Cluster Coordination Performance Monitoring

Guidance Note

The Global Cluster Coordinator Group, January 2014

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AAP Accountability to Affected Populations

CCPM Cluster Coordination Performance Monitoring

HC Humanitarian Coordinator

HCT Humanitarian Country Team

ICC Inter-cluster Coordination

ICCG Inter-cluster Coordination Group

RC Resident Coordinator

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Introduction

Background

The Transformative Agenda

In the Transformative Agenda (2012), IASC Principals agreed that 'there is a need to restate and return to the original purpose of the clusters, refocusing them on strategic and operational gap analysis, planning, assessment and results'. At country level, the focus should be on strengthening response through coordination, partnership and accountability to affected populations.

The IASC Sub-working Group on the Cluster Approach

The Transformative Agenda asked the IASC Sub-working Group on the Cluster Approach to review cluster guidance and consider ways to monitor the performance of cluster coordination at country level.¹

The Cluster Coordination Performance Monitoring (CCPM) process and final reporting format were endorsed by the IASC Working Group in August 2012.

What is Cluster Coordination Performance Monitoring?

Cluster Coordination Performance Monitoring (CCPM) takes place when a cluster assesses its coordination performance against

- (i) The six core cluster functions set out on the 'Reference Module for Cluster Coordination at Country Level' and
- (ii) Accountability to affected populations.

The CCPM is a country led process, which is supported by global clusters and OCHA.

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http://www.humanitarianinfo.org/iasc/pageloader.aspx?page=content-template-default&bd=87.

² clusters.humanitarianresponse.info/.

The six core cluster functions, and accountability to affected populations

1. To support service delivery

- a. Provide a platform for ensuring that service delivery is driven by strategic priorities.
- b. Develop mechanisms to eliminate duplication of service delivery.

2. To inform the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) and Humanitarian Country Team's (HCT) strategic decision-making

- a. Prepare needs assessments and gaps analysis (across and within sectors).
- b. Identify and find solutions for (emerging) gaps, obstacles, duplication and cross-cutting issues.
- c. Formulate priorities on the basis of analysis.

3. To plan and develop strategy

- a. Develop sectoral plans, objectives and indicators that directly support realization of the response's strategic priorities.
- b. Apply and adhere to standards and guidelines.
- c. Clarify funding requirements, help to set priorities, and agree cluster contributions to the HC's overall humanitarian funding proposals.

4. To monitor and evaluate performance

- a. Monitor and report on activities and needs.
- b. Measure performance against the cluster strategy and agreed results.
- c. Recommend corrective action where necessary.

5. To build capacity in preparedness and contingency planning.

6. Advocacy

- a. Identify concerns that should be raised in HC and HCT messaging and action.
- b. Undertake advocacy on behalf of the cluster, cluster members, and affected people.

7. Accountability to affected populations (AAP)³

- Apply agreed mechanisms to consult and involve affected populations in decisionmaking.
- Apply agreed mechanisms to receive, investigate and act upon complaints on the assistance received.

 $^{^3\,} The \, AAP \, Operational \, Framework: humanitarian info.org/iasc/downloaddoc.aspx? docID=6632 \& type=pdf.$

Why monitor coordination performance?

Monitoring coordination performance in sudden onset and protracted crises can help clusters to coordinate and fulfil the core cluster functions more efficiently and effectively.

When should CCPM be undertaken?

If clusters are activated, a CCPM exercise should ideally take place three to six months after the onset of an emergency and once every year thereafter.

In protracted crises, a CCPM exercise should occur annually, but clusters decide when to do it.

If several core functions are confirmed to be weak and therefore require frequent monitoring and follow-up, a CCPM process should occur more often.

Experience shows that clusters find it difficult to implement CCPM when their structure is changing or they have to manage other commitments at the same time (the Strategic Planning Process or donor visits for example).

Who should participate in CCPM and how is it coordinated?

Ideally, all clusters in a given country should carry out a CCPM exercise simultaneously. If the HCT does not reach agreement on participation by all clusters, individual clusters (or small groups of clusters) may implement CCPM on their own, with the support of their global cluster. ⁴

With respect to participation, cluster coordinators should ensure the broadest possible participation by cluster partners, including UN agencies, national and international NGOs, national authorities, and Focal Points on cross-cutting issues. For the purpose of CCPM, Areas of Responsibility under the Protection Cluster (Gender Based Violence, Child Protection, Mine Action and Housing, Land and Property) and all coordination mechanisms that have a mandate to fulfil the core cluster functions should be treated like individual clusters and permitted to conduct a CCPM process independently.

