in a little more detail;
✓ Include an 'urgent issues' item to ensure that something is done to address critical issues from Day 1;
✓ Once the agenda is circulated, follow up with key agencies to ensure that appropriate decision makers attend.

During the meeting:

✓ **Restrict introductions** to representatives from new agencies.
✓ **Minimise discussion of old agenda items or policy;** refer people to previous meeting notes or display core information on posters, e.g. Cluster strategy, principles etc.

✓ **Limit discussion of detailed or specialised issues** to separate committee or working group meetings.

Follow up and persist in ensuring **completion of actions points** prior to the meeting.
Committed Cluster partners may not attend your meeting again if they find that action points have not been addressed.

✓ **Avoid going round the table for updates** from partners; use the **Agency Reporting** and monitoring mechanisms (see section 3.2) for tracking agency activity and limit discussion in meetings to an overall summary.

✓ **Review action points at the end of meetings** rather than the beginning. As most issues will come up anyway during the course of the meeting; this avoids time wasted by discussing them twice.

✓ **Remind people to update the contacts list.**

Following the meeting:

✓ **Ensure prompt feedback** on decisions taken, agreed actions, etc. through brief **meeting notes** (see examples under Resources)

Writing up meeting notes places a significant burden on the WCC; consider getting the support of an **intern or local student** to assist.

✓ **Follow up on agreed actions** - with decision makers, working groups, etc. to ensure that issues are moving forward and facilitate continuity through brief updates at the next meeting.

A **practical checklist** of points to consider in planning and preparing for a Cluster Coordination meeting is incorporated under Resources.

2.2.3. Facilitating meetings

Chairing the WASH Cluster Coordination meeting is likely to be a major challenge – balancing the need to be seen as impartial, independent, a good listener, and open, with the importance of achieving the task facing the Cluster. The emphasis of the WCC role is on bringing discussions to a conclusion through focusing on the meeting process, as much as the content of the discussions themselves.

An effective facilitator….

Initiates	✓ Makes suggestions on how the meeting can proceed. ✓ Encourages ideas from others. ✓ Looks for connections between others ideas. ✓ Limits their own opinions and ideas in order to remain neutral.
Encourages positive reactions	✓ Checks the level of support and agreement for others ideas. ✓ Encourages reasoned disagreement to ensure constructive debate. ✓ Stays positive and focused on the purpose of the meeting.
Clarifies	✓ Asks open-ended questions. ✓ Restates an idea or thought to make it more clear. ✓ Checks that others have understood. ✓ Limits too much detailed explanation from others, bringing the discussion back to the agenda item.
Summarises	✓ Summarises regularly key points in the discussion, agreements, action points, etc. ✓ Arranges for a volunteer to record salient points as they arise; this helps the group stay focused, avoids repetition, and helps reach consensus.
Controls participation	✓ Creates opportunities for everyone to participate and feel that they are listened to and their contribution valued. ✓ Encourages wide participation, and asks for information and opinions, especially from smaller NGOs and donors. ✓ Prevents exclusive side conversations. ✓ Avoids strong characters dominating, e.g. by moving from one speaker or topic to another.
Uses non-verbal and verbal signals	✓ Listens actively. ✓ Allows time and space for reflection by pausing between comments. ✓ Combines body language and speech to communicate, e.g. uses eye contact to encourage or discourage particular behaviours. ✓ Is aware of cultural differences. Neutrality is important here, so that we don't encourage some people more than others.

Even an experienced facilitator will face some difficulties. Some of the common challenges experienced in facilitating WASH Cluster coordination meetings are outlined below, along with suggested strategies to address them.

