
COUNTRY BACKGROUND

The Logistics Cluster is mandated by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) to complement and coordinate the logistics capabilities of cooperating humanitarian agencies during large-scale complex emergencies and natural disasters.

As the lead agency of the Logistics Cluster, the World Food Programme (WFP) is accountable for working in partnership with humanitarian stakeholders to deliver a strategic response based on operational gaps, as per the IASC Guidelines on Cluster Coordination at Country Level. Each country-level Logistics Cluster Lead Agency has a Logistics Cluster Coordinator (as per the IASC Generic Terms of Reference for Sector Leads at Country Level), who is responsible for leading and facilitating this process. The Logistics Cluster Coordinator ensures that timely, coherent, and effective logistics support to humanitarian aid/relief operations is possible, within funding and security constraints.

In 2020, the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic compounded an already fragile situation in Sudan. As humanitarian partners scaled-up efforts to respond while simultaneously sustaining the humanitarian operation, with needs anticipated to grow, they faced challenges in the movement of supplies and other logistical services. In April 2020, following consultations with the Humanitarian Country Team, it was agreed to activate the Logistics Cluster in Sudan, and for it to remain in place for an initial period of one year to strengthen emergency response and ensure appropriate linkages with the Government of Sudan. The initial period of one year was extended as additional crises occurred in the country.

Since the outbreak of conflict on 15 April 2023, widespread insecurity and conflict dynamics have significantly impacted physical access to key locations, disrupted supply chain capacities, damaged infrastructure, increased costs, and decreased the availability of commercial transportation services. Movements restrictions, limited safe humanitarian access within conflict-affected areas, complex deconfliction processes, airspaces closures, limited operational points of entry into Sudan, multiple bureaucratic and administrative impediments affecting cargo movements and personnel, and limitations on crossline movements are all hindering the ability of humanitarian organizations to operate and impeding the delivery of humanitarian assistance to affected populations.

CLUSTER APPROACH (AS PER THE IASC)

The Cluster Approach operates at two levels:

- a) At the global level, the aim is to strengthen system-wide preparedness and technical capacity to respond to humanitarian emergencies by designating global Cluster Leads and ensuring that there is predictable leadership and accountability in all the main sectors/Clusters or areas of activity.
- b) At the country level, the aim is to ensure a more coherent and effective response by mobilizing groups of agencies, organisations and NGOs to respond in a strategic manner across all key sectors/Clusters or areas of activity. Each sector/Cluster is to have a clearly designated lead, as agreed by the Humanitarian Coordinator and

the Humanitarian Country Team (to enhance predictability, this should be in line with the lead agency arrangements at the global level where possible).

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

- I. Inclusion of key humanitarian partners:
 - Ensure inclusion of key humanitarian partners for the sector/Cluster, respecting their respective mandates and programme priorities.
- II. Establishment and maintenance of appropriate humanitarian coordination mechanisms:
 - Ensure appropriate coordination with all humanitarian partners (including national and international NGOs, the International Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, IOM and other international organizations), through the establishment/maintenance of appropriate sectoral/Cluster coordination mechanisms, including working groups at the national and, if necessary, local level.
 - Secure commitments from humanitarian partners in responding to needs and filling gaps, ensuring an appropriate distribution of responsibilities within the sectoral group/Cluster, with clearly defined focal points for specific issues where necessary.
 - Ensure the complementarity of different humanitarian actors' actions.
 - Promote emergency response actions while at the same time considering the need for early recovery planning.
 - Ensure effective links with other sectoral groups/Clusters.
 - Ensure that sectoral/Cluster coordination mechanisms are adapted over time to reflect the capacities of local actors and the engagement of development partners.
 - Represent the interests of the sectoral group/Cluster in discussions with the Humanitarian Coordinator and other stakeholders on prioritization, resource mobilization and advocacy.
- III. Coordination with national/local authorities, State institutions, local civil society and other relevant actors:
 - Ensure that humanitarian responses build on local capacities.
- IV. Attention to priority cross-cutting issues:
 - Ensure integration of agreed priority cross-cutting issues in sectoral/Cluster response (e.g. diversity, environment, gender, and human rights).
- V. Emergency preparedness:
 - Ensure adequate contingency planning and preparedness for new emergencies.
- VI. Planning and strategy development:
 - Ensure predictable action within the sectoral group/Cluster for the following:

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

VII. Application of standards:

- Ensure that responses are in line with existing policy guidance, technical standards.

VIII. Monitoring and reporting:

- Ensure adequate monitoring mechanisms are in place to review the impact of the sectoral working group/Cluster and progress against implementation plans.

