



Early Recovery Cluster

Proceedings:

Lessons Learned and Road Ahead

25 April 2024
Kathmandu, Nepal



1. Setting context

The humanitarian coordination architecture in Nepal is led-by the Government of Nepal via 11 clusters and formal inter-cluster working groups on information management, community engagement (accountability to affected populations), cash, and gender in humanitarian action. Under the guidance of the Resident Coordinator, the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) is responsible for the implementation of the international community's inter-agency disaster preparedness and response activities in Nepal. The Early Recovery Cluster (ERC) at the federal level is led by the Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration (MoFAGA) and at the provincial level, it is led by various ministries and co-leads at the federal and provincial tier is UNDP.

The ERC cluster aims to provide support on resumption of livelihoods and income general opportunities; and rehabilitate essential community infrastructures, offering local employment opportunities through cash for work mechanisms and unconditional cash transfers, where needed.

2. Recent Interventions

The ER Cluster was re-activated, following the Western Nepal Earthquake on 3rd November 2023, at the national level via the Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration (MOFAGA), Kathmandu and held its first meeting on 6 November 2023. A subsequent meeting took place on 1 April 2024.

Some key interventions in response to the earthquakes in Jajarkot District, led by Ministry of Industry Tourism Forest & Environment in Karnali Province include:

- Supported debris clearance of over 400 households in Berekot RM, Nalgad Municipality, Bheri Municipality in Jajarkot and Aathbishkot RM in Rukum West districts as part of the Cash for Work (CfW) programme.
- Completed the construction of Type 2 Temporary Learning Centers (TLCs) and toilets.
- Supported 220 households, especially pregnant women, lactating mother and people with disability through Cash Voucher Assistance in Ward 1, 2,3 and 4, at Bheri Municipality.
- Deployed psychosocial counsellors to provide psychosocial support in the earthquake affected areas.
- Provided training on temporary shelter construction as well as entry of beneficiary data entry in the BIPAD portal.

Though the recent interventions were effective, however a need for reflection and to further improve was realized. In this context, an ERC workshop was organized to further consolidate these interventions and identify concrete way forward.

3. Objective of the workshop

The overall objective of the workshop was to jointly discuss past interventions by ER cluster and identify priorities for further strengthening. The specific objectives of the workshop were:

- To stock take of the Early Recovery Cluster response to the recent disasters including the Jajarkot earthquake of 2023 and draw key lessons.
- To jointly discuss and identify priorities of the Early Recovery Cluster and key actions for cluster strengthening.

The agenda of the workshop is annexed ([Annex 1](#)). The government and development partners were the participants of this workshop and list of the participants is annexed ([Annex 2](#)).

4. Opening Session

The session began with opening remarks by Mr. Mohan Ghimire, Under Secretary, MoFAGA who welcomed all the participants and thanked the ERC members for all their successful on-going (as well as completed) interventions at the ground. He further shared that MoFAGA is always ready to coordinate and guide along the way by recommending methods and approaches for members to adapt in their project/intervention implementation. Following this, Mr. Sudhir Kumar, Risk Management Specialist, UNDP shared the objectives and its linkages with the agenda of the workshop. He gave a detailed description as to how different topics through discussions and group work would meet these objectives of the workshop. He further highlighted that the solutions to further improving ERC functioning will be jointly identified.

5. ERC Coordination and Response to the Jajarkot and other recent disasters

This session was conducted using the marketplace approach where the participants were divided into two groups to identify the good practices, challenges and gaps of the five thematic areas: debris management, information management and support systems, governance support, livelihoods/cash for work and disaster risk reduction/preparedness in view of the ERC coordination and response to the Jajarkot and recent disaster. Each group presented their identification under each thematic areas. The details of the groups work are in [Annex 3](#).

6. ERC Priorities and Way Forward

Mr. Santosh Dahal, RCO began this session by setting the context of ERC in Cluster System in Nepal. Through open house discussion, this session focused on four sub-themes:

1. Identify priority thematic areas/sub-thematic interventions of ERC
2. Focal point/alternative focal point of ERC members
3. Improving ERC reporting and visibility and regularizing meetings
4. Linkages between federal and provincial ER cluster

Identify priority thematic areas/sub-thematic interventions of ERC

In this discussion session, the participants shared that psychosocial counselling and cross cutting are two thematic areas that need to be added as Early Recovery Cluster thematic areas. Furthermore, sub-thematic interventions under the existing five thematic areas were also suggested for effective implementation of ERC objectives. Details in [Annex 4](#).

Focal Points/Alternative Focal Point of ERC

The cluster members agreed that on three things:

- ERC Cluster membership needs to be defined and a focal point and an alternative focal point needs to be identified.

- Membership criteria need to be discussed by MoFAGA specifying key criteria to be a part of the ERC.
- For agencies, which provide specific short-term/one-time support in an emergency will be acknowledged in the provincial ERC updates.

Improving ERC Reporting and Visibility, and Regularizing Meetings

The members came to an agreement that the cluster lead and co-lead should meet frequently. Whereas the cluster should meet on a quarterly basis, and one of these meetings should mandatorily be a pre-monsoon meeting. For visibility, cluster members can send in pictures or updates of their work to the cluster lead, by copying in the cluster co-lead.

