



Early Recovery Coordination: Frequently Asked Questions

UNDP has been designated the global lead for early recovery coordination at global and field levels. What does this mean?

In 2005, the UN humanitarian system underwent a comprehensive reform process that clearly identified early recovery (ER) as a gap area and established it as one of originally nine key clusters within the humanitarian architecture. UNDP was designated the cluster lead for ER. In that capacity, at the global level, UNDP leads the Cluster Working Group on Early Recovery (CWGER): a group of 26 international agencies and NGOs with an interest and expertise in ER. The CWGER focuses on providing technical support for ER at the country level, developing tools and guidance on ER, and strengthening partnerships for ER. A CWGER Secretariat, based in BCPR Geneva, is on hand to provide further information and operational support on inter-agency ER interventions and coordination.

At the country level, UNDP has the responsibility to lead a coordinated approach to ER planning together with key partners. Typically, this involves supporting the role of the UN Humanitarian Coordinator/Resident Coordinator (HC/RC) to coordinate the work of all IASC partners to reinforce the ER response and to enhance system-wide coherence, e.g. through an early recovery network. A UNDP Country Office may also be expected to take a lead in coordinating the areas of ER not covered by other clusters or coordination mechanisms through the establishment of a dedicated cluster. To cover the areas of ER not covered by the other clusters.

How is the cluster system activated at the country level?

The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) agreed in 2006 that all countries with Humanitarian Coordinators should use the cluster approach. The IASC has also agreed that it should be used in major "new" emergencies requiring a multi-sectoral response with participation of a wide range of international humanitarian actors. In such situations, the cluster approach should be used from the start to plan and organize the international response.

A decision to use the cluster approach is taken and communicated as follows:

- The Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) or Resident Coordinator (RC) works with the government to consult with relevant partners in determining the priority sectors or areas of response;
- He/she proposes leads for each priority sector or area of response, including ER, and sends this information to the Emergency Response Coordinator (ERC);
- The ERC shares the proposal with Global Cluster Leads;
- The ERC ensures agreement at global level and communicates agreement to HC/RC and partners within 24 hours of receiving the proposal;
- The HC/RC informs the host government and all partners.

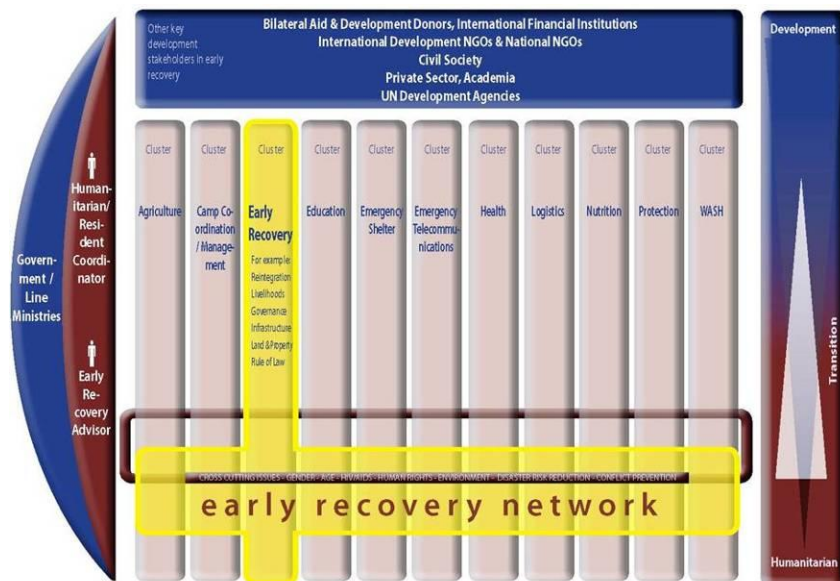
Where the cluster system is not activated, country teams should assess whether existing coordination mechanisms can cater effectively for early recovery needs. If existing mechanisms do not serve the purpose, then global guidance will need to be tailored to specific country contexts and adapted accordingly.

What is the recommended early recovery coordination mechanism?

Within the UN system, the RC/HC has the lead responsibility for coordinating the ER efforts of international organizations in cooperation with national actors. Given the multi-dimensional nature of ER, it is recommended to establish an Early Recovery Network: a network of ER focal points from each of the other clusters, to work together on the integration, mainstreaming and coordination of early recovery issues. Typically the RC/HC would oversee the work of the Early Recovery Network, supported where necessary by an Early Recovery Advisor. The ER Network makes ER a common concern and avoids limiting it to the work of one cluster, with each of the other IASC Clusters on the ground - such as Health, Protection, Education, etc –systematically planning and implementing early recovery interventions within the context of their own specific areas of work.

