DEVELOPING A WASH STRATEGIC OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK

08

Fall

ACRONYMS

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| AAP | Accountability to Affected Populations |
| GWC | Global WASH Cluster |
| HNO | Humanitarian Needs Overview |
| HPC | Humanitarian Programme Cycle |
| HRP | Humanitarian Response Plan |
| M&E | Monitoring & Evaluation |
| PiN | People in Need |
| AQA | Accountability and Quality Assurance |
| RRP | Refugee Response Plan |
| SAG | Strategic Advisory Group |
| SOF | Strategic Operational Framework |
| ToR | Terms of Reference |
| TWG | Technical Working Group |
| WoW | Ways of Working |

AUDIENCE & PURPOSE

This guidance is designed to be used by WASH Coordination Platforms to support the development and updating of a Strategic Operational Framework (SOF). The SOF complements the WASH Operational Response Plan by providing details on how the WASH response should be implemented and monitored. This document is intended to be used by all stakeholders contributing to a WASH Coordination Platform, including programme, coordination and monitoring staff working with the cluster lead agency and partners.

While it builds upon and updates previous GWC guidance, it should be considered complementary to:

* National standards and systems set up by authorities in the country of response
* [The Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS)](https://corehumanitarianstandard.org/)
* [The Sphere Handbook](https://spherestandards.org/handbook-2018/)
* [IASC Humanitarian Programme Cycle Guidance](https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/programme-cycle/space)
* [IASC Cluster Coordination Reference Module](https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/coordination/clusters/document/iasc-reference-module-cluster-coordination-country-level-0)
* [Global WASH Cluster Coordination Toolkit](http://washcluster.net/resources/ctk)

**Note:** In this document, the terms ‘cluster’ and ‘coordination platform’ are used interchangeably.

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# INTRODUCTION

This document provides an overview of the main steps involved in the development of a Strategic Operational Framework (SOF). **It should be read alongside:**

* The [**SOF indicative template**](#_ANNEX_1:_SOF) (Annex 1) which summarises key sections and reference documents;
* Complementary guidance on the [**GWC Coordination Toolkit**](https://washcluster.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/CTK/overview)**,** which provides detailed tools, guidance and examples for coordination and information management.

The steps set out the sequence of activities to be implemented, whether for the preparation of a new SOF or adjustments to an existing one.

WHAT IS A STRATEGIC OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK?

The WASH SOF is a document that is developed collectively to define operational details about how the WASH response is planned, coordinated, implemented and monitored in order to achieve its strategic objectives. It provides the basis of the collective approach of the coordination system and creates the foundation for mutual accountability between partners. It also defines key standards for quality and accountability against which the response performance will be monitored.

The SOF is:

* ***strategic***: it elaborates the cluster strategy as set out in the humanitarian response plan;
* ***operational***: it describes in practical, functional terms how the cluster plans to operate and achieve its objectives;
* a ***framework***: it provides structure for coherence while allowing partners flexibility to work to their capacities and adapt to meet changing needs.

The SOF is a collectively owned document and its effectiveness relies on achieving wide buy-in from partners. Development of a SOF is not a formal requirement of the Humanitarian Programme Cycle (HPC), it is a document specific to WASH Clusters (although similar approaches may be used in other sectors). However, it should align with and complement the information in the Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO), Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) and other strategic documents (e.g. Refugee Response Plans (RRP) or sectoral strategies[[1]](#footnote-2)).

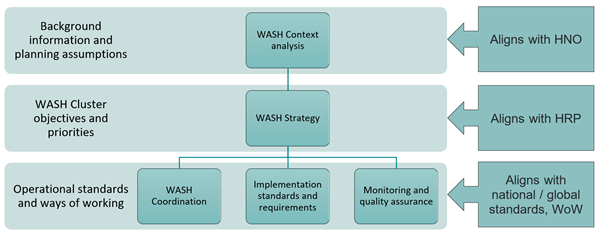
The contents of the SOF should reflect the ‘6+1 Core Functions’ of clusters[[2]](#footnote-3):

1. Supporting service delivery;
2. Informing the Humanitarian Coordinator’s (HC) or Humanitarian Country Team’s (HCT) decision-making;
3. Planning and implementing cluster strategies;
4. Monitoring and evaluating performance;
5. Building national capacity in preparedness and contingency planning;
6. Supporting robust advocacy; and
7. Ensuring accountability to the affected population (AAP).

The length and contents of the SOF will depend on the context and should evolve to meet the changing needs of the response, becoming more comprehensive as additional knowledge and understanding about the context and response requirements become available. The

Figure 1 below outlines the SOF structure and highlights links with other documents.

Figure 1: SOF Document structure



PRINCIPLES

The SOF is a document that sets out the current collective understanding of the WASH operational context, minimum technical and cross cutting standards and the approaches that are planned to effectively achieve cluster objectives.

It summarises the existing information, agreements and standards used by the cluster, which should be based on standards, evidence and examples from good practice from the national and global levels.

The SOF should be a collective document that is regularly updated to reflect changes in context, it must be developed collaboratively so that all partners can commit to work in compliance with it.

Information gaps should be identified and filled based on existing secondary sources where possible (global standards, approaches, good practice and specialist capacity in country).

The SOF is also an important positioning document that can be used to communicate a collective stance on potentially contentious key issues to external audiences. For example, highlighting where a lack of resources will result in minimum response standards not being met, or where access restrictions or national policies constrain the achievement of outcomes. This should then underpin the cluster advocacy strategy.

PROCESS, ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Sections of the SOF should be prepared by the WASH Cluster Coordinator and an inclusive SOF working group, in close collaboration with the Strategic Advisory Group (SAG) and relevant national government and local authorities’ counterparts to ensure the process is transparent and the final document widely accepted. Wherever possible, it is advised to seek the endorsement of the SOF by the government before it is finalised. This helps to ensure that partners follow SOF recommendations and supports a smooth transition from emergency to post-emergency arrangements i.e. from cluster-led to sectoral-led coordination.