⁴ When the HCT has adopted a cluster leadership arrangement under which the cluster at country level is not led by the agency that leads that cluster globally, the headquarters of the lead agency at country level should provide technical and facilitation support. If the agency does not possess the CCPM survey tool, OCHA Headquarters will provide these services.

⁵ To ensure coordination and broadest possible participation, the Global Cluster Coordinators agreed on following procedure at their meeting on 16 October 2013: If a country cluster expresses interest in implementing a CCPM exercise, the global cluster concerned should (i) Encourage it to ask the HCT, and subsequently the Inter-cluster Coordination Group, to discuss the question, with a view to encouraging multi-cluster participation, and (ii) Inform OCHA, which will request the OCHA Office in the relevant country to raise the issue at HCT and inter-cluster coordination level.

If a country cluster informs OCHA-HQ that it wants to implement CCPM, OCHA will (i) Inform global clusters, which will follow-up with country clusters and support their decision-making, and (ii) Contact the OCHA Field Office, which can encourage the adoption of a multi-cluster approach (at HCT and inter-cluster coordination meetings).

Technical support is provided by global clusters. When the cluster lead agency does not possess the survey tool, OCHA Headquarters provides technical support. External facilitation and meeting support can be requested from the global clusters and OCHA.

Where national governments lead or co-lead a cluster, it should be confirmed that they have been consulted, support the roll out, and are fully aware of the CCPM tool and its purpose.

At what level should CCPM be implemented?

It is mandatory to conduct a CCPM annually at national level, but it is for country clusters to decide if they want to implement a CCPM exercise at sub-national level too.

Experience suggests that it is not sensible to implement this rather complex exercise at subnational level unless the sub-national cluster fulfils all the core coordination mechanisms.

What does CCPM involve?

A full CCPM process generally takes place over a month and involves the following steps:

1. Planning

- The HCT meets to discuss implementation of the process. It decides a timeframe and which clusters will be involved.
- The Inter-cluster Coordination Group meets to discuss the CCPM process and its objectives, and agrees at what level CCPM will be implemented.
- o Individual clusters discuss the objectives and clarify the process.

2. CCPM Survey

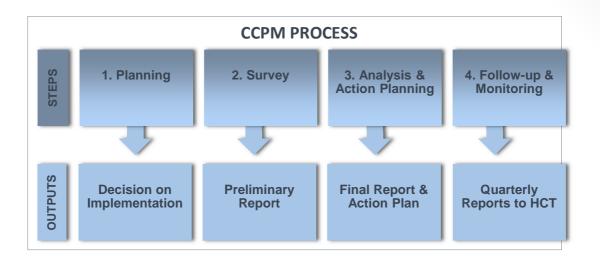
- o The cluster coordinator completes a Cluster Description Report online.
- The cluster coordinator and cluster partners each complete separate online questionnaires. (Responses take approximately 20-30 minutes).
- The global clusters or OCHA Headquarters compile and analyse the survey results (a task requiring 1-2 days), and produce a Cluster Description Report and Preliminary Coordination Performance Report.

3. Cluster analysis and action planning

o In a half or full day meeting, the cluster discusses and finalizes the Cluster Description Report and Coordination Performance Report, adds mitigating factors and explanations, and develops an Action Plan.

4. Follow-up and Monitoring

- The Inter-Cluster Coordination Group reviews the Final Coordination Performance Reports and Action Plans and pinpoints common weaknesses across clusters that need to be addressed systematically.
- The Coordination Performance Reports and Action Plans are presented to the HCT and global clusters, which identify support requirements.
- Every cluster monitors implementation of its Action Plan at regular intervals.
- o Every quarter, clusters report to the HCT on their progress.



The CCPM is not...

- ... a process to evaluate individuals.
- ... like humanitarian response monitoring, which records the aid delivered to an affected population and measures the results achieved in terms of the objectives of the strategic response plan. CCPM evaluates the coordination functions of the cluster, as a whole.
- ... the same as a cluster coordination architecture review. The RC/HC initiates cluster reviews annually to assess whether clusters are 'fit for purpose' whether they should be left unchanged, expanded, streamlined, merged or de-activated. Though cluster reviews may take account of CCPM reports, their assessments are essentially based on an analysis of changes in needs, national coordination capacity, and the humanitarian context. CCPM, by contrast, is a self-assessment of cluster performance against the six core cluster functions and accountability to affected populations. Its purpose is to assist clusters to coordinate and fulfil their core cluster functions more efficiently and effectively.

