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| GUIDANCE DOCUMENT |
| WASH Cluster response monitoring (4W) for emergencies |

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## Purpose of the document?

Response Monitoring refers to the tracking of what has actually been undertaken during the response. This Response Monitoring Briefing Sheet aims to assist in designing a 4W tool to capture what has been delivered and calculate overall indicators for a specific emergency. The objective is to have a number of tools and processes that are flexible enough to suit varied emergencies depending on the resources available, the conditions on the ground and the phase of the emergency.

## What is a 4W[[1]](#footnote-1)

A 4W (who, what, where, when) is a tool to collect information on emergency response activities by partners. There are many variants of this response monitoring tool which can also be known as a 3W (depending on the detail collected, the cluster, country and IMO). A 3W tool collects the most basic of information on who is doing what and where. OCHA typically collect and supply consolidated information in the form of a 3W.

A 4W builds on the 3W, collecting more detailed sectoral information at a higher resolution. Data collected can include information on beneficiaries, funding sources and gaps in provision. Indicators can be directly linked into the tool (see ‘WASH Choosing Indicators 4W-SOF-HRP Briefing Sheet’ and Strategic Indicators for SOF, HRP & 4W Section).

## Traditional 4W (Excel)

4W tools are generally created in Microsoft Excel or Google Sheets, though some basic 4Ws can be created in Microsoft Word format or by using online survey forms (Survey Monkey, Google Forms etc.). The layout of the matrix is generally constructed in one of the following structures:

1 row = 1 location, with a range of activities listed/detailed in the columns in that row

1 row = 1 activity at a chosen administrative level, with each column in that row giving data about that particular activity/location

The first approach can give a summary of activities at a particular location, and is best suited to responses in specific sites (e.g. camps). However, the approach can be limited in distinguishing the timeline of specific activities, and distinguishing between specific beneficiary or response types.

The second approach gives a detailed listing of activities, locations and beneficiaries for each activity – it can be more time-consuming for agencies to complete, and care must be taken when defining activities and analysing the data to avoid double-counting of beneficiaries in the same location. A SUM of MAX beneficiaries per location avoids double-counting activities have not been well-defined, but may underrepresent the response.

The selection of approach will depend primarily on the nature of the response. The IMO should seek the support of the Coordinator and understand the essentials of the response in setting up a 4W template.

## Positives of collecting information using traditional 4W methods (Excel)

1. Excel is a widely known and used software
2. There are free open-source software alternatives to Excel
3. Partners are used to completing 4Ws in Excel

## Negatives of collecting information using traditional 4W methods (Excel)

1. Partners find using Excel to report interventions time consuming and inconvenient
2. It is difficult to ensure consistency in data input across partners and sharing information back to partners is not user-friendly nor timely
3. Many partners already use databases to store their own intervention information in a different project-based format

## Mitigation factors for collecting information using traditional 4W methods (Excel)

1. Do not collect more than the essential i.e. if it is not used, it should not be collected
2. Automate and make accessible basic analyses that are informed by partner feedback. This also liberates time consumed with recurrent tasks.
3. Where feasible, investigate the possibility of exporting the 4W format directly from partner databases.

## ActivityInfo 4W (online)

In some longer-term operations, ActivityInfo has been introduced as a reporting platform. In such an instance, care is needed in understanding and evaluating the limitations of the platform against information requirements for coordination and real-world restrictions. Ideally, such a platform will replicate the structure of an existing excel system, or pre-exist the crisis – a roll-out during the initial phases is not advisable.

## The Strategic Response Plan (HRP) and the 4W Phases

While the HRP and WASH Strategic Operational Framework (SOF) are being finalised, the WASH IMO should, in tandem, be developing the WASH Phase 2 - 4W. The system is critical to the coordination of a response. The system will track the progress of the Cluster against the targets that have been agreed (defined from information on the assessments, needs, capacity and caseload exercises). For more information see ‘WASH Choosing Indicators 4W-SOF-HRP Briefing Sheet’ and ‘Strategic Indicators for SOF, HRP & 4W’ section.

Regular monitoring of the response (through the agreed indicators/targets) can provide evidence towards the Cluster achievements, highlighting critical gaps in the response. Done well, the response monitoring system can aid in transparency and accountability to WASH partners, donors, public and most importantly, the affected population.

# TIPS

*If using Excel to create a 4W, cells in the matrix should be restricted to cluster-defined values – this restriction can be for the type of data (for example, cells for ‘beneficiaries’ should be limited to numerical values only) or to choose from a list (locations from the CODs, or an activity selected from the cluster-defined list). This approach will encourage consistency in reporting, reduce the time required to check and clean the data, and facilitate analysis.*

TIPS

During the initial phases, the IMO should focus on analysing available data to flag gaps and maximise initial coverage of known needs. In addition, the IMO should ensure coordination and collaboration with other sectors and OCHA via the IMWG, should one be established. The IMO should not spend time setting up a comprehensive 4W at the start of an emergency response. This effort in time can be unproductive, as there is a likelihood that the WASH indicators will not be confirmed in the first few weeks until both the emergency situation and affected population needs become better understood (and the HRP and WASH SOF get developed).