However, experience on the ground has shown that there are often areas of ER that are not covered by the other clusters and that are essential in order to kick-start the recovery effort. Those ER areas will vary from context to context and may include, for example, livelihoods, reintegration, land and property, infrastructure, governance, or rule of law. As necessary, UNDP with its lead role within ER, may be required to set up and run an Early Recovery Cluster to cover the areas of ER not covered by the other clusters. An Early Recovery Cluster Coordinator may support the UNDP country office in setting up and maintaining this cluster.

Together, the Early Recovery Cluster and Early Recovery Network form the L-shaped model of early recovery coordination (see diagram below). The L-shape ensures that: a) early recovery is effectively mainstreamed throughout everyone’s work and becomes a collective responsibility (through the horizontal ER Network); and b) no gaps are left uncovered that are considered essential for the success of the collective early recovery effort (through the vertical ER Cluster).



What are the specific activities of an Early Recovery Network and Cluster?

An Early Recovery Network should:

- Assess and analyze ER needs using appropriate methodology – ideally joint/integrated needs assessments;
- Assess local capacities and capacity-building priorities for recovery;

- Design a Strategic Framework for ER, contextualizing the ER needs, setting out the key priority focus areas for a comprehensive approach to ER, and linking ER to longer-term recovery strategies;
- Develop an ER Action Plan, detailing the implementation of ER interventions;
- Ensure the immediate integration of key cross-cutting issues into the recovery process;
- Design and implement an effective information management strategy that contributes to inter-cluster information management products and services, often OCHA-led;
- Develop a monitoring and evaluation system for early recovery which tracks the delivery and impact of early recovery interventions on the ground;
- Mobilize resources for an adequate and appropriate response to early recovery needs;
- Derive lessons learned from ER actions and revise strategies and action plans accordingly; and
- Ensure that hand-over strategies are developed and implemented.

An Early Recovery Cluster should be guided by the [IASC Generic Terms of Reference for Cluster Leads at the country level](#).

What is the relation between OCHA, DOCO and the CWGER at the country level?

OCHA, DOCO and the CWGER (with UNDP in the lead) all play an important role in post-crisis coordination. In addition, in many complex crises the UN has extensive peacekeeping and peacebuilding missions that also have their own coordination structures and planning processes. The aim is to provide complementary coordination support which makes a smooth transition from relief through to recovery and longer-term development. However, transition is a non-linear process and in most cases, humanitarian, recovery and development needs co-exist and need to be dealt with simultaneously and in a coherent manner.

OCHA takes a lead role in humanitarian coordination and supports the Office of the HC in this respect. The CWGER has a targeted role in early recovery coordination and provides inter-agency support, usually through the deployment of an ER Advisor and other experts, for early recovery assessment, strategic planning, coordination and the implementation of initial foundational recovery activities at the beginning of the humanitarian crisis. DOCO supports the Resident Coordinator (RC) system and UN Country Teams (UNCTs), usually through the deployment of a Strategic Planner, throughout the entire process of transition, with the provision of operational practice and funding for strategic planning and coordination to address the broader recovery/transition challenges.

What support can be expected from the global Cluster Working Group on Early Recovery (CWGER) and from BCPR/UNDP, in its lead role within the CWGER?

When a crisis occurs, additional resources may be required to adequately assess and lead the early recovery effort. The CWGER is on hand to provide support for inter-agency early recovery efforts at the country level, primarily through support to the Office of the RC. This often comes in the form of deployment of early recovery experts to support the work of field-based colleagues. The types of expertise that can be deployed through the CWGER and UNDP are as follows:

- An ER Advisor (to the Office of the RC) to support the work of the RC/HC in overseeing inter-cluster and inter-agency ER linkages and to facilitate the Early Recovery Network;
- An ER Cluster Coordinator (to UNDP) to support the facilitation of an ER Cluster covering the areas of ER not covered by the other clusters.
- A Needs Assessment Specialist to support inter-agency post-crisis needs assessment and recovery planning, including technical support for the implementation of a Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) or an ER-orientated Post-Conflict Needs Assessment (PCNA).

- An Information Management Specialist to design and implement an effective ER information management strategy to support ER coordination.
 - Additional support may be required to ensure that someone is specifically tasked with overseeing the development and drafting of an Early Recovery Strategic Framework
- Generic terms of reference for these functions are available on request from the CWGER, and can be adapted as required to the specific country context.

Further resources:

- [The CWGER Guidance Note on Early Recovery](#)
- [Key things to know about the Early Recovery Cluster](#)
- The Early Recovery page of www.humanitarianreform.org

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