How to implement CCPM

Step I: Planning for CCPM

At the start, a proposal should be presented to the HCT. The HCT will set a timeframe for CCPM implementation and determine which clusters will participate. (Ideally all clusters take part but CCPM may be conducted by single or small groups of clusters.)

Subsequently, the Inter-cluster Coordination Group discusses how the CCPM will be carried out and at what level CCPM will be undertaken.

Fach cluster thereafter meets to:

- Introduce the CCPM: purpose, methodology, process, and follow-up.
- Clarify questions: on process, outcomes, and the language of the questionnaire.
- Discuss and clarify objectives and a timeframe for:
 - o The Survey: start and end dates (normally about 2 weeks).
 - o The Preliminary Coordination Performance Report and Cluster Description.
 - A cluster meeting to (i) analyse and contextualize the findings of the Preliminary Coordination Performance Report, and (ii) finalize the Coordination Performance Report and develop an Action Plan.
 - o Monitoring implementation of the Action Plan.

Output I: Deciding the framework for CCPM implementation

The most important decisions taken at planning meetings are: when to hold a CCPM process; which clusters will participate; and which levels will participate.

Step II: the CCPM Survey

The survey consists of three separate online questionnaires:

- 1. A general description of the cluster's structure, completed by the cluster coordinator.
- 2. A questionnaire on the cluster's performance, completed by the cluster coordinator and cofacilitator.
- 3. A questionnaire on the cluster's performance, completed by cluster partners.

The second and third questionnaires focus on criteria that indicate how well the coordinator and partners believe the cluster is performing its core functions.

The global clusters provide technical support to country clusters: they create links to the questionnaires, manage the data these generate, compile responses for the Preliminary Coordination Performance Report, delete comments as required, and share the Report with country clusters. OCHA provides technical support to country clusters when the lead agency does not possess the CCPM survey tool.

Data is managed at global level because this is less expensive than to install the software/database in each country. To preserve the country cluster's ownership of the exercise, technical staff compile and analyse the data. Access is password restricted, and only cluster coordinators in-country have access to their cluster's results until the Coordination Performance Report has been completed.

Structure and scope of the questionnaires

The questionnaires ask partners and cluster coordinators to assess how well the cluster fulfils its core functions. Most of the questions request qualitative responses.

To ensure maximum participation, it is recommended that cluster coordinators send reminders to cluster partners halfway through the period set for completing the questionnaires. If the response rate is low, the cluster coordinator and the global cluster, or OCHA, may decide to extend the deadline for submitting questionnaires.

Examples of questions: Planning and strategy development

Planning and strategy development

Question: Has your organization helped to develop a cluster strategic plan?

Answers

- The cluster has not developed its strategic plan
- A plan has been developed but my organization was not asked to participate
- My organization was asked to help develop the plan but it did not contribute
- My organization helped develop the plan but its contribution was not adequately taken into account
- My organization helped develop the plan and its contribution was taken into account somewhat adequately
- My organization helped develop the plan and its contribution was adequately taken into account
- Do not know
- Not applicable (for example, because my organization has observer status or is not engaged in this cluster activity.)

Question: Has the cluster strategic plan guided the response of your organization in the last 6 months?

Answers

- A strategic plan exists but it has not been shared with my organization
- The strategic plan has been shared but my organization has not used it
- The strategic plan has been shared and my organization has sometimes used it.
- The strategic plan has been shared and my organization has often used it
- The strategic plan has been shared and my organization has always used it.
- Do not know

Analysis and scoring

Answers are scored in five categories:

Answers	Points
Should have been done but was not	0
The action or activity was started but did not function	1
The action or activity was started but was partially complete and/or performed in a partially effective manner. Did function but needs major improvements	2
The action or activity was performed in a generally effective and complete manner. Did function, needs minor improvement	3
The action or activity was completely performed in a fully effective manner. Did function well.	4
Don't know / Not applicable	-

Questionnaires will be analysed at national and sub-national level separately. The scores are classified into four performance statuses: 'Good', 'Satisfactory', 'Unsatisfactory' and 'Weak'.

