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UNICEF Country Office Guide on Cluster Lead Agency Accountabilities and Humanitarian Coordination

Fulfilling UNICEF Cluster Lead Agency Accountabilities
and its Coordination Role in Humanitarian Settings

Acknowledgements

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In Brief

UNICEF addresses the needs of children and their families in humanitarian crises since its origins. The Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action (CCCs) are the core UNICEF policy and framework for humanitarian action and are mandatory for all UNICEF personnel. Coordination is one of the overarching commitments established in the CCCs: the organization “**Support[s] the leadership and coordination of humanitarian response, along with national and local stakeholders, and in compliance with humanitarian principles.**”



As a global humanitarian organization, **UNICEF has committed to the Interagency Standing Committee (IASC) to lead/co-lead four of the clusters/AoR that constitute the current humanitarian architecture: child protection, education, nutrition, and WASH;** this global leadership is replicated at a country level. In addition to countries in which clusters have been formally activated, **UNICEF plays a coordination role in other humanitarian contexts,** by supporting national and sub-national sector coordination, leading or co-leading sectors or other coordination mechanisms, and providing coordination support in its areas of programmatic responsibility.



This guide has been developed to assist **UNICEF Country Offices and their personnel to better fulfil CLA accountabilities in emergencies,** with reference to relevant IASC protocols and internal UNICEF procedure and guidance. It is focused on the **role of the Country Office in ensuring that UNICEF-led/co-led clusters and AoR are properly staffed and supported in the exercise of their functions.**

Consultations with COs showed that information is useful if structured in two ways: by topic (for example cluster functions, preparedness, resource mobilization, etc.) or by role in the CO (for example Representative, Programme Chief, etc.). **Part One of the guide is organized by topic, and Part Two by role.**

In **Part One** the most important information is at the beginning of each CHAPTER: relevant **core commitments and benchmarks, key takeaways,** followed by a table indicating **key actions, who is responsible for it (in Country Office or Regional Office), and existing tools and references.** Afterwards, each chapter and subchapter include a **brief overview of the topic** and a **description of the key aspects** related to cluster/AoR coordination.

In **Part Two,** key actions are organized by role; these “**Pathways**” **summarize the actions specific roles or functions are responsible for in the Country Office.** Pathways have been created for the following roles:

- Representative
- Deputy Representative – Programmes and Operations
- Cluster/AoR Coordinator supervisor
- Cluster/AoR Coordinator (national/sub-national)
- Sector coordinator
- Chief of Field Operations/Emergency
- Chief of Field Office
- Programme Chief/Operations Chief
- Chief of PME
- HR Manager
- Resource Mobilization Manager
- Regional Office

A **companion intranet site** is also available and similarly structured by topic and by role, for ease of consultation.

Acronyms

AA	Anticipatory Action	HPM	Humanitarian Performance Monitoring
AAP	Accountability to Affected Populations	HRP	Humanitarian Response Plan
AoR	Area of Responsibility	IA	Inter-Agency
AWP	Annual Work Plan	IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
C/AoR	Cluster/Area of Responsibility	ICCG	Inter Cluster Coordination Group
CCCs	Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action	ICT	Information, Communication and Technology
CCPM	Cluster Coordination Performance Monitoring	IM	Information Management
CCRM	Cluster Coordination Reference Module	JIAF	Joint Needs Analysis Framework
CLA	Cluster Lead Agency	MYHS	Multi-year Humanitarian Strategy
CMT	Country Management Team	MPS	Minimum Preparedness Standards
CO	Country Office	MTR	Mid-Term Review
COAR	Country Office Annual Report	NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
CP	Child Protection	OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
CPAoR	Child Protection Area of Responsibility	ORE	Other Resources Emergency
CPD	Country Programme Document	ORR	Other Resources Regular
CPP	Country Programme Planning	PBR	Programme and Budget Review
CSIs	Core Standard Indicators	PER	Performance Evaluation Review
CWG	Cash Working Group	PHE	Public Health Emergency
EMOPS	Office of Emergency Programmes	PME	Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation
EMT	Emergency Management Team	PMT	Programme Management Team
ERC	Emergency Relief Coordinator	PoLR	Provider of Last Resort
EPF	Emergency Programme Fund	ProCap	Protection Capacity Project
ERP	Emergency Response Preparedness	PSEA	Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
FO	Field Office	RAM	Results Assessment Module
FT	Fixed Term	RD	Regional Director
GBV	Gender-Based Violence	RO	Regional Office
GCCS	Global Cluster Coordinating Section	RR	Regular Resources
GEC	Global Education Cluster	RRF	Results and Resources Framework
GenCap	Gender Standby Capacity Project	RRP	Results and Resources Plan
GHTF	Global Humanitarian Thematic Fund	RWP	Rolling Work Plan
GNC	Global Nutrition Cluster	SAG	Strategic Advisory Group
GWC	Global WASH Cluster	SI	Standard Indicators
HAC	Humanitarian Action for Children	TA	Temporary Appointment
HAP	UNICEF Humanitarian Action Plan	ToC	Theory of Change
HC	Humanitarian Coordinator	ToRs	Terms of Reference
HCT	Humanitarian Country Team	TWG	Technical Working Group
HCTs	Humanitarian Cash Transfers	UNHCR	UN High Commissioner for Refugees
HNO	Humanitarian Needs Overview	UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
HPC	Humanitarian Programme Cycle	WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

Glossary

Accountability to Affected Populations. Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) is about using power and resources ethically and responsibly. It's about putting the needs and interests of the people and communities that organizations serve at the centre of decision-making, ensuring the most appropriate and relevant outcomes for them, while preserving their rights and dignity and increasing their resilience when facing situations of vulnerability and crisis. In practice, this means that people – including children and adolescents – have a say in decisions that affect their lives, receive the information they need to make informed decisions, have access to safe and responsive mechanisms to provide feedback or to complain, and have equitable access to assistance in proportion to their needs, priorities and preferences.¹

Area of Responsibility (AoR). The Global Protection Cluster works on a range of protection activities. It has four specialized areas of focus: child protection, gender-based violence, mine action, and housing, land and property². These specialized areas of focus are referred to as areas of responsibility (AoR). AoRs adhere to the same principles and standards as clusters. They can be established in a humanitarian emergency, operating in close collaboration with the country-level protection cluster.³ UNICEF globally leads the Child Protection AoR.

Child safeguarding. Child safeguarding refers to proactive measures taken to limit the direct and indirect collateral risks of harm to children that arise from an organization's work, its personnel and/or associates. These risks include those associated with physical violence (including corporal punishment); sexual violence, exploitation or abuse; emotional and verbal abuse; economic exploitation; failure to assure physical or psychological safety; neglect of physical, emotional or psychological needs; harmful cultural practices; and privacy violations.⁴

Cluster. A cluster is a temporary international coordination mechanism formally activated and deactivated by the IASC⁵ in a humanitarian emergency, based on a written request from the RC/HC in consultation with the HCT. It is established or activated when (i) response and coordination gaps exist due to a sharp deterioration or significant change in the humanitarian situation, and (ii) national response or coordination capacity is unable to meet needs in line with humanitarian principles. Clusters are closed or deactivated by the IASC when one of these two criteria no longer applies. The IASC has categorized humanitarian action into 11 clusters, each led by one to two humanitarian organizations.⁶ A cluster is required to fulfil all six core functions⁷ and ensure accountability to affected people. Usually based in the capital, it may function in sub-national locations deemed necessary by the HC/HCT; in such cases, the cluster at the national-level provides support and direction to the sub-national-level(s) and the accountability lines and ways of working between the two levels of the cluster are formalized in terms of reference (ToRs).⁸

Cluster/AoR Coordinator. A person appointed by the CLA to coordinate the cluster's day-to-day work, including ensuring the fulfilment of the cluster's six core functions and accountability to affected people. The coordinator's responsibilities are detailed in ToRs. S/he reports to the CLA's Representative (or delegate) and is accountable to cluster members and affected people. While the CLA may provide additional staffing, this dedicated position – along with the information management officer – is one of two CLA minimum staff requirements and is fundamental to the effective functioning of the cluster.⁹ The Global Cluster/AoR Coordinator similarly coordinates the work of a Global Cluster, ensuring the fulfilments of its specific functions.

1 UNICEF (2020), Accountability to Affected Populations. A handbook for UNICEF and partners.

2 The IASC currently does not have policy in place on the activation of AoRs. Various practices and approaches have been applied. It is expected that the next revision of the IASC Reference Module for Cluster Coordination at Country Level will address this issue.

3 GCCG (2023), Country-level Cluster Terms and Definitions Paper

4 UNICEF (2020), Accountability to Affected Populations. A handbook for UNICEF and partners.

5 As of December 2021, with agreement from the IASC Principals, the ERC delegated this responsibility to the IASC Emergency Directors Group.

6 The 11 IASC-agreed clusters are as follows: Camp Coordination & Camp Management, Early Recovery, Education, Emergency Telecommunications, Food Security, Health, Logistics, Nutrition, Protection, Shelter, and WASH. The Protection Cluster includes four areas of responsibility focused on Child Protection, Gender-Based Violence, Mine Action, and Housing, Land and Property.

7 The six cluster core functions are: service delivery; HC/HCT strategic decision-making; planning and strategy development; advocacy; performance monitoring and reporting; and national capacity building and contingency planning.

8 GCCG (2023), Country-level Cluster Terms and Definitions Paper.

9 GCCG (2023), Country-level Cluster Terms and Definitions Paper.

Cluster Lead Agency (CLA) or Cluster Co-Lead Agencies (Co-CLA).^{10 11}

One or more humanitarian organizations endorsed by the IASC to lead or co-lead a country-level cluster, based on the recommendation of the RC/HC following consultations with the HCT. The Country Representative/Director of the CLA is accountable to the RC/HC for the cluster's functioning and for serving as Provider of Last Resort.¹² This includes ensuring that the cluster has adequate resources at both national and sub-national levels¹³; at a minimum, the CLA appoints a national-level cluster coordinator and information management officer (IMO). For co-leads, shared accountability as well as roles, responsibilities and ways of working are detailed in a memorandum or letter of understanding (MoU/LoU).¹⁴

Co-coordination. Occurs when an organization is selected by the CLA through a consultative process to provide leadership support to the cluster at national and/or sub-national levels. This optional role can strengthen cluster leadership but does not displace the core accountabilities and responsibilities of the designated CLA as noted above. The co-coordinating partner is not accountable to the RC/HC for the cluster's functioning or for discharging the Provider of Last Resort responsibility. It is recognized as good practice that this role is carried out by a national or local actor. The responsibilities and resourcing of this role are formalized in a MoU or LoU¹⁵.

Co-leadership. A partnership between two organizations that lead and coordinate a cluster together, share equal accountability for the Cluster's functioning to the Emergency Relief Coordinator at a global level – as well as to the Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator at a country

level – ensuring predictability and serving as Providers of Last Resort. The organizations' roles, responsibilities, ways of working and mutual accountability are determined jointly based on the organizations' respective strengths, comparative advantages and complementarities, and are documented in a Memorandum of Understanding or other agreement. The two organizations are referred to as Cluster Co-Lead Agencies or Co-Leads (co-CLAs) and each appoints a Cluster Coordinator, as well as Cluster staff. Globally, the Education cluster is co-led by UNICEF and Save the Children International, while at country level there are multiple examples of co-led clusters.

Cross-cutting themes. Cross-cutting themes go beyond individual sectors and are mainstreamed in UNICEF work, including both programme and cluster leadership, because they are both related to children's rights and improve the quality of UNICEF preparedness, response, and programmes. Several themes belong to this category: including UNICEF humanitarian policy commitments (centrality of protection, accountability to affected populations, humanitarian-peace-development nexus, localization of aid), GBV risk mitigation, disability inclusion, adolescence, early childhood development, prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, gender, and others.

Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO). The Humanitarian Needs Overview is jointly developed by humanitarian actors to support the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) in developing a shared understanding of the impact and evolution of a crisis and to inform response planning. This document presents a comprehensive analysis of the overall situation and associated needs, vulnerabilities and capacities of affected people, based on the Joint Needs Analysis Framework (JIAF). It is based on existing information (secondary data) derived from multi-cluster and sectoral assessments, monitoring data, survey results, and contextual judgment of humanitarian actors and of local sources such as national authorities, community bodies and representatives from affected communities.¹⁶

Humanitarian-Development Nexus. Derived from the global commitment to the humanitarian-development-peace nexus, the UNICEF approach to linking humanitarian action and development establishes that all COs must implement risk-informed and conflict-sensitive programming that build and strengthen national and local capacities and systems to reduce needs, vulnerabilities of and risks to affected populations.¹⁷

10 In this document, CLA refers to a cluster lead agency, cluster co-lead agencies and AoR lead agency.

11 The IASC may designate a UN agency, NGO, or IFRC/National Society to this role. Country-level CLAs generally mirror global arrangements. However, the RC/HC may propose other organizations that are in a better position to lead or co-lead a country-level cluster after considering organizational capacity, operational presence, and scale-up ability. In some contexts, a government line ministry or national agency may refer to itself as a lead or co-lead, but it is not accountable to the RC/HC for the functioning of the cluster.

12 Provider of Last Resort (PoLR) is a commitment by CLAs to call on all relevant humanitarian partners to ensure the provision of services to fill crucial gaps in the response and if this fails, to commit itself to fill the gap itself (or advocate for resources or access to do so). For more information, please see the IASC Reference Module for Cluster Coordination at Country Level (2015) and the IASC Operational Guidance on the Concept of 'Provider of Last Resort' (2008).

13 This may include staffing provided by CCPs.

14 GCCG (2023), Country-level Cluster Terms and Definitions Paper.

15 GCCG (2023), Country-level Cluster Terms and Definitions Paper.

16 IASC (2015), Reference Module on the Implementation of the Humanitarian Programme Cycle.

17 UNICEF (2020), Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action.

Humanitarian Programme Cycle (HPC). The humanitarian programme cycle (HPC) is a coordinated series of actions undertaken to help prepare for, manage and deliver humanitarian response. It consists of five elements which build on each other. Successful implementation of the humanitarian programme cycle is dependent on effective emergency preparedness, effective coordination with national/local authorities and humanitarian actors, and information management. HPC elements are: needs assessment and analysis, strategic response planning, resource mobilization, implementation and monitoring, operational review and evaluation.

Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP). The Humanitarian Response Plan is prepared for a protracted or sudden onset emergency that requires international humanitarian assistance. The plan articulates the shared vision of how to respond to the affected population's assessed and expressed needs. The development of a strategic response plan is a key step in the humanitarian program cycle and is carried out only when needs have been understood and analysed through the Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO), based on the Joint Needs Analysis Framework (JIAF), or other joint needs assessment and analysis processes.

Information Management Officer. A person appointed by the CLA to establish, operate and maintain information systems for strategic and operational decision-making, including partner reporting, data analysis, gap identification, severity mapping, partner mapping and other cluster information products. The information management officer reports to the cluster coordinator. While the CLA may provide additional staffing, this position – along with the cluster coordinator – is one of two CLA minimum staff requirements and is fundamental to the cluster's effective functioning.

Localization. The process of better-engaging local and national actors in all phases of humanitarian action, including greater support for locally led action. UNICEF commits to localizing its humanitarian response by recognizing, respecting and strengthening the leadership and coordination of humanitarian action by national and local authorities, CSOs, and communities.¹⁸

Mutual accountability. Specific to the Education Cluster co-leadership, it refers to shared understanding of what each co-lead agency is accountable to the other(s) for, within the co-leadership and based on comparative

advantages, complementarity, and the agreed division of roles and responsibilities, both at a global and country level. It is a horizontal accountability, a “peer” accountability, and it requires commitment, evidence on performance, ownership of performance, a constructive and structured approach, trust, and dialogue.¹⁹

Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.

Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) refers to measures taken to prevent, and respond to, Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA). These measures aim to ensure safe and accessible reporting, good-quality assistance for survivors of SEA, and enhanced accountability among organizations, including in investigations into allegations of SEA.²⁰

Provider of Last Resort (PoLR).

The ‘provider of last resort’ concept is critical to the cluster approach – without it the element of predictability is lost. It represents a commitment of cluster leads to do their utmost to ensure an adequate and appropriate response. It is necessarily circumscribed by some basic preconditions that affect any framework for humanitarian action; namely unimpeded access, security, and availability of funding.²¹ Depending on access, security and availability of funding, the cluster lead, as PoLR, must be ready to ensure the provision of services required to fulfil crucial gaps identified by the cluster and reflected in the Humanitarian Response Plan.²² Further work to update the definition of PoLR for UN and civil society co-lead agencies is planned.

Sector.

While the term sector can refer to a broad range of coordination structures, for the purposes of this document,²³ it is a national coordination mechanism led by a government line ministry or national agency for a specific

19 At the time of writing the MoU for the Global Education Cluster (GEC) co-leadership was under development; copies can be requested by writing to the [GEC](#)

20 Source: UNICEF (2020), *Accountability to Affected Populations*. A handbook for UNICEF and partners.

21 IASC (2006), *Operational Guidance on the Concept of “Provider of Last Resort”*

22 IASC (2015), *Reference Module for Cluster Coordination at Country Level*.

23 The term ‘sector’ can be used interchangeably with the terms ‘sectoral working group’ or ‘sectoral coordination mechanism’. It also can refer to a variety of coordination structures, beyond the definition provided in this document, including those led or co-led by humanitarian organizations. Possibilities include, but are not limited to, transitional mechanisms leading to a cluster’s activation or following its deactivation; informal groups established to coordinate technical areas of the response on an ad hoc basis; and, coordination mechanisms under UNHCR’s refugee coordination model.

18 UNICEF (2020), *Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action*.

technical area.²⁴ The government is accountable for the functioning of the sector, for the response quality and for acting in accordance with international humanitarian law and humanitarian principles. Sectors generally are longer-term, with their duration defined by national policies and declarations.²⁵

24 As per General Assembly resolution 46/182, national authorities have the primary responsibility for taking care of those affected by natural disasters and other emergencies that occur on their territory. In-country humanitarian organizations or the relevant Global Cluster may provide government-led sectors with capacity, technical support and/or guidance, if resources and capacity allow.

25 GCCG (2023), Country-level Cluster Terms and Definitions Paper



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Introduction

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ① UNICEF has committed to the Interagency Standing Committee (IASC) to lead/co-lead four clusters/AoR: child protection, education, nutrition, and WASH.
- ① UNICEF commitment to coordination in humanitarian action is articulated under the CCCs.

UNICEF HUMANITARIAN MANDATE AND ROLE IN COORDINATION

UNICEF is committed to addressing the needs of children and their families in humanitarian crises since its origins. Humanitarian action for UNICEF encompasses interventions aimed at **saving lives, alleviating suffering, maintaining human dignity and protecting rights of affected populations**, wherever there are humanitarian needs, regardless of the kind of crisis (sudden onset or protracted emergencies, natural disasters, public health emergencies, complex emergencies, international or internal armed conflicts, etc.²⁶), irrespective of the Gross National Income level of a country (low, middle or high), or legal status of the affected populations. Humanitarian action also encompasses interventions addressing underlying risks and causes of vulnerability to disasters, fragility and conflict, such as system strengthening and resilience-building, which contribute to reducing humanitarian needs, risks and vulnerabilities of affected populations.²⁷

As a global humanitarian organization, **UNICEF has committed to the Interagency Standing Committee (IASC)²⁸ to lead/co-lead four of the clusters/AoR that constitute the current humanitarian architecture: child protection, education, nutrition, and WASH**; this global leadership is replicated at a country level. In addition to countries in which clusters have been formally activated, **UNICEF plays a coordination role in other humanitarian contexts**, by supporting national and sub-national sector coordination, leading or co-leading sectors or other coordination mechanisms, and providing coordination support in its areas of programmatic responsibility.

COORDINATION IN THE CORE COMMITMENTS FOR CHILDREN IN HUMANITARIAN ACTION (CCCs)

The Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action (CCCs) are the core UNICEF policy and framework for humanitarian action and are mandatory for all UNICEF personnel. Coordination is one of the overarching commitments established in the CCCs: the organization commits to **“Support the leadership and coordination of humanitarian response, along with national and local stakeholders, and in compliance with humanitarian principles.”**

UNICEF commitment to coordination in humanitarian action is articulated under the CCCs.

26 A humanitarian crisis is defined as any circumstance where humanitarian needs are sufficiently large and complex to require significant external assistance and resources, and where a multisectoral response is needed, with the engagement of a wide range of international humanitarian actors (IASC). This may include smaller-scale emergencies; in countries with limited capacities, the threshold will be lower than in countries with strong capacities. An emergency is a situation that threatens the lives and well-being of large numbers of a population and requires extraordinary action to ensure their survival, care and protection.

27 UNICEF (2020), Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action.

28 The Interagency Standing Committee (IASC) is the highest-level humanitarian coordination forum of the United Nations system. It brings together the executive heads of 18 organizations and consortia to formulate policy, set strategic priorities and mobilize resources in response to humanitarian crises. Created by United Nations General Assembly resolution 46/182 in 1991, and it is chaired by the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC).

The corresponding benchmark indicates that **“UNICEF, at CO/RO/HQ level, actively contributes to intersectoral coordination and ensures that sectors/clusters under its leadership are adequately staffed and skilled.”**

In fact, under the sectorial commitments, the first one is always the one on coordination:

PROGRAMME AREA	COMMITMENT	BENCHMARK
Nutrition, education, child protection, WASH	1. Leadership and coordination Effective leadership and coordination are established and functional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nutrition/education/CP/WASH cluster/AoR/sector coordination and leadership functions are adequately staffed and skilled at national and sub-national levels • Core leadership and coordination accountabilities are delivered
Health	1: Leadership and coordination Effective leadership and coordination are established and functional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNICEF actively contributes to the interagency and intersectoral coordination mechanisms
Social protection	1: Coordination Effective coordination is established and functional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination between the social protection and the humanitarian cash coordination systems is established and functional



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Who is this guide for and how to use it

This guide has been developed to assist **UNICEF Country Offices and their personnel to better fulfil CLA accountabilities in emergencies**, with reference to relevant IASC protocols and internal UNICEF procedure and guidance. It is focused on the **role of the Country Office²⁹ in ensuring that UNICEF-led/co-led clusters and AoR are properly staffed and supported in the exercise of their functions**. UNICEF plays a double role in the clusters/AoRs it leads – it is the lead agency, and also a member. This guide only addresses CLA's role and responsibilities, and does not include actions UNICEF should take as a cluster/AoR member.



It is not a guide on cluster coordination or meant for Cluster/AoR Coordinators; while there are mentions of Cluster/AoR Coordinator responsibilities, they are only included when related to UNICEF CLA accountabilities. The official IASC guide on cluster coordination is the [IASC 2015 Reference Module on Cluster Coordination](#).

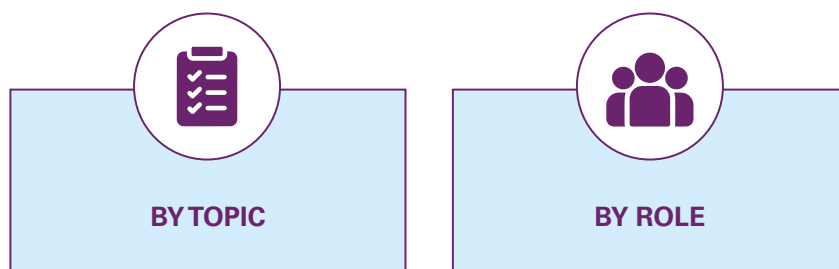


It is not a guide for UNICEF programmatic humanitarian work, which is instead fully described in several programmatic guidance tools, including the Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action (CCCs) and in the Emergency Handbook.



This guide is a tool addressed to Country Offices and their personnel, who collectively ensure the fulfilment of UNICEF CLA accountabilities, whether they have direct responsibilities in clusters/AoR or not.

Consultations with COs showed that there are two preferred ways for consulting the information: by topic (for example cluster functions, preparedness, resource mobilization, etc.) or by role in the CO (for example Representative, Programme Chief, etc.). This guide and the [Companion intranet site](#) therefore offer both structures, the first one by topic and the second by role.



²⁹ Including its Field Offices if existing, and with the support of the Regional Office.

MAIN GUIDE – ORGANIZATION BY TOPIC

In the present document, in **Part One** information is organized **by topic**.

The most important information is at the beginning of each chapter: relevant **core commitments and benchmarks, key takeaways**, followed by a table indicating **key actions, who is responsible for it (in Country Office or Regional Office),³⁰ and existing tools and references**.

CORE COMMITMENTS	BENCHMARK

KEY TAKEAWAYS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ① ①

ACTION	RESPONSIBLE	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
Example	Representative	
	C/AoR Coordinator supervisor	
	Chief of Programme	
	Chief of PME, Etc.	

USEFUL LINKS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ① ICON page: Title, link ① Procedure: Title, link ① Guidance: Title, link ① Tools: Title, link ① Other resources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Title, link

Note that Guidance refers to UNICEF internal documents while guidelines and manuals from other organizations (for example IASC) are included under “Other resources”.

Afterwards, each chapter and subchapter include a **brief overview of the topic** and a **description of the key aspects** related to cluster/AoR coordination.

In a CO, **the Representative is ultimately accountable** for the actions of the CO and its personnel in most cases. To simplify the tables, we have omitted accountability and only indicated responsibility. **Accountable** is defined as the person ultimately answerable for the correct and thorough completion of the deliverable or task, who ensures the task’s prerequisites are met and delegates work to those responsible. The accountable person must sign off (approve) the work of the responsible person. **Responsible** is defined as the person who does the work to complete the action.

³⁰ Some actions are conducted in collaboration with other offices and sections, for example GCCS or EMOPS; however since this guide focuses only on COs/ROs they are not included in the action tables.

Tools and resources are included to provide more in-depth information and support for decisions and action, including pros/cons tables, checklists, flowcharts, questions to ask, and so on. At the end of each chapter, there is a section with **useful links**, that refers to the relevant Intranet page if existing, UNICEF procedures (which are auditable), manuals and other guidance, and any other relevant resources.

It is expected that guidance and procedures (both internal and external) will evolve over time, and while all efforts have been made to ensure continuous **updating** through the [companion intranet site](#), should you find any inconsistency between this resource and others, do verify what the most recent information is and contact the [Global Cluster Coordination Section \(GCCS\)](#)

PATHWAYS – ORGANIZATION BY ROLE

Pathways are included in Part Two and in the [companion intranet site](#); they summarize the actions to be taken by a specific role or function in the Country Office, for example what actions a Chief of Section or the Human Resources team should take with regards to cluster coordination; actions are structured around key topics and in synthetic tables. For more details, references and tools readers should consult the corresponding section of the manual or website.



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Pathways have been created for the following roles:

- ① Representative
- ① Deputy Representative – Programmes and Operations
- ① Cluster/AoR Coordinator supervisor³¹
- ① Cluster/AoR Coordinator (national/sub-national)
- ① Sector coordinator
- ① Chief of Field Operations/Emergency³²
- ① Chief of Field Office
- ① Programme Chief/Operations Chief
- ① Chief of PME
- ① HR Manager
- ① Resource Mobilization Manager
- ① Regional Office

³¹ This Pathway is included due to the variety of line management options adopted in CO for supervision of Cluster/AoR Coordinators. Regardless of whether the supervisor is the Representative, the Chief of Field Operations or others, this Pathway applies.

³² In some Country Offices there is no Chief of Field Operations/Emergency and their functions are covered by an Emergency Manager or Specialist. The Pathways applies, in this case, to the Emergency Manager or Specialist.

The table below is a partial example of the [Representative Pathway](#)

THE CLUSTER APPROACH	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
Discuss the strategic value of clusters/AoRs for UNICEF COs and FOs within the team and promote active engagement with clusters/AoRs	
Meet with cluster/AoR coordinators before HCT meetings to discuss cluster/AoR issues, plans, and progress	
When UNICEF co-leads a cluster, meet with the Representative/Country Director of the co-lead agency to discuss strategic issues of the cluster and agree on representation at the HCT	
If not already happening, advocate with HCT for the participation of cluster/AoR coordinators in meetings when relevant issues are discussed	
In HCT meetings, differentiate when speaking on behalf of UNICEF and when speaking on behalf of the various clusters/AoR; and advocate for issues pertaining to UNICEF-led clusters/AoR	IASC Guidance on Humanitarian Country Teams
CLUSTER LEAD AGENCY ACCOUNTABILITY	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
Monitor that CLA accountabilities are fulfilled (key positions are created and filled; cluster coordinators are supported, supervised and are able to provide leadership in their key functional areas; and cluster/AoR priorities are appropriately brought to the attention of the HCT and other relevant inter-agency fora)	Accountability Compendium
Oversee fulfilment of leadership function in clusters/AoR, particularly around setting vision and strategy, partnership, intersectoriality.	QTA – leadership role of the CLA

COMPANION INTRANET SITE

Consultations with COs showed that both a text version and an **interactive version** of the guide are needed, on one side to facilitate perusing and to address connection challenges frequent in humanitarian contexts, and on the other to allow for regular updating of the guidance in line with the evolution of UNICEF and humanitarian procedures and practices.



For this reason, a **companion intranet site** to the guide has been developed and is maintained by the Global Coordination Cluster Section; it is available [here](#). On the website, as in the present document, information can be consulted both by topic and by role.



PART ONE

—
**Country Office Guide on Cluster
Lead Agency Accountabilities
and Humanitarian Coordination**

1. The cluster approach

CORE COMMITMENTS	BENCHMARK
<p>COORDINATION Support the leadership and coordination of humanitarian response, along with national and local stakeholders, and in compliance with humanitarian principles</p>	<p>① UNICEF, at CO/RO/HQ level, actively contributes to intersectoral coordination and ensures that sectors/clusters under its leadership are adequately staffed and skilled.</p>

<p>KEY TAKEAWAYS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ① UNICEF leads/co-leads three clusters (education, nutrition and WASH) and one AoR (child protection) at the global level, and generally the same clusters/AoR at the country level. ① Cluster coordination is an institutional accountability and is reflected in the CCCs. ① Cluster/AoR leadership is of strategic value for UNICEF. ① In the HCT, the Representative represents both the interests of UNICEF as an organization and the interests of the four clusters/AoRs.

ACTION	RESPONSIBLE ³³	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
Discuss the strategic value of clusters/AoRs for UNICEF COs and FOs within the team and promote active engagement with clusters/AoRs	Representative Deputy Representative - Programmes Programme Chief Chief of Field Operations/Emergency Chief of Field Office Chief of PME	
Consider the strategic value of cluster leadership during the elaboration of emergency response plans/humanitarian plans	Programme Chief Chief of Field Operations/Emergency Chief of PME	
Ensure active participation of UNICEF programme sections in respective cluster/AoR at national and sub-national level, and in their activities including the elaboration of the HNO and HRP	Programme Chief Chief of Field Office	See Chapter on UNICEF Programmes and Clusters/AoRs
Meet with Cluster/AoR Coordinators before HCT meetings to discuss cluster/AoR issues, plans, and progress; if supervisor is other than the Representative, brief Representative on issues discussed.	Representative C/AoR Coordinator C/AoR Coordinator supervisor Chief of Field Operations/Emergency	
When UNICEF co-leads a cluster, meet with the Representative/Country Director of the co-lead agency to discuss strategic issues of the cluster and agree on representation at the HCT	Representative	
If not already happening, advocate with HCT for the participation of Cluster/AoR Coordinators in meetings when relevant issues are discussed	Representative	
In HCT meetings, differentiate when speaking on behalf of UNICEF and when speaking on behalf of the various clusters/AoR	Representative	IASC Guidance on Humanitarian Country Teams
In HCT meetings, advocate for issues pertaining to UNICEF-led clusters/AoR	Representative C/AoR Coordinator (if attending HCT) Deputy Representative - Programmes (if attending HCT) Chief of Field Operations/Emergency (if attending HCT)	

33 In a CO, the Representative is ultimately accountable for the actions of the CO and its personnel in most cases. To simplify the tables, we have omitted to indicate accountability and only indicated responsibility. Accountable is defined as the person ultimately answerable for the correct and thorough completion of the deliverable or task, who ensures the task's prerequisites are met and delegates work to those responsible. The accountable person must sign off (approve) the work of the responsible person. Responsible is defined as the person who does the work to complete the action.

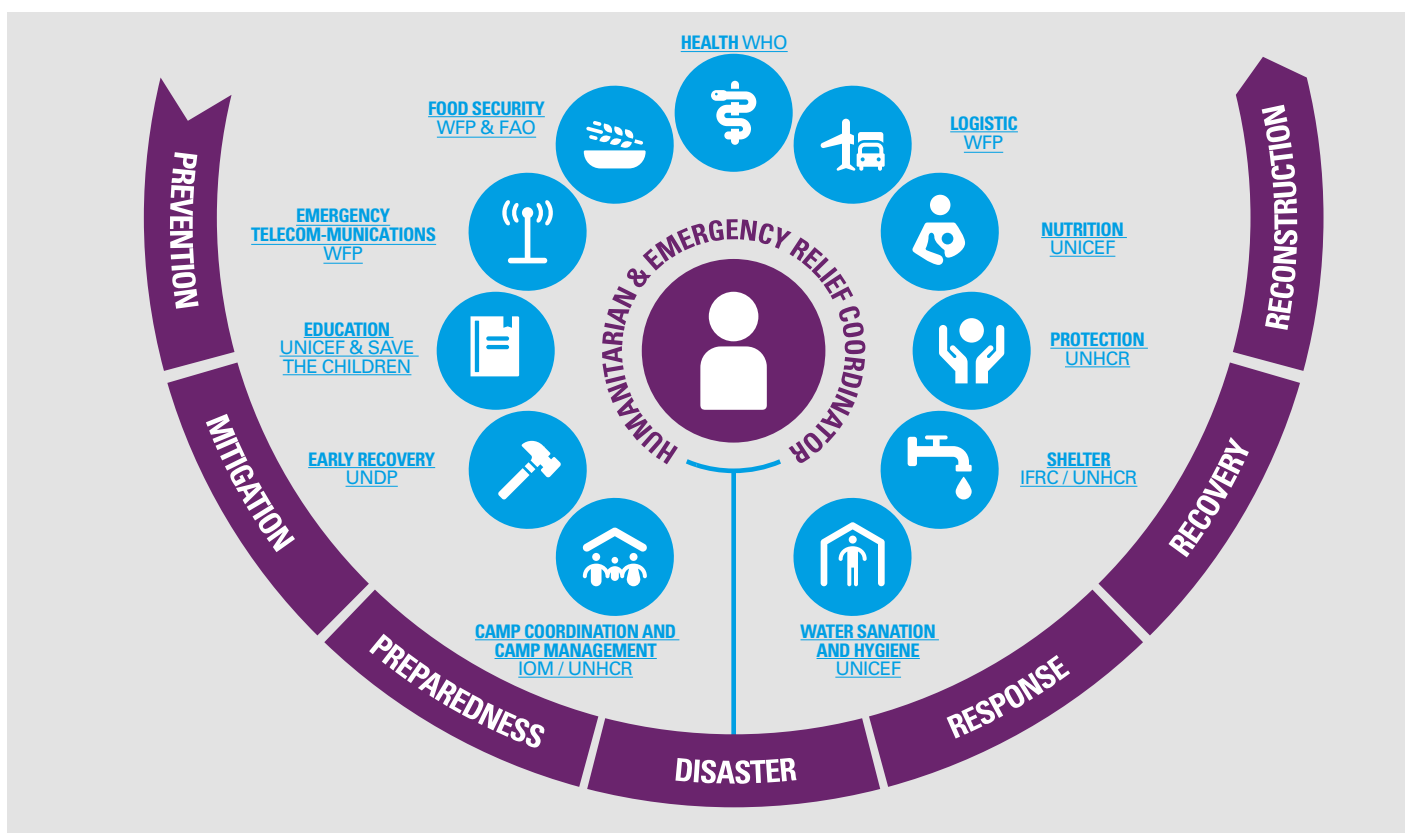
USEFUL LINKS

- ① ICON page: [Sectoral Coordination and the Cluster Approach](#)
- ① Guidance: [Emergency Handbook](#), Chapter 9.Sector/Cluster Coordination
- ① Other resources:
 - [IASC Reference Module on Cluster Coordination](#)
 - [IASC Guidance on Humanitarian Country Teams](#)
 - [AGORA Humanitarian Coordination Learning Channel](#)

THE CLUSTER APPROACH

The current humanitarian architecture has its roots in the coordination system established by General Assembly resolution 46/182, which was restructured in 2005 when the Humanitarian Reform Agenda introduced new elements to enhance predictability of the response, accountability of humanitarian organizations and partnership among them in humanitarian response, by improving prioritization and clearly defining the roles and responsibilities of humanitarian actors.³⁴ The Cluster Approach was one of these new elements, and was adopted to increase the effectiveness of humanitarian responses, and amplify their impact for the benefit of affected populations. **Clusters** are groups of humanitarian organizations – both UN and non-UN – in each of the main sectors of humanitarian action, each led by one or more **Cluster Lead Agencies**. In virtue of their collective nature, clusters do not represent or advance the interests of any single agency or humanitarian actor,³⁵ but are guided by the needs of populations affected by crises.

UNICEF leads/co-leads four clusters/AoR: child protection, education, nutrition and WASH at global level, and generally the same clusters/AoR at country level, if activated.³⁶



34 IASC (2015), Reference Module on Cluster Coordination

35 See section on the neutrality of Cluster/AoR Coordinators.

36 It is possible that not all clusters/AoRs are activated in an emergency.

For UNICEF, **cluster coordination is an institutional accountability** and this is reflected in its main humanitarian policy framework, the **Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action**. It is a responsibility of all UNICEF personnel – particularly of CO senior leadership and managers – to fulfil this accountability when their roles require it.

At a country level (including at a sub-national level), the cluster approach establishes a system for leadership and accountability of the humanitarian response under the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC).³⁷ It identifies the roles and responsibilities of the various agencies and provides a framework for effective partnership among international humanitarian actors, host governments, local authorities, local civil society and affected populations. When clusters and AoRs are activated at a country level, **the CLA has a responsibility for leadership of the clusters/AoRs and is accountable to affected populations, to the HC, and to national authorities for their effective functioning and performance.**

The cluster approach is utilized in rapid and slow onset or protracted emergencies – in agreement with governments – when affecting local populations, including internally displaced populations. In the case of refugees (both within and outside camps) responsibility for coordination of a humanitarian response remains within the mandate of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and is not part of the cluster approach.³⁸



It is important to note that UNICEF responsibility on humanitarian coordination extends beyond the activation of clusters, as indicated in the same CCCs: “Where clusters are not activated, UNICEF is accountable for its respective sectors to support coordination mechanisms”. Therefore, the vast majority of considerations and guidance in this document are applicable both when clusters are activated and when UNICEF leads humanitarian sectorial coordination. The only obligations for UNICEF as CLA that are triggered when clusters are activated and that are not formally required for humanitarian sector coordination are: the staffing of coordination and information management functions, the role of Provider of Last Resort, and the annual monitoring of cluster performance.



STRATEGIC VALUE OF CLUSTERS/AORS FOR UNICEF

It is of strategic value for UNICEF – both as CLA and as a member – to ensure well-functioning clusters/AoRs:

- ☑ As a CLA, UNICEF is **positioned as a leader** in several of its programmatic areas, and can leverage the collective strength of the cluster/AoR for the benefit of children, both on programmatic interventions and in advocacy for children’s rights;
- ☑ UNICEF is the **agency that leads most clusters/AoRs** and as such, it can have a great influence in ensuring that the humanitarian response in a country puts the needs and rights of children at its centre; it can have a **greater impact on children** through the clusters/AoRs it leads than the impact it has as an individual humanitarian actor;
- ☑ Through the meaningful **partnership approach** promoted by clusters/AoRs, UNICEF can benefit from the alliance and collaboration with other organizations, including local ones, and better achieve its programmatic and **cross-cutting** goals;
- ☑ Through clusters/AoRs UNICEF can promote the inclusion of local organizations into cluster/AoR management structures – for example as Co-Coordinating partners – and advance its commitment to localization;

³⁷ Sometimes the Resident Coordinator is also designated Humanitarian Coordinator (RC/HC).

³⁸ For a discussion of humanitarian coordination besides clusters, see chapter “**Other forms of humanitarian coordination**.”

- ☑ Strong and effective clusters/AoRs will ultimately **strengthen UNICEF emergency programme response**, better enabling UNICEF programmes to better reach their objectives and targets. Coordination benefits and efficiencies include strengthened collective advocacy, shared tools and resources and access to a broader range of partners and allies;
- ☑ Through clusters/AoRs, each organization's **comparative advantages** can be used (for example, better access to certain areas or populations) to reach more children, faster;
- ☑ Data and analysis from clusters/AoRs can provide critical information on humanitarian needs and **inform UNICEF strategic decision-making and response planning**;
- ☑ Through clusters/AoRs, members – including local organizations – can develop and strengthen their technical, operational and leadership capacities, which fosters a stronger humanitarian community and enlarges the pool of **potential UNICEF partners**;
- ☑ Coordination with cluster/AoR members can facilitate the **strategic allocation and use of UNICEF resources** in complementarity with others;
- ☑ Coordination among UNICEF-led clusters/AoR facilitates **access to the collective strength of other clusters/AoRs** for each party (for example, UNICEF education programmes could be supported or strengthened not only by UNICEF WASH programmes, but also by other WASH cluster members programmes), allowing them to address children's multidimensional needs together;
- ☑ As clusters **transition to sector coordination**, the respective UNICEF programme sections will become responsible for supporting coordination functions with the relevant ministries and government bodies, and thus involvement in cluster processes and mechanisms will enhance smooth transition, sustainability and institutional knowledge.

THE HUMANITARIAN COUNTRY TEAM (HCT)



The **Humanitarian Country Team (HCT)** is the centrepiece of the humanitarian coordination architecture, under the leadership of the Humanitarian Coordinator. The HCT's overall goal is to ensure that inter-agency humanitarian action alleviates human suffering and protects the lives, livelihoods and dignity of people in need; its primary purpose is to **provide strategic direction for collective inter-agency humanitarian response**.³⁹



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The HCT makes decisions to ensure that country-level humanitarian action is well-coordinated, principled, timely, effective and efficient. It also ensures that adequate prevention, preparedness, risk and security management measures are in place and functioning. Reporting directly and accountable to the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC), the HC is ultimately responsible for the overall response and accountable to populations in need. Where a separate HC position has not been established, the Resident Coordinator is accountable for the performance of humanitarian coordination functions.

HCT membership includes organizations that undertake humanitarian action in-country; that commit to participate in coordination arrangements, including UN agencies, national and international NGOs and, subject to their individual mandates, components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement; occasionally donors. The size of an HCT is limited, to allow for effective decision-making, and members of the HCT are represented at the highest level – Country Representative or equivalent.

³⁹ Generic ToRs of the HCT are available at https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/hct_tors.pdf

As UNICEF is a global CLA for four clusters/AoRs, and a major agency supporting humanitarian response programming, the UNICEF Representative will be a member of the HCT. S/he has a responsibility to proactively engage in HCT discussions and decision-making in all phases of the response, representing both the interests of UNICEF as an organization and the interests of the four clusters/AoRs (where UNICEF is designated to represent these clusters/AoRs in-country).⁴⁰

In several countries, **Cluster/AoR Coordinators attend HCT meetings** when relevant to discussions.⁴¹ This facilitates better communication and cooperation between clusters/AoRs and the HCT.

It is recommended:

- ① That Cluster/AoR Coordinators' attendance at the HCT is extended to all countries where clusters are activated. Cluster/AoR Coordinators attend the HCT together *with* a UNICEF Representative, not on behalf of them;
- ① Alternatively, UNICEF-led cluster and AOR coordinators should periodically attend HCT meetings as observers, to gain a better understanding of the HCT dynamic. One option used in some countries is the creation of a dedicated CLA forum, including cluster coordinators and heads of CLAs, to discuss issues pertaining to clusters with the HC before HCT meetings;
- ① Where the Deputy Representative - Programmes or the Chief of Field Operations/Emergency is responsible for management of clusters, s/he should attend the HCT together with the Representative (*not* in place of the Representative).

HCT responsibilities⁴² include:

- ① Providing a shared strategic vision for collective humanitarian action in-country, which is set out in a common strategic plan (the **Humanitarian Response Plan** or equivalent);
- ① Overseeing the Inter-Cluster Coordination Group (ICCG), sub-national coordination bodies and other groups that are part of the inter-agency coordination architecture in-country;
- ① Supporting efforts led by the HC to obtain free, timely, safe and unimpeded access of humanitarian organizations to populations in need;
- ① Ensuring that preparedness and response efforts are inclusive and coordinated;
- ① Ensuring that the international humanitarian response is coordinated with national, sub-national and local level authorities;
- ① Supporting and contributing to efforts to address the **humanitarian-development nexus**;
- ① Ensuring that the humanitarian response in country is in line with global humanitarian standards and principles;
- ① Activating resource mobilization mechanisms and advising the HC on allocation of resources from in-country humanitarian pooled funds, where applicable.



Note that **sub-national HCTs may be established if needed**. In 2021, according to IASC there were 39 sub-national HCTs across 29 humanitarian operations.⁴³

40 Even if clusters are not activated, where UNICEF leads sectors the same considerations apply.

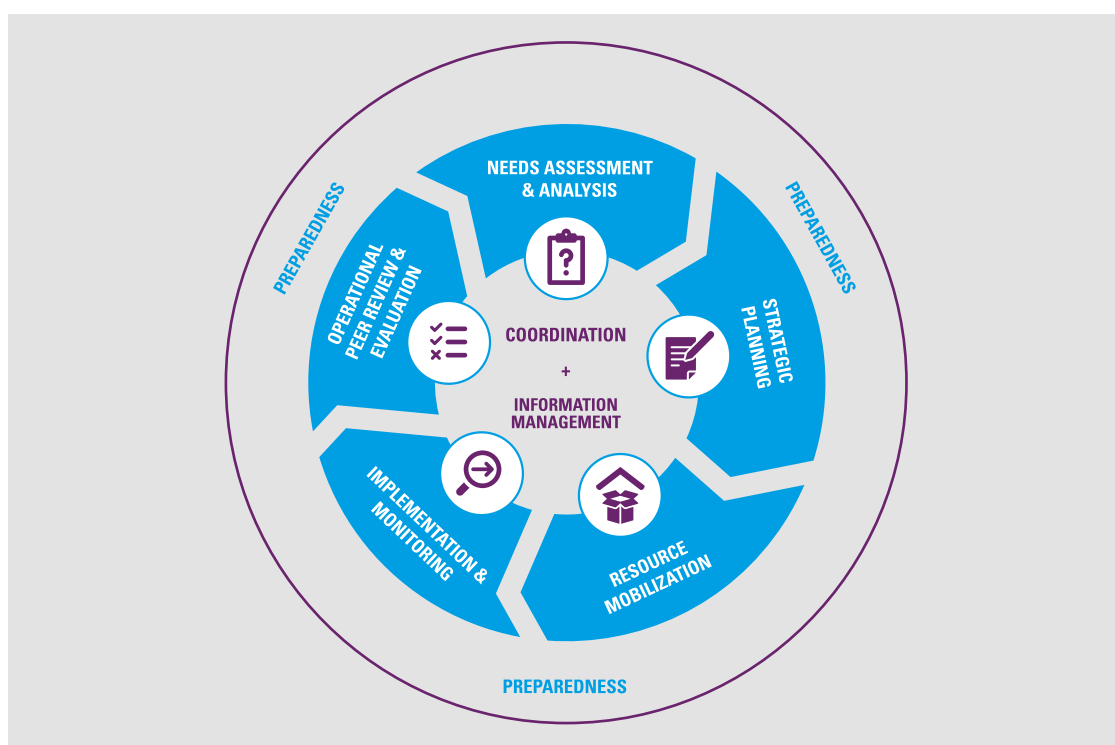
41 UNICEF (2022), Evaluation of the UNICEF Role as Cluster Lead (Co-Lead) Agency (CLARE II).

42 See IASC *Guidance for Humanitarian Country Teams* for a more detailed description of HCT purpose, establishment, responsibilities, composition, chairmanship, modus operandi and interface with other in-country coordination mechanisms. [IASC Guidance for Humanitarian Country Teams](#)

43 IASC (2022), Note on IASC coordination structures at country level in 2021.

THE HUMANITARIAN PROGRAMME CYCLE (HPC)

The **Humanitarian Programme Cycle (HPC)** is a coordinated series of actions undertaken to help prepare for, manage, and deliver humanitarian response. It consists of five elements which build on each other. Successful implementation of the humanitarian programme cycle is dependent on effective emergency preparedness, effective coordination with national/local authorities and humanitarian actors, and information management.



The five IASC HPC⁴⁴ elements are:

- **needs assessment and analysis,**
- **strategic response planning,**
- **resource mobilization,**
- **implementation and monitoring,**
- **operational review and evaluation.**

CLAs have a key role in facilitating activities linked to the HPC, particularly, supporting the elaboration of the annual **Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO)** and **Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP)**. More recently, **Multi-Year Humanitarian Strategies (MYHS)** have been introduced, whose development CLAs will equally support where they are used.

For a more detailed discussion of the actions required by UNICEF CO within the HPC, refer to the chapter "**The 6+1 core cluster functions.**"

44 To note that UNICEF describes the phases of the programme response Cycle in the CCCs as: needs assessments; planning, design of partnerships; programme implementation; support to service delivery; capacity-building; coordination; field monitoring and evaluation.

2. Cluster Lead Agency accountability

CORE COMMITMENTS	BENCHMARK
<p>COORDINATION Support the leadership and coordination of humanitarian response, along with national and local stakeholders, and in compliance with humanitarian principles</p>	<p>① UNICEF, at CO/RO/HQ level, actively contributes to intersectoral coordination and ensures that sectors/clusters under its leadership are adequately staffed and skilled</p>

KEY TAKEAWAYS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ① UNICEF CLA accountabilities are: ensuring functioning of the cluster/AoR and high standards of predictability, accountability, and partnership; ensuring staffing of the cluster; being the Provider of Last Resort. ② The Representative, CMT, Regional Director and EMOPS Director have specific accountabilities about cluster/AoR leadership. ③ The leadership function of a CLA is as important as the coordination function. ④ UNICEF as CLA is obligated to act as PoLR when situations require it.

ACTION	RESPONSIBLE	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
Monitor that CLA accountabilities are fulfilled (key positions are created and filled; cluster coordinators are supported, supervised and are able to provide leadership in their key functional areas; and cluster priorities are appropriately brought to the attention of the HCT and other relevant inter-agency for a)	Representative C/AoR Coordinator supervisor Chief of Field Office (at sub-national level)	Accountability Compendium
Oversee fulfilment of leadership function in clusters/AoR, particularly around setting vision and strategy, partnership, intersectorality	Representative C/AoR Coordinator supervisor	QTA – leadership role of the CLA
Strengthen leadership, communication and cross-cultural skills of C/ AoR Coordinators, if needed, through appropriate capacity building and professional opportunities; include leadership, communication and cross-cultural skills as required in C/AoR selection processes	C/AoR Coordinator supervisor HR Manager	Competency Framework for Cluster Coordination ⁴⁵
Conduct regular joint meetings with Cluster/AoR Coordinators and programme sections, to build on intersectoral opportunities and facilitate integrated interventions (including at sub-national/field level if existing)	Deputy Representative - Programmes Chief of Field Operations/Emergency Chief of Field Office	
Support cluster/AoR leadership function at country level through technical support, capacity building, financial support for skills strengthening, and other actions as relevant; support Representatives in humanitarian situations to fulfil the UNICEF Cluster Lead Agency role	Regional Office	Accountability Compendium
Clarify the concept and application of Provider of Last Resort (PoLR) within the CO; drive its fulfilment through implementation, advocacy or resource mobilization as needed	Representative	IASC Operational Guidance on PoLR
In case of co-leadership, clarify with the co-lead agency how the PoLR accountability is shared	Representative	

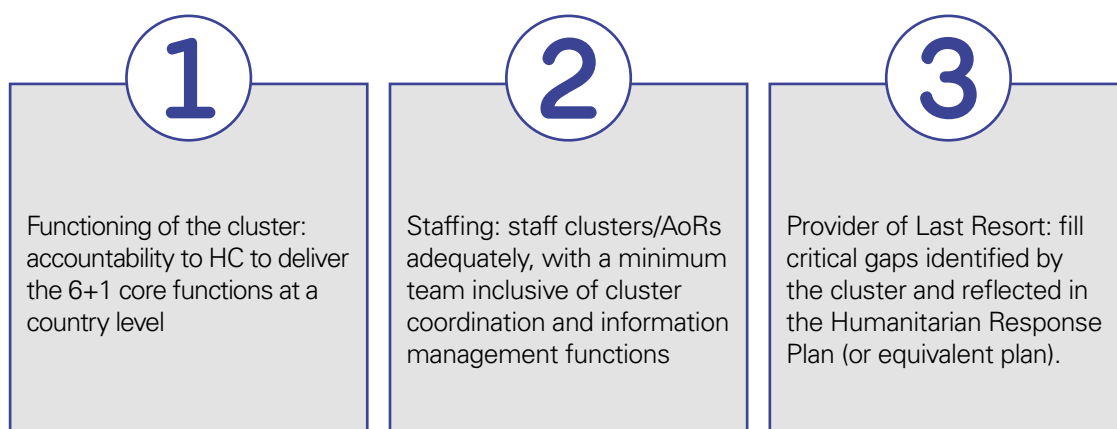
45 Included here is the Competency Framework developed by the Global Nutrition Cluster; frameworks for the other clusters/AoR only present minor variations to make it relevant to the specific Cluster/AoR, beside the adaptation of Competency A2.

USEFUL LINKS

- ① ICON page: [Sectoral Coordination and the Cluster Approach](#)
- ① Guidance: [Emergency Handbook](#), Chapter 9.Sector/Cluster Coordination; [Accountability Compendium](#)
- ① Tools: [Competency Framework for Cluster Coordination](#)
- ① Other resources:
 - [IASC Operational Guidance on PoLR](#)
 - [AGORA Humanitarian Coordination Learning Channel](#)

Initially, the IASC designated global cluster lead agencies for nine clusters, which evolved over time into 11 clusters with four Areas of Responsibility under the Protection Cluster. **UNICEF committed to the IASC to lead/co-lead the child protection, education, nutrition and WASH clusters/AoR.**

A Cluster Lead Agency is **accountable to the HC and ERC, as well as to national authorities and affected people for its cluster performance.**⁴⁶ The latter is a foundational accountability, with a consistently principled and people-centred approach to humanitarian action. CLAs are also accountable to cluster members as leaders of the group. The **main accountabilities of CLAs**⁴⁷ are:



In UNICEF, internal policy⁴⁸ establishes that cluster accountabilities are auditable. This is therefore an **institutional accountability which applies at a global, regional, country and field level.** As such, it is reflected in the [CCCs](#), as well as in the UNICEF accountability system and its [Accountability Compendium](#), which outlines the responsibilities of different roles in the organization. The Compendium explicitly indicates cluster leadership accountability as follows:

COUNTRY MANAGEMENT TEAM (CMT)

- The CMT serves to advise the Representative on: (a) programme and advocacy strategies and direction; (b) human and financial resource allocations and management; (c) supply strategy and management; (d) data activities **and monitoring of programme implementation and performance (including of the role of Cluster Lead Agency where relevant)**; (e) evaluation of programme results and lessons learned; (f) partnerships and resource mobilization and leveraging; (g) communication and representation; (h) advocacy priorities and related actions; (i) safeguarding and living the UNICEF culture and values in practice; and (j) rigorous application of a risk management approach.

