

Lead and Accountability Arrangements for consolidated Clusters

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endorsed by the IASC Principals,
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1. Protection Cluster (integrating Gender-Based Violence, Child Protection, and Mine Action)

Global lead/accountability arrangements and work modalities:

- UNHCR is the global cluster lead agency (CLA) for the Protection Cluster.
- One Protection Cluster means simplified coordination and integrated data management. Technical capacity and expertise related to Child Protection (CP), Gender-Based Violence (GBV), and Mine Action (MA) will be maintained and fully integrated within the Protection Cluster.
- At global level, an Operational Support Team with representation of the CP, GBV and MA agencies (UNICEF, UNFPA, and UNMAS) is established to support the global cluster functions, including field support, information management and advocacy.
- Global Provider of Last Resort (PoLR) responsibilities: UNHCR as global cluster lead agency is the global PoLR for Protection, UNICEF for Child Protection, UNFPA for Gender-Based Violence, and UNMAS for Mine Action. As per the cluster consolidation, PoLR responsibility for specialised responses on CP, GBV, and MA means “to be ready to ensure the provision of services required to fulfill crucial gaps (...) depending on access, security and availability of funding.” Cluster coordination responsibilities remain with the designated lead agency in each country and UNHCR at global level.

Country-level arrangements:

- UNHCR is the global lead agency. At country level, existing CLA arrangements remain in place.¹ HC/HCTs may adjust country-level arrangements as per capacity, predictability, and accountability, in consultation with the global lead agency. Capacity on protection and PoLR responsibilities should be considered. Co-/coordination by local and national actors should also be encouraged and given special consideration. Coordination at subnational level will be determined by presence and capacities.
- The Protection Cluster coordination team will include the cluster coordinator, a co-coordinator, at least one IMO, and resources permitting, representation from the agencies with PoLR responsibilities for CP, GBV and MA.
- The Protection Cluster coordinates the overall protection response. When required due to operational needs, especially at the onset of complex emergencies such as scale-up responses, or proposed by cluster members, local and national actors, thematic protection working groups under the Protection Cluster may continue or be established in response to operational needs identified and proposed by the cluster members, local and national actors, to strengthen or consolidate the operational response. These working groups remain integral parts of the Protection Cluster.

¹ As per the IASC Cluster Coordination Reference Module (2015), “at the country level, in disaster situations or complex emergencies without significant displacement, the three protection-mandated agencies (UNHCR, UNICEF and OHCHR) will consult closely and, under the overall leadership of the RC/HC, agree which agency among the three will assume the role of Cluster Lead Agency for protection.”

- Effective engagement with and participation of local and national actors at all levels will continue to be prioritised, including coordination arrangements with government and/or non-governmental national/local actors wherever feasible, and supporting long-standing system-strengthening efforts and work with line ministries.
- The Protection Cluster coordinator represents the entire protection sector, supported as needed by members of the cluster coordination team and other Cluster members. The Protection Cluster coordinator and the coordination team will ensure visibility of CP, GBV, MA and other protection risks and needs, while at the same time promoting an integrated protection narrative and protection mainstreaming across the response.
- Overall, the coordination and information management systems and tools of the Protection Cluster will be simplified. The cluster would require at least one IMO, with support from agencies with PoLR responsibility as needed.

Proposed next steps for implementation at country level:

- The Protection Cluster and agencies with PoLR responsibility should set up a coordination team, co-locate where possible.
- One consolidated Strategic Advisory Group (SAG) for the cluster should be established, ensuring participation of local and national actors, including community organisations, women-led organisations (WLOs), and persons with disabilities.
- The coordination team should review existing working groups and task teams and agree on the continuation or creation of thematic working groups based on operational needs and partners' inputs (especially local and national partners).
- The Protection cluster should review / update its country strategy.