Score	Performance status
>0.75	Green = Strong
0.51-0.75	Yellow = Satisfactory (needs minor improvement)
0.26-0.50	Orange = Unsatisfactory (needs major improvement)
≤ 0.25	Red = Weak

For more information on analysis and scoring, please see Annex I: Explanatory note on questionnaire and analysis.

Alternative to the online questionnaires

It is not mandatory to use the online questionnaires. Clusters may use a paper version or an alternative online system. Regardless of how the data is collected, reports must assess performance in each of the core cluster coordination functions. The assessment should always apply agreed performance scoring, and set out follow up actions that clusters have identified in consultation with all partners.

It is important to note that the survey is more time-consuming if handouts are used, because data will need to be entered and analysed manually.

Output II: The Preliminary Coordination Performance Report

When the online questionnaires have been completed, they are analysed automatically and two reports are generated: (i) the Cluster Description Report; and (ii) the Preliminary Coordination Performance Report.⁶

The Cluster Description Report

The Cluster Description Report, completed by the cluster coordinator, provides information (with web links) on the cluster's structure and processes (such as technical working groups, and availability of key deliverables). It provides the background to the performance monitoring exercise.

The Preliminary Coordination Performance Report

The Preliminary Coordination Performance Report combines the results of the two questionnaires completed by the cluster coordinator/co-facilitator and by cluster partners. Its detailed assessment of cluster-coordination, focusing on the six core cluster functions and accountability to affected people, enables the cluster to identify areas of strong performance as well as areas that need support and improvement.

Extract of a Preliminary Performance Report:

1.Supporting service delivery	
1.1 Provide a platform to ensure that service delivery is driven by the agreed strategic priorities	Good
1.2 Develop mechanisms to eliminate duplication of service delivery	Unsatisfactory
2. Informing strategic decision-making of the HC/HCT for the humanitarian response	
2.1 Needs assessment and gap analysis (across other sectors and within the sector)	Satisfactory
2.2 Analysis to identify and address (emerging) gaps, obstacles, duplication, and cross-cutting issues.	Weak
2.3 Prioritization, grounded in response analysis	Satisfactory

In advance of the follow-up meeting, the cluster coordinator should share both the Cluster Description Report and Preliminary Cluster Performance Report with cluster partners. Cluster partners should be allowed ample time to read the document.

⁶ These reports are currently produced in English, regardless of the survey language, though qualitative comments are reported in the original language.

Step III: Cluster analysis and action planning

Each cluster meets to discuss the findings of the Preliminary Coordination Performance Report and identifies instances of good practice, constraints, and actions that will improve the cluster's coordination. The meeting also enables the cluster to contextualize the report before sharing it with global clusters, cluster lead agencies, the HC/HCT, OCHA, and national authorities.

Purpose. For the cluster, the meeting is an opportunity to reflect, highlight areas of strong performance as well as areas that require attention, and identify where support may be needed from the cluster lead agency, partners, the HCT, or global clusters. A frank analysis and discussion of the results should strengthen transparency and partnership in the cluster.

The specific objectives of the meeting are to: (i) discuss and if necessary amend the Cluster Description Report; (ii) contextualize the findings of the Preliminary Coordination Performance Report (narrative comment boxes); and (iii) identify actions for improvements. On the basis of these discussions, a Final Cluster Description Report and Final Coordination Performance Report are produced.

Timing. To maintain momentum, it is recommended that the analysis and action-planning meeting should take place within two weeks of receiving the Preliminary Coordination Performance Report.

Participation. All cluster partners should be invited, including UN agencies, national and international NGOs, national authorities, and the Focal Points for cross-cutting issues. Partners who did not complete the questionnaire should be encouraged to contribute by participating actively in the cluster discussion.

Preparation. Even though the Cluster Description Report and the Preliminary Coordination Performance Report are distributed in advance (see above), the cluster coordinator should bring copies of both reports to the cluster discussion. There should be a copy for each participant or, at minimum, one for each core function/working group. Participants should be urged to read the Preliminary Coordination Performance Report before the meeting, and arrive prepared to discuss actions that will improve coordination, including actions that they will support.