Meeting challenges	Strategies to address them
Getting the people you need to attend	A clear agenda clarifying who needs to attend and the purpose, timing, and detail of each item. Maintaining personal contact with decision makers.
Keeping time	Indicate timings in the agenda. Elect a time keeper. Invest in consultation prior to meetings so that decisions can be taken more easily.
Dealing with aggressive partners	Determine the seating arrangement: do not place aggressive partners opposite each other, and mix people up so that the same people do not always sit together. Display agreed Cluster principles, policies, standards, etc. to diffuse old arguments. Ask people to refer to minutes for previous decisions.
Hidden or conflicting agendas	Be clear about who should attend, and specify this in the agenda. Invest in consultation before the meetings so that decisions can be taken more easily. Advance agenda with clear objectives and purpose, timing, and detail for each agenda item. Refer issues outside this agenda to an alternative forum for discussion.
Language barriers	Simultaneous translation. Translated agenda, meeting minutes or notes, Cluster strategy, plans, principles, policies, standards, etc.
Making meeting outcomes productive	Send minutes or notes from the previous meeting with the agenda. Adopt action orientated meeting minutes or notes. Follow up on actions before the next meeting. Name and shame.
Remaining patient and keeping focused	Advance agenda with clear objectives and purpose, timing, and detail for each agenda item. Refer issues outside this agenda to an alternative forum for discussion. Limiting inclusion of discussion to those items on the agenda: Allow for further discussion through working and sub groups.
Funding meetings and attendance	Incorporation of cluster coordination costs within pooled funding appeals. Clear policy on attendance costs, e.g. no *per diems* or payments for attendance.

2.2.4 Alternatives to face-to-face meetings

Meetings place a significant demand on people's time and attention. You need to use the time wisely, and consider alternatives where possible:

What is the purpose?	Key issues to consider	Alternatives to meeting
Information giving Information getting Problem solving Decision making	Is that information easily presented and understood without interaction? Who needs to input into the discussion or decision? Who needs to be committed to the outcome?	✓ Written memos / reports ✓ E-mail messages / fax ✓ Phone calls ✓ Instant messaging ✓ Teleconferencing ✓ One-to-one exchange ✓ On-line options, e.g. Google Groups, websites ✓ video

2.2.5 Managing information for meetings

✓ Attendance and the effectiveness of WASH Cluster, and technical or working group meetings will be enhanced if Cluster partners have advance notice and details of the agenda, and can readily access the minutes or notes. This can be done through:

✓ Maintaining a **WASH Cluster Meeting Schedule** via the OCHA inter-agency web platform, or a WASH Cluster web site (see Resources).

✓ Circulating meeting agendas and minutes through appropriate channels, e.g. Google Group, by hand (to local government and NGOs).

✓ Developing standard **meeting agendas**/**minutes**/**notes** formats to facilitate consistency in reporting, etc. (also see *section 2.4*).

✓ Maintaining web-based meeting and reporting records.

Resources

- IASC Cluster Sector Leadership Training – **Smarter Coordination Meetings**
- IFRC, **How to Facilitate Coordination Meetings**
- Cluster **meeting agenda**, ESC sample, Yogyakarta
- WASH **Cluster Minutes**, 16 May 2008, Yangoon
- Emergency Shelter **Cluster Meeting Notes** example, Yogyakarta
- UN OCHA **Weekly Meeting Schedule**, HIC Pakistan, March 2006

- http://www.seedsforchange.org.uk/free/tools.pdf -
  Excellent range of tools and techniques for use in meetings
- http://www.seedsforchange.org.uk/free/facil.pdfn -
  Guide to facilitating meetings
- http://www.genderdiversity.cgiar.org/resource/MulticulturalMeetingsFinal2.ppt
  Guidelines on facilitating multi-cultural meetings
- http://www.allindiary.org/Home_Page.html
  Guidelines on meeting management

2.3 Managing contacts and communication

2.3.1 Communication systems

Maintaining regular communications and the effective exchange of information is critical to the functioning and success of the WASH Cluster. However the diverse range of actors involved can make the process complicated and time consuming.

Give consideration to the pros and cons of different methods of communication and information exchange:

Means of communication / information exchange	Advantages (pro's)	Disadvantages (con's)
Shared web-site e.g. OCHA inter-agency web platform	Accessible for all Clusters. Cluster partners working in several sectors have one source of information. Facilitates OCHA's role in coordinating information. Facilitates opportunities for shared activities, e.g. procurement, cross cutting interventions.	Some partners will be unable to access information. May have limited use at sub-national level where detailed coordination is needed once interventions begin.
Email lists	Quick, enables information sharing with large numbers of people. Not dependent on direct contact, e.g. as in telephone, meetings. Likely to reach most stakeholders inc. government. The OCHA website has a listserve function which enables information to be targeted to the right people and puts some responsibility on the end user for subscribing to the list.	Reliant on internet access Email lists quickly become outdated and very long. Needs to be administered to limit what is being sent and to whom. Can overload users with information that is not always relevant to them.