2. Shelter, Land, and Site Coordination (SLSC) Cluster

Global lead/accountability arrangements and work modalities:

- IFRC and IOM are the global Cluster Lead agencies for the new Global Shelter, Land, and Site Coordination (SLSC) Cluster. IFRC² and IOM are Global Providers of Last Resort (PoLR) for broader SLSC performance, with NRC retaining the Global PoLR role on the Housing, Land and Property (HLP) thematic area.
- This new Global Cluster reflects one integrated global coordination platform bringing together the existing mandates and functions of Shelter, Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) and HLP into a place-based, people-centred model, recognizing that affected people live in diverse settings, camps, informal sites, host communities, urban or rural settlements, and require coherent shelter, land, and site coordination support across these locations. Both Global Lead Agencies are responsible for conflict and disaster contexts without distinction.
- The global structure is designed as one team acting collectively as an inter-agency platform with staffing and expertise drawn from multiple partners, reflecting the comparative and complementary strengths of Shelter, CCCM, and HLP functions. The Global SLSC Cluster leadership and working methods are grounded in the Principles of Partnership. Equality, transparency and complementarity will be upheld notably through an inclusive Strategic Advisory Group (SAG), transparent decision making and shared analysis. The principles of predictability, accountability, and flexibility will be core principles guiding the design and work of the cluster.
- The Cluster will enable accountable and efficient humanitarian responses across its different thematic areas through effective coordination, supporting resource mobilisation efforts, strengthening partner capacities, and ensuring protection is mainstreamed across the diverse operational contexts where it works. The cluster's work will be guided by IASC policies on Accountability to Affected People (AAP), Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA), Prevention of Gender Based Violence (GBV), and the Centrality of Protection.
- The Global SLSC Cluster will provide predictable, principled, and coordinated support to country operations, ensuring technically appropriate operational guidance and tools, consistent information management, access to technical expertise, and two-way engagement with national clusters. The structure will remain intentionally light and flexible, allowing efficiencies and adaptation as partner contributions, operational realities, and donor landscapes evolve.
- At the global level, the merger will take place in a phased manner, with the transition of global leadership expected to be completed by the end of March 2026 and the overall merger process finalised by June 2026, acknowledging that further harmonisation activities are likely to continue throughout 2026.

Country-level arrangements and work modalities:

- In line with the Humanitarian Reset, Humanitarian Coordinators and HCTs will determine the most context-appropriate country-level coordination arrangements. The SLSC Cluster offers a coherent framework that can be merged, adapted, or modularised based on contextual realities. As applied to all national clusters in all contexts, the HCT may activate the SLSC cluster when needed based on needs, operational capacity, and crisis scale.
- Local and national actors, including women-led-organisations, should be co-coordinators by default wherever feasible and aligned with humanitarian principles, with international CLAs supporting and enabling their leadership, including through resourcing, capacity

² This arrangement is consistent with previously agreed general conditions, including those stated in an MoU between IFRC and OCHA in 2006 (section 1.1).

strengthening, risk and decision-making sharing as recommended by [IASC guidance on localisation](#)³. The Global SLSC Cluster will track leadership arrangements and measure actions taken to promote the meaningful participation and leadership of local and national actors.

- As capacities and complexity across operations vary significantly, international NGOs will continue to play a critical role in cluster co-ordination and for supporting the responsible transfer of related responsibilities to local/national civil society actors.
- Sub-national or time-bound thematic working groups may be maintained or created where useful, and transition planning with government and local actors should begin from the outset.
- At country level, leadership will rest with the agency or agencies best placed to do so, based on context, capacity, and available resources. Existing country-level CLA arrangements remain in place for the time being. Any adjustments to CLA arrangements will be determined by HCs and HCTs in line with the Humanitarian Reset and according to contextual needs.

