**ASSURANCE QUALITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY (AQA) INITIATIVE**

COMMUNICATIONS AND DISSEMINATION PLAN

SUMMARY

Communication, engagement and dissemination are essential strategic elements for the Assurance Quality and Accountability (AQA) Initiative as it seeks to influence ways of working and build an enabling environment for enhancing quality and accountability in humanitarian response. Implementing effective, collective AQA systems requires the engagement and buy-in of a wide range of stakeholders, at both the national and global level. To support this, the communication plan aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. **Raise awareness** to maximise reach and impact by sharing approaches and tools widely with potential users.
2. **Build engagement** to ensure the technical quality and relevance of the AQA Initiative by learning from the experience of key WASH stakeholders and allied initiatives.
3. **Support uptake** by providing specific and targeted support to National WASH Clusters to adapt and test guidance and tools in their context, addressing issues as they arise.
4. **Share learning** about the methodology, results and lessons learned to contribute to the overall humanitarian evidence base.

This document presents a summary of the planning to meet these objectives. Specific approaches, channels, materials and messages will need to be adapted based on feedback and experience, to ensure they are effective and relevant to the target groups identified.

INDICATIVE WORKPLAN

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|  | **Q1** | **Q2** | **Q3** | **Q4** | **Q5** | **Q6** |
| Marketing  Raise awareness |  | NWCC WORKSHOP | WEBINARS |  |  |  |
| Chat  Build engagement | GLOBAL STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOPS |  | REGULAR TWG CALLS |  |  |  |
| Plant  Support uptake |  |  | SUPPORT VISITS | REMOTE SUPPORT |  |  |
| Teacher  Share learning |  | DATA COLLECTION | REGULAR BLOG, WEBSITE AND EMAIL UPDATES |  |  | WEBINARS & PRESENTATIONS  PUBLICATION |

TARGET AUDIENCE SEGMENTS

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| SEGMENT | DESCRIPTION | EXAMPLES |
| Users | People who would be involved in the implementation of the AQA Initiative | National WASH Clusters:  Coordinators, IMO, Partners  National Government Authorities |
| Influencers | People who can promote uptake | WASH Donors  UNICEF Country, Regional Office  GWC CAST, FST  GWC Partner Advisors (WASH, MEAL)  OCHA |
| Allies | Organisations or projects with shared goals or interests | Aligned GWC Roadmap initiatives  Cross-cutting specialists  Humanitarian Standards Partnership  Research, policy networks (ALNAP)  MEAL units within partner agencies  Other global clusters |
| Advisors | People who can provide relevant expertise, experience | MEAL Specialists  REACH  Joint Monitoring Programme  Ground Truth Solutions, 60 Decibels  Academic partners (Tufts, LSHTM) |

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| **Marketing** | RAISE AWARENESS |
| **Objective** | Maximise reach and impact of the AQA Initiative by sharing approaches and tools widely with potential users |
| **Audiences** | **Primary:**  National WASH Cluster / Sector Coordinators (NWCC)  Information Management Officers (IMO)  National WASH Cluster Partners (WASH Coordination level staff)  **Others:**  UNICEF Country and Regional Offices (WASH Specialists)  National / Regional AQA champions’ (including Field Support Team) |
| **Channels** | GWC Partners and NWCC email lists  Global WASH Cluster’s website (for initiative updates)  GWC Coordination Toolkit (for sharing guidance and tools)  NWCCs workshop  Bilateral NWC Partners meetings  GWC Trainings |
| **Materials** | Two-page introduction and toolkit summaries  Introductory presentation (problem statement, aims, approach and tools)  GWC Website landing page  Video / animation (3-minute explainer) |
| **External resources** | Communications specialist (project-based)  Videographer / animator  Translation (FR, EN, SP, AR) |
| **Approach** | Communications aimed at raising awareness of the project will be directed at potential users and key influencers with the aim of promoting further engagement and building demand. It is an important first step in supporting uptake. Messages will be kept simple and focussed on the potential value that working with the AQA Initiative can bring to existing workflows.  It is important to ensure that the AQA Initiative is included in existing communications and support provided by the GWC – integration with the CTK, GWC trainings and awareness amongst the FST is key.  Regional introductory webinars for coordination teams and partners hosted by UNICEF regional offices will be combined with short animations and presentations that can be accessed at any time through the GWC website. More detailed resources, including the main AQA guidance and toolkit will be hosted on the CTK.  The NWCC’s workshop, hosted by GWC CAST, will be an important opportunity for raising awareness with Cluster Coordinators and Information Management staff in person.  As awareness is achieved, emphasis will shift to supporting uptake. |

