

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Title:	WASH Specialist/ Cluster Coordinator (Earthquake, Returnees, and Cholera/AWD), P3
Reports to:	WASH Manager / Emergency
Duration:	6 months
Location:	Kabul, with frequent travel to field offices

BACKGROUND & JUSTIFICATION

The humanitarian system is undergoing collective reset due to an unprecedented funding crisis. Afghanistan remains one of the world's highest priority humanitarian contexts, with chronic structural vulnerabilities – economic collapse, multi-dimensional poverty, and weak basic services – compounded by recurrent shocks including natural disasters, mass returns, disease outbreaks, and conflict. In recent months, these pressures have intensified: **the 31 August 2025 earthquake killed more than 2,000 people and left over half a million in urgent need; a major cholera/AWD outbreak continues to stretch already fragile systems; and large-scale returns from neighboring countries** are adding to humanitarian needs. These overlapping emergencies have placed **extraordinary strain on the limited capacity of the WASH Cluster**, where only a handful of partners are able to respond due to severe funding constraints. This has created urgent demand for stronger coordination, resource mobilization, and technical leadership to ensure an effective and accountable WASH response.

PURPOSE

Against this backdrop, **the six-month surge deployment of a WASH Specialist/Cluster Coordinator is critical to reinforce coordination, planning, monitoring, and reporting for the earthquake and cholera responses, ensuring that scarce resources are used strategically and gaps are addressed quickly.**

In parallel, the incumbent will play a pivotal role in leading the WASH Cluster contributions to the Afghanistan 2026 Humanitarian Programme Cycle (HPC), including the HNO and HRP, at a moment of heightened pressure, with new HPC tools being rolled out, the humanitarian community navigating a cluster transition process, and no recognized government to transition the cluster functions to. **This deployment is therefore not a regular role but an essential surge function to sustain a principled, child-focused WASH response while safeguarding the quality and coherence of the HPC process in one of the most complex humanitarian operating environments globally.**

RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Strengthen Coordination and Response to Emergencies

- Lead and reinforce WASH Cluster coordination at national and subnational levels for the earthquake, AWD/cholera, and large-scale returnee crises, ensuring partners' efforts are coherent, complementary, and aligned to cluster strategies.
- Ensure effective engagement of all WASH partners, respect their mandates, and establish links with local authorities, civil society, and other clusters/sectors for a multisectoral response.
- Map partner capacities and activities (Who, what, Where, When) and ensure timely information-sharing to address gaps and avoid duplication.

2. Needs Assessment, Analysis, and Strategy Development

- Coordinate joint assessments and data analysis for earthquake and cholera-affected areas, ensuring that gaps are clearly identified and addressed through collective delivery.
- Integrate cross-cutting priorities (gender, age, disability, environment, accountability) in all assessments, planning, and monitoring, ensuring responses are community-driven and inclusive.
- Translate assessment findings into strategic response plans that inform resource mobilization and advocacy.

3. Monitoring, Reporting, and Accountability

- Establish robust monitoring mechanisms to track progress and outcomes of WASH interventions across affected provinces.
- Provide analytical reporting (coverage, quality, continuity, cost) with disaggregated data to demonstrate impact and inform adaptive programming.
- Ensure transparency and accountability by facilitating timely reporting to affected communities, authorities, donors, and the broader humanitarian community.

4. Intersectoral Coordination and Advocacy

- Represent WASH Cluster interests in inter-cluster coordination and high-level forums with UNICEF leadership, the RC/HC, HCT, and donors.
- Advocate for priority WASH needs in earthquake and cholera-affected areas, including mobilization of resources for partners and addressing critical response gaps.
- Contribute key WASH messages to broader advocacy initiatives and ensure WASH concerns are reflected in intersectoral response strategies.

5. Support the Humanitarian Programme Cycle (HPC) 2026

- Provide technical leadership for the WASH Cluster's contribution to the 2026 HRP and HNO, facilitating partner engagement in line with new HPC tools and processes.
- Guide the WASH response planning process in a way that balances immediate emergency response with longer-term strategic priorities, despite the absence of a recognized government and shifting humanitarian architecture.
- Ensure WASH inputs are evidence-based, coordinated, and aligned with HCT priorities, contributing to a coherent, high-quality intersectoral response plan.

6. Capacity Strengthening of Subnational Coordination

- Conduct a diagnostic of current coordination realities in the five field offices and identify priority capacity gaps.
- Strengthen the role of double-hatted WASH officers as subnational coordinators through mentoring, training, and structured support.
- Ensure regional coordination platforms are equipped to manage scaling up responses across water supply, sanitation, and hygiene promotion.

COMPETENCIES

Core competencies:

- Good experience on the HNO/HRP plans and development process
- Demonstrated experience and expertise in WASH Cluster/Sector Coordination in complex humanitarian environments at national and subnational levels
- Understands the rationale behind Humanitarian Reform, its main components and recent developments including the Transformative Agenda.
- Understands, uses and adapts the tools, mechanisms and processes developed as part of Humanitarian Reform
- Demonstrates commitment to Humanitarian Principles
- Demonstrates commitment to Principles of Partnership
- Communicates, works and networks effectively with a wide range of people to reach broad consensus on a well-coordinated response, and demonstrates leadership where required
- Thinks and acts strategically and ensures that sector activities are prioritized and aligned within an agreed strategy
- Capacity to provide formal and informal training
- Demonstrates commitment to the sector and independence from employing organization
- Builds, motivates and leads WASH Secretariat (Co-coordinator, IMO, TWGs, Sub national coordinators)

QUALIFICATIONS & EXPERIENCE

- Advanced university degree (minimum preference at master's degree level) qualification desirably in subjects/ areas of WASH e.g. Health Promotion or Education, Civil or Public Health Engineering, Public Health (MPH), Environmental Health. Note that work experience may substitute for higher degree qualifications.
- Knowledge of WASH sector as a whole and its priority issues; an ability to strategize how these sectoral needs are met through collective delivery, and ensuring that the roles, responsibilities and functional linkages among Cluster support team are clear and well-coordinated
- A minimum of 8 years of experience of responding to first phases of an emergency.
- A minimum of 5 years of experience with either the UN and/or NGO
- Government of Nigeria experience is an asset
- Fluency in English (verbal and written). Good written and spoken skills in the language of humanitarian operation and knowledge of another UN language an asset.