

DIAGNOSTIC TOOL
to assist HCs and Humanitarian Country Teams
in preparing for implementation of the Cluster Approach in ongoing emergencies

Sector leadership and operational response capacity

1. Roles and responsibilities within the international humanitarian community: For each major sector or area of humanitarian activity at stake in this emergency, is there a clear sector lead agency within the international humanitarian community responsible for working with humanitarian partners (NGOs/Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement/IOM/UN agencies), ensuring appropriate links with government/local authorities, assessing and meeting needs and monitoring impact? Please provide a list of current sectors and leads.
2. Terms of reference for sector leads: Are there agreed TORs outlining the role of the sector leads? If so, are these considered to be adequate? If TORs already exist, please attach samples.
3. Performance of sector leads: Do those participating in clusters/sectoral groups have a clear understanding of what they can expect from sector leads and of how they can contribute to the cluster's work? Do partners feel that sector leads are delivering the support and services they need? If not, what is lacking?
4. Coherent, strategic and prioritized response: To what extent do existing response capacities and coordination structures in your country promote and ensure a coherent, strategic and prioritized humanitarian response? Are there particular geographical areas where the humanitarian response is particularly inadequate? If so, what are the reasons and what is being done to address this issue?
5. Gap areas: Are there any particular "gap" areas where sectoral groups have not been established and where current response is not effectively meeting the needs of vulnerable populations? And are there any sectoral groups that, although adequate in terms of inclusiveness and coordination mechanisms, have proven to be particularly ineffective in meeting the needs of vulnerable populations? If so, what measures are being taken to address these gap areas?

Coordination structures

6. Humanitarian Country Team: Is there a Humanitarian/IASC Country Team or other similar structure, providing a forum for discussion and decision-making amongst international humanitarian partners (as per the ERC's instruction)? What is the composition of this group and how does it currently function? Is it mainly for information-sharing or is it also for planning and decision-making? How regularly does it meet?
7. NGO representation: Describe how international NGOs are selected to participate in the Humanitarian/IASC Country Team. Do international NGOs consider that the current inter-agency coordination mechanisms are adequate? How do these NGOs provide feedback to a larger NGO forum?
8. Partnership and complementarity: What significant humanitarian actors remain outside of your coordination structure? Are there significant variances among those who do participate, in terms of their willingness to coordinate? Could your coordination structures be strengthened to reinforce partnership and complementarity amongst humanitarian actors?
9. Linkages with government/local authorities, local NGOs etc: How does the Humanitarian Country Team (or other existing coordination body) link up with other coordination structures, including government/local authorities, national NGOs, sector coordination groups, and coordination structures at the provincial/district level?

10. Linkages between humanitarian and development structures: Do current coordination structures enable effective linkages between humanitarian and development efforts? If not, what is being done to address this?
11. Gaps in coordination: What do you consider to be the main strengths and weaknesses of current coordination structures? What do you consider needs to be done to strengthen existing coordination structures, to achieve enhanced partnership and complementarity, and to ensure greater predictability and accountability?

Common services and tools

12. Needs assessment, monitoring, reporting and strategy development: Are sectors provided with the necessary common guidance and services, particularly in the areas of inter-agency needs assessments, monitoring and reporting, contingency planning, and development of Common Humanitarian Action Plans (CHAPs), CAPs and other planning documents?
13. Information management: Describe the information management systems currently in place to ensure effective sharing of information within and across sectors, sound analysis, and monitoring of overall programme implementation. What, if any, are the main gaps in the current information management system? What is being done to address these gaps?
14. Attention to priority cross-cutting issues: Describe the mechanisms currently in place to ensure that agreed priority cross-cutting issues (e.g. age, diversity, environment, gender, HIV/AIDS and human rights) are adequately and systematically integrated into sectoral needs assessments, analysis, planning, monitoring and response. If they are not currently well integrated, how are these issues currently being addressed?
15. Contingency planning: Describe the procedures currently in place in your country to ensure an inclusive approach (involving both UN and non-UN humanitarian actors) to contingency planning for major new emergencies? What, if any, are the main gaps in the current contingency planning processes in place in your country?

Support needed in order to start using the cluster approach

16. Awareness and understanding of the cluster approach: Has the revised Guidance Note on Using the Cluster Approach (including the ToR for Cluster/Sector Leads at the Field Level) been widely disseminated amongst all key humanitarian partners in your country, in the main working languages? Describe any other measures already taken to raise awareness and understanding of the cluster approach amongst humanitarian partners in your country.
17. Need for additional guidance: Are there any specific issues on which you would like further guidance or support (e.g. from the IASC, OCHA, Global Cluster Leads or agencies at the HQ level) in order to facilitate introduction of the cluster approach in your country?
18. Need for additional support from the headquarters level and from Global Cluster Leads: Is the level of support being provided to agencies/NGOs from their Headquarters and from Global Cluster Leads considered to be adequate in order to enable them to effectively carry out their operational responsibilities in the different sectors, as well as to enable sector/cluster leads to carry out their coordination and leadership roles? If not, what is being done to address this?
19. Readiness to use the cluster approach: What specific steps does the Humanitarian Coordinator intend to take in order to start using the cluster approach? What will be the key targets of the Humanitarian Country Team in 2007 in starting to use the approach?
20. Timeframe: Please indicate when you believe that your country will be ready to start using the cluster approach. If for any reason you believe that it may not be possible to start using the cluster approach in your country before the end of 2007, please explain why.