

**Terms of Reference**  
**Humanitarian Coordination Task Team (HCTT)**  
**(Under the Local Consultative Group on Disaster Emergency Response (LCG DER))**

**Background**

The LCG Working Group on Disaster and Emergency Response (DER) is strengthening its ability to respond to the need for a better coordination of disaster management in Bangladesh. The LCG DER includes representation of all key stakeholders and is the central forum for Government and its partners to take strategic decisions and share ideas and information on disaster management. Being one of many thematic working groups of the LCG, the DER is mandated to ensure effective coordination of the national and international stakeholders in the broader scope of disaster management (risk reduction, preparedness, relief/response, and recovery/rehabilitation).

In this context, it is important to leverage and build on the full potential of GoB/Development Partners Joint Cooperation Strategy/LCG relevant thematic working groups—which are linked up to government’s development planning and coordination framework—as well as the several already-existing humanitarian coordination forums. The link with the LCG working groups can ensure full-cycle disaster management (including Disaster Risk Reduction) by strengthening links to development cooperation between development partners and GoB (JCS/LCG), and GoB’s major planning instruments (the 6<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan and Outline Perspective Plan). This link increases focus, efficiency and reduces the possibility of duplication of efforts in different fora.

The Standing Orders on Disasters (SODs) outline the way the government will respond to large scale disasters; the role of the DER is seen as being one of ensuring that the efforts of the international humanitarian community and non-government actors are coordinated within themselves as well as with government efforts.

**Rationale**

Against this backdrop, ensuring a coordinated humanitarian response to disasters requires a specific focus to ensure special attention and functional mechanism towards adequate preparedness before, an effective humanitarian response during, as well as early recovery after disaster strikes. This includes addressing the need for mechanisms for promoting collective preparedness, making rapid decisions, triggering humanitarian response, coordinating humanitarian actions, and sustaining recovery efforts. Such mechanisms must be able to respond to large scale disasters but, more importantly, to invoke the coordinated response amidst the typical uncertainty associated with the majority of Bangladesh’ disaster events including the slow onset, localized and small to medium scale disaster events.

Utilizing the cluster approach is one way of the international community coordinating with the government and other key stakeholders along sector lines. Having clear linkages between the clusters and the LCG thematic working groups increases focus, efficiency and reduces the risk of duplication of efforts. To this end, the DER considered it necessary to establish a forum dedicated to strengthening the humanitarian coordination.

The formation of a Humanitarian Coordination Task Team (HCTT) under the DER aims to be a coordination platform to strengthen the collective capacity of government, national and international

actors to ensure effective humanitarian preparedness for, response to, and recovery from the impacts of, disaster in Bangladesh.

The HCTT will act as an advisory group to the DER providing advice, taking forward agreed actions on behalf of, and feeding back to, the wider LCG DER group. Concurrently the Team also acts as coordination platform of the thematic clusters.

### **Key Functions:**

Working under the direct guidance of the DER joint chairmanship of the Secretary DMRD/MoFDM and the UNRC, the key functions of the Humanitarian Coordination Task Team (HCTT) of the LCG DER would include but not be limited to the following:

#### *As an advisory body to the LCG/DER*

1. Provide policy advisory on humanitarian – related matters to the broader disaster management and development policy forums
2. Facilitate decision making at the central level particularly in cases of slow onset, localized and/or small to medium scale disaster events where government policy decisions are required to coordinate the local and international agencies and or organizations that plan to or already responding.
3. Monitor on behalf of, and feed information to, the DER leaders and plenary on the status of humanitarian preparedness, response and recovery as well as lessons generated from humanitarian coordination.

#### *As a coordination platform of humanitarian thematic clusters*

1. Formulate and formally adopt minimum requirements for the clusters' preparedness, response and recovery considering the country context and technical and globally established standards.
2. Facilitate the coordination of clusters' activity and/or operation planning, implementation, and monitoring
3. Provide secretarial and common services for the inter and cross-clusters matters particularly but not limited to administrative, logistics, information management and reporting, needs assessment
4. Ensure the adequate technical capacity of secretariat and the clusters and facilitate the addressing of the identified gaps.
5. Liaison and brokerage of technical guidance and support among clusters access and, as appropriate, the regional and global sources
6. Facilitate the adoption of, and contingency planning for, the most critical humanitarian response preparedness tasks particularly involving the coordination of government and national / international capacities
7. Act as an inter-cluster coordination meeting (ICCM) in the immediate onset of humanitarian response when requested by DER Chair/Co-chair.

