

Guidance Note for Coordination in Urban Crises

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1. Summary

Humanitarian coordination and planning is primarily structured around the cluster/sector system at national levels. The cluster/sector system has enabled efficient coordination of humanitarian actors at national levels, **but presents shortcomings when responding to urban crises** which are characterized by the existence of complex, interdependent systems and high levels of diversity and density of actors.

The guidance note recommends humanitarian stakeholders to support **the operationalization of area-based coordination mechanisms operating at city and/or municipal levels**, approaching coordination within a defined geographic area and adopting a multi-sectoral and participatory perspective. This guidance note provides an overview of how **area-based coordination mechanisms at city and/or municipal levels align to the Humanitarian Program Cycle and complement the established cluster system**.

2. Introduction

54% of the world's population lives in an urban environment, characterized by complex and dynamic systems and governance mechanisms. This urban population continues to increase by the day. The nexus of increasing urbanization with conflict, displacement and climate change constitutes a key challenge for humanitarian responses, leading to difficulties and inefficiencies when responding to crises in urban settings. Urban areas are characterized by:

- › the **diversity of actors**: local authorities, local civil society, private sector and service providers, non-traditional actors, communities, along with international humanitarian and development stakeholders;
- › the level of **density of stakeholders** living in the area, including different population groups (*i.e. local communities, refugees, returnees, IDPs*): and
- › the existence of **complex systems**, ranging from service provision, to markets and governance structures within and between the city and its surrounding region.

These layers of diversity, density and complexity in an urban setting can pose significant challenges to understand local contexts and systems, hindering effective humanitarian coordination and response to urban sudden onset or protracted crises.

Recent humanitarian responses in urban contexts, such as in Port-au-Prince and Tacloban, have highlighted a number of shortcomings in the current approach to aid coordination and delivery. Lessons generated from these responses point to the need to enhance the coordination and planning of humanitarian response in urban contexts:

- › **Sectoral vs. multi-sectoral approach**: The cluster system remains structured around sectors of expertise and sectoral coordination, with an increasing focus on multi-sectoral analysis and response in line with World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) commitments. Urban crises are characterized by an extreme complexity of inter-related systems, dynamics and diversity of population groups, livelihoods, land and property (*i.e. slums/informal settlements*) within a dense and highly populated territory. This complexity calls for an increased capacity to respond holistically to multi-sectoral needs, and a stronger inter-sector operational coordination at geographic level such as a city or municipality;
- › **Individual vs. community and territory**: Humanitarian actors often target aid based on the needs of individual beneficiaries, with limited understanding of the structure and dynamics of the affected community within a given geographical area. In urban contexts, understanding community and territorial dynamics and leveraging community capacities is key to ensure effective and sustainable responses;
- › **International vs. integrated leadership**: In most crises, international humanitarian stakeholders coordinate aid delivery amongst themselves through the cluster/sector system, with limited engagement of relevant local stakeholders, such as authorities, civil society or the private sector. In line with the WHS commitments and the localization agenda, international actors have agreed to prioritize engagement with local actors and create links within coordination mechanisms, working towards a shared and integrated management of humanitarian response, capable of leveraging local capacities and building ownership.
- › **Humanitarian and Development nexus**: The vision of a clear division between humanitarian and development responses is regularly challenged by contexts where humanitarian and development needs and priorities overlap. This is even more relevant in urban contexts affected by crises, where humanitarian responses should complement and strengthen existing/long-term systems and development plans of a city. There is a growing global recognition among international organizations of the importance of holistic approaches between humanitarian and development/stabilization actors, addressing immediate and long-term needs of crisis-affected cities and building resilience.

In light of the above, in 2010 the **Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC)** called for a “*paradigm shift in humanitarian assistance in urban areas, based on a community-based - rather than - an individual beneficiary approach*”, also known as **settlement-based approach**¹. At the **policy level**, this is reflected as part of the IASC Strategy for Meeting Humanitarian Challenges in Urban Areas (MHCUA), implemented by the IASC Reference Group MHCUA, and endorsed by the Principals in 2011. At the **operational level**, Global Clusters, including the Global Food Security Cluster, Global Shelter Cluster, Global Camp Coordination and Camp Management Cluster and Global WASH Cluster, have launched urban-specific or area-based working groups at global and country level to tackle such issues, complementing the efforts of the IASC Reference Group MHCUA.

Notable improvements in how humanitarian and development actors are responding to urban crises have occurred at agency-level. However, such changes need to be systematized at the policy and operational level. The **WHS and Habitat III New Urban Agenda** further prompted humanitarian and development actors to advance on the discussion around **these challenges and develop concrete commitments to improve humanitarian responses to urban crises**, which include the creation of the *Global Alliance for Urban Crises*, the *Grand Bargain*, the *New Way of Working*, a resurgence of the *Principles of Partnership* and the localization agenda.

