



# Global Water Sanitation and Hygiene Cluster Strategic Plan 2016 - 2020

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## Abbreviation and Acronyms

<b>CAST</b>	Cluster Advocacy and Support Team
<b>CLA</b>	Cluster Lead Agency
<b>CC</b>	Cluster Coordinator
<b>CCRM</b>	Cluster Coordination Reference Model
<b>FST</b>	Field Support Team
<b>GWC</b>	Global WASH Cluster
<b>HC</b>	Humanitarian Coordinator
<b>HCT</b>	Humanitarian Country Team
<b>IASC</b>	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
<b>IM</b>	Information Management
<b>L2</b>	Level 2 system-wide emergency
<b>L3</b>	Level 3 system-wide emergency
<b>SAG</b>	Strategic Advisory Group
<b>TA</b>	Transformative Agenda
<b>ToR</b>	Terms of Reference
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>WASH</b>	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

# 1 Introduction

The Global WASH Cluster (GWC) has the primary mandate of *“strengthening system-wide preparedness and coordination of technical capacity to respond predictably to humanitarian emergencies, and provide clear leadership and accountability in the main areas of humanitarian response.”* As priority, the GWC exists to support the achievement of the 6+1 core coordination functions at country level as described in the Cluster Coordination Reference Module<sup>1</sup>, that support the effective and predictable delivery of appropriate WASH for those affected by an emergency.

The GWC is led by UNICEF as the Cluster Lead Agency (CLA) and made up of full and associate member agencies at Global level. UNICEF and the GWC partners have designated the Cluster Advocacy and Support Team (CAST) to manage GWC in close collaboration with a Strategic advisory Group (SAG).

Overall, the GWC is committed to (1) supporting agencies providing WASH services to those affected by emergencies, (2) ensuring the quality and coherence of the assistance, and (3) ensuring that the assistance is provided in a manner that is equitable, culturally acceptable and protects the dignity of the populations affected by crises.

The 2016-2020 GWC Strategic Plan describes how the GWC intends to deliver on these commitments. This plan is for all its members who are expected to contribute to the achievement of the plan and its objectives through participative engagement and partnership, both at global and country levels. It was developed through an extensive consultative process (using on-line survey, key informant interviews and document review) undertaken during the whole 2016 with a wide range of stakeholders, and consolidated after a final consultation with the GWC partners at the 21th GWC meeting held in Kathmandu on November 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2016.

## 2 Rationale

### 2.1 Summary of GWC Strategic Plan 2011-2015 Key Lessons

The 2011-15 Global WASH Cluster Strategic Plan was considered as a major improvement in the development of the strategic thinking of the GWC, which facilitated coherence with the IASC principles and standards. It helped align global thinking and the work of national clusters, particularly where there was strong engagement between the national platforms and the GWC. However, a too much top-down development process resulted in a weakness in capturing of and tailoring to national needs, whilst limited dissemination to the field and/or communication about its purpose resulted in a lack of familiarity with the plan at national level. The strategy’s detachment from operational tasks exacerbated the perception that there was limited value in being aware of it.

The 2011-15 plan was considered most relevant in guiding the operational support to newly established national WASH clusters, particularly in the areas of coordination (including information management) in large scale emergencies. Initial successes in supporting emergency preparedness and rapid

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/system/files/documents/files/cluster\\_coordination\\_reference\\_module\\_2015\\_final.pdf](https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/system/files/documents/files/cluster_coordination_reference_module_2015_final.pdf). The cluster functions are: 1. support service delivery, 2. inform the HC/HCT’s strategic decision-making, 3. plan and implement cluster strategies, 4. monitor and evaluate performance, 5. build national capacity in preparedness and contingency planning. 6. support robust advocacy. The +1 function is accountability to affected populations.

assessments flagged during the latter half of the plans' implementation highlighted the need to reprioritize country support.

The lack of a sufficiently robust monitoring and evaluation framework for GWC activities negatively impacted the GWC's ability to recalibrate plans based on evidence-based learning. The lack of progression around proposed advocacy and knowledge management outcomes was an area of concern, whilst transition and deactivation from the cluster approach to other models of coordination did not receive sufficient attention. This was partly attributable to the GWC having to support backstopping activities over strategic priorities due to resource constraints.

## 2.2 Major Changes in the Humanitarian Environment

The operating context for the GWC has changed markedly in the last 10 years. Whilst single-event, natural mega-disasters remain a constant, there has been a proliferation of complex and protracted emergencies. This has had significant effects on how the humanitarian system operates; the number of people requiring international humanitarian assistance has nearly doubled and the length of time they require support has extended. As a result, the relative amount of funding and capacity of the sector has decreased significantly<sup>2</sup>.

In addition to protracted crises, evolving scenarios such as increased migration, urbanisation, and climate change have diversified the range of needs and made the delivery of assistance increasingly challenging and expensive. Humanitarian and development activities are becoming more intertwined and national governments, and in some cases non-state actors, have a stronger capacity to design and coordinate the delivery of assistance. This is partly in reaction to changes in modes of delivery and partly because of capacity development efforts over the years by the international community<sup>3</sup>.