Much of the content of the SOF will be produced through the normal process of coordination, for example: technical working groups, needs assessments, analysis reports and information from different clusters. Specifically, strategic decisions and guidance from Technical Working Groups (TWG) should be added to the SOF as they are finalised and validated by the SAG and/or Government focal point.

The SOF development and revision process involves the following steps:

1. **Prepare:** Introduce the process and form a SOF working group;
2. **Review existing information:** Identify what information is required by reviewing the SOF template (Annex 1), collate and review available information, identify what should be included in the SOF based on relevance and collective agreement;
3. **Address information gaps:** Identify gaps in information, standards and agreed ways of working and prioritise what should be addressed before finalising the document and what can be added later;
4. **Draft, validate and share:**  Draft the first version of the SOF based on the summary proposed in annex through the SOF working group, share it to the SAG for review, revise and validate the document and disseminate the document and ensure that partners are briefed on its content;
5. **Review and update:** The SOF should be revised to adapt to changing context and response priorities and should adapt to reflect the phase of the emergency.

ACCOUNTABILITY AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

The Global WASH Cluster recommends that all national humanitarian WASH Coordination Platforms put in place a process for monitoring against standards for quality and accountability. The SOF presents the key standards and indicators that will be used for monitoring quality and accountability in a given context. These standards and indicators are collectively defined as part of the process set out below. The collective process of standards setting is an important part of building accountability between partners and to the affected population.

Maintaining quality and accountability requires monitoring systems that track key outcomes, perceptions and processes over time. These systems provide a way to monitor a WASH response against jointly agreed, contextually relevant framework of quality and accountability standards that integrate recognised national and international frameworks.

The Accountability and Quality Assurance (AQA) Initiative provides the approaches and tools to develop these systems to bring the voices of those affected by the crisis to the conversation. For more detailed information on [Accountability and Quality Assurance](https://washcluster.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/CTK/pages/10782135/Quality+assurance+system?preview=/10782135/922157085/2020%20GWC%20QAAS%20Modular%20Analytical%20Framework.pdf), refer to the [Guidance Note](https://washcluster.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/CTK/pages/10782135/Quality+assurance+system?preview=/10782135/922288157/2020%20GWC%20QAAS%20Guidance.pdf) and [Modular Analytical Framework](https://washcluster.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/CTK/pages/10782135/Quality+assurance+system?preview=/10782135/922157085/2020%20GWC%20QAAS%20Modular%20Analytical%20Framework.pdf).

Box 1: Accountability and Quality Assurance

ACCOUNTABILITY AND QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESS

The process developed by the Accountability and Quality Assurance Initiative focus on small, achievable actions that clusters can put in place step by step.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **1. DEFINE:** Collectively DEFINE standards, objectives and approaches. The modular analytical framework is used to set Key Quality Indicators (KQI) and benchmarks appropriate to the context. The timing, approach and roles for data collection, reporting and analysis are defined. |  |
| **2. MEASURE** against these indicators using available data. KQIs are continuously monitored. Data is regularly reported to the coordination platform for collation and production of the quality snapshot. |
| **3. ADAPT:** WASH Cluster partners jointly analyse the information in the quality snapshot, develop action plans based on the quality gaps identified and ADAPT programmes to mitigate risks and continuously improve. | **4. LEARN:** Trends, monitoring data and action plans are periodically reviewed and LESSONS LEARNED are documented. Definition documents are revised to ensure they are appropriate to the context and response objectives. |

Box 2: Accountability and Quality Assurance Process

TIMING

The development or revision of the SOF may be carried out at any time, but it is recommended to align this with the HPC to ensure that the SOF reflects the most recent understanding of needs and the WASH operational response plan in the HRP.

**Sudden onset and rapid escalation**

In sudden onset emergencies or during a rapid escalation of an existing crisis an initial SOF should be developed based on the information available in the first 30 days of the response. At this stage the SOF will be a lightweight document based on key globally agreed standards with contextualisation as is possible, supported by evidence from previous responses (see [the ‘Philippine Haiyan SOF](https://washcluster.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/CTK/pages/10782377/WASH+SOF?preview=/10782377/10783321/2013%20WC%20Philipine%20Haiyan%20SOF%20complete.pdf)’ for an example of lightweight SOF). Depending on the evolving context, it is likely that the SOF will need to be reviewed and revised within the first 9-12 months as more information becomes available. For countries working in line with the Accountability and Quality Assurance process (Box 2), the SOF development and revision steps should be aligned with the *DEFINE* and *LEARN* steps as outlined in the below figure.

