



Global Cluster Coordination Group: Key Messages on Coordination for COVID-19 Response (June 2020)

Key Message 1: Ensure coordination is relevant and meets the needs

Coordination must directly improve the lives and well-being of affected people. As far as possible use existing coordination mechanisms, adjusting them as necessary to the context and ensure they are fit-for-purpose for emergency response. Sector coordination approaches may be implemented where relevant (i.e. accountability and leadership arrangements for sectoral response areas, applying prioritization criteria to focus on the most urgent need).

Key Message 2: Ensure accountability is well defined and there are clear roles & responsibilities

It is important that entities (group, person or organization) taking on coordination roles are clearly identified and their accountability for the coordination activities is well understood. Equally important is ensuring that accountabilities between various coordination bodies are established including how the various entities' activities build upon or support each other and ultimately link up with the UNCT/RC. Ensure roles and responsibilities are clearly defined for all actors involved in coordination through an agreed Terms of Reference (ToRs) that defines functions and agreed outputs. Ensure the ToRs are shared with all relevant stakeholders.

- ✓ **Example:** In humanitarian settings UNICEF is accountable to the Emergency Relief Coordinator for the coordination of nutrition response activities.
- ✓ **Example:** An inter-sector group can be accountable to the UNCT to raise operational concerns regarding the response whereas the UNCT may be accountable to an inter-sector group to provide strategic direction.
- ✓ **Tip:** *Global Clusters have standard Terms of Reference for Coordinators and Clusters/Sectors that you can adapt.*

Key Message 3: Promote participation and partnership with NGOs and the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement

NGOs and the Red Cross/Crescent are often at the forefront of any emergency response. They are on the ground delivering services, and they bring a critical perspective that enriches the quality of the response. NGOs, both international and local, and the Red Cross/Crescent should be viewed as valuable partners complementing the response of UN agencies. In many cases, the response is not possible without them. NGOs and Red Cross/Crescent should be invited as equal partners to participate in decision-making around coordination and response activities.

- ✓ **Tip:** *Share the Principles of Partnership at the UNCT, amongst Sector Focal Points or within the Sector.*

Key Message 4: Ensure response does not expose people to harm and communities are engaged

Even well-intentioned actions risk causing harm. The transfer of resources (food, shelter, health care, etc.) into a resource-scarce environment may become an element of conflict. Actors providing assistance should do so in a principled manner and ensure that assistance does not lead to physical/psychological threats and can be accessed on an equal and equitable manner. Also, affected people must be consulted on their priorities and needs. This promotes trust with crisis-affected people and ensures a deeper understanding of the context and the impact of the response.

- ✓ **Tip:** *Ensure civil society organizations, local authorities and affected people are consulted, including on the risks they face. Promote their participation in the design, delivery and monitoring of the response in a safe environment.*
- ✓ **Tip:** *Make community feedback a standing item at coordination meetings so that it meaningfully informs the response.*

Key Message 5: Reinforce national capacity and resilience

Ensure coordination and response complement national efforts. Capitalize on local and national capacities in-country and engage more robustly with partners at the local, operational level, including civil society organizations to maintain or scale up their assistance and participation in response efforts. Ensure resilience initiatives are supported to promote a lasting impact.

Key Message 6: Ensure collaboration and coordination with other agencies and sectors

Foster collaboration across the different sectors and organizations to ensure coherent and complementary interventions. Strengthen collaboration on information sharing, joint analysis, joined-up planning and programming

- ✓ **Tip:** *Use the Covid19-Inter-Cluster/Inter Sector Matrix to promote cross-sectoral coordination.*