Building upon these processes and commitments, and with the **aim of bringing a concrete and system-level change to better coordinate and respond to urban crises**, this Guidance Note was developed under the framework of the IASC as an inter-agency process and endorsed by the IASC Working Group in 2018.

3. Purpose of Guidance Note²

This guidance note **aims to support Humanitarian Coordinators, Humanitarian Country Teams, Clusters and operational partners in decisions on urban and area-based coordination approaches**, encouraging HC/HCTs and Clusters to promote and support the operationalization of area-based coordination mechanisms operating at city and/or municipal levels.

Building off existing best practices and lessons learnt, this guidance note was developed as an **interagency consultation process in the framework of the IASC MHCUA Reference Group**, liaising with the Global Clusters Coordinators Group, Cluster-specific urban Working Groups (namely the global Food Security Cluster and the global Shelter Cluster Urban/Settlement Working Groups), UN Agencies, INGOs and Donors.

The note **provides practical steps and approaches** to be followed by humanitarian coordination mechanisms and partners in-country for each phase of the humanitarian programme cycle (HPC) to ensure more efficient coordination and response to crises in urban settings. For each HPC phase the note proposes a number of core activities and outputs, however suggestions are by no mean exhaustive. Links to other guidance and concrete examples/ practices are provided for reference.

The note should be considered as a reference document, to be reviewed based on feedback by Humanitarian Coordinators and Humanitarian Country Teams, clusters and operational partners. As a next step, the IASC encourages HC/HCTs and Clusters to pilot this approach in urban crises, identify and capture lessons learned to be shared with the IASC RG MHCUA, and promote further dialogue and advocacy efforts to promote and upscale the approach.

The IASC Reference Group MHCUA, OCHA and the Global Cluster Coordination Group (including the global Food Security and Shelter Clusters’ Urban and Settlement Working Groups) are available to provide capacity development support to assist HC/HCTs, Clusters and partners with practical implementation of this Guidance Note.

¹ Area (settlement) based approaches are characterized as being geographically targeted, participatory and multi-sectoral

² N.B. While this document focuses on urban areas – which has been identified as a key challenge for humanitarian responses and is the primary focus of the IASC RG MHCUA and of the global clusters urban working groups – the approach and guidelines can be applicable also to responses in non-urban environments.

4. Coordinating Responses in Urban Crisis Settings

When an urban crisis occurs, an **efficient and integrated response requires strong coordination among local and international stakeholders at the city and/or municipal levels**. Understanding the systems, governance and complexity of the city is crucial for efficient response planning and delivery, and key to *reinforce, not replace* existing local coordination structures and response capacities.

Area Based Coordination involves undertaking coordination within a defined geographic area, taking a holistic, multi-sectoral perspective. Such an approach can provide a useful framework to promote joint leadership of coordination efforts with local authorities whenever feasible, such as through co-convening area based coordination mechanisms with counterpart municipal/city level authorities or relevant local actors. By working in partnership with local actors responsible for the long-term development of their city, area based coordination mechanisms bring opportunities to ensure humanitarian response contributes to local plans and goals.

The HC/HCT, ultimately responsible within the IASC system, should strive to ensure efficient coordination between international and local actors during crisis responses in urban settings. With this aim, **the HC/HCT should task OCHA (if in place) or the RC's Office (RCO) to work with partners and cluster coordinators to:**

- > **Identify and engage with local stakeholders (4.1)**
- > **Strengthen or establish area based (city and/or municipal level) coordination mechanism (4.2)**

4.1 Identification and engagement with local stakeholders

In sudden onset and protracted crisis, front line responders are often local stakeholders³. **Local actors benefit from a strong understanding of their context** - its dynamics, needs, vulnerabilities – **and of the local response and coping capacities** of affected communities, service providers, authorities, etc. To implement effective and sustainable responses in urban settings, international humanitarian actors must work in close synergy with relevant local actors and systems, enhancing their resilience and capacity to implement and coordinate the crisis response.

Within the context of an urban crisis, the HC/HCT, through OCHA or RCO and in cooperation with cluster/sector coordinators and partners must **systematically identify local stakeholders and assess their roles and capacities**, developing an understanding of their:

1. Respective roles in governance and service delivery;
2. Capacities, limitations, plans and priorities;
3. Relations between different stakeholders and specific population groups

Based on this information, the HC/HCT should develop an analysis of local stakeholders and their response capacities in delivering aid to affected populations, ensuring local efforts are complemented and not undermined. Such analysis should inform the HC/HCT decisions on coordination mechanisms at a city-level, as outlined in 3.2.

Recommended Outputs:

Stakeholder analysis, including:

- a) who are the key stakeholders;
- b) what is their response capacity and how can it be supported;
- c) awareness of power and political structures: pro and cons linked to engagement with local stakeholders, what are the risks and mitigation strategies; and
- d) which engagement and communication channels will ensure a regular and inclusive coordination with key local stakeholders and how can this be established/formalized.