Google / Yahoo Groups	Good alternative to meetings, enables sharing and storing information, and discussion between Cluster partners and the Cluster. See **Global WASH Cluster Yahoo Group Service Guidance Note** under Resources below.	Limited membership size will exclude some partners. High turnover of actors means a lot of administration is needed. Reliant on reasonably good internet access. May not be acceptable in environments with strong government control. May exclude national / local actors due to poor internet connectivity, lack of familiarity with this method and language adopted for on-line discussions (not likely to be local language and no facility for translation).
Telephone contact	Reaches national and local partners. Enables immediate exchange of information, discussion, decision making. Can be used in most environments.	May be expensive. Not all stakeholders have access to a phone. Can be time consuming. More difficult to delegate to other staff / cluster actors.
Delivery of hard copies	Reaches national and local partners. Familiar method of communication at community level. Easily translated.	Slow, expensive and time consuming. Not inter-active – need a mechanism to allow people to respond.
Public meetings	Reaches national and local partners. Familiar method of communication at community level. Easily translated.	Time consuming In early response, when information changes very quickly can be hard to capture this through meetings. Can be dominated by powerful interests, strong personalities.
Posters	Reaches national and local partners.	Slow – not suitable for daily information exchange.

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	Easily translated. Useful for communicating standards, strategies, etc.	Not inter active - need a mechanism to allow people to respond.
The media (periodicals, local newspapers, radio, TV)	Useful for sharing public information and engaging community interest. Easily translated and can reach a wide range of people.	Expensive and can be slow and time consuming to arrange. Care needed in use of language and information being shared (can be read / interpreted by anyone). Not inter active.

Managing web-based information

- ✓ Encourage an informal network of Information Managers across UN agencies and NGOs to discuss standards and protocols for shared web sites. Refer to the 'Functional Requirements for the OCHA inter-agency web platform' in Resources below.
- ✓ An inter active web portal for the WASH Cluster will allow partners to share information with each other and input data directly, e.g. into WWWW schedules or monitoring reports.
- ✓ Maintain clear signposting of folders and documents, e.g. clear dated file names, folders for historical documents in chronological order, means of highlighting current versions and new information.

2.3.2 Managing contact information

Effective communication depends on establishing and maintaining reliable contact information for all Cluster stakeholders. Options include:

- ✓ An on-line **contact directory** or list incorporated in the WASH Cluster web site or OCHA inter-agency web site platform (see Resources).
- ✓ **Contact information** managed through the UN OCHA 3W database system (see *section 3.2* for further details)
- ✓ Contacts maintained through a Google Group or similar, but additional capacity may be needed elsewhere.
- ✓ A database system, but the value is limited if it cannot be accessed and shared by all Cluster partners.

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✓ Using **attendance lists**[8] at meetings (see Resources) can help to ensure that details are up to date. Those who have already attended can simply tick or update their details.

✓ Allocate responsibility within the WASH Cluster team for inputting changes to contact data when required.

Tips for managing contacts

✓ Keep **contact information up to date** and provide regular updates;

✓ Administration of email lists, Google Groups, Cluster web site, etc. demands a lot of time; allocate specific responsibilities and get sufficient admin support;

✓ Adopt **communication systems** that are familiar and accessible to all stakeholders.

Resources

📖 **Attendance List**, Emergency Shelter Cluster, Yogjakarta 2006
📖 **Contact List**, HIC Darfur, 2005
📖 UNOCHA **on-line Contact directory** sheet, Sri Lanka, Nov 2007
📖 Gordon, P., Functional Requirements Document – **Inter Agency Website** Platform, UNOCHA, 2008
📖 Global WASH **Cluster Yahoo Group** Service Guidance Note, Nov 2007

▫ http://www.HumanitarianInfo.org/IMToolBox
Includes standard templates for Contact Directories, Meeting schedules, 3W schedules, and examples of rapid and detailed assessments, plus tools and guides for mapping and GIS/GPS.