## Strategic Planning and Response Monitoring Support Pack

There are three main sections and an additional Briefing Sheet in the Support Pack:

* **Response Monitoring - 4W** A Partner Card for use in the first few days of an emergency (in Word format to collect contact/ potential operational area information) and a 4W template as well as example templates.
* **4W Setup, Compilation and Analysis** A technical reference document outlining the workflow and providing step-by-step guidance to setup, compile, analyse and share 4W data is also available.
* **Strategic Indicators for SOF, HRP & 4W** An Excel sheet that lists interventions, units and associated indicators to help in the development of the Phase 2 – 4W and SOF/HHRP framework
* In addition to this 4W Briefing Sheet, there is a Briefing Sheet that helps the CC/IMO to choose indicators for WASH 4W, HRP and SOF **(WASH Choosing Indicators 4W-SOF-HRP Briefing Sheet).**

The **Partner Card** can be used in the first week[[2]](#footnote-2). From weeks 1-42, the basic **Phase 1 - 4W** can be used to collect key operational information to share to the partners.

Once the WASH SOF/HHRP indicators are defined (weeks 3-5)2, the more extensive **Phase 2 - 4W** should be developed (using the Excel sheet that lists interventions, units and indicators).

The indicators (chosen for the HHRP/WASH SOF) should be part of the **Phase 2 - 4W** framework so that the input from partners directly feeds the HHRP and WASH SOF process without the need for additional information to be collected at a future date, unless previously identified (e.g. assessment).

The IMO ***should*** be involved in the following Monitoring Tasks :

* Creating/amending the Partner Card and Phase 1 - 4W to meet the needs of the response until the HRP/WASH SOF indicators are defined *(not all IMOs will have to do this, they may deploy in the later stages of an emergency)*
* Helping the CC identify realistic indicators (output and outcome) and targets for the HHRP/SOF (via analysis of assessments and needs, capacity and caseload exercises).
* Creating/amending the Phase 2 - 4W to interlink with the reporting needs of the HHRP/WASH SOF and partner information needs
* Determining the best software solution for the emergency response (Excel, ActivityInfo, other system) in coordination with other Clusters/OCHA

## Designing Phases - 4Ws

***Table 1 –*** *The makeup of a 4W for HPC Phases.*

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| **Type** | **Initial Phase** | **Further phases – example questions** |
| **Who**  Refers to the partners whose activities are reported in the 4Ws; commonly the first column of the activity reporting template | * The name of the reporting agency | * Name of funding agency * [Optional] Donor Project Code or Appeal Type * Name of reporting agency * Type of agency (LNGO, INGO, government) * Name of implementing partner (if different from reporting agency) |
| **Where**  Reports the geographical location of the activities related to a partner. It can make reference to administrative boundaries (region, department or municipality) or point-data (camps, settlements, schools, etc.). The Cluster must decide the detail of geographical information needed for the 4W. | * Name of location (at cluster-agreed administrative level) | * Name of location * GPS Coordinates * Place Codes (P-Codes)/CODS - these resolve the basic issue of what we all call a place. Using place-names as identifiers can easily lead to confusion over spelling, different languages or scripts as well as duplication. Spatial data standards agreed by all agencies provide a single, unified system for referring to locations, allowing the free exchange of data between participating agencies. If a P-Code system is in use, OCHA can normally provide the lists. * Location Type – to allow partners to indicate if the intervention has taken place in a specific facility. In some emergencies the analysis if this type of information may be critical. Examples are a school, camp, health facility, cholera treatment centre, primary school, child friendly space, therapeutic feeding centres etc. |
| **Type** | **Initial Phase** | **Further phases – example questions** |
| **When**  Incorporating this type of information would enable distinguishing between past, present or future activities, and generate time-specific summaries of specific activities, or more detailed trend analyses. | * Nil | * Status – a column indicating the status of activities is another way to capture the condition of an intervention. Options usually include <planned> or <ongoing> or <completed>   - Time frame – the (planned) start and end date of activities can be captured by adding two separate columns (<start date> and <end date>).HRPHRPHRP |
| **What**  In 4Ws, ‘what’ is being done or is planned can be quite detailed. Some 4Ws are very specific in the description of the activities undertaken, others are rather generic. | * WASH Domain or activity description | - See the ‘WASH Choosing Indicators 4W-SOF-HRPHRP Briefing Sheet’ and Excel Document ‘Interventions Units Indicators’ in ‘Strategic Indicators for SOF, HRPHRP & 4W’ for further information.   * See also, Table 2 below |
| **For Whom**  Incorporating this type of information would enable distinguishing between different target population groups, for example, IDPs in formal camps vs IDPs in informal shelters vs WASH in Schools | * Population covered | * Beneficiary Type – a column indicating the type of population / institution to capture the target of the intervention. * Population targeted – captures the target population * Population reached – captures the population reached to date * Disaggregated population figures – reference should be made to the Child Protection / Protection Clusters in defining age brackets. |