As a result there has been a shift in the focus of the GWC support which will continue into the coming strategy. The types of support requested over past years has evolved from establishing cluster mechanisms at country level and raising awareness of the importance of coordinated response to refining and improving quality of coordination for response, renewing joint commitments and accountability in coordination and a strong focus on supporting Government coordination (both at national and sub-national levels) and / or transitioning to Government led coordination modules.

The realities of new working environments, specifically access limitations, will require the GWC to increase flexibility by understanding and working with different groups (including political and private sector actors) and strengthening sub-national level coordination with national actors. In addition, the GWC will need to work more strategically and operationally with other sectors to improve programming and coordination effectiveness and quality. The GWC will also need to examine its role with respect to bridging humanitarian and development work and renew its focus on capacity building, specifically focusing on National Government and local actor capacity to lead coordination. Advocacy will become increasingly important - not just for cluster funding but recognising that emergencies are increasingly political in nature<sup>4</sup>. A renewed capacity to manage knowledge, capture and disseminate lessons will

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<sup>2</sup> Development Initiatives, Global Humanitarian Assistance Report, 2015; OCHA, World Humanitarian Data and Trends, 2015.

<sup>3</sup> Including ALNAP, State of the Humanitarian System, 2015.

<sup>4</sup> Including ALNAP, State of the Humanitarian System, 2015.

continue to be a keystone to support national and sub-national platforms, build strong capacity within the Humanitarian WASH Sector and base advocacy on evidence.

### 2.3 Priorities

Based on the evolving nature of the role of Global clusters as described above there is a positive re-emphasis that focuses on a people centred approach, quality of response and improved coherence at inter-sectoral level for joint outcomes. As key priorities, the GWC will:

- Improve delivery of core functions by maintaining surge capacity, promoting consistent regional level support to field based clusters, ensuring that clusters are adequately staffed and resourced, and working to embed the core function into existing processes and resource pools;
- Adhere to sectoral standards such as Sphere, its companions (such as the WASH Minimum Commitments), and the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS);
- Facilitate a timely and effective transition of clusters to national actors, improve support to preparedness to minimise the need for external support (or cluster activation), strengthen the continuum with sector coordination, and enhance linkages with development;
- Refine / develop, implement and promote practical methodologies to ensure accountability to affected populations, gender mainstreaming and targeting of the most vulnerable;
- Implement sectoral interventions based on joint strategic planning with other clusters where programmatic synergies are likely to increase coverage, and undertake cross-cluster monitoring and evaluation;
- Work with donors and cluster members to build on and strengthen good practice in assessment, response planning and response monitoring through clusters;
- Leverage global level commitments from cluster partners to increase quality of response and scale-up where required;
- Delineate respective responsibilities (including CLA, SAG, CAST and GWC members) and understand and take action on non-compliance.

## 3 GWC Strategic Plan 2016-2020

The core of the GWC Strategic Plan for 2016-20 reflects the synthesis of GWC commitments under the Transformative Agenda, lessons learnt from the previous plan, external drivers, cross-cluster thinking and GWC stakeholders' aspirations.

### 3.1 Vision and Goal

The GWC's vision is that increased coordination and response quality and capacity of national WASH coordination platforms will result in the improved relevance, quality, coverage and effectiveness of WASH assistance provided to people affected by emergencies.

The WASH cluster agencies' goal is to improve the predictability, timeliness, and effectiveness of a comprehensive WASH response to humanitarian crises.

### 3.2 Strategic Principles

The GWC's commitment to coordination means that working with other actors is essential to achieving its goals. This translates into the following strategic principles:

- Partnership. The GWC will work in partnership with all WASH actors - government, local NGOs, INGOs, development NGOs, academia, private sector - to find solutions to issues arising in a response.
- Interconnectedness. Recognition of the interconnectedness of global, regional and national/sub-national WASH coordination mechanisms is reflected in the GWCs actions.
- Integration. Develop linkages with other relevant clusters/sectors to maximise the efficiency and effectiveness of the response for affected populations.
- Accountability. Ensure that responses are accountable and reflect the needs of affected populations by: 1) Promoting the participation of affected populations in design, implementation and monitoring of programmes; 2) Learning from the GWC's own and others successes and failures by critically evaluating actions from the standpoint of affected populations; 3) Working with other clusters to support the development of beneficiary feedback and complaints mechanisms<sup>5</sup>.

### 3.3 Strategic Objectives and Expected Outcomes

The strategic objectives should meet the needs of the sector with deliverables that can be prioritised. Therefore, the GWC will focus its support on four Strategic Objectives:

- SO 1. Provide timely operational support to national and sub-national humanitarian WASH coordination platforms to meet the TA 6+1 core functions and improve Humanitarian WASH service delivery;
- SO 2. Ensure that key WASH stakeholders (sub-national, national and global) have the capacity to coordinate and deliver an appropriate and timely response in emergency;
- SO 3. Influence and advocate for an effective humanitarian WASH coordination response and funding;
- SO 4. Provide to the Humanitarian WASH actors a timely access to appropriate and accurate knowledge on coordination and response.

