

Reporting Primer

Early Recovery

Note: Reporting Primers are internal guidance for OCHA staff to increase understanding of specialized aspects of humanitarian operations and in turn strengthen reporting efforts. The information contained here is for background purposes only. Reporting for a specific emergency should always be based on input from, and dialogue with, cluster representatives in the field.

I. Overview

Global Cluster Working Group Lead: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

The overall focus of the recovery approach is to restore the capacity of national institutions and communities to recover from a conflict or a natural disaster, enter transition or 'build back better' and avoid relapses. Early Recovery (ER) is a process that actually begins during what has traditionally been thought of as the 'humanitarian' or 'relief' phase and uses development principles to make recovery sustainable. In practical terms it encompasses the restoration of basic services, livelihoods, transitional shelter, governance, security and rule of law, environment and other socio-economic dimensions, including the reintegration of displaced populations.¹

Examples of ER activities:

- Re-establishing and facilitating access to essential services such as health, education, water and sanitation, finances, primary infrastructure (road repair, transport, communication) and restoring environmental assets
- Ensuring appropriate transitional shelter
- Distributing seeds, tools and other goods and services that help to revive socio-economic activities among women and men
- Providing temporary wage employment for women and men (e.g. cash-for-work programmes)
- Strengthening the rule of law and the capacity of the State to respect, protect and fulfill the rights of the people

Note: At the country level, the name of the cluster established to address recovery needs may change to reflect the priorities of the Cluster or existing governmental development bodies. In Pakistan for example, the Early Recovery Cluster was named the "Community Restoration Cluster" to reflect an emphasis on projects in the areas of governance, non-farm livelihoods and community infrastructure rehabilitation.

II. Early recovery coordination

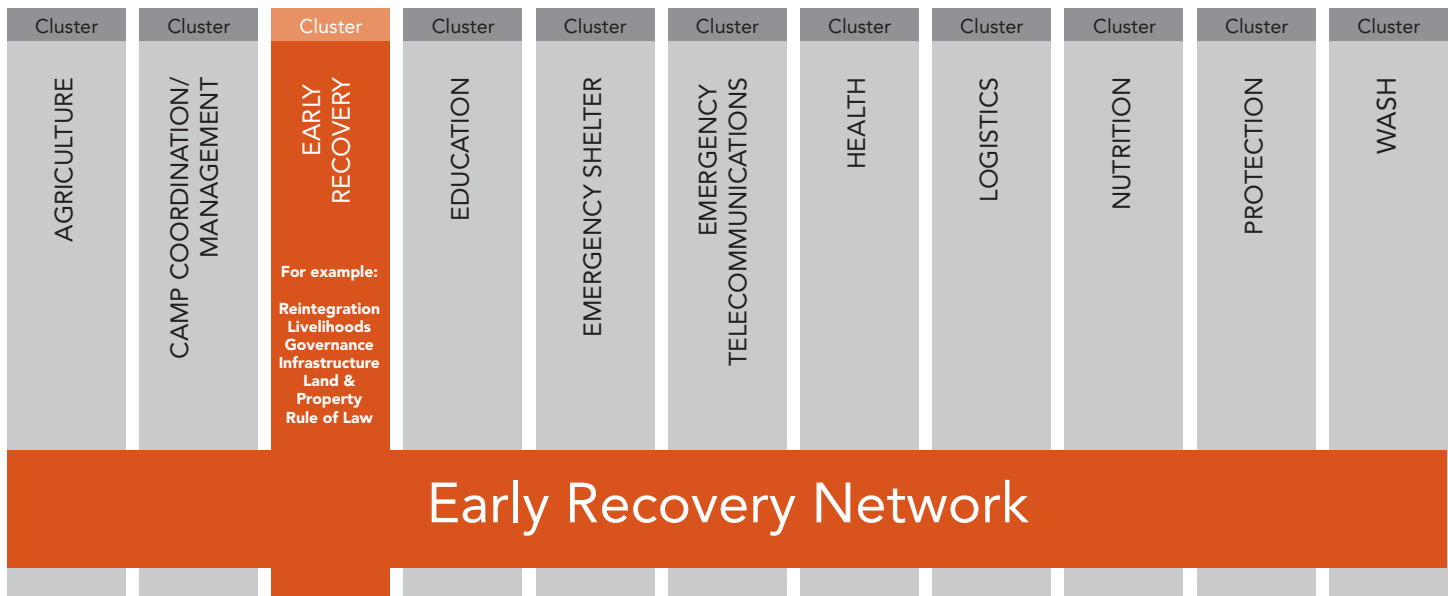
The early recovery process is multidimensional. Early recovery activities are often just one element of the overall work being carried out by clusters. But at the same time, these activities are also early recovery activities in their own right. To address this, a specific coordination approach is required.

The Early Recovery Network is a network of ER focal points from each of the other clusters, working together on the integration, mainstreaming and coordination of early recovery issues within each cluster. The ER Network makes ER a common concern and avoids limiting it to the work of one cluster. Each of the other Inter-Agency Standing Committee clusters on the ground – such as health, protection and education – systematically plan and implement ER interventions within the context of their own specific areas of work.

In addition, 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.

Together, the cluster and network form an L-shaped model of ER coordination (see diagram overleaf). 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 ER effort (through the vertical ER Cluster).

¹ Sections I and II have been adapted from the Cluster Working Group on Early Recovery (CWGER) "Guidance Note on Early Recovery."



III. Glossary of frequently used terms in early recovery²

Transition: The period immediately after a disaster or conflict when pre-existing plans and programmes no longer reflect the most pressing priorities.

Livelihood: The means by which an individual or household obtains assets for survival and self-development. Livelihood assets are the tools (skills, objects, rights, knowledge, social capital) applied to enacting the livelihood.

Governance: The exercise of economic, political and administrative authority to manage a country's affairs at all levels. It comprises the mechanisms, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences.

Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA): A process by which the results of assessments undertaken by various actors (i.e. United Nations and World Bank) are integrated with recovery programme planning to develop a comprehensive approach to recovery requirements and priorities. It aims to improve coordination and capacity among the United Nations, the World Bank, the European Commission and other interested recovery stakeholders to support country-level recovery needs assessment, planning and implementation.³

United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF): The common strategic framework for the operational activities of the United Nations system at the country level.

IV. For more information

All cluster information and documents can be found on <http://onerresponse.info>

Key documents to read are:

[Early Recovery Coordination: Frequently Asked Questions](#)

[Guidance Note on Early Recovery](#)

² Source: UNDP unless otherwise indicated.

³ Adapted from the CWGER "Guidance Note on Early Recovery."