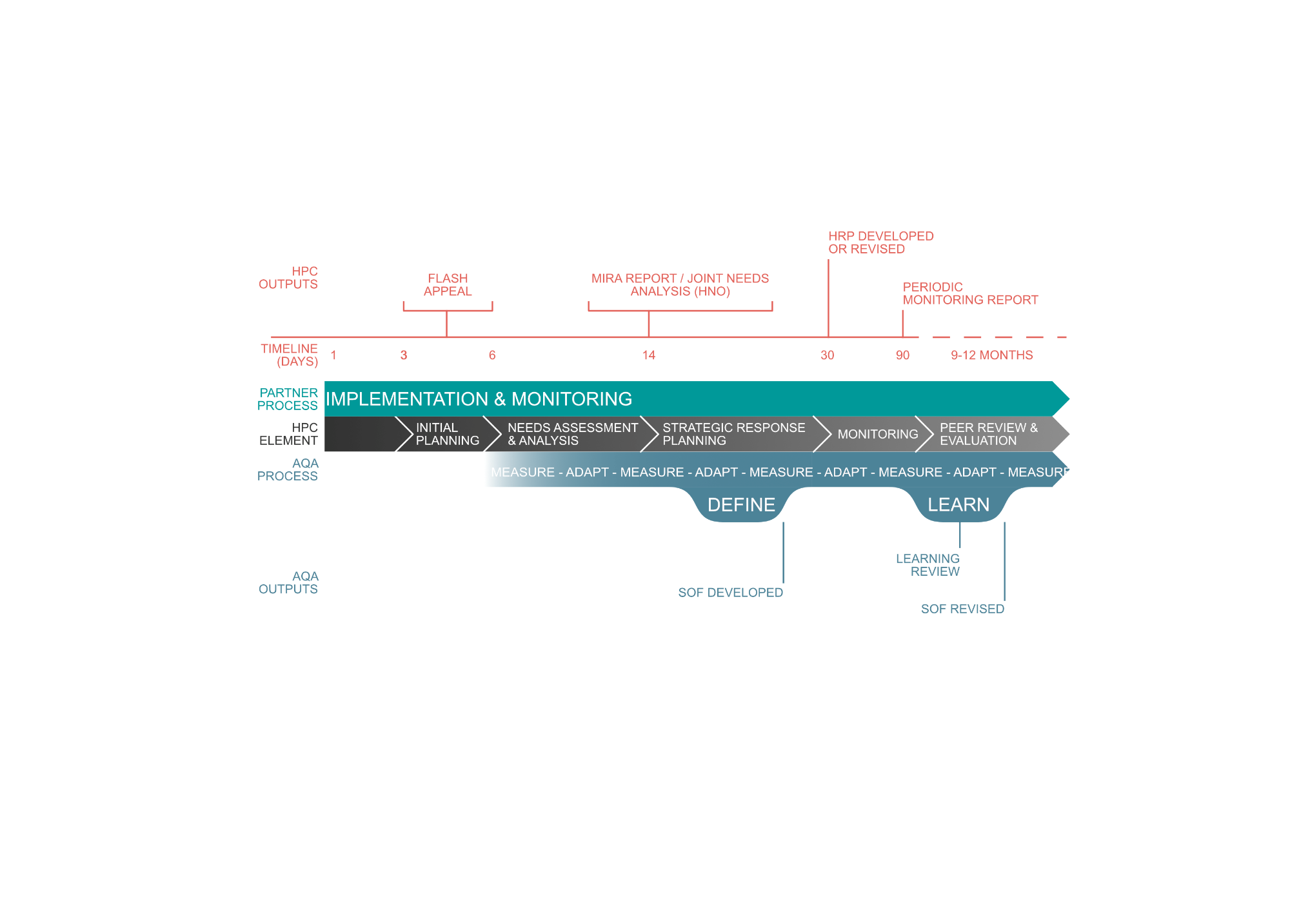


Figure 2: Timeline for SOF development in rapid onset emergencies

**Protracted emergencies**

In protracted emergencies working within an annual or multi-year HPC updates to the SOF may be carried out at any time, however, it is recommended that this happens shortly following the finalisation of the HRP. This timing is designed to allow WASH Clusters to carry out activities outside periods with significant workloads related to HPC processes while ensuring that the SOF is aligned closely with the strategic objectives and priorities set out in the HRP. The SOF development and revision steps should be aligned with the Accountability and Quality Assurance process *DEFINE* and *LEARN* steps as outlined in the below figure.