▫ http://www.clustercoordination.org
Range of examples of IM tools developed by CCs for different Clusters

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[8] Practical examples of the IM tools highlighted within the text, can be found below under 'Additional Resources'

2.4 Reporting

2.4.1 Reporting requirements, and why reporting is important

Reporting by the WASH Cluster and WCC is required for:

- **Coordination** – so stakeholders inside and outside WASH are aware of coverage, resource availability, progress, and results;
- **Predictability** – so that the HC and CLA are aware of situational developments, progress, and gaps;
- **Accountability and transparency** - to the affected population, government, donors, each other (see *section 8.3*), for funding, progress, and effectiveness of WASH interventions;
- **Advocacy and public information** – to mobilize resources and raise awareness of key issues;
- **Learning** – to share performance outcomes and good practice.

WASH Cluster partners may already have onerous reporting requirements to their own organisations and supporters, the communities they are supporting, the government for registration and / or coordination purposes, and to their own donors.

The Humanitarian Country Team, government staff and other humanitarian actors will also have limited time for accessing reports and extracting the necessary information.

2.4.2 Reporting responsibilities within WASH

Regular **reporting between the WASH Cluster and Cluster partners**, and between the **WASH Cluster and the Humanitarian Country team** is essential. Ideally, the WASH cluster will have the capacity to collate, analyse, and report on collective progress and outcomes. As a minimum, in the immediate response, there must be a mechanism for receiving and circulating individual WASH cluster agency reports.

The **WCC is also required to report to the CLA** regarding their ability to fulfill the WASH Cluster obligations. The format for this reporting, and reporting directly to the HC, will depend on the particular context and individuals involved, e.g. verbal reports, Sit Reps, other formats.

The WCC will also be required to input into inter-cluster Sit Reps, and it is useful to schedule the WASH Cluster reporting to feed into this process.

Reports produced for WASH coordination

Using the **Sit Rep** as the core report, and the basis for other reporting can help to streamline requirements. See examples under Resources below.

A Sit Rep can also provide up to date *situational analysis* for use in advocacy and public information (see *section 7.5* for further details).

SITUATION REPORT
Date

KEY POINTS

OVERALL SITUATION ANALYSIS

ACTIVITY UPDATES

e.g.
Water supply

Environmental Sanitation

Hygiene Promotion

NFIs

Vector control

Solid waste

Drainage

Representation

ACHIEVEMENTS

ASSESSMENT & MONITORING

CHALLENGES, ISSUES AND CONSTRAINTS

FUTURE PRIORITY ACTIONS

ADVOCACY MESSAGES

The principle reports that may be required include:

Report	Purpose	Produced by	For
WASH Cluster **Sit Reps**	Updates of the emergency situation and impact on WASH, WASH implementation priorities, collective progress, results, and constraints.	WCC	All WASH stakeholders input to inter-cluster Sit Reps
WASH Cluster partner **monitoring reports** (see *section 3.2*)	Updates of the local emergency situation and impacts on WASH, progress, outcomes, and resource allocations.	WCC / IM	WASH Cluster, UNOCHA, govt partners, affected communities
3W or 4W matrices (see *section 3.2*)	Update on who is doing what, where (and when)	WCC / IM	WASH Cluster, UNOCHA, other Clusters
Gap analysis reports (see *section 3.2*)	To highlight gaps or areas of duplication between Cluster actors	WCC / IM	WASH Cluster, UNOCHA, other Clusters
Input to **financial and narrative reports** on pooled funding (Flash Appeal, CAP, CERF)	Inform donors of cost, progress, outcomes, and impact of funded interventions.	WASH Cluster steering group	UNOCHA and other Clusters, WASH partners
WCC **reports to the CLA**	Updates on WASH Cluster coordination, implementation, constraints in relation to the CLA responsibilities.	WCC	CLA, HC
Notes from Steering group, technical and working group and WASH **Cluster meetings**	Record key issues discussed, decisions, actions, responsibilities, and deadlines agreed and delegated.	'Minute taker' / meeting chair	WASH stakeholders
WASH **Cluster bulletin**	May be introduced in later stages of the response to share experience, learning, good practice, and initiatives and opportunities among stakeholders	WASH Cluster admin	WASH stakeholders