46 IASC (2015), Reference Module on Cluster Coordination

47 Refer to the Human Resources chapter for the UNICEF recommended minimum composition of Cluster/AoR coordination teams.

48 UNICEF (2021), Emergency Procedures. [Document Number: PROCEDURE/EMOPS/2021/001]

REPRESENTATIVE

- **Provide overall strategic direction and vision** to the UNICEF team in the conceptualization and delivery of the country programme – making adjustments based on recommendations from programme monitoring, including outcome monitoring, performance and programme effectiveness reviews and evaluations (**including of the role of Cluster Lead Agency where relevant**) – in advocacy of child rights and in leveraging resources and partnerships for children.
- **Ensure that UNICEF Cluster Lead Agency responsibilities are fulfilled, and that: key positions are created and filled; cluster coordinators are supported and supervised; cluster coordinators are empowered to provide leadership in their key functional areas; and cluster priorities are appropriately brought to the attention of the HCT and other relevant interagency fora.**
- **Serve as member of the UNCT** and collaborate with the United Nations Resident Coordinator, United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator and United Nations system partners to strengthen inter-agency coordination, coherence, collaboration and harmonization of programming, common services and operations, in line with commitments of the UNSDCF, humanitarian appeals, **Cluster Lead Agency commitments**, and the parameters of the MAF.
- **Monitor programmes** and assess progress, identify bottlenecks and programmatic risks, and take decisions to resolve issues; organize programme effectiveness reviews and evaluations in consultation with all relevant partners and stakeholders, to use monitoring data to improve programme performance, **including performance of the role of Cluster Lead Agency, where relevant.**

REGIONAL DIRECTOR

- **Support representatives in humanitarian situations to fulfil the UNICEF Cluster Lead Agency role**, ensuring oversight, quality assurance and appropriate reporting on the progress of country teams in this regard, and systematic inclusion of cluster coordination roles in mandatory Level 2 and Level 3 emergency response evaluations.
- **Monitor the progress, effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, sustainability and equity** of UNICEF country programmes (**and of the role of Cluster Lead Agency where relevant**) within the region, with a view to improving programme, management and coordination effectiveness, and risk management (in line with the organizational policy on ERM).

EMOPS DIRECTOR

- **Provide overall policy, operational and technical guidance to the organization on: [...] Global cluster leadership and coordination** for the Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), Education and Nutrition clusters, and for the Child protection area of responsibility in the Protection cluster.

Although the [Accountability Compendium](#) does not explicitly mention it, Chiefs of Field Offices also have CLA-related responsibilities (for the sub-national level) if UNICEF leads subnational clusters/AoR in their area of responsibility, and/or if they supervise subnational coordinators. The table below suggests their responsibilities, in line with the rest of the CO ones:

CHIEF OF FIELD OFFICE

- **Provide direction to the FO team on Cluster Lead Agency accountability**, consistently with the strategy and vision established by the CO.
- **Support and supervise (depending on line management arrangements) sub-national Cluster/AoR Coordinators** and empower them to provide leadership in their key functional areas.
- Bring sub-national cluster/AoR issues to the attention of the **sub-national HCT** (if existing) and other relevant inter-agency fora.
- Monitor **performance of the role of sub-national CLA**, where relevant.

CLA accountability should be upheld by **assessing CO leadership on how the CO is performing on its CLA role**; such responsibility is clearly assigned to the Regional Director, and specific responsibilities should be included in all relevant personnel Terms of Reference (ToRs) and Performance Evaluation Reviews (PERs). UNICEF is currently exploring how to include **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) around CLA accountability** in the CO performance management tools,⁴⁹ following the CLARE II review.⁵⁰

It is important to highlight that, in any case, national authorities have the ultimate accountability to promote and protect the rights and well-being of their populations and assist them in case of an emergency, as stated in General Assembly Resolution 46/182.⁵¹

COORDINATION AND LEADERSHIP ROLES OF A CLUSTER LEAD AGENCY (CLA)

In the **CCCs**, UNICEF describes the CLA role as “Support the **leadership and coordination** of humanitarian response, along with national and local stakeholders, and in compliance with humanitarian principles”, highlighting the two distinct but related aspects of this role.

The **leadership role of a CLA** is articulated in CLARE II around three main aspects:

1. Building a consensus among cluster partners around a shared vision and ways to collectively realize that vision;
2. Bringing the clusters and areas of responsibility (AoRs) closer together by working toward inter-sectoral connections and synergies; and
3. Sharing UNICEF’s experiences and views on the cluster approach in HCTs, the IASC and with the wider humanitarian community.

The CLARE II review⁵² highlights how UNICEF has generally delivered⁵² on the **coordination** responsibilities of its CLA role, and invites the organization to step up its commitment towards the **leadership** aspects of being a CLA. **It is the responsibility of the Cluster/AoR Coordinators and their supervisors to ensure that the leadership aspect is not neglected** in favour of the extensive coordination component.



QUESTIONS TO ASK. THE LEADERSHIP ROLE OF A CLA

How does UNICEF as CLA interpret and put into practice its leadership role in clusters/AoR in the country?

Has UNICEF as CLA been able to create and maintain trust among cluster/AoR members?

Is UNICEF as CLA creating the space for reflection and analysis with cluster/AoR members to develop a common vision and identify the ways to realize it and the role cluster/AoR members can have in the process?

Is UNICEF as CLA actively pursuing opportunities for intersectoral collaboration and synergy, especially but not only among UNICEF-led clusters/AoRs?

Is UNICEF as CLA advancing the needs and priorities of the clusters/AoR it leads in the HCT, with donors, in other fora?

49 For more details, see the chapter on **Planning and Programme Implementation**.

50 The “Evaluation of the UNICEF Role as Cluster Lead (Co-Lead) Agency”, commonly referred to as CLARE II, is the second evaluation UNICEF undertook on its role as a CLA. It is available [here](#).

51 Guiding Principle IV: Each State has the responsibility first and foremost to take care of the victims of natural disasters and other emergencies occurring on its territory. Hence, the affected State has the primary role in the initiation, organization, coordination, and implementation of humanitarian assistance within its territory. General Assembly Resolution 46/182 (1991).

52 UNICEF (2022), Evaluation of the UNICEF Role as Cluster Lead (Co-Lead) Agency (CLARE II).

PROVIDER OF LAST RESORT (POLR)

As CLA, UNICEF commits and is obligated to provide critical services:

- where they are identified as priority gaps within the context of the cluster/AoR response plan;
- where there are no other partners able to provide the services;
- and where access, security and funding allow.

When a cluster/AoR is activated, **the CLA must do its utmost to ensure provision of services to fill critical gaps**, as stated in the IASC Operation Guidance on the concept of “Provider of Last Resort.”⁵³

“Where there are critical gaps in humanitarian response, it is the responsibility of cluster leads to call on all relevant humanitarian partners to address these. If this fails, then depending on the urgency, the cluster lead as ‘provider of last resort’ may need to commit itself to filling the gap.

If, however, funds are not forthcoming for these activities, the cluster lead cannot be expected to implement these activities, but should continue to work with the Humanitarian Coordinator and donors to mobilize the necessary resources. Likewise, where the efforts of the cluster lead, the Humanitarian Country Team as a whole, and the Humanitarian Coordinator as the leader of that team are unsuccessful in gaining access to a particular location, or where security constraints limit the activities of humanitarian actors, the provider of last resort will still be expected to continue advocacy efforts and to explain the constraints to stakeholders.”⁵⁴



In the case of **co-leadership**, the PoLR concept presents the additional challenge of identifying how this responsibility is shared between the co-leads, and the sharing (or not) of the PoLR responsibility should be specifically included in country-level co-leadership agreements.

In practical terms, acting as PoLR may require different actions depending on the context. It could include, for example:

- ① Providing additional funds to cluster/AoR partners to fill critical gaps;
- ① Advocating for collective scale up strategies that look at comparative advantages of partners to ensure maximum coverage and reach;
- ① Strongly advocating internally and/or with external donors to fund critical gaps;
- ① Reallocating UNICEF’s resources to address critical gaps;
- ① Engaging in direct implementation if partners cannot operate in certain contexts (for example through Rapid Response Mechanisms);
- ① Ensuring through advocacy that other organizations, including outside the cluster/AoR, deliver the critical services needed.

The PoLR responsibility is automatic, and intervention should be automatically activated; however, it might be necessary on occasion for Cluster/AoR Coordinators to engage the CLA when the conditions are present and request the CLA intervention.

53 IASC (2008), Operation Guidance on the concept of “Provider of Last Resort,” available [here](#)

54 IASC (2008), Operation Guidance on the concept of “Provider of Last Resort,”

3. The 6+1 core cluster functions

CORE COMMITMENTS	BENCHMARK
<p>COORDINATION</p> <p>Support the leadership and coordination of humanitarian response, along with national and local stakeholders, in compliance with humanitarian principles</p>	<p>① UNICEF, at CO/RO/HQ level, actively contributes to intersectoral coordination and ensures that sectors/clusters under its leadership are adequately staffed and skilled</p>

<p>KEY TAKEAWAYS</p> <p>① Representative, Cluster/AoR Coordinators and their supervisors and CO Programme Chiefs have specific responsibilities to ensure the fulfilment of the 6+1 core cluster functions</p>

ACTION	RESPONSIBLE	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
Oversee the implementation of 6+1 core cluster functions (see Responsibility Matrix details)	Representative	Cluster/AoR Responsibility Matrix (Representative)
Actively participate in cluster activities and processes or support them as relevant (see Responsibility Matrix organized around 6+1 functions and Tasks Matrix organized around tasks and roles in CO)	Programme Chief Chief of PME	Cluster/AoR Responsibility Matrix (Programme Chief) Tasks Matrix

<p>USEFUL LINKS</p> <p>① ICON page: Sectoral Coordination and the Cluster Approach</p> <p>① Guidance: Emergency Handbook, Chapter 9.Sector/Cluster Coordination; CCCs, Chapter 2.1.2 Coordination</p> <p>① Tools: Cluster/AoR Responsibility Matrix</p> <p>① Other resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IASC Reference Module on Cluster Coordination • AGORA Humanitarian Coordination Learning Channel
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In recent years, AAP was added to the traditional six core cluster functions, therefore **clusters/AoRs are now responsible for the following main functions:**



The six core functions and respective activities are outlined in Section 4 of the [Reference Module for Cluster Coordination at Country Level](#). In addition to these, the role of the clusters in mobilizing and preparing allocation decisions of funding for the (sector) response has increased significantly over the years.⁵⁵

The following table illustrates the role of cluster/AoR coordination staff, partners, UNICEF Programme Chiefs and Representative in relation to the overall cluster/AoR purpose and to fulfilling the 6+1 core functions.⁵⁶



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55 UNICEF (2022), Evaluation of the UNICEF Role as Cluster Lead (Co-Lead) Agency (CLARE II).

56 In Chapter 13. UNICEF Programmes and Clusters/AoRs a [Tasks Matrix](#) is included which identifies responsibilities around programme- or cluster-specific tasks and the role of CO team members

CLUSTER/AOR RESPONSIBILITIES MATRIX

ROLE OF CLUSTER/AOR COORDINATION TEAM ⁵⁷	ROLE OF CLUSTER/AOR PARTNERS	ROLE OF UNICEF PROGRAMME CHIEFS	ROLE OF THE REPRESENTATIVE
Overall cluster/AoR purpose: To ensure a well-coordinated, strategic, adequate, coherent and effective response in accordance with the Principles of Partnership.			
<p>Lead the cluster and facilitate implementation of the 6+1 core functions in a coordinated and participatory manner.</p> <p>Provide strategic leadership to sub-national clusters.</p> <p>Proactively engage in relevant strategic coordination mechanisms (for example ICCG, Cash Working Group, HDP nexus, humanitarian access, etc.)</p>	<p>Actively participate in cluster/AoR mechanisms and processes, including, involvement in strategic issues (Strategic Advisory Group, technical working groups, peer reviews), participate in co-leading or co-coordinating clusters/AoRs, and in reporting.</p> <p>Commit necessary resources (e.g. senior staff member/focal point) to work with the cluster/AoR to ensure it fulfils its mission and activities.</p>	<p>Actively participate in cluster mechanisms/processes representing UNICEF as a cluster/AoR partner.</p> <p>Member of a Strategic Advisory Group where it exists.</p> <p>Demonstrate an understanding of the duties and responsibilities of clusters/AoR; and of the Cluster/AoR Coordinator position of neutrality.</p> <p>Facilitate collaboration between cluster/AoR team and UNICEF programme section and commit necessary resources (e.g. senior staff member/focal point) to work with the cluster/AoR to ensure it fulfils its mission and activities.</p> <p>In case of double-hatting role by a programme staff, agree on coordination responsibilities and allocation of time for programme and for cluster functions with the other supervisor, to avoid excessive workload and inefficiencies.</p>	<p>Ultimately accountable to the HC/RC for the effective functioning of UNICEF-led clusters/AoR.</p> <p>Enable clusters/AoR to function effectively through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ① timely appointment of adequate number of appropriately experienced staff; ① availability of adequate administrative, logistical and office services to clusters/AoR; ① availability of funding for coordination functions; ① effective management of cluster/AoR staff; ① representation of and advocacy on behalf of clusters/AoR at HCT and in other for a.
To support service delivery by:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ① Providing a platform that ensures service delivery is driven by the HRP and strategic priorities. ① Developing mechanisms to eliminate duplication of service delivery. 			
<p>Establish and maintain an appropriate humanitarian coordination mechanism, ensure consistency and coherence of approach, and that interventions are in line with HRP and strategic priorities.</p> <p>Ensure effective communication, coordination and reporting between national and sub-national clusters.</p> <p>Establish and maintain 4/5Ws and conduct regular analysis to identify gaps and avoid duplications.</p> <p>Ensure cluster/AoR members have the basic skills to receive disclosures and are aware of protection and GBV referral pathways.</p> <p>Ensure mainstreaming of protection and cross-cutting issues in cluster/AoR strategy and plans.</p>	<p>Actively participate in cluster/AoR coordination mechanisms and planning processes.</p> <p>Design and implement programmes that deliver quality services supporting the agreed HRP and strategic priorities, including cross-cutting issues.</p> <p>Where appropriate, support staff member to fulfil co-coordinator position at sub-national and/or at national levels.</p> <p>Highlight gaps and duplications where they appear.</p> <p>Provide required information to analyse response in a timely manner.</p> <p>Promote intersectoral coordination and integration in programme implementation to achieve cluster/AoR strategic objectives.</p> <p>Mainstream protection into programme delivery (including respect for principles of non-discrimination, do no harm, etc.)</p> <p>Mainstream key cross-cutting issues into programming delivery (including age, gender, disability, localization, PSEA, etc.)</p>	<p>Actively participate in cluster/AoR coordination mechanisms and planning processes.</p> <p>Design, resource and implement programmes delivering quality services that support the agreed HRP and strategic priorities, including cross-cutting issues.</p> <p>Support section staff at sub-national level to fulfil sub-national coordinator roles as required.</p> <p>Highlight gaps and duplications where they appear.</p> <p>Provide required information to analyse response in a timely manner.</p> <p>Promote intersectoral coordination and integration within programme implementation to achieve cluster/AoR strategic objectives.</p> <p>Mainstream protection into programme delivery (including respect for principles of non-discrimination, do no harm, etc.)</p> <p>Mainstream key cross-cutting issues into programming delivery (including age, gender, disability, localization, etc.)</p> <p>Act as PoLR where no other agency can provide required services and where access, security and funding are available.</p>	<p>Oversight.</p> <p>Advocacy as required to support fulfilment of function (with clusters, within HCT, with donors and with government).</p> <p>Support fulfilment of PoLR function, through implementation, advocacy or resource mobilization as needed.</p>

⁵⁷ Depending on the configuration of each cluster/AoR, the coordination team may include the Cluster/AoR Coordinator, Information Management Officer(s), Deputy Coordinators, Analysts and other roles.

To inform the HC/HCT's strategic decision-making by:

- ① Preparing needs assessment and analysis of gaps (across and within sectors), using information management tools as needed.
- ① Identifying and finding solutions for emerging gaps, obstacles, duplications and cross-cutting issues.
- ① Formulating priorities based on analysis.

<p>Facilitate cluster/AoR needs assessments and analysis (including joint intersectoral needs analysis through the JIAF) across and within sectors, including identifying and finding solutions for gaps, obstacles, duplications and for mainstreaming of cross-cutting issues. Formulate priorities based on analysis. Contribute as needed to the development of the HNO.</p> <p>Establish and maintain information databases that consolidate, analyse and report on/disseminate information critical to decision-making.</p> <p>Represent the interests of the cluster in inter-cluster meetings (ICCG) and at HCT meetings (on request of the UNICEF Representative).</p> <p>Ensure that the UNICEF Representative is kept informed on process and findings.</p>	<p>Actively participate in assessments, analysis and processes, and in the elaboration of the HNO as required.</p> <p>Facilitate access to relevant information from all sources (UNICEF, government, other specialist institutions) in a timely manner.</p> <p>Support cluster/AoR to undertake quality assessment and analysis (staff, facilities, etc.).</p>	<p>Actively participate in assessments, analysis and processes, and in the elaboration of the HNO as required.</p> <p>Facilitate access to relevant information from all sources (UNICEF, government, other specialist institutions) in a timely manner.</p> <p>Support cluster/AoR to undertake quality assessment and analysis (staff, facilities, etc.).</p>	<p>Oversight.</p> <p>Advocacy as required to support fulfilment of function, including funding for assessment (with clusters, within HCT, with donors and with government).</p> <p>Represent clusters/AoR at HCT.</p>
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To plan and develop strategy by:

- ① Developing sectoral plans, objectives and indicators that directly support realization of the response's strategic priorities.
- ① Applying and adhering to standards and guidelines.
- ① Clarifying funding requirements, helping to set priorities, and agreeing on cluster/AoR contribution to the HC's overall humanitarian funding proposals (flash appeals, Consolidated Appeals Process, Central Emergency Response Fund, Common Humanitarian Fund, etc.).

<p>Facilitate the development of cluster/AoR response plans (including objectives, approach, targets, monitoring framework, activities and cost) through a consultative process.</p> <p>Participate in the development of HRP and its monitoring framework.</p> <p>Ensure the inclusion of cross-cutting issues in preparedness and response plans and monitoring frameworks.</p> <p>Facilitate adoption of international standards and guidelines – adapted to national context – ensure these standards are widely disseminated and promote adherence to standards by all cluster partners.</p> <p>Clarify funding requirements and priorities through a consultative process with cluster/AoR partners and present funding requests to the HCT, with solid information/analysis supporting the request.</p> <p>Facilitate or participate as required in funding allocation processes.</p>	<p>Actively participate in cluster/AoR planning processes (including membership of technical working groups).</p> <p>Align agency plans with agreed cluster/AoR plan, priorities, objectives and indicators.</p> <p>Commit and adhere to humanitarian principles, Principles of Partnership, cluster-specific guidance and internationally recognized programme standards (e.g. SPHERE)</p> <p>During the process of common/pooled fund allocation, participate in the steering committee or SAG meetings on project vetting, as needed.</p>	<p>Actively participate in cluster/AoR planning processes (including membership of technical working groups).</p> <p>Include cluster coordination functions in funding proposals</p> <p>Participate as needed in the development of HRP and its monitoring framework.</p> <p>Align agency strategic plans with agreed cluster/AoR plan, priorities, objectives and indicators.</p> <p>Commit and adhere to humanitarian principles, Principles of Partnership, cluster-specific guidance and internationally recognized programme standards (e.g. SPHERE)</p> <p>During the process of common/pooled fund allocation, participate in the steering committee or SAG meetings on project vetting, as needed.</p>	<p>Oversight.</p> <p>Ensure quality and coherence of cluster/AoR plans in line with HRP.</p> <p>Ensure funding requests are adequate and inclusive of UNICEF CLA responsibilities.</p>
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To monitor and evaluate cluster performance:

- ① Monitoring and reporting on activities and needs.
- ① Measuring performance against the cluster strategy and agreed results.
- ① Recommending corrective action where necessary.

<p>Lead the development and implementation of the cluster/AoR monitoring framework</p> <p>Monitor and report on progress of cluster response and analysis of 4/5VVs against agreed cluster plan, in line with agreed reporting schedule of OCHA and UNICEF.</p> <p>Put forward recommendations and implement actions/strategies for corrective action, as required.</p> <p>Disseminate reports; share information on coverage, gaps, output and outcome indicators and other key issues, as required and as agreed, for differing audience(s) – OCHA, government, donors etc.</p> <p>Lead the CCPM exercise and the implementation of identified action points.</p> <p>Support HC/HCT in the peer review of humanitarian response.</p>	<p>Actively participate in cluster/AoR monitoring and evaluation processes.</p> <p>Monitor programme progress and submit reports to cluster/AoR using agreed format/indicators.</p> <p>Implement corrective actions/strategies, as required, in line with cluster/AoR recommendations.</p>	<p>Actively participate in cluster/AoR monitoring and evaluation processes.</p> <p>Align reporting formats and indicators with cluster/AoR and promote use of cluster/AoR reporting format/indicators by programme partners; avoid duplication of reporting burden for partners</p> <p>Monitor UNICEF programme progress and submit reports to cluster/AoR using agreed format/indicators.</p> <p>Implement corrective actions/strategies, as required, in line with cluster/AoR recommendations.</p>	<p>Oversight.</p> <p>Monitor progress of clusters/AoR against work plans.</p> <p>Monitor implementation of corrective strategies and activities to address performance issues identified.</p> <p>Ensure corrective actions specifically relevant to UNICEF are implemented.</p> <p>Convene regular meetings with Cluster/AoR Coordinators to review progress and plans, and address problems and issues.</p>
<p>To build capacity in preparedness and contingency planning</p>			
<p>Identify capacity development needs of cluster/AoR partners and facilitate opportunities for training by cluster/AoR, UNICEF, OCHA or other training institutions.</p> <p>Advocate for funding for support of capacity-building activities.</p> <p>Lead the development of cluster/AoR preparedness plan and ensure minimum/advanced preparedness actions are implemented as relevant.</p> <p>Ensure AAP and core people-related issues are included in cluster/AoR preparedness plans.</p>	<p>Actively participate in risk analysis and monitoring, preparedness planning and development of capacity-building plans.</p> <p>Align agency preparedness and capacity-building plans with cluster/AoR.</p> <p>Ensure AAP and core people-related issues are included in agency preparedness plans.</p> <p>If feasible, given organizational capacity, contribute to implementation of agreed cluster plan for preparedness and capacity-building plans (pre-positioning of supplies and training of own and partner staff in-country and beyond).</p>	<p>Actively participate in risk analysis and monitoring, preparedness planning and development of capacity-building plans.</p> <p>Align UNICEF preparedness and capacity-building plans with cluster/AoR.</p> <p>Ensure AAP and core people-related issues are included in UNICEF preparedness plans.</p> <p>Provide substantial contribution to implementation of agreed cluster/AoR plan for preparedness and to capacity-building plans (pre-positioning of supplies and training of own and partner staff in-country and beyond).</p>	<p>Oversight.</p> <p>Ensure quality and coherence of cluster/AoR and UNICEF programme plans for preparedness and capacity-building; support their implementation.</p> <p>If required, advocate for funding for building capacity on preparedness and contingency planning.</p>
<p>Advocacy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ① Identifying concerns that contribute to HC and HCT messaging and action. ② Undertaking advocacy on behalf of the cluster/AoR, their members and affected people 			
<p>Through consultative process with partners, agree on evidence-based, coherent advocacy positions on various key issues.</p> <p>Develop communication and advocacy messages on key cluster/AoR issues for use by partners.</p> <p>Communicate agreed positions of the cluster/AoR externally.</p>	<p>Actively participate in process of identification of advocacy positions on various issues.</p> <p>Align agency advocacy messages with cluster/AoR messages as relevant.</p>	<p>Actively participate in process of identification of advocacy positions on various issues.</p> <p>Align UNICEF advocacy messages with cluster/AoR messages as relevant.</p>	<p>Oversight.</p> <p>Advocate on behalf of the cluster/AoR on various issues and in various for a, including with HCT, government and donors.</p> <p>Be sure to make it clear whether advocating on behalf of cluster or specifically for UNICEF.</p>
<p>Accountability to Affected Populations</p>			
<p>Coordinate capacity building on core people-related issues and AAP to ensure skill within the cluster/AoR.</p> <p>Ensure needs assessments, data collection and analysis integrate core people-related issues and AAP effectively.</p> <p>Ensure accountability, gender, age, diversity, disability, communication with communities and protection are included in response frameworks and strategic planning and all major response processes, including with relevant and contextualized indicators.</p> <p>Facilitate the development of a coherent strategy on targeting and selection of affected women, men, girls and boys, including older people and persons with disability.</p> <p>Facilitate the development of a common strategy on information provision, including messaging and two-way communication, feedback and complaints.</p> <p>Advocate with donors on AAP and core people-related issues, and on flexibility of funding for adaptive implementation.</p>	<p>Strengthen internal capacity on core people-related issues and AAP.</p> <p>Participate in actions that specifically improve accountability to affected people, in line with the IASC Commitments on AAP; support the cluster/AoR's AAP strategy.</p> <p>Ensure needs assessments, data collection and analysis integrate core people-related issues and AAP effectively.</p> <p>Ensure accountability, gender, age, diversity, disability, CwC and protection are included in agency response plans, including with relevant and contextualized indicators.</p> <p>Incorporate budget lines for required activities to mainstream AAP and core people-related issues.</p> <p>Participate in cluster/AoR development of AAP strategy and implement as relevant.</p> <p>Include AAP indicators within project monitoring frameworks.</p>	<p>Strengthen UNICEF internal capacity on core people-related issues and AAP.</p> <p>Participate in actions that specifically improve accountability to affected people, in line with the IASC Commitments on AAP; support the cluster/AoR's AAP strategy.</p> <p>Ensure UNICEF needs assessments, data collection and analysis integrate core people-related issues and AAP effectively.</p> <p>Ensure accountability, gender, age, diversity, disability, CwC and protection are included in UNICEF response plans, including with relevant and contextualized indicators.</p> <p>Incorporate budget lines for required activities to mainstream AAP and core people-related issues.</p> <p>Participate in cluster/AoR development of AAP strategy and implement as relevant.</p> <p>Include AAP indicators within UNICEF project monitoring frameworks.</p>	<p>Oversight.</p> <p>Advocate on behalf of the cluster/AoR on AAP and core people-related issues in relevant for a, including with HCT, government and donors.</p>

4. Cluster activation, transition and de-activation

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ① Cluster/AoR activation and its (shared) leadership are based on an analysis of context, including the scale of humanitarian need and the capacity of existing coordination structures on the ground
- ① Cluster/AoR deactivation is decided when activation conditions are no longer met
- ① The transition process is essential to ensure an effective transfer of leadership and accountabilities to sectorial and development-focused coordination mechanisms
- ① UNICEF as CLA and its staff have clear responsibilities in the transition planning and process
- ① Where clusters are not activated, UNICEF is accountable for its respective sectors to support coordination mechanisms

ACTION	RESPONSIBLE	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
ACTIVATION		
Proactively engage in discussion, analysis and decision-making on activation of clusters and AoRs in-country	Representative Chief of Field Operations/Emergency Programme Chief Chief of Field Office	
If not done under UNICEF MPSs, assign sector/cluster lead roles in agreement with the UNCT/HCT and have them signed off by the Emergency Relief Coordinator/Resident Coordinator. Advocate for the activation of all UNICEF-led sectors/clusters, no matter the response	Representative Programme Chief Chief of Field Office	MPS2 ; See Chapter on Preparedness ; Emergency Handbook
Ensure that UNICEF-led clusters are established at national and where needed at sub-national level in coordination with the UNCT/HCT, including defining the relationship to the national cluster in terms of accountability	Representative Deputy Representative - Programmes Programme Chief Chief of Field Office C/AoR Coordinator	Emergency Handbook
Consider co-leadership at national or sub-national level as relevant, discuss roles and responsibilities with co-leads. Liaise with the Global Cluster/AoR on specific leadership arrangements	Representative C/AoR Coordinator	Emergency Handbook
Sign an agreement ⁵⁸ on leadership arrangements and division of responsibilities and provide technical support to national NGO co-leads. To ensure funding does not limit NGO co-leadership, advocate for fund mobilization to cover these positions at all levels	Representative C/AoR Coordinator	Emergency Handbook
If national authorities participate in cluster leadership, invest in technical support and capacity building to national co-leads. Ensure UNICEF maintains a leading role in addition to contributions by local actors ⁵⁹	Representative C/AoR Coordinator Programme Chief	Emergency Handbook
Immediately start the process for staffing of clusters at national and sub-national levels, as needed; clearly define line management arrangements for supervision of cluster/AoR coordination. Preferably assign to Representative	Representative C/AoR Coordinator supervisor	See Chapter on Human Resources ; Minimum Coordination Structure

58 For a sample agreement, please contact the relevant Global Cluster/AoR.

59 The Emergency Handbook highlights the risk linked to national participation in cluster leadership: politicization and/or inadequate capacity, which can impact the neutrality and coverage of the humanitarian response.

ACTION	RESPONSIBLE	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
TRANSITION AND DEACTIVATION		
Engage proactively in deactivation decision-making: Consult Cluster/AoR coordination teams and members on transition and deactivation decisions, and engage proactively with the HC and HCT on transition, deactivation, coordination architecture reviews and in deactivation decision-making. If annual coordination reviews are not conducted, regularly review appropriateness of the cluster/AoR.	Representative	Guidance on Cluster Transition and Deactivation for the Country-Level Cluster and Cluster Lead Agency ⁶⁰
Ensure robust transition processes are followed and monitored, including development of realistic cluster/AoR transition plans with benchmarks and defined accountabilities; assign internal responsibilities and sufficient resourcing and staffing to support transition, and monitor progress periodically	Representative	Guidance on Cluster Transition and Deactivation for the Country-Level Cluster and Cluster Lead Agency
Lead strategic engagement before and during the transition process, facilitating engagement with government authorities; establishing links with development coordination bodies and guiding engagement with the UNSDCF, advocate for continuing coordination and engagement of local and national civil society actors, ensure necessary capacity-strengthening support is provided to any entity taking over coordination functions, and define how UNICEF will support coordination after cluster/AoR deactivation	Representative	Guidance on Cluster Transition and Deactivation for the Country-Level Cluster and Cluster Lead Agency
Ensure Global Clusters are informed of and actively engaged in reviews of cluster coordination architecture and transition planning	Representative C/AoR Coordinator	Guidance on Cluster Transition and Deactivation for the Country-Level Cluster and Cluster Lead Agency
Facilitate appropriate consultation and communication with all relevant stakeholders, especially local and national actors and affected people	C/AoR Coordinator	Guidance on Cluster Transition and Deactivation for the Country-Level Cluster and Cluster Lead Agency
Lead the cluster/AoR coordination team to develop and roll out realistic and viable transition plans through a consultative process with all relevant actors, with benchmarks for transition, and ensure good communication of transition plans and decisions to all relevant stakeholders	C/AoR Coordinator	Guidance on Cluster Transition and Deactivation for the Country-Level Cluster and Cluster Lead Agency
Advocate and work with national actors, including government counterparts, to ensure continued coordination through a sector working group and/or other mechanism	C/AoR Coordinator	Guidance on Cluster Transition and Deactivation for the Country-Level Cluster and Cluster Lead Agency
Advise the Representative on the likelihood that criteria for deactivation may be met, and progress toward transition plans and benchmarks, to inform HCT decision-making	C/AoR Coordinator	Guidance on Cluster Transition and Deactivation for the Country-Level Cluster and Cluster Lead Agency
Facilitate links between the Cluster Coordinator and government and development actors and coordination bodies to support transition planning, and linkage of the transition with UNSDCF objectives	Programme Chief	Guidance on Cluster Transition and Deactivation for the Country-Level Cluster and Cluster Lead Agency
Contribute to cluster transition planning, and support the planning and integration of any humanitarian coordination functions into national sectoral structures after cluster deactivation	Programme Chief	Guidance on Cluster Transition and Deactivation for the Country-Level Cluster and Cluster Lead Agency

60 UNICEF (2023) Guidance on Cluster Transition and Deactivation for the Country-Level Cluster and Cluster Lead Agency. Forthcoming. Contact GCCS for the final version and link to the Guidance, its summary and the accompanying short document for UNICEF Country Offices on cluster transition and deactivation.

Ensure suitable structures, resources, and capacities are in place for any support to sectoral coordination that UNICEF will continue after cluster deactivation	Programme Chief	Guidance on Cluster Transition and Deactivation for the Country-Level Cluster and Cluster Lead Agency
Strengthen national capacities and preparedness through technical assistance, as required, for national actors (government and/or civil society) to be able to take on leadership of sectoral coordination functions that support humanitarian response to be in line with humanitarian principles	Programme Chief	Guidance on Cluster Transition and Deactivation for the Country-Level Cluster and Cluster Lead Agency
Advise on and input to transition planning wherever relevant, including on scenario planning, risk analysis, and in preparedness arrangements and capacity-strengthening	Chief of Field Operations/Emergency	Guidance on Cluster Transition and Deactivation for the Country-Level Cluster and Cluster Lead Agency

USEFUL LINKS

- 🔗 Guidance: [Emergency Handbook; Recommended good practices for minimum coordination structure](#)
- 🔗 Tools: [MPS2 – Humanitarian Coordination Template](#)
- 🔗 Other resources:
 - [IASC Reference Module on Cluster Coordination](#)
 - [IASC Operational Guidance for Cluster Lead Agencies on Working with National Authorities](#)

CLUSTER ACTIVATION



The decision to activate clusters/AoRs is made by the IASC, following the recommendations of the HC based in her/his consultations with the HCT, government and national partners, and is based on an analysis of context, including the scale of humanitarian need and the capacity of existing coordination structures on the ground. When a cluster or AOR is not activated, it does not mean that the sector concerned is not a priority. Rather, it implies that the government is leading coordination in that sector, including humanitarian response. The government’s role may be augmented by international actors, and collaboration is underpinned by the [Principles of Partnership](#).⁶¹

In consultation with the HCT, the HC proposes the CLA based on the agency’s coordination and response capacity, operational presence and ability to scale up; this recommendation is submitted to the Emergency Directors Group for final approval. The selection of CLAs ideally mirrors global arrangements, but this is not always possible and sometimes other organizations are in a better position to lead clusters and AoRs, including at subnational level.



Shared leadership of the cluster/AoR is encouraged with the government, where this is appropriate in the context; shared leadership with NGOs – in the form of co-leadership or co-coordination - is also considered (see [Chapter on co-leadership and co-coordination](#)) and it is increasingly encouraged in view of the global commitment to the [localization](#) of humanitarian action and support for local leadership.⁶² UNICEF co-leads the **Global Education**

⁶¹ See chapter on “[Other forms of humanitarian coordination](#)”

⁶² CCC 2.2.6 outlines UNICEF’s commitment to localization and notes that UNICEF commits to localizing its humanitarian response by recognizing, respecting and strengthening the leadership and coordination of humanitarian action by national and local authorities, CSOs, and communities.

Cluster with Save the Children International. At a country level, the same arrangement generally occurs, or with another NGO if SCI has insufficient presence and capacity to co-lead the Country Education Cluster.

Where UNICEF does not have operational programmes in a particular sector where clusters/AoRs will be established, the CO needs to consider its position and realistic ability to adequately fulfil the coordination function, in both the short- and longer-term. Depending on the context, the UNICEF Representative and the HCT may decide that:

- ① Another organization is better placed to take full CLA responsibility for the cluster/AOR, in which case the Representative will facilitate linkages with the relevant global cluster/AoR;
- ② UNICEF should share CLA responsibility with another organization; or
- ③ Another organization should take on CLA responsibility in the short term, with UNICEF agreeing to scale up and take CLA responsibility in the longer term.

TRANSITION AND DE-ACTIVATION

The IASC Reference Module on Cluster Coordination states that “**Cluster transition** refers to the process (and potentially the activities) by which transfer of leadership and accountabilities is planned and implemented, leading to deactivation. A plan is required to map phases of the transition, set transition or deactivation benchmarks for each phase, and schedule activities to meet them.”⁶³

Cluster deactivation is the closure of a formally activated cluster/AoR. Deactivation includes the transfer of core functions from clusters/AoRs that have international leadership and accountability to other structures, including those that are led nationally or are development focused.⁶⁴ Functions may be transferred to existing/pre-crisis or new coordination and response structures.”

Since clusters are temporary coordination structures, **deactivation can be considered when at least one condition for activation is no longer met:**

1. The humanitarian situation improves, significantly reducing humanitarian needs and consequently reducing associated response and coordination gaps;
2. National structures acquire sufficient capacity to coordinate and meet residual humanitarian needs in line with humanitarian principles⁶⁵

At a country level, decisions on cluster/AoR deactivation are initiated and led by the HC, and should follow an in-country review of the cluster coordination architecture. This is done in consultation with the HCT, with the support of OCHA – and in close collaboration with the national authorities, wherever possible. The CLA should be participating in any reviews (which should be at least annual, in all contexts), and in their absence it should be reviewing directly the clusters it leads. Deactivation of a cluster does *not* mean that financing for coordination activities is no longer required – transitional activities, including capacity-building, can be included in budgets to meet core cluster/AoR needs, and financing may be allocated to enable national and other authorities to coordinate action to meet residual humanitarian need or strengthen preparedness.

63 IASC (2015) Reference Module for Cluster Coordination at Country Level.

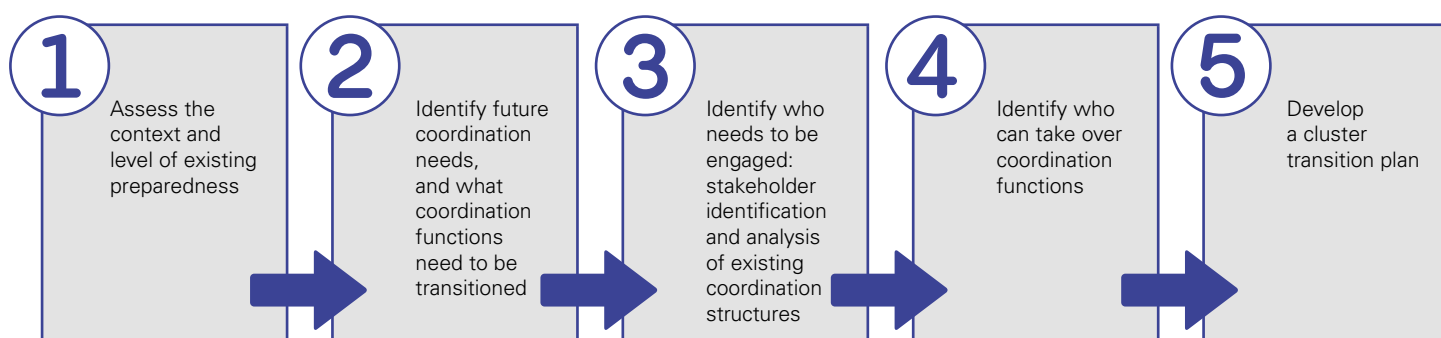
64 Deactivation can transfer leadership and accountabilities to other internationally supported mechanisms.

65 IASC (2015) Reference Module for Cluster Coordination at Country Level.

Each cluster/AoR should put a **transition plan** in place (though this should happen as soon as a cluster is activated, it is not always the case) that allows relationship-building and capacity-strengthening to be developed over time. A phased approach allows gradual progress toward a long-term goal of transition. The transition plan should ensure effective bridging with development-focused coordination mechanisms.

Ordinarily, the HCT will agree an **overarching transition plan**, articulating how the cluster coordination architecture and the HCT itself will adapt to changes in context. Clusters/AoRs should be invited to contribute to this through individual cluster and inter-cluster analysis and by providing updates on their transition planning and progress. CLAs will contribute through the HCT.

Planning for transition and deactivation is articulated into 5 steps:



For a more detailed discussion of transition and deactivation, and of the steps above, see the **“Guidance on Cluster Transition and Deactivation for the Country-Level Cluster and Cluster Lead Agency”** describing the responsibilities of UNICEF personnel, and its summary, as well as the accompanying short document for UNICEF Country Offices on cluster transition and deactivation.⁶⁶ The table below summarizes the **responsibilities of the Representative, Cluster/AoR Coordinator, Programme Sections and CO Emergency team in transition and deactivation:**

REPRESENTATIVE	CLUSTER/AOR COORDINATOR	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ① Consult Cluster/AoR coordination teams on transition and deactivation, and engage proactively with the HC and HCT on transition, deactivation, coordination architecture reviews and in deactivation decision-making ① Ensure robust transition processes are followed, including realistic cluster/AoR transition plans with benchmarks and defined accountabilities; assign internal responsibilities and sufficient resourcing and staffing to support transition, and monitor progress periodically ① Lead strategic engagement before and during the transition process, facilitating engagement with government authorities; establishing links with development coordination bodies and guiding engagement with the UNSDCF ① Ensure Global Clusters/AoR are informed of and actively engaged in reviews of cluster coordination architecture and transition planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ① Develop and roll out realistic and viable plans, with benchmarks for transition, and decentralization/localization/deactivation, and advocate with relevant government sectors to ensure continued coordination through a sector working group and/or other mechanisms 	
	<th data-bbox="826 667 1503 721">PROGRAMME CHIEF</th> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ① Facilitate links with government and development coordination bodies, and linkage of the transition with UNSDCF objectives ① Ensure suitable structures, resources, and capacities are in place for any support to sectoral coordination that UNICEF will continue after cluster deactivation 	PROGRAMME CHIEF
	<th data-bbox="826 869 1503 922">CHIEF OF FIELD OPERATIONS/EMERGENCY</th> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ① Advise on and input to transition planning wherever relevant, including on scenario planning, risk analysis, and in preparedness arrangements and capacity-strengthening 	CHIEF OF FIELD OPERATIONS/EMERGENCY

SUPPORT TO SECTORAL COORDINATION

When a cluster is deactivated, some of its coordination functions may be transferred into an existing **sectoral coordination mechanism**,⁶⁷ or a new coordination mechanism may be established, to ensure the continued coordination of any ongoing humanitarian response and to prepare for emergency response. As clearly stated in the **CCCs**: “Where clusters are not activated, **UNICEF is accountable for its respective sectors to support coordination mechanisms.** This includes supporting coordination functions, the development of assessment and information management systems and tools, capacity-building and pre-positioning of supplies.”⁶⁸

Coordination support can be time-bound, to ease the transfer of coordination responsibilities to government, or can be long-term. It can include capacity-building, resourcing, or staffing. UNICEF Programme Chiefs should ensure that the necessary structures, resources, and capacities are in place for sectoral coordination support, including:

- ① Allocation of budget;
- ① Inclusion of coordination responsibilities in staff ToRs and performance objectives;
- ① Good understanding of humanitarian coordination and humanitarian principles by staff with coordination responsibilities; staff capacity, skills, and knowledge adequate to perform coordination functions;
- ① Separation, to the extent possible, of coordination functions from responsibility for partnership contracts, to avoid perception of conflict of interest.

66 This document (forthcoming) complements the *Guidance on Cluster Transition and Deactivation for the Country-Level Cluster and Cluster Lead Agency* and this guidance on CLA accountabilities. It provides more detailed actions for UNICEF Representatives, Country Office Programme Sections, Emergency Team, Cluster/AoR Coordinators, and Global Clusters/AoR to support cluster transition and deactivation.

67 For example the Local Education Group (LEG) of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE).

68 UNICEF (2020), Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action.

5. Other forms of humanitarian coordination

CORE COMMITMENTS	BENCHMARK
<p>COORDINATION</p> <p>Support the leadership and coordination of humanitarian response, along with national and local stakeholders, and in compliance with humanitarian principles</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UNICEF, at CO/RO/HQ level, actively contributes to intersectoral coordination and ensures that sectors/clusters under its leadership are adequately staffed and skilled
<p>LARGE-SCALE MOVEMENTS OF REFUGEES, MIGRANTS AND INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS</p> <p>1: Coordination and leadership</p> <p>Effective coordination is established UNICEF's participation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interagency and intersectoral coordination mechanisms, including cross-border, are in place and allocate clear roles and responsibilities across sectors, without gaps nor duplications In situations where the Humanitarian Coordination System and Refugee Coordination Mechanism co-exist, response modalities are adapted accordingly UNICEF-led sectors are adequately staffed and skilled at national and sub-national levels UNICEF core leadership and coordination accountabilities are delivered
<p>PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCIES (PHE)</p> <p>1: Coordination and leadership</p> <p>Effective coordination is established with governments and partners</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interagency and intersectoral coordination mechanisms, including cross-border, are in place and allocate clear roles and responsibilities across sectors, without gaps nor duplications UNICEF-led sectors are adequately staffed and skilled at national and sub-national levels UNICEF core leadership and coordination accountabilities are delivered Surge deployments and emergency procedures are activated on a no-regrets basis In case of the activation of the IASC Protocol for the Control of Infectious Disease Events, response modalities and capacities are adapted and scaled up accordingly

KEY TAKEAWAYS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where clusters are not activated, UNICEF is accountable for its respective sectors to support humanitarian coordination mechanisms The role of CLAs is clearly established in refugee and mixed settings coordination by the Refugee Coordination Model and by OCHA-UNHCR guidance respectively; if the IASC protocol on infectious diseases is activated, UNICEF has responsibilities equivalent to CLA In all other hybrid and evolving contexts, UNICEF core leadership and coordination responsibilities must be delivered, and UNICEF contributes as required to the coordination mechanisms established in country and regionally

ACTION	RESPONSIBLE	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
HUMANITARIAN SECTOR COORDINATION		
If relevant, request the activation of the Emergency Procedures	Representative	Emergency Procedures
Identify staff within the CO who can build national capacity for sector/ cluster coordination and sector-wide information management prior to, during and after an emergency; if relevant, second staff to support national/ sub-national coordination, in particular information management functions	Representative Programme Chief	Emergency Handbook
Clarify roles and responsibilities vis-à-vis national authorities in coordination of sectoral response	Sector coordinator	

Manage risk of politicization of humanitarian response	Representative	Emergency Handbook
Coordinate with and support national/sub-national authorities in needs assessments, analysis of needs and response planning, monitoring, development of technical standards and tools; support as relevant to the development of Flash Appeals, HNOs and HRPp and in strengthening authorities' preparedness capacities and plans	Sector coordinator Programme Chief Chief of Field Operations/Emergency Chief of Field Office	Emergency Handbook; IASC Guidance for CLAs on working with national authorities
Provide support on quality of the response, cross-cutting issues and people-centred approach, including a nexus approach	Sector coordinator Programme Chief	
Mobilize and provide resources (cash transfers or supplies) and technical assistance as required to national and sub-national government to support the response. Regularize these emergency-related activities through an updated workplan endorsed by an exchange of letters or documented in official minutes with government	Deputy Representative - Programmes Programme Chief Resource Mobilization Manager	Emergency Handbook
Advocate with national authorities for the fulfilment of children's rights and the response to their needs; advocate as needed for adequate information management	Sector coordinator Programme Chief	
Plan for the transition between emergency and development coordination, to sustain the capacity created through sector coordination support	Sector coordinator Programme Chief	
REFUGEE AND MIXED SETTINGS		
Advocate in HCT meetings for the needs of children in refugee response, as required	Representative	
Participate in refugee response planning as needed	Programme Chief C/AoR Coordinator Chief of Field Operations/Emergency	UNHCR Refugee Coordination Model
Conduct joint meetings and ensure harmonization of approach with Protection Working Group	AoR Coordinator	UNHCR Refugee Coordination Model
Participate in joint Protection Working Group/Protection Cluster + AoR meetings	Programme Chief (Child Protection)	UNHCR Refugee Coordination Model
In contexts where refugees and IDPs are geographically separated, share information with UNHCR sectors	C/AoR Coordinator	UNHCR Refugee Coordination Model
In contexts where refugees and IDPs are geographically mixed, conduct joint meetings between clusters and sectors, and ensure coordination on activities including needs assessments, planning, implementation and monitoring	C/AoR Coordinator	UNHCR Refugee Coordination Model
OTHER HUMANITARIAN COORDINATION MECHANISMS		
Support the coordination mechanism in place with staffing and resources as needed; assign or hire staff for both coordination and information management functions when UNICEF leads sectors of the response	Representative Programme Chief	IASC Guidance on strengthening participation, representation and leadership of local and national actors in iasc humanitarian coordination mechanisms
Harmonize approaches between UNICEF-led components of different coordination mechanisms	Sector coordinator C/AoR Coordinator	
Support and actively participate in regional and cross-border coordination mechanisms, including large-scale movement and migration crises, and PHE	Regional Office Sector coordinator C/AoR Coordinator	

If needed, clarify in the HCT and with the overall coordination leadership (OCHA, UNHCR, WHO, Government or others) the specific role of UNICEF as sectoral or operational lead	Representative	
Assign or hire staff for both coordination and information management functions when UNICEF leads sectors of the response	Representative Programme Chief	
If the response is Government-led, proactively support authorities in engaging and coordinating with the cluster system to increase opportunities for synergies, efficiencies and a more effective response	Sector coordinator C/AoR Coordinator	
Ensure internal coordination for all aspects of responses that UNICEF leads or co-leads; similarly, ensure complementarities and efficiencies between different coordination mechanisms in UNICEF-led sectors	Deputy Representative -Programmes C/AoR Coordinator supervisor Sector coordinator C/AoR Coordinator	
Proactively engage with multiple coordination platforms if they remain separated (for example, ensure a Cluster/AoR member participates in PHE coordination meetings for the same sector and reports back)	Sector coordinator C/AoR Coordinator	
If multiple coordination mechanisms exist, to the extent possible align response plans and resource mobilization efforts of different coordination mechanisms with each other	Sector coordinator C/AoR Coordinator Resource Mobilization Manager	
Remote deployment: In situations of reduced access and or increased insecurity, including public health emergencies, deploy surge staffing and new recruits remotely for all or part of an assignment	HR Manager Regional Office	Emergency Handbook

USEFUL LINKS

- ① Procedure: [Emergency Procedures](#)
- ① Guidance: [Emergency Handbook](#)
- ① Other resources:
 - [IASC Guidance for CLAs on working with national authorities](#)
 - [IASC Guidance on strengthening participation, representation and leadership of local and national actors in iasc humanitarian coordination mechanisms](#)
 - [UNHCR Refugee Coordination Model](#)
 - [UNHCR Updated Refugee Coordination Guidance Note](#)

The CCCs clearly establish that “Where clusters are not activated, UNICEF is accountable for its respective sectors to support coordination mechanisms. This includes supporting coordination functions, the development of assessment and information management systems and tools, capacity-building and pre-positioning of supplies.”⁶⁹

The cluster approach is not the only humanitarian coordination solution in emergencies. Ideally, and in many contexts, **humanitarian coordination is led by the respective government sectors, reporting to a designated government body**, while international humanitarian support, underpinned by the principles of the cluster approach, can augment national coordination capacity.

There are different types of coordination mechanisms, including contexts with multiple mechanisms functioning at the same time, for example:

- ① Government-led sector coordination
- ① Sector coordination mechanism overseen by OCHA, without formal cluster activation
- ① Refugee coordination led by UNHCR
- ① Coordination for mixed settings, including both refugees and IDPs
- ① Activation of clusters/AoRs only for some sectors, and of Technical Working Groups (led by national authorities) for others

69 UNICEF (2020), Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action

- ④ Coordination mechanisms for migration emergencies, in addition or parallel to clusters/AoRs
- ④ Development coordination mechanisms (for example UNSDCF – United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework) including outcomes on populations affected by crises such as IDPs or migrants, which deal with humanitarian activities
- ④ Coordination mechanisms for Public Health Emergencies (PHE) in parallel to clusters and/or refugee coordination mechanisms.

The table below compares some coordination mechanisms that may exist in countries:

SYSTEM	REFUGEE COORDINATION	HUMANITARIAN/ CLUSTER COORDINATION	DEVELOPMENT (SECTORS) COORDINATION
Accountability to	High Commissioner for Refugees UN General Assembly	Emergency Relief Coordinator Secretary General of the UN	Chair of the UN Sustainable Development Group Secretary General of the UN
Leadership by	UNHCR Representatives UNHCR sector coordination	Humanitarian Coordinator OCHA and CLAs	Resident Coordinator
Inter-Agency Planning Approach	Refugee Response Plan	Humanitarian Response Plan Cluster strategies	UN Sustainable Development Collaboration Framework (UNSDCF)
Inter-Agency Coordination	Refugee (Education) Working Group/Sector	Clusters Emergency (Education) Working Groups	Sectoral Coordination/Working Groups
Primary Resource Mobilization	UNHCR Fund CERF	CERF/EPF Country-Based Pooled Funds Flash Appeals	Bilateral Funds UNSDCF Funds Global Partnership for Education



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Not all coordination systems and mechanisms are codified in IASC guidance, and new ones will surely emerge in the future in line with the evolution of humanitarian crises and humanitarian responses. Where formal guidance exists, we will refer to it. For other situations we offer **principles and key aspects to consider**, so that they can be evaluated in the specific context of a country to guide decision-making.

HUMANITARIAN SECTOR COORDINATION

In many countries, clusters are not activated, and the emergency coordination is done through sectors, led by Government entities (sometimes only nominally). **States remain the primary duty bearers for the respect, promotion and realization of children’s rights, including in crises.** When a national government leads the emergency response, **UNICEF’s role** is to support national and sub-national authorities in coordination, by providing resources, technical assistance, and strengthening their capacities and systems.

The table below compares **characteristics and accountabilities of clusters and sectors**, as outlined in the IASC Reference Manual for Cluster Coordination.

