

Functional Framework for Protection Cluster Coordinators

Global Protection Cluster



2022



Cover: Emmanuelle walks her children from Plain Savo site to their school in Bulé town. “It’s only three kilometers away but it feels much longer and often they go with an empty stomach as we don’t have enough food. Sometimes, they don’t want to go to school. We are so poor, they don’t have shoes, they walk bare-feet. They feel humiliated going to school without shoes”. The thirty-eight-year-old woman was in her shelter with her four children and her husband Aymery when armed men attacked the site on 1 February 2022. As soon as they heard gun shots, they fled to the bush, leaving everything behind them. “Since then, we are always on our guards” she says. “The children jump at the slightest noise, they have nightmares at night”

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Foreword



In 2022, protection risks continue unabated with over 151 million people in need of protection. This is the highest increase in a long time driven by conflicts and worsening situations in Ukraine, Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Sudan, Myanmar and the continued level of needs in Yemen, Syria and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

To fulfill the commitment to prioritize protection, protection coordinators need to enhance their skills and knowledge, which is the aim of this functional framework. Protection coordinators and humanitarians should see themselves as invested with a protection mandate to ensure that their activities contribute to the overall objective of saving lives.

This means that more than ever, we are required to join forces and act together to ensure protection of all affected populations. To do so, we need to analyze situations and understand underlying causes, we need to plan together with the affected communities and we need to be prepared for the changes we are seeing in today's crisis.

Utilizing the expertise of the protection community, this functional framework is the product of extensive consultations. It can be used for the induction of new staff members. To all coordinators out there, doing their best to ensure the rights of affected populations in all kinds of challenging situations, I thank you for taking on this responsibility to coordinate our collaborative response. I hope this framework brings more clarity and support to these leadership roles as well as attaining the overall goal of a more effective and appropriate response to the needs of the affected population.

Samuel Cheung
Global Protection Cluster Coordinator

Introduction: Functional Framework Overview

The Functional Framework for Coordination outlines the competencies¹ required for those working as Coordinators in a Protection Cluster. The framework has thirteen competencies all of which are essential. These competencies are arranged into three groups:

1) Sectoral competencies

These are competencies that relate to the protection sector and include competencies that require the application of humanitarian principles and concepts.

2) Coordination core competencies

These competencies define the proficiencies required for working effectively in a coordination group.

3) Functional/technical competencies

These competencies relate to the tasks or functions of a specific role or group of related roles. In this framework, these competencies define the proficiencies and skills required by those who are Cluster Coordinators. Each of the competencies has a definition, knowledge area and skills.

Development work for the Protection Coordinators functional framework was supported by members of the GPC, AOR members, particularly those who were previously involved in the development of a Competency Framework for the Child Protection AoR and Nutrition Cluster, from which the current framework originates, UNHCR HR colleagues and the GLDC.

¹ a competency is defined as: a set of behaviors that a person must demonstrate, based on underlying knowledge, skills and experiences, in order to perform effectively in a given situation (CHCF)



Overview of the Functional Framework for Coordinators



1) Sectoral competencies

- 1.1 Applies humanitarian principles, standards and guidelines
- 1.2 Applies key protection principles, standards, concepts and tools
- 1.3 Operates safely and securely

2) Coordination core competencies

- 2.1 Demonstrates commitment to a coordinated response
- 2.2 Promotes cooperation and collaboration
- 2.3 Demonstrates accountability
- 2.4 Promotes inclusion

3) Functional/technical competencies

- 3.1 Provides influential and strategic leadership
- 3.2 Analyses and communicates information
- 3.3 Supports resource mobilization
- 3.4 Advocates for increased protection outcomes
- 3.5 Monitors the response
- 3.6 Strengthens national and local capacity to respond and lead

1) Sectoral competencies

1.1 Applies humanitarian principles, standards and guidelines

Definition: Demonstrates commitment to key humanitarian principles, standards and guidelines in their own work, and that of others, and ensures the response adheres to these; challenges inappropriate or harmful activities and behaviors and follows appropriate reporting and disciplinary procedures.