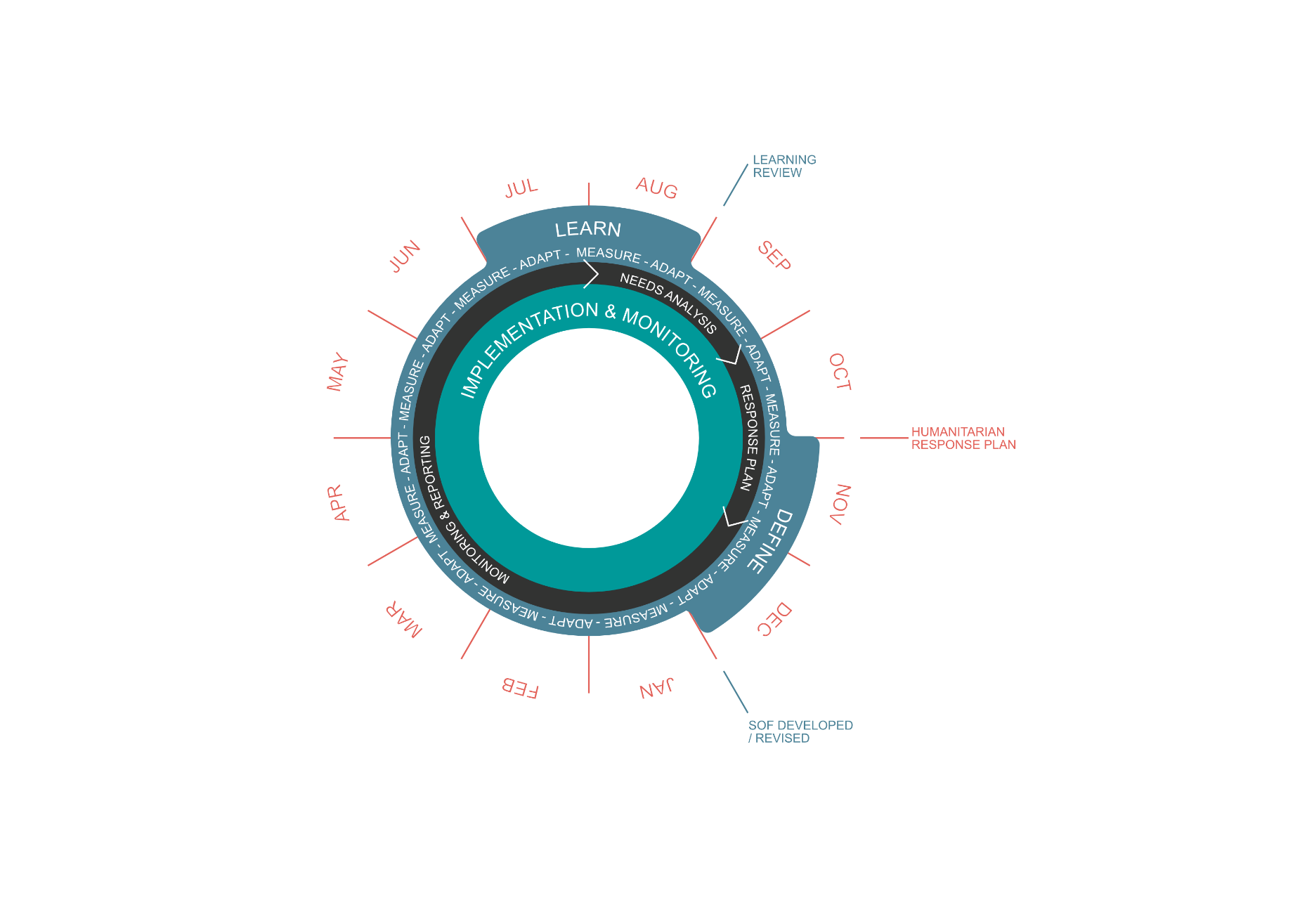


Figure 3: Timeline for SOF development in protracted emergencies

While the SOF should be updated to reflect changes to the context or response and to continue to be aligned to agreed standards and good practice, much of the content may remain constant over time. This makes the SOF a useful reference document for guiding and updating strategic decisions and ensuring that stakeholders have a common understanding of priorities, standards and expectations.

USES FOR THE SOF

The SOF should be the primary reference document that sets a common understanding of the national and crisis context, the objectives, approaches and standards of the WASH response, and the functioning of the coordination platform. The document can be used as the primary reference for:

* Briefing new partner staff, visiting specialists and external audiences
* Communicating with the representatives of the beneficiaries
* Ensuring partner programmes are designed in line with the wider cluster strategy
* Developing strategies for pooled funding and guidance for donors
* Setting up assessment, monitoring and evaluation systems that track core indicators
* Developing an accountability and quality assurance system
* As a basis for advocacy at the sector level to support funding activities or transitioning from a cluster-led to a sector-led approach
* A national communications strategy to promote the agreed approaches and information exchange.

Where relevant, plan for the translation to local languages of various surveys, documents and reports produced during strategy development as well as the SOF document itself; this is especially important for ensuring national and local participation and consultation.

# STEP BY STEP

STEP 1: PREPARE

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Step | Details |
| What?  Introduce the SOF process and establish a working group  Who?  WASH Cluster group and key stakeholders (i.e., National authorities) | Brief partners and key stakeholders on the process and rationale for SOF development / revision.  Convene a working group who will develop / revise the SOF, balancing the need for representative and inclusive participation and engagement with a streamlined approach and the need to ensure an appropriate range of local knowledge.  Engage and consult with local and national government authorities on the process[[3]](#footnote-4).  Create a SOF work plan, building in opportunities for the wider cluster to feed in and validate drafts.  **Key resources**   * SOF Partner briefing slide deck * SOF WG Terms of reference * SOF Work plan |
| What?  Consult exiting SOF support materials  Who?  SOF Working group | Review the available tools in the GWC Coordination Toolkit  Reach out to the GWC helpdesk for additional support  **Key resources**   * [GWC Coordination Toolkit](https://washcluster.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/CTK/overview?homepageId=11010109) * [GWC helpdesk](https://washcluster.net/contact/help_desk) * [GWC Partner Briefing pack](https://agora.unicef.org/course/info.php?id=22347) on Humanitarian Coordination |

If partners are to be expected to work in alignment with the SOF, it must be developed collaboratively with their input and buy-in. This starts by briefing cluster partners on the process and rationale underlying the SOF and establishing a working group who are given the responsibility to draft the document before it is validated and finalised.

Cluster partners will have a key role to play in strategy development. Early in the planning process, it is important to present the SOF process to partners and to collectively agree the timeframe, steps and the different levels of involvement, including who will contribute information, time and who will validate the draft document.

While all partners will be involved in the process and will be expected to work in alignment with the standards and ways of working set out, the work of collating information, drafting and revising the document should be assigned to a small task group. This may be an existing group (such as the SAG or an existing TWG) or it may be a time, and task, specific group set up for the SOF development process. Balancing the need for a small and effective team who can work efficiently together with the need to produce an end product that has the buy-in of all partners is key.

When considering the composition of the working group, consider:

* The level of experience of different international and local partners, the capacity and motivation to dedicate to the process;
* The gender balance, inclusion and diversity in the SOF WG, as well as sensitivity to conflict and other crisis-related dynamics;
* It might be useful to invite specialists from other sectors to support sector and cross-sector issues (gender, age, disability, AAP, etc.).

Membership will need to be defined contextually, but will typically be between 5-10 members with representation from the government and key national authorities (if appropriate), Cluster Lead Agencies (CLAs), international and national actors.

When working on the SOF process and work plan, consider:

* Keeping the process as light as possible in the context, it is better to develop the SOF rapidly and review as needed;
* Be sure to clearly outline in a Terms of Reference the objectives, activities, responsibilities, and membership composition of the SOF Working Group;
* Ensuring that the final product will be concise, relevant and usable by all intended stakeholders;
* Ensuring that the final product has the buy-in and ownership from all partners.
* Ensuring participation of government, national and development actors in the SOF development/review process will help ensure representation from local experts and support transition to longer-term strategies and leads to transition from cluster-led to sectoral-led coordination when appropriate.

SUPPORT FROM THE GWC

The GWC provides resources that support national WASH Clusters, through [the Coordination Toolkit (CTK)](https://washcluster.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/CTK/overview?homepageId=11010109). You can also reach out to the [GWC Helpdesk](https://washcluster.net/contact/help_desk) to request additional support during the SOF development process. In-country resources may also be available from OCHA (such as Humanitarian Data Exchange (HDX), Common Operational Datasets (COD)).