### **Key principles:**

The HCTT will abide by the following principles:

1. Technical competence as demonstrated by clusters' possession and /or access to technical capacities, methodologies and resources in accordance to the agreed minimum standards

2. Inclusiveness to ensure the effective leveraging from the convergence of the government, national, and international sectoral/technical actors
3. Consistency with humanitarian principles throughout the policy advocacy, planning and implementation of preparedness, response, and recovery
4. Multi-level coordination involving the clear, timely and inclusive information flow and feedback mechanisms and decision making within and between the LCG DER and clusters
5. Leadership, predictability and accountability of the clusters through clear designation of cluster lead agencies/organisations, presence of strategic / action plans, and clear line of reporting and accountability according to the agreed minimum standards
6. Flexibility and speed in communicating, meeting, analyzing need and making recommendations, particularly during times of disaster.

**Modus operandi:**

1. The HCTT is jointly coordinated by two officers each one is designated by, and thus jointly reporting directly to, the LCG DER Chair/Co-Chair.
2. HCTT meetings are called and facilitated jointly by the designated officers or, as necessary, by either one with the consent of the other
3. Key DER members will be considered members of the HCTT, i.e. donors representatives (ECHO, DFID); INGOs (3 members), and BDPC – national NGOs representative
4. The HCTT facilitates the interactions amongst the clusters and through the DER with the other LCG Working Groups
5. Leadership of clusters will be assumed by government agencies and the international counterpart agencies based on their formal and, as appropriate, their global mandates, readiness and / or precedence to lead, and comparative advantage in technical capacities related to the particular cluster's technical subject matters.
6. Clusters are established for the priority sectors while other sectors will be established, or as appropriate, to be rejuvenated from the existing ones as determined by the HCTT and agreed in the LCG DER.
7. In the pilot phase, the standing clusters, linked to their respective LCGs with the lead agencies from the side of the international counterparts would include but need not be restricted to the following:
  - Food Security (FAO/WFP)
  - Education (UNICEF)
  - Early Recovery (UNDP)
  - Water, Sanitation and Hygiene – WASH (UNICEF)
  - Shelter (UNDP lead, with IFRC as convenor at times of humanitarian response)
  - Logistics (WFP)
8. The clusters have their primary relationship within the HCTT and, as applicable, also relate with their respective counterpart thematic LCG working groups initially to include the LCG working groups on Health, Agriculture/Food, Education, Water and Sanitation, and Poverty Reduction.
9. The HCTT facilitates the linking with external and global resources for clusters that are to be established which do not have corresponding LCG Working Groups namely Shelter and Logistics clusters.
10. A meeting will be called if requested by two or more members of the HCTT.
11. The HCTT and Clusters, during preparedness phase, meet on monthly basis, or more often as needed, particularly to ensure establishment of a consistent and improved humanitarian coordination and disaster preparedness system. During disasters, HCTT will meet immediately and as needed throughout the response.

**Membership and relationship with clusters:**

1. The lead agencies are regarded as standing members. The lead agency designates an officer as a “Cluster Coordinator” to carry out the day-to-day management of the cluster
2. Interested agencies are to express their interest for membership to the cluster lead agency for the approval of the cluster meeting
3. Cluster member agencies are expected to attend regular meetings, abide the adopted minimum standards, and assume particular tasks as agreed in the respective clusters

**Closing provision**

The first 6 months of 2012 is considered a pilot phase to establish, assess the function and effectiveness of the HCTT. Indicative performances for this phase include:

1. Establishment/rejuvenation of key clusters (5 linked to LCG plus the stand alone ones),
2. Development of clusters’ ToR and membership guidelines,
3. Adoption of mechanisms for building build trust and partnerships,
4. Development of operational guidelines through an inclusive process,
5. Support the effective implementation of the Standing Orders on Disasters,
6. Conduct coordination meeting on monthly basis, or more often as required, to monitor progress.

Dhaka, 10<sup>th</sup> April 2012.