ACTIVATED CLUSTER	SECTORAL EMERGENCY COORDINATION
Leadership	<p>The designated CLA leads and manages the cluster/AoR. Where possible, it does so in co-leadership with government bodies and NGOs. Strong links should be made with development coordination bodies to ensure a nexus approach, and that cluster plans are aligned with national development objectives and steps are taken to strengthen national preparedness and response capacity.</p>
Accountability	<p>The national government or a designated national agency leads the sector. International humanitarian support, underpinned by the principles of the cluster approach, augments national capacity.</p>
Provider of Last Resort	<p>A CLA is accountable for its cluster/AoR performance to the HC and ERC, as well as to national authorities and affected people. Performance is measured in terms of needs met as outlined in the HRP objectives, and respect for national and humanitarian law and principles.</p>
Lifespan	<p>Where necessary, and depending on access, security and availability of funding, the cluster/AoR lead, as PoLR, must be ready to ensure the provision of services to fill critical gaps identified by the cluster and reflected in the HRP.</p>
Mainstreaming of cross-cutting issues	<p>As stated in General Assembly Resolution 46/182, national authorities have the primary responsibility for taking care of victims of natural disasters and other emergencies that occur in their territories.</p>
Human resources for coordination	<p>Activated clusters/AoRs are temporary and subject to regular review.</p>
Technical support	<p>Governments are ultimately responsible for mainstreaming of cross-cutting themes, and international partners can advise the government on mainstreaming.</p>
Role of global clusters/AoR in preparedness	<p>The CLA will provide staff for coordination and information management.</p>
	<p>Government bodies are responsible for ensuring that sufficient coordination capacity is available.</p>
	<p>Relevant cluster/AoR members, the CLA in-country, the Regional Office or the global cluster/AoR may provide technical support and guidance.</p>
	<p>In-country agencies or the relevant global cluster/AoR may provide technical support and guidance as needed, when capacity and resources allow.</p>
	<p>Global clusters/AoR do not restrict their support to formally activated clusters, if there is a high level of risk or imminent threat of an emergency, they may support other humanitarian coordination and response structures to prepare.</p>

In certain countries, **UNICEF de facto leads humanitarian sectors through dedicated or double-hatting sector coordinators**. Even if these mechanisms are not clusters, the same coordination and collaboration principles apply.

REFUGEE CRISES AND MIXED SETTINGS

UNHCR is mandated to lead and coordinate the response in refugee contexts, regardless of whether refugees find themselves in camps or in non-camp settings; UNHCR leads sectoral inter-agency coordination, contingency planning, response and resource mobilization, and in these contexts, clusters are not established. UNICEF is a vital partner in refugee contexts and its role is to support the refugee response, participating in established coordination and response mechanisms. **UNHCR's Refugee Coordination Model** explains how the response is coordinated. In 2023, UNICEF and UNHCR signed a **Strategic Collaboration Framework**, which confirms the two organizations will continue to respond to emergencies under the Refugee Coordination Model, the cluster system or the mixed setting approach, depending on context.



In contexts involving **refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs)**, either in separate geographic areas within a country, or in the same geographic area, the 'Joint UNHCR-OCHA Note: Mixed situations – coordination in practice' details the division of responsibilities between UNHCR Representatives and RC/HCs. **The role of CLAs and the clusters/AoRs** they lead is the following:

- ① CLAs participate in the HCT which operates normally (see chapter on **The Humanitarian Country Team**) while coordinating with the UNHCR Representative on refugee matters; the HCT is consulted and kept informed on the refugee response through a standing agenda item at HCT meetings;
- ① The UNHCR Representative leads the refugee-specific strategic planning exercise with partners, drawing on the HCT and OCHA, to ensure coherence with the broader humanitarian response. CLAs, as part of the HCT, are included in the exercise;
- ① The Refugee Coordinator and team share information with inter-cluster coordination forums, support the implementation of the **HPC** and ensure protection mainstreaming across clusters. The Protection Working Group and the Protection Cluster and its AoRs harmonize approaches;
- ① **In contexts where refugees and IDPs are geographically separated**, clusters coordinate the operational response for IDPs and other affected populations and facilitate service delivery, while UNHCR sectors coordinate the response for refugees; and cluster and sectors share information at the national level;
- ① **In contexts where they are geographically mixed**, where possible clusters and UNHCR sectors will conduct joint meetings and coordinate on joint needs assessment and planning, where possible.

Joint coordination mechanisms tailored to specific contexts have also been developed to respond to mixed movements of refugees and migrants, for example the joint coordination mechanisms established by UNHCR and IOM in response to the 2015-2016 crisis in Europe and in response to the Venezuela crisis. In this case, operational partners like UNICEF may lead in their areas of expertise, and UNHCR continues to coordinate to ensure refugee protection.⁷⁰

OTHER FORMS OF HUMANITARIAN COORDINATION

LARGE-SCALE MOVEMENTS AND MIGRATION CRISES

Large-scale movements involve mixed flows of people (migrants, IDPs, refugees and others) who move for different reasons but may use similar routes. They are characterized by a high proportion of children and their families in need of humanitarian assistance; in fact, migration crises are the second-largest category of UNICEF humanitarian action.⁷¹ **Migrant response should be addressed by existing humanitarian coordination frameworks before considering alternative arrangements**; migrant sectoral response is often led by national authorities and supported by UNICEF in a similar way to clusters; on occasions UNICEF co-leads with other actors such as the IFRC or international NGOs.

As a last resort, additional, dedicated coordination mechanisms can be established, using a migrant (or migrant and refugee) response platform model to ensure a holistic response. In mixed settings involving migrants, refugees and potential asylum seekers, IOM, alongside UNHCR, coordinate with other UN

70 UNHCR (2019), Updated Refugee Coordination Guidance Note

71 UNICEF (2020), Strengthening UNICEF's Humanitarian Action. The Humanitarian Review: Findings and Recommendations

agencies and stakeholders to ensure that assistance is complementary with broader humanitarian response operations.⁷² These mechanisms may also have a regional dimension (for example the Venezuelan regional migration platform) to ensure consistency and continuity in the response.



The CCCs establish UNICEF commitments in case of large-scale movement and migration crises and expect core leadership and coordination accountabilities to be delivered, ensuring adequate and skilled staffing for UNICEF-led sectors. **Complementarity with the cluster system is also recommended, and the capacity to deliver a multisectoral response and a flexible approach able to move between humanitarian response, humanitarian-development nexus, and development.** UNICEF COs are expected to:

- ① Support the coordination model/response plan in place and work with UNHCR, IOM and national authorities to ensure that the needs of children and adolescents are adequately captured in interagency/sector assessments, strategies and programmes.
- ① Work with partners to harmonize approaches, avoid gaps and reduce duplications. Ensure complementarities within the cluster system and with other coordination models, including the Refugee Coordination Model, the Camp Coordination and Camp Management Cluster, and other coordination mechanisms set up to respond to large-scale population movements.
- ① Support cross-border coordination and case management between child protection, immigration and foreign affairs and/or interior ministries, including for family tracing and reunification and child-sensitive return and reintegration.
- ① Work with partners to connect humanitarian and development coordination mechanisms to ensure quality programming, application of relevant standards and inclusion of migrant or displaced children in local and national systems.⁷³

Large-scale movement and migration crises present several coordination challenges; for example, the existence of dual coordination mechanisms and the risk of conflicting priorities among different coordination mechanisms. While it is not possible to offer general guidance on migration/large-scale movement coordination, because actions are highly dependent on the specific context and coordination model established, the section below on '[Principles and Recommendations](#)' offers some indication to determine the role of the CO and its personnel in this regard.

PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCIES (PHEs)

Leadership regarding a PHE of international concern is guaranteed by WHO, who will propose to the ERC the recommended public health strategic priorities, a response structure and the major activities required to control the event. This initial recommendation is the basis for further discussions and decisions by the HCT, Emergency Directors Group and IASC Principals. The IASC Principals will decide on the most appropriate leadership model at country, regional and HQ levels to support national authorities, taking into consideration pre-established resources, and they will decide, among other things, on:

- ① The overall in-country mechanism to ensure coordination and links across the humanitarian system in alignment with national structures and processes, and the roles and responsibilities of each agency at country, regional and global levels.
- ① The activation of clusters in response to the specific infectious hazard and the necessary control measures, as well as humanitarian needs.⁷⁴

72 IASC (2019), Leadership in Humanitarian Action: Handbook for the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator

73 Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action

74 IASC (2019), Leadership in Humanitarian Action: Handbook for the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator

Mechanisms different from the 'classic' ones might be established; for example, in the DRC Ebola response, WHO rather than OCHA took the lead due to its health-focused, highly technical nature.⁷⁵

In-country, UNICEF frequently responds to disease outbreaks, including large, local outbreaks of measles, cholera and other PHEs; trends show that even before COVID-19, public health emergencies were becoming a key type of humanitarian action for UNICEF.⁷⁶ This has prompted the inclusion of PHEs within the CCCs:

- ① In collaboration with the government, WHO and partners, UNICEF contributes to the leadership and coordination of several outbreak response pillars, including risk communication and community engagement, immunization, psychosocial support and WASH, as well as continuation of essential health services, including education and child protection;
- ① In the event of activation of the IASC Protocol for the Control of Infectious Disease Events, UNICEF mobilizes capacities and resources to contribute to the collective response *as per its mandated areas and Cluster Lead Agency responsibilities*. This includes the deployment of supplies and logistics, surge capacity and the support to national and sub-national coordination;
- ① In a PHE, UNICEF can provide a multisectoral, integrated approach through its role as cluster lead in Education, WASH and Child Protection;
- ① The CO should ensure that adequate humanitarian-development linkages are taken into consideration;
- ① In contexts affected by conflict, fragility or major challenges to social cohesion, UNICEF's expertise in vaccination, nutrition and health-care systems in fragile setting is a key asset.

When PHEs extend beyond a single country, CO and RO should ensure regional coordination among countries and sectors/clusters, even if national authorities are focused on their own country.

However, PHEs present several coordination challenges:

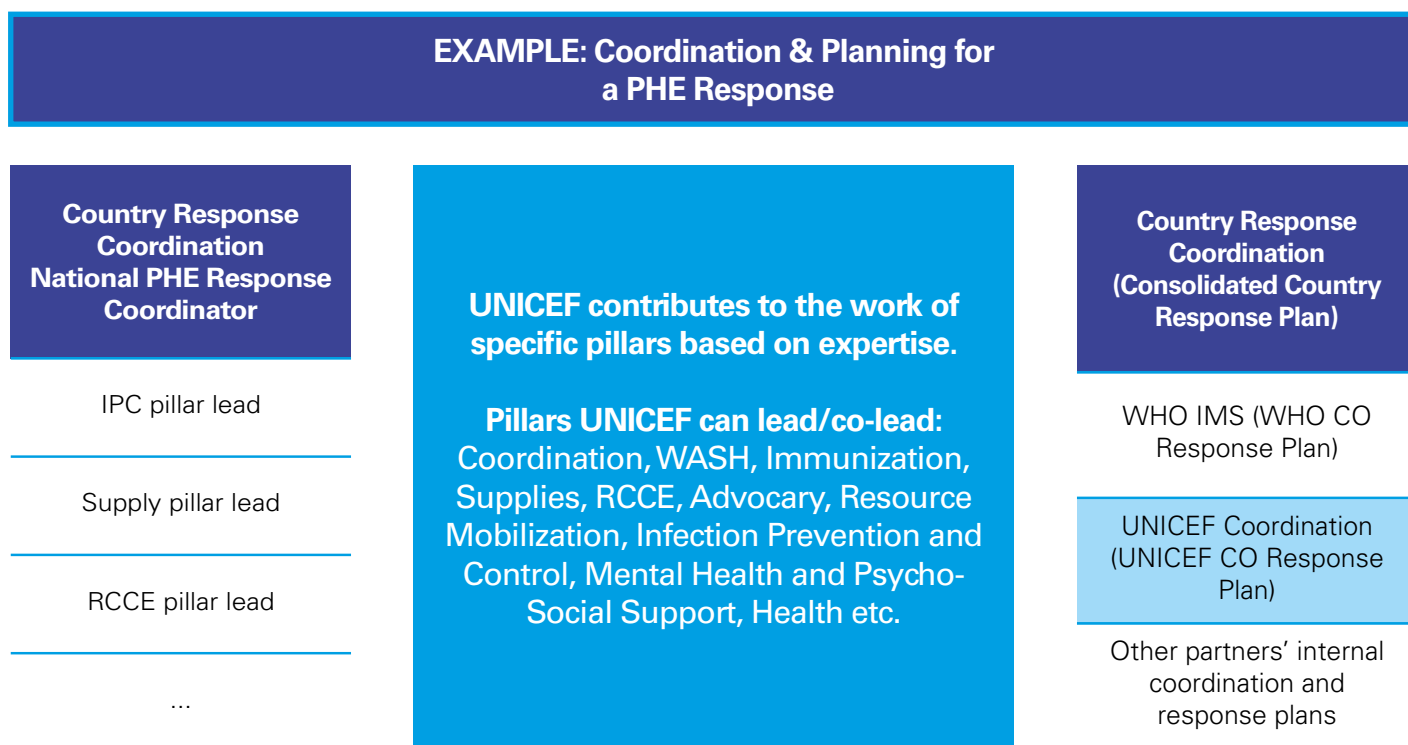
- ① National authorities might not want to declare an emergency, thus limiting the action of clusters or other coordination mechanisms;
- ① There might be multiple or parallel coordination mechanisms, with the risk of conflicting approaches and priorities.



⁷⁵ UNICEF (2020), Strengthening UNICEF's Humanitarian Action. The Humanitarian Review: Findings and Recommendations

⁷⁶ UNICEF (2020), Strengthening UNICEF's Humanitarian Action. The Humanitarian Review: Findings and Recommendations

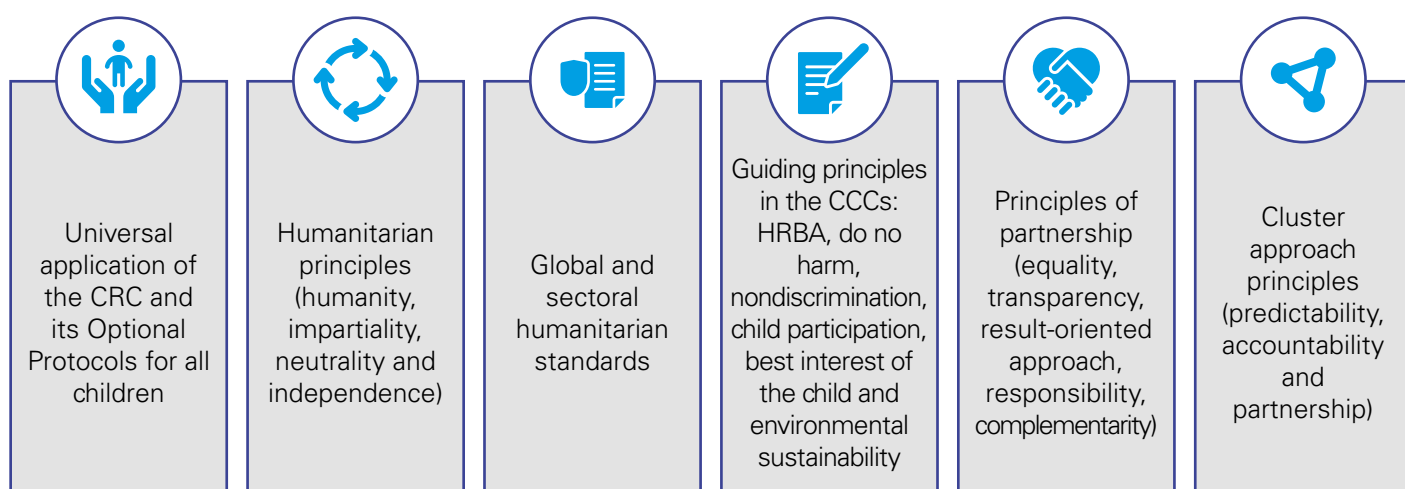
Below an example⁷⁷ of the coordination structure in a PHE response:



The following section on '**Principles and Recommendations**' offers some indications to determine the role of the CO and its personnel in hybrid and multiple coordination mechanisms.

PRINCIPLES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The forms of coordination described above, and the role of COs is highly variable and context-dependent, therefore it is not possible to offer a single set of actions to be undertaken. Nevertheless, the CO shall use the organization's key principles, and the principles of humanitarian coordination, to be guided in decision-making:



⁷⁷ Image taken from Module 2 of the Foundational training: Public health emergencies basics.

The following actions are recommended (with the necessary adaptation to the country context):

- ① If needed, clarify in the HCT and with the overall coordination leadership (OCHA, UNHCR, WHO, Government or others) UNICEF's specific role as sectoral or operational lead;
- ① Assign or hire staff for both coordination and information management functions when UNICEF leads sectors of the response; consider the feasibility of sharing or complementing IM resources;
- ① If the response is Government-led, proactively support authorities in engaging and coordinating with the cluster system to increase opportunities for synergies, efficiencies and a more effective response;
- ① Ensure internal coordination for all aspects of responses that UNICEF leads or co-leads; similarly, ensure complementarities and efficiencies between different coordination mechanisms in UNICEF-led sectors;
- ① Proactively engage with the multiple coordination platforms if they remain separated (for example, ensure a cluster member participates in PHE coordination meetings for the same sector and reports back);
- ① To the extent possible, align response plans and resource mobilization efforts of different coordination mechanisms with each other.



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6. Cluster co-leadership and co-coordination

CORE COMMITMENTS	BENCHMARK
<p>COORDINATION Support the leadership and coordination of humanitarian response, along with national and local stakeholders, and in compliance with humanitarian principles</p>	<p>① UNICEF, at CO/RO/HQ level, actively contributes to intersectoral coordination and ensures that sectors/clusters under its leadership are adequately staffed and skilled</p>
<p>CHILD PROTECTION 1: Leadership and coordination Effective leadership and coordination are established and functional</p>	<p>① Child Protection Sector/Area of Responsibility (AoR) coordination and leadership functions are adequately staffed and skilled at national and sub-national levels</p> <p>① Core leadership and coordination accountabilities are delivered</p>
<p>EDUCATION 1: Leadership and coordination Effective leadership and coordination are established and functional</p>	<p>① Education sector/cluster coordination and leadership functions are adequately staffed and skilled at national and sub-national levels</p> <p>① Core leadership and coordination accountabilities are delivered</p>

KEY TAKEAWAYS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ① UNICEF leads the Child Protection AoR. AoR and cluster lead agencies' functions and responsibilities are identical. ① Globally UNICEF co-leads the Education Cluster with Save the Children international, which can but does not necessarily turn into co-leadership at the country level. Articulate the division of labour in a co-leadership agreement, based on respective strengths and complementarities. ① Wherever possible, consider shared leadership of the cluster/AoR for stronger engagement and better coordination, and support the government and/or local organizations in taking co-leadership and / or co-coordination roles.

ACTION	RESPONSIBLE	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
Where possible and appropriate, engage in co-leadership and / or co-coordination of the cluster/AoR with the government and/or another organization, especially a local organization; if needed provide institutional, technical or financial support. Selection of the co-leadership or co-coordination partner should be done through consultations with cluster/AoR partners	C/AoR Coordinator Programme Chief	Questions to ask for co-leadership or co-coordination ; IASC Guidance on strengthening participation, representation and leadership of local and national actors in IASC humanitarian coordination mechanisms
Develop a co-leadership and / or co-coordination agreement with relevant organizations, detailing roles and responsibilities, and mutual accountabilities. The agreement documents how representation, advocacy, strategy, fundraising and other key functions will be managed by UNICEF and the other organization	Representative C/AoR Coordinator	
If needed, advocate for funding for co-leadership/co-coordination with HCT and donors	Representative C/AoR Coordinator	Emergency Handbook

Agree on ToRs and reporting lines for co-leadership/co-coordination roles, including matrix management where relevant	Representative C/AoR Coordinator
Conduct an annual meeting for mutual accountability with clusters/AoR co-lead / co-coordinating organizations' heads of agency	Representative C/AoR Coordinator
In case of co-leadership, arrange for joint office space for Cluster/AoR Coordinators	C/AoR Coordinator supervisor

USEFUL LINKS

- ① Guidance: [Emergency Handbook](#)
- ① Tools: [Questions to ask for co-leadership or co-coordination](#)
- ① Other resources:
 - [GCCG Terms and Definitions Paper](#)
 - [Principles of Partnership](#)
 - [IASC Guidance on strengthening participation, representation and leadership of local and national actors in iasc humanitarian coordination mechanisms](#)
 - [Guidance Note on Supporting NGOs' Contribution to Nutrition Cluster Leadership at National and Sub-National Level \(GNC\)](#)

Evaluation and experience show that **when cluster leadership is shared** between United Nations agencies, national authorities, NGOs and other key humanitarian actors, **there is stronger engagement and better coordination**. Shared leadership may be at the national and/or sub-national levels, and involves the sharing of cluster responsibilities between two or more entities, including national and local authorities. In fact, when feasible, sharing leadership with governments is strongly encouraged. There might be different modalities depending on the context, including for example full sharing of leadership between line ministries and UNICEF, alternate co-chaired meetings and operational coordination meetings (without government presence), or other arrangements.



In the case of activated clusters and sub-clusters, **when the Government takes a leadership role we suggest to use the terms 'chairing' or 'co-chairing' of the Cluster/AoR**, to avoid confusion related to the specific meaning and accountability implied by the term 'co-leadership' (see [glossary](#)); if clusters are not activated, we suggest to align with the CCCs which indicates that UNICEF supports coordination (implicitly assigning leadership to Government as the duty-bearer). See chapter on "[Humanitarian sector coordination](#)" for more details.

AOR LEADERSHIP: THE CHILD PROTECTION AOR AND THE PROTECTION CLUSTER

The Child Protection AoR is led by UNICEF. At a country level, the child protection AoR operates **independently of the protection cluster in terms of programming**. However, all key interagency processes go under/through the protection cluster. It is usual for the Child Protection AoR coordinator to have access to inter-cluster meetings and processes to represent the AoR directly, in coordination with the protection cluster coordinator. **AoR lead agencies' functions and responsibilities are identical to CLA ones.** Therefore, UNICEF needs to ensure the same level of investment and support for the AoR as is given to clusters.

One collaboration of particular importance is the cooperation between the Child Protection AoR and the Education Cluster across all phases of the HPC. All tools of the CP – EiE Collaboration Framework can be found [here](#).



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The CP AoR is part of a unique set up with the **Protection Cluster and three other AoRs**; all together they can significantly influence the humanitarian response and tackle the complexity of protection risks and needs faced by communities, families and individual. It is recommended that CLAs senior representatives meet regularly to discuss protection strategic issues requiring joint approaches, context-specific needs and solutions, to support collectively cluster/AoR coordination functions, and to identify key protection issues for discussion with the HCT. While the lead in bringing together the CLAs should be with UNHCR, UNICEF could take a proactive role in making those meetings happen.

CLUSTER CO-LEADERSHIP: THE EDUCATION CLUSTER

The Global Education Cluster (GEC) is co-led by UNICEF and Save the Children International (SCI). This arrangement is usually replicated **at a country level**, where there are two coordinators for the Education Cluster: one for each organization; there can be exceptions to this arrangement including: UNICEF leading the country Education Cluster by itself, co-leading with another organization that is not SCI, co-coordinating⁷⁸ with a local organization, in addition to the co-leadership arrangement. Other co-leadership formats may emerge in the future. Co-lead agencies are appointed by the Emergency Directors Group based on the recommendations of the HC (or RC/HC) while co-coordinating agencies do not require such appointment.

Co-leadership is based on the five **Principles of Partnership** and on the concept of **mutual accountability** among co-lead organizations. The **division of labour** between the two CLAs is based on a process that identifies respective strengths and complementarities, and documents each organization's roles and responsibilities in a **co-leadership agreement**. The **GEC can support** a CO through the co-leadership process with guidance, tools and templates.

OTHER FORMS OF CO-LEADERSHIP AND CO-COORDINATION, INCLUDING LOCAL NGOs



The Inter-Cluster Coordination Group (ICCG) distinguishes⁷⁹ between **co-leadership** and **co-coordination**: **co-leadership** implies that the co-lead agency assumes all the responsibilities of the CLA, including being PoLR; **co-coordination** implies that the co-coordinating agency provides leadership support but does not displace the core accountabilities of the designated in-country CLA, including, but not limited to, PoLR. A co-lead or co-coordinator agency can assume different functions including: Deputy National Cluster/AoR Coordinator, Sub-national Coordinator, Strategic Advisory Group (SAG) Chair, co-chair or member, Technical Working Group (TWG) Chair, co-chair or member.⁸⁰

78 See the **Glossary** for a distinction between co-leadership and co-coordination.

79 GCCG (2023), Country-level Cluster Terms and Definitions Paper

80 Adapted from GNC (no date), **Guidance note on supporting NGOs' contribution to Nutrition Cluster leadership at national and sub-national level.**



It must be noted that not all partners are willing or able to share leadership responsibilities; therefore, the **selection of organizations to take on shared leadership responsibilities** should be based on:

- ① Operational and technical relevance in the emergency;
- ① Capacity to contribute strategically to the cluster/AoR;
- ① Capacity to provide appropriately experienced staff;
- ① Commitment to contribute consistently;
- ① Risks local organizations might face in assuming a leadership role, in politically sensitive contexts.

There are **multiple forms of co-leadership and co-coordination** at country level, for example:

- ① UNICEF co-leads at national level, while at sub-national level an international NGO co-leads;
- ① UNICEF leads at national level, while at sub-national level international or national NGOs or sub-national authorities co-coordinate;
- ① UNICEF and an international NGO co-lead at national level, and a national NGO organization or national authority co-coordinates;
- ① UNICEF and an international NGO co-lead at sub-national level (with no national cluster level);

In the future, other configurations might develop and COs must be able to adapt to the emerging coordination formats that better suit the needs of the affected population and the effectiveness of the response.

Whatever the format might be, **it is recommended that national / local authorities and / or national / local NGOs are supported and sustained in taking leadership roles**, including through institutional, technical or financial support if needed. It is widely recognized that local and national actors⁸¹ have an understanding of the context and populations affected, access, and capacities that are not available to international organizations, and that their contribution to humanitarian response is essential, as shown by the drive for **localization**. The selection of a co-coordinating and / or co-lead partner for shared leadership, regardless of whether international or local, should take place through a transparent, consultative process within the cluster/AoR.



QUESTIONS TO ASK. TO IDENTIFY LOCAL OR NATIONAL ACTORS FOR CO-LEADERSHIP/CO-COORDINATION.⁸²

Will co-leadership or co-coordination support and strengthen the cluster/AoR and contribute to the effectiveness of humanitarian response?

Is the Local and / or National actor willing to take on a leadership role? Does it have the personnel and resources to do it?

Will the co-leadership and / or co-coordination enhance local humanitarian leadership and the participation of local organizations?

What is the technical and institutional capacity of the Local or National Actor?

What is the geographic presence and access of the Local or National Actor?

Are there any conflict sensitivities associated with the Local or National Actor under consideration?

(For co-leadership only) Is the Local or National Actor able to take the role of PoLR?

What additional technical, institutional or financial resources does the Local or National Actor need to take on a leadership role? Are these available or can be obtained by donors?

81 The expression 'Local and National Actors' encompasses both NGOs and Governments.

82 Adapted from NRC (2014), NGO Cluster Coordination Manual.

The co-leadership or co-coordination **agreement should be formalized** through a UNICEF-Partner Agreement, Letter of Understanding, or other format, detailing the roles and responsibilities of each party, mutual accountabilities, and how representation, advocacy, strategy, fundraising and other key functions will be managed.



Co-leadership and co-coordination have costs. Where a shared leadership model is desired and appropriate, it is important that funding does not become an obstacle. Funds may be mobilized by an approved co-lead or co-coordinating agency through pooled funding mechanisms and/or where appropriate through bilateral funding, as with funding for UNICEF coordinator costs (see [Resource Mobilization](#)). The UNICEF Representative should advocate for donor support as required, both directly to donors and via the HCT.



In some situations, **UNICEF mobilizes funds for cluster co-leadership and co-coordination.** There are advantages to this approach, especially in the early stages of an emergency, until co-lead / co-coordinating agencies make other arrangements; however, this approach could lead to a dependency on UNICEF funds, or to a false perception of UNICEF ownership of the cluster, as if it were subcontracting agencies to take on cluster (co-) coordination roles. In both cases, it is important that funds are mobilized for co-leadership and co-coordination also by the relevant organizations, and that the selection of the organization is conducted in a transparent and consultative manner with cluster/AoR members.



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7. Cluster/AoR coordination and management at national and sub-national levels

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ① Establish/recruit national cluster/AoR coordination teams, as required by the context. Refer to the “Recommended good practices for the minimum structure of coordination teams” for suggested team composition.
- ① If relevant, establish/recruit sub-national cluster/AoR coordination teams, as required by the context. Refer to the “Recommended good practices for the minimum structure of coordination teams” for suggested team composition.
- ① Support cluster/AoR leadership at sub-national level by local organizations/authorities
- ① Support and facilitate neutrality of national and sub-national Cluster/AoR Coordinators
- ① Participate in cluster/AoR strategic management arrangements (SAG and TWGs) and fulfil the 12 minimum commitments for partners’ participation in clusters/AoRs

ACTION	RESPONSIBLE	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
Ensure the timely recruitment of cluster/AoR coordination teams with adequate seniority level and reporting lines; at a minimum, recruit national Cluster/AoR Coordinator and IMO roles for a period of at least six months for L2 and L3 emergencies	C/AoR Coordinator supervisor HR Manager	Decision Tree (national) See Human Resources chapter; Recommended good practices for the minimum structure of coordination teams at country level for UNICEF as a Cluster Lead Agency.
Oversee the establishment and management of effective national and sub-national coordination structures for each of the clusters and AoRs UNICEF leads or co-leads	Representative Chief of Field Office	WASH and Nutrition sub-national cluster ToRs examples; Decision Tree (sub-national) ; Minimum coordination structure See Human Resources chapter
Advocate for more resources if needed for cluster/AoR coordination at national and sub-national level, with HCT and donors	Representative C/AoR Coordinator supervisor Programme Chief Chief of Field Office	Minimum coordination structure
Appoint a focal point/specialist in CO to advise UNICEF-led clusters/AoR on better mainstreaming people-centered and accountability approaches in their work	Representative Deputy Representative - Programmes	Minimum coordination structure
Engage in analysis and decision-making within the HCT on the establishment of sub-national clusters	Representative Chief of Field Office	Minimum coordination structure ; IASC reference module on cluster coordination
Establish/recruit cluster/AoR sub-national level coordination teams following recommended minimum structure (as a minimum coordination and information management functions) and/or adapting to new sub-national coordination models emerging	C/AoR Coordinator Chief of Field Office HR Manager	Decision Tree (sub-national) See Human Resources chapter

Support co-ordination at sub-national level by local organization, through institutional, technical and financial resources as possible	Programme Chief C/AoR Coordinator	
Provide internal operational and administrative support to enable the clusters/AoRs to function effectively (both at national and sub-national level)	Deputy Representative – Operations	See Operational and administrative support chapter
Ensure TORs for country clusters, sub-clusters, co-leads, strategic advisory groups and technical working groups should be developed, indicating membership, leadership and respective responsibilities	C/AoR Coordinator	IASC Reference Module on Cluster Coordination
Where appropriate, ensure that relevant government sectors are appropriately engaged with and involved in cluster/AoR management, and where possible, chair or co-chair the cluster/AoR	Representative	
Oversee UNICEF participation in cluster/AoR strategic management and the implementation of the 12 minimum commitments for cluster/AoR membership	Representative	IASC Reference Module on Cluster Coordination
Actively participate in cluster/AoR meetings (especially when the Cluster/AoR Coordinator is double-hatting), in strategic management of the cluster/AoR through SAG and TWGs, and fulfil IASC 12 minimum commitments	Programme Chief	IASC Reference Module on Cluster Coordination
Periodically participate in cluster/AoR meetings to demonstrate UNICEF commitment to its CLA role, and engage in strategic discussions with partners	Representative	

USEFUL LINKS

- 🔗 ICON page: [Sectoral Coordination and the Cluster Approach](#)
- 🔗 Guidance: [Emergency Handbook](#), Chapter 9. Sector/Cluster Coordination; [Minimum coordination structure](#)
- 🔗 Tools: [Decision Tree \(national\)](#); [Decision Tree \(sub-national\)](#)
- 🔗 Other resources:
 - [IASC Reference Module on Cluster Coordination](#)
 - [WASH](#) and [Nutrition](#) sub-national cluster ToRs examples
 - [AGORA Humanitarian Coordination Learning Channel](#)

NATIONAL LEVEL

Once clusters/AoR are activated, the CO shall **establish/recruit the cluster leadership and coordination team**.⁸³ UNICEF has developed a good practice guidance for coordination structures “fit-for-purpose” as per the local context, sensitivity and local capacities. These recommended practices⁸⁴ for minimum structure of the cluster/AoR/sector coordination teams at national and sub-national levels are meant to ensure that cluster/AoR functions are effectively fulfilled, and to ensure a more timely and relevant humanitarian response. Staffing can be adjusted if the national government is taking a leadership role in coordinating the cluster/AoR/sector response, and ensures that dedicated coordination staff are recruited. In this case, UNICEF is required to support government capacities by addressing human resource gaps through capacity development.

⁸³ This chapter and the following on sub-national coordination only discuss the *structure* of the coordination teams to be established; for more details on the seniority of positions, type of contract, reporting lines and other HR aspects, refer to the chapter on [Human Resources](#).

⁸⁴ UNICEF (no date), Recommended good practices for the minimum structure of coordination teams at country level for UNICEF as a Cluster Lead Agency.

The minimum structure includes Coordination and Information Management functions⁸⁵, and, depending on the context, additional roles might be necessary, such as Assessment Specialists, Communication Specialists and so on. In addition, it is recommended to recruit a **dedicated gender/GBV technical expert** to work with all UNICEF-led / co-led clusters/AoR to mainstream gender and GBV into Clusters/AoR's work, especially in L3 emergencies, complex emergencies and in a protection crisis. As UNICEF moves towards a comprehensive **people-centered approach**, it is recommended that the CO appoints or recruits a **focal point/specialist to advise UNICEF-led clusters/AoR on better mainstreaming people-centered and accountability approaches** in their work.

The CO should consider several factors in deciding which positions to recruit and at which level, including:

- ① complexity of the crisis (mixed natural disaster and man-made crisis, overlap of different types of humanitarian issues such as food insecurity, epidemics and violence);
- ① size of the humanitarian caseload (number of displaced people and people affected);
- ① number of organizations taking part in the response;
- ① interaction needed with development actors;
- ① hindrance or prevention of humanitarian assistance by political and military constraints;
- ① number of national authorities and their existing capacity;
- ① level of advocacy and interaction needed with national authorities.



An important aspect to keep in consideration is the **neutrality of the Cluster/AoR Coordinators** (and by extension, of the coordination teams). These positions, although contracted by UNICEF in its CLA role, represent the cluster/AoR and its members, and they are required to maintain neutrality toward any organization that is a member of the cluster, including UNICEF. For this reason, they should not represent UNICEF in cluster/AoR meetings; this aspect is especially important in the case of **double-hatting**.

See chapter on **Human Resources** for more details.

SUB-NATIONAL LEVEL



Sub-national coordination is critical when responses take place in remote areas and/or extend over a large territory. As with national-level clusters, sub-national cluster coordination structures should only be established based on operational need and should be deactivated as soon as those needs are met or when local coordination capacity is adequate.

- ① Sub-national HCTs and ICCGs may also be established (in 2021, according to IASC there were 39 sub-national HCTs and 79 sub-national ICCGs across 29 humanitarian operations)⁸⁶
- ① The sub-national cluster/AoR structure does not need to mirror the national structure – it may make sense to merge some clusters/AoRs at the sub-national level while they remain separate at the national level.
- ① Sub-national cluster/AoR TORs should be formalized and endorsed by the CLA and clear lines of accountability between national and sub-national levels should be articulated in the ToRs.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ At the time of writing the Generic Job Descriptions (GJDs) for Cluster/AoR Coordinators and Information Management Officers were being finalized. Contact **GCCS** for the approved versions.

⁸⁶ IASC (2022), Note on IASC coordination structures at country level in 2021.

⁸⁷ For sample templates of ToRs, contact the relevant cluster/AoR or GCCS. Examples of WASH cluster sub-national ToRs are available **here** and for Nutrition cluster **here**.

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- ④ National clusters/AoR should provide support and policy direction to sub-national levels. Links between sub-national and national clusters/AoRs should:
 - Facilitate reporting, information-sharing and collaboration;
 - Promote coherence of national programming and overall coordination;
 - Help track trends;
 - Identify shared and common concerns in operational areas;
 - Develop more upstream advocacy and programming strategies.

In recent years, several **different sub-national coordination modalities have developed**, including area-based, decentralized, multisectoral coordination approaches to ensure solutions are adjusted to the context. There are examples of local hybrid coordination fora addressing both humanitarian and development aspects, mechanisms co-chaired by local authorities; local NGO coordinators supported by OCHA focal points, and other formats.⁸⁸ It is important that UNICEF adapts to the evolution of coordination models to remain a strong and relevant leader, able to guide or accompany humanitarian response at all levels, including the sub-national level.

Sub-national coordination is particularly apt for **leadership by local organizations or sub-national authorities**, thanks to their presence on the territory, understanding of the specific context (and often of the local languages), access to affected populations, and other factors. As part of its commitment to **localization**, UNICEF COs shall support local authorities or local organizations in taking leadership roles whenever possible. In the majority of cases, local actors would take the role of **co-coordinators**, and not **co-leads**, as they would not have the resources and capacities to act as a CLA (including as Providers of Last Resort).

At sub-national level, **coordination and information management functions**⁸⁹ remain equally important.

- ④ In some situations – especially large-scale sudden onset emergencies, **full-time Cluster/AoR Coordinators** and Information Management Specialists are appointed to sub-national level by the CLA.
- ④ In other situations, particularly protracted emergencies, cluster coordination functions are carried out through **double-hatting of a CLA staff member and/or by a local or national actor staff member**. However, double-hatting is discouraged, and fully dedicated coordinators are preferred. In the case of double-hatting, it is important to ensure that cluster/AoR coordination activities and allocation of time is clearly articulated in the job description and performance appraisal of individual(s), and that the UNICEF sub-national office hosting the cluster or partner NGO hosting agency is fully aware of and committed to fulfilment of the coordination function.
- ④ UNICEF has developed a **Decision Tree (sub-national)**⁹⁰ to guide the CO in establishing the positions for sub-national coordination as per local context, capacities and sensitivities around the crisis. The Decision Tree is available [here](#).
- ④ Similarly to the national level, the **neutrality of the sub-national Cluster/AoR Coordinators** remains a fundamental aspect of their role and essential for their credibility as leaders. This is even more important given the higher frequency of double-hatting still existing at sub-national level.

88 IASC (2022), Note on IASC coordination structures at country level in 2021.

89 The GJDs for Cluster/AoR Coordinators and Information Management Officers can be adapted to develop ToRs for the subnational levels' At the time of writing the Generic Job Descriptions (GJDs) for Cluster/AoR Coordinators and Information Management Officers were being finalized. Contact [GCCS](#) for the approved versions.

90 This decision tree is applicable if clusters/AoRs/sectors are operational at the national level and sub-national clusters/AoRs/sectors report to them. If the sub-national coordination mechanism does not report to the national one (e.g. North-Eastern Nigeria, Cox's Bazar), the decision for them should be made using the national decision tree.



STRATEGIC CLUSTER/AOR MANAGEMENT AND CLUSTER/AOR PARTICIPATION

While the CLA is accountable to the HC for the effective functioning of the cluster, it is important to note that an effective cluster/AoR requires the active participation of the CLA, Cluster/AoR Coordinators, information managers, donors, and cluster partners at national and sub-national levels; and that clusters/AoR are expected to cooperate with national authorities, to accept their leadership and to support national capacity, where feasible and appropriate.

Internal cluster management arrangements will vary from country to country depending on the context; they may include:

- ① **Strategic Advisory Groups (SAG)**⁹¹: The SAG provides strategic direction of clusters/AoR and strengthens the participatory nature of the sector management; it has a reduced size (from 5 to 10 members) which still allows decisions to be taken quickly. It is often chaired by the Cluster/AoR Coordinator and its membership generally includes UN agencies, INGOs, national NGOs, relevant technical Government authorities and in some cases donors relevant technical staff; the composition may vary in each country depending on the context. UNICEF as a cluster/AoR member and technical agency in the programmatic area of the cluster/AoR is expected to participate in SAG.⁹²
- ① **Technical Working Groups (TWG)**: TWGs are small, task-orientated and time-limited, and they are established by Cluster/AoR Coordinator(s) only if there is a need to support specific technical or thematic areas of work within and/or between clusters (e.g. to develop minimum standards). The deliverables of a TWG are typically set out in ToRs; the group dissolves when these are completed. They can be coordinated by focal points or technical advisors. UNICEF as member of the cluster/AoR participates in TWGs as appropriate.

The eligibility of organizations to participate in strategic management work of a cluster/AoR is based on:

- operational relevance in the emergency;
- technical expertise;
- demonstrated capacity to contribute strategically and to provide practical support; and

91 UNICEF is developing an annotated template for country-level SAGs. Con Contact [GCCS](#) for the approved versions.

92 GCCG (2022), Country-level Cluster Terms and Definitions

- commitment to contribute consistently.

All cluster/AoR partners, **including UNICEF as an implementing agency**, have a shared responsibility to meet the humanitarian needs of affected people in a timely manner. The IASC has outlined **12 minimum commitments for partner participation in clusters/AoR**.⁹³

TWELVE MINIMUM COMMITMENTS FOR PARTNER PARTICIPATION IN CLUSTERS/AOR

01. Commitment to humanitarian principles, the Principles of Partnership, cluster/AoR-specific guidance and internationally recognized programme standards, including the Secretary-General's Bulletin on Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse.
02. Commitment to mainstream protection in programme delivery (including respect for principles of non-discrimination, 'do no harm', etc.)
03. Readiness to participate in actions that specifically improve accountability to affected people
04. A demonstrated understanding of the duties and responsibilities associated with membership of the cluster/AoR, as defined by IASC TORs and guidance notes, cluster/AoR-specific guidance and TORs.
05. Active participation in the cluster/AoR and a commitment to consistently engage in the cluster/AoR's collective work.
06. The capacity and willingness to contribute to the cluster/AoR's HRP and activities, which must include inter-cluster coordination.
07. Commitment to mainstream key programmatic cross-cutting issues
08. Commitment by a relevant senior staff member to work consistently with the cluster/AoR to fulfil its mission.
09. Commitment to work co-operatively with other cluster/AoR partners to ensure optimal and strategic use of available resources, and share information on organizational resources.
10. Willingness to take on leadership responsibilities in sub-national or working groups as needed, subject to capacity and mandate.
11. Undertake advocacy, and disseminate advocacy messages to affected communities, the host government, donors, the HCT, CLAs, the media and other audiences.
12. Ensure that the cluster/AoR provides interpretation (in an appropriate language) so that all partners can participate, including local organizations (and national and local authorities, where appropriate).

UNICEF programme personnel must participate in cluster/AoR meetings representing UNICEF as cluster/AoR member, and fulfilling the minimum commitments highlighted above. This responsibility cannot be regularly delegated to the Cluster/AoR Coordinator who instead represents UNICEF in its role of CLA. Particularly in cases in which the Cluster/AoR Coordinator is double-hatting, it is essential that another UNICEF programme officer attends meetings.⁹⁴

It is also strongly recommended that the **UNICEF Representative periodically attend cluster/AOR meetings**⁹⁵ to:

- ① Support the Cluster/AoR Coordinators;
- ① Illustrate to partners UNICEF commitment to the clusters/AoR as a CLA;
- ① Engage in key strategic discussions with cluster/AoR partners, e.g. advocacy on increasing geographical coverage of response, partners taking on a co-leadership role, etc.;
- ① Remain in touch with the dynamics of each of the UNICEF-led clusters/AoRs.

93 IASC (2015), Reference Module on Cluster Coordination.

94 For a more detailed discussion on clusters/AoR and UNICEF Programmes, refer to the [corresponding chapter](#).

95 CLARE II review highlights that: "In countries where the representative could be seen taking an active interest and role in relation to the clusters—for example by meeting regularly with coordinators prior to HCT meetings or taking a strong stance in terms of hiring dedicated staff for the CLA role—there has been a positive effect in terms of cluster activity and engagement. Cluster coordinators not only feel an expectation to deliver, but also that they have been given the profile and recognition to provide leadership and move things forward."

8. People-centered approach

CORE COMMITMENTS	BENCHMARK
<p>ACCOUNTABILITY TO AFFECTED POPULATIONS</p> <p>Ensure that affected children and families participate in the decisions that affect their lives, are properly informed and consulted, and have their views acted upon</p>	<p>All COs, with the support of ROs/HQ, establish processes to ensure that affected and at-risk populations, including children and women:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ① Participate in humanitarian planning processes and in decisions that affect their lives ① Are informed about their rights and entitlements, expected standards of conduct by UNICEF personnel, available services, and how to access them through their preferred language and methods of communication, as per the Sphere standards ① Have their feedback systematically collected and used to inform programme design and course correction ① Have access to safe and confidential complaint mechanisms
<p>LINKING HUMANITARIAN AND DEVELOPMENT</p> <p>Foster coherence and complementarity between humanitarian and development programming</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ① All COs, with the support of ROs/HQ, design and implement risk-informed and conflict-sensitive humanitarian programmes that build and strengthen national and local capacities and systems from the start of humanitarian action to reduce needs, vulnerabilities of and risks to affected populations; and contribute to social cohesion and peace, where relevant and feasible
<p>GBV RISK MITIGATION</p> <p>1: Ending Gender-Based Violence.</p> <p>GBV prevention and risk mitigation for all is included in programmes, with a focus on the safety and resilience of girls and women</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ① Programmes are designed to prevent and mitigate the risks of GBV ① Coordination is established with GBV actors to ensure that GBV is mainstreamed in all sectors ① All sectors' frontline workers and personnel are trained and equipped with information on available GBV response services and referral procedures to support GBV survivors
<p>DISABILITIES</p> <p>1: Inclusive needs assessments, planning and monitoring</p> <p>The needs of children with disabilities and their caregivers are identified and reflected in planning and monitoring</p> <p>2: Inclusive and safe access to information and services</p> <p>Children with disabilities and their caregivers have safe access to humanitarian programmes</p> <p>3: Participation</p> <p>Children with disabilities participate in the design of programmes and in the decisions that affect their lives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ① Identification of risks and barriers faced by children with disabilities is included in needs assessments and analysis, and incorporated in humanitarian programme planning and monitoring ① Physical accessibility for children with disabilities is included in planning and design of humanitarian services and facilities ① Accessibility of communication and information for children with disabilities is incorporated in planning and design of humanitarian programmes ① Community-based mechanisms/platforms exist for the systematic engagement of children with disabilities
<p>LOCALIZATION</p> <p>Invest in strengthening the capacities of local actors (national and local authorities, CSOs and communities) in humanitarian action</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ① All COs, with the support of ROs/HQ, invest in strengthening institutional and technical capacity of local actors to deliver principled humanitarian response
<p>PSEA</p> <p>Deliver on UNICEF's commitment to protection from sexual exploitation and abuse.</p> <p>UNICEF has zero tolerance for sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) and is committed to the effective prevention and response to SEA, as set out in the Secretary-General's bulletin, Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (ST/SGB/2003/13) and the IASC Six Principles on related to SEA. [...] UNICEF partners are also obligated to promptly report allegations of SEA to UNICEF, in accordance with the United Nations Protocol on Allegations of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Involving Implementing Partners, and to meet the PSEA requirements outlined in UNICEF's Programme Cooperation Agreement (PCA).</p>	<p>All COs, with the support of ROs/HQ, establish processes to ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ① Every child and adult in humanitarian contexts have access to safe, child- and gender-sensitive reporting channel(s) to report SEA ① Every survivor is promptly referred for assistance in line with their needs and wishes (such as medical care, mental health and psychosocial support, legal assistance, reintegration support), as part of UNICEF's gender-based violence (GBV) and child protection programmes ① The prompt, safe and respectful investigation of SEA cases, is consistent with the wishes and best interest of every survivor

CENTRALITY OF PROTECTION (Global Standards and Principles)

Protection is the purpose and intended outcome of humanitarian action and must be central to preparedness efforts, as part of immediate and life-saving activities, and throughout the duration of humanitarian response and beyond. UNICEF commits to design and implement a humanitarian response that helps keep people with vulnerabilities from harm, protect them from violence, coercion and abuse, reduce the threats they face, minimize their exposure to these and increase their capacity to cope. The protection of all persons affected and at-risk is central to UNICEF decision-making and response, including UNICEF engagement with states and non-state parties to conflict.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- To ensure that crisis-affected populations are reached with safety and dignity and their diverse priorities reflected in the response, UNICEF shall adopt a people-centered approach and integrate Policy Commitments and Cross-Cutting Issues into the work of clusters/AoRs. These include accountability to affected populations (AAP), centrality of protection, localization, the humanitarian-development-peace (HDP) nexus, GBV risk mitigation and disability inclusion, as well as the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA)

ACTION	RESPONSIBLE	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
Recruit or deploy cluster/AoR coordination staff with knowledge and experience on PSEA, policy commitments and cross-cutting issues	C/AoR Coordinator supervisor HR Manager	
Address PSEA, policy commitments and cross-cutting issues in a coordinated manner through the internal inter-sectorial coordination committees and meetings	C/AoR Coordinator supervisor Deputy Representative – Programmes Chief of Field Operations/Emergency	See chapter on UNICEF Programmes and Cluster/AoRs
Appoint a focal point/specialist in CO to advise UNICEF-led clusters/AoR on better mainstreaming people-centered and accountability approaches in their work	Representative Deputy Representative - Programmes	Recommended good practices for the minimum structure of coordination teams at country level for UNICEF as a Cluster Lead Agency.
Champion a people-centered approach in HCT and ICCG meetings	Representative	
Ensure that SAGs are inclusive and organizations such as women-led organizations, youth-led organizations, organizations of people with disabilities, and local organizations are part of them	C/AoR Coordinator	
Oversee that cluster/AoR strategies, plans and monitoring frameworks take into account PSEA, policy commitments and cross-cutting issues	C/AoR Coordinator supervisor	
Oversee the implementation of the top 5 key actions for each of the 6 cluster/AoR core functions as described in the Practical Guide to Advancing Policy Commitments and Cross-cutting Issues ⁹⁶	C/AoR Coordinator supervisor C/AoR Coordinator	
Support partners to be part of inter-agency coordination structures for AAP and for GBV risk mitigation and for disability inclusion	Programme Chief	AAP Handbook
Advocate for local actors' participation in coordination mechanisms in which UNICEF is a key party, such as inter-cluster coordination groups and HCT; advocate for the HCT to have an AAP strategy reflected in the cluster strategies and HNO and HRP	Representative	AAP Handbook
Ensure coordination between the cluster/AoR and other interagency platforms on AAP, including engaging with the AAP Working Group (or Community Engagement Working Group or other denominations), which can support the cluster/AoR in promoting a collective community participation approach, collective information provision and messaging, and a collective complaints and feedback mechanism	C/AoR Coordinator	AAP Handbook
Ensure that Cluster/AoR Coordinators engage with development coordination mechanisms to foster linkages as relevant	C/AoR Coordinator C/AoR Coordinator supervisor	

96 At the time of writing the Guide was being approved. Contact [GCCS](#) for the final document.

Leverage UNICEF dual mandate and engagement with both humanitarian and development actors to create opportunities to connect humanitarian, development and peace actions	C/AoR Coordinator Programme Chief	Procedure on Humanitarian, Development and Peace Nexus
Clarify for both Cluster/AoR Coordinators and CO programme/field operations teams the role that clusters/AoRs can play in strengthening national systems and building national capacities	C/AoR Coordinator supervisor Deputy Representative – Programmes Chief Field Operations/Emergency	See Section on the strategic value of clusters/AoRs
Oversee clusters/AoR work on preparedness and contingency planning	C/AoR Coordinator supervisor	See chapter on preparedness
Where relevant, support multi-year humanitarian response strategies and inter-agency plans	Representative	
Strengthen government/authorities' capacities – especially for local governments – for coordination and information management so that they can co-lead clusters/AoRs at national and subnational levels, or at least participate actively and meaningfully in coordination mechanisms	Programme Chief	Technical note on Localization in Humanitarian Action for Children
Support local (national and sub-national) CSOs to initiate mechanisms that promote coordination among CSOs, such as CSO networks, for a or consortia	C/AoR Coordinator Programme Chief	Technical note on Localization in Humanitarian Action for Children
Support the mapping of local actors, including WLOs, organizations for people with disabilities, youth organizations and LGBTQI organizations to ensure diversity in cluster/AoR membership	C/AoR Coordinator Programme Chief	Technical note on Localization in Humanitarian Action for Children
Support local actors to access humanitarian funding, including country-based pool funds	C/AoR Coordinator Programme Chief	Technical note on Localization in Humanitarian Action for Children
Ensure effective coordination with government authorities in case of deactivation of clusters and transfer to them of humanitarian coordination responsibilities	C/AoR Coordinator	Technical note on Localization in Humanitarian Action for Children ; See chapter on deactivation
Support the institutionalization of the IASC Guidelines on Disability Inclusion; IASC PSEA guidelines; IASC GBV guidelines, gender handbook and other resources and measurement indicators on a people-centered approach; and integrate their recommendations into clusters/AoRs tools	C/AoR Coordinator	IASC GBV Guidelines IASC Guidelines on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities
Leverage existing (or potential) partnerships with Organizations of People with Disabilities (OPD), youth led organizations, women-led organizations to facilitate and support their participation in UNICEF-led clusters/AoR	Programme Chief	Disability Inclusive Humanitarian Toolkit
Ensure budget for people-centered humanitarian approaches and inclusion is considered in cluster/AoR plans and in resource mobilization processes and initiatives	C/AoR Coordinator	Disability Inclusive Humanitarian Toolkit ; AAP Handbook ; AAP helpdesk
If not existing, advocate at the HCT for the establishment of a disability focal point, focal agency or task force to represent disability issues in humanitarian coordination mechanisms	Representative	Disability Inclusive Humanitarian Toolkit
When establishing cluster or sector capacity, identify, create and foster partnerships with government stakeholders and civil society organizations that have expertise on disability, gender, GBV and/or representing marginalized group	C/AoR Coordinator Programme Chief	Disability Inclusive Humanitarian Toolkit
Support the RC/HC and UNCT/ HCT to establish or strengthen a PSEA Network, including coordination and co-chair functions, to scale up PSEA from the outset of the emergency response.	Representative	Emergency Handbook: Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) in Humanitarian Action: A UNICEF Handbook (draft)

Integrate IASC PSEA core activities and indicators in the HRP and/or any other relevant IA response plan (including clusters/AoR ones), with requisite funding requirements included to establish IA PSEA systems.	C/AoR Coordinator C/AoR Coordinator supervisor Chief of Field Operations/Emergency	Emergency Handbook
In collaboration with the IA PSEA Network, ensure that SOPs or a protocol on IA reporting and referral is established and rolled out at the outset of the emergency response. The SOPs or protocol should connect with IA community-based complaint mechanisms for PSEA.	C/AoR Coordinator C/AoR Coordinator supervisor	Emergency Handbook

USEFUL LINKS

- ① ICON pages:
 - [Centrality of Protection](#)
 - [AAP page](#) and [AAP Commitment page](#)
 - [Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus and Humanitarian-Development-Peace \(HDP\) Nexus](#)
 - [Localization and Localisation](#)
 - [GBViE](#)
 - [Disability](#)
 - [PSEA](#) and [PSEA in Emergency Response](#)
- ① Procedures: [Procedure on Humanitarian development, and peace nexus](#)
- ① Guidance: [Emergency Handbook, AAP Handbook, HPC Toolkit on GBV Risk Mitigation for UNICEF-Led Clusters and AoRs and matching matrices; Guidance for Risk-Informed Programming \(GRIP\); Technical note on Localization in Humanitarian Action for Children; Disability Inclusive Humanitarian Toolkit ; Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse \(PSEA\) in Humanitarian Action: A UNICEF Handbook](#) (draft)
- ① Tools:
 - [Tip sheet to integrate localization in HNO and HRP](#)
 - [Mainstreaming accountability to affected population and core people-related issues in the humanitarian programme cycle through the cluster system](#)
 - HPC toolkit on GBV risk mitigation for UNICEF-led clusters/AoRs: [CP](#), [Nutrition](#), [WASH](#), [Education](#)
 - [Quality check-list for cross-cutting themes in HNO/HRP](#)
 - [Essential actions on disability-inclusive humanitarian action](#)
- ① Other resources:
 - [IASC Collective AAP Framework](#) (draft, 2021)
 - [Inter-Agency Toolkit on Localization in Humanitarian Coordination](#)
 - [IASC Guidance. Inclusion of persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action](#)
 - AGORA Course: [An Introduction to the HDP Nexus for AoRs/clusters/sectors](#)
 - [Update on UNICEF humanitarian action with a focus on linking humanitarian and development programming](#)
 - CP AoR, Good practice [Accelerating Local and National NGOs leadership in Humanitarian Coordination mechanisms](#)
 - [Guidance on strengthening disability inclusion in Humanitarian Response Plans](#)
 - [IASC GBV Guidelines](#)
 - [IASC Guidelines on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities](#)
 - [IASC Six Core Principles Relating to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse](#)
 - [IASC PSEA](#)

POLICY COMMITMENTS AND CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

In its effort to ensure that crisis-affected populations are reached with safety and dignity and their diverse priorities reflected in the response, UNICEF has developed an approach to **integrate Policy Commitments and Cross-Cutting Issues into the work of clusters/AoRs**. These commitments and issues include: **accountability to affected populations (AAP), centrality of protection, localization, the humanitarian-development-peace (HDP) nexus, GBV risk mitigation and disability inclusion.**

As a CLA, UNICEF has a leading role in integrating cross-cutting issues and policy commitments in the HPC. The present chapter is based on the upcoming “UNICEF Practical Guide to Advancing Policy Commitments and Cross-Cutting Issues”⁹⁷, as well as on other UNICEF

⁹⁷ At the time of writing the Guide was being approved. Contact [GCCS](#) for the final document.

guidance the 6 topics, and extrapolates the role of the CO around these policies commitments and cross-cutting issues when leading and supporting cluster/AoR coordination; it does not discuss the integration of these topics in UNICEF programming.