STEP 2: REVIEW EXISTING INFORMATION

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Actions | Considerations |
| What?  Review existing documents and information  Who?  SOF Working group | Use existing national standards as the primary reference, where adjustments need to be made to contextualise national standards, these should be stated and justified.  Collect information from WASH Cluster partners, third party monitors and secondary sources to provide an overview of what is known about the impact of the crisis on the affected population.  Highlight differences in needs, risks and vulnerabilities between difference groups and individuals (e.g. across status (refugee, host community, IDP) age, gender and disability dimension).  **Key resources:**   * National emergency management guidelines * National WASH sector / development standards * Global Standards (SPHERE, Core Humanitarian Standards, UNHCR Standards, etc.) * Accountability and Quality Assurance Framework * Joint Monitoring Programme * Partner / 3rd party assessments (REACH, IOM DTM), MICS * Gender / safety audit, WASH GBV Checklists * Accessibility audits * [UN Statistics Division](https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic-social/sconcerns/disability/statistics/#/home): Database for disability statistics at national level. * Protection working group * Market assessments, monitoring * Humanitarian Data Exchange (HDX), OCHA Common Operational Datasets (COD) * [CTK: Secondary Data Review](https://washcluster.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/CTK/pages/10788869/Secondary+Data+Review) * <https://www.crisisgroup.org/> for political / conflict crisis analysis * <http://www.fao.org/aquastat/en/geospatial-information/maps> for information on water resources situation * <https://www.plateformecholera.info/> for information on cholera in Africa and MENA * <https://www.who.int/data/gho> for global health observatory for data on health risks and epidemics * <https://www.fsinplatform.org/global-report-food-crises-2020> for information on food crisis |
| What?  Collect information on partner capacity and status of ongoing response ways of working (approaches and activities)  Who?  SOF Working group | Collect information on partner capacity: current geographical distribution of partners, capacity of partners to scale up in case of escalation, access to affected areas, and capacity for remote management.  Collect information on the status of the on-going response, e.g.:   * The type of WASH approaches that are being implemented, and what is known about how effective, inclusive and appropriate they are * What good practices have been identified? Are there lessons that can be learned from other responses? * Management of contingency stocks and their accessibility, existence of contingency plans at the intercluster level and the role of the WASH Cluster within them * Level and prioritisation of financial resourcing now compared to requirements, how is this likely to change?   **Key resources**   * [3/4/5Ws](https://washcluster.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/CTK/pages/10788130/Activity+reporting+tool+W-matrix) * [Partner capacity survey / mapping](https://washcluster.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/CTK/pages/10788590/WASH+capacity+mapping) * [Intercluster contingency and preparedness plan](https://washcluster.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/CTK/pages/10782677/Preparedness) |
| What?  Review cluster strategy and identify key inter-sectoral linkages  Who?  SOF Working group | Extract key information from the cluster strategy:   * What are the planning assumptions for people Affected / PIN / Targeted? * Identify key cross-cutting issues and seek input from thematic specialists (e.g. gender, GBV risk mitigation, protection, disability, inclusion)   **Key resources**   * HNO /HRP * WASH Severity Index and PIN * [WASH Disability Checklist Guidance Including children with disabilities in humanitarian action](https://sites.unicef.org/disability/emergencies/wash.html) * [UNICEF Good Practices in the provision of Accessible and Inclusive WASH services](https://www.unicef.org/documents/good-practices-provision-accessible-and-inclusive-wash-services) * [Humanitarian inclusion standards for older people and people with disabilities](https://reliefweb.int/report/world/humanitarian-inclusion-standards-older-people-and-people-disabilities) (2018). See the section on WASH * [UNICEF Help Desk GBViE Safety Audits: A How-To Guide:](http://www.sddirect.org.uk/media/1556/unicef-helpdesk-rapid-programme-support-safety-audits-v2.pdf) * [Tip Sheet: Consulting Women and Girls:](https://gbvguidelines.org/en/documents/tip-sheet-consulting-with-women-and-girls/) * [WASH GBV Checklist - Shelter:](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1_7T1pMCnoGwVnf85qGZhDNDh6Tg9BCtB/view?usp=sharing) * [WASH GBV Checklist – Communities:](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1xD9EIYUp9CJ2a0BA-DFPIyxZV7aWA3e0/view?usp=sharing) * [GBV risk mitigation into Global WASH cluster](https://unicef.libsyn.com/unicef-gbvie-podcast-episode-15-gbv-risk-mitigation-into-global-wash-cluster) * [GBV risk mitigation into WASH COVID-19 response](https://unicef.libsyn.com/episode-2-gbv-risk-mitigation-in-wash-programming-for-covid-19-pandemic-1) * [Availability, Acceptability, Accessibility and Quality Framework](https://gbvguidelines.org/en/documents/availability-accessibility-acceptability-and-quality-framework-a-tool-to-identify-potential-barriers-in-accessing-services-in-humanitarian-settings/) |
| What?  Identify existing community feedback and response mechanisms  Who?  SOF Working group | Identify existing community feedback and response mechanisms provided by organisations, by AAP working groups, by PSEA coordinator, by the CCCM or at the cluster / inter-cluster level.  Agree how alerts and referrals from CFRM will be communicated to partners for action, and how these will be monitored to check issues are resolved.  **Key resources**   * <https://womenindisplacement.org/index.php/toolkit> * UNICEF AAP Handbook |

Much of the information required to be included in the SOF is likely to already be available at the cluster level and/or with partners. Use the *SOF template* in Annex 1 to identify what is already known and where this information is stored. If possible, a quick evaluation of information management processes efficiency for informing the response design, planning and monitoring should be conducted. If not, it should be conducted during the SOF reviews. Information gaps should also be identified, and plans made to fill these either as part of the SOF development process or at a later date. Where existing documents have been produced by the WASH cluster or by other clusters, include a summary of findings in the SOF and link to the resources for more in-depth information.

The general types of information that are required are:

* Secondary information from assessment, monitoring and evaluation reports that relate directly to what is known about the context and response (e.g. location and status of the affected population, information about access to WASH services);
* Planning assumptions that reflect the collective ‘best guess’ about what is not, or cannot, be known exactly (e.g. assumptions about how long people will remain in camps or how much water people use on a daily basis);
* Information about what has been agreed collectively about minimum standards and ways of working, based on evidence from the available data.