Knowledge areas

- Centrality of Protection (https://www.globalprotectioncluster.org/_assets/files/tools_and_guidance/IASC%20Guidance%20and%20Tools/IASC_Principals_Statement_Centrality_Protection_Humanitarian_Action_December2013_EN.pdf)
- IASC Policy IASC Protection Priority: Global Protection Cluster | IASC (interagencystandingcommittee.org)
- IASC Guidance Note on Using the Cluster Approach to Strengthen Humanitarian Response
- Reference Module for Cluster Coordination at country level, 2015, <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/2020-11/Reference%20Module%20for%20Cluster%20Coordination%20at%20Country%20Level%20%28revised%20July%202015%29.pdf>
- Joint UNHCR-OCHA Note on Mixed Situations: Coordination in Practice
- Principles of Partnership <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/2021-12/Principles%20of%20Partnership%20%28by%20Global%20Humanitarian%20Platform%29.pdf>
- Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (ST/SGB/2003/13)

Skills

- **Analytical skills** including the ability to select, adapt and apply suitable and relevant resources and to analyze contextual and statistical data
- **Communication skills** including the ability to persuade and inspire support for universal principles despite differences in cultures and beliefs
- **Interpersonal skills** including the ability to have difficult conversations and challenge established ways of thinking when contrary to principles of best practice, to motivate and influence others and to set and manage expectation

1.2 Applies key Protection principles, standards, concepts and tools

Definition: Understands key Protection principles, standards, concepts, tools and issues sufficiently to undertake the functions of their role effectively, enable full engagement with cluster members as well as AoRs and effectively represent the needs and concerns of the cluster and the AoRs to other actors involved in the response. Is confident with key concepts in preventing and managing protection risks, protection strategies and in promoting the Centrality of Protection to others.



Knowledge areas

- Mandates, roles, capacities and gaps of AoRs, partners and key stakeholders
- Q&A: activation and deactivation of AoRs
- Co-ordination agreements: template and guidance
- Field coordination package
- IASC Policy on protection in Humanitarian action
- UNHCR Policy on IDP response



Skills

- Ability to conduct safe, accessible, participatory and ethical consultation processes with the affected population using accountability mechanisms
- **Analytical skills** including the ability to assess the technical and contextual relevance and applicability of tools and concepts
- **Communication skills** including the ability to represent concepts clearly
- **Interpersonal skills** including the ability to convene, be challenged, negotiate and influence others

1.3 Operates safely and securely (Judgement and decision making M003)

Definition: Plays an active role in maintaining the safety, health and well-being of oneself and one's colleagues; exercises due care and avoids taking unnecessary risks that could jeopardize their own security and that of other UNHCR, UN and / or partner organization personnel, premises or assets; takes steps to minimize risk to stakeholders and affected populations and follows appropriate safeguarding procedures.



Knowledge areas

- Travel Request Information Process (TRIP) for requesting security clearances and how to use the TA mobile application, as required in the location
- Mandatory UN security training like BSAFE and SSAFE
- Contact details for duty station's Security Management Team and personnel with a specific security role within the UN SMS or UNHCR including: UNDSS Chief Security Advisor (CSA), Security Advisor (SA) or Field Security Coordination Officer (FSCO),



Skills

- Using communication, safety and security equipment

Syria. UNHCR continues to support displaced people from Afrin in rural Aleppo.

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2) Coordination core competencies

2.1 *Demonstrates commitment to a coordinated response (M001 Empowering and Building trust)*

Definition: promotes the value of coordination by ensuring their own behavior and actions contribute to a well-coordinated response; demonstrates a personal and positive commitment to the aims of the Protection cluster and the AoRs and fair and impartial treatment of all partners; coordinates effectively with all relevant stakeholders and engages with the wider humanitarian response. Understand the interagency architecture and the role and responsibilities of stakeholders

Knowledge areas:

- IASC guidelines on Cluster Coordination at Country level (2015), Guidelines for Integrating GBV Interventions in Humanitarian Action, Thematic Guide for Child Protection (2015), [Mine Action AoR strategy \(2022-2024\)](#)
- Key contacts in key stakeholders including AoRs, Working Groups, other Clusters, Community Based Protection Networks, Community Based Organisations Working Groups, Inter-Cluster Coordination Groups, Humanitarian Country Teams
- Principles of Partnership
- Strategic planning including Humanitarian Response Planning

Skills:

- **Communication skills** including public speaking, persuasion and influencing
- Consensus building and conflict management
- **Interpersonal skills** including negotiation skills and persuasion and the ability to work collaboratively with colleagues and partners
- Leadership, strategic vision and decision-making
- Meeting management including planning and facilitating meetings
- **Organizational skills** including time management
- Stakeholder management including networking skills, establishing sub-national clusters, developing partnerships, working with and managing partners, Strategic Advisory Groups and Technical Working Groups and identifying minimum partner commitments

2.2 Promotes cooperation and collaboration

Definition: Promotes cooperation and collaboration between cluster members by facilitating solution-focused consensus building and transparent negotiation, supports partners to collaborate effectively to ensure the response is efficient, effective and has minimal obstacles. Builds on the complementarity of cluster members.