Proposed annotated agenda for the analysis and action-planning meeting

Content	Annotations
Introduction, re-cap of the survey process and presentation of findings	The cluster coordinator, a member of the Cluster Strategic Advisory Group, or an external facilitator, should present the survey's findings and suggest how they might be contextualized.
Review and discuss the findings of the Preliminary Coordination Performance Report and develop action points in relation to each core cluster function as well as Accountability to Affected Populations.	 Review and amend the Cluster Description. Examine performance and identify what worked well. Explain and contextualize the findings by identifying issues relevant to cluster performance that the survey did not address. Prioritize actions that will improve coordination (focusing on areas of unsatisfactory and weak performance). Identify support requirements. Each group should appoint a presenter, to report back in plenary, and a note taker.
Coffee break / lunch	
Present key findings and endorse actions	Propose changes to the Cluster Description Report. Recommend follow-up actions* that will improve performance in core function areas that are rated below satisfactory in the report. Set a time-frame for actions and allocate responsibility for follow-up. (If possible, follow up responsibilities should be agreed at the meeting.) Identify opportunities, constraints, and requests for support.

- * Proposed actions for follow up should clearly identify (at minimum):
 - Actions that will be taken to improve coordination with respect to each core cluster function as well as Accountability to Affected Populations (paying special attention to functions that have been rated unsatisfactory or weak).
 - A timeframe for implementing each action.
 - > The persons or organizations that will be responsible for following up on each action.

Output III: The Final Coordination Performance Report and the Action Plan

The Final Coordination Performance Report incorporates comments that the cluster coordinator and partners made during the cluster meeting, and contextualizes the survey findings in order to highlight (e.g. financial) constraints that might have influenced the survey's results (Annex II: Template: Final Coordination Performance Report).

After the Final Coordination Performance Report has been shared, the cluster may extract action points to create a stand-alone Action Plan or include the identified follow up actions in its cluster work plan. An Action Plan will help the cluster to monitor implementation of remedial actions that it takes, and to seek support where this is required. The RC/HC and HCT should use the Final Report and Action Plan reports to keep the performance of clusters under review.

Step IV: Following up and monitoring the implementation of Action Plans

Inter-cluster discussion: Final Coordination Performance Reports and Action Plans

The Inter-Cluster Coordination Group or the Cluster Strategic Advisory Group should review the Final Coordination Performance Reports and Action Plans, to analyse proposed follow-up action and pinpoint common weaknesses across clusters that need to be addressed systemically.

HCT: Presentation of Final Coordination Performance Reports and Action Plans

Once the Final Coordination Performance Reports and Action Plans have been discussed at the inter-cluster meeting, they should be presented to the HC/RC/HCT and global clusters, which should identify forms of support that clusters may need to remedy particular weaknesses.

Clusters: Monitoring and reporting on implementation of the Action Plans

The cluster coordinators monitor the implementation the Action Plan regularly; the clusters take stock of progress every month.

Clusters submit progress reports to the Inter-Cluster Coordination Group and the HCT after three, six and nine months.

Each cluster should normally repeat this process annually. In cases where core functions have been registered as unsatisfactory and weak, more frequent monitoring and follow-up on improvement action are required.

Output IV: Quarterly reports to the Humanitarian Country Team

A cluster's quarterly progress report to the HCT is an important part of monitoring the implementation of its Action Plan. Progress reports assist the cluster to document progress, and draw attention to support the cluster may need from the HC/RC, the HCT or global clusters.

Annex I: How questionnaires will be analysed

Target audience

Two separate questionnaires have been developed for cluster coordinators and for cluster partners. They ask similar questions about the performance of their cluster.

Scope of the and structure of the questionnaires

The questionnaires asks partners and cluster coordinators to assess performance with respect to the six core cluster functions and accountability to affected populations. Most of the questions are qualitative. Questionnaires will be completed via online anonymous forms.

The questionnaire has the following sections:

- 0. General description of the cluster structure and partners and description of the respondents.
- 1. Supporting service delivery.
- 2. Informing strategic decision-making by the HC/HCT.
- 3. Planning and strategy development.
- 4. Advocacy.
- 5. Monitoring and reporting on implementation of the cluster strategy and results and recommending corrective action.
- 6. Preparedness for recurrent disasters.
- 7. Accountability to affected populations.

Questions

Answers to each question will be scored in 5 categories.

Description of categories	Points
No action was taken	0
Action was taken but was not implemented (successfully)	1
Action was taken but requires major improvement	2
Action was taken but requires minor improvement	3
Action was taken successfully	4
Don't know	Not counted
Not applicable	Not counted

Analysis and scoring

Questionnaires will be compiled and analysed separately at national level and at each subnational level.