This unified approach aims at bringing **synergies to the different policy commitments and cross-cutting issues, recognizing the importance of them all in advancing safe, accountable, inclusive and impactful programming**. Rather than having siloed, and sometimes competing guidance separately for Centrality of Protection, AAP, nexus working, localization, GBV risk mitigation, and disability inclusion, these issues are brought together holistically.⁹⁸

This approach is a **people-centered approach**: it ensures that “humanitarian actors are held accountable to affected populations by using an intersectional approach to identifying and responding to the needs, capacities and risks of the affected population in all their diversity; and enabling the leadership of affected populations and their representative organizations.”⁹⁹

THE LINKAGES BETWEEN THE SIX POLICY COMMITMENTS AND CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

In the table below we define briefly the six policy commitments and cross-cutting issues:¹⁰⁰

POLICY COMMITMENTS AND CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES



COP:

For clusters, centrality of protection means protection mainstreaming: ensuring that clusters support members to put in place practical actions that ensure all people, and particularly those most vulnerable, marginalized and excluded, are protected through humanitarian action



AAP:

Each member of the cluster has their own responsibility for ensuring accountability to affected populations, including children, within their programmes, so clusters have the responsibility to ensure that accountability is considered, implemented, and harmonized across cluster / sector-specific interventions and programmes.



HDP Nexus:

Clusters are fundamentally established to respond to humanitarian crises, and this remains, until de-activation of the cluster, the core role and mandate of the cluster. However, where it is possible to contribute to longer-term development, particularly through building the capacity of national and local actors and ensuring increased funding to local actors, this should be embraced.



LOCALIZATION:

Meaningful engagement of local actors is critical for effective humanitarian coordination. Many of the barriers inhibiting local actors from meaningfully and more frequently participating in coordination mechanisms are rooted in practical obstacles. Clusters should take steps to understand and address the barriers for local actors' participation in coordination by proactively reaching out to key actors. For example, local NGO forums and networks, and particularly local user-led organizations such as women-led organizations (WLOs) and organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs), development actors involved in response, academia, diaspora, private sector, and faith-based organizations.

Local actors should be respected and strong members of clusters, and in leadership positions of co-ordination.



GBV RISK MITIGATION:

All clusters are responsible for ensuring that all cluster members have a consistent and comprehensive understanding of the specific GBV risk mitigation measures necessary for the sector and to support all cluster members to incorporate these measures into all interventions for safe and accountable programming. All clusters and sub-clusters are also responsible for promoting the use of the IASC GBV Guidelines.



DISABILITY INCLUSION:

All clusters are responsible for ensuring that partners understand the criticality of reaching and including persons with disabilities, which includes those with physical, mental, intellectual and sensory disabilities. They also need to ensure that partners understand the minimum key actions for disability inclusion. This is not just about reducing risk and exclusion for persons with disabilities, but finding entry points to ensure persons with disabilities are viewed by responders and the community as contributors: accessing employment and leadership positions equal to persons without disabilities.

98 UNICEF (2023, draft), Practical Guide to Advancing Policy Commitments and Cross-Cutting Issues

99 UNICEF (2023, draft), Practical Guide to Advancing Policy Commitments and Cross-Cutting Issues

100 Table adapted from UNICEF (2023, draft), Practical Guide to Advancing Policy Commitments and Cross-Cutting Issues

All of the policy commitments and cross-cutting issues rely on the other commitments and issues to be implemented effectively for safe, accountable, inclusive, and impactful programming. The below table highlights how at a glance:¹⁰¹

	CoP	AAP	NEXUS	LOCALIZATION	GBV RISK MITIGATION	DISABILITY INCLUSION
CoP		Centrality of Protection is only operationalized through meaningful and purposeful engagement with local communities.	System strengthening and ensuring equitable and protected access to services has a direct link to the concept upon which CoP is founded.	Local actors have critical knowledge and experience to offer in terms of understanding community power dynamics and providing key insights to protection mainstreaming.	GBV risk mitigation is a key component of protection mainstreaming.	Ensuring everyone is protected, including persons with disabilities, and recognizing vulnerabilities, is a key component of protection mainstreaming.
AAP	Centrality of Protection is only operationalized through meaningful and purposeful engagement with local communities.		For systems strengthening, and ensuring equal, equitable, and inclusive access for all population groups to services that respond to needs, AAP is critical.	Engagement with local communities is central to localization.	Strong AAP programming – strong feedback systems, including for PSEA, is critical for GBV risk mitigation programming. Further, core elements of GBV risk mitigation, including a strong gender / power analysis, are critical for effective and inclusive AAP systems.	Being accountable to all different groups within the community, and especially those with specific vulnerabilities such as people with disabilities, is central to safe and accountable programming.
NEXUS	Part of the nexus is systems strengthening, ensuring equitable and protected access.	For systems strengthening, and ensuring equal, equitable, and inclusive access for all population groups to services, AAP is critical.		Localization is the key nexus approach.	Working with local WLOs and WROs is crucial to promoting humanitarian development collaboration and GBV risk mitigation contributes to more equal ongoing development.	Ensuring equitable and protected access while strengthening systems requires a strong disability inclusion-lens.
LOCALIZATION	Local actors have critical knowledge and experience to offer in terms of understanding community power dynamics and can provide key insights to centrality of protection goals.	Engagement with local communities is central to localization.	Localization is the key nexus approach.		Working with local WLOs and WROs is a key approach to achieving effective and sustainable GBV risk mitigation and risk reduction.	The meaningful engagement of local actors for disability-inclusive programming can ensure that more disability-friendly services and structures become embedded in national systems.
GBV RISK MITIGATION	GBV risk mitigation is a key component of protection mainstreaming.	Core elements of GBV risk mitigation, including a strong gender / power analysis, are critical for effective and inclusive AAP systems.	Working with local WLOs and WROs is crucial within the nexus and GBV risk mitigation contributes to more equal ongoing development.	Engaging diverse local WLOs and WROs is an essential element to the delivery of effective humanitarian programming.		Engaging diverse local WLOs and WROs including women and girls with disabilities in GBV risk mitigation activities is a critical element for supporting effective GBV mainstreaming.
DISABILITY INCLUSION	Ensuring everyone is protected, including persons with disabilities, and recognizing vulnerabilities, is a key component of protection mainstreaming	Being accountable to all different groups within the community, and especially those with specific vulnerabilities such as people with disabilities is central to safe and accountable programming	Part of nexus is systems strengthening, ensuring equitable and protected access – links to inclusion, links to disability inclusion.	The meaningful engagement of local actors for disability-inclusive programming can ensure that more disability-friendly services and structures become embedded in national systems.	Engaging diverse local WLOs and WROs including women and girls with disabilities in GBV risk mitigation activities and decision-making is critical.	

101 For a more detailed discussion refer to the UNICEF (2023, draft), Practical Guide to Advancing Policy Commitments and Cross-Cutting Issues

THE ROLE OF THE CLA

For the CLA, integrating policy commitments and cross-cutting issues means creating or favouring the conditions by which clusters/AoRs can accomplish what was described in the section above.

Examples of actions the CLA can take are:

- ① Engaging cluster/AoR coordination staff with knowledge and experience on the 6 topics (as it is highly unlikely that one person will have experience on all of them, a combination of skills across the coordination team is the most feasible option; this should be taken into consideration both in **surge** and **recruitment** processes);
- ① Addressing policy commitments and cross-cutting issues in a coordinated manner through the internal **inter-sectorial coordination meetings**; for example by having one standing agenda item for discussion of these topics;
- ① Championing a people-centered approach in HCT and ICCG meetings;
- ① Ensuring that SAGs are inclusive and organizations such as women-led organizations, organizations of people with disabilities, and other local organizations are part of them;
- ① Overseeing that cluster/AoR strategies, plans and monitoring frameworks take into account policy commitments and cross-cutting issues;

Overseeing that policy commitments and cross-cutting issues are addressed in all phases of the HPC – for this, CO should refer to the top 5 key actions for each of the 6 cluster/AoR core functions as described in the Practical guide.¹⁰²



In addition to the overarching responsibilities listed above, **specifically on AAP**, among the responsibilities of the CO as CLA, the **AAP Framework** highlights:

- ① Supporting partners to be part of inter-agency coordination structures for AAP, particularly by freeing up resources to make participation feasible;
- ① Advocating for local actors' participation in coordination mechanisms in which UNICEF is a key party, such as inter-cluster coordination groups and HCTs (in addition to clusters/AoRs);
- ① Supporting full interagency collaboration on AAP including engaging with the AAP Working Group (or Community Engagement Working Group or other denominations), promoting a common complaint and feedback mechanism (UNICEF as lead/co-lead of 4 clusters/AoR has a great influence in making this happen), advocating for the HCT to have an AAP strategy reflected in the HNO and HRP.



Specifically on the **HDP nexus**, the CO as CLA is responsible for:

- ① Ensuring that Cluster/AoR Coordinators engage with development coordination mechanisms to foster linkages as relevant;
- ① Leveraging UNICEF dual mandate¹⁰³ and engagement with both humanitarian and development actors to create opportunities to connect humanitarian, development and peace actions;
- ① Clarifying for both Cluster/AoR Coordinators and CO programme teams the role that clusters/AoRs can play in strengthening national systems and building national capacities;
- ① Overseeing clusters/AoR work on **preparedness** and contingency planning;
- ① Establishing and managing coordination in a way that reinforces the capacity of government

¹⁰² UNICEF (2023, draft), Practical Guide to Advancing Policy Commitments and Cross-Cutting Issues. Contact **GCSS** for the final version of the guide.

¹⁰³ UNICEF (2022), **Procedure on Humanitarian, Development and Peace Nexus**

and local actors, and that fosters linkages between humanitarian and development action and ensures conflict sensitivity and contributions to peace;¹⁰⁴

- ④ Where relevant, supporting multi-year humanitarian response strategies and inter-agency plans. These strategies and plans that dovetail with longer-term development plans to reduce people's needs, risks and vulnerabilities, and increase their resilience; and working towards United Nations Development Assistance Framework plans that are more strategic, focused on the most vulnerable children and communities, anchored in human rights standards, aligned with national priorities, and based on common needs assessments and analyses.



On **localization**, the [Technical Note on Localization in Humanitarian Action for Children](#) recommends seven actions for cluster/AoRs;¹⁰⁵ in order to support these actions UNICEF CO should:

- ④ Strengthen government/authorities' capacities – especially for local governments – for coordination and information management so that they can co-lead clusters/AoRs at national and subnational levels, or at least participate actively and meaningfully in coordination mechanisms;
- ④ Support local (national and sub-national) CSOs to initiate mechanisms that promote coordination among CSOs, such as CSO networks, for a or consortia;
- ④ Support the mapping of local actors, including including WLOs, organizations for people with disabilities, youth organizations and LGBTQI organizations to ensure diversity in cluster/AoR membership;
- ④ Support local actors to access humanitarian funding, including country-based pool funds;
- ④ Ensure effective coordination with government authorities in case of **deactivation** of clusters and transfer to them of humanitarian coordination responsibilities.

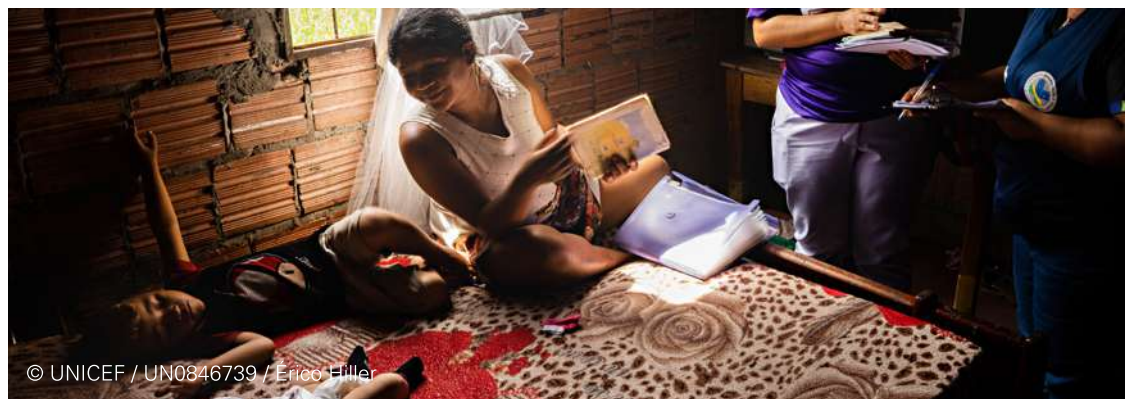


UNICEF has developed a toolkit¹⁰⁶ to ensure **GBV risk mitigation** in HPC for each of the four clusters/AoR it leads. Overall, the CO as CLA has the following additional responsibilities:

- ④ Considering the recruitment of a GBV specialist to support all UNICEF clusters/AoRs;
- ④ Supporting institutionalization of the IASC GBV guidelines, gender handbook and other GBV risk mitigation resources and measurement indicators; and integrating the recommendations of the GBV guidelines into clusters/AoRs tools.



- ④ Finally, on **disability inclusion** UNICEF should:
- ④ Leverage existing (or potential) partnerships with Organizations of People with Disabilities (OPD) to facilitate and support their participation in UNICEF-led clusters/AoRs;



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104 UNICEF (2018), [Update on UNICEF humanitarian action with a focus on linking humanitarian and development programming](#)

105 See recommended actions for clusters/AoRs on the Technical Note on Localization, p.16.

106 The toolkit is included in the "Useful links" box at the beginning of the chapter.

- ④ Ensure budget for inclusion is considered in cluster/AoR plans and in resource mobilization processes and initiatives;
- ④ If not existing, advocate at the HCT for the establishment of a disability focal point, focal agency or task force to represent disability issues in humanitarian coordination mechanisms (for instance, in existing clusters or working groups).
- ④ When establishing cluster or sector capacity, identify, create and foster partnerships with government stakeholders and civil society organizations that have expertise on disability, including NGOs, disability service providers and organizations of people with disabilities.

PROTECTION FROM SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE (PSEA)

Sexual exploitation and abuse of affected community members by anyone associated with the provision of aid constitutes one of the most serious breaches of humanitarian accountability. It is a serious protection concern and erodes the confidence and trust of affected communities and other stakeholders (in all those providing assistance. This is why **Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)** is an essential issue of accountability.

Cluster/AoR coordination teams can play a key role to discuss and identify risks and integrate prevention strategies into cluster/AoR strategies and work plans, and advocate that all cluster members have appropriate mechanisms in place to deal with any issues of exploitation and abuse. Clusters/AoRs can also promote integration of GBV risk mitigation as a practical and tangible way of reducing SEA-related risks, and they can ensure that issues are brought to the attention of the appropriate stakeholders for action, such as the Humanitarian Coordinator.

Protection from SEA at country level is led by the Humanitarian Coordinator and the HCT; UNICEF as a key member of the HCT, and as CLA has an important role to play. The [Emergency Procedures](#) and the [UNICEF Handbook on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse \(PSEA\) in Humanitarian Action](#) highlight the role that UNICEF COs can have in protecting communities from SEA, setting up or strengthening the PSEA Network, and advancing its key actions. **UNICEF as an HCT member and as a CLA can support the PSEA network** by:¹⁰⁷

- ④ Appointing a PSEA focal point and select co-chairs for the PSEA Network (UNICEF PSEA focal point should seek to co-chair the PSEA network, where possible);
- ④ Keeping the HCT (and similar platforms) engaged throughout the entire process, for example by placing PSEA as a standing item on the HCT's agenda;
- ④ Ensuring Cluster/AoR Coordinators (and especially the CP AoR Coordinator) participate in the PSEA network, in order to improve two-way coordination between clusters/AoR/sectors and the network and to support prevention and response to SEA;
- ④ Integrating PSEA core activities and indicators in the HRP and/or any other relevant interagency response plan (including clusters/AoR ones), with requisite funding requirements included to establish interagency PSEA systems.
- ④ Ensuring that SOPs or a protocol on interagency reporting and referral is established and rolled out at the outset of the emergency response. The SOPs or protocol should connect with interagency community-based complaint mechanisms for PSEA.

¹⁰⁷ Adapted from the In-country PSEA Network Generic ToRs, UNICEF Emergency Procedures and the UNICEF Handbook on PSEA in Humanitarian Action.

9. Inter-cluster coordination

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ① UNICEF participates in ICCG through Cluster/AoR Coordinators, and can also influence it through the HCT, to which the ICCG reports.
- ① UNICEF can leverage its dominant position as the lead of four clusters/AoR to ensure that all cross-sectoral opportunities are taken to respond to the needs of children.
- ① UNICEF COs should play a proactive, strong role in interagency cash coordination and are encouraged where relevant and possible to become programmatic co-chair of the CWG.
- ① Until a clearer division of labour is established, UNICEF should seek clarity within the HCT/ICCG on the division of roles and responsibilities between CWG and clusters/AoR.

ACTION	RESPONSIBLE	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
Advocate in the HCT, as necessary, for improved inter-cluster coordination to address key strategic issues with the multi-cluster approach	Representative	
Participate in CWG meetings and activities as needed	C/AoR Coordinator	Cash Coordination Model
Designate or recruit a Humanitarian Cash Transfer Specialist or Focal Point (P3/NOC or above) to provide technical expertise to emergency and programme colleagues, as well as coordinating internal and/or interagency initiatives and cluster-related HCTs activities	Deputy Representative - Programmes HR Manager	Emergency Handbook
Promote the use of Humanitarian Cash Transfers, both from a sector and multisectoral perspective, in HCT and cluster/AoRs	Representative C/AoR Coordinator	HCTs guidance
Seek clarity on the division of labour between clusters/AoRs and the Cash Working Group by discussing it in the HCT and ICCG/CWG, and determining a division of labour adapted to the country context	Representative C/AoR Coordinator	
If relevant and possible, take a leadership role in the CWG as programmatic lead	Representative	
When recruiting C/AoR Coordinators, include knowledge and experience about HCTs in the profile	C/AoR Coordinator supervisor HR Manager	

USEFUL LINKS

- ① ICON page: [HCT Resource Site](#)
- ① Guidance: [UNICEF Humanitarian Cash Transfer Programme Guidance](#) (chapter on Coordination), [Emergency Handbook](#)
- ① Other resources:
 - [IASC Cash Coordination Model](#)

INTER-CLUSTER COORDINATION



Inter-cluster coordination is the mechanism through which clusters come together at national and sub-national levels to coordinate the response through each stage of the HPC. Usually the **Inter-Cluster Coordination Group (ICCG)** is mandated for said role. The ICCG is accountable to the HC and reports to the HCT through OCHA. ICCGs can also be established at sub-national level.

Inter-cluster coordination facilitates multi-cluster responses by ensuring strategic and operational synergies between clusters/AoRs to address particular issues. For example:

- ④ education and WASH cluster collaboration to address the school dropout of adolescent girls;
- ④ education cluster and CP AoR ensuring school safety;
- ④ education, nutrition, CP and health clusters/AoR on school feeding, to ensure health as biological prerequisite for education and protection against risks;
- ④ food security, health, nutrition and WASH clusters to address malnutrition.

Inter-cluster coordination can provide a platform for discussion on cross-cutting issues, centrality of protection, accountability to affected populations, and the ICCG is also accountable for overall cash coordination within the newly established cash coordination model.¹⁰⁸



Cluster/AoR Coordinators are members of the ICCG, while CLAs usually are not; however **UNICEF can influence the ICCG through the HCT.** As an agency, UNICEF leads/co-leads four of the clusters/AoR and therefore brings a significant contribution to inter-cluster work. **UNICEF can leverage this dominant position in the humanitarian coordination system to ensure that all cross-sectoral opportunities are taken for the protection and advancement of children's rights in humanitarian response.**¹⁰⁹ Also, if technical or other issues arise that require inputs, resources or other engagement by the CLA (beyond what Cluster/AoR Coordinators can provide), these need to be brought from the ICCG to the HCT and discussed at the HCT; similarly, the Representative should raise these concerns with the HCT whenever they appear.

CASH COORDINATION MECHANISMS

Given the steady rise of Humanitarian Cash Transfers (HCTs) in emergencies, a cash coordination mechanism has developed over the years; a new model has been approved by IASC in 2022. **UNICEF COs are encouraged to play a strong role in cash coordination,** and the new model for Cash Coordination presents an opportunity for a strong engagement of the organization.¹¹⁰

At country level, the **Cash Coordination Model** is organized as follows:

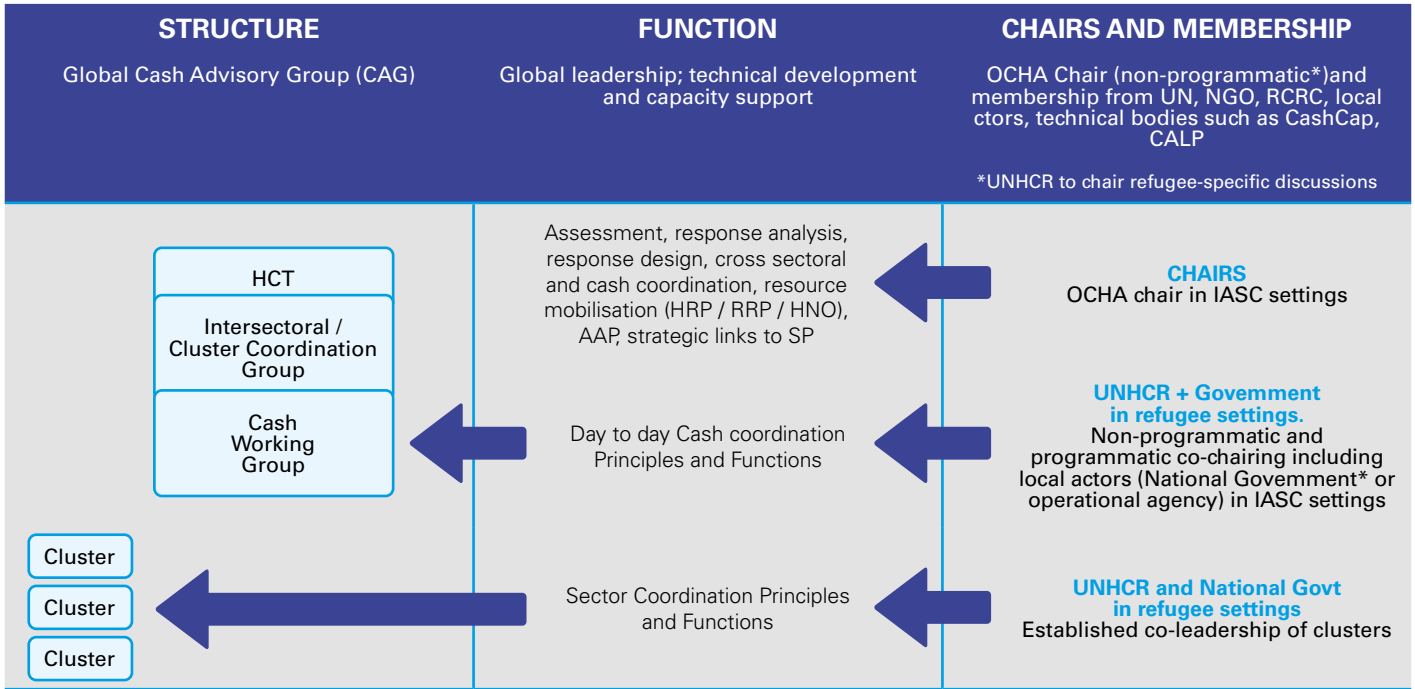
- ④ The ICCG, under the existing chair (OCHA for IASC coordination or UNHCR for refugee coordination arrangements), is responsible for overall cash coordination. **The ICCG is the forum for strategic coordination around cash and it is crucial for UNICEF to be part of it;**
- ④ A Cash Working Group (CWG) is established, reporting to the ICCG and mandated to manage day-to-day coordination. CWGs have nonprogrammatic and programmatic co-chairs, including from local organisations and local governments. Sub-national CWG can be

¹⁰⁸ IASC (2022), Cash Coordination Model.

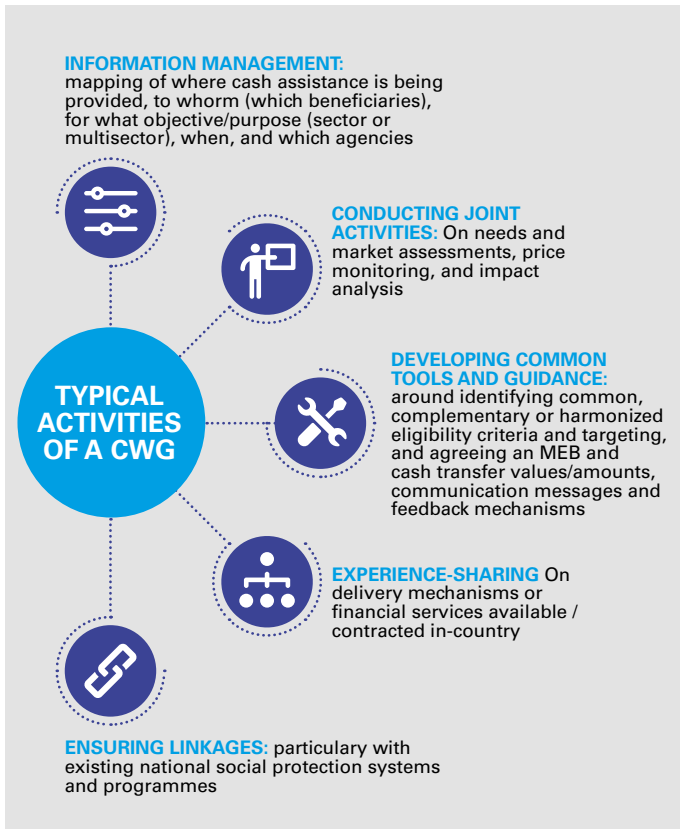
¹⁰⁹ Within UNICEF, this is reflected in the internal intersectoral coordination, discussed in [this chapter](#).

¹¹⁰ This chapter does not discuss the use of Humanitarian Cash Transfers by UNICEF as a humanitarian actor, but rather the interaction with cash coordination mechanisms within the humanitarian architecture. For more guidance on HCT as an implementation modality see the [Humanitarian Cash Transfers Field Guidance](#)

established as needed. **UNICEF COs are encouraged where possible to take the role of programmatic co-chair.**



① The CWG and ICCG are responsible for multisectoral or multi-purpose cash. **Clusters/sectors/AoRs coordination teams remain responsible for the overall coordination of the assessment, planning, reporting, implementation and monitoring of the respective sectoral response’s cash components.**



The image on the side¹¹¹ shows a CWG’s typical activities. The IASC model does not elaborate in detail on the relation between CWG and clusters, or with CLAs, and on respective roles and responsibilities. However, it provides some indications:

- ① The Cash Working Group should have **strong links to the clusters and sectors, who should be represented in its membership** and will continue to remain responsible for cash relating to their sectoral responses;
- ① The Cash Working Group should have **clear lines of accountability with programmatic agencies** – it should be clear what support and services it will provide and what engagement and information it will require from them;
- ① Among the functions of the CWG for which clusters/AoRs are mentioned, there are (*emphasis added*):
 - Providing effective information management (including protection of data privacy) on the delivery of cash assistance, across the response, and *in close collaboration with clusters* and their IMO for sector-specific use of cash;

111 UNICEF (2021), UNICEF Humanitarian Cash Transfers Field Guidance.

- Reviewing capacity building requirements of CWG members, *clusters*, local actors and government partners and develop strategies for addressing gaps in skills and knowledge.

In absence of a clear definition of the roles and responsibilities between CWG and cluster/AoRs, UNICEF COs are encouraged to seek such clarity by discussing it in the HCT and in the ICCG/CWG and determining a division of labour adapted to the country context.

UNICEF COs should play a proactive role in inter-agency cash coordination:

- ① UNICEF, as both CLA and humanitarian actor that implements HCTs, needs to ensure **consistency and coordination** between these aspects of its work. Have a common, agreed approach to HCTs between UNICEF programmatic response and UNICEF-led clusters/AoR;
- ① Ensure **dedicated capacity in the CO** (either by hiring or by getting support from ROs/ERTs) for support to programmes and to UNICEF-led clusters/AoRs. Strong internal capacity on HCTs will translate in technical support to clusters/AoRs on HCTs and into a better integration of HCTs in cluster/AoR work;
- ① Ensure that UNICEF personnel engaged with HCTs **understands the role of clusters/AoRs and UNICEF CLA accountabilities**;
- ① As CLA, UNICEF's role is critical in **promoting the use of HCTs** among cluster/AoR members, both from a sector and multisectoral perspective; and in promoting the link with national social protection schemes.
- ① In humanitarian responses with a large cash component, the **Representative** should be knowledgeable about HCTs and informed about any issues pertaining to HCTs and clusters/AoRs to advocate about them in the HCT.



10. Partnership

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ① Within a cluster, Cluster/AoR members are equal partners to the CLA
- ① To maintain the credibility of UNICEF as CLA, UNICEF must ensure a clear separation of the role of the cluster/AoR lead and that of UNICEF as a donor to partners
- ① Strengthening capacities of partners is an advantage for the UNICEF CO, which will have a broader pool of potential implementing partners for response, better access to affected populations through these local partnerships, a timelier and better response, and a stronger membership of the cluster/AoR it leads.

ACTION	RESPONSIBLE	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
Engage with cluster/AoR members as equal partners (not as implementing partners) within the context of the Cluster/AoR	C/AoR Coordinator Programme Chief	Principles of Partnership
Maintain UNICEF's roles as CLA and donor clearly separate, even though a donor/grantee relationship exists with between some cluster/AoR members and UNICEF programmes	C/AoR Coordinator Programme Chief	
Strengthen capacity of cluster/AoR members who are also UNICEF implementing partners (especially local organizations) by adding a capacity strengthening component to the partnership agreements	Programme Chief	

USEFUL LINKS

- ① Other resources:
 - [Principles of Partnership](#)

CLUSTER/AOR MEMBERS AS PARTNERS

Within the context of clusters/AoRs and for the purposes of this manual, we look at cluster/AoR members as **partners**, not in the connotation of “implementing partners” but in its original meaning – an entity that takes part with another in doing something. **Cluster/AoR members are partners that jointly define and pursue objectives established in the HRP and in cluster/AoR strategies and plans, and they are equal partners to the CLA in this endeavour.** What guides clusters/AoRs are the [Principles of Partnership](#):



EQUALITY

Equality requires mutual respect between members of the partnership irrespective of size and power. The participants must respect each other's mandates, obligations and independence and recognize each other's constraints and commitments. Mutual respect must not preclude organizations from engaging in constructive dissent.



TRANSPARENCY

Transparency is achieved through dialogue (on equal footing), with an emphasis on early consultations and early sharing of information. Communications and transparency, including financial transparency, increase the level of trust among organizations.



RESULT-ORIENTED APPROACH

Effective humanitarian action must be reality-based and action-oriented. This requires result-oriented coordination based on effective capabilities and concrete operational capacities.



RESPONSIBILITY

Humanitarian organizations have an ethical obligation to each other to accomplish their tasks responsibly, with integrity and in a relevant and appropriate way. They must make sure they commit to activities only when they have the means, competencies, skills, and capacity to deliver on their commitments. Decisive and robust prevention of abuses committed by humanitarians must also be a constant effort



COMPLEMENTARITY

The diversity of the humanitarian community is an asset if we build on our comparative advantages and complement each other's contributions. Local capacity is one of the main assets to enhance and on which to build. Whenever possible, humanitarian organizations should strive to make it an integral part in emergency response. Language and cultural barriers must be overcome.

Co-leadership or co-coordination with international and local NGOs reinforces the sense of partnership within clusters/AoRs and contributes to a more equal stance among organizations.

It can also be the case (as often is) that cluster/AoR members are also programme **implementing partners**¹¹² to UNICEF. This dual role of UNICEF as CLA and donor could bring in power dynamics affecting partner perceptions of UNICEF and its performance as CLA, but also their willingness and ability to openly engage in coordination.¹¹³ For example, fear of funding cuts or a sense of respect for their donor may make it hard for partners to openly speak out about what is going wrong with the response in front of their programme counterparts; yet this information may be critical to the success of the sectoral response and enable timely corrective action.



For the effective functioning of the cluster/AoR and to maintain UNICEF's credibility as CLA, **these two roles (CLA and donor) must remain separate**, to avoid the perception of conflict of interest, or unfair treatment of partners, which would delegitimize UNICEF as CLA and the Cluster/AoR Coordinators themselves.¹¹⁴ For this reason, any discussion regarding the implementing partnership should happen between the UNICEF Programme officer and the partner, and not involve the Cluster/AoR Coordinator, who should not represent UNICEF as a donor, only UNICEF as a CLA.

STRENGTHENING CAPACITIES

Another important role the CO can play towards clusters/AoR is to strengthen the overall humanitarian community by **strengthening the institutional and technical capacities of local and national cluster/AoR partners**. It is a medium- to long-term endeavour which can bring excellent results over time; by including a capacity strengthening component in its humanitarian partnerships¹¹⁵ – especially with local organizations – **UNICEF can contribute to the overall strengthening of the humanitarian community and can contribute to localization and local leadership of humanitarian action**. Capacity strengthening can focus on different areas, for example technical sectorial issues, data management, leadership in humanitarian action, gender equality, needs assessments, and many other subjects; capacity strengthening can be done with

112 For guidance on 'implementing partners' refer to the **Programme Implementation Handbook** and to the 'CSO implementing partnership' chapter in the **Emergency Handbook**.

113 UNICEF (2022), Evaluation of the UNICEF Role as Cluster Lead (Co-Lead) Agency (CLARE II).

114 The CLARE II review highlights how this perception may exist in some contexts, and regardless of it being based on facts or not, its existence affects the credibility of the organization as CLA.

115 In this case we are referring to implementing partnerships.

different modalities, beyond traditional training methods, for example by coaching local actors to develop institutional capacities and not just technical ones; through continuous support provided to implementing partners who are under contractual arrangement with UNICEF (for example on logistics, administration, finance). Capacities might also be available with other cluster/AoR members and with OCHA, and the cluster/AoR can play a facilitating role by supporting intra-cluster capacity strengthening.



As explained in the “Technical note on localization”: “Through its strategic plan 2022-2025, UNICEF is committed to building capacity, leveraging resources, and influencing policies and programmes through partnerships, including with civil society organisations.

Externally, through the Grand Bargain commitments, UNICEF has committed to:

1. Increase and support multi-year investment in the institutional capacities of local and national responders, including preparedness, response and coordination capacities, especially in fragile contexts and where communities are vulnerable to armed conflicts, disasters, recurrent outbreaks and the effects of climate change.
2. Remove or reduce barriers that prevent organizations and donors from partnering with local and national responders, in order to lessen their administrative burden.
3. Support and complement national coordination mechanisms where they exist and include local and national responders in international coordination mechanisms as appropriate and in keeping with humanitarian principles.
4. Achieve by 2023 a global, aggregated target of at least 25 per cent of humanitarian funding to local and national responders as directly as possible to improve outcomes for affected people and reduce transactional costs.

In addition, through inter-agency processes such as Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), UNICEF has committed to practical steps to enhance the participation, representation and leadership role of local and national actors in its humanitarian coordination mechanisms such as the clusters.”¹¹⁶

To ensure reliable programme implementation via partners, UNICEF’s emergency **preparedness** action should include technical and institutional capacity-strengthening for local partners, particularly current partners or those who have already signed a contingency programme document.¹¹⁷

Like all partnerships, local partnerships present risks; all relevant risk management measures that UNICEF puts in place remain valid, especially in complex settings where there are important financial and non-financial risks to take into consideration.

Strengthening partners directly benefits the CO, which will have a broader pool of potential partners for humanitarian response, better access to affected populations through these local partnerships, a timelier and better response, and a stronger membership of the cluster/AoR it leads. Strengthening capacities is better achieved in non-emergency times and therefore is an essential component to include in **preparedness**.

116 UNICEF (2021) Technical Note Localization in Humanitarian Action for Children

117 UNICEF (2020) Strengthening UNICEF’s Humanitarian Action. The Humanitarian Review: Findings and Recommendations

11. Preparedness

CORE COMMITMENTS	BENCHMARK
Improve humanitarian response through investing in preparedness with a focus on enabling effective and timely response, reducing costs and reaching the most vulnerable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All COs, ROs and HQ meet the Minimum Preparedness Standards (MPS) as per the UNICEF Procedure on Preparedness for Emergency Response and the Guidance Note on Preparedness for Emergency Response in UNICEF

KEY TAKEAWAYS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take into consideration cluster/AoR coordination in CO preparedness Ensure UNICEF-led clusters/AoRs participate as needed in interagency preparedness and complete their own sectoral preparedness

ACTION	RESPONSIBLE	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
Ensure CO risk analysis and corresponding scenarios take into consideration (if relevant) cluster activation or other forms of humanitarian coordination; and ensure preparedness actions take into consideration clusters/AoR where relevant (especially but not exclusive to MPS2, MPS4, MPS6, MPS7)	Chief of Field Operations/Emergency Deputy Representative - Programmes	EPP – Step 1 (Risk Analysis) EPP – Step 2 (Scenarios) EPP – Step 4 (MPS); Emergency Preparedness Procedure
Identify personnel within the CO who can build national capacity for sector/cluster coordination and sector-wide information management prior to, during and after an emergency and, if needed, temporarily coordinate UNICEF-led or co-led sectors	Representative	MPS 2; Emergency Handbook
Strengthen internal knowledge (especially with Programme Chiefs, managers and decision makers in the CO) on the cluster system and on UNICEF accountabilities as CLA	Chief of Field Operations/Emergency Deputy Representative - Programmes	
Ensure Cluster/AoR Coordinators and IMOs – as well as Chiefs of Section and Emergency Focal Points – have an induction session with the respective global clusters, where training options are discussed	Programme Chief Chief of Field Operations/Emergency C/AoR Coordinator supervisor	Emergency Handbook
Systems strengthening: Based on humanitarian principles, and where feasible, establish and maintain relationships with local actors/authorities. Strengthen the preparedness plans of local authorities through technical assistance, as required. This includes the existing and/or proposed coordination structures that will be used during a response, and in the event of a cluster activation and/or deactivation	Programme Chief	Emergency Handbook
If simulations are conducted, ensure to include cluster/AoR leadership role in the design (injects) and in the simulation exercise	Chief of Field Operations/Emergency	
Identify possible sources of funding for cluster/AoR coordination teams and cluster coordination activities; explore resource mobilization opportunities for cluster/AoR coordination through the Emergency Preparedness Funding Initiatives	Chief of Field Operations/Emergency Resource Mobilization Manager	

As member of the HCT, and particularly in high-risk countries, advocate for risk analysis, scenario developments, interagency preparedness, preparedness and/or contingency planning to be initiated/updated as relevant	Representative	IASC ERP Guidance
Oversee that cluster/AoR preparedness is completed and that UNICEF-led / co-led clusters/AoRs participate in interagency preparedness initiatives as required	C/AoR Coordinator supervisor	Emergency Handbook ; IASC ERP Guidance

USEFUL LINKS

- ① ICON page: [Risk Analysis and Emergency Preparedness](#)
- ① Procedure: [UNICEF Procedure on Preparedness for Emergency Response](#) (to be reviewed in 2023)
- ① Guidance: [Preparedness for Emergency Response in UNICEF Guidance Note 2016](#) and [EPP Help. Emergency Handbook. Guidance on Risk-Informed Programming \(GRIP\)](#)
- ① Tools: [MPS 2 – Humanitarian Coordination Template](#)
- ① Other resources:
 - [Emergency Preparedness Platform](#) (to be reviewed mid-2024)
 - [In-Depth Simulation Package](#) (includes clusters in the simulation scenarios)
 - Mozambique good practice showing how preparedness contributed to a faster cluster response [Mozambique – Emergency Preparedness in Action for Cyclone Response.pdf](#)
 - First Action Initiative (FAI) and Co-Funding Initiative [Emergency Preparedness Funding Initiatives](#)
 - [IASC ERP Guidance](#)
 - [AGORA Humanitarian Coordination Learning Channel](#)

Emergency preparedness facilitates a swifter, more effective response to humanitarian crises, helping UNICEF to deliver on the **CCCs** more rapidly and more efficiently, including on its coordination commitments.¹¹⁸ CO preparedness follows 4 steps: risk analysis, scenario definition, key elements of UNICEF response and preparedness actions.¹¹⁹ UNICEF COs are required to complete these steps in the **Emergency Preparedness Platform (EPP)**. For **humanitarian coordination** they implement **Minimum Preparedness Standard 2 (MPS2)**, based on the risks and scenarios identified in each country. The risk analysis and the scenarios developed should actively take into consideration the possibility of **cluster activation** or of **alternative forms of humanitarian coordination**, and prepare accordingly. Depending on the risk level (low, medium or high), COs are expected to complete preparedness actions against minimum benchmarks; benchmarks beyond the minimum are also established.

MPS 2 requires COs to map emergency coordination structures and to support the IASC Emergency Response Preparedness (ERP) if adopted by UNCT/HCT, for low-risk countries.

Further actions, shown in the table below, are required for COs with higher risk. The **EPP Help System** shows [how to complete MPS 2 \(Humanitarian Coordination\)](#).

While most MPSs can contribute to the fulfilment of CLA accountabilities, COs should pay particular attention to **MPS3 – Staff**

MPS 2 – Humanitarian Coordination: Humanitarian coordination mechanisms, leadership and tools agreed with the government (as feasible) and the inter-agency for sectors/areas of responsibility (AoR) globally led by UNICEF and capacities are built accordingly.

¹¹⁸ Analyses of the return on investment for UNICEF preparedness interventions in six humanitarian contexts found an average savings of more than \$4 for every \$1 invested, plus a response time faster by 12 days. UNICEF (2020) [Procedure On Preparedness For Emergency Response](#)

¹¹⁹ In completing these analyses and planning, UNICEF COs are guided by the principles of risk-informed programming. UNICEF Guidance on Risk-Informed Programming (GRIP) is available [here](#).

BENCHMARKS FOR COs IN LOW-RISK COUNTRIES	BENCHMARKS FOR COs IN MEDIUM RISK COUNTRIES	BENCHMARKS FOR COs IN HIGH-RISK COUNTRIES
2.1. Emergency coordination structures and potential emergency response organizations in the country mapped for UNICEF globally led sectors/AoR.	2.1. Emergency coordination structures and potential emergency response organizations in the country mapped for UNICEF globally led sectors/AoR.	2.1. Emergency coordination structures and potential emergency response organizations in the country mapped for UNICEF globally led sectors/AoR.
2.2. UNICEF-supported IASC Emergency Response Preparedness (ERP) if adopted by UNCT/HCT.	2.2. UNICEF-supported IASC Emergency Response Preparedness (ERP) if adopted by UNCT/HCT.	2.2. UNICEF-supported IASC Emergency Response Preparedness (ERP) if adopted by UNCT/HCT.
	2.3. Leadership/co-leadership of UNICEF globally led sectors/AoR for humanitarian coordination and information management agreed with UNCT/HCT and, as feasible, with government.	2.3. Leadership/co-leadership of UNICEF globally led sectors/AoR for humanitarian coordination and information management agreed with UNCT/HCT and, as feasible, with government.
		2.4. Multisectoral needs assessment tool for UNICEF-led sectors/AoR (and ideally for all other sectors) agreed with UNCT/HCT and, as feasible, with government.
		2.5. Roles and responsibilities for coordinated data collection agreed for UNICEF-led sectors/AoR feeding into cross-sectoral HCT/national processes
		2.6 Up-to-date inventory of sources for critical baseline data available (ref. latest IASC guidance)

Surge and Capacities in addition to **MPS2**, ensuring the inclusion of cluster/AoR coordination roles among staff surge considerations,¹²⁰ and strengthening CO capacity on humanitarian coordination and the cluster system.¹²¹ Other closely related preparedness actions include **MPS6 – Implementing Partners**, as many UNICEF partners will also be cluster/AoR members; **MPS4 – Supply and Logistics**, and **MPS7 – Resource Mobilization**, given that financial resources and supplies are essential in fulfilling the cluster lead role, notably as **Provider of Last Resort**.



These aspects of preparedness for cluster/AoR coordination should be kept in mind:

- **Internal capacity building.** Key staff at country office (management, chiefs of sections, supervisors of Cluster/AoR Coordinators) should be trained on the cluster approach and their responsibilities made clear in terms of supporting Cluster/AoR Coordinators; additionally and if feasible, programme and emergency staff should be trained to cover cluster functions, so that they can cover the role initially (in the most neutral way possible) until cluster/AoR coordination teams are on board either by surge or recruitment.
- **Surge.** External talent pipelines shall be built by COs as part of their preparedness;¹²²
- **Culture.** Promote a culture of collaboration and support to cluster/AoRs, in which programme sections welcome, support and complement this critical UNICEF accountability, and do not consider it a secondary responsibility;
- Prepare for proper **cluster/AoR coordination support**, including operational support, small funding for coordination activities, such as software for information management functions

¹²⁰ For the corresponding GJD, see chapter on **Human Resources**

¹²¹ The **Humanitarian Coordination Learning Channel** in AGORA provides several resources for capacity strengthening.

¹²² UNICEF (2022), Well Placed: A talent management strategy for cluster coordination and information management.

(like GIS), funding for meeting and coordination activities, travel for needs assessments and sub-national coordination, and so on;

- ④ **Supplies.** Calculate readiness supplies and scenario-based supplies not only for UNICEF but also considering its cluster/AoR lead role and PoLR accountability;
- ④ **Information management.** Prepare for data readiness, set up mechanisms for data collection, prepare tools for needs assessment and processing of data collected in advance. Programme sections should work with line ministries on information systems that are able to switch into emergency mode and provide high frequency data collection and analysis, as well as monitoring, as needed;
- ④ **Coordination with national/local authorities.** Programme sections should work with line ministries to agree on humanitarian coordination focal points with the right level of seniority and internal authority;
- ④ **Resource mobilization.** Some **emergency preparedness funding initiatives** might be used to support preparedness related to cluster coordination (except salary costs), for example the First Action Initiative (smaller amounts, with donor restrictions and generally limited to supply prepositioning) and the Co-Funding Initiative (larger amounts and generally non-earmarked).

INTERAGENCY PREPAREDNESS

UNICEF has committed to support the **interagency approach to preparedness**, which is organized around three elements:¹²³

1. Risk Analysis and Monitoring
2. Minimum Preparedness Actions
3. Advanced Preparedness Actions and Contingency Planning

Overall accountability for preparedness rests with the HC, but the clusters – and by extension CLAs – have an important role in ensuring preparedness is achieved. The following table shows the **responsibilities for preparedness in line with the ERP approach**.

CONTEXT	RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ERP	SUPPORT FROM GLOBAL CLUSTERS
Countries with an HC.	Clusters, AoRs and sectors under the leadership of the HC.	To monitor implementation of ERP and overall readiness, and support clusters and sectors, as necessary.
Countries with an RC but at high risk of emergencies and requiring international support.	Sectors under the guidance of the Resident Coordinator, supported by the CLA. The global cluster coordinator can be called on for support in the event of an imminent emergency.	To proactively support the RC and sector coordination mechanisms, encourage and support operationalization of the ERP strategy and prioritize immediate implementation of minimum preparedness actions. HQ and RO support may also be required.
Countries with an RC and at low risk of emergencies requiring international support.	Sectors under the guidance of the RC supported by the CLA.	Not expected to provide assistance unless specifically requested by the RC.

123 IASC (2015), Emergency Response Preparedness.

UNICEF as a sector or cluster lead is called to facilitate interagency preparedness in the sectors/ clusters it leads. **Interagency preparedness activities** include:

- ① Development of scenarios ranked by likelihood.
- ① Putting in place arrangements for assessment, including accessing and collating relevant pre-crisis information from all relevant sources. Pre-crisis data should be disaggregated by age and sex for better understanding of the various groups' situations when a crisis arises. It should also include maps and inventory of infrastructure, most likely sourced from monitoring and evaluation staff.
- ① Familiarizing Cluster/AoR Coordinators, Sector Coordinators, Information Managers, monitoring and evaluation staff, government and programme section staff with the mechanisms and procedures to provide emergency funding for key partners (e.g. the Consolidated Appeals Process, the Central Emergency Response Fund and SRP appeals).
- ① Identifying information needs and frequency and seek to build accountabilities, processes and systems for high frequency collection and analysis in case of an emergency, where possible minimizing parallel systems. Putting in place arrangements for information management, including establishing and aligning information management systems that are compatible with emergency information needs; identification of information management contact point(s) within monitoring and evaluation sections and line ministries.



- ① Identifying training needs for capacity-building on emergency preparedness and response (for government and cluster partner staff, including UNICEF's staff) and providing in-country (by UNICEF country, regional or global offices, or by expert consultants) or out-of-country training (UNICEF, OCHA, other specialized humanitarian training institutions).
- ① Preparing an inventory of materials that could be used for the emergency at country/regional level and pre-identifying suppliers and storage facilities.¹²⁴ Identify and disseminate standards for emergency response (for example NFI kit composition; type of technical assets or supplies depending on the context, etc.).
- ① In recent years, anticipatory action (AA) has become more and more important. An opportunity to advance policy and funding in support of child-centered AA. UNICEF can prioritize children within ongoing policy dialogue with humanitarian partners on collective approaches to AA, including on the development of agreed frameworks and triggers for droughts and dry spells, storms, floods and public health emergencies, leveraging its strong sectoral expertise and role as cluster lead agency, and role and presence within the humanitarian community.¹²⁵

124 IASC (2015), Emergency Response Preparedness.

125 UNICEF (2023), A Framework for UNICEF's anticipatory action.

12. Planning, programme implementation, monitoring and reporting

CORE COMMITMENTS	BENCHMARK
<p>3: Response planning</p> <p>Response plans are evidence-based and consistent with interagency planning. They address coverage, quality and equity, adapt to evolving needs, ensure conflict sensitivity and link humanitarian and development programming</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ① Planning is informed by evidence, including needs assessments, vulnerability analysis, pre-crisis data, learning from evaluations/ reviews, partner dialogue and feedback from affected populations ① Indicators and targets are identified, including high frequency indicators ① Ongoing needs assessment and monitoring plans are in place and reviewed twice a year, addressing coverage, quality, equity and “do no harm” ① Humanitarian and development programming are linked through preparedness, system strengthening, resilience and transition planning
<p>4: Monitoring</p> <p>The humanitarian situation and the coverage, quality and equity of the humanitarian response are monitored to inform ongoing corrective action and future planning processes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ① Progress against targets is regularly reported, including through high frequency indicators ① Structured field monitoring, including partner dialogue and feedback from affected populations, is undertaken in line with the UNICEF Field <p>MONITORING GUIDANCE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ① Situation Monitoring tracks evolving humanitarian needs at a frequency appropriate to the context ① Intended and unintended consequences³¹ are monitored, with a focus on equity and conflict sensitivity

KEY TAKEAWAYS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ① In Country Programme Planning (CPP), issues related to cluster/AoR coordination should be considered by countries with high risk of emergencies (of any kind) and countries with protracted crises. ① In countries where clusters/AoR are already activated, engage them to contribute to the planning process, through data and analysis, or by participating in relevant CPP of the steps ① Where new humanitarian needs arise due to deterioration or sudden-onset crises that require additional humanitarian/ emergency interventions, revise the existing work plan structure and include additional activities to respond to emerging needs, as a first option, or develop a new humanitarian plan if needed. In both cases, include leadership and humanitarian coordination. ① Monitor CLA accountabilities through the dedicated Cluster Monitoring Tool ① Ensure COs support the cluster information management function ① Streamline reporting and ensure that UNICEF Ips are not required to ‘double report’ to both eTools PRP and 4/5Ws. ① Report cluster/AoR leadership results and achievements in SitReps and COAR.