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How to ensure that reporting is useful and reports are read

As WCC, with support from the Information Manager:

- ✓ **Keep reporting simple, relevant, timely** and to a minimum.
- ✓ **Widely circulate** reports; post on the web site, circulate electronically and in hard copy as required.
- ✓ Give **upward and downward reporting** equal priority.
- ✓ **Use information that is reported** to the Cluster, or don't ask for it.
- ✓ **Report impact of actions,** not just outputs (numbers).
- ✓ **Report progress as a proportion of overall need.**
- ✓ **Follow up late reporting** with Cluster partners.
- ✓ **Translate reports** for local actors, communities.
- ✓ **Follow required reporting formats,** e.g. for pooled funding.

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Disseminating reports to others

Provisions will be needed for disseminating, and making reports accessible, via a variety of media.

- ✓ Upload reports to the OCHA inter-agency web platform / WASH Cluster web site.
- ✓ Retain historical reports on the web-site using clear, chronological archive folders.
- ✓ Circulate reports electronically, ensuring that they are accessible with the most basic operating systems and older versions of software.
- ✓ Facilitate access to hard copies for organisations with unreliable, or no access to email or the internet.
- ✓ Produce summarized details of key information for public dissemination through notice boards, radio and press updates, etc.

2.4.3 Reporting formats

Where a reporting format is provided, use it. This saves time in providing unnecessary information, or follow-up information that is requested later.

a) Donor reporting

Reporting requirements for funding allocated under the Emergency Response Fund (ERF) will be determined by the RC/HC, dependent on the nature of funding. http://www.humanitarianreform.org/humanitarianreform/Default.aspx?tabid=244.

Similarly, reporting in relation to funding allocated through the Flash Appeal or Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP) will depend on the requirements of the individual donors that elect to fund specific Cluster projects. Refer to: http://ochaonline.un.org/cap2005/webpage.asp?MenuID=9198&Page=1481.

Central Emergency Response Fund reporting

The RC/HC, on behalf of the HCT, submits one **annual report** on 30th March for all CERF allocations provided for that country in the previous 12 month (Jan-Dec) period. This provides a broad overview of the results achieved by sector / Cluster and the impact on the overall humanitarian response of CERF funding.

The WASH CLA / WCC will be required to provide information for inputting into this report.

CERF annual reporting content
Executive Summary
Coordination and partnership building
Implementation
Results
Impact
Assumptions and constraints
Lessons learnt
Matrix results by projects (log frame)

b) Presentation of information

For reports disseminated to national and local actors, or across a broad range of stakeholders, consider the following points in getting the information across.

- Ensure that translated versions are available
- Avoid use of acronyms and abbreviations and technical and specialist terminologies and concepts.
- Maximise the use of visual imagery, e.g. maps, photos, diagrams, and drawings.
- Consider disseminating information verbally through radio, TV broadcasts, or local community meetings.

General tips for writing reports

- ✓ Ensure that the key findings and recommendations are clear, easy to find, and easy to read;
- ✓ Arrange the information logically, and ensure that the content is balanced;
- ✓ Check you have provided the required information and answers;
- ✓ Write from the readers perspective, use appropriate language;
- ✓ Keep sentences and paragraphs short;
- ✓ Use diagrams, charts, and photographs;
- ✓ Proof read for spelling, grammar, page numbering and presentation;
- ✓ Get someone else to review the clarity of reporting.

Resources

  Emergency Shelter Coordination Group, Java Earthquake, **Situation Report**, June 2006

  WASH Cluster, Myanmar. **Situation Report**, May 2008

  CERF Reporting Matrix for RC / HC s, **Feb 2008**

  CERF Income and Expenditure Annual Statement

  WASH **Cluster Sit Rep template**

▫ http://ochaonline.un.org/cerf/HowtoApply/ReportingRequirements/tabid/1812/language/en-US/Default.aspx
  Guidelines for CERF reporting.

