

TERMS OF REFERENCE

IASC CLUSTER LEADS AND SECTOR FOCAL POINTS

Philippines

Definition of Cluster Lead

- A “cluster lead” is an agency/organisation that formally commits to take on a leadership role within *the international humanitarian community* in a particular sector/area of activity, to ensure adequate response and high standards of predictability, accountability and partnership¹.

Objectives

- Ensure a more coherent and effective response by mobilizing groups of agencies, organisations and NGOs to respond in a strategic manner across all key sectors or areas of activity, each sector having a clearly designated focal point to take leadership, as agreed by the Resident Coordinator and the Inter Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Country Team.
- Recognising the need to differentiate between humanitarian coordination in natural disasters and internal armed conflicts, enable independent, neutral and impartial humanitarian assistance in response to the complex emergency in Mindanao while at the same time building on local capacities and maintaining appropriate links with government.
- Ensure IASCs responsibilities in minimum standards as described in *IASC Guidance Note on Using the Cluster Approach to strengthen Humanitarian Response (2006)* are met in terms of coordinating the international humanitarian community in the context of the internal armed conflict in Mindanao.
- Ensure compliance with the GRPs Joint Memorandum Circular No 17, Series 2008 on *Guidelines in the Coordination of the Delivery of Humanitarian Services to Disaster Victims and IDPs*.

Accountability

- The Resident Coordinator – with the support of OCHA – retains responsibility for ensuring the adequacy, coherence and effectiveness of the overall humanitarian response and is accountable to the Emergency Relief Coordinator.
- Sector/cluster leads at the country level are accountable to the Resident Coordinator for facilitating a process at the sectoral level aimed at ensuring the following:

Inclusion of key humanitarian partners

- Ensure inclusion of key humanitarian partners for the sector, respecting their respective mandates and programme priorities.
- Enable participation in independent meetings for NGOs and international organisations whose mandate, Code of Conduct or mission statements makes it impossible to coordinate directly with the GRP army or armed parties (this includes MOD,

¹ IASC Operational Guidance on designating sector/cluster leads in ongoing emergencies

NDCC/RDCCs).

- Map the humanitarian actors in the sector and make efforts to bring them into existing coordination mechanisms and working groups.

Establishment and/or maintenance of appropriate humanitarian coordination mechanisms

- Ensure appropriate coordination with all humanitarian partners (including national and international NGOs, the International Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, IOM and other international organizations), through establishment/maintenance of appropriate sectoral coordination mechanisms, including working groups at the regional level.
- Secure commitments from humanitarian partners in responding to needs and filling gaps, ensuring an appropriate distribution of responsibilities within the sectoral group, with clearly defined focal points for specific issues where necessary;
- Ensure the complementarity of different humanitarian actors' actions;
- Promote emergency response actions while at the same time considering the need for early recovery planning as well as prevention and risk reduction concerns;
- Ensure effective links with other sectoral groups;
- Ensure that sectoral coordination mechanisms are adapted over time to reflect the capacities of local actors and the engagement of development partners;
- Represent the interests of the sectoral group in discussions with the Resident Coordinator, GRP and other stakeholders on prioritization, resource mobilization and advocacy;

Coordination with national/local authorities, State institutions, local civil society and other relevant actors

- Ensure that humanitarian responses build on local capacities;
- Ensure appropriate links with national and local authorities, state institutions, local civil society and other relevant actors and ensure appropriate coordination and information exchange with them.

Participatory and community-based approaches

- Ensure utilization of participatory and community based approaches in sectoral needs assessment, analysis, planning, monitoring and response.