ACTION	RESPONSIBLE	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
Ensure inclusion of CLA role and accountabilities in relevant steps of the CPP	Representative Chief of PME	Core Standard Indicators

Participate as relevant in the different steps of the CPP (or facilitate cluster/AoR member participation), share data and analysis that can be useful for UNICEF strategic planning	C/AoR Coordinator	
Include CLA responsibilities/humanitarian coordination and relevant Core Standard and Standard Indicators in programme RRP, and estimate ORE required	Programme Chief	Core Standard Indicators
Ensure cluster/AoR leadership or humanitarian coordination is included in revised AWP/RWP in case of emergency, or in new humanitarian plans, developed in line with the CCCs, IA planning and with the contingency plans developed under MPS where available.	Deputy Representative - Programmes Chief of PME Chief of Field Operations/Emergency Programme Chief	Operational Response Plan Template and Response Plan Narrative Template ; Emergency Handbook
Implement cluster coordination monitoring, the 3rd pillar of Humanitarian Performance Monitoring (HPM) including through its dedicated tool	Chief of PME Chief of Field Operations/ Emergency Programme Chief C/AoR Coordinator supervisor	Cluster Coordination Monitoring ; Quick guide on cluster coordination monitoring ; Cluster Monitoring Tool ; Emergency Handbook
Oversee that CCPM is conducted regularly (3–6 months after activation of cluster/AoR and then annually)	C/AoR Coordinator supervisor	
Through the HCT, actively engage in the planning of cluster architecture reviews and in oversight of review implementation, as well as in discussion on the way forward based on findings of the architecture review	Representative C/AoR Coordinator	
Include the 12 Minimum Commitments for Cluster/AoR Membership as annex in PCA/SSFAs with partners who are also cluster/AoR members	Programme Chief Chief of Field Operations/Emergency	12 Minimum Commitments
Consider including capacity building on data quality and information management in PCA/SSFAs with partners who are also cluster/AoR members	Programme Chief Chief of Field Operations/Emergency	Agora courses as relevant
Align the indicators chosen in donor appeals (HAC), HPM, UNICEF's response plan, AWPs, IA plans (HRP), Results Assessment Module (RAM) in inSight, PDs and Small-Scale Funding Agreements. Indicators should measure access, reach, quality and equity of humanitarian programming, as well as coverage.	Chief of PME C/AoR Coordinator Programme Chief	Emergency Handbook
Identify preferred solution for streamlining reporting for UNICEF implementing partners who are also cluster/AoR members, either through eTools or 4W/5W. IPs should not be required to 'double report'. Either UNICEF collects reporting and passes it on to clusters, or IPs report to clusters and UNICEF extracts the UNICEF funded results.	Chief of PME Programme Chief	
Ensure regular reporting of cluster/AoR leadership achievements in SitReps and other relevant reports	Chief of Field Operations/ Emergency Deputy Representative - Programmes	SitRep Guidelines and SitRep Annotated Template

USEFUL LINKS

- ① ICON pages:
 - [Country Programme Document \(CPD\) Development](#)
 - [Humanitarian Planning](#) and [Humanitarian PME - Planning](#)
 - [Cluster Coordination Monitoring](#)
- ① Procedures:
 - [UNICEF Procedure on Programme Implementation: Work Planning, Partnerships and Risk Management](#)
- ① Guidance:
 - [SitAn Core Guidance](#) and [SitAn Thematic Toolkit](#)
 - [Country Programme Planning Guidance](#)
 - [Guidance on Risk-Informed Programming \(GRIP\)](#)
 - [Programme Implementation Handbook](#)
 - [Using Contingency and Response Plans Templates](#)
 - [CCC indicator guidance](#)
 - [Quick Guide on Cluster Coordination Monitoring](#)
 - [Key messages on Cluster Coordination for the UNICEF Country Management Team \(CMT\)](#)
 - [SitRep Guidelines](#) and [SitRep Annotated Template](#)
 - [COAR Guidelines 2022](#)
- ① Tools:
 - [Minimum Preparedness Standard 2 – Humanitarian Coordination](#)
 - List of [Core Standard Indicators](#)
 - [Operational Response Plan Template](#) and [Response Plan Narrative Template](#)
 - [Cluster Monitoring Tool](#)
- ① Other resources:
 - [Cluster Coordination Performance Monitoring](#) (IASC)

This chapter looks at CO ‘regular’ planning and at how considerations regarding clusters/AoR should be kept in mind, followed by a brief overview of programme implementation and work plans, and of humanitarian planning within the CO. The CLARE II review recommends that “UNICEF should mainstream CLA responsibilities in annual work plans and budgets, country programme documents (and other relevant documents related to developing a new country programme) and programme strategy notes, and CO performance management using the key performance indicators, monitoring and audit frameworks, job descriptions, etc.”¹²⁶

For a discussion of the [Humanitarian Programme Cycle](#), refer to the corresponding section under the chapter “The Cluster Approach.”

COUNTRY PROGRAMME PLANNING

All UNICEF COs develop their new **Country Programmes** through a **Country Programme Planning (CPP)** process in collaboration with the government and partners, building on evidence collected on the situation of children, and aligning to UNICEF Strategic Plan, Gender Action Plan, Disability inclusion Policy and Strategy (DIPAS), and Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) Strategy. UNICEF Country Programme is also aligned to the UNSDCF and contributes to the achievement of national priorities, for the achievement of the SDGs. Every Country Office submits to UNICEF Executive Board for approval the **Country Programme Document (CPD) together with a Results and Resource Framework** and a **Costed Evaluation Plan**. Approval of the CPD marks the ‘authorisation’ of a new country programme, which can then be implemented. **Partnership implementation modalities** are selected and formalized to implement activities agreed upon with government in jointly produced work plans, and with CSOs. **Programme monitoring** tracks progress and provides feedback to managers to improve implementation of the country programme, work plans and partnerships.

126 UNICEF (2022), Evaluation of the UNICEF Role as Cluster Lead (Co-Lead) Agency (CLARE II).

In Country Programme Planning, issues related to cluster/AoR coordination should be considered by countries with a high risk of emergencies (of any kind) and countries with protracted crises. This does not impede other COs considering the UNICEF CLA role as part of their strategic planning.

COUNTRY PROGRAMME PLANNING (CPP) AND COUNTRY PROGRAMME DOCUMENT (CPD)

The Country Programme is developed through the **Country Programme Planning (CPP)** process, organized around 5 main steps:



Clusters/AoR can contribute to the planning process in countries where are already activated through data and analysis, and by participating in some of the steps. If clusters/AoRs are not activated, COs should consider potential future activation, and its implications as Cluster Lead Agency, during the CPP.

Once the Country Programme Planning is advanced or completed, the CO elaborates a **Country Programme Document (CPD)** to be submitted to the Executive Board for approval. Since the Country Programme encompasses both humanitarian and development interventions, reaffirming the unity of UNICEF Programme, if relevant to the country context and risks, the CPD should include **humanitarian coordination** in the following section¹²⁷

PROGRAMME RATIONALE

- ① This section highlights the most significant risks associated with conflict, climate, natural disaster or other shocks or stresses in the country and their potential impact on children and vulnerable groups.

PROGRAMME PRIORITIES AND PARTNERSHIPS

- ① This section describes any cross-cutting strategies including commitments to furthering gender equality, social cohesion or resilience – by strengthening national risk reduction, preparedness and crisis response.
- ① It indicates partnerships critical to achieving programme results.

PROGRAMME AND RISK MANAGEMENT

- ① Humanitarian coordination is included, should any of the identified risks materialize and significantly affect programmes.

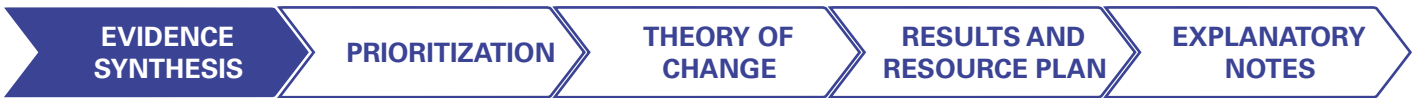
MONITORING AND EVALUATION

- ① This section explains how the Country Programme will systematically support the gathering and use of information on the evolving situation of children's rights and emergency risks in the country. It ensures feedback mechanisms for timely programme and policy adjustments.

¹²⁷ <https://unicef.sharepoint.com/teams/DAPM-PPPX/SitePages/Developing-a-Country-Programme-Document.aspx>



Let's see what **cluster/AoR entry points are in the CPP** process:



It includes evidence and data, and documents deprivations and bottlenecks. One of the key elements of the evidence synthesis (but not the only one) is the **Situation Analysis (SitAn)**, which should include the risks children face in a country so that appropriate measures can be taken, should these risks materialize.

SitAn Core Guidance indicates that “As the humanitarian landscape continues to evolve, the situation analysis supports common assessments across humanitarian and development processes, and facilitates the coverage of interventions across the continuum of inclusive care. It presents recent progress, including on climate change, and provides insights on emerging and future trends that could affect children, as well as the ongoing and practical measures to address these trends.” Depending on each country’s context, these measures might imply the (potential) existence of clusters/AoRs or other forms of humanitarian coordination, and should be included in the analysis.

The **Humanitarian Risk Profile** is part of the SitAn: it examines the risks and drivers of humanitarian crises, disasters, unplanned urbanization, extreme weather and emergencies – including protracted crises at national and local levels (as applicable) and the preparedness of the various levels of government and other stakeholders to mitigate such risks. The profile provides an assessment of how these risks might impact children, their families and communities. In countries where there are ongoing conflicts and/or emergencies, the situation analysis provides insights into how these are affecting children, emphasizing the disproportionate impacts on them.

In addition to the Core Guidance, UNICEF has developed a **SitAn Thematic Toolkit** including a section on risk, resilience and peacebuilding, which explains how a risk-informed situation analysis documents not only what changes are necessary to realize child rights, but also how to protect those gains from the negative impacts of shocks and stresses. Humanitarian response and its coordination should be considered in the risk-informed analysis as capacities and resources that can counterbalance risks. The Toolkit offers several questions, resources and methodologies to develop this analysis in depth.

Data from clusters/AoR, gaps identified and the HNO (if the country has produced it) are other sources of information that can be useful for evidence synthesis. “Humanitarian and humanitarian-development-peace assessments, risk analyses, preparedness profiles and reports” are all listed as relevant sources of information in the **CPP Guidance**.



In the CPP Guidance, the Prioritization phase is organized in the 7 steps described below, and around 5 criteria to be used during the Internal visioning exercise:

IN BRIEF: HOW TO COMPLETE THE PRIORITIZATION **1.2 PRIORITIZATION OF CHILD RIGHTS DEPRIVATIONS**

1. Adapt the prioritization process to the country context

2. Engage key stakeholders, national to local levels

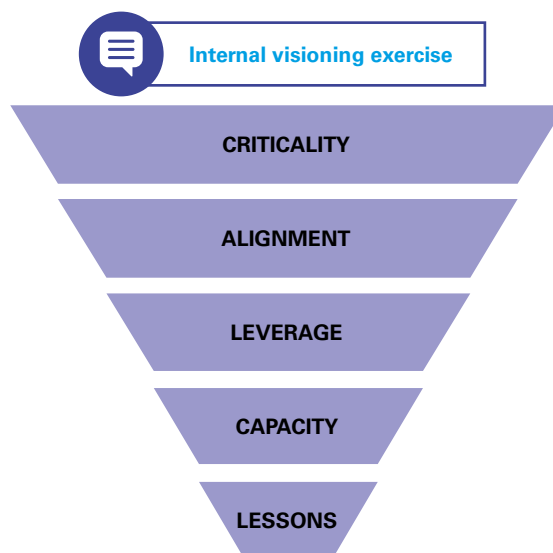
3. Coordinate with stakeholders across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus

4. Prioritize deprivations

5. Identify underlying bottlenecks for prioritized deprivations

6. Conduct prioritization during 'internal visioning exercise'

7. Use prioritized child rights' deprivations and bottlenecks as basis for Theory of Change (ToC)



Clusters/AoR and their members can contribute in multiple ways:

- ① As **key stakeholders to be engaged**, either by involving key cluster/AoR members (for example, those who are also UNICEF partners or who are particularly active in programmatic areas that are of UNICEF interest), or engaging the cluster/AoR as a whole (in this case, through its coordinator);
- ① In step 3: Coordinate with stakeholders **across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus**, and help identify **collective priority areas**;
- ① Cluster/AoR Coordinators can participate in the **Internal Visioning Exercise** (also called Strategic Moment of Reflection);
- ① Among the 5 criteria, clusters /AoR are key actors for **Leverage**: *“Prioritize deprivations and bottlenecks that have the potential to be addressed through broader interventions with a variety of stakeholders, rather than by UNICEF alone. These interventions can comprise advocacy, influencing and leveraging actions, partnerships and resources, including through UNICEF’s role as lead agency in Clusters and Areas of Responsibility, where relevant.”*



In this phase, the CO identifies interventions which address the main bottlenecks; when developing the Theory of Change (ToC) – if applicable to the context – **the CO should reflect on if and how leading clusters/AoR can help address such priority bottlenecks, through the joint action of a well-managed cluster/AoR.** ToCs for each programme area capture the contributions of other partners and well, and in this case cluster/AoR leadership can be considered an ‘Opportunity’: “Opportunities are situations existing or emerging in the country context that

UNICEF can leverage to advance the results of the country programme.”¹²⁸

This assumes that UNICEF and cluster/AoR approaches would be already similar or aligned; it is not meant to suggest that the cluster/AoR ToC should be forcefully aligned with the UNICEF approach, which would be contrary to the principle of cluster/AoR **neutrality**.



CPP Results and Resources Plan (RRP)

- One per each programme component
- RR, ORR and anticipated ORE
- Outcome, outputs and key interventions

A **Results and Resources Plan (RRP)** is developed for each programme component, so COs should consider CLA accountabilities for the RRP of the 4 areas in which UNICEF globally leads clusters, as applicable in the country. An RRP includes outcome, outputs and key interventions, described in the guidance as programmatic interventions, advocacy, leveraging, influencing and private sector engagement interventions. Humanitarian coordination can be one of the ‘interventions’ identified in the RRP and to which resources are allocated.

In addition to Regular Resources (RR) and Other Resources Regular (ORR), **each programme component shall also estimate all Other Resources Emergency (ORE) to be mobilized through a HAC appeal or any other source of emergency funds**, and the resources necessary for **coordination**¹²⁹ (not only salaries but also coordination main activities, see chapter on **Resource Mobilization** for more details) must be included in these calculations. **Humanitarian programming and funding should be included in the RRP** to provide a complete and organic picture of the entire CO programme in all its components, with humanitarian and development actions combined.

Each programme RRP includes:¹³⁰

- ① Outcome (institutional and behavioural change)
- ① Outputs (capacity building, availability of new products, goods and services)
- ① Key interventions including emergency interventions.

The Results and Resources Framework (RRF), which accompanies the CPD submission to the Executive Board, is obtained by compiling the RRP of each programme component and **does not include key interventions and ORE**¹³¹, which is excluded. For more details refer to the **CPP guidance**.

This phase requires the formulation of **Core Standard Indicators (CSIs) and Standard Indicators (SIs)**. COs can use three main sub-types of indicators to measure programme results:

128 UNICEF (2022), Country Programme Planning.

129 Note that the CLARE II recommends that cluster functions and activities are funded by *core* resources.

130 UNICEF (2022), Country Programme Planning.

131 ORE is not part of the RRF because it is reflected in the annual HAC Appeal.

CORE STANDARD INDICATORS	STANDARD INDICATORS	ADDITIONAL INDICATORS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Core set of programme indicators expected to be used in planning, monitoring and reporting on country programming. They generate the data required to calculate and track many Strategic Plan indicators. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommended for use in country programme planning, monitoring and reporting, but are not required for Strategic Plan monitoring. This list includes indicators for humanitarian action, and standard indicators for the UNICEF-UNHCR Blueprint. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CO can define a small number of their own SMART additional indicators if necessary, in discussion with and advised by Regional Planning Teams.

Core Standard Indicators are a required set of global standard indicators derived from the UNICEF Strategic Plan 2022-2025 results framework. They can be embedded in Country Programme results frameworks, then in the Results Assessment Module (RAM) in the CSIs and Outcome/Output Planning modules. CSIs are to remain stable for 4 years and can be adjusted at the same cadence as part of the Mid-Term review (MTR) of the Strategic Plan.



In the list of **Core Standard Indicators** for 2022-2025, those relevant for cluster/AoR coordination are:

- H8.4a. UNICEF-led cluster/sector coordination mechanisms meet satisfactory performance for established functions: Nutrition**
- H8.4b. UNICEF-led cluster/sector coordination mechanisms meet satisfactory performance for established functions: Education**
- H8.4c. UNICEF-led cluster/sector coordination mechanisms meet satisfactory performance for established functions: WASH**
- H8.4d. UNICEF-led cluster/sector coordination mechanisms meet satisfactory performance for established functions: Child protection (area of responsibility)**

They are assigned at output level, and are optional – because not all countries have clusters/AoRs. The methodology for these indicators is explained in detail [here](#).

COs have also designed several other **Standard Indicators and Additional Indicators** that can be used to monitor performance. The table below shows a sample of the Standard Indicators and Additional Indicators related to cluster/AoR coordination performance, available in July 2023.

INDICATOR CATEGORY	INDICATOR CODE	INDICATOR DESCRIPTION
STANDARD	IND2001075	% CO staff designated to lead/co-lead a humanitarian cluster/sector/AoR trained on children on the move
STANDARD	IND0000773	Proportion of CCC standards met by the country cluster or sector coordination mechanism for nutrition
STANDARD	IND0000904	Cluster coordination mechanism for education sector rating for the 7 core cluster functions (incl. accountability to affected populations)
ADDITIONAL	IND1002121	Number of humanitarian platforms and development partners networks chaired, co-chaired or within which UNICEF plays a lead role by UNICEF (including clusters)
ADDITIONAL	IND1007502	Education Cluster coordination mechanisms are fully functioning at national and sub-national levels
ADDITIONAL	IND0023022	CPIE, PSEA and GBViE risk mitigation integrated in plans and budgets of sectoral clusters
ADDITIONAL	IND0026071	Protection Cluster strategic plan and contingency plans (at national- and sub-national levels) updated/revised
ADDITIONAL	IND1006772	Protection cluster strategic work plan priority interventions included in government annual plan
ADDITIONAL	IND1007497	% of active cluster members who provide child protection information/data on a monthly basis to UNICEF
ADDITIONAL	IND0024926	Number of HRP/non-HRP countries where UNICEF-co/led coordination mechanisms (cluster or sector) meet satisfactory performance (as measured by the CCPM, for HRP countries) or meet at least 65% of Minimum Coordination Requirements (for non-HRP countries)
ADDITIONAL	IND0020309	Existence of adaptive WASH cluster contingency response plan



In this final step, the CO can describe **partners’ roles and main contributions** – including the **collective partnership that a Cluster/AoR represents**, and UNICEF’s efforts to advocate, influence and leverage partnerships, again with reference to clusters and AoRs.

PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION: ANNUAL AND ROLLING WORK PLANS

The Country Programme and humanitarian programming funded through the HAC appeal is implemented through **annual work plans (AWP) or rolling work plans (RWP)**, depending on the country context. In case of emergencies, the **Programme Implementation Handbook (PIH)** provides indications on how to develop work plans either by adapting existing ones, or by developing new humanitarian plans. This pertains to UNICEF programmatic work and not to its role as CLA, so we refer you to the PIH for more detail¹³² – here we will only discuss elements related to cluster coordination and leadership.

Where new humanitarian needs arise due to deterioration or sudden-onset crises that require additional humanitarian/emergency interventions, COs are encouraged, as the first option, **to revise the existing work plan structure and include additional activities to respond to emerging needs, in line with the CCCs and inter-agency planning. This includes cluster leadership and humanitarian coordination.** There are different options to include humanitarian response in the country programme results structure: adding new activities, new key interventions, new outputs or new outcomes; most likely cluster/AoR coordination would be added as an activity.

The PIH highlights the responsibilities of CO staff in this context:

ROLE	RESPONSIBILITIES
Representative	Influences the scope and strategic objectives of inter-agency humanitarian response plans, through the Humanitarian Country Team, in consultation with UNICEF programme and cluster teams.
Deputy Representative - Programmes	Ensures consultation of stakeholders and leads UNICEF’s contribution in joint UNSDCF and humanitarian work planning, progress reviews and reporting exercises (in consultation with cluster/sector leads and emergency specialists).
Emergency Specialist	Collaborates with priority technical leads and Cluster/AoR Coordinators to facilitate evidence-based planning, in line with the wider humanitarian needs and operating context.

HUMANITARIAN PLANNING

Humanitarian response planning defines how UNICEF responds to humanitarian needs: it sets out a clear strategy and provides a robust results framework specifying results, targets and indicators. This should be aligned to interagency and government response planning to prevent gaps or overlaps. In case of an emergency, and if the CO decides to develop a new humanitarian plan (as opposed to updating the existing AWP/RWP), **cluster/AoR (or sector) coordination must be included in the humanitarian plan.**

¹³² The PIH does not have yet a specific section on clusters/AoR; it is planned to include them in the 2023 update.

To facilitate the work of COs, UNICEF has developed an **operational response plan template** with suggested expected results (corresponding to the CCCs) and a **response plan narrative template** with a suggested section on humanitarian leadership and coordination. To guide COs there is also a brief on **Using Contingency and Response Plans Templates**.

The **planning page** of **Humanitarian PME** includes a vast selection of resources that are useful for planning. In this chapter we only look at the **humanitarian coordination aspect**, as part of UNICEF CLA accountabilities.

For the 4 programmatic areas in which UNICEF leads clusters/AoRs globally, the template shows the following results and indicators in the operational response plan:¹³³

EXPECTED RESULT (UNICEF'S CORE COMMITMENT FOR CHILDREN)	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
N1: Effective leadership and coordination are established and functional	Existence of functional sector or cluster coordination for Nutrition
Benchmark: Nutrition cluster/sector coordination and leadership functions are adequately staffed and skilled at national and sub-national levels	CO assigns designated staff to lead/co-lead a humanitarian cluster/sector/AoR
Benchmark: Core leadership and coordination accountabilities are delivered	Cluster/sector/AoR coordination score for Nutrition



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133 This table uses nutrition as an example but the same is valid for the remaining clusters/AoR.

UNICEF has also developed a [CCC indicator guidance](#), and if we look at the (nutrition) **coordination section**, this is how it's structured:

CCCs		HAC/ SitRep	Strategic Plan Indicator	RAM Indicator	RAM Level	CSI #	Indicators	Disaggregation	CROSS-CUTTING ANALYSIS						
Commitment (2.3.4)	Benchmark								Gender	ECD	Adolescents	Disability	On the Move	SBC/Comm	AAP
N1. Leadership and coordination Effective leadership and coordination are established and functional	Nutrition cluster/sector coordination and leadership functions are adequately staffed and skilled at national and sub-national levels		H8.4 (a)	IND0001201	output	H8.4 (a)	Existence of functional sector or cluster coordination for nutrition								
							CO assigns designated staff to lead/co-lead a humanitarian cluster/sector/AoR								
				IND0001180	output		Existence of a functional national multisectoral committee for nutrition								
	Core leadership and coordination accountabilities are delivered						Cluster/sector/AoR coordination score for Nutrition								

COs shall make sure that CLA responsibilities are clearly included in their humanitarian plans through the tools referred above.

MONITORING

MONITORING OF THE CLUSTER/AOR COORDINATION FUNCTION

As a CLA, UNICEF is responsible for ensuring that the clusters/AoRs it leads function properly, have adequate staffing both at national and subnational level, and are able to identify and respond to the needs of populations affected. This section discusses **monitoring of cluster coordination functions**, not monitoring of cluster deliverables against objectives and targets outlined in the HRP, or humanitarian monitoring of UNICEF programmes. To monitor the achievement of its CLA commitments, UNICEF has developed a [Cluster Monitoring Tool](#), together with a [Quick guide](#) to help CMTs/EMTs¹³⁴ in supervising CLA commitments, and [Key messages for the CMT](#) on the same topic. For more information and guidance on humanitarian monitoring, refer to the [Cluster Coordination Monitoring page](#) on ICON.

134 Depending on the CO set-up, CLA commitments may be monitored by the CMT or the EMT.

First of all, to ensure **preparedness**, the CO should monitor the completion of its **Minimum Preparedness Standard 2 – Humanitarian Coordination**, where key coordination aspects are described in case of a sudden onset emergency or a degradation of an existing crisis. In case of protracted crises, it is reasonable to assume that humanitarian coordination mechanisms are already in place.

To monitor the achievement of its CLA commitments, the CO should use the **Cluster Monitoring Tool** (partially shown below), which has been designed specifically to look at CLA accountabilities:

FOR WEEKLY USE DURING CLUSTER / SECTOR SET-UP PHASE								
Milestone	Indicator	Child Protection AoR National	Education Cluster National	Nutrition Cluster National	WASH Cluster National	Means of Verification	Responsible	Additional Guidance
Core Cluster / AoR/ Sector Coordination roles are staffed	See sheet on Tool - Staffing						UNICEF Representative	*Staffing at national and sub-national levels is the key element in fulfilling CLAs. *Consider recruiting on FT/TA contracts early on. *Seniority in cluster roles is important for the quality of the entire response. Coordinators have a representation and advisory role. *Cluster coordinators should report to the Representative and IM staff should report to their cluster coordinators. * Deciding if a dedicated person is needed is best done in coordination with EMOPS GCCS. * If there is a gap in staffing for a sector under UNICEF's CLA, the Section Chief will step in until surge/recruitment are completed.
	Cluster Coordination positions report to UNICEF Representative	N/a	✓	✓	✓	Job descriptions		
Immediate Surge	National level Cluster coordinator filled position filled within 4 weeks through surge	N/a	✗	✗	✓	HR tracking		
	Position is dedicated (i.e. not double hatting)					Programme and Budget Review (PBR)		
	National level Information Management (IM) Specialist filled position filled within 4 weeks through surge							
	Position is dedicated (i.e. not double hatting)							
Immediate Recruitment Solution	Recruitment of national level Cluster coordinator FT/TA position launched within 12 weeks							
	Position is dedicated (i.e. not double hatting)							
	Recruitment of national level IM Specialist FT/TA position launched within 12 weeks							
	Position is dedicated (i.e. not double hatting)							
Agreement /ToR for Coordinating Mechanism is established	Cluster Terms of Reference (ToR) validated with cluster members					TOR/MOU on shared to cluster /AOR / sector	Cluster coordinator	* Address key functions in the IASC generic TOR for Cluster coordinator

It is divided in three parts, with different indicators and monitoring frequencies:

- ① Set-up milestones
- ② Staffing
- ③ Sustained monitoring



In the case of **co-leadership of a cluster**, the CO should also monitor staffing by the co-lead organization, and if challenges arise, discuss with the co-lead how can they be addressed.

CLUSTER COORDINATION PERFORMANCE MONITORING (CCPM) AND THE CLUSTER COORDINATION ARCHITECTURE REVIEW

The IASC module on Cluster Coordination refers to two different cluster monitoring processes:

- ① **Cluster Coordination Performance Monitoring (CCPM)** and
- ② Cluster coordination architecture review

The cluster coordination performance monitoring and the architecture review are not directly a responsibility of the UNICEF CO as CLA, however, since they are important for cluster architecture, a brief explanation is included here.

CCPM is an exercise where clusters/AoR assess their performance against the 6+1 core functions; ideally, it should be implemented three to six months after the onset of an emergency and annually thereafter. It should be conducted by all clusters/AoR at the same time, but in some situations an individual cluster/AoR may wish to conduct the process at another time. While this is a country-level process, it should be supported by the Global Cluster Coordination Section and global Cluster Coordinators in terms of guidance on the process and analysis of the data generated by the CCPM survey. Cluster Coordinators or inter-cluster coordination should ensure that cluster/AoR partners participate, including UN agencies, national and international NGOs, national authorities and representatives of cross-cutting issues. Global Clusters provide technical support on the survey and help with facilitation and the OCHA Field Office is responsible for coordinating the CCPM exercise across clusters/AoRs and ensuring the engagement of the HC/HCT. This is not directly a responsibility of the UNICEF CO as CLA.

The **cluster coordination architecture review** is a process which assesses the appropriateness and relevance of cluster/AoR coordination structures considering context changes and the HRP's strategic objectives. It determines if clusters/AoRs should continue as they are, be expanded, merge, be streamlined or transition with benchmarks for **deactivation**. A cluster architecture review is initiated and led by the HC/HCT and supported by OCHA. While cluster coordination architecture reviews may be informed by CCPM results, decisions on whether a cluster/AoR remains the most appropriate structure to meet identified needs must be based on analysis of changes in the humanitarian context and national coordination activity.





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CO SUPPORT TO CLUSTER/AOR INFORMATION MANAGEMENT FUNCTION

UNICEF is a respected leader in terms of data and information management capacity; with established and powerful systems that can be leveraged for the benefit of clusters/AoRs. COs teams (including but not limited to PME teams) can support clusters/AoRs in overcoming some of the challenges they face regarding information management; in turn, improved data collection and information management in clusters/AoRs will be beneficial for UNICEF, which will have a stronger evidence basis for its own programming, as well as stronger partners. Some of the challenges around information management include:

CHALLENGES	PROPOSED SOLUTIONS OR MITIGATING MEASURES
<p>Cluster/AoR members not providing information regularly or as needed</p>	<p>For those cluster/AoR members who are also UNICEF implementing partners, an Annex can be included in the cooperation agreement with the 12 minimum commitments of cluster/AoR membership</p>
<p>Limited data quality, limited capacity of the partner to collect, process and share quality data</p>	<p>For those cluster/AoR members who are also UNICEF implementing partners, the organization can consider mandatory capacity building around data management, using for example existing courses in Agora, Kaya or other humanitarian learning platforms. Programme section information managers/M&E staff can support clusters/AoRs in capacity strengthening efforts of partners.</p>
<p>Alignment of indicators and data</p>	<p>Differences between indicators to monitor UNICEF implementing partner agreements and indicators used for the same issues by clusters/AoRs, force partners into a double information management workload, with a significant risk of discrepancy. COs should align HAC indicators and the indicators they use to monitor humanitarian response, implemented through partners with HRP and clusters/AoRs indicators</p>
<p>Standardization of indicators</p>	<p>In some COs, UNICEF has developed guides for its indicators including definitions, measurement and other aspects; the same guidance can be used as a basis for cluster/AoR indicators, and expanded as relevant by cluster/AoR members.</p>
<p>Reporting</p>	<p>UNICEF uses eTools as a reporting tool for partners. At the same time, cluster/AoR members are required to report data for the 4/5W matrix, which implies a double reporting burden on cluster/AoR members who are also UNICEF implementing partners. The CO should identify the best format to avoid or minimize such duplication (which is inefficient and reduces time dedicated to implementation). Two options appear feasible:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ① Partners report using eTools, and UNICEF extracts data and reports on their behalf on the cluster/AoR 4/5W; ① Partners report through 4/5W and UNICEF extracts data for its eTools. <p>Each CO will have to identify its preferred solution and include it in the agreement signed with partners.</p>



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REPORTING

The CO should report the coverage and the results achieved by the clusters/AoR it leads in its regular UNICEF SitReps, clearly indicating UNICEF’s own results and the results achieved by the cluster/AoR, and being careful of not appearing as if it is appropriating cluster/AoR results.

It is not always easy to translate coordination and leadership roles into clear information on tangible results; however, it is important that COs share their engagement and achievements as CLA. The [SitRep Annotated Template](#) offers the following questions to help COs reflect on their cluster/AoR coordination role:



QUESTIONS TO ASK. REPORTING ON CLUSTER/AOR LEADERSHIP

How has UNICEF’s cluster/AoR leadership and coordination efforts contributed to the response e.g. UNICEF’s value-add in coordination benefits, synergies developed with other projects, etc.?

Clearly state if cluster/AoR staffing commitments have been met for staffing of Coordinators and IMOs

What were the coordination challenges within the reporting period and impact on project outcomes?

What are the recommendations for improving coordination in the future and the potential impact on project outcomes?

CO should also describe in their Annual Report (COAR) their cluster/AoR leadership roles and results achieved. According to the [COAR Guidelines](#) (2022), this can be done both through the Core Standard Indicators in Section 2 of the report, and in the third part about Annual Results, under the Humanitarian results section, through the End-of-Year SitRep which “provides a summary report of humanitarian programming against HAC appeals. Results for the calendar year are reported primarily for use by UNICEF and UNICEF-led clusters.”¹³⁵

135 UNICEF (2022), Specific Guidelines for 2022 Country Office Annual Reports.

13. UNICEF programmes and clusters/AoR

CORE COMMITMENTS	BENCHMARK
<p>Commitment to deliver on the CCCs.</p> <p>The CCCs state the organization’s – and each Country Office’s – commitment to respond, regardless of the kind of crisis, irrespective of a country’s Gross National Income level, or legal status of the affected populations.</p> <p>UNICEF has established clear accountabilities and systems to ensure that all UNICEF personnel and all sectors of the organization at global, regional, country and local level are empowered and held accountable for the fulfilment of the CCCs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ① All UNICEF personnel, sectors and offices of UNICEF at global, regional, country and local level are responsible for the fulfilment of the CCCs. ① All UNICEF personnel, whether operating in a humanitarian or development context are expected to know the CCCs, promote their implementation and contribute to their fulfilment, according to the context. ① Country Representatives, with the support of the Country Management Team (CMT) and the guidance of the RO and HQ, are responsible for ensuring UNICEF delivers on its IASC commitments at country level, including on coordination

KEY TAKEAWAYS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ① UNICEF is an essential member of clusters/AoRs (besides being CLA) and its active participation in its processes and initiatives is fundamental for the good functioning of the cluster/AoR ① Coordination and collaboration between UNICEF programmes and clusters/AoR is articulated around: participation in respective meetings, inclusion in planning, funding for coordination functions and activities, release of funds, streamlining of processes with partners/cluster and AoR members, administrative support ① Ensure in-house inter-cluster coordination across UNICEF-led clusters and AoR

ACTION	RESPONSIBLE	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
Ensure UNICEF active participation in Cluster/AoR meetings and processes	Programme Chief	CCCs See Responsibility matrix around 6+1 functions See Tasks matrix
Orientation. Ensure Cluster/AoR Coordinators and IMOs, as well as the Chiefs of Section and Emergency Focal Points, have an induction session with the respective global clusters/AoR, where training options are discussed	Programme Chief Chief of Field Operations/ Emergency	Emergency Handbook
Participate in Strategic Advisory Groups, where these are created	Programme Chief	
Facilitate collaboration between cluster/AoR teams and UNICEF programme sections (including on cross-sectoral programmes and topics) and commit necessary resources	Programme Chief	
Participate in UNICEF programme section meetings, including when relevant PMT and EMT meetings	C/AoR Coordinator	
Include coordination activities in annual workplans	Programme Chief	See chapter on Programme implementation
Include budget for coordination functions in funding proposals submitted to HRP, pooled fund and donors	Programme Chief	

Ensure timely release of cluster/AoR funding and adequate administrative support	Programme Chief	See chapter on Operational and Administrative Support
Coordinate and streamline processes with UNICEF partners who are also cluster/AoR members on information management, reporting and other administrative processes	Programme Chief C/AoR Coordinator Chief of PME	
Promote effective in-house inter-cluster coordination across UNICEF-led clusters and AoRs, thus enhancing UNICEF-led cluster coherence of approach and collaboration and reducing duplication of effort on common issues. This will also promote programme integration within UNICEF	Deputy Representative - Programmes C/AoR Coordinator supervisor	

USEFUL LINKS

- ① Guidance: [CCCs, Emergency Handbook](#)
- ① Other resources: [AGORA Humanitarian Coordination Learning Channel](#)

In addition to being the cluster lead agency, **UNICEF is an essential member of clusters and AoRs**, due to its technical capability, longstanding presence in countries, relationship with authorities, financial capacity, supply and logistics capacity, relationship with donors, number and variety of partners. It is **fundamental** for the good functioning of the cluster/AoR that UNICEF engages in its activities as a partner, and **this role must be played by UNICEF Programme Chiefs and programme staff, and cannot be played by the Cluster/AoR Coordinator** (see chapter on [neutrality](#)).

The following table¹³⁶ summarizes the **roles of national and sub-national Cluster/AoR Coordinators, programme sections and field operations/emergency on different tasks**. Details are articulated in the following chapters.



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136 Table adapted from the CAR CO collaboration matrix between programmes and clusters.

TASK [Responsibility]	CLUSTER/AOR COORDINATOR	SUB-NATIONAL CLUSTER/AOR COORDINATOR	PROGRAMME SECTION	FIELD OPERATIONS / EMERGENCY
Cluster/AoR meeting [Cluster/AoR]	Leads/co-leads all cluster/AoR, SAG and TWG meetings	Where possible, participates in national meetings Leads all sub-national cluster/AoR meetings and reports back to the national level	Ensures participation of a Section Focal Point in cluster/AoR meetings to share UNICEF technical expertise, information about programmes, coverage and reach, challenges and opportunities and so on.	Participates in cluster meetings if related to preparedness, disaster risk management and early warning
Meeting between national and sub-national cluster/AoR [Cluster/AoR]	Leads meetings	Participates in meetings, shares information, gaps and alerts	Ensures participation of a section focal point in meetings	When relevant, ensures participation of clusters/AoR in Field Office coordination meetings around strategic issues
Section meeting [Section]	Participates in section meetings/retreat	Participates in section meetings/retreat	Invites the cluster/AoR to section meetings/retreats and integrates it into the section's dynamics	
Reporting data in cluster/AoR tools [Section]	Trains partners and sub-national cluster/AoR leads on filling in cluster/AoR monitoring tools Analyse data and quality of information provided	Ensures that partners report their data to the national level and participates in the analysis of the data and the quality of the information provided concerning own area.	Ensures that UNICEF partners complete cluster/AoR monitoring tools Analyses data and quality of information provided	Ensures alignment of HPM/HAC reports with cluster/AoR monitoring tools
Sharing information on UNICEF programmes [Section]	Follows up on partners' activities, including UNICEF	Follows up on the activities of partners, including UNICEF, at sub-national level	Shares information on UNICEF activities and status of partnerships, resource mobilization Shares invitations to programme/activity briefings	Shares information on UNICEF operations, needs and challenges at Field Operations and Field Offices level
Sitrep [Section]	Shares cluster/AoR data (including UNICEF) + UNICEF data in the section's sitrep. Writes the cluster/AoR narrative	Ensures that partners complete the 4W/5W and shares it with the national cluster/AoR Ensures quality of data for simplified data processing.	Ensures that UNICEF and partners complete the 4W/5W Ensures quality of data for streamlined data processing. Writes the programme section narrative of SitRep	Compiles the different contributions and ensures quality of the data
Cluster/AoR strategy, action plan, CCPM, etc [Cluster/AoR]	Writes strategic documents in collaboration with SAG Shares documents with all partners, including UNICEF Leverages UNICEF institutional capacities for the benefit of the cluster/AoR	Provides input into strategic documents, facilitates discussions on these documents with partners in own area	Provides inputs and validates strategy documents, participates in presentation meetings	
Section strategy, CPD, CPMP, PBR, etc [Section]	Provides inputs according to required themes and deadlines	Provides sub-cluster perspective in discussions with field and zone offices	Involves clusters/AoR in discussions on strategic documents	
Annual sector review [Section]	Participates in meetings and provides inputs	Participates in meetings and shares challenges and opportunities in own area	Invites the cluster/AoR and integrates it into the review process	

HNO/HRP [Cluster/AoR]	Produces analyses to define the cluster/AoR's objectives. Shares with the Emergency and Field Ops section the analyses so that they are taken into account in the HAC	Provides input into strategic steps, facilitates discussions on HNO/HRP with partners in own area	Provides inputs through its focal point and participates in validation meetings of HNO and HRP	
RRM [Field Operations/ Emergency]	Participates in the RRM meetings, coordinates with sectoral partners if complementary and monitors gaps			Invites clusters/AoR to RRM meetings and coordinates with them
HAC [Section]	Provides inputs as needed (programmatic with the section and budgetary with the Emergency Field Ops section)		Involves clusters/AoR in discussions	Integrates clusters/AoR in discussions and includes cluster/AoR budgets in the HAC
Resource Mobilization for the cluster/AoR [Cluster/AoR]	Defines the budget and the narrative necessary for the functioning of the cluster/AoR		Supports resource mobilisation for the cluster (for example with a set % in all project proposals), including budgeting for the coordination function and its activities.	
Resource Mobilization for the programme [Section]	Contributes to the development of project proposals, in particular those in line with the cluster/AoR's strategy, the coverage of gaps and identification of duplication risks, through analysis of context and needs	Contributes to the development of project proposals for own area, including the definition of strategies, operational activities, gap filling and identification of duplication risks, context and needs analysis	Include clusters/AoR in discussions and includes a set % in the budget for cluster/AoR coordination	Contributes to the development of project proposals
Allocation of humanitarian funds [Cluster/AoR]	Discusses the allocation strategy and priority areas with the sub-national clusters/AoRs and SAG. Shares project proposals with the sub-national cluster/AoR. Ensures strategic and technical analysis of projects	Supports the strategic analysis of projects at sub-national level. Follows the implementation of projects in its area of coverage and shares recommendations with the national cluster/AoR	Supports strategic analysis of projects as a member of SAG	Discusses with clusters/AoR to assess feasibility of UNICEF positioning
HCT [Cluster/AoR]	Follows up on the implementation of funded projects. Raises relevant issues discussed in HCT or ICCG in UNICEF internal meetings. Shares the points raised in the ICCG with programme sections. Briefs UNICEF's Representative on key cluster/AoR issues ahead of the HCT meeting	Provides feedback on issues discussed in the sub-national ICCG or other local coordination platforms to the national cluster/AoR		Participates in the internal coordination meetings where cluster/AoR issues are discussed
Emergency Preparedness [Cluster/AoR]	Works on emergency preparedness with partners	Provides input on national emergency preparedness. Develops sub-national cluster/AoR emergency preparedness as relevant	Provides input to cluster/AoR emergency preparedness as needed	Provides input to cluster/AoR emergency preparedness as needed
EPP [Field Operations / Emergency]	Provides input to CO emergency preparedness as needed	Provides input to CO emergency preparedness as needed	Participates in CO emergency preparedness	Leads CO emergency preparedness
Emergency Task Force [Field Operations / Emergency]	Participates in meetings and provides updates as relevant		Participates in meetings and provides updates as relevant	Leads ETF meetings

UNICEF PROGRAMMES PARTICIPATION IN CLUSTER/AOR MEETINGS

The Programme Chief represents UNICEF in the cluster/AoR and:

- ① Demonstrates an understanding of the duties and responsibilities of clusters/AoR;
- ① Actively participates in all aspects of cluster/AoR processes and mechanisms; especially in cases of double-hatting by the Cluster/AoR Coordinator, a UNICEF programme representative must be present at meetings to avoid (the perception of) conflicts of interest;
- ① Where a Strategic Advisory Group is formed, is expected to be a member of this group;
- ① Facilitates collaboration between cluster/AoR team and UNICEF programme section and commits necessary resources (e.g. senior staff member or focal point) to work with the cluster/AoR to ensure it fulfils its mission and activities;
- ① Facilitates capacity building of UNICEF programme sections on humanitarian architecture, the role of clusters/AoR and the role of UNICEF as CLA;
- ① Respects the Cluster/AoR Coordinator position of **neutrality**;
- ① When relevant, facilitates the delivery of services as **PoLR** for UNICEF-led clusters and AoRs.

The details of the responsibilities of the Programme Chief around the 6+1 cluster functions are explained in the [responsibility matrix](#) in Chapter 3.

UNICEF technical staff members from programme sections participate in clusters/AoR:

- ① Relevant technical staff members from UNICEF programme sections should attend cluster/AoR meetings and participate in relevant processes, as well as provide technical contributions when needed;
- ① Where Technical Working Groups are formed, appropriately experienced and skilled UNICEF technical staff should proactively participate in these groups, and where the appropriate level of technical capacity exists, UNICEF should play a key role in leadership within these groups.



Occasionally, there might be differences between UNICEF's vision, and the direction of the cluster/AoR, which may negatively affect UNICEF's image. However, it is important that both the cluster/AoR and the agency positions are respected. In this case it will be important that the UNICEF programme representatives explain their position as an agency, but do not try to impose direction on the cluster/AoR; the best option for UNICEF is to be open and transparent about its agenda and intentions toward the entire cluster/AoR.¹³⁷

PARTICIPATION OF CLUSTER/AOR COORDINATORS IN PROGRAMME MEETINGS

It is recommended that **Cluster/AoR Coordinators participate in the corresponding UNICEF programme section meetings**. This will clearly facilitate collaboration and coordination. The CLARE II review highlighted how in certain contexts Cluster/AoR Coordinators became isolated from UNICEF, due to a (mis)understanding of the CLA role as secondary and detached from the organization.

UNICEF Programme sections should inform Cluster/AoR Coordinators of their dialogue with government and donors, with other UN agencies around any joint approach, and share information and analysis. This will facilitate the coordination between UNICEF and the cluster/AoR.¹³⁸

137 UNICEF (2022), Evaluation of the UNICEF Role as Cluster Lead (Co-Lead) Agency (CLARE II).

138 UNICEF (2022), Evaluation of the UNICEF Role as Cluster Lead (Co-Lead) Agency (CLARE II).

PROGRAMME AND CLUSTER/AOR STAFF COLLABORATION

Good collaboration between the Cluster/AoR Coordinator, the Programme Chief of Section and other relevant programme staff members is essential for a well-functioning cluster/AoR.

The following table highlights several aspects of this collaboration:

CLUSTER AND AOR COORDINATION ACTIVITIES IN ANNUAL WORK PLANS

- 1 Cluster and AoR coordination activities should be included in the **annual work plans** of each of the programme sections. This will mean that humanitarian coordination activities will be explained transparently, resulting in subsequent ease of allocation and release of funds against the articulated activities and monitoring of progress within the context of the UNICEF annual work plan. Also, Cluster/AoR Coordinators should be consulted during the elaboration of annual work plans.

FUNDING FOR CLUSTER AND AOR COORDINATION FUNCTIONS

- 1 **Funding** for cluster/AoR coordination functions (salaries, travel, equipment/software and core coordination activities)¹³⁹ should be included in UNICEF project submissions to the HRP and in the relevant project proposals submitted through the various pooled funding mechanisms (e.g. Central Emergency Response Fund, Common Humanitarian Fund).
- 1 When appropriate, it should also be included in UNICEF programme proposals submitted to bilateral donors. Funding may be requested from UNICEF Emergency Programme Funds (EPF) managed by EMOPS, although this must be reimbursed; or it can be requested from the Global Humanitarian Thematic Fund (GHTF) which has started allocating a certain amount to UNICEF coordination functions.
- 1 Regardless of whether coordination staff members are dedicated or **double-hatting** with a dual role supporting UNICEF programmes and clusters, cluster/AoR coordination costs must be clearly calculated and transparently outlined in the various budgets.

RELEASE OF CLUSTER/AOR FUNDING

- 1 Cluster coordination finance is in the section's respective budgets and the release of funds requires the authorization of the budget holder/chief of section. It is important that budget holders/chiefs of sections and Cluster/AoR Coordinators work together on cluster-related budget issues, to ensure timely release of funds as required. As stated in the CCC on timely disbursement of funds: "Funds are disbursed in a timely manner, for intended purposes and in compliance with established procedures."¹⁴⁰
- 1 It is also important that the mechanisms for release of funding are straightforward and streamlined, that the processes are made clear to the cluster coordinators (as not all have experience of UNICEF processes), and that the various sections facilitate timely disbursement of cluster funding, with an appreciation that (sometimes) cluster activities are organized at short notice.
- 1 Where cluster coordination functions are conducted under the auspices of government Ministries, finances will be allocated to the respective government offices through the normal processes. In such a situation, coordination and good collaboration between Ministry officials and Cluster/AoR Coordinators are required for release of finance to cover cluster functions. In some situations, disbursement of cluster funding is directly through UNICEF rather than through a government Ministry.

STREAMLINING PROCESSES WITH PARTNERS, AND AVOIDING DUPLICATION

- 1 Programme and cluster/AoR staff should work together to avoid duplication and foster **streamlining of information management, reporting** and other administrative processes that cluster and UNICEF partners may participate in, e.g. in relation to assessments, situation reports and monitoring and evaluation of partner projects.

COORDINATION OF ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT FUNCTIONS

- 1 Programme and cluster/AoR staff should coordinate **administrative functions** to ensure shared resources are effectively used and that there is mutual understanding and agreement on work priorities of shared staff.

139 One of the commitments on Administration and finance indicates as a benchmark: "Staff are provided with adequate resources, office space, equipment, transportation, accommodation, security and logistics support which meet the duty of care principles and facilitate the delivery of programmes." While this refers to UNICEF field presence, by extension the same principles apply to any UNICEF staff performing core functions of the organization, such as the coordination responsibility as CLA.

140 UNICEF (2020), Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action.

INTER-SECTORIAL COORDINATION

As the global lead of three Clusters and one Area of Responsibility, which is often reflected in the same arrangement at country level, UNICEF has an enormous opportunity to **work in an integrated manner across clusters/AoRs and across the humanitarian-development nexus**. The issues that affect children are multidimensional and most often a multidimensional response is required; having an intentional intersectoral approach not only in programming but also in cluster/AoR leadership will facilitate addressing these issues holistically at a larger scale.

In fact, some clusters have already developed a systematic collaboration at global level, for example the **CP-EiE Collaboration in Coordination Framework**.

A dedicated space must be created to allow for the discussion of cluster/AoR-related issues and to capitalize on opportunities for integrated interventions, ultimately enhancing UNICEF support of cluster/AoR coordination.

The specific purpose of internal cluster/AoR coordination meetings would be to:

- ① Keep the agency informed on cluster/AoR plans, progress against key milestones, and any problems arising;
- ② Cohesively address cluster/AoR support issues related to human resources, supplies, logistics, finance, etc.

Three options to create the space are suggested:

- 1** UNICEF cluster/AoR meetings could be held periodically (recommended twice monthly in early stages of emergency, possibly changing to monthly as the situation stabilizes), chaired by the UNICEF Representative and attended by the dedicated cluster manager (where in post), Coordinators and Information Managers, Emergency or Field Coordinators and the Deputy Representative - Programmes. If relevant, Chiefs of Sections for programmes and operations could also participate.
- 2** UNICEF cluster/AoR meetings could be held periodically (recommended twice monthly in early stages of emergency, possibly changing to monthly as the situation stabilizes), chaired by the UNICEF Representative and attended by the dedicated cluster manager (where in post), Coordinators and Information Managers, Emergency or Field Coordinators and the Deputy Representative - Programmes. If relevant, Chiefs of Sections for programmes and operations could also participate.
- 3** Alternate ETF or EMT meetings with UNICEF cluster/AoR meetings.

This space could also be useful before HCT and/or CLA meetings to brief the Representative on key cluster/AoR issues, endorse key messages and ensure a common understanding and position on specific topics.

14. Human Resources (HR)

CORE COMMITMENTS	BENCHMARK
<p>1: Timely deployment Timely deployment of personnel at the onset of emergencies enables rapid emergency response</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experienced and suitable personnel are identified within 48 hours after the sudden onset or deterioration of a humanitarian crisis and are deployed through surge mechanisms
<p>2: Planning ROs, COs and field offices are adequately staffed to enable ongoing humanitarian response</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Human resource plans are established for immediate, medium- and longer-term needs, including scale-up, scale-down and exit strategies
<p>3: Well-being Duty of care for UNICEF personnel is assured</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Duty of care measures are in place UNICEF personnel receive information on available care/support
<p>4: Capacity UNICEF personnel have appropriate knowledge of emergency preparedness and response</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personnel complete applicable mandatory training and have access to supplementary training/learning on emergency preparedness and response
<p>5: Standards of conduct UNICEF personnel observe organizational standards of conduct, both as an individual responsibility and an organizational commitment. These include standards on discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment and abuse of authority, child safeguarding, and SEA</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standards of conduct are disseminated and UNICEF personnel complete applicable mandatory training Appropriate and timely action is taken in response to any breaches Leadership promotes a culture that aligns with the organisation's standards of conduct Complaint and feedback mechanisms are in place and accessible to affected populations and external stakeholders

KEY TAKEAWAYS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UNICEF is responsible for ensuring the timely recruitment of adequate numbers of staff with the appropriate level of seniority, facilitation and technical skills to ensure effective cluster/AoR coordination, including information management. As a minimum, UNICEF is committed to recruiting (at national level): a Cluster/AoR Coordinator and an Information Management Officer; it is also recommended to engage a dedicated gender/GBV technical expert for the CO within all UNICEF-led clusters/AoR, to mainstream gender and GBV risk mitigation into cluster work. Information management is not an optional component. Effective information management can have a significant impact on the response, advocacy, and on influencing key actors, including donors – therefore this position's value should not be underestimated. Cluster/AoR Coordinators should report directly to the Representative. Alternative reporting lines might be considered provided that the flow of information and communication with the Representative continues to function well. Double-hatting as a long-term solution is discouraged, except in specific cases. Cluster/AoR Coordinators have an overriding duty to the partners and must act as neutral representatives of the cluster/AoR as a whole, rather than as a representative of UNICEF. COs can request immediate support through internal and external surge support mechanisms, while launching recruitment for coordination positions as needed. Once on board, coordination teams shall be introduced to key external stakeholders and in UNICEF CO – in particular to programme teams. Proper onboarding and performance evaluations are also required.