City-level coordination and the Cluster system

City-level coordination mechanisms can serve as a complement to institutionalized inter-cluster coordination, undertaking an inter-sector coordination role but operating at a more localized level, inclusive of relevant local/international actors operating in the area. Acknowledging that 'one size does not fit all' the relationship between inter-cluster/clusters and city-level coordination will vary across urban crises.

³ Local stakeholders include affected communities themselves, service providers, civil society, governance actors, the private sector, informal leaders, etc.

4.2 Establishment of city-level coordination mechanisms

The humanitarian sector is predominantly structured around cluster/sector coordination at national levels, complemented by an inter-cluster/sector coordination group bringing a multi-sectoral focus to operational coordination and an HCT, led by the HC, providing the strategic direction. This current structure allows for efficient coordination of humanitarian actors at national level, but presents shortcomings when responding to an **urban crisis requiring multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder coordination, linked to a specific urban area/territory**.

To enable such type of coordination, this guidance note recommends the adoption of area based coordination mechanisms, operating at **city and/or municipal levels-level (would could align to a sub-hub level)**, creating a framework for integrated joint city-level planning and response implementation between local and international actors.

Such coordination mechanisms could either:

1. **build on existing local mechanisms**, in line with the principle of *reinforcing not replacing*, or
2. *When not existing or appropriate, be established by relevant humanitarian coordination bodies in-country* (e.g. HC/HCT) with clear Terms of Reference, purpose/deliverables, and reporting lines (most commonly to the ICCG on operational matters and the HCT on strategic issues), ensuring this body fits into the broader humanitarian architecture.

Participation

City-level coordination mechanisms should be **inclusive of key international stakeholders** (i.e. operational stakeholders working within the urban area, including both humanitarian and stabilization/development actors) **and identified local counterparts**.

The identification of local counterparts through the stakeholder mapping (4.1) should inform the coordination architecture and promote inclusion of local actors.

Tasks

Tasks of the city-level coordination mechanisms should include the:

- › identification and capacity assessment of local and international actors;
- › facilitation of needs/vulnerability assessments and of context analysis at city/area level;
- › drafting of urban response plans at city/area level, and overall coordination of actors responding to the urban crisis;
- › Terms of Reference should be defined based on the context and actual needs/purpose of this mechanism.

Governance

- › Whenever possible, such a body should be **co-chaired by a local and an international actor**, promoting joint ownership and integrated coordination;
- › The body should have **defined reporting lines and linkages** within the IASC system (e.g. HC/HCT) and towards national authorities when relevant;
- › **Terms of Reference** should be endorsed by the HC/HCT;
- › Such a body **could comprise operational area-specific coordination platforms** (ex. at neighborhood level) which feed into the city-level coordination mechanism, enabling operational coordination of the response within a specific urban area.

Recommended Outputs:

City-level coordination mechanism is reinforced or established, inclusive of local and international response stakeholders and of all relevant sectors of intervention, with Terms of Reference clearly outlining purpose, authority, reporting lines and responsibilities.

Urban Coordination at a Glance



5. Key steps for efficient responses in urban areas across the HPC:

5.1 Preparedness

Preparedness makes it possible to respond faster, more appropriately and efficiently, and to take decisions on the basis of more reliable information. Responses are likely to be more efficient if training, analysis, planning, prepositioning, and information collection have been strategically managed and coordination mechanisms have been established. Humanitarian actors must leverage pre-existing relationships with national and local authorities as well as development actors in urban contexts, using existing knowledge and networks when responding to a crisis.

Throughout the preparedness phase, **capacity strengthening and knowledge sharing must be prioritized** within organisations and among local and international partners on core issues related to responses in urban areas (understand urban systems and structures, urban development plans, etc). Wherever possible, **community feedback and complaints mechanisms** or systems should be identified and supported in a preparedness phase.

Key tasks	Responsibility	Output
1. Baseline information on cities particularly fragile/exposed to risks of crises: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Review available data on socio-economic status, demography, vulnerable areas and groups, local development plans, structure and management of service provision, infrastructure, markets, rule of law, governance mechanisms and capacities, etc.; › collect additional information to provide baseline information › Identify local expertise to help analyse, interpret and recommend appropriate engagement and response strategies prior to a crisis. 	Humanitarian /development partners and (if active) HCT and inter-cluster coordination group	Compilation and review of data on key fragile cities, and filling of major gaps; maps to support visualization of such information.
2. Conduct in-depth stakeholders' analysis of local/national actors to understand roles, capacities, and relationships, amongst themselves and with vulnerable groups	Humanitarian /development partners and (if active) HCT and inter-cluster coordination group	
3. Identify/support existing coordination mechanisms at city-level and ensure such mechanisms engage in traditional humanitarian coordination mechanisms through development of clear ToR and SoPs	Humanitarian /development partners and (if active) HCT and inter-cluster coordination group	Overview of coordination mechanisms at city-level Set-up of city-level coordination mechanism