Knowledge areas

- Accountability to Affected Populations principles and approaches
- Effective meeting management techniques
- Humanitarian Development Nexus
- The Humanitarian Programme Cycle



Skills

- **Communication skills** including active listening and public speaking
- Consensus building and conflict management
- Decision-making
- **Interpersonal skills** including negotiation and persuasion
- Meeting management including facilitation
- Technical and operational capacity mapping

2.3 Demonstrates accountability

Definition: Demonstrates accountability to affected populations, partners, the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC), Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) and other relevant stakeholders by operating transparently and with integrity and by taking responsibility for the impacts of their own and their teams' actions. Reduces risk to the affected population and engages and empowers girls, boys, women and men in affected populations to be agents of positive changes, by actively creating meaningful opportunities for their involvement in the response and by establishing mechanisms by which individuals and communities can hold the cluster to account.



Knowledge areas

- Accountability to Affected Populations
- Cluster Coordination Performance Monitoring Guidance
- Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability
- IASC Community-Based Complaint Mechanisms on PSEA



Skills

- **Advocacy skills** including advocacy planning
- **Evidence generation skills** including in needs assessments and creating and using surveys
- **Interpersonal skills** including the ability to have sensitive, challenging and difficult conversations
- **Organizational skills** including prioritization and time management

2.4 Promotes inclusion

Definition: Promotes a positive and inclusive environment in the cluster, in relation to partners, and in their work and interactions with the affected population. Embraces, encourages and supports diversity and addresses the diverse needs and vulnerabilities of the affected population by ensuring centrality of protection, gender, gender-based violence (GBV) risk mitigation, human trafficking risk mitigation, age, disability, and HIV & AIDS considerations are integrated into needs assessments, planning, resource mobilisation, implementation, monitoring and reporting and by supporting other coordination groups and stakeholders to integrate protection into their work and operations.



Knowledge areas

- Definitions, key issues and contextual information related to cross-cutting issues including centrality of protection, gender, gender identity, GBV, anti-human trafficking, age, child protection, disability and HIV & AIDS
- Gender with age marker (GAM)
- Guidance on Strengthening Disability Inclusion in Humanitarian Response Plans
- IASC Gender Handbook for Humanitarian Action
- Minimum Standards for Age and Disability Inclusion in Humanitarian Action



Skills

- **Advocacy skills**
- **Analytical skills** including systematic disaggregation of data by sex, age and disability
- **Communication skills** including influencing and persuasion

3) Functional/technical competencies

3.1 Provides influential and strategic leadership (Strategic planning and vision M004)(Leadership M005)

Definition: Effectively leads the cluster to work collectively towards a common, strategic goal by developing a shared vision based on evidence and providing the leadership to realize it. Harnesses the skills and experience of cluster members and AoR members, encourages active participation and inspires trust and respect amongst partners. Provides leadership to a wide range of stakeholders beyond their immediate team or direct reports.



Knowledge areas

- Contingency planning processes and tools
- Humanitarian Programme Cycle Guidance
- Humanitarian Response Framework process and templates
- Cluster and AoR structures, processes and functions



Skills

- **Communication skills** including active listening, persuasion and influencing
- Consensus building and conflict management
- **Interpersonal skills** including negotiation and the ability to give and receive constructive feedback
- **Leadership skills** including adaptive and influential leadership
- Stakeholder management including networking and partnership building

3.2 Analyses and communicates information

Definition: Coordinates Protection Analysis, maintains accurate records, paying attention to the needs and views of vulnerable persons, and shares information in appropriate and accessible formats with the members and other stakeholders as relevant, encourages a transparent both ways flow of information between partners.