Proposed next steps for implementation at country level:

Global level priorities:

- Develop the cluster's integrated scope, including clarity on thematic visibility across CCCM, Shelter and HLP functions previously delivered under those coordination mechanisms.
- Initiate transition planning with joint SAG arrangements, bringing together Shelter, CCCM, and HLP representatives.
- Align tools, IM systems and guidance to the new structure, ensuring operational data systems capture needs and services across the full range of SLSC functions.
- Provide clear guidance on thematic communication and establish flexible global support modalities including surge and remote support.
- Ensure consistent and coherent communications with partners, donors and authorities on the purpose, value, and structure of the SLSC Cluster, aligned with global guidance.

Country level priorities:

- For HCTs considering cluster mergers, provide a clear menu of coordination models for structuring SLSC functions and sharing high-level narrative on the cluster's integrated scope.
- Support HCTs through any cluster transition and merger processes they may decide to initiate, ensuring continuation of coordination and accountability.

Localisation:

- Strengthen national and local co-ordination by identifying local co-coordinators early and providing predictable support and capacity-strengthening packages.
- Organise orientations for national counterparts on the cluster's approach and structure.

³ IASC Guidance on Strengthening Participation, Representation and Leadership of Local and National Actors in IASC Humanitarian Coordination Mechanisms (2021)

3. Logistics and Telecommunications Cluster

Global lead/accountability arrangements and work modalities:

- WFP will continue to serve as the CLA of the merged Global Logistics and Telecommunications Cluster and will continue to convene and work together with global stakeholders.
- WFP as CLA will continue to meet all relevant IASC requirements, including ensuring:
 - implementation of applicable IASC standards and policy in the areas of logistics and telecommunications support and services;
 - timely support to HCs and HCTs in the areas of logistics and telecommunications services. HCs may reach out to WFP as global CLA for immediate services and advice, prior to activation.
- The Global Logistics and Telecommunications Cluster will continue to include technical leaders to ensure that humanitarian response is in line with global standards for operations.

Country-level Arrangements:

- WFP will continue to serve as the Cluster Lead Agency (CLA) of country-level Logistics and Telecommunications Clusters, wherever possible and in line with HC/HCT requests; and will continue to convene and work together with country-level stakeholders.
- WFP as CLA will continue to meet all relevant IASC requirements, including ensuring that coordination arrangements and architecture at country level maintain the flexibility to deliver the appropriate services depending on the needs and context of the response, in line with HC/HCT requests.
- WFP commits to ensuring the relevant technical expertise as Provider of Last Resort (PoLR) for logistics and telecommunication services, and to provide quality support and coordination to the response.

Proposed next steps for implementation:

- Update and/or issue new guidance that is service focused – including for activation, principles of service provision, and the scope of service provision – with updates to existing cluster and inter cluster guidance, ensuring clarity of roles and accountabilities;
- Support HCs and HCTs in the review of their coordination arrangements and architecture, to align country level structures to the new global Cluster Approach standards as relevant to local context (i.e. merging into single Logistics and Telecommunications Clusters, where required);
- Currently active Logistics Clusters, Telecommunications Clusters, as well as newly activated or merged Logistics and Telecommunications Clusters to be reflected consistently across all HNRPs/Flash Appeals; within a single chapter, together with UNHAS and costed by activity.

4. Transformation of the Global Cluster on Early Recovery

- The Global Cluster on Early Recovery (GCER) will be sunset by the end of 2026.
- As per the tasking of the IASC Deputies Group (DG) in November 2025, consultations are ongoing to determine guidelines on transitions as part of the transformation of the GCER. Discussions have commenced at technical level and are being conducted in consultation with OCHA and the UN Development Coordination Office (DCO).
- Part of these discussions relate to three critical thematic areas: (i) global-level anchoring; (ii) country-level anchoring and ownership, with particular attention to the respective roles of different actors in facilitating transition; and (iii) localisation as a core pillar of the transition process.
- Ultimately, the ambition is to enable both the humanitarian and development systems to collaborate systematically to ensure context-sensitive and responsible transitions that are timebound, sequenced, evidence-informed, and accountable to affected communities, with the purpose of securing sustainable recovery and resilience.