5.2 Needs and Capacities Assessments & Analysis

Needs and Capacity assessments and Analysis provide the evidence base for strategic planning and the baseline information to inform response monitoring systems. They should be conducted regularly throughout the humanitarian programme cycle, and are important in urban contexts to ensure that the ‘architecture’ of the area, often characterized by complex inter-linked systems, high density and urban-related challenges, is sufficiently understood. **Joint and coordinated assessments should be undertaken in partnership with relevant local and international humanitarian/development actors to:**

- > assess the humanitarian situation;
- > identify needs and priorities of the affected population, the impact on local, regional and national system and services; and
- > map the response capacity of local and international actors in a specific area.

Assessments in urban areas must consider (pre-) existing needs, vulnerabilities and capacities and should be undertaken through an area-based, multi-sectoral lens in complementarity with activated clusters. Needs assessment methodologies must integrate key aspects related to urban contexts and ensure appropriate means to engage with and collect feedback from all groups in the affected population, with particular emphasis on protection, gender, age and disability issues.

Key tasks	Responsibility	Output
1. Contexts analysis - Secondary data review: Socio-economic, demographic, system-related data and information often already exists in cities affected by crises. To form the basis for assessments, humanitarian stakeholders should conduct a secondary data review of existing information and data on affected cities. Data may exist through national or humanitarian (cluster) activities which can be geographically disaggregated. The knowledge and expertise of key informants and local experts can provide useful support to analyse and interpret this data.	City-level coordination mechanism through operational partners	Secondary data review report, outlining information gaps
2. Context analysis – Primary data collection: When secondary data is insufficient or no longer relevant, humanitarian stakeholders should conduct a needs assessment in the targeted area at individual, community and system levels. Assessments should identify how the crisis has affected local populations in terms of vulnerability and access to basic service delivery, markets, safety-nets, livelihoods, etc.	City-level coordination mechanism through operational partners	Multi-sectoral vulnerability assessment report of needs at individual-, community- and systemic-level per area (regularly updated to reflect the changing context)
3. Conduct a Capacity Assessment/Stakeholder Analysis to map response actors and capacity at different levels (national & local authorities and service providers, private sector, civil society, and affected communities themselves). This will enable an identification of response gaps and concrete opportunities to support local response capacities, address structural issues and ensure complementarity. It is recommended that private sector networks (such as CBI, Global Compact or Chambers of Commerce) be contacted as early as possible during the assessment as often they are among the first responders and are moving ahead with their own response with or without humanitarian engagement. In 2017, 8 of the 13 CBI networks were engaged in response including Mexico and Madagascar in an urban response.	City-level coordination mechanism through operational partners	Capacity assessment report, outlining response capacity and gaps per area (regularly updated to reflect the changing context)

4. Compile a consolidated urban/area needs overview with multi-sectoral analysis of needs, vulnerabilities and response capacity per area/neighborhood. This is created by compiling information from the multi-sectoral vulnerability assessment (activity 3) and the response capacity assessment (activity 4) and considering links/cause and effect between different areas.	City-level coordination mechanism	City level needs overview
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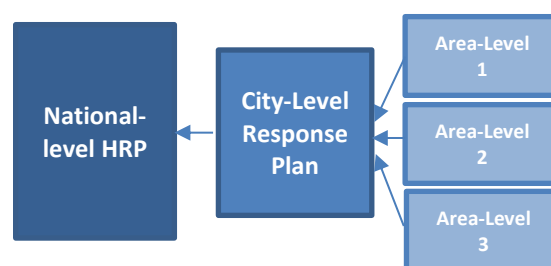
5.3 Strategic Planning

As the Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) provides the evidence base and analysis of the crisis at country-level and informs the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP), the **Consolidated urban/area needs overview provides an understanding of needs, vulnerabilities and capacity**, supporting the identification of response gaps and modalities, and informing prioritization and strategic directions of the response at the city-level.

Building on the needs overview in an urban response context, a **city-level response plan should be developed by the relevant City/municipal level coordination mechanism** identifying both immediate and mid- to long-term priorities.

This response plan can be either a **stand-alone product**, endorsed by the city-level coordination mechanism and the HCT, **and/or incorporated into the HRP**, providing an overview of the multi-sectoral plan for the response in a specific urban setting.

Considering the size, complexity and diversity within cities, **city plans may be complemented by area-level response plans**, created by the relevant area operational coordination body and feeding into an overall city plan, as shown in the picture above.