Secondary Data Reviews

A [Secondary Data Review](https://washcluster.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/CTK/pages/10788869/Secondary+Data+Review) (SDR) is often an integral part of the HNO process, but may also be conducted to fill information gaps for the SOF. It is a key opportunity to consult and engage with Cluster partners. Train partners on how to identify relevant types of secondary data and how to share with the Cluster for compilation and analysis. Developing a checklist for identifying secondary data can increase the involvement of local partners. Sharing regular and predictably scheduled Secondary Data Review reports for feedback and finalization with partners will also help them to see the value and increase buy-in.

Where possible, assumptions should be backed up by evidence from the field and regularly re-evaluated to ensure that they reflect reality.

The general considerations for the review steps are:

* Identify sources of information, including: Quality Snapshots, Meeting minutes, TWG reports, cluster coordination performance monitoring (CCPM). Also, consider what information is available outside the WASH Cluster: Recommendations from evaluations or support visits, findings from operational research or specialist reports, assessment and Multi-Sector Needs Assessment reports and analysis products.
* Collect information from WASH Cluster partners, third party monitors and secondary sources to provide an overview of what is known about the impact of the crisis on the affected population. Highlight differences in needs, risks and vulnerabilities between difference groups and individuals (e.g. across age, sex and disability).
* Where existing national standards exist, these should be the primary reference for creating contextualised minimum standards. Where adjustments need to be made to contextualise national standards, these should be explained and justified
* Collate and summarise key findings, recommendations and identify trends.
* Consider quality gaps that have been identified and the actions taken to address them, what is still to do?
* Jointly agree changes that need to be made to the approaches, standards and indicators in the SOF.

**Inclusion criteria:**

When reviewing what information to include in the SOF, consider the following factors:

1. Is it accurate? Does it come from a reliable source and does it agree with other sources? Does it relate to the same population, location and timeframe? Does it cover all the population sub-groups?
2. Does it represent a consensus view? Can all partners agree with it? Does it align with national and global perspectives?
3. Is it recent information? Is it likely to change significantly or remain valid until the SOF is next revised?

Try to keep the SOF clear, avoid including information that may be unreliable, volatile or controversial. A reliable document that sets out the consensus view from partners will benefit from greater authority and will act as the foundation for further development.

LEARNING REVIEWS

Before updating an existing SOF, consider carrying out a review with cluster stakeholders to identify and document lessons that can be learned. The review should be informed by the data collected as part of response monitoring as well as findings from programme evaluations, support visits, operational research and cluster technical working groups. It can be managed through a small, task-focussed working group, but should be inclusive of input from all WASH cluster participants. Contributions can be sought through online survey, during regular meetings or through a dedicated face-to-face review workshop. Learning reviews should be documented, translated into local languages and made available publicly.

In protracted emergencies, holding the review in July-August allows recommendations to inform the HNO and HRP process as well as the SOF revision in November-December.

STEP 3: ADDRESS INFORMATION GAPS

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Actions | Considerations |
| What?  Identify information gaps  Who?  SOF Working group | Refer to the SOF contents checklist for a summary of the information that should be included.  Reach out to partners and wider stakeholders to identify sources of information that can contribute to the SOF and ensure that source documents are collated on the cluster’s information management platform. |

It is likely that the previous step will highlight where information is either not available or not of sufficient quality to be included in the SOF. It may be that no unified standards or guidance have been reached, or that they are not representative of a unified view of cluster members. At this stage, it is useful to take stock of these information gaps and to decide what can be addressed during the SOF development process and what requires more consideration.

Several approaches may be required to address gaps in the information required for the SOF:

Figure 4: Evidence based decision-making

In some cases, partners may need to meet to analyse the information and evidence available to agree on standards and harmonised approaches. This may happen as part of the SOF development process without significant additional work. Where there is not already general agreement, or where there is not sufficient data to evidence a decision, the task of developing a collective position should be given to a TWG who can make a recommendation for the SAG to validate. A review of the information management system and tools can be undertaken to fill the data gap. This learning exercise will inform the review step (last step) of the SOF process.

STEP 4: DRAFT, VALIDATE and SHARE

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Actions | Considerations |
| What?  Draft the SOF and review  Who?  SOF Working Group  WASH Cluster SAG  ICCG  Government authorities | Draft the first version of the SOF based on the template found in Annex 1.  Consult with stakeholders: Circulate first draft to all stakeholders ensuring that diverse groups of stakeholders are included and consulted and incorporate comments; agree a rapid but realistic turn-around time for each re-draft.  Penultimate draft: Once the draft has the support of WASH Cluster partners, circulate to wider cluster stakeholders for comment, including Government authorities and the Inter-Cluster Coordination Group (ICCG) |
| What?  Obtain endorsement from key stakeholders  Who?  Humanitarian Coordinator  Governmental authorities | Present the finalised draft to the SAG for cluster endorsement.  Where possible and appropriate, get the further written endorsement from government authorities. |
| What?  Share the SOF and plan for review  Who?  WASH Cluster Coordinator | Disseminate the document and ensure that partners are briefed on its content  Present the finalised document to WASH Cluster partners  Plan SOF review/updates: The SOF, and other key response documents should be updated to reflect changes to the context and improvements to methods and approaches. Agree a timescale for the next round of review. |

The first draft, or initial review, of the SOF should be prepared based on the information collected and analysed during the previous steps. Most of the work is done, and the content should be entered in the SOF template. The draft should be shared by the SOF working group to all cluster partners, to provide an opportunity to raise concerns. Agree a realistic timetable for partners to provide comments before the document is shared more widely.

Once the draft document has been provisionally approved by the cluster partners it may be shared with the national and sub-national government authorities when possible (translation may be required), ICCG and other thematic working groups for comment before being finalised. This provides an opportunity to identify areas of commonality, or opportunities for collaboration that have not previously been raised. The document can then be presented to the Cluster’s SAG for endorsement.

If possible and appropriate, once the document has been finalised, share it with the relevant national and sub-national government counterparts for formal endorsement when possible (translation may be required). Depending on the arrangements in place, this may be done either directly through the relevant line ministry or WASH focal point, or through a Government liaison. Since this may take some time, the Cluster should adopt the SOF as an interim measure.