▫ http://ochaonline.un.org/cap2005/webpage.asp?MenuID=7890&Page=1371
  Guidelines for reporting on the CAP.

2.5   Negotiating, consensus building and conflict resolution

Within the WASH Cluster a range of decision making processes will be needed. This section sets out some guidelines for both negotiating and consensus building, and then considers what to do when there is interpersonal conflict between cluster members.

Key tips in choosing the right decision-making process

- ✓ Use the **command** style for decision making when decisions are needed very quickly, as in a crisis, and one person will be able to make decisions effectively.
- ✓ Use **consultation** when the opinions and ideas of the group are needed to inform the decision-maker, but it is clear who will make the decision and how that decision will be communicated.
- ✓ Use **negotiation** when there are conflicting interests and both parties need, and are prepared, to make concessions to reach an agreement.
- ✓ Use **delegation** to increase efficiency and maximize the contribution of every team member, delegating the authority to make certain decisions.
- ✓ Use the **majority vote** to include a large number of people, in a minimum amount of time, and the issues are clear and understood.
- ✓ Use **consensus** when you want high-quality input and commitment, with follow-through, from the group.

2.5.1 A collaborative approach

As indicated in section 1.1, the WCC will rely on cooperation and collaboration among Cluster partners, because s/he has no formal authority to impose coordination requirements.

Some useful steps to consider in achieving a collaborative approach include:

1. **Cultivating a shared vision** right from the start, even if it's vague (the WASH Cluster Response planning can help to achieve this).
2. Taking care to involve the **right mix** of stakeholders and decision-makers.
3. **Sustaining the momentum** and keeping a focus on progress and results (reliable flow of accurate information and regular review of Cluster plans and outcomes will help to achieve this).

4. **Engaging the perspectives** and addressing the needs of each stakeholder group in the work of the Cluster.

5. Ensuring that each partner agency's individual and institutional **self-interests are served** by both the process and products of the collaboration, to the greatest extent possible.

6. **Not wasting time**. Meetings must be efficient and productive; management must be lean and driven. Consider alternatives to meetings.

7. **Developing clear roles and responsibilities** for Cluster partners (and rotating these roles regularly to facilitate involvement).

8. Securing commitment from partners that the **same people come to each meeting.**

9. Building a rapport and maintaining regular **contact with decision makers** to ensure that decisions are made quickly.

10. All collaboration is personal - effective collaboration happens between people – so **maintain regular communication.**

However, different situations often require different styles of leadership, particularly when decisions are needed quickly, there are strongly conflicting interests, or sensitivities are high. The WCC will need to assess each situation and choose an appropriate leadership style:

Directive	Participative	Delegative
Initiates tasks. Directs others. Decisive.	Democratic. Initiates process or discussion. Involves others. Facilitates consensus-building and decision making.	Allows others to take ownership of tasks. Group makes decisions. Uses expertise of others.
WASH CC control		**Cluster Partners' control**

2.5.2 Negotiation skills within the WASH Cluster

As WCC you may find yourself either negotiating directly with another person or group (e.g. on behalf of the WASH Cluster at an inter-Cluster meeting) or facilitating negotiations between other conflicting parties (e.g. within the WASH Cluster). Understanding the process and skills of negotiation are key to a successful outcome in either situation.

The following conditions are required before you can enter negotiation:

- Conflicting interests exist between two individuals or groups
- There is joint interest in achieving a settlement
- More than one potential outcome is possible
- Both parties are prepared to make concessions.