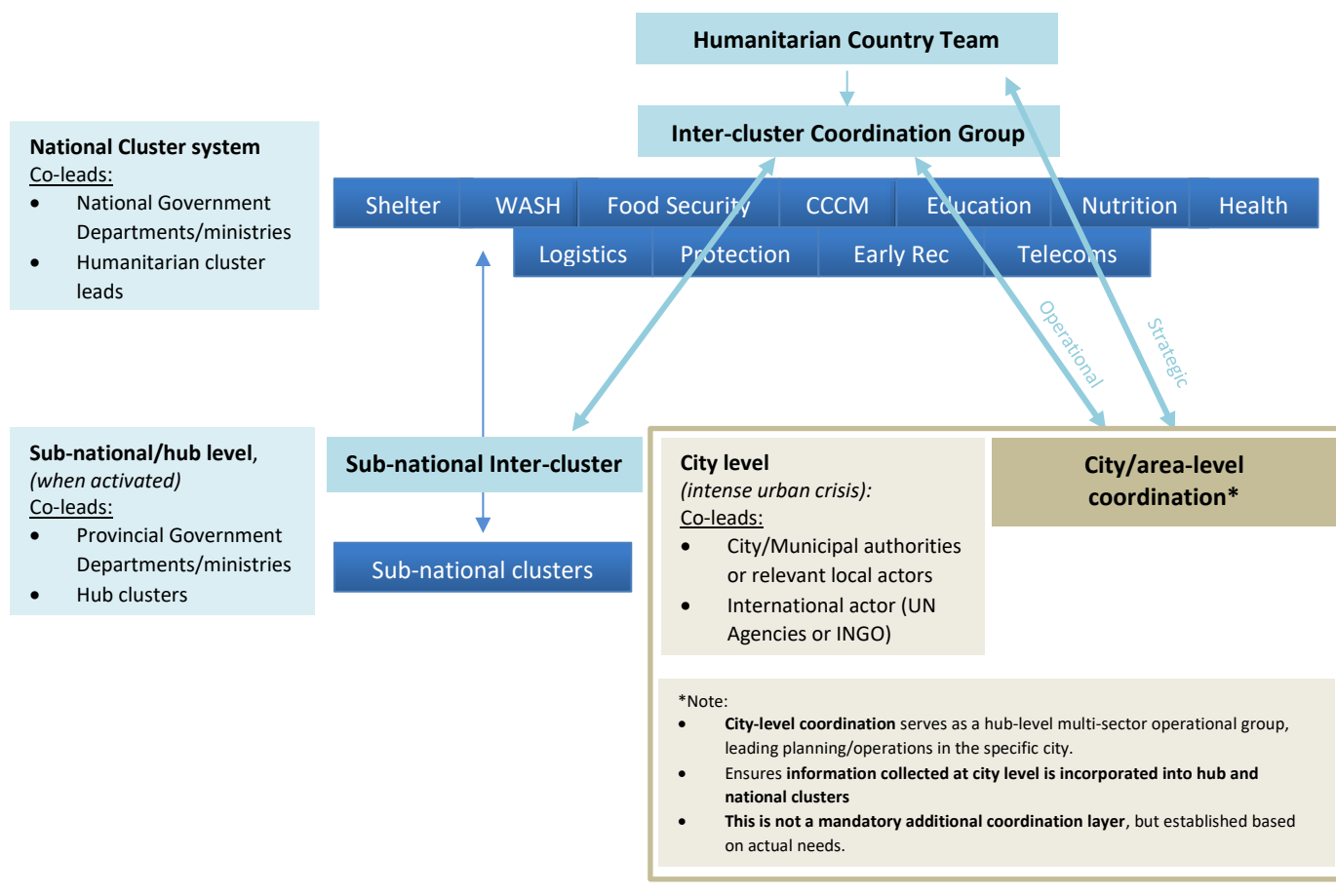


Throughout this process, the city-level coordination mechanism, inclusive of local and international humanitarian and development actors should:

Key tasks	Responsibility	Output
1. Jointly review and agree on response priorities, strategy and modalities (ex. In kind, cash) tailored for the urban context and reflecting both immediate and longer-term objectives. These objectives will enable local and international humanitarian, stabilisation and development partners to ensure strong synergies between short-term and long-term programmes.	City-level coordination mechanism	City level multi-sector response plan, when relevant incorporated in HRP/Flash Appeals
2. Develop municipal/city-level response plan(s) , providing an overview of needs and response (from local, national and international actors) within the targeted geographical area. Ensure plans are endorsed by the HC/HCT; well connected into national level response planning processes such as the HRP; and complement cluster response plans	City-level coordination mechanism – endorsed by HCT	
3. Ensure the objective, narrative, activities and indicators of Response plans at city- and national-level (e.g. HRP, Flash Appeal, etc.) capture urban-specific dynamics	City-level coordination mechanism and HCT	
4. Ensure that planned responses leverage and strengthen local response capacities and systems , mainstreaming capacity strengthening for local responders and support to their response and coordination mechanisms.	City-level coordination mechanism	

Area based coordination mechanisms active at the city level must complement existing humanitarian coordination mechanisms, such as active clusters operating at the national and sub national level. In relation to an existing cluster system, area based coordination mechanisms (at the city level), could be considered at the ‘**sub-hub**’ level. The diagram on the following page represents **one potential relationship between area/city level coordination mechanism and the national & sub national cluster system**. Whilst the following represents one potential modality, the exact nature and relationship must be informed by the specific context of the crisis.