STEP 5: REVIEW AND UPDATE

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| Actions | Considerations |
| What?  Review the SOF  Who?  SOF Working group | The SOF should be revised to adapt to changing context and response priorities and should reflect the phase of the emergency.  The revisions should take place according to the timeframe agreed during the previous step. The SOF working group will lead on this activity.  The process should restart from step 1. |

PERIODIC REVIEW AND REVISION

The SOF should be a living document that is regularly revised and updated as new information or learning becomes available through assessments, analysis or the output of technical working groups. As long as information meets the inclusion criteria of being accurate, timely and representative of a consensus view, it may be added to the SOF on an ongoing basis with the approval of the cluster SAG.

In addition to rolling updates, it is a good idea to schedule a periodic review of the SOF to ensure that it continues to be accurate and relevant to the current context. This review should be aligned with the learning step of the Accountability and Quality Assurance process as the later will feed into the SOF.

# ANNEX 1: SOF INDICATIVE TEMPLATE

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| **1. Context summary** | | **Key resources** |
| Pre-crisis WASH conditions | | | |
|  | Baseline service levels and access to Water, Sanitation, Hygiene services and facilities:   * Availability, Accessibility, Acceptability and Quality of WASH services * Differences in access between urban and rural areas and different groups * Trends in access to key services over time | Joint monitoring programme (JMP)  Democratic and Health Surveys (DHS)  Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS)  Multi Sector Needs Assessments (MSNA) |
|  | Key WASH Service providers:   * Key market actors and private sector * Public utilities * Non-government organisations, civil society and community groups involved in WASH service provision | Government / Line ministry focal points  WASH market assessments, mapping and analysis reports  Stakeholder mapping |
|  | Overview of WASH sector governance:   * Water, Sanitation, Health/Hygiene line ministries * Policy documents and programmes * Contacts | Government / Line ministry focal points |
|  | Physical geography:   * Climate, seasonality * Hydrogeology * Physical access * Floods, drought and other environmental risks |  |
|  | Anthropology / social factors:   * Religious and socio-cultural factors * Marginalised groups * Groups who are disadvantaged on the basis of age, sex, disability * Behaviours and beliefs * Community structure, focal points and trusted sources of information * Languages |  |
|  | Key health factors:   * Access to, and quality of, key health services * WASH-related disease risks, location and seasonality * Links to multi-sector contingency plans | National epidemic preparedness plans (Health cluster) |
| WASH related crisis impact | | | |
|  | Location and status of the affected population:   * Breakdown of affected population by site * Refugee / IDP / Host community / Returnee * Overview of settlement typology (urban, hosted, managed, informal camp) | Assessment reports  IOM DTM  REACH  Humanitarian Data Exchange |
|  | Crisis impact on the *delivery* of WASH services:   * Damage to infrastructure * Interruption of services * Impact on markets and service providers * Impact on WASH systems and governance | Market assessment analysis and mapping reports  JRAM Reports |
|  | Crisis impact on *access* to WASH services   * Effects of displacement * Physical access constraints * Conflict, insecurity and safety * Financial access to WASH markets |  |
|  | Summary of the differences in impact and vulnerability between different groups:   * Age * Gender * Disability * Marginalised groups | Partner reporting  Age, Gender, Disability specialists  Protection cluster |
| Response and coordination context | | | |
|  | Overview of the WASH Cluster stakeholders, current and planned capacity in country |  |
|  | Summary of who is doing what where, when and for who (3/4/5Ws) highlighting key current or future coverage gaps and access issues |  |
|  | Summary of key coordination stakeholder working groups (Information management, Cash, Access, Communicating with communities) |  |
|  | Summary of funding resources available, details of donor priorities and pooled funding arrangements |  |

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| **2. WASH Cluster Strategy** | | **Key references** |
| WASH Needs overview | | |
|  | Calculation and rationale for People in Need (PiN):   * Summarise figures disaggregated by SAD[[4]](#footnote-5), location and vulnerable group * State sources of information, assumptions made and methodology | [CTK: People in Need](https://washcluster.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/CTK/pages/10789972/People+in+Need+PIN) |
|  | WASH Severity mapping / scale   * Identify areas with the most severe needs * Summarise methodology | [CTK: Needs Severity Mapping](https://washcluster.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/CTK/pages/10782303/Needs+severity+mapping) |
|  | Prioritisation approaches and targeting criteria   * Targeting figures disaggregated by SAD, location and vulnerable group * State sources of information, assumptions made and methodology |  |
| Affected population groups, specific needs and vulnerabilities | | |
|  | Community profile describing which individuals and groups are vulnerable to which WASH-related health risks |  |
|  | Description of the main public health risks and their contributing environmental and behavioural factors |  |
|  | Safety analysis highlighting key protection risks and vulnerable groups |  |
|  | Inclusion analysis highlighting barriers to access faced by different groups (including older people and people with disabilities) |  |
| Strategic objectives and targets | | |
|  | Summary of strategic objectives as set in the humanitarian response plan, detailing definitions and minimum requirements |  |
|  | Summary of targets for reach and coverage, disaggregated by age, sex, disability and location |  |
| Key activities | | |
|  | Overview of activities for each area and/or affected group |  |
| Preparedness, emergency response and transition strategy | | |
|  | Summary of contingency planning with details of WASH cluster contribution |  |
|  | Emergency preparedness and response plan |  |
|  | Cluster transition / deactivation strategy |  |