Scoring for questions

For each of the questions in both questionnaire, an overall score (Q) will be calculated by dividing the score allocated to each answer (P) by the maximum number of points available for the question (M). Q = P/M.

To illustrate, if a particular answer (P) scores 2 points and the maximum score (M) for the question is 4, the overall score for this question (Q) is 2/4 = 0.5 or 50%.

Aggregation of questionnaires

The median score for each question will be calculated.

Scoring for core functions

Performance of core functions will not be scored in terms of the median score for each question, however.

In each questionnaire, the score for the sub-function (S) will be calculated by summing the score of all the answers relating to it (T), and dividing that number by the maximum score for the same questions (M). S = T/M

To illustrate, suppose:

- Three questions in the questionnaire relate to a particular sub-function.
- The responses to those three questions score 2, 3 and 1.
- The score for that sub-function is therefore 2+3+1 = 6.
- The maximum number of points (M) for the same sub-function is 3*4 = 12.

Consequently, the overall score for the sub-function is 6/12 = 0.5 or 50%

Aggregation of questionnaires

The median score for each sub-function will be calculated.

Performance status

The median score will be classified in terms of performance as follows:

Score	Performance Status
> 75%	Good
51-75%	Satisfactory, needs minor improvement
26-50%	Unsatisfactory, needs major improvement
≤ 25%	Weak

Results

Responses will be analysed automatically and a report (which will also be generated automatically) will indicate the cluster's performance status (table above) and provide narrative comments.

The results and the report will be discussed at a cluster meeting. The cluster partners will identify good practices, constraints on performance, and follow-up actions to improve performance. These outcomes will be shared as appropriate with lead agencies, national authorities, the humanitarian coordinator, and global clusters.

Repeating the survey will make it possible to monitor the performance of clusters over time.

Global clusters will use the results to identify which countries and functions need additional support.

Annex II: Final Cluster Coordination Performance Report (Template)

Final Cluster Coordination Performance Monitoring Report and Action Plan

Cluster:

Country:

Level:

Survey Completed on:

CPM Meeting held on:

Table 1 Response rate among partners				
Partner type	Number partners responding	Total number of partners	Response rate (%)	
International NGOs				
National NGOs				
UN organizations				
National authority				
Donors				
Others				
Total				
Comment on partner participation / response rate				
Other comments				

Core cluster functions	Performance status	Constraints, unexpected circumstances, good	Follow-up action and support requirements	Deadline	Responsible for follow up
1. Supporting service delivery					
Has established a platform that ensures service delivery is driven by agreed strategic priorities.	Satisfactory, needs minor improvement				
1.2 Has developed mechanisms that eliminate duplication of service delivery.	Satisfactory, needs minor improvement				
2. Informing strategic decisions of the HC/HCT					
2.1 Has conducted needs assessments and gap analyses (in the sector and with other sectors).	Unsatisfactory, needs major improvement				
2.2 Has analyzed obstacles, duplication, (emerging) gaps, and cross-cutting issues.	Good				
2.3 Has prioritized issues and activities, based on response analysis.	Weak				
3. Planning and strategy development					
3.1 Has developed sectoral plans, with objectives and indicators that support strategic priorities agreed by the HC/HCT.	Good				
3.2 Has applied and adhered to standards and guidelines.	Unsatisfactory, needs major improvement				
3.3 Has identified sectoral funding requirements and prioritization of activities, and contributed to the overall funding needs of the strategic response plan.	Satisfactory, needs minor improvement				
4. Advocacy					
4.1 Has identified advocacy concerns that have contributed to HC and HCT messaging and action.	Good				
4.2 Has undertaken advocacy activities on behalf of cluster participants and affected people.	Unsatisfactory, needs major improvement				
5. Monitoring and reporting					
Has monitored and reported on implementation of the cluster strategy and results; has recommended corrective action where necessary.					
6. Contingency planning and preparedness					
Has put contingency planning and preparedness in place wherever it is feasible and relevant	Satisfactory, needs minor improvement				
7. Accountability to the affected population					
7.1 Has established and applied mechanisms to consult and involve affected people in decision-making.	Satisfactory, needs minor improvement				
7.2 Has established and applied mechanisms to receive, investigate and act on complaints by affected people about assistance they receive.	Weak				