Potential link between city coordination mechanism and HCT/Cluster system



5.4 Resource Mobilization

In line with the development of city- and, when relevant, area-based response plans, humanitarian actors will need to advocate for and secure funding to implement response priorities. **Advocacy and partnership with donors** is vital to seek **flexibility and long-term funding** to mainstream resilience and support the capacity of local actors. Funding should also synergetic responses between humanitarian and development partners. In line with Grain Bargain commitments, this includes **advocating for and prioritizing direct funding to local responders** such as civil society and applicable service providers and municipalities themselves (also through different funding channels).

5.5 Response Implementation

At national level, implementation puts into practice the objectives as defined in the Humanitarian Response Plan. At the **city level, implementation should also follow subsequent city and area response plans**. Throughout the implementation phase, local and international aid actors should ensure these key tasks/components are reflected in their response implementation.

Key tasks & considerations	Responsibility	Output
1. Implement aid action informed by city/area based response plans, shifting from sectorial to multi-sectoral area-based response implementation to efficiently address the needs of individuals, communities and systems within a specific territory.	City-level coordination mechanisms, Operational Partners	Implementation of City level multi-sector response plan, through a multi-sectorial and settlement-approach
2. Maintain and reinforce synergies between local and international actors , fostering resilience and local ownership and contributing to local development plans and goals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Work within and in support of existing systems and service provision mechanisms whenever possible (water systems, social welfare systems, child protection, housing systems, etc.). b. Look for appropriate mechanisms for local communities and actors to directly engage with and jointly manage projects at the city/area level. 	City-level coordination mechanisms, Operational Partners	Joint partnerships and programs between international and local actors
3. Maintain efficient coordination at a city level : This should be done through active participation in the city-level working group by all operational actors, also ensured by strong coordination of the city-level working group, enabling partners to use this forum for strategic and operational discussions and decision-making.	City-level coordination mechanisms	Active coordination among partners of the city-level coordination mechanism
4. Ensure strong information management to track the response, including the urban dimension as a filter in the 3/4Ws and/or any other Information Management product of city-level working group and ensure linkages with the HCT/inter-cluster coordination group, as well as common approaches to collecting, analysing, and incorporating feedback and other data from affected populations and integrating into decision-making processes.	City-level coordination mechanisms	Information management systems are maintained to support coordination of city level response plans, and are well integrated into national systems.
5. Ensure strong coordination between the national level and the city-level mechanisms and responses.	City-level coordination mechanisms, HCT/HC	Information is shared on an ongoing basis; City-plans are integrated into national response plans

5.6 Response Monitoring and Evaluation

Humanitarian response monitoring is a continuous process to **identify shortcomings in the response**, ensure **accountability to affected populations** and **measure progress** towards the strategic objectives of the HRP, while considering the diversity of the affected population and their perspectives of the response. Through this process, humanitarian actors should track the humanitarian assistance delivered to affected populations and monitor the quality of the response on an ongoing basis, compared to targets set out in the city-level response plan, considering:

- > To what extent vulnerabilities, needs, priorities and preferences of affected populations identified through needs assessments have been addressed
- > How this has differed across the city (geographically and across population types) and
- > How response and coordination capacities of local actors have evolved and have been strengthened.

To ensure response monitoring and evaluation remains cognizant of urban specific nuances, humanitarian actors should:

- > Ensure **integration of relevant and contextualized indicators on urban responses** (e.g. Engagement of local actors, building on existing systems, etc.) across all major response processes, (e.g.; HRP, 3/4Ws, programme monitoring and evaluations), and that analysis and information produced highlights feedback and learning for improving programming and coordination of responses to urban crises. Monitoring frameworks should include indicators around the quality and effectiveness of responses and coordination from the perspectives of local actors and communities.
- > **Share urban-response specific findings, tools, data, lessons learned and good practices** with local and national actors, the IASC RG on MHCUA and with global Clusters for consolidation and sharing.