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| **Chat** | BUILD ENGAGEMENT |
| **Objective** | Ensure the technical quality and relevance of the AQA Initiative by learning from the experience of key WASH stakeholders and allied initiatives |
| **Audiences** | **Primary:**  Global WASH Advisors  Cross-cutting specialists (inclusion, gender, sustainability, protection, AAP…)  Academia  GWC Field Support Team (FST)  **Others:**  UNICEF Country and Regional Offices (WASH Specialists)  National and regional influencers, quality and accountability champions |
| **Channels** | AQA Initiative Technical Working Group  AQA Initiative Stakeholder workshops  Networks and communities of practice (ALNAP, CHS Alliance)  GWC Partners email lists  Global WASH Cluster Website (for initiative updates)  Sector forums and events (UNC, EEHF, WEDEC) |
| **Materials** | 2 Page introduction and toolkit summaries  Technical briefing notes  Introductory slide deck (problem statement, aims, approach and tools)  GWC Website AQA Initiative TWG page  Feedback survey |
| **External resources** | Translation (FR, EN, ES, AR) |
| **Approach** | As an initiative undertaken on behalf of the Global WASH Cluster, it is important that the approaches, tools and guidance reflect the priorities, expectations and best practice of the collective. Building engagement with this diverse stakeholder group will require a mix of channels to ensure broad participation in the initiative.  The AQA Initiative TWiG will be the main communications channel to engage with GWC stakeholders. Current participation is drawn from UN, NGO and academic groups. Monthly calls will be held with the TWG to provide updates and to create opportunities for experience sharing and input to strategic direction. Meeting minutes, presentations and other resources will be shared through the GWC TWiG webpage.  Opportunities for more involved engagement will be created through global 2-day face-to-face workshops to share updates, set priorities and agree course corrections.  Representation from the AQA Initiative team at WASH Sector Events will provide additional opportunities to learn from aligned initiatives.  Feedback and endorsement from the TWiG and the SAG for all major AQA Initiative outputs will be sought prior to finalisation. |
| **Plant** | SUPPORT UPTAKE |
| **Objective** | Provide specific and targeted support to National WASH Clusters to adapt and test guidance and tools in their context, address issues as they arise |
| **Audiences** | **Primary:**  National WASH Cluster / Sector Coordinators (NWCC)  Information Management Officers (IMO)  National WASH Cluster Partners (WASH Coordination level staff)  **Others:**  UNICEF Country and Regional Offices (WASH Specialists)  National / regional Q&A ‘champions’ (including Field Support Team) |
| **Channels** | Support to National WASH Clusters (remote and in-person)  National WASH Cluster Training  In person support visits  Remote support  GWC Helpdesk |
| **Materials** | Guidance note and summary  Toolkit and summary  Training modules (Slide deck, facilitator notes, handouts) |
| **External resources** | Translation (EN, FR, ES, AR) |
| **Approach** | Supporting uptake of the AQA Initiative approach among National WASH Clusters is the primary goal of the initiative. Countries will be selected based on GWC prioritisation criteria and demonstrated interest to be involved in, and contribute to, the AQA. Support will be provided initially through a remote on-boarding process involving 1-to-1 briefings with NHWCP coordinators, wider briefings with partners and setting of terms of reference for support.  Support will be tailored to each context to ensure that it contribute to, and fits within the constraints of, the targeted NHWCP. The AQA Initiative will be able to carry out an initial mapping of data tools, collection approaches, and will provide suggestions for improvement in line with the guidance and analytical framework. In some cases, support may focus on analysis of data that is already available in country.  Where good practice is identified from NHCWP ways of working, these will be captured and shared across coordination platforms.  In ten priority countries, field visits will be made to provide in-person support, through facilitation of trainings for partners and coordination staff. This will also be an opportunity for the AQA Initiative team to ‘ground truth’ the information being collected by visiting field sites and understanding in more detail the constraints for data collection. |

