

Global WASH Cluster

Technical Working Group on WASH Quality Assurance System

Terms of Reference

Background

Two pillars are essential for the execution of principled, accountable and high-quality humanitarian WASH response:

1. The **coordination** within the WASH cluster¹ and with other clusters must provide the enabling environment allowing that the projects of the WASH partners are strategically implemented avoiding gaps and duplications, and following agreed standards and modalities². Usually the agreed standards and implementation modalities are summarized in the Strategic Operational Framework (SOF), a document that is agreed among the WASH partners involved in the response. The SOF completes the Humanitarian Response Plan;
2. The **implementation of the projects executed by the WASH partners** must respect these agreed standards and modalities.

Thus, the National Humanitarian WASH Coordination Platform and the partners are mutually accountable to ensure that the WASH response is 1) relevant, 2) effectively and timely implemented in close collaboration with national and local governments, and 3) responds to the needs of the affected populations.

The Global WASH Cluster Strategic Plan for 2016-2020 outlines the provision of support to NHWCPs and partners to deliver quality WASH services to the affected populations, starting with countries facing L3 emergencies.

Findings of humanitarian action reviews carried out by UNICEF and the Cluster Advocacy

¹ For this specific document, the word *cluster* will be used also to designate the *sector*, when the response is implemented in a country where the cluster approach is not activated.

² The coordination is structured around six core functions and one requirement (on accountability to affected populations) that have been formally described in the Cluster Coordination Reference Module edited by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) in 2015. Based on this document, the Global WASH Cluster (GWC) has developed Minimum Requirements on cluster coordination that each National Humanitarian WASH Coordination Platform (NHWCP) should meet to fulfil their role. These requirements provide the framework against which the performance of the coordination can be monitored

Support Team (CAST) in several countries show that too often WASH partners fail to meet the minimum humanitarian or technical standards and thus undermines the overall quality of the WASH services that are delivered to the affected populations. In most cases, WASH partners in countries have no agreed joint quality assurance systems they could use to monitor WASH response quality, reinforce their capacity where it is needed and take corrective measures.

Key considerations

In 2017, the GWC Strategy Advisory Group endorsed the Humanitarian WASH Accountability Framework that details the priority areas NHCs and partners in countries should pay attention to. This framework should be updated and provide the baseline for the GWC to develop guidance in order to support countries addressing the quality of response in humanitarian WASH programmes.

Quality assurance systems should consider, as a priority:

- The strategic, programmatic and technical areas that are essential to meet the requirements of the Humanitarian WASH Accountability Framework³;
- Humanitarian and technical standards that should be met by the WASH partners during the implementation of a response;
- Targets, criteria and indicators that the Humanitarian Response Plan should pursue to improve the quality of the WASH response, considering both programmatic and technical aspects;
- Arrangements among partners to monitor the quality of the response and decide on corrective actions. Among the key areas are: a) the response level against the response plan objectives in all relevant WASH sub-domain areas, b) geographical coverage, c) the appropriateness of WASH implementation modalities, d) the relevance, the reliability, the safety, the quantity and the continuity of WASH services, e) the level of accountability of WASH partners towards the affected population;
- Plans to roll out the corrective actions and build capacity where necessary.
- Documentation of lessons learned and good practices

Aim of the TWiG

Provide strategic guidance and advocate for quality of humanitarian WASH programming in countries.

³ Relevance, appropriateness, effectiveness, efficiency and timeliness.

Objectives of the TWiG

- Provide technical advice on the key components of the quality assurance systems;
- Provide guidance for the elaboration of a “Guidance on development of WASH Cluster Quality Assurance Systems for countries”;
- Support the piloting and dissemination of quality assurance systems in selected countries;
- Support CAST to help steering and adoption of the Guidance among GWC partners;
- Undertake reviews of large scale emergency responses, providing recommendations for improvement and documenting lessons learned.

Membership

The TWiG should comprise individuals representing a variety of agencies and skill-sets. TWiG representatives should come from humanitarian organisations (NGO, UN, others) involved in WASH (senior technical WASH specialists and coordinators).

The final composition of this TWiG will be reviewed and agreed by the Strategic Advisory Group (SAG). CAST will have the responsibility to manage the TWiG.

Duration

The TWiG is set up for an initial period of 9 months till December 31, 2018.

Working Modalities

The TWiG will be conducted primarily via teleconferencing with individual discussions with CAST. Based on the availability of the TWiG members, there is potential for a one-day workshop during the second semester of 2018.