Key minimum steps	Responsibility	Output
1. Establish a mechanism to monitor changes in the situation and needs within the urban area-affected by a crisis.	HCT, inter-cluster group, Operational Partners, Donors	
2. Perform a collective review exercise of the city-level response mechanism and other relevant coordination bodies , that includes a review of inter-cluster/sector and operational coordination within the context of a specific city-crisis response, guiding future improvements to coordination and programming. Such a review should have an emphasis on the views and perspectives of local actors on the quality and effectiveness of coordination and engagement with international actors and vice versa.	HCT, Cluster lead agencies	Cluster review report, outlining lessons learned and action points
3. Perform Operational Peer Review and Evaluation as an inter-agency management tool, to identify areas of immediate corrective action in urban responses, and help the HCs and HCTs determine adjustments related to leadership, HPC implementation and coordination. In an urban response, such Peer Review should also target local actors involved in response and coordination to evaluate the quality, effectiveness and accountability.	Global Peer to Peer, HCT	OPR report with specific focus on response at city-level

Way Forward

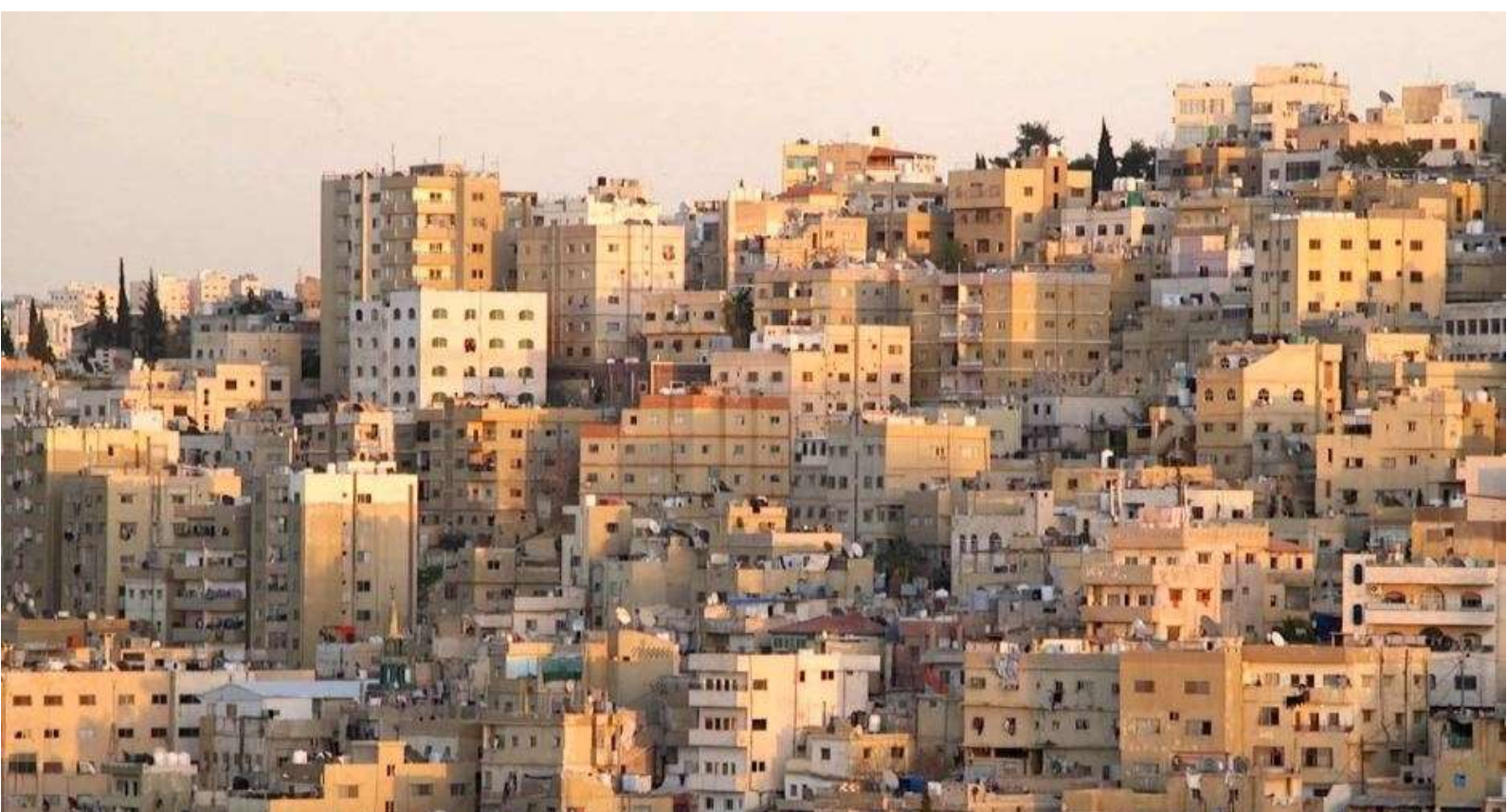
This Guidance Note has been developed based on global practices and inputs from a wide variety of partners. As a next step, it is of outmost importance to **transform this Guidance Note into practice**, through the multiplication of pilots relating to coordination in urban areas utilising an area-based approach, and a continued global effort to review field-level Best Practices and Lessons Learned. While the IASC RG MHCUA has been deactivated following the IASC WG decision in early 2018, other bodies - such as the Inter-Cluster Coordination Group, Cluster-specific urban working groups, and the Global Alliance for Urban Crises - will be able to carry forward the implementation of this Guidance Note and its subsequent revisions.