Knowledge areas

- Protection Analysis
- Humanitarian Needs Overview process and templates



Skills

- **Analytical skills** including contextual and situational analysis to inform strategic decision-making.
- **Communication skills** including creating appropriate and accessible written and verbal communications
- **Decision-making skills**
- Safe and ethical management of data (both in storing the data as well as using/communicating the data) including in relation to child protection cases and programs, GBV and PSEA in coordination with GBV coordination groups and other relevant stakeholders

3.3 Supports resource mobilization (Managing resources M006)

Definition: Supports partners to mobilize resources in terms of funding and supplies; facilitates access to sources of funding; quantifies and accurately represents the funding needs of the cluster and the AoRs to others; and promotes critical thinking around cost efficiency.

Knowledge areas

- Humanitarian funding processes and resources including appeals, CERF, Country Based Pooled Funds and the Financial Tracking System
- Relevant global and national funding sources including humanitarian and development funds
- [IASC Guidance: Role of Cluster Coordinators in the consolidated appeal process](#)
- [IASC Guidance: Role of the Humanitarian Coordinator in the consolidated appeal process](#)

Skills

- **Advocacy skills**
- Consensus building and conflict management
- Financial resource mobilization including preparation of effective project proposals and using the protection cluster strategy, Humanitarian Needs Overview and Response Plan to harmonise project proposals
- **Interpersonal skills** including negotiation
- **Organizational skills** including prioritization
- Preparation of effective project proposals
- **Writing skills** including report writing and technical writing

3.4 Advocates for increased protection outcomes

Definition: Advocates for increased protection outcomes by working with partners to define an advocacy strategy aligned with cluster priorities and based on an analysis of protection risks and needs. Networks with advocacy allies and targets to achieve the aims of the advocacy strategy. Influences key stakeholders' decision-making through advocacy, representation and showcasing of partners' work and concerns. Advocates with partners to address gaps in assistance.



Knowledge areas

- HCT Protection Strategy
- Protection Cluster Strategy
- IASC Statement on the Centrality of Protection
- Humanitarian Response Planning
- IASC AAP Framework



Skills

- **Advocacy skills** and techniques, which take into account ethical and safety considerations for the affected populations
- **Analytical skills** including analysis of needs assessment data and statistical interpretation of data
- **Communication skills** including persuasion and influencing
- **Consensus building skills**
- **Interpersonal skills** including negotiation, encouraging collaboration and motivating
- Stakeholder management including analysis and networking

3.5 Monitors the response

Definition: Monitors, evaluates and reports on the coverage, equity, quality and progress of the response against the cluster's strategy, priorities and agreed results and against the evolving situation and needs of the affected population and suggests corrective action when required. Meaningfully involves the affected population in monitoring as appropriate.



Knowledge areas

- Humanitarian Programme Cycle
- Strategic Annual Reviews, lessons learned reviews and Cluster Coordination Performance Monitoring Exercises



Skills

- **Analytical skills**
- **Communication skills** including report writing, persuasion and influencing
- **Interpersonal skills** including negotiation
- **Monitoring and evaluation skills** including the ability to track progress, to undertake Strategic Annual Reviews, Lessons Learned Reviews and Cluster Coordination Performance Monitoring Exercises and to link findings to preparedness and contingency planning
- **Planning and management skills**
- **Risk management skills** including developing a risk analysis/ risk monitoring plan

3.6 Strengthens national and local capacity to respond and lead (M001 Empowering and building trust)

Definition: Supports, strengthens and builds national preparedness and response capacity and lead an effective response by supporting the development of technical and operational capacity of national and local, state and non-state organizations, by working through and engaging with national and sub-national coordination mechanisms when appropriate and by encouraging the active participation of national and local actors in the protection cluster and the AoRs.



Knowledge areas

- Guidance Note on Capacity Strengthening for Localization
- Guidance Note on Humanitarian Financing for Local Actors
- Local and national coordination structures, national emergency response plans and processes
- [IASC Guidance on Strengthening Participation, Representation and Leadership of Local and National Actors in IASC Humanitarian Coordination Mechanisms.pdf](#)



Skills

- **Capacity building skills** including mentoring and coaching skills
- **Communication skills** including influencing and persuasion
- **Interpersonal skills** including negotiation
- **Leadership skills**
- **Meeting management including facilitation skills**
- **Stakeholder engagement skills** including identification and engagement of local civil society and women's groups

Annex 1:

Process of developing this document

Documents reviewed and resources:

- Generic TORs for Cluster Coordinators
- Protection Cluster Coordinators Competencies
- Child Protection Competency Framework (2020)
- Core competencies for GBV specialists (2014)



Global Protection Cluster

