INTRODUCTION
As the scale of needs inside Syria continues to grow, and following the adoption of resolutions 2139 and 2165 by the United Nations Security Council, humanitarian actors in Syria, Jordan and Turkey have embarked on a “Whole of Syria” (WoS) approach to improve the coordination, effectiveness and operational reach of their collective responses. Under the WoS approach, health responders in the three hubs (Damascus, Amman and Gaziantep) are working together to ensure that aid is delivered with minimum overlap in a principled and timely manner, and health needs are jointly assessed with priorities identified and health information promptly provided. This is in addition to identifying and following the most appropriate and effective methods of delivery (i.e. cross-line and/or cross-border) to equitably reach people in need across the country.

This newsletter outlines monthly activities and progress against objectives of the Whole of Syria (WoS) Health Sector.

COORDINATION
The WoS Health Sector held an inter-hub coordination meeting in Beirut on 13 – 14 July. This meeting brought the three hubs together to discuss issues where joint-action or coherence was required. Agenda items included standardization of health response indicators, micro-planning, joint-contingency planning for Aleppo and AWD, protection and advocacy, and developing a country-wide distribution plan. Progress was made in ensuring that the three hubs define and measure agreed upon indicators in standardized ways to allow for aggregation of data at the country-wide level.

INTEGRATION OF LEBANON AND IRAQ ACTORS
The WoS Health Sector has integrated health sector actors conducting cross-border programming from Iraq and Lebanon into the WoS architecture. This allows for expanded geographical coverage and an increased ability to identify gaps and areas of possible overlap. The first phase of integration includes primarily 4Ws reporting. The overall goal is to ensure that priorities, gaps, restraints and forward planning needs specific to XB operations from Iraq and Lebanon are incorporated into WoS health sector strategy and the HNO and HRP for 2016.

PRODUCTS AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT
The WoS information management team is working with the hubs to standardize methodologies for reporting and collecting data across hubs. This includes initiating a 4W template. Initial consultations have posed difficulties due to differences in definitions and measurement of key indicators and information sharing; a balance needs to be struck between anonymous inputs and aggregation at sub-district level against the ability to meaningfully conduct country wide gap analysis and de-confliction. Through increased interactions with hubs, the WoS IM team is building trust and increasing communication, aiming to add value at an operational level.

The IM team aims to have regularly updated WoS health dashboards, situation reports, a newsletter and health topic themed documents being published and universally accessible on the WoS health humanitarian response website.

KEY DATES
ISCCG meeting, Damascus 22 -23 June
WoS Health Sector inter-hub meeting 13 - 14 July
WoS actors to submit JOP draft 16 August
WoS Health Sector inter-hub TVC 20 August
HNO workshop 14 - 15 September

CONTINGENCY PLANNING
The WoS Health Sector is supporting the hubs in joint contingency planning where required. Due to the unpredictable and fluid nature of the conflict, contingency planning has become a cornerstone of the health sector response. Currently, joint planning between Damascus and Gaziantep is being developed for Aleppo and AWD, and other forward planning needs are being identified in response to situations requiring cross-border and cross-line response.

STRATEGIC PLANNING
On 26 June the Strategic Steering Group requested the Inter-Sector-/Cluster Coordination Group (ISCCG) to undertake a light costed prioritization exercise for the remainder of 2015. The WoS team is working with the hubs to identify priority activities and geographic areas in the health response, gaps and constraints and forward planning needs at the country level. The WoS team will then apply agreed-upon criteria to select existing SRP projects that will make up the costing element of this exercise.

HUMANITARIAN PROGRAM CYCLE (HPC)
The WoS Health Sector is participating in the Whole of Syria Assessments (WOSA) process. Through analysis of WOSA findings and other existing sources of health information (EWARN/S, HeRAMS, 4Ws, Area of Origin, NPM) the Sector will formulate the Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) and the health sector component of the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) for 2016. Efforts are being made to ensure that the HPC process is inclusive of hubs and partners’ needs, and better able to capture the full scope of the health response in Syria compared to previous years.