ACTION	RESPONSIBLE	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
Preparedness. Define staffing needs for the emergency response in line with the MPSs (including technical skills, cross-cultural, communication and leadership skills). Consider whether the office would benefit from 'surging back-fill' to maintain regular work processes, allowing a CFO, Section or Unit Chief to focus on the emergency response	Representative Programme Chief HR Manager	MPS3 Emergency Handbook

Staff mobilization. Suitable CO staff identified during emergency preparedness planning take on the Cluster/AoR Coordinator role immediately when clusters are activated. In parallel, initiate deployment of national-level Cluster Coordinators and IMOs from ERT, Global Cluster Rapid Response Teams, surge or stand-by partners (including CashCap) on a 'no regrets' basis for a minimum period of two months	Programme Chief HR Manager Chief of Field Operations/Emergency	MPS3 Emergency Handbook HR in Emergencies Toolkit
Surge Tracking Sheet (STS): Create an STS covering immediate staffing needs. Define in the STS if support is required on-ground or can be provided remotely. Circulate the STS to RO, DHR Surge Desk and EMOPS for inputs	HR Manager Chief of Field Operations/Emergency	STS E-staffing template Emergency Handbook HR in Emergencies Toolkit
Surge: Assess the STS and determine, in cooperation with RO, CO and/or EMOPS as needed, (ERT Focal Point and Standby Team) appropriate surge mechanisms (including Stand-by partners). Contact Surge Cell which will source support. Ensure that all personnel are informed of the onboarding and orientation in emergencies, which includes the predeployment in emergencies. Ensure that all personnel are informed of and complete the Humanitarian Learning Pathways	Representative Regional Office HR Manager Chief of Field Operations/Emergency	STS E-staffing template Emergency Handbook HR in Emergencies Toolkit
Oversee timely recruitment of cluster/AoR coordination teams with adequate seniority level and reporting lines	Representative	Decision tree (national) and Decision tree (subnational) QTA – Options for coordination teams Recommended reporting lines and Advantages & Disadvantages Emergency Handbook HR in Emergencies Toolkit
Ensure the timely recruitment of cluster/AoR coordination teams with adequate seniority level and reporting lines; at a minimum, recruit national Cluster/AoR Coordinator and IMO roles for a period of at least six months for L2 and L3 emergencies. Cluster Coordinators at the national level are expected to be at P4 level	C/AoR Coordinator supervisor HR Manager Regional Office	Decision tree (national) and Decision tree (subnational) QTA – Options for coordination teams Recommended reporting lines and Advantages & Disadvantages Emergency Handbook HR in Emergencies Toolkit
Incorporate all cluster/AoR coordination posts into the PBR and operational staff matrix. Conduct a mail-poll PBR within the first month of a sudden-onset emergency or L2/L3 declaration	Representative Deputy Representative – Operations HR Manager Regional Office	Emergency Handbook
Support sourcing for critical emergencies: Complete assessments for emergency recruitments within 20 days. Ensure approvals for emergency recruitments are received within five days. Ensure offer letters are sent within four business days, and candidates accept the offer within three business days. Use single-sourcing options in the best interest of the organization. This should be prioritized for L2/L3 emergencies	HR Manager C/AoR Coordinator supervisor Regional Office	Emergency Handbook HR in Emergencies Toolkit
Onboarding and orientation: Ensure that new UNICEF personnel receive a comprehensive onboarding and orientation	Representative HR Manager	Onboarding guide for supervisors A Head Start: A Quick Guide for Country and Regional Offices for Onboarding and Orientation in Emergencies

Ensure capacity development and learning opportunities for Cluster/AoR Coordination teams	C/AoR Coordinator supervisor	Humanitarian Coordination Learning Channel on Agora
Ensure regular meetings between C/AoR Coordinators and the Representative	Representative C/AoR Coordinator supervisor C/AoR Coordinator	
Mission end performance appraisal: Ensure systematic performance conversations and evaluations for all deployed personnel at the end of deployment. Ensure that the performance evaluation is properly recorded. Ensure an exit interview is completed	DHR HR Manager Programme Chief Operations Chief	Achieve SBP Performance Evaluation Form

USEFUL LINKS

- ① ICON page: HR in Emergencies
- ① Procedure: [Procedure on Recruitment and Staffing in Emergencies Situations, Emergency Procedures](#)
- ① Guidance: [Emergency Handbook, Recommended good practices for the minimum structure of coordination teams at country level for UNICEF as a Cluster Lead Agency](#), [HR in Emergencies Toolkit](#)
- ① Tools:
 - Cluster/AoR Coordinator GJD, Information Management Officer GJD, [Gender/GBV Specialist GJD](#)¹⁴¹
 - [Decision tree \(national\)](#) and [Decision tree \(subnational\)](#)
- ① Other resources:
 - [A talent management strategy for cluster coordination and information management.](#)
 - [A Head Start: A Quick Guide for Country and Regional Offices for Onboarding and Orientation in Emergencies](#)
 - [Resources for Managers](#)
 - [The Essential guide for UNICEF Managers](#)
 - [Addressing workplaces issues in UNICEF](#)
 - [Preparing a conversation with someone causing you issues](#)
 - [Humanitarian Coordination Learning Channel - Agora](#)

HUMAN RESOURCES FOR CLUSTER/AOR COORDINATION



As outlined in IASC operational guidance, **UNICEF is responsible for ensuring the timely recruitment of adequate numbers of staff with the appropriate level of seniority, facilitation and technical skills, leadership, team-building and cross-cultural communication skills to ensure effective cluster/AoR coordination, including information management.** Decisions on what capacity is required will depend on context, and the CO should take the following into consideration:

- ① Complexity of the crisis (for example a mixed natural disaster and man-made crisis, overlap of different types of humanitarian issues such as food insecurity, epidemics and violence, or highly politicized contexts);
- ① Size of the humanitarian caseload (number of people affected);
- ① Number of organizations taking part in the response;
- ① If cluster/AoR already activated, existing coordination priorities;
- ① Interaction needed with development actors;
- ① Hindrance or prevention of humanitarian assistance by political and military constraints;
- ① Number of national authorities;
- ① Level of advocacy and interaction needed with national authorities;

¹⁴¹ The Cluster/AoR Coordinator and Information Management Officer GJD are being finalized. Contact [GCCS](#) for the approved versions.

- ④ Extent of existing national capacity on the ground in-country;
- ④ In case of **co-leadership**, familiarity and ability to co-lead cluster/AoR with another co-lead organization.

As a minimum, UNICEF is committed to recruiting a **Cluster/AoR Coordinator and Information Management Officer** (at national level).¹⁴² Depending on variations in context and complexity, others may be required; such as Deputy Coordinators, Co-Coordinators, Assessment Specialists, Cluster Support Officers, Analysts, Communication Specialists, or other staff to cover some of the cluster functions.

If the cluster/AoR also exists **at sub-national level**, UNICEF is committed to recruiting staff for these positions as well and¹⁴³ preferably it will hire nationally recruited staff for cluster/AoR positions.



The **role of the Cluster/AoR Coordinator** is to provide predictable, timely and strategic leadership and representation of the Cluster/AoR to ensure timely and effective Cluster/AoR response. The coordinator is responsible for leading multiple stakeholders, beyond their immediate team of direct reports, to work collectively towards the realization of a shared goal based on evidence in a complex humanitarian environment. S/he has the following responsibilities:¹⁴⁴

COORDINATION, REPRESENTATION AND LEADERSHIP

- ④ Ensure, establish and maintain a coordination mechanism that facilitates the effective achievement of the **cluster functions** (as outlined by the IASC Reference Module) and the requirements of the **HPC** (HNO, HRP and CCPM), and which builds on pre-existing coordination structures where appropriate and furthers the development of current or future national and subnational capacities,
- ④ Oversee the functioning of any **sub-national** or hub AoR/ Cluster/Sector/Working Group where they exist, ensuring alignment of work and priorities, effective communication, reporting, engagement and coordination between the levels,
- ④ Supervise the AoR/ Cluster/ Sector/ Working Group coordination team,
- ④ Ensure appropriate coordination and build partnerships with all relevant sector stakeholders including government counterparts and national authorities, local, national and international organizations and affected populations, other AoRs/ Clusters/ Sectors/ Working Groups, and affected populations,
- ④ Where relevant, pro-actively engage with line Ministries to jointly agree on information needs, response prioritization, coordination and handover modalities,
- ④ Build **complementarity of partner actions** within the AoR/ Cluster/ Sector/ Working Group and in the case of the Education Cluster, in co-leadership of Cluster/ Sector/ Working Group), pro-actively negotiating with a wide range of partners to avoid and resolve duplication and gaps and taking action to resolve any conflict or systemic challenges arising from within or beyond the AoR/ Cluster/ Sector/ Working Group,
- ④ Coordinate, collaborate and represent the AoR/ Cluster/ Sector/ Working Group with stakeholders across all sectors, including through inter-cluster coordination fora, developing cross-sectoral relationships as appropriate.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND ANALYSIS

- ④ Lead the planning and implementation of needs assessment and analysis, including representing the AoR/ Cluster/ Sector/ Working Group and taking a leading role in multi-sectoral needs assessments and joint analysis of need, at national and subnational levels,
- ④ Analyse needs assessment data and work collaboratively with the AoR/ Cluster/ Sector/ Working Group partners to create analytical products, including an **HNO** based on evidence-based information.
- ④ Advocate for the funding and implementation of needs assessments and analysis by the Cluster/AoR, partners and inter-cluster/agency working groups.

142 Emergency Procedures and Handbook indicate “Recruit at minimum the national Cluster Coordinator and IMO roles for a period of at least six months for L2 and L3 emergencies.”

143 According to the overarching principle of the Talent Strategy: “Cluster posts will be filled to the extent possible with UNICEF staff.”

144 We use as a reference in this document the GJD for the level 5; the level 3 and level 4 GJD have slightly different formulations. The minimal differences between the GJD in each of the four clusters/AoR have been consolidated. Contact HR or GCCS for the GJD applicable to your context.

STRATEGIC RESPONSE PLANNING

- 1 Lead and coordinate strategic planning, response prioritization and the development of the sectoral response plan that is based on the HNO and aligned with national priorities, policies and plans,
- 1 Ensure all programme delivery modalities (in-kind, cash, voucher and services) are given equal consideration in the strategic response planning and establish and implement systematic measures for supporting their consideration and use,
- 1 Provide high-level technical expertise to drive strategic-level discussion and ensure the sectoral response addresses national priorities and affected populations' needs drawing on the latest innovations and research,
- 1 Ensure that the AoR/ Cluster/ Sector/Working Group response plan is updated regularly according to evolving needs and that it establishes indicators by which performance of the AoR/ Cluster/ Sector/Working Group can be measured,
- 1 Engage with OCHA and other AoRs/ Clusters/ Sectors/Working Groups to contribute to the development of the [HRP](#), advocating for a response that reflects and addresses the concerns of the AoR/ Cluster/ Sector/Working Group.

RESOURCE MOBILIZATION AND ADVOCACY

- 1 Support and coordinate the mobilization and equitable allocation of adequate resources to ensure the effective functioning of the AoR/ Cluster/ Sector/Working Group and its response, identifying and taking actions to resolve any ongoing or potential future challenges that impact partners' access to resources and subsequent handing over and establishment of medium to long term capacities when the cluster approach is deactivated,
- 1 Monitor, analyse and communicate information about the AoR/ Cluster/ Sector/Working Group's financial situation and resource mobilization and identify appropriate actions to address gaps or constraints,
- 1 Advocate for improved sectoral outcomes, by developing an advocacy strategy, networking with advocacy allies, influencing stakeholders' decision-making and ensuring that advocacy activities are adequately resourced.

IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

- 1 Monitor, evaluate and report on the coverage, equity, quality and progress of the response against the AoR/ Cluster/ Sector/Working Group strategy, priorities and agreed results,
- 1 Plan and oversee gap and coverage analysis to identify spatial and temporal gaps, overlaps and coverage of the AoR/ Cluster/ Sector/Working Group humanitarian response,
- 1 Monitor AoR/ Cluster/ Sector/Working Group adherence to IASC cluster approach principles, relevant humanitarian and sectoral agreements, standards, initiatives and guidelines and provide systemic advice and support to make improvements.

OPERATIONAL PEER REVIEW AND EVALUATION

- 1 Lead the annual [cluster coordination performance monitoring \(CCPM\)](#) exercise and annual review and contribute to other sectoral and humanitarian evaluations as appropriate.

ACCOUNTABILITY TO AFFECTED POPULATIONS

- 1 Be accountable to the affected population by establishing inclusive and consultative feedback mechanisms, creating meaningful opportunities for the involvement of the affected population in the response and encouraging partners to operate accountably,
- 1 Ensure the inclusion of [cross cutting issues](#) (age, disability, gender, gender-based violence (GBV) mitigation and response and HIV & AIDS) in AoR/ Cluster/ Sector/Working Group activities throughout the HPC,
- 1 Establish and implement systematic measures for supporting inclusive work practices and processes,
- 1 Adhere to child safeguarding and PSEA policies including procedures for challenging and reporting incidents and ensure other members of the coordination team comply.

STRENGTHEN NATIONAL AND LOCAL CAPACITY

- 1 Encourage participation of local and national actors in AoR/ Cluster/ Sector/Working Group activities and strategic decision-making, removing barriers to access,
- 1 Lead the development of a capacity assessment and capacity strengthening strategy for AoR/ Cluster/ Sector/ Working Group members and oversee implementation and harmonization of initiatives,
- 1 Lead early warning, contingency planning, and emergency [preparedness](#) efforts for the AoR/ Cluster/ Sector/ Working Group, ensuring adequate participation in inter-cluster early warning, contingency planning and emergency preparedness activities.

In addition to the above it is particularly important to ensure that Cluster/AoR Coordinators are skilled in **leading and managing people and in working collaboratively**.¹⁴⁵ This implies:

- ① Lead cluster/AoR teams and coordinate activities in a way that is respectful, emotionally intelligent, cross-culturally sensitive, conflict-sensitive, competent in managing conflicts, open to feedback, trust-building and inclusive (also in decision-making)
- ① Engage strategically and productively with diverse stakeholders, through negotiation and influencing as needed, using diplomacy, emotional intelligence and communication to cultivate and maintain successful relationships
- ① Build trust and credibility with stakeholders and with cluster/AoR members
- ① Ensure relationships are managed with contextual and political awareness and wisdom.



The **role of the Information Manager** is to manage the collection, analysis and sharing of information which is important for Cluster/AoR members and leadership and for HCT to make informed, evidence-based, strategic decisions. S/he has the following responsibilities:¹⁴⁶

COORDINATION AND REPRESENTATION

- ① As a member of the coordination team, contribute to the effective roll out and monitoring of the core cluster functions (as outlined by the IASC Reference Module) and to the Humanitarian Programme Cycle (HNO, HRP and CCPM),
- ① Lead, coordinate and represent the AoR/Cluster/ Sector/Working Group IM function at all levels ensuring effective communication, reporting and engagement,
- ① Supervise IM staff within the coordination team at various levels,
- ① Actively engage with other IMs through relevant IMWGs, including leading the AoR/Cluster/ Sector/Working Group IMWG and representing the AoR/Cluster/ Sector/Working Group on the inter-cluster IMWG,
- ① Promote harmonized and coordinated approaches to IM across partners, AoRs/ Clusters/ Sectors/Working Groups and OCHA.

IM FUNCTION LEADERSHIP

- ① Create and oversee the implementation of an IM strategy and data collection and analysis plan that take into account the information needs of stakeholders and that are compliant with standards and protocols for ethical data and information management,
- ① Plan, support and oversee the regular implementation of secondary data reviews and primary data collection including designing, or supervising the design of, questionnaires using appropriate tools,
- ① Oversee and ensure accurate data processing including organizing, cleaning, triangulating, evaluating and validating the data,
- ① Analyse data to meet identified information needs of AoR/Cluster/ Sector/Working Group members and other stakeholders,
- ① Oversee the creation of accurate, quality and timely information products that are in line with agreed style guides,
- ① Ensure the dissemination of information and information products through appropriate channels,
- ① Establish, maintain and ensure the accessibility of a common and shared secure storage system,
- ① Ensure feedback on IM products is gathered and used to make improvements.

145 In the Human Resources chapter there is a section discussing more in detail **relationship management** especially when tensions arise among different team.

146 We use as a reference in this document the IMO GJD for the level 4; the level 2 and level 3 GJD have slightly different formulations. The minimal differences between the GJD in each of the four clusters/AoR have been consolidated. Contact HR or GCCS for the GJD applicable to your context.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND ANALYSIS

- 1 In close collaboration with the Senior Manager AoR/ Cluster/ Sector Coordinator, lead the planning and implementation of needs assessment and analysis, including joint assessments and analysis, at national and subnational levels,
- 1 Ensure information is collected on economic needs, markets and price monitoring to support the equal consideration and use of all programme delivery modalities (in-kind, cash, voucher and services),
- 1 Work with AoR/ Sector/ Working Group participants to identify information gaps at national and sub-national levels, agree and implement ways to bridge those gaps by providing technical advice and support to partners,
- 1 Analyse needs assessment data to provide required information for the HNO including estimating People in Need (PIN),
- 1 Compare and align joint needs analysis findings with other AoRs/ Clusters/ Sectors/ Working Groups and participate in developing reports.

STRATEGIC RESPONSE PLANNING

- 1 Design, or supervise the development of, partner presence mapping and oversee the implementation,
- 1 Contribute to strategic planning, response prioritization and the development of the HRP or other response plans as relevant, including the formulation of objectives, indicators and targets, prioritizing response modalities and activities, identifying and quantifying inputs and the curation of data.

RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

- 1 Oversee or monitor and analyse the AoR/ Cluster/ Sector/ Working Group's financial situation and support financial tracking,
- 1 Support and advocate with AoR/ Cluster/ Sector/ Working Group partners for financial reporting on the Financial Tracking Service (FTS),
- 1 Support evidence-based advocacy and resource mobilization by providing accurate, relevant and timely data, information and information products.
- 1 Conduct evidence-based advocacy and resource mobilization by providing accurate, relevant and timely data, information and information products.

IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

- 1 Develop, or supervise the development of, an AoR/ Cluster/ Sector/ Working Group monitoring plan and associated databases, including a response monitoring (3/4/5Ws) database and oversee implementation,
- 1 Ensure the AoR/ Cluster/ Sector/ Working Group monitoring plan, and 3/4/5Ws include programme delivery modalities (in-kind, cash, voucher and services),
- 1 Support AoR/ Cluster/ Sector/ Working Group members to contribute timely and quality periodic monitoring reports on AoR/ Cluster/ Sector/ Working Group and OCHA platforms,
- 1 Support monitoring in the areas of information flows, dissemination, processing, analysis and dissemination,
- 1 Plan and conduct quantitative and qualitative gap and coverage analysis to identify spatial and temporal gaps, overlaps and coverage of the AoR/ Cluster/ Sector/ Working Group humanitarian response,
- 1 Monitor adherence to relevant sector quality standards, regulations and codes.

OPERATIONAL PEER REVIEW AND EVALUATION

- 1 Lead the annual cluster coordination performance monitoring (CCPM) exercise and annual review,
- 1 Contribute to sectoral and broader humanitarian evaluations.

ACCOUNTABILITY TO AFFECTED PEOPLE

- ① Be accountable to affected populations by ensuring the meaningful participation of affected people, establishing and maintaining an effective feedback mechanism and handling complaints appropriately, by ensuring data about the most vulnerable is systematically collected and analysed, and by encouraging partners to work accountably,
- ① Ensure the inclusion of cross cutting issues (age, disability, gender, gender-based violence (GBV) mitigation and response and HIV & AIDS) in AoR/ Cluster/ Sector/ Working Group data collection, analysis and dissemination.
- ① Adhere to child safeguarding and PSEA policies including procedures for challenging and reporting incidents and ensure other members of the IM team comply.

STRENGTHEN NATIONAL AND LOCAL CAPACITY

- ① Develop a strategy to strengthen local and national leadership and capacity by ensuring participation of local and national actors in the IM activities of the AoR/ Cluster/ Sector/ Working Group and providing support to partners to overcome technical and operational challenges in participating in IM activities,
- ① Design and oversee the implementation of an IM capacity assessment and capacity development plan for AoR/ Cluster/ Sector/ Working Group partners.



It is worth noting that **information management is *not* an optional component**; rather it is an essential requirement for effective coordination. It is therefore imperative that the information management function for each cluster and AoR be adequately supported. Preferably, this role should be separate from the IM role in programme sections, especially in large emergencies where the IMO manages the information needs of 20+ partners; it is also worth noting that the analysis and IM products needed by clusters/AoRs and that needed by sections are different. **Effective information management can have a significant impact on advocacy and influencing key actors, including donors – therefore this position’s value should not be underestimated. On the other hand, its absence can significantly hinder the effectiveness of the sectoral and overall response.**

In addition to the coordination and information management functions, based on the Inter-Agency Humanitarian evaluation on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls Management Response Plan, UNICEF will recruit a **dedicated gender/GBV technical expert** to support all UNICEF-led clusters/AoR to mainstream gender and GBV risk mitigation into cluster work, especially in L3 emergencies, complex emergencies and in a protection crisis.



In the case of **co-leadership or co-coordination at national and sub-national levels**, the ToRs should be adapted from UNICEF corresponding GJDs, outlining the specific responsibilities and reporting lines of the co-lead or co-coordinator position.

In countries with several sub-national Cluster/AoR Coordinators, a **Deputy Cluster/AoR Coordinator** position might be established, who will build capacity and provide continuous oversight of sub-national coordinators, among other functions.

The Talent Management Strategy for Cluster Coordination and Information Management clearly indicates the role of COs in ensuring coordination capacity: “it is ultimately ***envisaged that Country Offices will take ownership to ensure cluster coordination capacity is prioritized as part of how they work, and as a key contributor to coordinated and collective humanitarian action.***”¹⁴⁷

147 UNICEF (2022), Well-Placed: A talent management strategy for cluster coordination and information management.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE POSITIONS

HOW TO DETERMINE POSITION LEVEL, CONTRACT TYPE AND LENGTH AND OTHER CONTRACT ASPECTS

In line with the findings and recommendations of the Humanitarian Review, the Talent Management Strategy for Cluster Coordination and Information Management states that **dedicated cluster positions are established at the right level of seniority.**

One of the first issues a CO faces is what type of position is necessary, what level of seniority, what kind of contract is the most appropriate and so on. Below there are a few questions the CO should answer to, to determine the most appropriate choice:



QUESTIONS TO ASK. TO DETERMINE THE BEST OPTIONS FOR CLUSTER/AOR COORDINATION TEAMS

Is it a short-term (2 months or less) or longer-term need?

Is it urgent (e.g. due to a sudden onset emergency) or is it planned (e.g. end of a contract/tour of duty)?

Is it likely to be a single event (e.g. earthquake), or is it recurring (e.g. seasonal floods, protracted crisis)?

Is it possible to hire nationally recruited staff?

What are the nature, characteristics and complexity of the crisis (and within it, the sector)?

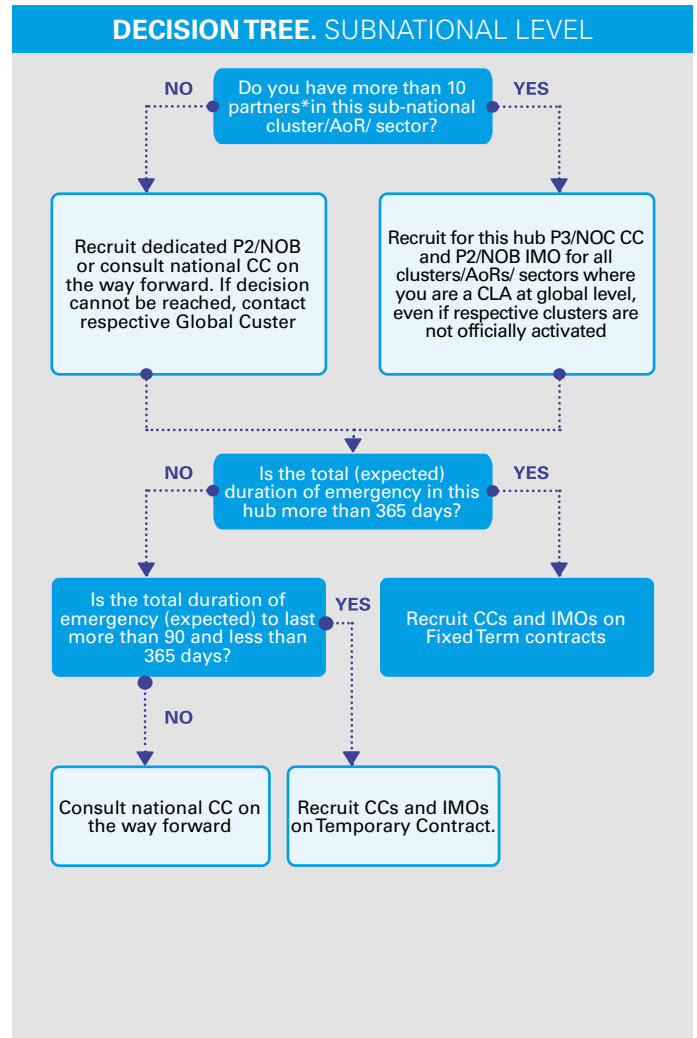
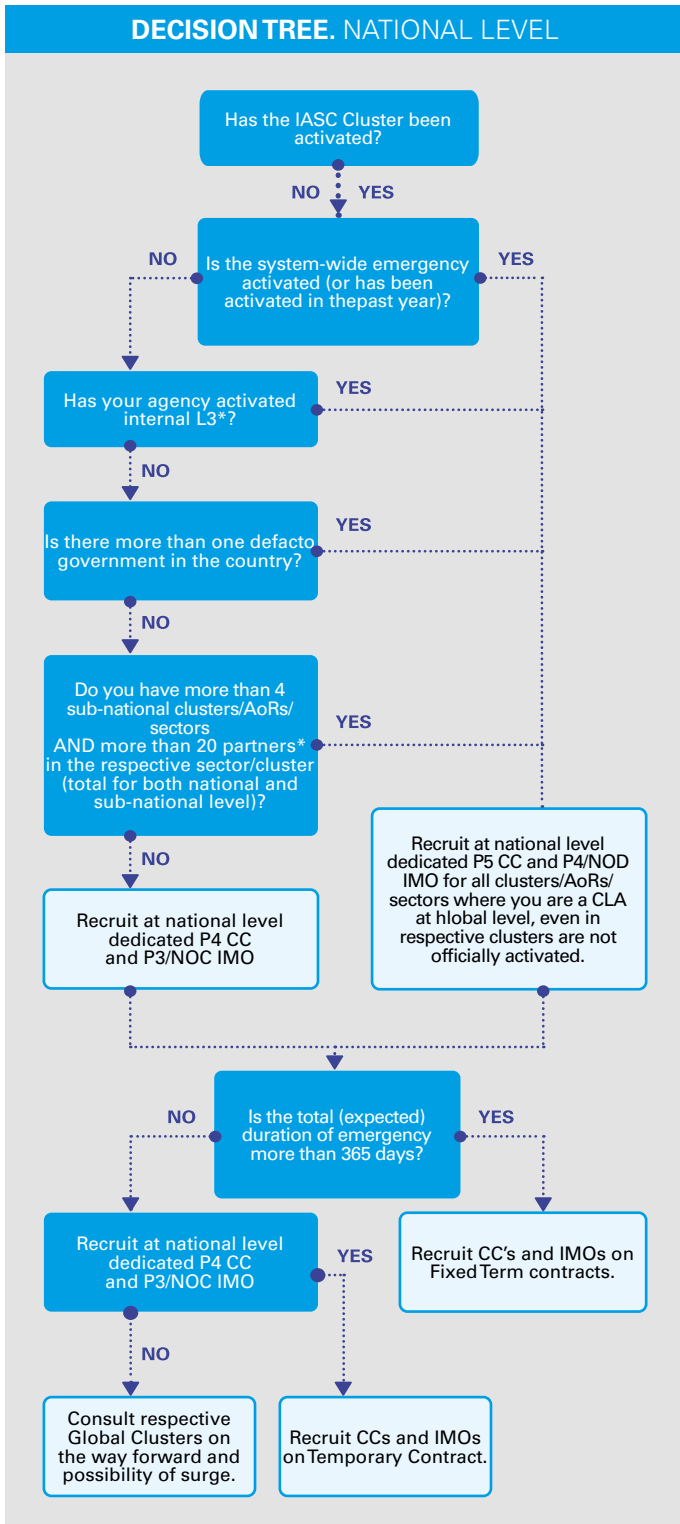
What is the expected size and severity of the crisis?

Will funds likely be available? And for how long?



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UNICEF has developed a good practice document¹⁴⁸ that can help COs think through their coordination staffing needs both at national and sub-national levels and determine the right level of capacities for their context and coordination needs. Two decision trees are included for this purpose and they are shown below:



NATIONAL LEVEL

CC - Cluster/Sector/AoR Coordinator
 IMO - Information Management Officer / Specialist
 IASC - Inter Agency Standing Committee

* For L2 emergencies contact respective Global Clusters / AoRs for guidance specific to your context

**Partner – is an agency currently implementing activities in the sectoral/AoR/ cluster workplan. The figure should correspond to the number of partners on the respective cluster pages in the latest Humanitarian Response Plan.

SUBNATIONAL LEVEL

CC - Cluster/Sector/AoR Coordinator
 IMO - Information Management Officer / Specialist

**Partner – is an agency currently implementing activities in the sectoral/AoR/cluster workplan. The figure should correspond to the number of partners on the respective cluster pages in the latest Humanitarian Response Plan.

148 [Recommended good practices for the minimum structure of coordination teams at country level for UNICEF as a Cluster Lead Agency.](#)

Cluster coordination staff may be employed on **fixed-term, temporary assignment or special service assignment contracts**, depending on context. The **type and length of contract and level** shall be established based on consideration of several factors, including:

- ④ **Expected duration** of the crisis and its consequences (TA for less than a year, FT for two years or more).
 - Where coordination staff members are recruited to full-time coordination posts and where there is a clear long-term need for dedicated cluster/AoR coordination, e.g. in a protracted, complex emergency, it is preferable to move towards longer-term, fixed-term contracts.
 - However, fixed-term positions are not always appropriate, e.g. in contexts where the situational analysis indicates that cluster coordination functions will be transitioned back to sectors in a relatively short time (i.e. up to 18 months). In such situations, a temporary assignment contract could be recommended. In some cases, a short FT could be considered to attract high-level talent with good knowledge of UNICEF.
 - A special service assignment would be appropriate in the context of very short-term deployments, especially where immediate deployment is required, as the administrative process is shorter.
- ④ **Complexity** of the crisis and humanitarian caseload (the more complex the crisis or higher the caseload, the higher the seniority);
- ④ Level of **interaction required with the national authorities** (the higher the level and complexity, the higher the seniority);
- ④ **Contract desirability.** Fixed Term contracts are likely to attract more qualified and more senior professionals, and they should be prioritized as first option, with external personnel used for surge or additional capacity only.¹⁴⁹ Temporary appointments will not attract the best talents, and this needs to be considered despite the higher cost of fixed term contracts;
- ④ Consultant contracts and external surge mechanisms, including standby partnership arrangements, are only considered appropriate in the **first 90 days**, while UNICEF creates and recruits staff positions, as these posts have high visibility and a high potential for reputational risk for UNICEF;¹⁵⁰
- ④ **Compatibility of contract levels** between programme and coordination staff. The level of other positions in the CO with similar responsibility (for example, Chiefs of Sections, Deputy Representative - Programmes, Chief of Field Operations/Emergency) and reporting lines should be considered: ideally, C/AoR Coordinators are hired at the same level as the corresponding Chief of Section if the complexity, expected duration, caseload of the crisis and other factors require it. Similarly, the level of a sub-national Cluster Coordinator should not be lower than the highest level of the respective programme specialist in the same sub-national office;
- ④ **Consistency.** Unless the crisis is strongly focused on a specific aspect (for example nutrition, or protection) ideally all C/AoR Coordinators have the same level in UNICEF and with the other Cluster Coordinators in different agencies, to avoid power imbalances among clusters/AoRs, both internally and externally.



All these considerations are usually weighed against the **financial implications** of long-term, fixed contracts; as opposed to temporary appointments, special service agreements, or **surge** through external options like standby partners. While FT contracts are significantly more expensive, given that CLA accountabilities are core institutional accountabilities of the organization, it is strongly

149 UNICEF (2022), Well-Placed: A talent management strategy for cluster coordination and information management.

150 UNICEF (2022), Well-Placed: A talent management strategy for cluster coordination and information management.

recommended that COs make an effort to **overcome financial limitations**, should these weigh on the final decision around C/AoR Coordination and IM positions. Excellence in cluster roles reflect positively in UNICEF’s credibility vis-à-vis donors.

It is also recognized that **Cluster/AoR/Sector Coordinators at P5 level** (as suggested in one of the options of the Decision Tree) do not usually have large budgetary responsibilities, as in the case of P5 Chiefs of Section. However, their overall contribution to the response is strategic in nature as they should lead high-level advocacy aimed at donors, UN Agencies and government entities, and be able to coordinate complex programming, multi-partner engagement – including representation at the Humanitarian Country Team and other responsibilities requiring advanced competencies and experience. The position is highly visible and carries high potential for reputational risk for UNICEF.

JOB DESCRIPTIONS AND THE COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK

UNICEF has developed **Generic Job Descriptions (GJD)** for Cluster/AoR Coordinators and Information Management Officers (which can also be used for the sub-national level with the appropriate adaptations). They can be found at the following links:

- 🔗 Cluster/AoR Coordinator¹⁵¹
- 🔗 Information Management Officer

All UNICEF-led clusters have developed competency frameworks adopted for Cluster/AoR Coordination and organized around 4 types of competencies:

<p style="text-align: center;">SECTORAL COMPETENCIES</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Applies humanitarian principles, standards and guidelines 2. Applies key Nutrition in Emergencies concepts and tools 3. Operates safely and securely 	<p style="text-align: center;">COMMON COMPETENCIES</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Demonstrates commitment to a coordinated response 2. Promotes cooperation and collaboration 3. Demonstrates accountability 4. Promotes inclusion
<p style="text-align: center;">FUNCTIONAL COMPETENCIES</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provides influential and strategic leadership 2. Analyses and communicates information 3. Supports resource mobilisation 4. Advocates for improved nutritional outcomes 5. Monitors the response 6. Strengthens national capacity to respond and lead 	<p style="text-align: center;">CORE BEHAVIOURAL COMPETENCIES</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Builds and maintains partnerships 2. Demonstrates self-awareness and ethical awareness 3. Drive to achieve results for impact 4. Innovates and embraces change 5. Manages ambiguity and complexity 6. Thinks and acts strategically 7. Works collaboratively with others 8. Nurtures, leads and manages people

Due to the nature of cluster/AoR coordination work, particular emphasis should be placed on **cross-cultural communication and leadership skills**, to ensure that the profiles recruited are able to manage successfully the challenges inherent in coordination of a variety of actors, often in difficult contexts.

¹⁵¹ The Cluster/AoR Coordinator and Information Management Officer GJD are being finalized. Contact **GCCS** for the approved versions.

Depending on the crisis and response, COs should also consider other technical knowledge such as cash programming, inter and multi-sectoral coordination, working with other actors to help bridge the humanitarian – development – peace nexus, and digital innovation.¹⁵²

As part of the organizational effort to develop a pool of talented and experienced coordinators and information managers, especially for longer-term contracts, COs should consider **capacity development and learning opportunities** for cluster/AOR coordination teams, including for leadership skills, as established in the Talent Management Strategy for Cluster Coordination and Information Management.¹⁵³

Cluster coordinators will not report to the sections and reporting lines will be promoted in conformity with IASC guidance with strong collaboration between cluster coordinators and Programme teams.

LINE MANAGEMENT

The IASC generic TORs for cluster coordinators state that, while the cluster and AoR coordinators have an overriding duty to all partners, they **report directly to the CLA country representative**.¹⁵⁴ With its Talent Management Strategy for Cluster Coordination and Information Management,¹⁵⁵ UNICEF commits to ensure that cluster/AoR staff reporting lines reflect IASC guidance:

The recommended reporting lines¹⁵⁶ are:

C/AOR COORDINATORS	CLUSTER/AOR/SECTOR COORDINATORS AT SUBNATIONAL LEVEL
<p>Report to the Representative/Head of Office as they represent UNICEF as a Cluster Lead Agency in the Humanitarian Country Team, and they are ultimately accountable for effective cluster leadership. In recognition of the potential for a high number of direct reports to these posts, alternative reporting lines might be considered, for example, to the Deputy Representative-Programmes or Chief of Field Operations/Emergencies, provided that the flow of information and communication with the Representative continues to work, especially in relation to the HCT.</p> <p>It is not recommended that Coordinators report to the respective programme staff (i.e. Chiefs of Section), to ensure the impartiality and neutrality of the cluster coordination role.</p>	<p>Report to the Chiefs of Field Offices, and with a dotted line, including technical accountability, to the national Cluster/AoR/Sector Coordinator or vice versa. It is not recommended that Coordinators report to the respective programme staff (i.e. programme specialists), to ensure their impartiality and neutrality.</p>
INFORMATION MANAGERS	INFORMATION MANAGEMENT OFFICERS/SPECIALISTS AT SUB-NATIONAL LEVEL
<p>Report directly to the respective Cluster/AoR/Sector Coordinators, and with a dotted line, including technical accountability, to other internal mechanisms.</p>	<p>Report to the respective sub-national Cluster/AoR/Sector Coordinators.</p>
CO-LEADERSHIP	
<p>In case of co-leadership, it is recommended that the country representative or director of the cluster co-lead agency should participate in selected or strategic UNICEF cluster/representative meetings and should be actively engaged in the overall management of the respective clusters, alongside the UNICEF Representative.</p>	
DOUBLE-HATTING	
<p>If any of the positions above is double-hatting (for example with programmes), a matrix management is recommended.</p>	

152 UNICEF (2022), Well-Placed: A talent management strategy for cluster coordination and information management.

153 UNICEF (2022), Well-Placed: A talent management strategy for cluster coordination and information management.

154 It is also accepted that the Representative delegates this task, for example to a dedicated cluster/AoR supervisor, to the Chief of Field Operations/Emergency, or others.

155 UNICEF (2022), Well-Placed: A talent management strategy for cluster coordination and information management.

156 Note that due to the similarity of the role these considerations are also valid for sector coordinators when clusters/AoRs are not activated.



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The decision on the best option for direct line management of UNICEF-led Cluster/AoR Coordinators will be taken at country level, based on an analysis of the context and capacities, and on the following general recommendations and principles:

- ④ **L3 emergencies.** In L3 emergencies, it is recommended that the UNICEF country office identify a person of an appropriate level of seniority to manage the clusters/AoR or, if the scale of response requires it, recruit a dedicated cluster manager. The manager of the clusters should work under the direct supervision of the Representative.
- ④ **L2/1 emergencies.** There are two options:
 1. The Cluster/AoR Coordinators will be directly managed by the UNICEF Representative.
 2. If this is not feasible, the Representative should bear the following in mind when deciding how to manage the coordinators:
 - All UNICEF-led Cluster/AoR Coordinators should be managed by one person to ensure coherence of approach within the UNICEF-led clusters and to ensure that issues common to all clusters are identified and addressed coherently.
 - The manager should be of an appropriate level of seniority to elicit respect and to have the capacity and experience to manage the coordinators.
 - It is essential that the manager regularly brief the Representative and attend the HCT alongside her/him.
 - There should be periodic meetings with the Representative and manager to give the Cluster/AoR Coordinators the opportunity to engage with the Representative, and through this dialogue to allow him/her to gain a deeper understanding of cluster/AoR-related issues.

The following table shows **advantages and disadvantages of the different reporting line options:**

CLUSTER/AoR COORDINATOR REPORTS TO	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES	RECOMMENDATIONS
Dedicated cluster/AoR manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensures cluster/AoR issues are dealt with cohesively. Facilitates identification of common issues across clusters/AoR and management of these issues in a coherent manner. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only feasible and cost effective in a large-scale emergency. Potential that UNICEF Representative disengages from cluster/AoR work. 	<p>Recommended – where dedicated cluster manager in post.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cluster manager reports to the Representative. Cluster manager is also responsible for ensuring that the Representative is adequately briefed on cluster/AoR-related issues. Cluster manager may attend the HCT with the Representative but not in his/her place. Holds additional periodic UNICEF Representative and Cluster/AoR Coordinators meetings to ensure that Representative is well placed to represent the clusters/AoR at HCT and other fora.
UNICEF Representative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows opportunity for Cluster/AoR Coordinators to regularly engage with Representative. Ensures Representative in touch with cluster/AoR activity and well placed to represent them in the HCT. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant additional workload for a country Representative – especially in a large-scale emergency with equally large-scale emergency programming. Risk that Representative does not have the time to effectively manage the Cluster/AoR Coordinators. 	<p>Recommended – where dedicated cluster manager not in post and country Representative has time to effectively manage the Cluster/AoR Coordinators.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Representative could also delegate some of the day-to-day management tasks to the Deputy Representative-Programmes or Chief of Field Operations/Emergency.
Deputy Representative – Programme or Chief of Field Operations/Emergency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> These individuals may have more time available than the Representative to manage the Cluster/AoR Coordinators effectively. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant additional workload for a Deputy Representative - Programmes or Chief of Field Operations – especially in a large-scale emergency with equally large-scale emergency programming. Risk that these individuals do not have the time to effectively manage the Cluster/AoR Coordinators. 	<p>Possibly recommended – as an option where no dedicated cluster manager in post and UNICEF Representative does not have time to effectively manage Cluster/AoR Coordinators.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Representative to select the most appropriate individual considering relevant experience and skills, potential to commit the time to do the job and level of seniority. Important that the manager keeps Representative fully briefed and may attend the HCT with, but not in place of, Representative.
Chief of Section	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As only taking on management of one additional person, the chief of section may have time to perform the management role. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Common issues across all clusters may be lost/diluted/not managed coherently by CLA, and not adequately represented in the HCT. Potential for chief of section to focus on coordinator support for UNICEF-related issues rather than the broader cluster issues. Each Chief of Section would be required to brief UNICEF Representative on respective Cluster/AoR issues – adding a time-consuming process. 	<p>Not recommended – In principle this approach is not recommended, however, if the coordinator is double-hatting, a matrix management with Representative or his/her delegate is recommended.</p>

DOUBLE-HATTING

C/AoR Coordinator and IMO positions are frequently not fully dedicated positions but double-hatting: **UNICEF programme staff member functions as Cluster/AoR Coordinator or IMO in addition to his/her UNICEF programme responsibilities.** Double-hatting is also when an IMO has responsibility for more than one cluster/AoR; for example, Child Protection AoR and Education. Double-hatting is very often the default option for sub-national coordination; in fact, it is rare to have fully dedicated coordinators at sub-national level, even in large emergencies.



The CLARE II review¹⁵⁷ highlighted the challenges deriving from this practice, primarily the risk of a (real or perceived) conflict of interest for the coordinator and the subsequent loss of credibility and trust by cluster/AoR members. For this reason, **double-hatting as a long-term solution is discouraged**¹⁵⁸ and should only be considered in the first 90 days of sudden-onset crises.

Double-hatting across sectors is also discouraged as this work requires specific sectoral competencies, although it might be considered on a case-by-case basis – depending on the context, type and scale of emergency, and the existence and capacity of the pre-emergency information management systems.

Decisions as to how much capacity is required will depend on context. The CO should consider the following:

- As a rule of thumb, double-hatting can be considered if the work related to each of the two different areas (coordination/programme, or different sectors/clusters) takes up to 50% of the time of the staff; this is not always easy to estimate, and it should be noted that coordination work by nature is time-consuming.
- There is a risk that with an excessive and competing workload, attention is given mostly to the easier coordination functions and less to the strategic leadership functions of cluster/AoR coordination.¹⁵⁹
- Nevertheless, in smaller-scale crises and in some protracted crises, it may not be operationally or financially viable to have dedicated cluster and AOR coordination staff and therefore double-hatting is the best solution.
- An alternative option is to have a *roving* Cluster/AoR Coordinator, based at national level and supporting sub-national coordination; this allows for full capacity but is deployed at need, avoiding the high cost of dedicated sub-national coordinators.



Cluster/AoR coordination responsibilities and allocation of time for cluster functions should be clearly articulated in the job description and in the performance appraisal of the post-holder, and monitored through regular meetings with supervisor(s) to ensure that the dual role is sustainable. Staff who hold double-hatting positions have frequently highlighted the excessive workload and competing priorities that are common in this situation.

A double-hatting Cluster/AoR Coordinator must always make it clear when speaking on behalf of and representing the cluster/AoR and when speaking on behalf of and representing UNICEF; this is particularly important at sub-national level, where less familiarity with humanitarian agencies and the humanitarian coordination architecture may create confusion for stakeholders.

157 UNICEF (2022), Evaluation of the UNICEF Role as Cluster Lead (Co-Lead) Agency (CLARE II).

158 UNICEF (2022), A talent management strategy for cluster coordination and information management.

159 UNICEF (2022), Evaluation of the UNICEF Role as Cluster Lead (Co-Lead) Agency (CLARE II).

To avoid such confusion, both at national and sub-national level, another person should **represent UNICEF at meetings**, especially in a situation where UNICEF is likely to take a different position from other cluster/AoR partners. It is essential that another person represent UNICEF where funding allocations are being made.

NEUTRALITY OF THE CLUSTER/AOR COORDINATOR



Cluster/AoR Coordinators are employed by or seconded to UNICEF, and report to the Representative or his/her designate. Nevertheless, **they have an overriding duty to the cluster/AoR partners and must act as neutral representatives of the cluster/AoR as a whole, and should not act as a representative of UNICEF (or any other entity except the cluster/AoR)**. However, the very nature of clusters/AoRs as composite and diverse bodies, the humanitarian context, the realities of cross-cultural communication and of managing a diverse team, sometimes make neutrality a challenging aspect of coordination. Neutrality of the coordinator position may be promoted through:

- ① Appointment of a dedicated coordinator with no UNICEF programme responsibilities. This neutral position should be articulated in the coordinator’s job description and performance appraisal;
- ① The neutrality of the coordinator should be clarified with partners on a regular basis, and should be backed up by practice, i.e. Cluster/AoR Coordinators are not expected to represent UNICEF or take on aspects of UNICEF programme work;
- ① Active participation of UNICEF Chiefs of Section and senior staff in cluster/AoR meetings, representing UNICEF;
- ① Reporting line of the coordinator to someone other than the Chief of Section;
- ① If appropriate in the context, appointment of a Cluster/AoR Coordinator at the same seniority level as the Chief of Section, which favours a balanced relation among peers;
- ① In case of double-hatting, the coordinator needs to articulate very clearly whether s/he is speaking on behalf of and representing UNICEF, or speaking on behalf of and representing the cluster.

SURGE AND RECRUITMENT

COs have different options to appoint cluster/AoR coordination personnel. The first step is having completed **preparedness**:

STAFF MOBILIZATION	L -1 L -2 L -3 emergency levels
	Within the first 24 to 48 hours of a sudden onset emergency or L2/L3 declaration, repurpose and/or deploy staff already in country to support the response (as agreed in MPS3).

The **MPS 3** requires COs to identify staff responsibilities, staff refocusing and surge needs, and develop a staff learning plan. In the immediate aftermath of a sudden onset emergency, for example, staff can be refocused temporarily to take on coordination functions until a more permanent solution is found. The Talent Strategy¹⁶⁰ also invites COs to build external talent pipelines as part of their preparedness.

160 UNICEF (2022), A talent management strategy for cluster coordination and information management

SURGE

SURGE	L -1 L -2 L -3 emergency levels
	Define immediate programme, cluster and operations staffing needs in a Surge Tracking Sheet (STS). The DHR Surge Desk then assesses the STS and determines, in cooperation with RO, CO and/or EMOPS as needed, (Emergency Response Team Focal Point and Standby Team) appropriate surge mechanisms.

COs can request support through surge, which is usually faster than recruitment, while setting up the recruitment of cluster/AoR personnel. In fact, the [Emergency Procedures](#) clearly state COs need to immediately request surge in an L2/3 declaration, while launching staff recruitment into cluster/AoR positions.

COs can avail themselves of both **internal and external surge support mechanisms**; COs will be able to choose among different suitable options. All seconded staff should be fully integrated into the UNICEF country office and treated as equal members to the UNICEF team; they report to UNICEF and should be line-managed by UNICEF. Global Cluster/AoR Coordinators should be involved in pre-departure orientation of temporary or surge personnel sourced from these various options.

The table in the next page shows the different options including time frame and length of deployment, and costs for the COs.



SOURCE	GENERAL INFORMATION	TIMEFRAME BETWEEN REQUEST AND DEPLOYMENT	LENGTH OF DEPLOYMENT AND EMPLOYMENT STATUS	COSTS	COMMENTS
INTERNAL MECHANISMS					
Humanitarian Surge Deployment via Frontlines Platform	Managed by DHR Emergency Section, in liaison with RO and with the approval of CO. Refers to UNICEF staff and personnel deployed on mission to support a Humanitarian response.	Deployment usually takes place within 48 to 72 hours. However, depending on the availability of colleagues/competencies, as well as the logistics (e.g., duplicate UNLPs, visas, etc.) this may take longer.	Employed by UNICEF. Deployment: 1–3 months	Requesting CO to bear costs. (Daily subsistence allowance/DSA, travel and terminal charges)	Access to staff with knowledge and experience of UNICEF systems.
Global Cluster Coordination Section (GCCS)	Global cluster coordinators and deputies are based in EMOPS Geneva.	Available for deployment 48 hours after request. Carry United Nations Laissez Passer.	Short term – engagement in analysis/ decision-making on activation of cluster/AoR and cover coordination functions as required until surge staff in place.	Salary and costs for travel to country covered by EMOPS – CO responsible for all costs in-country.	In priority countries where clusters/AoRs are activated, the global clusters can provide short-term surge support to fill gaps and provide technical support and capacity development if the country office and regional office resources are insufficient.
Emergency Response Team (ERT)	Twenty-four staff members with specific technical expertise, mobilized at the approval of the EMOPS director and usually for L3 emergencies.	Deployment usually takes place within 48 to 72 hours.	Employed by UNICEF. 4 to 6 weeks. Meant for a gap, not a long time	Salaries and entitlements are covered by their division. Requesting CO to bear costs. (Daily subsistence allowance/ DSA, travel and terminal charges)	Emergency professionals and familiar with UNICEF systems and processes
Regional roster/Rapid Response Mechanism	Managed by ROs; internal rosters consisting of pre-screened, appropriately qualified and experienced staff members with approval to be deployed to emergency missions. These individuals may have coordination, information management and/or technical skills and may be deployed within and between regions.	Variable.	Up to three months. Employed by UNICEF.	Receiving CO responsible for all costs including salary (salary to be reimbursed to seconding country office).	Familiar with UNICEF systems and processes. Usually bring significant experience to the post but may be less familiar with cluster coordination systems and processes.
UNICEF internal mission	Internal UNICEF missions may be agreed through bilateral negotiation between representatives. These individuals may have coordination, information management and/or technical skills and may be deployed within and between regions.	Variable	Usually up to three months. Employed by UNICEF.	Receiving CO responsible for all costs including salary (salary to be reimbursed to seconding country office).	Familiar with UNICEF systems and processes. Usually bring significant experience to the post but may be less familiar with cluster coordination systems and processes.