Within the Cluster you may need to negotiate the strategic focus of the Cluster, or division of responsibilities, or simply the timing of the meetings. Whatever the level, the following guidelines are important:

i)   *Prepare options beforehand*

Before entering into a negotiation, prepare:
- *What do you really want?*
- *What is the minimum you are prepared to accept?*
- *What are all the issues you could negotiate over (time, money, quantity, quality)?*

You also need to consider:
- *What might they want from me, and what am I prepared to offer?*

Anticipate why the other person might resist your suggestion, and be prepared to counter with an alternative.

ii)   *Draw out the other's perspective*

In a negotiating situation use questions to find out what the other person's concerns and needs might be. You might try:
- *What effective ways could be used to solve this problem, or address this issue?*
- *What are your concerns about what is being suggested?*

Use active listening, gauging what issues are most important to them, and which they are most likely to move on.

iii)   *State your needs*

The other person needs to know what you need. It is important to state not only what you need, but why you need it. Often disagreement may exist regarding the method for solving an issue, but not about the overall goal. Start with what you ideally want, but indicate that you are prepared to make some concessions.

iv)   *Don't argue*

Negotiating is about finding solutions, don't waste time arguing. If you disagree with something, state your disagreement in a gentle but assertive way, and offer an alternative suggestion. Don't demean the other person or get into a power struggle.

v)   Consider timing

There are good times to negotiate and bad times. Bad times include those situations where there is:
- a high degree of anger on either side
- preoccupation with something else

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- ▪ a high level of stress
- ▪ tiredness on one side or the other.

Schedule negotiations to avoid these times as far as possible. If they arise during negotiations, a time-out or rest period is in order, or perhaps rescheduling to a better time.

Negotiation is a complex process, but one worth mastering. If you keep in mind that you are responsible for the success or failure of negotiation, and if you follow the tips above, you will find the process easier.

It is also worth noting that conflicts of interest – and the negotiations around them – can often lead to more effective and sustainable solutions, because they draw in a much wider range of views and possible solutions. So don't see them as something to be avoided (see below; Conflict Resolution).

2.5.3 Consensus Building in Clusters

Consensus is '*the maximum agreement among people while drawing on as much of everyone's ideas as possible*'.

Key tips for effective consensus building for WCCs

- ✓ Use active listening and questioning skills
- ✓ Communicate openly
- ✓ Remember and review common goals
- ✓ Focus on and explore underlying interests
- ✓ Identify and grow the "zones of agreement" – these are those areas and priorities on which the group agrees
- ✓ Trust the process; believe that you can reach agreement and infuse this belief throughout the group
- ✓ Remain calm and respectful to all members
- ✓ Break larger groups down into smaller groups tasked with specific responsibilities. It is easier to work out an agreement with a smaller group of representatives (6-8 people) than with a larger group

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Consensus building is one process for encouraging participation and ownership and can lead to groups creating innovative solutions to complex problems.

However, it is only one form of decision-making and is not appropriate for all items on an agenda. It is time consuming, requires equal input and commitment, and can lead to conflict if no consensus is agreed. A key skill therefore is in

assessing when it is important and appropriate to use consensus building to reach a decision.

Procedure for consensus

1. Agree on your objectives for the task or project, expectations, and rules.
2. Define the problem or decision to be reached by consensus.
3. Brainstorm possible solutions.
4. Discuss pros and cons of the narrowed-down list of ideas and solutions.
5. Adjust, compromise, and fine tune the agreed idea or solution so that all group members can accept the result.
6. Make your decision. If a consensus is not reached, review and / or repeat steps one to six (see below 'Dealing with Impasse')
7. Once the decision has been made, act upon what you have decided.

Testing for agreement:

Notice when the group is nearing agreement, and can move on to a firm decision. Groups can waste a lot of time talking round ideas which they largely agree on. It is worth presenting the group with the ideas you are hearing and asking for some sign of agreement or disagreement. Some disagreement may still allow the group to move forward.

For example:
Non-support: 'I don't see the need for this, but I'll go along with it'.
Standing aside: 'I personally can't do this, but I won't stop others from doing it'

When consensus building is most useful	When should consensus building not be used
✓ Partners have perspectives and information of value to the decision-making, prioritisation, and planning process	✗ When the problem is **not complex** or solutions are **highly technical, clearly obvious, or options are severely limited**
✓ Buy-in is key to **commitment, ownership of decisions,** and follow-through	✗ **Humanitarian standards** and objectives are being compromised or threatened
✓ The way forward is in doubt and/or solutions are **ambiguous**	✗ Another decision making process is more efficient and effective
✓ Solutions require **interdependent action** by stakeholders	✗ Stakeholders are extremely politicized or views highly polarized
✓ **Power, information and implementation is fragmented** among many stakeholders	✗ **Decision-makers** are not at the table
✓ Stakeholders hold **conflicting**	✗ When the group has **insufficient**