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| **Teacher** | SHARE LEARNING |
| **Objective** | Ensure methodology, results and lessons learned are shared widely to contribute to the overall humanitarian WASH evidence base |
| **Audiences** | GWC Partner advisors  WASH Donors  Academia |
| **Channels** | Sector forums and events (UNC, EEHF, WEDC)  Webinars  GWC Website and email list  Oxfam / SI Blogs  Networks and communities of practice  Journal  Lessons learned workshops |
| **Materials** | Baseline, midline and endline reports  Case studies report  Blog content (quarterly)  Invited article / poster (methods and evaluation results)  Presentation materials |
| **External resources** | Communications specialist (project-based)  Translation (EN, FR, ES, AR)  Academic partner |
| **Approach** | The scope of the AQA Initiative extends beyond use in national humanitarian WASH coordination platforms. Dissemination of the approach developed, as well as learning from the process, has application across both humanitarian programming and coordination. Generation and diffusion of knowledge and evidence for quality assurance and accountability systems across other contexts is a key objective.  Working with an academic partner, the AQA initiative will carry out baseline, intermediate and final reviews of the use of AQA tools and approaches in NHWCPs. These reviews will seek to understand what data is being collected, how it is analysed, shared and ultimately used in decision making. NHWCP partners will be interviewed to understand where the AQA Initiative can deliver value and address pain points.  Monitoring the progress of the AQA Initiative will be focussed on capturing successes, challenges and lessons learned using a combination of quantitative metrics, qualitative approaches and case studies. This information will be used as the basis of efforts to share learning from the initiative widely, to support uptake in different sectors, to contribute to an enabling environment for quality, and to advocate for addressing systemic barriers to quality and accountability throughout the humanitarian system.  Dissemination channels will include presentations at key sector forums and events, as well as contributing to cross-sector networks and communities of practice. A final evaluation and lessons learned report will be submitted for publication at the end of the project. |

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND DISSEMINATION ACTIVITIES

**1) Make it EASY**

* **Provide guidance that is short, simple and applicable to a broad range of contexts.** Reduce the time needed for reading (produce a summary document). Minimise the need to refer to different documents. Limit the need to adapt the tools to work with each context.
* **Limit the hassle factor.** Make it clear to users what the next steps are and follow up with support to adapt tools and approaches during the early stages of implementation.
* **Leverage the donors’ influence.** Work with donors to streamline reporting requirements.
* **Integrate aspects of AQA into existing templates to make recommended approaches the default.** Adapt the templates and guidance provided on the Coordination Toolkit to set up the foundations for implementing AQA (standard indicator sets, monitoring frameworks).
* **Simplify key messaging.** Break down complex goals into simple, easy actions and identify quick wins. Make sure AQA, CAST, FST and UNICEF are using consistent messaging around quality and accountability with clusters.

**2) Make it ATTRACTIVE**

* **Identify and alleviate pain points.** Frame AQA as a tool to help reduce reporting burden by making data collection, analysis and sharing more efficient. Ensure that AQA contributes to reducing workload involved in the HPC rather than being another parallel process.
* **Highlight opportunities to add value:** Frame AQA as a tool to highlight the work of the WASH cluster to donors, inter-cluster groups and others (e.g., improved quality assurance should lead to greater confidence amongst donors to effectively prioritise funding – potentially improving the resourcing of WASH gaps.)
* **Provide incentives (global):** Prioritise countries showing progress implementing AQA for additional support from FST. Link quality gaps identified with specific technical support.
* **Provide incentives (in-country):** Link support of AQA to humanitarian pooled funding. Provide capacity building for partner staff.

**3) Make it SOCIAL**

* **Build expectations:** Make sure AQA is raised during country support calls, visits and in GWC communications.
* **Monitor and demonstrate uptake:** Global dashboard showing progress of implementation on the GWC website.
* **Showcase good practice:** Experience sharing – highlighting good practice.
* **Set country-specific plans, get commitment**: from partners 🡪 coordinators 🡪 GWC and hold accountable.
* **Create attractive templates and formats** that coordinators can be proud of: Showcase the work of the NHWCP & partners and demonstrate that the WASH Cluster is leading.
* **Engage with stakeholders at different levels**: get support from HQ level teams to support AQA roll out.

**4) Make it TIMELY**

* **Prompt for change at the right time:** Recognise that changes to strategic processes can only happen at specific ‘decision points’ during the HPC and prompt / nudge change at appropriate times during the programme cycle.
* **Plan for problems:** Provide support to pre-empt problems that might occur later.
* **Capacity building:** Ensure AQA becomes a part of pre-mission briefing for WCCs.
* **Avoid over-burdening:** Schedule support visits outside periods when NHWCPs are particularly busy (HNO / HRP).