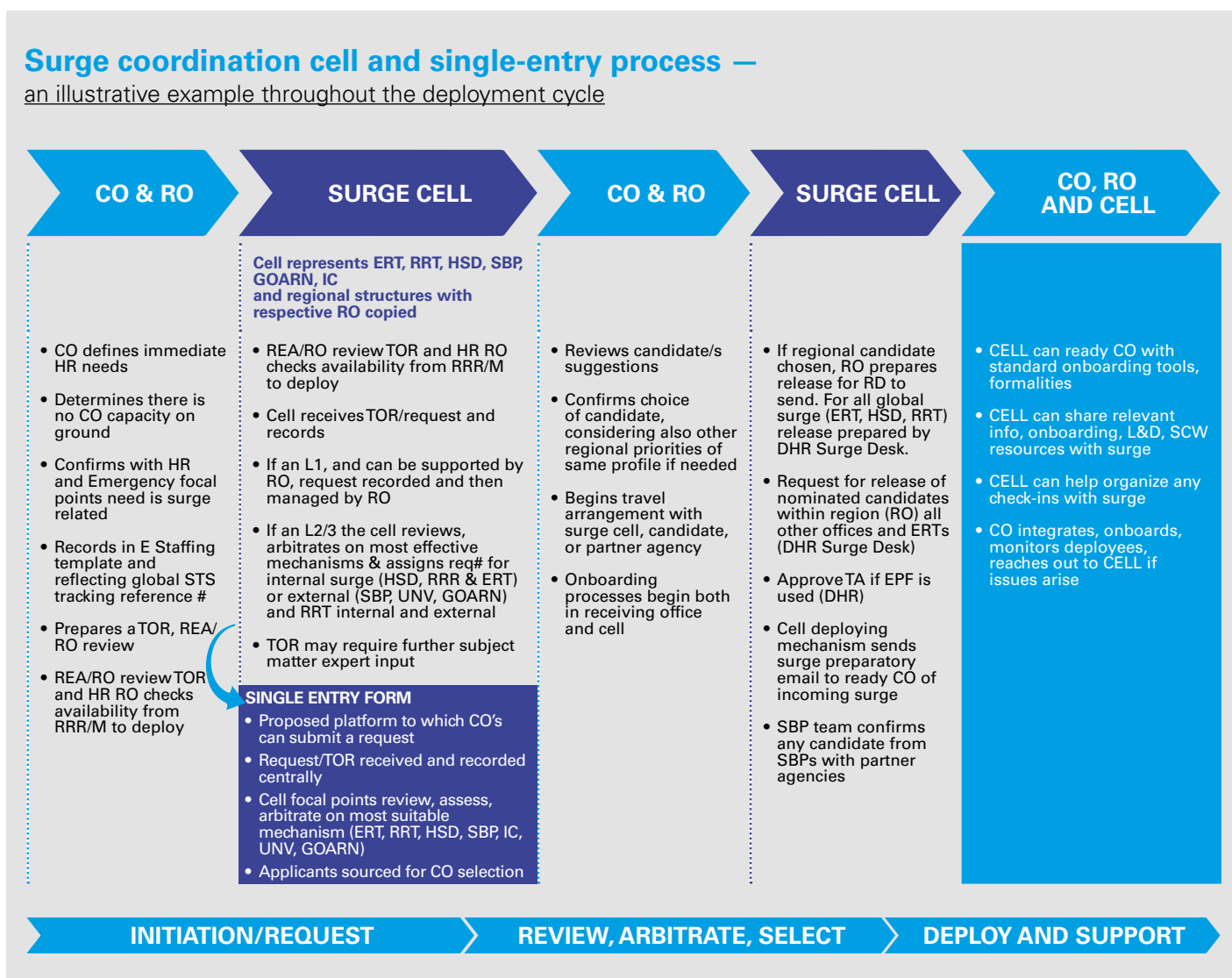
EXTERNAL MECHANISMS

Cluster/ AoR Rapid Response Teams	Each UNICEF-led or co-led cluster and AoR has a rapid response team, made up of high quality, rapidly deployable coordinators and information management specialists.	Available for deployment 48 hours after request (pending visa).	Up to three months. Personnel or employed by host agency – seconded to UNICEF through a partnership agreement. Education deploys some rapid response team personnel to in-country co-lead Save the Children.	In the case of all clusters except child protection, the GCCS will cover the cost of salary and travel to the receiving country while the country office will cover all in-country costs. In the case of the child protection AoR, the country office will cover travel to country and daily subsistence allowance (in addition to in-country costs).	To some extent familiar with UNICEF systems and processes – significant understanding of cluster coordination systems and processes. Usually bring significant experience to post.
Standby partners	UNICEF has developed standby partner agreements with a number of agencies, which maintain rosters of emergency surge capacity personnel for deployment. Standby partners include NGOs, government agencies and private companies based in several countries. The individuals on the rosters are usually employed in their home country but can take leave on short notice to be seconded to UNICEF. They may have coordination, information management and/or technical skills.	May be deployed within two weeks after request (pending visa).	Usually deployed for three to six months; in some cases up to a year. Employed by host agency – seconded to UNICEF through a partnership agreement.	Standby partner organizations bear the remuneration costs (salary, allowances, travel to and from country), as applicable. All costs associated within country, equipment and onboarding are borne by the requesting office.	Pre-vetted by Standby Partner, usually brings significant technical experience, but unless previously deployed with UNICEF, may not be familiar with UNICEF systems and processes.
UNV fast track	To add capacity to the staffing structure of a CO. EMOPS Geneva can accelerate UNV's sourcing, selection and recruitment only in emergency contexts. International, national and remote deployments are available.	May be deployed within 10-20 days after request (pending visa)	3 to 12 months	Requesting offices will fully bear the costs associated with contracting a UNV, including salary, allowances, etc. UNV contracting costs vary from one country to another, based on UNV regulations. An estimate can be provided by UNV focal points.	Pre-vetted by UNV, usually brings significant technical experience, but unless previously deployed with UNICEF, may not be familiar with UNICEF systems and processes.
ProCap	The Protection Capacity Project (ProCap) is a resource providing senior level expertise and leadership in protection through deployment of senior protection officers to humanitarian situations. ProCap officers are senior, experienced, full-time protection officers (P4/P5 level or equivalent) on permanent rotation, employed by the Norwegian Refugee Council and deployed to the HC and agencies with a protection mandate.	Aim for deployment within two weeks after request (pending visa). However, may be some delay as this goes through IASC process.	Generally a three-to-six-month mandate. Personnel are employed by the Norwegian Refugee Council – seconded to UNICEF through partnership agreement.	The Norwegian Refugee Council covers salary and travel to country. Country office responsible for all costs in-country.	May not be familiar with UNICEF systems and processes. Usually bring significant experience to post.
GenCap	The Gender Standby Capacity Project (GenCap) seeks to build capacity of humanitarian actors at country level to mainstream gender equality programming, including prevention of and response to GBV. GenCap advisers (P4/P5 level or equivalent) are employed by the Norwegian Refugee Council and are available for deployment on short notice as inter-agency resources to support the HC, HCT and cluster/sector leads in humanitarian situations.	Aim for deployment within two weeks after request (pending visa). However, may be some delay as this goes through IASC process.	Generally six to 12 months; extensions may be made up to a maximum of 24 months. Personnel are employed by the Norwegian Refugee Council – seconded to UNICEF through partnership agreements.	The Norwegian Refugee Council covers salary and travel to country. Country office responsible for all costs in-country.	May not be familiar with UNICEF systems and processes. Usually bring significant experience to post.

While surge is an immediate and useful option, there are some disadvantages to it:

- Most mechanisms for surge support are for short periods of time, generating a potential loss of continuity in coordination. Short-term options should be only used on an interim basis while arrangements for longer-term appointments are being processed.
- Over-reliance on external personnel on surge to fill cluster/AoR coordination positions is poorly perceived by some external key stakeholders, including donors, and interpreted as a signal that UNICEF has not internalized its full responsibilities as a Cluster Lead Agency.
- External surge may be sought if unavailable internally, while recruitment is launched, and it is only appropriate in the first 90 days of the IASC Cluster/AoR activation while UNICEF creates and recruits staff positions, as these posts have high visibility and a high potential for reputational risk for UNICEF.

Following the Humanitarian Review, **one central point of entry for all surge and deployment** has been created together with **updated guidance** for Country and Regional Offices on available surge and incorporation of cluster coordination and IMS positions to existing surge rosters.¹⁶¹ The **process for requesting surge** is the following:



161 UNICEF (2022), A talent management strategy for cluster coordination and information management

For more details and to initiate the surge process, COs can refer to the [HR in Emergencies Toolkit](#) and contact the [DHR Emergency Team](#), NYHQ.

RECRUITMENT

RECRUITMENT	L -1 L -2 L -3 emergency levels
	Develop an HR Strategy covering the transition from immediate (including surge) support to longer term staffing needs, and a scale down strategy, including for cluster/AoR coordination.

At the beginning of an emergency – and even before if **preparedness** is done correctly – an analysis of cluster/AoR coordination and information management capacity should be carried out, identifying staffing needs and developing a **staffing strategy**. For protracted emergencies, it is also important to conduct the same analysis and plan in advance for positions that need to be substituted at the end of a tour of duty.

The country office shall start the recruitment for longer-term positions as a priority at the outset of an emergency – recognizing that the temporary/surge mechanisms are gap-filling measures to support the country office until they can recruit staff. **Previous chapters** in this manual provide guidance on the type and seniority of contracts recommended. GCCS and Global Clusters/AoR participate in recruitments by providing inputs on shortlisting, participating in interview panels where applicable, and providing technical clearance of selected candidates.

The simplified **emergency procedures** for recruitment of staff in L2 and L3 emergencies are summarized in the following table:¹⁶²

L3 EMERGENCY	L2 EMERGENCY
1. Staff mobilization: CO, within the first 24 to 48 hours of a sudden onset emergency or L2/L3 declaration, repurpose and/or deploy staff already in country to support the response	
2. COs define immediate staffing needs for the emergency response, which is then supported by DHR in collaboration with RO, CO and/or EMOPS as needed.	
3. Mail-poll PBR within the first month of a sudden onset emergency or L2/L3 declaration.	
4. Sourcing for critical emergency recruitments is supported by DHR.	
*** Milestones (KPIs): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🕒 Assessments completed → 20 days 🕒 approvals → 5 days 🕒 offer letters → 4 days 🕒 candidates accepting offers → 3 days 	
5. The approving authority for IP TA positions under 7 months can be delegated to the Rep after approval from the RD, and the Director of HR.	
6. Single sourcing can be used in the best interest of the organization	
7. Approving authority	
<i>Category/grade of the post</i>	<i>Approving authority</i>
FT P5 posts + FT Dep Rep, CFO & IP security posts	DHR Director
TA P5 posts + TA Dep Rep and CFO post	RD/Division Director
All P1 to P4 posts (except Dep Rep, CFO & IP security posts)	Technical clearance of CCs/IMOs positions should also be requested to GCCS ¹⁶²
FT NO posts	
All GS posts in RO/HQ duty station	

¹⁶² According to the UNICEF (2023), Human Resources in Emergencies Toolkit 2.0 which includes GCCS and global clusters/AoR in the selection of country cluster/AoR coordination teams

TA NO posts	Head of Office
All GS posts in a CO	

8. Reduced Breaks in Service (BIS)

9. Staff Wellbeing:

- ① Staff wellbeing activities included in the Annual Management Plan
 - ① Regular staff wellbeing missions by a UNICEF-recruited Staff Counsellor to CO and FO duty stations at least once per year.
 - ① Referral resources for external mental health professionals (considering culture and language) are available
- *** For L3 Emergency: make staff counselling services available to all staff and their dependents



For **co-leadership**, the co-lead agency should be included in the selection of cluster/AoR coordination teams.¹⁶³ According to the upcoming policy on recruitments: Non-UNICEF personnel, mainly but not limited to UN staff members, may be invited to participate in a selection panel as non-voting members, only when the expertise is not available in UNICEF or would add value to a UNICEF selection panel. Additionally, they may be granted the voting rights in the panel if the selection is for a position that will also serve their employing organization.¹⁶⁴

More detailed information on all the aspects above is available in the [HR in Emergencies Toolkit](#).

SCALE DOWN

As clusters/AoRs are temporary coordination mechanisms, at some point the CO will **scale down** its engagement on humanitarian coordination, for example, in case of cluster/AoR **deactivation** and transition to sectorial mechanisms.

- ① Scale-down should be conducted with sustainability in mind, using national capacity to the extent possible;
- ① Cluster/AoR staff on abolished posts should be informed verbally by their supervisor as part of the PBR process and receive a six-month notification upon PBR approval. Proactive placement support and career transition support should be offered, including (where applicable) consideration for staff rotation exercises or lateral moves;
- ① Some countries are subject to cyclical crises and might experience repeated scale-ups and scale-downs. In this case, COs might consider 'freezing' cluster/AoR positions rather than abolish them in the following PBR, so that they can be quickly reactivated at the next scale-up.

STAFF MANAGEMENT

Once the cluster/AoR coordination team is on board, it is important that the CO – and especially the supervisor – ensures a proper **introduction and onboarding of the cluster/AoR coordination team**; this will facilitate a positive relationship and collaboration between coordination and programme teams. The coordinator supervisor is also responsible for introducing the cluster/AoR coordination team to stakeholders, including Government authorities and other key actors in the response. These considerations are equally valid for staff on surge and staff seconded from standby partners.

¹⁶³ Experience in the education cluster, globally co-led by UNICEF and SCI, has shown that when recruitments are conducted jointly there are better chances of a successful relationship between co-lead coordinators; inclusion of the co-lead agency in the recruitment process is therefore recommended.

¹⁶⁴ UNICEF staff selection policy (under development).

The organization is considering the creation of a common platform to support onboarding of new cluster/AoR staff, building on the existing guidance '[A Head Start: Onboarding and Orientation in Emergencies](#)'. Supervisors can refer to the [Onboarding guide for Supervisors](#) for further guidance and tips.

During their assignments, cluster/AoR coordination teams should also be offered **capacity development and learning opportunities**, including on leadership skills, as recommended in the Talent Management Strategy.

Finally, their **performance evaluation** should be properly ensured:

- For staff on FT/TA contracts, surge deployment performance can be documented in the [Achieve](#) system directly. It is important to showcase individual contributions and have them documented as evidence.
- Standby partner personnel (SBP) should complete the [SBP Performance Evaluation Form](#).

RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

Relationship management is the ability to build relationships of trust and coordinate effectively among a wide range of stakeholders within and outside of UNICEF. This is an important competency and Cluster/AoR Coordinators are required to demonstrate effective collaboration and networking skills within and across the Cluster/AoR and coordination teams. These relationships are considered critical to the effectiveness of Cluster/AoR Coordinators ability to build trusted relationships within UNICEF and externally with Partners.

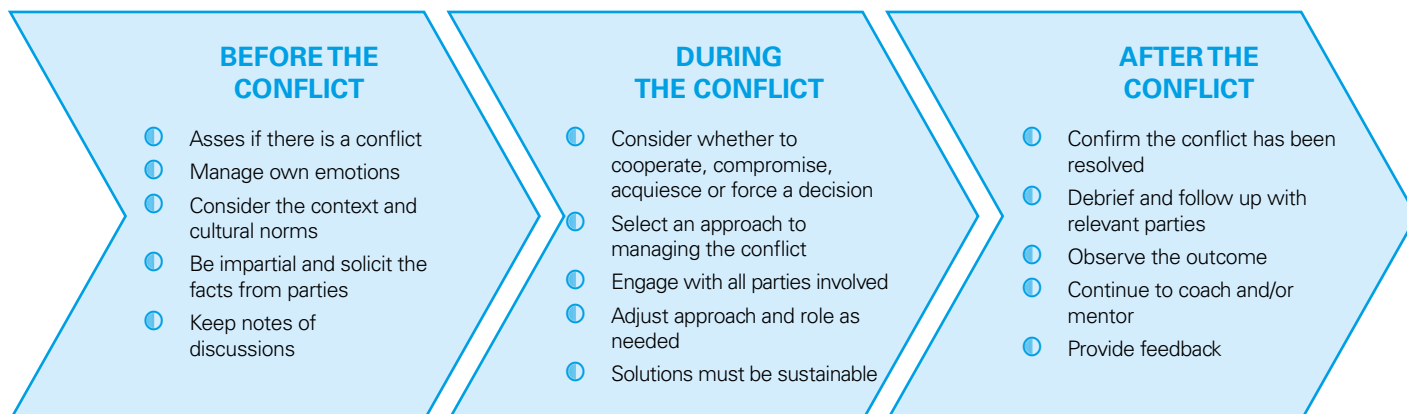
Benefits of strong relationship management skills include:

- Fosters collaboration & cooperation
- Enhances skills & knowledge transfer
- Boosts individual and team morale
- Inspires creativity & innovation
- Increase individual and team performance
- Builds psychological safety and trust in teams

For good relationship management, UNICEF requires Cluster/AoR Coordinators, Programme Chiefs and other managers to apply the following principles:

- Role model appropriate behaviours as a team leader
- Demonstrate respect for cultural norms and values
- Use emotional intelligence to demonstrate political astuteness and cross-cultural sensitivity
- Leverage contacts at all levels to identify synergies in work goals
- Practice active listening and communicate effectively to enhance trust
- Demonstrate strong interpersonal skills and respect for cultural norms and values
- Demonstrate strong conflict management skills, understanding when to cooperate, compromise, acquiesce or take a decision
- Facilitate discussions that encourage reflection and review
- Engage others in a cooperative approach to problem solving
- Acknowledge and recognize individual and team contribution
- Recognise that not all conflict is unhealthy and build culture of healthy conflict

There are times when conflict is unavoidable, and tensions may arise between the Programme & Cluster/AoR teams, it is incumbent on the team leaders, particularly Programme Chiefs and Cluster/AoR Coordinators to manage conflict effectively and minimize the potential for unhealthy conflict.



Staff may consult the following internal resources:

- [UNICEF Competency Framework](#)
- [UNICEF Values in Action](#)
- [Culture & Diversity Values Charter](#)
- [Resources for Managers](#)
- [The Essential guide for UNICEF Managers](#)
- [Addressing workplaces issues in UNICEF](#)
- [Preparing a conversation with someone causing you issues](#)

External courses available through UNICEF corporate accounts:

Need to understand more about how to be successful at managing healthy workplace conflict?	Managing Team Conflict Conflict Resolution for Beginners Mistakes to Avoid When Resolving Conflict
Need ideas on how to develop greater trust and collaboration at work?	Building Trust and Collaborating with Others Skills to Build Stronger Work Relationships Creating a Culture of Collaboration Leading with Emotional Intelligence



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15. Operational and administrative support

CORE COMMITMENTS

BENCHMARK

OVERARCHING COMMITMENT

All UNICEF offices are fit for purpose and personnel know and contribute to the application of minimum preparedness standards and emergency procedures, to enable the timely delivery of humanitarian assistance by UNICEF and its partners.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ① Since cluster/AoR coordination is a UNICEF accountability, by extension all relevant Operational Commitments apply to cluster/AoR-related UNICEF activities in the same way as they apply to programme activities
- ① The CO shall provide the required operational and administrative support for their effective functioning to cluster/AoRs coordination teams at national and sub-national levels.

ACTION	RESPONSIBLE	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
Ensure CO preparedness (especially MPS3 and MPS4) take into consideration requirements for cluster/AoR Coordination	Chief of Field Operations/Emergency	MPS3 MPS4 Preparedness Procedure
Provide required operational and administrative support for clusters/ AoR at national and sub-national level, including office space, ICT equipment and technical support, logistics support, transport, translation, administrative support	Deputy Representative – Operations	Core Commitments for Children, Emergency Handbook
Where required, designate relevant sectors/clusters as implementors in VISION, using generic vendor number 2500240235 to transfer supplies from UNICEF to sector/cluster partners. Ensure there is a signed TOR with results reporting requirements before releasing the supplies	C/AoR Coordinator Supply and Logistics Manager	Guideline Release Orders from CO warehouses. Emergency Handbook

USEFUL LINKS

- ① Procedure: [Preparedness Procedure](#)
- ① Guidance: [Emergency Handbook](#), [Guideline Release Orders from CO warehouses.](#)
- ① Tools: [MPS3](#) and [MPS4](#)



As UNICEF-led clusters/AoRs are established in-country, there is a need for UNICEF to scale up administrative and logistical functions to ensure the CO has the capacity to provide the required level of support for effective coordination. **While Operational Commitments do not refer explicitly¹⁶⁵ to cluster/AoR coordination, as coordination is a UNICEF accountability, by extension all relevant operational commitments apply to cluster/AoR-related UNICEF activities in the same way as they apply to programme activities.**

UNICEF is accountable to the HC and ERC for effective coordination of all UNICEF-led and co-led clusters/ AoRs at country level. Therefore, **UNICEF CO support for clusters/AoR is an essential and equal part of UNICEF emergency response and not a secondary support for UNICEF programmes.**

¹⁶⁵ Except briefly under the ICT and Supply and Logistics “Key Considerations.”

While it is appreciated that, in the early stages of an acute onset emergency, operational and administrative support services for clusters/AoR may be less than optimal; nevertheless, it is the responsibility of the UNICEF Representative and Deputy-Representative-Operations to ensure that the various sections of the organization prioritize provision of operational and administrative support services for effective coordination as soon as possible.

UNICEF **CO preparedness** should also take into consideration support required for clusters/AoR, particularly under **MPS3 – Human Resources** and **MPS4 – Supply and Logistics**.

Operational and administrative support for clusters includes:

- ④ Suitable **office space** and furnishing for cluster/AoR coordination teams to work effectively and to meet with partners. While office space located outside UNICEF premises may increase a perception of neutrality and impartiality, this should be balanced against the level of support clusters/AoRs will require from UNICEF, e.g. generator, water and office support services, and how viable this is outside UNICEF premises. Where possible, locate co-lead cluster coordination staff at UNICEF, to allow the cluster team to work effectively.
- ④ As with national level cluster/AoR coordination, it is essential that UNICEF provides the required operational and administrative support to enable the **sub-national cluster/AoR** to function effectively.
- ④ Adequate **ICT equipment and technical support**.
- ④ Technical support to establish and maintain a **cluster/AoR website** where an information manager may not be in post, or does not have the required technical assistance. The primary web platform for field-level cluster websites is <https://response.reliefweb.int/>. Where new websites are being established, this is the platform that should be used. Where country cluster websites exist on other platforms, UNICEF-led clusters/AoRs are encouraged to consider transition to the new platform. Assistance for establishment or transition of country cluster/AoR websites should be available through the OCHA information management office in-country.
- ④ Adequate **logistics support, including transport**, with an appreciation that cluster/AoR staff are often expected to work after normal office working hours and will require transport, especially in a situation where public transport or taxis are not available, authorized or safe to use.
- ④ Facilitating access to **translation** services, as necessary.
- ④ An appropriate level of **administrative support** should be made available. Options include:
 - The appointment of an administrative officer to provide administrative support to all clusters/AoRs (this model has been successful in some country offices).
 - An administrative officer from the programme section to perform a dual function, providing administrative support for both programme and cluster/AoR. In this case, it will be important to ensure that (as with double-hatting Cluster/AoR Coordinators and information managers) cluster-related responsibilities and allocation of time for cluster/AoR functions are clearly articulated in the job description and performance appraisal of the post-holder. Clearly, where cluster/AoR and programme sections share staff, very good collaborative working relationships must be established between the Cluster/AoR Coordinator, the chief of section and senior technical staff.

16. Resource mobilization for cluster/AoR coordination

CORE COMMITMENTS	BENCHMARK
<p>1: Mobilization of adequate and quality resources Adequate and quality resources are mobilized in a timely and predictable manner to support preparedness and response to humanitarian and protection needs, particularly of the most vulnerable populations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multi-year, predictable and flexible funding is mobilized from private and public sectors to reduce the gap between humanitarian needs and the resources available to meet them Funding is secured to support preparedness for faster, timely and more cost-effective responses Internal funding mechanisms (Emergency Programme Fund and Thematic Funding) are used to rapidly respond and scale up programmes
<p>2: Linking humanitarian and development resources Integration of humanitarian and development resources is enhanced</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic investments are made from UNICEF thematic pools to support preparedness, humanitarian response and activities related to system strengthening and resilience-building Localization of humanitarian and development programming is supported through multi-year, predictable and flexible funding. Systems are in place to track, monitor and report on these investments
<p>3: Impartiality and risk-sharing Resources are allocated impartially, based on the needs of affected populations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Available resources are allocated based on needs assessment Procedures are in place to manage donor conditions at CO level Donors are aware of and understand UNICEF risk management policies

KEY TAKEAWAYS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resources for cluster/AoR coordination should include, in addition to post costs, funding of activities in support of cluster coordination functions (travel, equipment, core coordination and leadership activities) CO should prioritize funding for cluster/AoR roles Ensure that budget for coordination roles and CLA accountabilities is included in proposals to donors, in HRP and in HAC

ACTION	RESPONSIBLE	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
Mobilize resources specifically to fulfil CLA accountabilities; ensure that funding for CLA accountabilities is included in proposals to donors, as well as monitor and maintain opportunities for coordination and CLA accountabilities within CO pipeline	Representative Deputy Representative - Programmes Resource Mobilization Manager Programme Chief Chief of Field Operations/Emergency	Donor profiles
Include humanitarian coordination and CLA accountabilities in CO RM strategy	Resource Mobilization Manager	
Develop arguments and/or investment case for funding coordination roles	Resource Mobilization Manager Chief of Field Operations/Emergency	
If the CO launches a HAC appeal, include coordination either as a standalone budget line or integrated into sectoral budget lines	Resource Mobilization Manager Programme Chief	2024 HAC guidance , 2024 HAC guidance on Funding Requirements

USEFUL LINKS

- ① ICON page: [RM in Emergencies](#); [Global Humanitarian Thematic Fund](#); [Humanitarian Action for Children](#)
- ① Guidance: [2024 HAC guidance](#), [2024 HAC guidance on Funding Requirements](#) and [HAC Template Guidance](#)
- ① Tools: [Donor profiles](#)
- ① Other resources:
 - [Resource Mobilization e-course \(Agora\)](#)
 - [Investment case for the GHTF](#)



Resources for cluster/AoR coordination are not only related to the coordination team post costs, but include other activities that allow staff to perform their functions optimally:

- ① Travel
- ① Activities related to core coordination and leadership functions (**6+1**) including for example mobilization, capacity strengthening, and so on.
- ① Assets needed to deliver on core functions (equipment, software licenses and access to UNICEF systems).

Cluster/AoR coordination teams often depend on programme sections for the allocation of additional funding for coordination activities. This has often been difficult, especially if the **strategic value of clusters** is not well understood in the COs. However, resources are necessary to perform coordination and leadership functions and should be budgeted for in addition to the cost of positions. In some COs, options to consolidate such funding under the budget approving authority of the coordinators' supervisor (be this the Representative or his/her delegate) are explored, so that a common approach is taken and additional funding does not depend on individual programme sections.

Recent reviews¹⁶⁶ of UNICEF humanitarian and cluster performance have recommended the **prioritization of funding for cluster/AoR roles**, and that they be covered by core resources (RR) to increase predictability and stability of positions for the period in which they are needed.



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166 Both the Humanitarian Review and the CLARE II review make similar recommendations on this regard.

UNICEF has committed “to prioritize investment in core coordination roles in existing funding streams, including a dedicated 1% of the Humanitarian Appeal for Children for coordination and use of the Global Humanitarian Thematic Fund and Country Offices’ fundraising strategies to invest in coordination, in adherence to UNICEF’s corporate prioritization and accountability processes.”¹⁶⁷ In 2023, approximately 10% of the Global Thematic Humanitarian Fund (GHTF) was allocated to COs for coordination roles; and this trend is expected to continue. COs are responsible for the allocation of funding to coordination roles; for example, they can follow the recommendation above and allocate 1% of the funds received against the HAC.



Different types of UNICEF resources can be used for funding CLA accountabilities:

Regular Resources (RR)

Flexible funding. Recent reviews recommend that Cluster/AoR coordination functions are funded through RR. Proposals for funding of coordination posts will be subject to regional programme budget review process.

Global Humanitarian Thematic Funding (GHTF)

Flexible funding. After RR, the GHTF is the most flexible form of funding. These resources can be used for coordination, but also to fulfil the **PoLR** role. In 2022 the GHTF allocated over 1% (or USD 728,000) out of 63.7 million USD to CLA accountability, as shown in the **GHTF Report 2022**. In 2023, more than 10% was allocated. Allocation criteria:

- Critical unmet needs for the most vulnerable children
- Critical funding gaps based on available and projected contributions
- Strong implementation capacity based on the delivery track records of regular country programmes
- Alignment with organization-wide initiatives aimed at strengthening the efficiency and effectiveness of UNICEF humanitarian action. This can include gender-transformative programming; establishing effective mechanisms for the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse; accountability to affected populations; and localization strategies that emphasize anti-racism and anti-discrimination

Emergency Programme Funds (EPF)

These resources are allocated automatically for L2/L3 emergencies, and they need to be reimbursed.

With an L3 declaration, EMOPS drafts a short note for the record and recommends a minimum no-regrets allocation of \$5,750,000 in emergency programme funds (EPF) (including \$750,000 earmarked for PSEA). EPF clearance is to be fast-tracked by mail poll (Programme Division, PPD, and the Office of the Executive Director).

With an L2 declaration, EMOPS drafts a short note for the record and recommends a minimum no-regrets allocation of \$2,500,000 in EPF (including \$500,000 earmarked for PSEA). EPF clearance is to be fast-tracked by mail poll (Programme Division, PPD, and the Office of the Executive Director).^[3]

Other Resources (Emergency) (ORE)

ORE consist of funds designated for emergency response requirements. Sources include public and private sector partners, humanitarian pooled funds managed by OCHA such as the United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and the Country-Based Pooled Funds (CBPF). They are frequently earmarked and therefore less flexible than core funds. In addition, COs also receive flexible non-thematic ORE funding, as well as softly earmarked ORE, particularly during and in the period after crises.

These are currently the most common sources for funding coordination and information management roles, as well as for funding needs assessments.

167 UNICEF (no date), Recommended good practices for the minimum structure of coordination teams at country level for UNICEF as a Cluster Lead Agency.

168 UNICEF (2021), Guidance Handbook in L1, L2 and L3 emergencies.

Resource mobilization for cluster/AoR functions presents several **challenges**:

- ① Increasing expectations from donors and Member States that UNICEF will support its corporate commitment to humanitarian coordination and leadership, funding those functions with its own resources in countries where coordination platforms are active.¹⁶⁹ Especially in the case of sectors (when clusters/AoRs are not activated), donors are reluctant to provide funds for coordination. When they do, there tends to be additional donor scrutiny and influence on the use of funds. More generally, funding becomes increasingly earmarked against results (especially in protracted crises) and there is a reduction of flexible funding that could be used for coordination roles;
- ① Partners' perception of a conflict of interest when UNICEF is the CLA and the recipient of donors' funds. Given clusters' collective nature, the perception of partners is important – and when those deciding on the funding are also those in a position to receive it, there is a clear conflict of interest.¹⁷⁰ For this reason it is especially important that the coordinator's **neutrality** is protected and that **UNICEF programme representatives participate in cluster/AoR meetings** when funding issues are discussed;
- ① Lack of specific guidance to COs on how to mobilize resources specifically for cluster/AoR coordination functions; limited inclusion of humanitarian coordination in CO resource mobilization strategies and in funding proposals;
- ① Limited involvement of Cluster/AoR Coordinators in programme proposal development (where funding for coordination functions could be included) and limited clarity on whose responsibility it is in the CO to mobilize funds for coordination functions.



COs can adopt some of the **actions** below to **facilitate fundraising for CLA accountabilities**:

- ① In funding proposals to donors, translate convincingly the impact of effective coordination into concrete (and possibly quantitative) results for children, show the **strategic value of coordination** and include specific budget lines for coordination;
- ① Highlight coordination achievements in SitReps, annual reports and reports to donors. Enhance results-based reporting demonstrating value for money and work towards collective results through coordination and leadership of clusters/AORs;
- ① Leverage the unique role of **PoLR** which is not covered by any organization but the CLA;
- ① With the support from partnership divisions, PPD and PFP, review **donor profiles** and identify those more open to funding coordination functions;
- ① Leverage **good donorship principles** (especially if the targeted donor is a member of the Good Humanitarian Donorship initiative) and advocate for the respect of the 10th Principle: *"Support and promote the central and unique role of the United Nations in providing leadership and coordination of international humanitarian action"*;
- ① If applicable to the context, explore less traditional funding options in-country including private sector, foundations, innovative finance agreements (if possible) such as blended financing instruments and public-private partnerships, as well as south-south and horizontal cooperation;
- ① Develop an investment case for coordination, using the **investment case for the GHF** as starting point and inspiration, or existing investment cases /capacity statements within the CO;
- ① Involve Cluster/AoR Coordinators in donor programme/project proposal development, and in allocation decisions.

169 UNICEF (2022), Humanitarian Action for Children.

170 UNICEF (2022), Evaluation of the UNICEF Role as Cluster Lead (Co-Lead) Agency (CLARE II).



The following arguments can be made in favour of coordination, and they can be used to strengthen donor proposals which include CLA accountabilities, including through demonstration of Value for Money principles:¹⁷¹

- 3. Efficient Resource Allocation:** Cluster/AoR coordination ensures that resources are used efficiently and effectively. Without proper coordination, there's a risk of duplication of efforts – with multiple organizations potentially addressing the same needs while other needs remain unmet, and of donor resources not being used optimally.
- 4. Enhanced Accountability:** Improved monitoring and evaluation mechanisms derived from effective coordination ensure that cluster/AoR members are more accountable to both donors and the affected population.
- 5. Improved Information Management:** The IM function of clusters ensures better access to data and information, leading to more evidence-based decision-making and ultimately a more effective use of donor funds.
- 6. Leveraging Strengths:** Good coordination can leverage the strengths of different organizations in a complementary manner, ensuring that the overall humanitarian response is more effective, and that donor resources are optimally spent.
- 7. Cost-Effectiveness and Value for Money:** While there is a cost to coordination mechanisms, in the long run they lead to savings: by avoiding duplications, making informed decisions, and leveraging shared resources, the overall cost of humanitarian interventions is reduced and the efficiency and effectiveness are increased.

HUMANITARIAN ACTION FOR CHILDREN (HAC)

The **Humanitarian Action for Children (HAC)** is UNICEF's humanitarian appeal; it is UNICEF's higher level plan related to humanitarian action and is presented to the donors to mobilize resources for crises; it is also the sole mechanism for UNICEF offices to establish emergency funding (other resources emergency - ORE), annual ceiling and planning targets.

Country Office HAC appeals should be aligned with the country and regional offices' humanitarian response plan, Annual Work Plans and with any interagency plans, such as the Humanitarian Response Plans and Refugee Response Plans. HAC appeals should include coordination costs, both if they are related to activated clusters and if UNICEF is supporting coordination through **other humanitarian coordination mechanisms**.

The **2024 HAC guidance** and the **HAC Template Guidance** indicate that the **coordination role of UNICEF should be described in the humanitarian strategy** and that under 'funding requirements' the funding table can include a **standalone budget line for cluster/AoR coordination or this can be integrated into the sectoral budget lines**.

The **2024 HAC guidance on Funding Requirements** highlights that "Based on the recommendation of CLARE II evaluation on UNICEF's role as cluster lead/co-lead agency and the organizational commitment to support the leadership and coordination of humanitarian response, **COs are encouraged to reflect cluster coordination needs into their appeals. Cluster coordination budget should be merged into respective programmatic sectors**. However, in countries where UNICEF is "officially appointed" as the representative of the national inter-cluster platform into the Humanitarian Country Team, it is recommended that cluster coordination is presented as a standalone budget line."

171 The three principles of Value for Money are economy, efficiency and effectiveness

17. The role of the Regional Office

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ① The Regional Director is accountable for supporting Representatives in humanitarian situations to fulfil the UNICEF Cluster Lead Agency role, ensuring oversight, quality assurance and appropriate reporting on the progress of country teams in this regard, and systematic inclusion of cluster coordination roles in mandatory Level 2 and Level 3 emergency response evaluations.
- ① Regional Offices can assist COs on fulfilling their CLA accountabilities in preparedness, deployment of surge staff, support in recruitment of coordination teams, technical assistance and resource mobilization. They take a lead role in L2 emergencies and in regional crises.

ACTION	RESPONSIBLE	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
Provide oversight and support cluster/AoR leadership function at country level through technical support, capacity building, financial support for skills strengthening, and other actions as relevant; support Representatives in humanitarian situations to fulfil the UNICEF Cluster Lead Agency role	Regional Office	Accountability Compendium
Support and actively participate into regional and cross-border coordination mechanisms, including in large-scale movement and migration crises, and in PHE	Regional Office Sector coordinator C/AoR Coordinator	See chapter on Other forms of humanitarian coordination
Support COs by deploying surge staff for coordination and information management role, if needed	Regional Office	See Human Resources chapter
Support the recruitment of national Cluster Coordinator and IMO roles for a period of at least six months for L2 and L3 emergencies	Representative HR Manager Regional Office	See Human Resources chapter Emergency Handbook
Incorporate all cluster/AoR coordination posts into the PBR and operational staff matrix. Conduct a mail-poll PBR within the first month of a sudden-onset emergency or L2/L3 declaration	Representative Deputy Representative – Operations HR Manager Regional Office	Emergency Handbook
Support sourcing for critical emergencies: Complete assessments for emergency recruitments within 20 days. Ensure approvals for emergency recruitments are received within five days. Ensure offer letters are sent within four business days, and candidates accept the offer within three business days. Use single-sourcing options in the best interest of the organization. This should be prioritized for L2/L3 emergencies	HR Manager C/AoR Coordinator supervisor Regional Office	Emergency Handbook HR in Emergencies Toolkit

USEFUL LINKS

- ① Procedure: [UNICEF Procedure for Emergency Preparedness and Response](#)
- ① Guidance: [Accountability Compendium](#), [Emergency Handbook](#), [HR in Emergencies Toolkit](#)

The key accountabilities of Regional Directors are to [...] support Representatives in humanitarian situations to fulfil the UNICEF Cluster Lead Agency role, ensuring oversight, quality assurance and appropriate reporting on the progress of country teams in this regard, and systematic inclusion of cluster coordination roles in mandatory Level 2 and Level 3 emergency response evaluations.

The **role of the Regional Office** and of the Regional Director in helping COs fulfil CLA accountabilities is clearly enunciated in the UNICEF **Accountability Compendium**.¹⁷²

In Level 2 emergencies, ROs assume an even more important role: “The scale of an emergency is such that a country office needs additional support from other parts of the organization (headquarters, regional office and country offices) to respond and that **the regional office must provide leadership and support.**”

Regional Offices provide oversight and quality control, and they can also **directly support COs on CLA accountabilities** on several aspects:

- ☑ **Preparedness.** Regional Directors ensure that Regional Offices meet the Minimum Preparedness Standards and provide technical assistance, oversight and quality control to COs to enhance their preparedness levels – *including preparedness related to cluster/AoR coordination*. See regional Minimum Preparedness Actions and Standards as they relate to COs in the **UNICEF Procedure for Emergency Preparedness and Response**.
- ☑ **Deployment of surge staff for Cluster/AoR Coordination.** RO emergency staff can be deployed to support initial assessments, design of the humanitarian response strategy, and to temporarily fill gaps in cluster/AoR coordination, including information management. ROs maintain rosters of experienced staff that can be accessed by COs.
- ☑ **Support COs in recruiting Cluster/AoR Coordination Teams.** Where applicable, it is the responsibility of Regional Offices to support Country Offices in the recruitment of appropriate human resources for coordination positions. In line with their oversight function, Regional Offices should be informed by the Representative or the post’s line manager of any changes in the coordination team structure, gaps in human resources, ongoing recruitment processes, and once the posts are recruited. Regional Offices should provide support in the following areas:
 - Review the Human Resource plans of Country Offices in their regions, including plans developed as part of the Programme Budget Review submission or alternative processes, and propose modifications to ensure that coordination teams’ contract levels and types are in line with this current document;
 - Identify suitable candidates and distribute recruitment advertisements through their networks in the region;
 - Participate in the recruitment process for international positions as a member of the review panel and provide final approval;
 - Act as the first point of contact for human resources-related questions from the country offices on posts for coordination teams and ensure that Global Clusters are consulted on the recruitment of coordination teams.¹⁷³
- ☑ **Technical Assistance.** In addition to sectorial technical assistance, ROs can provide support on **cross-cutting issues** and how they are implemented in coordination structures; for example, the Regional AAP Advisors can support country clusters/AoR on mainstreaming accountability to affected populations in the HNO and HRP. They can also provide support on information

172 UNICEF (2022), Report of the accountability system of UNICEF: Compendium on the organization of UNICEF

173 UNICEF (no date), Recommended good practices for the minimum structure of coordination teams at country level for UNICEF as a Cluster Lead Agency.

management (including data sharing and cleaning and data coordination).¹⁷⁴

- ☑ **Resource Mobilization.** ROs can assist COs in identifying donors open to funding coordination roles, and in developing successful RM mobilization strategies and proposals that include CLA accountabilities.

Regional crises. In case of crises that encompass more than one country, for example **large-scale movement and migration crises**, or **public health emergencies**, RO have a direct role in coordination and ensuring UNICEF fulfils CLA accountabilities if regional clusters/AoR are established, and will support and coordinate with country-level mechanisms to ensure coherence of approach and action by UNICEF.



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174 This is particularly relevant in regions where political circumstances require separate parallel coordination mechanisms for areas under the control of different authorities (see for example Whole of Syria); in such situations data platforms that include information from multiple regions might require a super partes entity (i.e. the Regional Office) because individual clusters might be locally bound and unable to provide the full picture.



02

PART TWO

—
Guidance by role

Guidance by role

In this second part, a table summarizes the **actions to be taken by each function in the CO**. Please note that some actions are the responsibility of multiple roles and they will be included in all corresponding tables. For more details on topic refer to the corresponding chapter of the manual.

REPRESENTATIVE

The following actions are responsibility of the **CO Representative**. If s/he is also the direct supervisor of the Cluster/AoR Coordinators, the actions in the **corresponding chapter** apply as well. For more details on each section of the table, please refer to the relevant chapter in **PART ONE** of the Guide.

THE CLUSTER APPROACH	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
Discuss the strategic value of clusters/AoRs for UNICEF COs and FOs within the team and promote active engagement with clusters/AoRs	
Meet with cluster/AoR coordinators before HCT meetings to discuss cluster/AoR issues, plans, and progress	
When UNICEF co-leads a cluster, meet with the Representative/Country Director of the co-lead agency to discuss strategic issues of the cluster and agree on representation at the HCT	
If not already happening, advocate with HCT for the participation of cluster/AoR coordinators in meetings when relevant issues are discussed	
In HCT meetings, differentiate when speaking on behalf of UNICEF and when speaking on behalf of the various clusters/AoR; and advocate for issues pertaining to UNICEF-led clusters/AoR	IASC Guidance on Humanitarian Country Teams
CLUSTER LEAD AGENCY ACCOUNTABILITY	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
Monitor that CLA accountabilities are fulfilled (key positions are created and filled; cluster coordinators are supported, supervised and are able to provide leadership in their key functional areas; and cluster/AoR priorities are appropriately brought to the attention of the HCT and other relevant inter-agency fora)	Accountability Compendium
Oversee fulfilment of leadership function in clusters/AoR, particularly around setting vision and strategy, partnership, intersectoriality.	QTA – leadership role of the CLA
Clarify the concept and application of Provider of Last Resort (PoLR) within the CO; drive its fulfilment through implementation, advocacy or resource mobilization as needed	IASC Operational Guidance on PoLR
In case of co-leadership, clarify with the co-lead agency how the PoLR accountability is shared	
THE 6+1 CORE CLUSTER FUNCTIONS	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
Oversee the implementation of 6+1 core cluster functions (see Responsibility Matrix for details)	Cluster/AoR Responsibility Matrix (Representative)
CLUSTER ACTIVATION, TRANSITION AND DE-ACTIVATION	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
ACTIVATION	
Proactively engage in discussion, analysis and decision-making on activation of clusters and AoRs in-country	

If not done under UNICEF MPSs, assign sector/cluster lead roles in agreement with the UNCT/HCT and have them signed off by the Emergency Relief Coordinator/Resident Coordinator. Advocate for the activation of all UNICEF-led sectors/clusters, no matter the response	MPS2 ; See Chapter on Preparedness; Emergency Handbook
Ensure that UNICEF-led clusters are established at national and where needed at sub-national level in coordination with the UNCT/HCT, including defining the relationship to the national cluster in terms of accountability	Emergency Handbook
Consider co-leadership at national or sub-national level as relevant, discuss roles and responsibilities with co-leads. Liaise with the Global Cluster/AoR on specific leadership arrangements	Emergency Handbook
Sign an agreement on leadership arrangements and division of responsibilities and provide technical support to national NGO co-leads. To ensure funding does not limit NGO co-leadership, advocate for fund mobilization to cover these positions at all levels	Emergency Handbook
If national authorities participate in cluster leadership, invest in technical support and capacity building to national co-leads. Ensure UNICEF maintains a leading role in addition to contributions by local actors	Emergency Handbook
Immediately start the process for staffing of clusters at national and sub-national levels, as needed; clearly define line management arrangements for supervision of cluster/AoR coordination. Preferably assign to Representative	See Chapter on Human Resources; Minimum Coordination Structure
TRANSITION AND DEACTIVATION	
Engage proactively in deactivation decision-making: Consult Cluster/AoR coordination teams and members on transition and deactivation decisions, and engage proactively with the HC and HCT on transition, deactivation, coordination architecture reviews and in deactivation decision-making. If annual coordination reviews are not conducted, regularly review appropriateness of the cluster/AoR.	Guidance on Cluster Transition and Deactivation for the Country-Level Cluster and Cluster Lead Agency
Ensure robust transition processes are followed and monitored, including development of realistic cluster/AoR transition plans with benchmarks and defined accountabilities; assign internal responsibilities and sufficient resourcing and staffing to support transition, and monitor progress periodically	Guidance on Cluster Transition and Deactivation for the Country-Level Cluster and Cluster Lead Agency
Lead strategic engagement before and during the transition process, facilitating engagement with government authorities; establishing links with development coordination bodies and guiding engagement with the UNSDCF advocate for continuing coordination and engagement of local and national civil society actors, ensure necessary capacity-strengthening support is provided to any entity taking over coordination functions, and define how UNICEF will support coordination after cluster/AoR deactivation	Guidance on Cluster Transition and Deactivation for the Country-Level Cluster and Cluster Lead Agency
Ensure Global Clusters are informed of and actively engaged in reviews of cluster coordination architecture and transition planning	Guidance on Cluster Transition and Deactivation for the Country-Level Cluster and Cluster Lead Agency
OTHER FORMS OF HUMANITARIAN COORDINATION	
TOOLS AND REFERENCES	
HUMANITARIAN SECTOR COORDINATION	
If relevant, request the activation of the Emergency Procedures	Emergency Procedures
Identify staff within the CO who can build national capacity for sector/cluster coordination and sector-wide information management prior to, during and after an emergency; if relevant, second staff to support national/sub-national coordination, in particular information management functions	Emergency Handbook
Manage risk of politicization of humanitarian response	Emergency Handbook
REFUGEE AND MIXED SETTINGS	
Advocate in HCT meetings for the needs of children in refugee response, as required	
OTHER HUMANITARIAN COORDINATION MECHANISMS	
Support the coordination mechanism in place with staffing and resources as needed; assign or hire staff for both coordination and information management functions when UNICEF leads sectors of the response	IASC Guidance on strengthening participation, representation and leadership of local and national actors in IASC humanitarian coordination mechanisms
If needed, clarify in the HCT and with the overall coordination leadership (OCHA, UNHCR, WHO, Government or others) the specific role of UNICEF as sectoral or operational lead	

CLUSTER CO-LEADERSHIP AND CO-COORDINATION	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
Develop a co-leadership and/or co-coordination agreement with relevant organizations, detailing roles and responsibilities, and mutual accountabilities. The agreement documents how representation, advocacy, strategy, fundraising and other key functions will be managed by UNICEF and the other organization	
If needed, advocate for funding for co-leadership/co-coordination with HCT and donors	Emergency Handbook
Agree on ToRs and reporting lines for co-leadership/co-coordination roles, including matrix management where relevant	
Conduct an annual meeting for mutual accountability with clusters/AoR co-lead/co-coordinating organizations' heads of agency	
CLUSTER/AOR COORDINATION AND MANAGEMENT AT NATIONAL AND SUB-NATIONAL LEVELS	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
Oversee the establishment and management of effective national and sub-national coordination structures for each of the clusters and AoRs UNICEF leads or co-leads	WASH and Nutrition sub-national cluster ToRs examples; Decision Tree (sub-national) ; Minimum coordination structure See Human Resources chapter
Advocate for more resources (if needed) for cluster/AoR coordination at national and sub-national level, with HCT and donors	Minimum coordination structure
Engage in analysis and decision-making within the HCT on the establishment of sub-national clusters	Minimum coordination structure ; IASC reference module on cluster coordination
Where appropriate, ensure that relevant government sectors are appropriately engaged with and involved in cluster/AoR management, and where possible, chair or co-chair the cluster/ AoR	
Oversee UNICEF participation in cluster/AoR strategic management and the implementation of the 12 minimum commitments for cluster/AoR membership	IASC Reference Module on Cluster Coordination
Periodically participate in cluster/AoR meetings to demonstrate UNICEF commitment to its CLA role, and engage in strategic discussions with partners	
PEOPLE-CENTERED APPROACH	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
Appoint a focal point/specialist in CO to advise UNICEF-led clusters/AoR on better mainstreaming people-centered and accountability approaches in their work	Minimum coordination structure
Champion a people-centered approach in HCT and ICCG meetings	
Advocate for local actors' participation in coordination mechanisms in which UNICEF is a key party, such as inter-cluster coordination groups and HCT; advocate for the HCT to have an AAP strategy reflected in the cluster strategies and HNO and HRP	AAP Handbook
Where relevant, support multi-year humanitarian response strategies and inter-agency plans	
If not existing, advocate at the HCT for the establishment of a disability focal point, focal agency or task force to represent disability issues in humanitarian coordination mechanisms	Disability Inclusive Humanitarian Toolkit
Support the RC/HC and UNCT/ HCT to establish or strengthen a PSEA Network, including coordination and co-chair functions, to scale up PSEA from the outset of the emergency response.	Emergency Handbook; Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) in Humanitarian Action: A UNICEF Handbook (draft)
INTER-CLUSTER COORDINATION	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
Advocate in the HCT, as necessary, for improved inter-cluster coordination to address key strategic issues with the multi-cluster approach	
Promote the use of Humanitarian Cash Transfers, both from a sector and multisectoral perspective, in HCT and cluster/AoRs	HCTs guidance
Seek clarity on the division of labour between clusters/AoRs and the Cash Working Group by discussing it in the HCT and ICCG/CWG, and determining a division of labour adapted to the country context	
If relevant and possible, take a leadership role in the CWG as programmatic lead	

PREPAREDNESS	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
Identify personnel within the CO who can build national capacity for sector/cluster coordination and sector-wide information management prior to, during and after an emergency and, if needed, temporarily coordinate UNICEF-led or co-led sectors	MPS 2: Emergency Handbook
As member of the HCT, and particularly in high-risk countries, advocate for risk analysis, scenario developments, interagency preparedness, preparedness and/or contingency planning to be initiated/updated as relevant	IASC ERP Guidance
PLANNING, PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND REPORTING	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
Ensure inclusion of CLA role and accountabilities in relevant steps of the CPP	Core Standard Indicators
Through the HCT, actively engaging in the planning of cluster architecture reviews and in oversight of review implementation, as well as in discussion on the way forward based on findings of the architecture review	
UNICEF PROGRAMMES AND CLUSTERS/AOR	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
Promote effective in-house inter-cluster coordination across UNICEF-led clusters and AoRs, thus enhancing UNICEF-led cluster coherence of approach and collaboration and reducing duplication of effort on common issues. This will also promote programme integration within UNICEF	
HUMAN RESOURCES (HR)	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
Preparedness. Define staffing needs for the emergency response in line with the MPSs (including technical skills, cross-cultural, communication and leadership skills). Consider whether the office would benefit from 'surging back-fill' to maintain regular work processes, allowing a CFO, Section or Unit Chief to focus on the emergency response	MPS3 Emergency Handbook
Surge: Assess the STS and determine, in cooperation with RO, CO and/or EMOPS as needed, (ERT Focal Point and Standby Team) appropriate surge mechanisms (including Stand-by partners). Contact Surge Cell which will source support. Ensure that all personnel are informed of the onboarding and orientation in emergencies, which includes the predeployment in emergencies. Ensure that all personnel are informed of and complete the Humanitarian Learning Pathways	STS E-staffing template: Emergency Handbook HR in Emergencies Toolkit
Oversee timely recruitment of cluster/AoR coordination teams with adequate seniority level and reporting lines	Decision tree (national) and Decision tree (subnational) QTA – Options for coordination teams Recommended reporting lines and Advantages & Disadvantages Emergency Handbook HR in Emergencies Toolkit
Incorporate all cluster/AoR coordination posts into the PBR and operational staff matrix. Conduct a mail-poll PBR within the first month of a sudden-onset emergency or L2/L3 declaration	Emergency Handbook
Onboarding and orientation: Ensure that new UNICEF personnel receive a comprehensive onboarding and orientation	Onboarding guide for supervisors; A Head Start: A Quick Guide for Country and Regional Offices for Onboarding and Orientation in Emergencies
Ensure regular meetings between C/AoR Coordinators and the Representative	
RESOURCE MOBILIZATION FOR CLUSTER/AOR COORDINATION	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
Mobilize resources specifically to fulfil CLA accountabilities; ensure that funding for CLA accountabilities is included in proposals to donors, as well as monitor and maintain opportunities for coordination and CLA accountabilities within CO pipeline	Donor profiles
THE ROLE OF THE REGIONAL OFFICE	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
Support the recruitment of national Cluster Coordinator and IMO roles for a period of at least six months for L2 and L3 emergencies	See Human resources chapter; Emergency Handbook
Incorporate all cluster/AoR coordination posts into the PBR and operational staff matrix. Conduct a mail-poll PBR within the first month of a sudden-onset emergency or L2/L3 declaration	Emergency Handbook

DEPUTY REPRESENTATIVE - PROGRAMMES AND OPERATIONS

The following actions are responsibility of the **Deputy Representative for Programmes (DRP) and/or the Deputy Representative for Operations (marked as DRO)**. If s/he is also the direct supervisor of the Cluster/AoR Coordinators, the actions in the **corresponding chapter** apply as well. For more details on each section of the table, please refer to the relevant chapter in **PART ONE** of the Guide.

THE CLUSTER APPROACH	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
[DRP/DRO] Discuss the strategic value of clusters/AoRs for UNICEF COs and FOs within the team and promote active engagement with clusters/AoRs	
[DRP] In HCT meetings (if attending), advocate for issues pertaining to UNICEF-led clusters/AoR	
CLUSTER LEAD AGENCY ACCOUNTABILITY	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
[DRP] Conduct regular joint meetings with cluster/AoR coordinators and programme sections, to build on intersectoral opportunities and facilitate integrated interventions (including at sub-national/field level if existing)	
CLUSTER ACTIVATION, TRANSITION AND DE-ACTIVATION	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
ACTIVATION	
[DRP] Ensure that UNICEF-led clusters are established at national and where needed at sub-national level in coordination with the UNCT/HCT, including defining the relationship to the national cluster in terms of accountability	Emergency Handbook
OTHER FORMS OF HUMANITARIAN COORDINATION	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
HUMANITARIAN SECTOR COORDINATION	
[DRP/DRO] Provide resources (cash transfers or supplies) and technical assistance as required to national and sub-national government to support the response. Regularize these emergency-related activities through an updated workplan endorsed by an exchange of letters or documented in official minutes with government	Emergency Handbook
OTHER HUMANITARIAN COORDINATION MECHANISMS	
[DRP] Ensure internal coordination for all aspects of responses that UNICEF leads or co-leads; similarly, ensure complementarities and efficiencies between different coordination mechanisms in UNICEF-led sectors	
CLUSTER/AOR COORDINATION AND MANAGEMENT AT NATIONAL AND SUB-NATIONAL LEVELS	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
[DRP] Appoint a focal point/specialist in CO to advise UNICEF-led clusters/AoR on better mainstreaming people-centered and accountability approaches in their work	Minimum coordination structure
[DRO] Provide internal operational and administrative support to enable the clusters/AoRs to function effectively (both at national and sub-national level)	See Operational and administrative support chapter
PEOPLE-CENTERED APPROACH	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
[DRP] Address policy commitments and cross-cutting issues in a coordinated manner through the internal inter-sectorial coordination committees and meetings	See chapter on UNICEF Programmes and Cluster/AoRs
[DRP] Clarify for both Cluster/AoR Coordinators and CO programme/field operations teams the role that clusters/AoRs can play in strengthening national systems and building national capacities	See Section on the strategic value of clusters/AoRs

INTER-CLUSTER COORDINATION	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
[DRP] Designate or recruit a Humanitarian Cash Transfer Specialist or Focal Point (P3/NOC or above) to provide technical expertise to emergency and programme colleagues, as well as coordinating internal and/or interagency initiatives and cluster-related HCTs activities	Emergency Handbook
PREPAREDNESS	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
[DRP/DRO] Ensure CO risk analysis and corresponding scenarios take into consideration (if relevant) cluster activation or other forms of humanitarian coordination; and ensure preparedness actions take into consideration clusters/AoR where relevant (especially but not exclusive to MPS2, MPS4, MPS6, MPS7)	EPP – Step 1 (Risk Analysis); EPP – Step 2 (Scenarios); EPP – Step 4 (MPS); Emergency Preparedness Procedure
[DRP/DRO] Strengthen internal knowledge (especially with Programme Chiefs, managers and decision makers in the CO) on the cluster system and on UNICEF accountabilities as CLA	
PLANNING, PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND REPORTING	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
[DRP] Ensure cluster/AoR leadership or humanitarian coordination is included in revised AWP/ RWP in case of emergency, or in new humanitarian plans, developed in line with the CCCs, IA planning and with the contingency plans developed under MPS where available.	Operational Response Plan Template and Response Plan Narrative Template; Emergency Handbook
UNICEF PROGRAMMES AND CLUSTERS/AOR	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
[DRP] Promote effective in-house inter-cluster coordination across UNICEF-led clusters and AoRs, thus enhancing UNICEF-led cluster coherence of approach and collaboration and reducing duplication of effort on common issues. This will also promote programme integration within UNICEF	
HUMAN RESOURCES (HR)	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
[DRO] Incorporate all cluster/AoR coordination posts into the PBR and operational staff matrix. Conduct a mail-poll PBR within the first month of a sudden-onset emergency or L2/L3 declaration	Emergency Handbook
OPERATIONAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
[DRO] Provide required operational and administrative support for clusters/AoR at national and sub-national level, including office space, ICT equipment and technical support, logistics support, transport, translation, administrative support	Core Commitments for Children Emergency Handbook
RESOURCE MOBILIZATION FOR CLUSTER/AOR COORDINATION	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
[DRP] Mobilize resources specifically to fulfil CLA accountabilities; ensure that funding for CLA accountabilities is included in proposals to donors, as well as monitor and maintain opportunities for coordination and CLA accountabilities within CO pipeline	Donor profiles

CLUSTER/AOR COORDINATOR SUPERVISOR

The following actions are responsibilities of the **Cluster/AoR Coordinator supervisor**. In COs this role may be assigned to the Representative, a dedicated Cluster/AoR Manager, the Chief of Field Operations/Emergency, or others. For more details on each section of the table, please refer to the relevant chapter in [PART ONE](#) of the Guide.