IX. Advocacy and resource mobilization:

- Identify core advocacy concerns, including resource requirements, and contribute key messages to broader advocacy initiatives of the HC and other actors.
- Advocate for donors to fund humanitarian actors to carry out priority activities in the sector/Cluster concerned, while at the same time encouraging sectoral group/Cluster participants to mobilize resources for their activities through their usual channels.

X. Training and capacity building:

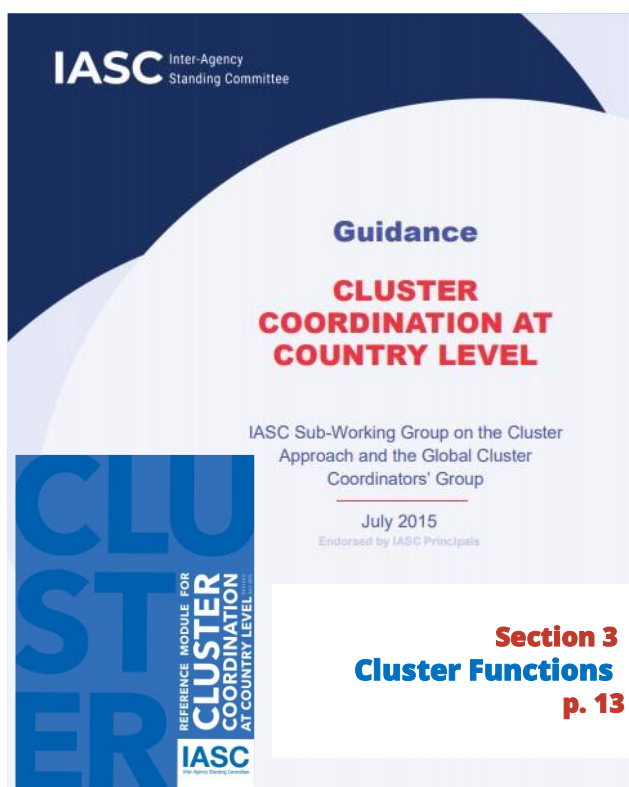
- Promote/support training of staff and capacity building of humanitarian partners.
- Support efforts to strengthen the capacity of the national authorities and civil society.

XI. Provision of assistance or services as a last resort:

- As agreed by the IASC Principals, sector/Cluster leads are responsible for acting as the provider of last resort (subject to access, security and availability of funding) to meet agreed priority needs and will be supported by the HC and the ERC in their resource mobilization efforts in this regard.

Nota bene: Partners with interests, capabilities, and responsibilities in emergency planning and response, and who choose to function within the framework of the cluster approach can strongly encouraged to participate in the implementation of the Cluster approach in Sudan.

CLUSTER FUNCTIONS AT COUNTY LEVEL



Cluster Functions at Country Level

1. Support Sectorial Services delivery
2. Inform the HC/HCT's strategic decisionmaking
3. Plan and implement cluster strategies
4. Monitor and evaluate performance
5. Capacity building
6. Support advocacy

+ **POLR:** The Cluster Lead Agency is the Provider of Last Resort (This means that, where necessary, and 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 HC-led Humanitarian Response Plan.

"IASC clusters are a temporary coordination solution and efforts should be made as soon as appropriate and possible to hand over coordination to the relevant authorities." (RMCC 2015)

ROLE RESPONSIBILITY AND MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

All Logistics Cluster partners (including CLAs in their role as implementer alongside other agencies) have a shared mutual responsibility to meet the humanitarian needs of affected people in a timely manner.

Humanitarian actors who participate in the development of common humanitarian action plans are expected to be proactive partners in assessing needs, developing strategies and plans for the sector/Cluster, and implementing agreed priority activities. Provisions should also be made in sectoral groups/Cluster for those humanitarian actors who may wish to participate as observers, mainly for information-sharing purposes.

The minimum commitments for participation in clusters include:

- (i) Commitment to humanitarian principles, the Principles of Partnership, cluster-specific guidance, and internationally recognized programme standards, including the Secretary-General's Bulletin on Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse.
- (ii) Commitment to mainstream protection in programme delivery (including respect for principles of non-discrimination, do no harm, etc.).
- (iii) Readiness to participate in actions that specifically improve accountability to affected people, in line with the IASC Commitments to Accountability to Affected Populations and the related Operational Framework.

- (iv) A demonstrated understanding of the duties and responsibilities associated with membership of the cluster, as defined by IASC ToRs and guidance notes, any cluster-specific guidance, and country cluster ToRs, where available.
- (v) Active participation in the cluster and a commitment to consistently engage in the cluster's collective work.

Nota Bene: Without the constant commitment of cluster participants, predictable coordination will not be achieved. The minimum commitments for participation in country-level clusters set out what all local, national or international organizations undertake to contribute. They do not seek to exclude organizations or national authorities from participating in clusters.

Contacts

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