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views yet unity on major decisions is required to uphold standards

✓ **Good relationships** among key stakeholders are needed in the future

✓ The group is relatively small (up to 20) and has mutual understanding

information

✗ There is **insufficient time** for a full exploration of all views and consensus to be reached

2.5.4 Conflict resolution

Conflicts are a pervasive and inevitable part of any group and, if handled well, can lead to growth and development of the Cluster as well as of each individual member. Positive outcomes can include:

- Awareness of problems and encouraging change
- Better decisions and more creativity
- Heightened interest and energy in the group
- Increased cohesiveness and clearing the air

Because of this it is important to learn the skills involved in handling conflicts constructively.

If a Cluster tends to avoid conflicts, resolves them prematurely, or stifles any discussion of differences, serious difficulties will arise. Relationships among partners and the Cluster's effectiveness and productivity will suffer. Unless a group is able to withstand the stress of a conflict among members, it is not likely to last very long.

a)   Skills of resolving conflict

1. Recognise symptoms

Overt symptoms include: anger, disengagement, being quiet, body language, cliques forming, arguments.

Hidden symptoms include: low energy, non-attendance, lateness or leaving early, mistakes, not socialising.

2. Tackle it early: left alone, conflict grows and spreads.

Experience from the field has shown that conflicts are reduced or more quickly resolved when the Cluster has a clear Work Plan and ToR (refer to *sections 1.4 and 5.2*)

3. Identify the causes: Sources of conflict include:
- Strategies   (lack of clarity; no common vision).
- Systems   (methods of communicating).
- Structures   (division of responsibilities; physical barriers).
- Cluster   (differing values).
- Individuals   (personalities, styles of working).

4. **Focus on core issue or problem**: avoid previous disputes or 'getting personal'.
5. **Consider each point of view:** use active listening.
6. **Invite suggestions on the way forward:** focus on solutions and building consensus.
7. **Check agreement of all stakeholders:** check back that everyone accepts the resolution.

b)   What to do when impasse is reached?

Impasse occurs when the key stakeholders are unable to perceive effective solutions to their dispute or differences. People feel stuck, frustrated, angry, and disillusioned. They might dig their heels in deeper, adopting extreme or rigid positions, or they might withdraw from the Cluster. Either way, impasse represents a turning point in efforts to negotiate a solution to the conflict. As such, rather than avoiding or dreading it, impasse should be viewed with calm, patience, and respect. Know that you are near a 'breakthrough'.

Techniques for breaking an impasse include:

- ✓ Remind all of the humanitarian consequences of failing to reach an agreement, how an agreement will benefit the populations you are all there to serve, and that the longer-term relationship and cooperation are at stake.
- ✓ Confer and invite suggestions - use probing questions.
- ✓ Retrace progress and summarise areas of agreement and disagreement.
- ✓ Find out where people stand, and how strongly they feel.
- ✓ Gather further information or 'evidence'.
- ✓ Build consensus in mixed small groups, e.g. sub- or working groups, then send representatives to Cluster steering group.
- ✓ Set a time limit, and then suggest that the issue goes to a majority vote.
- ✓ Meet with primary disputants and ask them 'What could be changed so that you could support it?'.
- ✓ Bring disputing parties together at a separate time and facilitate conflict resolution and problem solving.

Resources

- http://www.seedsforchange.org.uk/free/consensus.pdf -
  Useful detailed guidelines on consensus building
- http://www.seedsforchange.org.uk/free/conslarge.pdf -
  Useful detailed guidelines on facilitating consensus building in large groups
- http://ocha.unog.ch/procaponline/docs/library/Leadership_Style_Questionnaire_&_Reading.doc -
  This includes a short self-assessment questionnaire and additional guidelines on the different leadership styles
- http://www.clustercoordination.org –
  An independent website which includes guidelines, samples and good practice across all Clusters.