THE CLUSTER APPROACH	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
Meet with Cluster/AoR Coordinators before HCT meetings to discuss cluster/AoR issues, plans, and progress; if supervisor is other than the Representative, brief Representative on issues discussed.	

CLUSTER LEAD AGENCY ACCOUNTABILITY		TOOLS AND REFERENCES
Monitor that CLA accountabilities are fulfilled (key positions are created and filled; cluster coordinators are supported, supervised and are able to provide leadership in their key functional areas; and cluster priorities are appropriately brought to the attention of the HCT and other relevant inter-agency fora)		Accountability Compendium
Oversee fulfilment of leadership function in clusters/AoR, particularly around setting vision and strategy, partnership, intersectoriality		QTA – leadership role of the CLA
Strengthen leadership, communication and cross-cultural skills of C/AoR coordinators, if needed, through appropriate capacity building and professional opportunities; include leadership, communication and cross-cultural skills as required in C/AoR selection processes		Competency Framework for Cluster Coordination
CLUSTER ACTIVATION, TRANSITION AND DE-ACTIVATION		TOOLS AND REFERENCES
ACTIVATION		
Immediately start the process for staffing of clusters at national and sub-national levels, as needed; clearly define line management arrangements for supervision of cluster/AoR coordination. Preferably assign to Representative		See Chapter on Human Resources ; Minimum Coordination Structure
OTHER FORMS OF HUMANITARIAN COORDINATION		TOOLS AND REFERENCES
OTHER HUMANITARIAN COORDINATION MECHANISMS		
Ensure internal coordination for all aspects of responses that UNICEF leads or co-leads; similarly, ensure complementarities and efficiencies between different coordination mechanisms in UNICEF-led sectors		
CLUSTER CO-LEADERSHIP AND CO-COORDINATION		TOOLS AND REFERENCES
In case of co-leadership, arrange for joint office space for cluster/AoR coordinators		
CLUSTER/AOR COORDINATION AND MANAGEMENT AT NATIONAL AND SUB-NATIONAL LEVELS		TOOLS AND REFERENCES
Ensure the timely recruitment of cluster/AoR coordination teams with adequate seniority level and reporting lines; at a minimum, recruit national Cluster/AoR Coordinator and IMO roles for a period of at least six months for L2 and L3 emergencies		Decision Tree (national) See Chapter on Human Resources ; Recommended good practices for the minimum structure of coordination teams at country level for UNICEF as a Cluster Lead Agency .
Advocate for more resources if needed for cluster/AoR coordination at national and sub-national level, with HCT and donors		Minimum coordination structure
PEOPLE-CENTERED APPROACH		TOOLS AND REFERENCES
Recruit or deploy cluster/AoR coordination staff with knowledge and experience on PSEA, policy commitments and cross-cutting issues		
Address PSEA, policy commitments and cross-cutting issues in a coordinated manner through the internal inter-sectorial coordination committees and meetings		See chapter on UNICEF Programmes and Cluster/AoRs
Oversee that cluster/AoR strategies, plans and monitoring frameworks take into account PSEA, policy commitments and cross-cutting issues		
Oversee the implementation of the top 5 key actions for each of the 6 cluster/AoR core functions as described in the Practical Guide to Advancing Policy Commitments and Cross-cutting Issues		
Ensure that cluster/AoR coordinators engage with development coordination mechanisms to foster linkages as relevant		
Clarify for both Cluster/AoR Coordinators and CO programme/field operations teams the role that clusters/AoRs can play in strengthening national systems and building national capacities		See Section on Strategic value of clusters/ AoRs
Oversee clusters/AoR work on preparedness and contingency planning		See Chapter on Preparedness

Integrate IASC PSEA core activities and indicators in the HRP and/or any other relevant IA response plan (including clusters/AoR ones), with requisite funding requirements included to establish IA PSEA systems.	Emergency Handbook
In collaboration with the IA PSEA Network, ensure that SOPs or a protocol on IA reporting and referral is established and rolled out at the outset of the emergency response. The SOPs or protocol should connect with IA community-based complaint mechanisms for PSEA.	Emergency Handbook
INTER-CLUSTER COORDINATION	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
When recruiting C/AoR coordinators, include knowledge and experience about HCTs in the profile	
PREPAREDNESS	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
Orientation: Ensure Cluster Coordinators and IMO – as well as Chiefs of Section and Emergency Focal Points – have an induction session with the respective global clusters, where training options are discussed	Emergency Handbook
Oversee that cluster/AoR preparedness is completed and that UNICEF-led / co-led clusters/ AoRs participate in interagency preparedness initiatives as required	Emergency Handbook ; IASC ERP Guidance
PLANNING, PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND REPORTING	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
Implement cluster coordination monitoring, the 3rd pillar of Humanitarian Performance Monitoring (HPM) including through its dedicated tool	Cluster Coordination Monitoring ; Quick guide on cluster coordination monitoring ; Cluster Monitoring Tool ; Emergency Handbook
Oversee that CCPM is conducted regularly (3–6 months after activation of cluster/AoR and then annually)	
UNICEF PROGRAMMES AND CLUSTERS/AOR	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
Promote effective in-house inter-cluster coordination across UNICEF-led clusters and AoRs, thus enhancing UNICEF-led cluster coherence of approach and collaboration and reducing duplication of effort on common issues. This will also promote programme integration within UNICEF	
HUMAN RESOURCES (HR)	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
Ensure the timely recruitment of cluster/AoR coordination teams with adequate seniority level and reporting lines; at a minimum, recruit national Cluster/AoR Coordinator and IMO roles for a period of at least six months for L2 and L3 emergencies. Cluster Coordinators at the national level are expected to be at P4 level	Decision tree (national) and Decision tree (subnational) QTA – Options for coordination teams Recommended reporting lines and Advantages & Disadvantages Emergency Handbook HR in Emergencies Toolkit
Support sourcing for critical emergencies: Complete assessments for emergency recruitments within 20 days. Ensure approvals for emergency recruitments are received within five days. Ensure offer letters are sent within four business days, and candidates accept the offer within three business days. Use single-sourcing options in the best interest of the organization. This should be prioritized for L2/L3 emergencies	Emergency Handbook ; HR in Emergencies Toolkit
Ensure capacity development and learning opportunities for Cluster/AoR Coordination teams	Humanitarian Coordination Learning Channel on Agora
Ensure regular meetings between C/AoR Coordinators and the Representative	

CLUSTER/AoR COORDINATOR

The following actions are responsibility of the **Cluster/AoR Coordinator**. Please note these are only related to the CLA role of UNICEF and are often a joint responsibility with others in the CO, they are not a comprehensive list of Cluster/AoR Coordinators responsibilities (for these, please consult cluster coordination guidance). For more details on each section of the table, please refer to the relevant chapter in **PART ONE** of the Guide.

THE CLUSTER APPROACH		TOOLS AND REFERENCES
Meet with Cluster/AoR Coordinators supervisor or with the Representative before HCT meetings to discuss Cluster/AoR issues, plans, and progress		
If attending HCT meetings, advocate for issues pertaining to UNICEF-led Clusters/AoR		
CLUSTER ACTIVATION, TRANSITION AND DE-ACTIVATION		TOOLS AND REFERENCES
ACTIVATION		
Ensure that UNICEF-led clusters are established at national and where needed at sub-national level in coordination with the UNCT/HCT, including defining the relationship to the national cluster in terms of accountability		Emergency Handbook
Consider co-leadership at national or sub-national level as relevant, discuss roles and responsibilities with co-leads. Liaise with the Global Cluster/AoR on specific leadership arrangements		Emergency Handbook
In case of co-leadership or co-coordination, provide technical support to national NGO co-leads/co-coordinators. To ensure funding does not limit NGO co-leadership, advocate for fund mobilization to cover these positions at all levels		Emergency Handbook
If national authorities participate in cluster leadership, invest in technical support and capacity building to national co-leads. Ensure UNICEF maintains a leading role in addition to contributions by local actors		Emergency Handbook
TRANSITION AND DEACTIVATION		
Ensure Global Clusters are informed of and actively engaged in reviews of cluster coordination architecture and transition planning		Guidance on Cluster Transition and Deactivation for the Country-Level Cluster and Cluster Lead Agency
Facilitate appropriate consultation and communication with all relevant stakeholders, especially local and national actors and affected people		Guidance on Cluster Transition and Deactivation for the Country-Level Cluster and Cluster Lead Agency
Lead the cluster/AoR coordination team to develop and roll out realistic and viable transition plans through a consultative process with all relevant actors, with benchmarks for transition, and ensure good communication of transition plans and decisions to all relevant stakeholders		Guidance on Cluster Transition and Deactivation for the Country-Level Cluster and Cluster Lead Agency
Advocate and work with national actors, including government counterparts, to ensure continued coordination through a sector working group and/or other mechanism		Guidance on Cluster Transition and Deactivation for the Country-Level Cluster and Cluster Lead Agency
Advise the Representative on the likelihood that criteria for deactivation may be met, and progress toward transition plans and benchmarks, to inform HCT decision-making		Guidance on Cluster Transition and Deactivation for the Country-Level Cluster and Cluster Lead Agency
OTHER FORMS OF HUMANITARIAN COORDINATION		TOOLS AND REFERENCES
REFUGEE AND MIXED SETTINGS		
Participate in refugee response planning as needed		UNHCR Refugee Coordination Model
Conduct joint meetings and ensure harmonization of approach with Protection Working Group		UNHCR Refugee Coordination Model
In contexts where refugees and IDPs are geographically separated, share information with UNHCR sectors		UNHCR Refugee Coordination Model

In contexts where refugees and IDPs are geographically mixed, conduct joint meetings between clusters and sectors, and ensure coordination on activities including needs assessments, planning, implementation and monitoring	UNHCR Refugee Coordination Model
OTHER HUMANITARIAN COORDINATION MECHANISMS	
Harmonize approaches between UNICEF-led components of different coordination mechanisms	
Support and actively participate in regional and cross-border coordination mechanisms, including large-scale movement and migration crises, and PHE	
If the response is Government-led, proactively support authorities in engaging and coordinating with the cluster system to increase opportunities for synergies, efficiencies and a more effective response	
Ensure internal coordination for all aspects of responses that UNICEF leads or co-leads; similarly, ensure complementarities and efficiencies between different coordination mechanisms in UNICEF-led sectors	
Proactively engage with multiple coordination platforms if they remain separated (for example, ensure a Cluster/AoR member participates in PHE coordination meetings for the same sector and reports back)	
If multiple coordination mechanisms exist, to the extent possible align response plans and resource mobilization efforts of different coordination mechanisms with each other	
CLUSTER CO-LEADERSHIP AND CO-COORDINATION	
Where possible and appropriate, engage in co-leadership and/or co-coordination of the Cluster/AoR with the government and/or another organization, especially a local organization; if needed provide institutional, technical or financial support. Selection of the co-leadership or co-coordination partner should be done through consultations with cluster/AoR partners	Questions to ask for co-leadership or co-coordination; IASC Guidance on strengthening participation, representation and leadership of local and national actors in iasc humanitarian coordination mechanisms
Develop a co-leadership and/or co-coordination agreement with relevant organizations, detailing roles and responsibilities, and mutual accountabilities. The agreement documents how representation, advocacy, strategy, fundraising and other key functions will be managed by UNICEF and the other organization	
If needed, advocate for funding for co-leadership/co-coordination with HCT and donors	Emergency Handbook
Agree on ToRs and reporting lines for co-leadership/co-coordination roles, including matrix management where relevant	
Conduct an annual meeting for mutual accountability with clusters/AoR co-lead / co-coordinating organizations' heads of agency	
CLUSTER/AOR COORDINATION AND MANAGEMENT AT NATIONAL AND SUB-NATIONAL LEVELS	
Establish/recruit cluster/AoR sub-national level coordination teams following recommended minimum structure (as a minimum coordination and information management functions) and/or adapting to new sub-national coordination models emerging	Decision Tree (sub-national) See Chapter on Human Resources
Support co-coordination at sub-national level by local organization, through institutional, technical and financial resources as possible	
Ensure TORs for country clusters, sub-clusters, co-leads, strategic advisory groups and technical working groups should be developed, indicating membership, leadership and respective responsibilities	IASC Reference Module on Cluster Coordination
PEOPLE-CENTERED APPROACH	
Ensure that SAGs are inclusive and organizations such as women-led organizations, youth-led organizations, organizations of people with disabilities, and local organizations are part of them	
Ensure the implementation of the top 5 key actions for each of the 6 cluster/AoR core functions as described in the Practical Guide to Advancing Policy Commitments and Cross-cutting Issues	

Ensure coordination between the cluster/AoR and other interagency platforms on AAP, including engaging with the AAP Working Group (or Community Engagement Working Group or other denominations), which can support the cluster/AoR in promoting a collective community participation approach, collective information provision and messaging, and a collective complaints and feedback mechanism.	AAP Handbook
Ensure engagement of the Cluster/AoR with development coordination mechanisms to foster linkages as relevant	
Leverage UNICEF dual mandate and engagement with both humanitarian and development actors to create opportunities to connect humanitarian, development and peace actions	Procedure on Humanitarian, Development and Peace Nexus
Support local (national and sub-national) CSOs to initiate mechanisms that promote coordination among CSOs, such as CSO networks, fora or consortia	Technical note on Localization in Humanitarian Action for Children
Support the mapping of local actors, including WLOs, organizations for people with disabilities, youth organizations and LGBTQI organizations to ensure diversity in cluster/AoR membership	Technical note on Localization in Humanitarian Action for Children
Support local actors to access humanitarian funding, including country-based pool funds	Technical note on Localization in Humanitarian Action for Children
Ensure effective coordination with government authorities in case of deactivation of clusters and transfer to them of humanitarian coordination responsibilities	Technical note on Localization in Humanitarian Action for Children ; See chapter on deactivation
Support the institutionalization of the IASC Guidelines on Disability Inclusion; IASC PSEA guidelines; IASC GBV guidelines, gender handbook and other resources and measurement indicators on a people-centered approach; and integrate their recommendations into clusters/AoRs tools	IASC GBV Guidelines; IASC Guidelines on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities
Ensure budget for people-centered humanitarian approaches and inclusion is considered in Cluster/AoR plans and in resource mobilization processes and initiatives	Disability Inclusive Humanitarian Toolkit; AAP Handbook; AAP helpdesk
When establishing cluster or sector capacity, identify, create and foster partnerships with government stakeholders and civil society organizations that have expertise on disability, gender, GBV and/or representing marginalized group	Disability Inclusive Humanitarian Toolkit
Integrate IASC PSEA core activities and indicators in the HRP and/or any other relevant IA response plan (including Cluster/AoR ones), with requisite funding requirements included to establish IA PSEA systems.	Emergency Handbook
In collaboration with the IA PSEA Network, ensure that SOPs or a protocol on IA reporting and referral is established and rolled out at the outset of the emergency response. The SOPs or protocol should connect with IA community-based complaint mechanisms for PSEA.	Emergency Handbook
INTER-CLUSTER COORDINATION	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
Participate in CWG meetings and activities as needed	Cash Coordination Model
Promote the use of Humanitarian Cash Transfers, both from a sector and multisectoral perspective, in HCT and cluster/AoRs	HCTs guidance
Seek clarity on the division of labour between clusters/AoRs and CWG by discussing it in the HCT and ICCG/CWG, and determining a division of labour adapted to the country context	
PARTNERSHIP	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
Engage with Cluster/AoR members as equal partners (not as implementing partners) within the context of the Cluster/AoR	Principles of Partnership
Maintain UNICEF's roles as CLA and donor clearly separate, even though a donor/grantee relationship exists with between some Cluster/AoR members and UNICEF programmes	
PLANNING, PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND REPORTING	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
Participate as relevant in the different steps of the CPP (or facilitate cluster/AoR member participation), share data and analysis that can be useful for UNICEF strategic planning	
Actively engage in the planning of cluster architecture reviews and in the review implementation, as well as in discussion on the way forward based on findings of the architecture review	
Align the indicators chosen in donor appeals (HAC), HPM, UNICEF's response plan, AWP, IA plans (HRP), Results Assessment Module (RAM) in inSight, PDs and Small-Scale Funding Agreements. Indicators should measure access, reach, quality and equity of humanitarian programming, as well as coverage.	Emergency Handbook

UNICEF PROGRAMMES AND CLUSTERS/AOR	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
Participate in UNICEF programme section meetings, including when relevant in PMT and EMT meetings	
Coordinate and streamline processes with UNICEF partners who are also Cluster/AoR members on information management, reporting and other administrative processes	
HUMAN RESOURCES (HR)	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
Participate in regular meetings between C/AoR Coordinators and the Representative	
OPERATIONAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
Where required, designate relevant sectors/clusters as implementors in VISION, using generic vendor number 2500240235 to transfer supplies from UNICEF to sector/cluster partners. Ensure there is a signed TOR with results reporting requirements before releasing the supplies	Guideline Release Orders from CO warehouses ; Emergency Handbook

SECTOR COORDINATOR

The following actions are responsibility of the **Sector Coordinator**. For more details on each section of the table, please refer to the relevant chapter in **PART ONE** of the Guide.

OTHER FORMS OF HUMANITARIAN COORDINATION	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
HUMANITARIAN SECTOR COORDINATION	
Clarify roles and responsibilities vis-à-vis national authorities in coordination of sectoral response	
Coordinate with and support national/sub-national authorities in needs assessments, analysis of needs and response planning, monitoring, development of technical standards and tools; support as relevant to the development of Flash Appeals, HNOs and HRPs and in strengthening authorities' preparedness capacities and plans	Emergency Handbook ; IASC Guidance for CLAs on working with national authorities
Provide support on quality of the response, cross-cutting issues and people-centred approach, including a nexus approach	
Advocate with national authorities for the fulfilment of children's rights and the response to their needs; advocate as needed for adequate information management	
Plan for the transition between emergency and development coordination, to sustain the capacity created through sector coordination support	
OTHER HUMANITARIAN COORDINATION MECHANISMS	
Harmonize approaches between UNICEF-led components of different coordination mechanisms	
Support and actively participate in regional and cross-border coordination mechanisms, including large-scale movement and migration crises, and PHE	
If the response is Government-led, proactively support authorities in engaging and coordinating with the cluster system to increase opportunities for synergies, efficiencies and a more effective response	
Ensure internal coordination for all aspects of responses that UNICEF leads or co-leads; similarly, ensure complementarities and efficiencies between different coordination mechanisms in UNICEF-led sectors	
Proactively engage with multiple coordination platforms if they remain separated (for example, ensure a Cluster/AoR member participates in PHE coordination meetings for the same sector and reports back)	
If multiple coordination mechanisms exist, to the extent possible align response plans and resource mobilization efforts of different coordination mechanisms with each other	

CHIEF OF FIELD OPERATIONS/EMERGENCY

The following actions are responsibility of the **Chief of Field Operations/Emergency**. If s/he is also the direct supervisor of the Cluster/AoR Coordinators, the actions in the **corresponding chapter** apply as well. In some Country Offices there is no Chief of Field Operations/Emergency and their functions are covered by an Emergency Manager or Specialist. The table below applies, in this case, to the **Emergency Manager or Specialist**. For more details on each section of the table, please refer to the relevant chapter in **PART ONE** of the Guide.

THE CLUSTER APPROACH		TOOLS AND REFERENCES
Discuss the strategic value of clusters/AoRs for UNICEF COs and FOs within the team and promote active engagement with clusters/AoRs		
Consider the strategic value of cluster leadership during the elaboration of emergency response plans/humanitarian plans		
Meet with Cluster/AoR Coordinators before HCT meetings to discuss cluster/AoR issues, plans, and progress; if supervisor is other than the Representative, brief Representative on issues discussed.		
If attending HCT meetings, advocate for issues pertaining to UNICEF-led clusters/AoR as relevant		
CLUSTER LEAD AGENCY ACCOUNTABILITY		TOOLS AND REFERENCES
Conduct regular joint meetings with cluster/AoR coordinators and programme sections, to build on intersectoral opportunities and facilitate integrated interventions (including at sub-national/field level if existing)		
CLUSTER ACTIVATION, TRANSITION AND DE-ACTIVATION		TOOLS AND REFERENCES
ACTIVATION		
Proactively engage in discussion, analysis and decision-making on activation of Clusters and AoRs in-country		
TRANSITION AND DEACTIVATION		
Advise on and input to transition planning wherever relevant, including on scenario planning, risk analysis, and in preparedness arrangements and capacity-strengthening		Guidance on Cluster Transition and Deactivation for the Country-Level Cluster and Cluster Lead Agency
OTHER FORMS OF HUMANITARIAN COORDINATION		TOOLS AND REFERENCES
HUMANITARIAN SECTOR COORDINATION		
Coordinate with and support national/sub-national authorities in needs assessments, analysis of needs and response planning, monitoring, development of technical standards and tools; support as relevant to the development of Flash Appeals, HNOs and HRP and in strengthening authorities' preparedness capacities and plans		Emergency Handbook; IASC Guidance for CLAs on working with national authorities
REFUGEE AND MIXED SETTINGS		
Participate in refugee response planning as needed		UNHCR Refugee Coordination Model
PEOPLE-CENTERED APPROACH		TOOLS AND REFERENCES
Address PSEA, policy commitments and cross-cutting issues in a coordinated manner through the internal inter-sectorial coordination committees and meetings		See chapter on UNICEF Programmes and Cluster/AoRs
Clarify for both Cluster/AoR Coordinators and CO programme/field operations teams the role that clusters/AoRs can play in strengthening national systems and building national capacities		See Section on the strategic value of clusters/AoRs

Integrate IASC PSEA core activities and indicators in the HRP and/or any other relevant IA response plan (including clusters/AoR ones), with requisite funding requirements included to establish IA PSEA systems.	Emergency Handbook
PREPAREDNESS	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
Ensure CO risk analysis and corresponding scenarios take into consideration (if relevant) cluster activation or other forms of humanitarian coordination; and ensure preparedness actions take into consideration clusters/AoR where relevant (especially but not exclusive to MPS2, MPS4, MPS6, MPS7)	EPP – Step 1 (Risk Analysis); EPP – Step 2 (Scenarios); EPP – Step 4 (MPS); Emergency Preparedness Procedure
Strengthen internal knowledge (especially with Programme Chiefs, managers and decision makers in the CO) on the cluster system and on UNICEF accountabilities as CLA	
If emergency simulations are conducted, ensure to include Cluster/AoR leadership role in the design (injects) and in the simulation exercise	
Identify possible sources of funding for Cluster/AoR coordination teams and cluster coordination activities; explore resource mobilization opportunities for cluster/AoR coordination through the Emergency Preparedness Funding Initiatives	
PLANNING, PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND REPORTING	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
Ensure cluster/AoR leadership or humanitarian coordination is included in revised AWP/RWP in case of emergency, or in new humanitarian plans, developed in line with the CCCs, IA planning and with the contingency plans developed under MPS where available.	Operational Response Plan Template and Response Plan Narrative Template; Emergency Handbook
Implement cluster coordination monitoring, the 3 rd pillar of Humanitarian Performance Monitoring (HPM) including through its dedicated tool	Cluster Coordination Monitoring; Quick guide on cluster coordination monitoring; Cluster Monitoring Tool; Emergency Handbook
Include the 12 Minimum Commitments for Cluster/AoR Membership as annex in PCA/SSFAs with partners who are also Cluster/AoR members	12 Minimum Commitments
Consider including capacity building on data quality and information management in PCA/SSFAs with partners who are also Cluster/AoR members	Agora courses as relevant
Ensure regular reporting of Cluster/AoR leadership achievements in SitReps and other relevant reports	SitRep Guidelines and SitRep Annotated Template
UNICEF PROGRAMMES AND CLUSTERS/AOR	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
Orientation. Ensure Cluster/AoR Coordinators and IMOs, as well as the Chiefs of Section and Emergency Focal Points, have an induction session with the respective global clusters/AoR, where training options are discussed	Emergency Handbook
HUMAN RESOURCES (HR)	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
Staff mobilization. Suitable CO staff identified during emergency preparedness planning take on the Cluster/AoR Coordinator role immediately when clusters are activated. In parallel, initiate deployment of national-level Cluster Coordinators and IMOs from ERT, Global Cluster Rapid Response Teams, surge or stand-by partners (including CashCap) on a 'no regrets' basis for a minimum period of two months	MPS3; Emergency Handbook HR in Emergencies Toolkit
Surge Tracking Sheet (STS): Create an STS covering immediate staffing needs. Define in the STS if support is required on-ground or can be provided remotely. Circulate the STS to RO, DHR Surge Desk and EMOPS for inputs	STS E-staffing template; Emergency Handbook HR in Emergencies Toolkit
Surge: Assess the STS and determine, in cooperation with RO, CO and/or EMOPS as needed, (ERT Focal Point and Standby Team) appropriate surge mechanisms (including Stand-by partners). Contact Surge Cell which will source support. Ensure that all personnel are informed of the onboarding and orientation in emergencies, which includes the pre-deployment in emergencies. Ensure that all personnel are informed of and complete the Humanitarian Learning Pathways	STS E-staffing template; Emergency Handbook HR in Emergencies Toolkit
OPERATIONAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
Ensure CO preparedness (especially MPS3 and MPS4) take into consideration requirements for Cluster/AoR Coordination	MPS3; MPS4; Preparedness Procedure

RESOURCE MOBILIZATION FOR CLUSTER/AOR COORDINATION	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
Ensure that funding for CLA accountabilities is included in proposals to donors, as well as monitor and maintain opportunities for coordination and CLA accountabilities within CO pipeline	Donor profiles
Develop arguments and/or investment case for funding coordination roles	

CHIEF OF FIELD OFFICE

The following actions are responsibility of the **Chief of Field Office**. If s/he is also the direct supervisor of the Cluster/AoR Coordinators at subnational level, the actions in the **corresponding chapter** apply as well, adapted to the subnational level. For more details on each section of the table, please refer to the relevant chapter in **PART ONE** of the Guide.

THE CLUSTER APPROACH	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
Discuss the strategic value of clusters/AoRs for UNICEF COs and FOs within the team and promote active engagement with clusters/AoRs	
Ensure active participation of UNICEF programme sections in respective Clusters/AoR at national and sub-national level, and in their activities including the elaboration of the HNO and HRP	See Chapter on UNICEF Programmes and Clusters/AoRs
CLUSTER LEAD AGENCY ACCOUNTABILITY	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
Monitor that CLA accountabilities are fulfilled as relevant at subnational level (key positions are created and filled; cluster coordinators are supported, supervised and are able to provide leadership in their key functional areas; and cluster priorities are appropriately brought to the attention of the relevant inter-agency fora)	Accountability Compendium
Conduct regular joint meetings with cluster/AoR coordinators and programme sections, to build on intersectoral opportunities and facilitate integrated interventions (including at sub-national/field level if existing)	
CLUSTER ACTIVATION, TRANSITION AND DE-ACTIVATION	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
ACTIVATION	
Proactively engage in discussion, analysis and decision-making on activation of Clusters/AoRs in-country	
If not done under UNICEF MPSs, assign sector/cluster lead roles in agreement with the UNCT/HCT and have them signed off by the Emergency Relief Coordinator/Resident Coordinator. Advocate for the activation of all UNICEF-led sectors/clusters, no matter the response	MPS2 ; see Chapter on Preparedness ; Emergency Handbook
Ensure that UNICEF-led clusters are established at national and where needed at sub-national level in coordination with the UNCT/HCT, including defining the relationship to the national cluster in terms of accountability	Emergency Handbook
OTHER FORMS OF HUMANITARIAN COORDINATION	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
HUMANITARIAN SECTOR COORDINATION	
Coordinate with and support national/sub-national authorities in needs assessments, analysis of needs and response planning, monitoring, development of technical standards and tools; support as relevant to the development of Flash Appeals, HNOs and HRPs and in strengthening authorities' preparedness capacities and plans	Emergency Handbook ; IASC Guidance for CLAs on working with national authorities

CLUSTER/AOR COORDINATION AND MANAGEMENT AT NATIONAL AND SUB-NATIONAL LEVELS	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
Oversee the establishment and management of effective national and sub-national coordination structures for each of the clusters and AoRs UNICEF leads or co-leads	WASH and Nutrition sub-national cluster ToRs examples; Decision Tree (sub-national) ; Minimum coordination structure See Chapter on Human Resources
Advocate for more resources if needed for cluster/AoR coordination at sub-national level, with HCT and donors	Minimum coordination structure
Engage in analysis and decision-making within the HCT on the establishment of sub-national clusters	Minimum coordination structure ; IASC reference module on cluster coordination
Establish/recruit cluster/AoR sub-national level coordination teams following recommended minimum structure (as a minimum coordination and information management functions) and/or adapting to new sub-national coordination models emerging	Decision Tree (sub-national) ; See Human Resources chapter

PROGRAMME CHIEF/OPERATIONS CHIEF

The following actions are responsibility of the **Programme Chief of Section (indicated as [P]) or of Operations Chiefs or Managers (indicated as [O])**. If s/he is also the direct supervisor of a Cluster/AoR Coordinator, the actions in the [corresponding chapter](#) apply as well. For more details on each section of the table, please refer to the relevant chapter in [PART ONE](#) of the Guide.

THE CLUSTER APPROACH	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
[P/O] Discuss the strategic value of clusters/AoRs for UNICEF COs and FOs within the team and promote active engagement with clusters/AoRs	
[P] Consider the strategic value of cluster leadership during the elaboration of emergency response plans/humanitarian plans	
[P] Ensure active participation of UNICEF programme sections in respective Cluster/AoR at national and sub-national level, and in their activities including the elaboration of the HNO and HRP	See Chapter on UNICEF Programmes and Clusters/AoRs
THE 6+1 CORE CLUSTER FUNCTIONS	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
[P] Actively participate in cluster activities and processes (see Responsibility Matrix organized around 6+1 functions and Tasks Matrix organized around tasks and roles in CO)	Cluster/AoR Responsibility Matrix (Programme Chief) ; Tasks Matrix
CLUSTER ACTIVATION, TRANSITION AND DE-ACTIVATION	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
ACTIVATION	
[P] Proactively engage in discussion, analysis and decision-making on activation of Clusters/AoRs in-country	
[P] If not done under UNICEF MPSs, assign sector/cluster lead roles in agreement with the UNCT/HCT. Advocate for the activation of all UNICEF-led sectors/clusters, no matter the response	MPS2 ; see Chapter on Preparedness ; Emergency Handbook
[P] Ensure that UNICEF-led clusters are established at national and where needed at sub-national level in coordination with the UNCT/HCT, including defining the relationship to the national cluster in terms of accountability	Emergency Handbook
[P] If national authorities participate in cluster leadership, invest in technical support and capacity building to national co-leads. Ensure UNICEF maintains a leading role in addition to contributions by local actors	Emergency Handbook
TRANSITION AND DEACTIVATION	

[P] Facilitate links between the Cluster Coordinator and government and development actors and coordination bodies to support transition planning, and linkage of the transition with UNSDCF objectives	Guidance on Cluster Transition and Deactivation for the Country-Level Cluster and Cluster Lead Agency
[P] Contribute to cluster transition planning, and support the planning and integration of any humanitarian coordination functions into national sectoral structures after cluster deactivation	Guidance on Cluster Transition and Deactivation for the Country-Level Cluster and Cluster Lead Agency
[P] Ensure suitable structures, resources, and capacities are in place for any support to sectoral coordination that UNICEF will continue after cluster deactivation	Guidance on Cluster Transition and Deactivation for the Country-Level Cluster and Cluster Lead Agency
[P] Strengthen national capacities and preparedness through technical assistance, as required, for national actors (government and/or civil society) to be able to take on leadership of sectoral coordination functions that support humanitarian response to be in line with humanitarian principles	Guidance on Cluster Transition and Deactivation for the Country-Level Cluster and Cluster Lead Agency
OTHER FORMS OF HUMANITARIAN COORDINATION	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
HUMANITARIAN SECTOR COORDINATION	
[P] Identify staff within the CO who can build a national capacity for sector/cluster coordination and sector-wide information management prior to, during and after an emergency; if relevant, second staff to support national/sub-national coordination, in particular information management functions	Emergency Handbook
[P] Coordinate with and support national/sub-national authorities in needs assessments, analysis of needs and response planning, monitoring, development of technical standards and tools; support as relevant to the development of Flash Appeals, HNOs and HRP and in strengthening authorities' preparedness capacities and plans	Emergency Handbook; IASC Guidance for CLAs on working with national authorities
[P] Provide support on quality of the response, cross-cutting issues and people-centred approach, including a nexus approach	
[P/O] Provide resources (cash transfers or supplies) and technical assistance as required to national and sub-national government to support the response. Regularize these emergency-related activities through an updated workplan endorsed by an exchange of letters or documented in official minutes with government	Emergency Handbook
[P] Advocate with national authorities for the fulfilment of children's rights and the response to their needs; advocate as needed for adequate information management	
[P] Plan for the transition between emergency and development coordination, to sustain the capacity created through sector coordination support	
REFUGEE AND MIXED SETTINGS	
[P] Participate in refugee response planning as needed	UNHCR Refugee Coordination Model
[P] Participate in joint Protection Working Group/Protection Cluster + AoR meetings	UNHCR Refugee Coordination Model
OTHER HUMANITARIAN COORDINATION MECHANISMS	
[P] Support the coordination mechanism in place with staffing and resources as needed; assign or hire staff for both coordination and information management functions when UNICEF leads sectors of the response	IASC Guidance on strengthening participation, representation and leadership of local and national actors in IASC humanitarian coordination mechanisms
CLUSTER CO-LEADERSHIP AND CO-COORDINATION	
[P] Where possible and appropriate, engage in co-leadership and/or co-coordination of the Cluster/AoR with the government and/or another organization, especially a local organization; if needed provide institutional, technical or financial support. Selection of the co-leadership or co-coordination partner should be done through consultations with cluster/AoR partners	Questions to ask for co-leadership or co-coordination; IASC Guidance on strengthening participation, representation and leadership of local and national actors in iasc humanitarian coordination mechanisms
CLUSTER/AoR COORDINATION AND MANAGEMENT AT NATIONAL AND SUB-NATIONAL LEVELS	
[P] Advocate for more resources if needed for Cluster/AoR coordination at national and sub-national level, with HCT and donors	Minimum coordination structure
[P] Support co-coordination at sub-national level by local organization, through institutional, technical and financial resources as possible	

[P] Actively participate in Cluster/AoR meetings (especially when the cluster/AoR coordinator is double-hatting), in strategic management of the cluster/AoR through SAG and TWGs, and fulfil IASC 12 minimum commitments	IASC Reference Module on Cluster Coordination
PEOPLE-CENTERED APPROACH	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
[P] Support partners to be part of inter-agency coordination structures for AAP and for GBV risk mitigation and for inclusion	AAP Handbook
[P] Leverage UNICEF dual mandate and engagement with both humanitarian and development actors to create opportunities to connect humanitarian, development and peace actions	
[P] Strengthen government/authorities' capacities – especially for local governments - for coordination and information management so that they can co-lead clusters/AoRs at national and subnational levels, or at least participate actively and meaningfully in coordination mechanisms	Technical note on Localization in Humanitarian Action for Children
[P] Support local (national and sub-national) CSOs to initiate mechanisms that promote coordination among CSOs, such as CSO networks, fora or consortia	Technical note on Localization in Humanitarian Action for Children
[P] Support the mapping of local actors, including WLOs, organizations for people with disabilities, youth organizations and LGBTQI organizations to ensure diversity in cluster/AoR membership	Technical note on Localization in Humanitarian Action for Children
[P] Support local actors to access humanitarian funding, including country-based pool funds	Technical note on Localization in Humanitarian Action for Children
[P] Leverage existing (or potential) partnerships with Organizations of People with Disabilities (OPD), youth led organizations, women-led organizations to facilitate and support their participation in UNICEF-led clusters/AoR	Disability Inclusive Humanitarian Toolkit
[P] When establishing cluster or sector capacity, identify, create and foster partnerships with government stakeholders and civil society organizations that have expertise on disability, gender, GBV and/or representing marginalized group	Disability Inclusive Humanitarian Toolkit
PARTNERSHIP	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
[P] Engage with Cluster/AoR members as equal partners (not as implementing partners) within the context of the Cluster/AoR	Principles of Partnership
[P] Maintain UNICEF's roles as CLA and donor clearly separate, even though a donor/grantee relationship exists with between some Cluster/AoR members and UNICEF programmes	
[P] Strengthen capacity of Cluster/AoR members who are also UNICEF implementing partners (especially local organizations) by adding a capacity strengthening component to the partnership agreements	
PREPAREDNESS	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
[P] Systems strengthening: Based on humanitarian principles, and where feasible, establish and maintain relationships with local actors/authorities. Strengthen the preparedness plans of local authorities through technical assistance, as required. This includes the existing and/or proposed coordination structures that will be used during a response, and in the event of a cluster activation and/or deactivation	Emergency Handbook
PLANNING, PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND REPORTING	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
[P] Include CLA responsibilities/humanitarian coordination and relevant Core Standard and Standard Indicators in programme RRP, and estimate ORE required	Core Standard Indicators
[P] Ensure Cluster/AoR leadership or humanitarian coordination is included in revised AWP/ RWP in case of emergency, or in new humanitarian plans, developed in line with the CCCs, IA planning and with the contingency plans developed under MPS where available.	Operational Response Plan Template and Response Plan Narrative Template ; Emergency Handbook
[P] Implement cluster coordination monitoring, the 3 rd pillar of Humanitarian Performance Monitoring (HPM) including through its dedicated tool	Cluster Coordination Monitoring; Quick guide on cluster coordination monitoring; Cluster Monitoring Tool; Emergency Handbook
[P] Include the 12 Minimum Commitments for Cluster/AoR Membership as annex in PCA/ SSFAs with partners who are also cluster/AoR members	12 Minimum Commitments
[P] Consider including capacity building on data quality and information management in PCA/ SSFAs with partners who are also Cluster/AoR members	Agora courses as relevant

[P] Align the indicators chosen in donor appeals (HAC), HPM, UNICEF's response plan, AWP, IA plans (HRP), Results Assessment Module (RAM) in inSight, PDs and Small-Scale Funding Agreements. Indicators should measure access, reach, quality and equity of humanitarian programming, as well as coverage.	Emergency Handbook
[P] Identify preferred solution for streamlining reporting for UNICEF implementing partners who are also cluster/AoR members, either through eTools or 4W/5W. IPs should not be required to 'double report'. Either UNICEF collects reporting and passes it on to clusters, or IPs report to clusters and UNICEF extracts the UNICEF funded results.	
UNICEF PROGRAMMES AND CLUSTERS/AOR	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
[P] Ensure UNICEF programmes active participation in Cluster/AoR meetings and processes	CCCs ; See Responsibility matrix around 6+1 functions; See Tasks matrix
[P] Orientation. Ensure Cluster/AoR Coordinators and IMOs, as well as the Chiefs of Section and Emergency Focal Points, have an induction session with the respective global clusters/AoR, where training options are discussed	Emergency Handbook
[P] Participate in Strategic Advisory Groups, where these are created	
[P] Facilitate collaboration between Cluster/AoR teams and UNICEF programme sections (including on cross-sectoral programmes and topics) and commit necessary resources	
[P] Include coordination activities in annual workplans	See chapter on Programme implementation
[P] Include budget for coordination functions in funding proposals submitted to HRP, pooled fund and donors	
[P/O] Ensure timely release of cluster/AoR funding and adequate administrative support	See chapter on Operational and Administrative Support
[P] Coordinate and streamline processes with UNICEF partners who are also cluster/AoR members on information management, reporting and other administrative processes	
HUMAN RESOURCES (HR)	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
[P/O] Preparedness. Define staffing needs for the emergency response in line with the MPSs (including technical skills, cross-cultural, communication and leadership skills). Consider whether the office would benefit from 'surging back-fill' to maintain regular work processes, allowing a CFO, Section or Unit Chief to focus on the emergency response	MPS3 Emergency Handbook
[P/O] Staff mobilization. Suitable CO staff identified during emergency preparedness planning take on the Cluster/AoR Coordinator role immediately when clusters are activated. In parallel, initiate deployment of national-level Cluster Coordinators and IMOs from ERT, Global Cluster Rapid Response Teams, surge or stand-by partners (including CashCap) on a 'no regrets' basis for a minimum period of two months	MPS3 ; Emergency Handbook HR in Emergencies Toolkit
[P/O] Mission end performance appraisal: Ensure systematic performance conversations and evaluations for all deployed personnel at the end of deployment. Ensure that the performance evaluation is properly recorded. Ensure an exit interview is completed	Achieve SBP Performance Evaluation Form
OPERATIONAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
[P/O] Where required, designate relevant sectors/clusters as implementors in VISION, using generic vendor number 2500240235 to transfer supplies from UNICEF to sector/cluster partners. Ensure there is a signed TOR with results reporting requirements before releasing the supplies	Guideline Release Orders from CO warehouses ; Emergency Handbook
RESOURCE MOBILIZATION FOR CLUSTER/AoR COORDINATION	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
[P] Ensure that funding for CLA accountabilities is included in proposals to donors, as well as monitor and maintain opportunities for coordination and CLA accountabilities within CO pipeline	Donor profiles
[P] If the CO launches a HAC appeal, include coordination either as a standalone budget line or integrated into sectoral budget lines	2024 HAC guidance, 2024 HAC guidance on Funding Requirements

CHIEF OF PME

The following actions are responsibility of the **Chief of PME**. For more details on each section of the table, please refer to the relevant chapter in **PART ONE** of the Guide.

THE CLUSTER APPROACH	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
Discuss the strategic value of clusters/AoRs for UNICEF COs and FOs within the team and promote active engagement with clusters/AoRs	
Consider the strategic value of cluster leadership during the elaboration of emergency response plans/humanitarian plans	
THE 6+1 CORE CLUSTER FUNCTIONS	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
Actively participate in cluster activities and processes or support them as relevant (see Responsibility Matrix organized around 6+1 functions and Tasks Matrix organized around tasks and roles in CO)	Cluster/AoR Responsibility Matrix ; Tasks Matrix
PLANNING, PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND REPORTING	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
Ensure inclusion of CLA role and accountabilities in relevant steps of the CPP	Core Standard Indicators
Ensure cluster/AoR leadership or humanitarian coordination is included in revised AWP/RWP in case of emergency, or in new humanitarian plans, developed in line with the CCCs, IA planning and with the contingency plans developed under MPS where available	Operational Response Plan Template and Response Plan Narrative Template ; Emergency Handbook
Implement cluster coordination monitoring, the 3 rd pillar of Humanitarian Performance Monitoring (HPM) including through its dedicated tool	Cluster Coordination Monitoring; Quick guide on cluster coordination monitoring; Cluster Monitoring Tool; Emergency Handbook
Align the indicators chosen in donor appeals (HAC), HPM, UNICEF's response plan, AWPs, IA plans (HRP), Results Assessment Module (RAM) in inSight, PDs and Small-Scale Funding Agreements. Indicators should measure access, reach, quality and equity of humanitarian programming, as well as coverage.	Emergency Handbook
Identify preferred solution for streamlining reporting for UNICEF implementing partners who are also cluster/AoR members, either through eTools or 4W/5W, to avoid 'double report'. Either UNICEF collects reporting and passes it on to clusters, or IPs report to clusters and UNICEF extracts the UNICEF funded results.	
UNICEF PROGRAMMES AND CLUSTERS/AoR	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
Coordinate and streamline processes with UNICEF partners who are also cluster/AoR members on information management, reporting and other administrative processes	

HR MANAGER

The following actions are responsibility of the **HR Manager**. For more details on each section of the table, please refer to the corresponding relevant in **PART ONE** of the Guide.

CLUSTER LEAD AGENCY ACCOUNTABILITY	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
Strengthen leadership, communication and cross-cultural skills of C/AoR coordinators, if needed, through appropriate capacity building and professional opportunities; include leadership, communication and cross-cultural skills as required in C/AoR selection processes	Competency Framework for Cluster Coordination

OTHER FORMS OF HUMANITARIAN COORDINATION	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
OTHER HUMANITARIAN COORDINATION MECHANISMS	
Remote deployment: In situations of reduced access and or increased insecurity, including public health emergencies, deploy surge staffing and new recruits remotely for all or part of an assignment	Emergency Handbook
CLUSTER/AoR COORDINATION AND MANAGEMENT AT NATIONAL AND SUB-NATIONAL LEVELS	
Ensure the timely recruitment of cluster/AoR coordination teams with adequate seniority level and reporting lines; at a minimum, recruit national Cluster/AoR Coordinator and IMO roles for a period of at least six months for L2 and L3 emergencies	Decision tree (national) and Decision tree (subnational) QTA – Options for coordination teams Recommended reporting lines and Advantages & Disadvantages ; Emergency Handbook ; HR in Emergencies Toolkit
Establish/recruit cluster/AoR sub-national level coordination teams following recommended minimum structure (as a minimum coordination and information management functions) and/ or adapting to new sub-national coordination models emerging	Decision tree (subnational) See Chapter on Human Resources
PEOPLE-CENTERED APPROACH	
Recruit or deploy cluster/AoR coordination staff with knowledge and experience on PSEA, policy commitments and cross-cutting issues	
INTER-CLUSTER COORDINATION	
Designate or recruit a Humanitarian Cash Transfer Specialist or Focal Point (P3/NOC or above) to provide technical expertise to emergency and programme colleagues, <i>as well as coordinating internal and/or interagency initiatives and cluster-related HCTs activities</i>	Emergency Handbook
When recruiting C/AoR coordinators, include knowledge and experience about HCTs in the profile	
HUMAN RESOURCES (HR)	
Preparedness. Define staffing needs for the emergency response in line with the MPSs (including technical skills, cross-cultural, communication and leadership skills). Consider whether the office would benefit from 'surging back-fill' to maintain regular work processes, allowing a CFO, Section or Unit Chief to focus on the emergency response	MPS3 Emergency Handbook
Staff mobilization. Suitable CO staff identified during emergency preparedness planning take on the Cluster/AoR Coordinator role immediately when clusters are activated. In parallel, initiate deployment of national-level Cluster Coordinators and IMOs from ERT, Global Cluster Rapid Response Teams, surge or stand-by partners (including CashCap) on a 'no regrets' basis for a minimum period of two months	MPS3 Emergency Handbook HR in Emergencies Toolkit
Surge Tracking Sheet (STS): Create an STS covering immediate staffing needs. Define in the STS if support is required on-ground or can be provided remotely. Circulate the STS to RO, DHR Surge Desk and EMOPS for inputs	STS E-staffing template Emergency Handbook HR in Emergencies Toolkit
Surge: Assess the STS and determine, in cooperation with RO, CO and/or EMOPS as needed, (ERT Focal Point and Standby Team) appropriate surge mechanisms (including Stand-by partners). Contact Surge Cell which will source support. Ensure that all personnel are informed of the onboarding and orientation in emergencies, which includes the predeployment in emergencies. Ensure that all personnel are informed of and complete the Humanitarian Learning Pathways	STS E-staffing template Emergency Handbook HR in Emergencies Toolkit
Incorporate all cluster/AoR coordination posts into the PBR and operational staff matrix. Conduct a mail-poll PBR within the first month of a sudden-onset emergency or L2/L3 declaration	Emergency Handbook
Support sourcing for critical emergencies: Complete assessments for emergency recruitments within 20 days. Ensure approvals for emergency recruitments are received within five days. Ensure offer letters are sent within four business days, and candidates accept the offer within three business days. Use single-sourcing options in the best interest of the organization. This should be prioritized for L2/L3 emergencies	Emergency Handbook HR in Emergencies Toolkit
Onboarding and orientation: Ensure that new UNICEF personnel receive a comprehensive onboarding and orientation	Onboarding guide for supervisors A Head Start: A Quick Guide for Country and Regional Offices for Onboarding and Orientation in Emergencies
Mission end performance appraisal: Ensure systematic performance conversations and evaluations for all deployed personnel at the end of deployment. Ensure that the performance evaluation is properly recorded. Ensure an exit interview is completed	Achieve SBP Performance Evaluation Form

RESOURCE MOBILIZATION MANAGER

The following actions are responsibility of the **Resource Mobilization Manager**. For more details on each section of the table, please refer to the relevant chapter in **PART ONE** of the Guide.

OTHER FORMS OF HUMANITARIAN COORDINATION	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
HUMANITARIAN SECTOR COORDINATION	
Mobilize resources as required to support national and sub-national government leadership of the response	
OTHER HUMANITARIAN COORDINATION MECHANISMS	
If multiple coordination mechanisms exist, to the extent possible, align response plans and resource mobilization efforts of different coordination mechanisms with each other	
PREPAREDNESS	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
Identify possible sources of funding for cluster/AoR coordination teams and cluster coordination activities; explore resource mobilization opportunities for cluster/AoR coordination through the Emergency Preparedness Funding Initiatives	
RESOURCE MOBILIZATION FOR CLUSTER/AoR COORDINATION	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
Ensure that funding for CLA accountabilities is included in proposals to donors, as well as monitor and maintain opportunities for coordination and CLA accountabilities within CO pipeline	Donor profiles
Include humanitarian coordination and CLA accountabilities in CO RM strategy	
Develop arguments and/or investment case for funding coordination roles	
If the CO launches a HAC appeal, include coordination either as a standalone budget line or integrated into sectoral budget lines	2024 HAC guidance, 2024 HAC guidance on Funding Requirements

REGIONAL OFFICE

The following actions are responsibility of the Regional Office. For more details on each section of the table, please refer to the relevant chapter in **PART ONE** of the Guide.

CLUSTER LEAD AGENCY ACCOUNTABILITY	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
Support cluster/AoR leadership function at country level through technical support, capacity building, financial support for skills strengthening, and other actions as relevant; support Representatives in humanitarian situations to fulfil the UNICEF Cluster Lead Agency role	Accountability Compendium
OTHER FORMS OF HUMANITARIAN COORDINATION	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
OTHER HUMANITARIAN COORDINATION MECHANISMS	
Support and actively participate in regional and cross-border coordination mechanisms, including large-scale movement and migration crises, and PHE	

Remote deployment: In situations of reduced access and or increased insecurity, including public health emergencies, deploy surge staffing and new recruits remotely for all or part of an assignment	
HUMAN RESOURCES (HR)	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
Surge: Assess the STS and determine, in cooperation with RO, CO and/or EMOPS as needed, (ERT Focal Point and Standby Team) appropriate surge mechanisms (including Stand-by partners). Contact Surge Cell which will source support. Ensure that all personnel are informed of the onboarding and orientation in emergencies, which includes the predeployment in emergencies. Ensure that all personnel are informed of and complete the Humanitarian Learning Pathways	STS E-staffing template Emergency Handbook HR in Emergencies Toolkit
Ensure the timely recruitment of cluster/AoR coordination teams with adequate seniority level and reporting lines; at a minimum, recruit national Cluster/AoR Coordinator and IMO roles for a period of at least six months for L2 and L3 emergencies	Decision tree (national) and Decision tree (subnational) QTA – Options for coordination teams Recommended reporting lines and Advantages & Disadvantages ; Emergency Handbook ; HR in Emergencies Toolkit
THE ROLE OF THE REGIONAL OFFICE	TOOLS AND REFERENCES
Provide oversight and support cluster/AoR leadership function at country level through technical support, capacity building, financial support for skills strengthening, and other actions as relevant; support Representatives in humanitarian situations to fulfil the UNICEF Cluster Lead Agency role	Accountability Compendium
Support and actively participate into regional and cross-border coordination mechanisms, including in large-scale movement and migration crises, and in PHE	See Chapter on Other forms of humanitarian coordination
Support COs by deploying surge staff for coordination and information management role, if needed	See Chapter on Human Resources
Support the recruitment of national Cluster Coordinator and IMO roles for a period of at least six months for L2 and L3 emergencies	See Chapter on Human Resources: Emergency Handbook
Incorporate all cluster/AoR coordination posts into the PBR and operational staff matrix. Conduct a mail-poll PBR within the first month of a sudden-onset emergency or L2/L3 declaration	Emergency Handbook
Support sourcing for critical emergencies: Complete assessments for emergency recruitments within 20 days. Ensure approvals for emergency recruitments are received within five days. Ensure offer letters are sent within four business days, and candidates accept the offer within three business days. Use single-sourcing options in the best interest of the organization. This should be prioritized for L2/L3 emergencies	Emergency Handbook HR in Emergencies Toolkit