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| **3. WASH Cluster principles of operation** | | **Key references** |
| Cluster coordination and information management arrangements | | |
|  | Objectives, functions, principles and priorities:   * 6+1 Core functions * Minimum requirements * Minimum commitments for the safety and dignity of the affected population | WASH Cluster ToR  GWC Minimum Requirements  Cluster activation letter  [CTK: Coordination Platform](https://washcluster.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/CTK/pages/10787765/Coordination+platform)  [CTK: Information management](https://washcluster.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/CTK/pages/10782270/Information+management) |
|  | Roles and responsibilities:   * WASH Cluster Coordinator and Co-coordinator * Government Chair / Focal Point * Information Management Officers * Sub-national coordinators and IMO * Strategic Advisory Group * Technical Working Groups * Cluster Lead Agency (CLA) * Partners and observers * Third parties | WASH Cluster ToR and Work Plan  TWG, SAG ToR |
|  | Operational arrangements:   * Partner engagement * Monitoring, reporting analysis and validation * Meetings and communications * Decentralisation * Coordinated approaches to AAP * Representation, advocacy | Principles of partnership  Cluster Coordination Reference Module |
|  | Linkages and key partnerships:   * Inter-cluster coordination * Working groups (IM, Assessment, Cash, CwC etc.) * WASH Sector, refugee response and other coordination mechanisms | [CTK: Intersectoral arrangements](https://washcluster.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/CTK/pages/10782397/Intersectoral+arrangements) |

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| **4. WASH Standards and approaches** | | **Key references** |
| Humanitarian principles | | |
|  | Description of collective commitments to accountability to the affected population (AAP) | [GWC Minimum commitments for the safety and dignity of the affected population](https://washcluster.atlassian.net/wiki/download/attachments/10782342/2012%20GWC%20WASH%20minimum%20commitments%20for%20Safety%20&%20Dignity.pptx?version=1&modificationDate=1543998225925&cacheVersion=1&api=v2) |
|  | Summary of approaches to ensure that all members of the affected population feel and are safe while accessing WASH services |  |
|  | Summary of approaches to ensure that all members of the affected population are able to participate in decisions that affect them |  |
|  | Description of considerations to ensure equitable inclusion for older people and people with disabilities Including children with disabilities | Children with disability in humanitarian action. WASH Booklet, UNICEF |
|  | Description of collective mechanisms for collecting and disseminating feedback and complaints from the affected population |  |
| Water supply | | |
|  | Minimum requirements for community consultation and participation in the design of water supply systems |  |
|  | Summary of agreed minimum water quantity standards | Sphere, UNHCR |
|  | Summary of agreed minimum water quality standards | Sphere, WHO |
|  | Agreed designs for water supply facilities and infrastructure and requirements for construction supervision and contract management. |  |
|  | Minimum specifications for water collection, treatment and storage NFIs and distribution modalities |  |
|  | Agreed approaches for water trucking |  |
| Sanitation | | |
|  | Minimum requirements for community consultation and participation in the design of sanitation programmes | Sani-Tweaks Checklist |
|  | Summary of agreed standards for toilet provision, operation and maintenance |  |
|  | Summary of agreed standards for faecal sludge management |  |
|  | Approved designs for toilets, faecal sludge management facilities and other sanitation infrastructure |  |
|  | Standards and approaches for solid waste management, drainage and environmental vector control |  |
| Hygiene Promotion | | |
|  | Summary of harmonised key messages and communications channels for behaviour change communications campaigns | WASH’Em |
|  | Summary of standard approaches to community engagement and dialogue in hygiene promotion |  |
|  | Summary of standards for hygiene promotion staffing, recruitment of volunteers including training and remuneration |  |
|  | Standards and approaches to address menstrual hygiene and incontinence |  |
|  | Minimum standards for hygiene kit contents, product specifications and distribution methodologies |  |
| Modality-specific standards and approaches | | |
|  | Description of standards for recruiting casual labour and volunteers from the affected community |  |
|  | Standards and requirements for market-based approaches, including the design, implementation and monitoring of cash and voucher assistance |  |
|  | Minimum standards and requirements for remote programming |  |
|  | Guidelines and standard tools for needs assessment, analysis and reporting |  |
| Other context-based standards | | |
|  | WASH in health care facilities, feeding centres, IPC measures |  |
|  | WASH in schools and child-friendly spaces |  |
|  | Menstrual Hygiene Management |  |
|  | Guidelines for design, approval, construction and handover of WASH infrastructure |  |
|  | Guidelines for preparedness and response to WASH-related disease outbreaks |  |

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| **5. Response Monitoring** | | **Key references** |
| Monitoring progress against strategic objectives | | |
|  | Monitoring framework:   * Core indicators * Monitoring tools * Data collection approaches | [CTK: Response monitoring](https://washcluster.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/CTK/pages/10787689/Response+monitoring) |
|  | Analysis and reporting plan for each of the core indicators defining the type and frequency of analysis and the information products | [CTK: Analysis & Visualisation](https://washcluster.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/CTK/pages/10790319/Analysis+visualization) |
|  | Summary of roles and responsibilities for monitoring, including arrangements with third party monitors and the use of secondary data sources |  |
| Activity reporting | | |
|  | 3/4/5Ws (W-matrix) reporting template and instructions for reporting partners |  |
|  | 3/4/5Ws analysis plan and summary of information products |  |
| Monitoring quality and accountability | | |
|  | Overview of Accountability and Quality Assurance process detailing the Define > Measure > Adapt > Learn steps and key outputs | [CTK: Accountability and Quality Assurance System](https://washcluster.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/CTK/pages/10782135/Quality+assurance+system) |
|  | Contextualised modular analytical framework for quality and accountability, including Key Quality Indicator definitions and monitoring approaches | CTK: Modular Analytical Framework |
| Monitoring community complaints and feedback | | |
|  | Summary of Community Feedback and Response Mechanisms in place at partner, cluster and inter-cluster levels with details of how WASH-related information is collected and referred to the relevant partners for follow-up |  |
| Cluster Coordination Performance Monitoring (CCPM) | | |
|  | Summary of CCPM arrangements, frequency, process, roles and responsibilities |  |
|  | Links to previous CCPM reports and key issues identified |  |

1. In responses where both RRP and HRP are active, the SOF should set out how coordination arrangements will work between these plans. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. See: [IASC Reference Module for Cluster Coordination at the Country Level](https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/coordination/clusters/document/iasc-reference-module-cluster-coordination-country-level-0) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. This step may not be always possible, it will depend on in-country arrangements with governmental authorities. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Sex, Age and Disability [↑](#footnote-ref-5)