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<sup>5</sup> AAP is the responsibility of all clusters and one area that would particularly benefit from inter-cluster cooperation: the GWC could best add value here by, for example, monitoring the quality of complaints and feedback mechanisms.

Expected outcomes, associated to the four strategic objectives are presented in the table hereafter. The complete result framework (outcomes, outputs, indicators and baselines/targets) for these strategic objectives are described in Annex 1.

Strategic Objectives	SO1 Operational support	SO2 Capacity building	SO3 Advocacy	SO4 Knowledge mgt
<b>Expected Outcomes</b>	<p><b>1.1 Preparedness</b> - In countries prioritized for emergency preparedness, National Humanitarian WASH Coordination (NWHC) platforms have an updated and operational emergency preparedness plan (including contingency plans) that are agreed among the partners and consistent with the national preparedness plan.</p> <p><b>1.2 Response:</b> In Cluster Activated or HRP covered countries, National and sub-national WASH Humanitarian Coordination platforms deliver the 6+1 core functions and monitor the quality of the Humanitarian WASH service delivery</p> <p><b>1.3 Transition</b> - National WASH Clusters have a transition plan to national WASH coordination platforms that considers the sub-national levels</p> <p><b>1.4 Systems</b> - The delivery of humanitarian WASH coordination functions and the overall quality of the humanitarian WASH response are systematically supported, monitored and evaluated by GWC in Cluster Activated or HRP covered countries</p> <p><b>1.5 Partnership</b> - Priority partnerships are in place at global level to strengthen the quality of the humanitarian WASH coordination and technical response</p>	<p><b>2.1 Systems</b> - National Humanitarian WASH Coordination platforms and GWC partners benefit from a capacity building system established at global and regional levels to strengthen their ability to deliver the coordination functions</p> <p><b>2.2 Partnership</b> - GWC partners have reinforced their capacity to support the delivery of core coordination functions of National and sub-National Humanitarian WASH Coordination Platforms</p> <p><b>2.3 WASH practitioners</b> - The global pool of fit-for-purpose WASH practitioners to support humanitarian WASH coordination is sufficient to meet 'normal' demand</p>	<p><b>3.1</b> There is an increased focus on <b>Humanitarian WASH coordination, response and funding</b> within global agendas</p> <p><b>3.2</b> The <b>GWC partnership</b> is strengthened and broadened both at global and national levels</p>	<p><b>4.1</b> Humanitarian WASH related <b>Lesson Learned, evidence and innovative approaches</b> corresponding to identified priority gaps are disseminated and used by partners to improve coordination and response in subsequent emergencies</p>



## 4 Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

An increased attention will be paid on the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the GWC Strategic Plan, which will be monitored on a quarterly basis and formal monitoring exercises will be carried out during the GWC annual meetings. A mid-term review is planned for 2018. The detailed monitoring and evaluation framework is presented in annex 2.

## 5 Operationalization of the 2016-2020 GWC Strategic Plan

### 5.1 Operational Principles

To maximise resources that best serve affected populations, the following GWC operational principles will guide implementation:

- Work to achieve the IASC Transformative Agenda and the Cluster Coordination Reference Module;
- Concentrate on supporting capacity development for national emergency WASH coordination mechanisms in preparedness, operational and transition phases of emergency response;
- Provide specific specialised services aligned with the 6+1 IASC core functions;
- Support the connection to technical WASH guidance and networks; but may not be the primary provider of these resources;
- Strengthen country and global advocacy to promote emergency WASH coordination, at all levels (global, regional, national and sub national);
- Prioritise the GWC support provided based on the context, capacity and needs;
- The GWC will only operationalise where it can add value (and not, for example, duplicate services) and will work in modalities that reinforce transition to national authorities as soon as practicable.

### 5.2 Ways of Working

The implementation of the GWC Strategic Plans has been supported by an interim organisational structure which has been in effect since May 2011<sup>6</sup>. This document details the current way of working and the membership categories within the GWC. With the maturation of the GWC, it is felt by the current membership that a more permanent system is required to support the governance of the GWC and the implementation of the new 2016-2020 GWC Strategic Plan. The GWC partners will set up this new structure and renewed ways of working in the early phase of the Strategic Plan implementation.

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<sup>6</sup> Interim Organizational Structure for the IASC Global WASH Cluster, May 2011

GWC partners will be encouraged to implement and monitor the GWC Strategic Plan through the setup of Technical Working Groups and direct involvement / leading of the expected outputs, associated to the strategic objectives.

Endorsed by the GWC partners  
22<sup>th</sup> Global WASH Cluster meeting  
Kathmandu November 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2016

Annex 1: Detailed Result Framework

## Annex 2: Detailed Monitoring Framework