Attention to priority cross-cutting issues

- Ensure integration of agreed priority cross-cutting issues in sectoral needs assessment, analysis, planning, monitoring and response (e.g. age, diversity, environment, gender, HIV/AIDS and human rights); contribute to the development of appropriate strategies to address these issues; ensure gender-sensitive programming and promote gender equality; ensure that the needs, contributions and capacities of women and girls as well as men and boys are addressed;

Needs assessment and analysis

- Ensure regular, effective and coherent sectoral needs assessment and analysis, involving all relevant partners where possible
- Ensure assessments and analysis is shared with other sectoral groups/ OCHA/ humanitarian partners

Emergency preparedness

- Ensure adequate contingency planning and preparedness for new emergencies;

Planning and strategy development

- Identification of gaps;
- Developing/updating agreed response strategies and action plans for the sector and ensuring that these are adequately reflected in overall country strategies,
- Drawing lessons learned from past activities and revising strategies accordingly;
- Developing an exit, or transition, strategy for the sectoral group.

Application of standards

- Ensure that sectoral group participants are aware of relevant policy guidelines, technical standards and relevant commitments that the Government has undertaken under international human rights law/ humanitarian law;
- Ensure that responses are in line with existing policy guidance, technical standards, and relevant Government human rights legal obligations.

Monitoring and reporting

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

Information Management

- The IM responsibilities of the Cluster co-leads is to ensure that appropriate information management systems are in place for effective and coordinated intra-cluster response. Where possible an IM focal point per cluster should be appointed. If there is no designated IM focal point the cluster co-lead is responsible for IM tasks. IM responsibilities include:
 - Sharing relevant information to all actors within the cluster including government agencies, UN agencies, NGOs and others.
 - IM focal points are responsible for intra (within) and inter (between) cluster information sharing.
 - IM focal point products include but are not limited to:
 - Cluster specific contact list
 - Cluster specific meeting schedules and meeting minutes
 - Cluster specific assessments
 - Needs/gap analysis
 - Cluster specific Who is doing What Where (3W) tracking
 - Ensuring that globally-agreed standards such as SPHERE, ISO, IASC or other cluster specific and national standards are included in analysis.
 - Collection and dissemination of cluster specific base information. (Base information will vary by cluster but could include number and type of health facilities, schools, economic data, etc.)

Advocacy and resource mobilization

- Identify core advocacy concerns, including resource requirements, and contribute key messages to broader advocacy initiatives of the RC, IASC CT and other actors;

- Advocate for donors to fund humanitarian actors to carry out priority activities in the sector concerned, while at the same time encouraging sectoral group participants to mobilize resources for their activities through their usual channels.

Training and capacity building

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

The following operational principles should be used to guide IM and information exchange activities:

- **Accessibility.** Humanitarian information should be made accessible by applying easy-to-use formats and tools and by translating information into common or local languages when necessary.
- **Inclusiveness.** Information exchange should be based on a system of partnership with a high degree of ownership by multiple stakeholders, especially representatives of the affected population and Government.
- **Inter-operability.** All sharable data and information should be made available in formats that can be easily retrieved, shared and used by humanitarian organizations.
- **Accountability.** Users must be able to evaluate the reliability and credibility of information by knowing its source and having access to methods of collection, transformation and analysis.
- **Verifiability.** Information should be relevant, accurate, consistent and based on sound methodologies, validated by external sources, and analyzed within the proper contextual framework.
- **Relevance.** Information should be practical, flexible, responsive, and driven by operational needs in support of decision-making throughout all phases of a crisis.
- **Objectivity.** A variety of sources should be used when collecting and analyzing information so as to provide varied and balanced perspectives for addressing problems and recommending solutions.
- **Neutral.** Information should be free of political interference that distorts a situation or the response.
- **Humanity.** Information should never be used to distort, to mislead or to cause harm to affected or at risk populations and should respect the dignity of those affected.
- **Timeliness.** Humanitarian information must be kept current and made available in a timely manner.
- **Sustainability.** Humanitarian information should be open sourced, preserved, cataloged and archived, so that it can be retrieved for future use, such as for preparedness, analysis, lessons learned and evaluation.
- **Confidentiality.** Sensitive data and information that are not to be shared publicly should be managed accordingly and clearly marked as such.