The field implementation of this Guidance Note and the compilation of feedback from urban crises will enable the IASC and other relevant bodies to ensure this Guidance Note is updated regularly and reflects relevant changes emerging from field-testing. Key to this process is to maintain a strong link between this urban agenda and other ongoing evolutions of the humanitarian architecture, such as multi-year planning, the humanitarian-development nexus and localization agendas, ensuring such efforts lead to a wider system-change in a synergetic manner.

Lastly, the IASC RG MHCUA suggests that an evaluation is conducted within a 3-4 year framework, assessing the progress of urban response, and evaluating how this Guidance Note has been adopted in urban crises contexts and what further system-changes are required for more efficient humanitarian responses in urban areas.

Acknowledgements

This Guidance Note has been drafted by IMPACT Initiatives in its role of Co-Chair of the IASC Reference Group on Meeting Humanitarian Challenges in Urban Areas (co-chaired by IMPACT Initiatives and UN-Habitat). Valuable inputs were received by partners of the IASC RG MHCUA, the global Food Security Cluster Urban WG, the Global Shelter Cluster Settlements WG, as well as by the Inter-Cluster Coordination Group and OCHA. This Guidance Note was endorsed by all abovementioned partners and the IASC Working Group in April 2018.



Annex 1: Useful Resources and further reading

Resource	Entity/ Organization	Relevance to specific HPC phases					
		Preparedness	Needs and Capacities Assessments & Analysis	Strategic Planning	Resource Mobilization	Implementation	Monitoring and Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adapting to an urban World: URBAN CASE STUDY: SYRIA CRISIS (LEBANON & JORDAN) 	Global Food Security Cluster						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ALNAP's Urban Response Portal: A selection of useful resources include: • Stepping Back: Understanding Cities and their Systems Learning from the Ebola Response in Cities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Communication and engagement ▪ Population Movement ▪ Responding in the context of Urban quarantine • Shelter and Settlements Response in Urban Emergencies • Urban WASH in emergencies • Meeting the Urban Challenge: Adapting humanitarian efforts to an urban world • Humanitarian Interventions in situations or urban violence • Urban Disasters: Learning from previous relief and recovery operations • Working with People and communities in urban humanitarian crises • What's missing? Adding context to the urban response toolkit 	ALNAP						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • British Red Cross : Learning from the City 	British Red Cross						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Region Food Systems: Literature Review 	RUAF Foundation; FAO						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Resilience Profiling Programme (CRPP) 	UN Habitat						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk Review: Urban Displacement & Outside of Camp 	CCCM cluster						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 'Do No Harm Framework' – Seven Steps 	Do No Harm Project; Global Protection Cluster						

• Enhanced local coordination for effective aid provision: the case of Lebanon	IIED; UN-Habitat; American University of Beirut						
• Environment and Urbanization Journal	IIED; SAGE publications						
• GSC Settlement Approaches in Urban Areas: Case Study Compendium	Global Shelter Cluster; IMPACT Initiatives						
• Humanitarian Exchange: Humanitarian Response in Urban Areas	HPN; ODI						
• Humanitarian Response to Urban Crises: A review of area-based approaches	IIED						
• IMPACT Area-based Assessment: (EXAMPLE: Ar-Raqqa, Syria)	IMPACT Initiatives						
• IMPACT Initiatives' Example: Bangui Urban response plan	IMPACT Initiatives						
• Integrating Climate Change and Urban Risks into the VCA	IFRC						
• Inter-Cluster Coordination Group: Is Coordination between the HCT and ICCG Strategic?	Peer 2 Peer Support						
• Preparedness - What Can We Learn from the Nepal Response?	Peer 2 Peer Support						
• Review of Context Analysis Tools for Urban Humanitarian Response	IRC; Stronger Cities Consortium						
• A Review of Needs Assessment Tools, Response Analysis Frameworks, and Targeting Guidance for Urban Humanitarian Response	IIED						
• Shelter Cluster Coordination at the sub hub level	Global Shelter Cluster						
• Sustainable Reconstruction in Urban Areas	IFRC; SKAT						
• UNHabitat City & Neighbourhood Profiles & Strategies: (EXAMPLE: Maachouk Neighbourhood Profile & Strategy, Tyre, Lebanon)	UN Habitat						
• The Urban Amplifier: Adapting to Urban Specificities	ECHO						
• Urban Area Based Approaches in post-disaster Contexts	World Vision; Stronger Cities Consortium						
• Urban context analysis toolkit	IRC; Stronger Cities Consortium						
• Urban multi-sector vulnerability assessment tool (UMVAT)	NRC; Stronger Cities Consortium						
• Urban stakeholder engagement and coordination guidance note	IIED; Stronger Cities Consortium						