***Table 2*** *The ‘What’ in Phase 2- 4W response monitoring system*

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| **Field** | **Description** |
| **Emergency Type** | Depending on the context, it may be useful to differentiate between different response types within the same data collection tool. For example, refugee and IDP responses with similar WASH Activities. Alternatively, where different responses involve different activities, for example, cholera vs drought response. |
| **WASH Domains** | The Sphere Standards divide WASH interventions into 6 domains: Hygiene, Water Supply, Excreta Disposal, Vector Control, Solid Waste Management and Drainage. |
| **Activity /Input Description** | To avoid a proliferation of activities, distinctions can be made by using other columns e.g. beneficiary type, location type, emergency type.  Activities must be clearly defined and mutually exclusive, and each must have a standard unit that fits to the activity definition.  The definition of the activities / units must be able to feed relevant information into the indicators as chosen for the HRP/WASH SOF. ***For this reason, the Phase 2 – 4W should not be finalised until the HRPHRP and WASH SOF indicators are chosen. It is critical that the WASH IMO and Cluster Coordinator work together to choose the indicators.*** |
| **Unit** | The units must fit to the activity definition, and allow for the calculation of production-level indicators |
| **Quantity Planned** | Captures the unit quantity intended |
| **Quantity Achieved** | Captures the unit quantity provided to date |
| **Target/Planned population** | The number of people targeted by the intervention. |
| **Population reached** | The number of people reached by the intervention. |
| **Production-Level Indicators** | Planned and Actual production level indicators can thus be calculated from 4Ws provided the activities and units are carefully formulated. Examples are <liters of water/person/day> <number of people/latrine>, etc. |

## Data compilation and analysis[[3]](#footnote-3)

Data collected through an excel-based 3W or 4W should be combined into a Master sheet, and reviewed to ensure that data is clean and consistent prior to further analysis.

The technical reference document outlines several methods of compilation and cleaning depending on the version of Excel used (or google sheets).

A basic 3W should be able to provide the following analyses:

* Which organisations are implementing WASH activities
* Where are these activities implemented
* Which standard responses and activities are implemented

A more comprehensive 4W should also be able to provide the following:

* The name and type of organisations, their funding sources, and implementing partners, including information on capacity of agencies to scale-up operations

# Tips

Timely and regular feedback to agencies completing the 4W is vital in encouraging ongoing and improved adherence to this reporting process.

This feedback can be as simple as presenting maps of agency presence, based on 4W submissions, to a cluster/sector meeting, so that agencies can see their data has been used, and agencies not represented on the map are encouraged to submit data.

In a more detailed 4W, pivot tables and maps can be developed for each agency, giving them a summary of their own data.

TIPS

* Information about specific locations of activities, and the types of facilities targeted
* Details of the progress of interventions over time, and their status
* Information about the number of targeted and reached beneficiaries, disaggregated by age and sex.
* An indication of the standard being implemented

The technical reference document outlines some essential features in Excel and Google Sheets to implement:

Basic exploratory analyses[[4]](#footnote-4) can be done using Excel tables filters, or calculated colour-coded fields to compare beneficiary figures to activity outputs. More detailed analysis of data will make use of pivot tables, BI data-models and other features to synthesise data and highlight temporal and geographic coverage and trends. This information can be combined with data on the needs of the population to produce an analysis of gaps in the response.

Maps[[5]](#footnote-5) and graphs showing coverage, trends, gaps and planned activities can be combined into operationally useful data products, and are often part of the data analysis process. As long as P-Codes or consistent naming conventions from the CODs are used, outputs can be mapped geographically.

## Other tips

**Reducing reporting requirements for partners**

If contracting mechanisms exist for implementing agencies (such as UNICEF PCAs or OCHA Emergency Reserve funding) the 4W format can be promoted as a basis for reporting against these contracts. It can also be used as early as the proposal stage, with activities, locations and target beneficiaries identified in the 4W format, which then becomes the template for ongoing reporting.

**Standard Indicator Calculations**

Standards should be set for analysis of data, and how different activities are aggregated geographically and temporally. Such standards should reduce double-counting of beneficiaries between activities and across response domains. Share these standards with partners.

**Automatized operational dashboards**

A regular summary of the data from the 4W should be prepared and used as the basis for information requests from agencies, OCHA, government, donors etc. If the WASH SOF/ HRP objectives are in place, the summary should present quantitative progress against the key indicators. Consistent reporting[[6]](#footnote-6) of these key indicators, with explanations of the nature of the information being reported, is important in presenting a clear picture of a nuanced response, and should reduce the chances of over-simplifying data to “WASH beneficiaries”.

Other automated data products can be identified and developed to facilitate information access for partners, and to minimise the time spent on recurrent tasks.

1. For the purposes of this document, both the Phase 1 and Phase 2 monitoring tools are called 4W, with the distinction being made by the Phase indicated. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Indicative timeframe [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. See Sections on Reporting and Visualisation/ Dissemination, in addition to the Capacity Building training on Excel in the WASH IM Toolkit [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. See Capacity Building training on Excel in the WASH IM Toolkit [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. See Capacity Building training on Mapping in the WASH IM Toolkit [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. See Sections on Reporting and Visualisation/ Dissemination in the WASH IM Toolkit [↑](#footnote-ref-6)