Linkages Between Federal and Provincial ERC Cluster

There is scope to re-vitalize the ERC cluster at the provincial level and create linkages with the federal level. Therefore, the cluster leads at each province needs to be identified.

7. Closing remarks

Mr. Mohan Ghimire, Under Secretary, MoFAGA mentioned that he thoroughly enjoyed the workshop as he was able to dive into extensive discussions on various themes and topics. He shared that since Nepal has a diverse geography with different geographical locations vulnerable to different kinds of potential disasters, for example, in Madesh province, dry season and drought due to pre-monsoon leads to forest fires. He further emphasized on the importance and need for preparedness and asked the cluster members to also prioritize on preparedness activities/interventions along with other interventions.

Annex 1

Workshop on

Lessons learned from the recent disaster response and road ahead for the Early Recovery Cluster (ERC), Nepal

Date: 23 April 2024

Time: 1:00 pm to 5:30 pm

Hotel Himalaya, Lalitpur

Agenda

- 13:00-14:00 : Registration and lunch
- 14:00-14:30 : Opening session**
- Opening remarks by MoFAGA, ERC Lead
 - Setting agenda by UNDP, ERC Co-lead
 - Introduction of participants
 - Group photo
- 14:30-15:30 : ERC coordination and response to the Jajarkot & other recent disasters**
- Short presentation by ERC members
 - Discussion to draw lessons: good practices, challenges and gaps
- 15:30-17:15 : ERC priorities and next steps**
- Setting context: ERC in Cluster system
 - Identify priority thematic/sub-thematic interventions of ERC
 - Focal points/alternative focal point of ERC members
 - Improving ERC Reporting and meetings
 - Linkages between federal and provincial ERC cluster
 - Monsoon EPR
- 17:15-17:30 : Closing remarks



Attendance Sheet for Early Recovery Cluster Workshop

Date: 25 April 2024	Time: 1:00 PM - 5:30 PM	Venue: Hotel Himalaya, Kathmandu, Nepal
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Attendance:

S.No.	Name	Designation/Institution	sex	Age Group	Disability Status	Contact No.	Email	Signature and Consent for Photos
1	Udaya Bikram Thapa	Sr. Infra Specialist/ World Vision	M	40	N/A	9852680087	udaya_thapa@wvi.org	
2	Krishna Raj Kaphle		M	55	N/A	9851003967	krishna.raj.kaphle@undp.org	
3	Vijay Raj Pant	External Relation Specialist Plan International	M	47	N/A	9851147952	vijayraj.pant@plan-international.org	
4	Mohan K Ghimire	Under Secretary	M	49	N/A	9851198271	ghimiremohan68@gmail.com	
5	Santosh Kumar Khatri	Section Officer	M	36	N/A	9851211956	santosh43.sk@gmail.com	
6	Jay Ram Upreti	Section Officer	M	40	N/A	9851091534	avodjaya@gmail.com	
7	Manish Raj Timsina	Shelter Coordinator	M	38	N/A	9843588311	manish.timsina@mcs.org	
8	Man Bahadur Saru	S.O, MoFA	M	35	N/A	9867928922	manb.saru@gmail.com	
9	Sudhir Kumar	RA&S, UNDP	M	47	N/A	9801465020	sudhir.kumar@undp.org	
10	Pragati Manandhar	Technical Assistant, UNDP	F	34	N/A	9801040643	pragati.manandhar@undp.org	
11	Santosh Dahal	UNRCO	M	38	N/A	9851062332	satosh.dahal@un.org	
12	Gaeta Parajuli	MoFA	F	46	N/A	9841880634	geetaparajuli00@gmail.com	
13	Rosy Bhalla	MoFA	F	N/A	N/A	9841251415	rosematygula2014@gmail.com	
14	Janak Raj Sharma	MoFA	M	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
15	Rina Maharjan	MoFA	F	38	N/A	9841271273	rinamaharjan2080@gmail.com	
16	Asim Shrestha	Emergency / UNICEF	M	N/A	N/A	9801024987	ashrestha@unicef.org	
17	Anankeshor Sharma	UNDP SUPER	M	50	N/A	9841268150	anankeshor.sharma@undp.org	
18	Himashree Mala	Communication Associate	F	29	N/A	9813580252	himashree.mala@undp.org	
19	Siddhartha Sharma	N.P.C/UNDP	M	44	N/A	9851121071	siddhartha.sharma@undp.org	
20	Ayushma Basnyat	Communication and Outreach Officer/UNDP	F	32	N/A	9860311252	ayushma.basnyat@undp.org	
21	Sunil Kapali	UNDP SUPER	M	45	N/A	9841456735	sunilkapali78@gmail.com	
22	Krishna Maharjan	UNDP SUPER	M	N/A	N/A	9851010737	N/A	
23	Akkal Thapa	UNDP SUPER	M	N/A	N/A	9843194748	N/A	

Annex 3

Themes	Good Practices	Challenges	Gaps
Debris Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the aftermath of the Jajarkot earthquake, humanitarian agencies and volunteers mobilized themselves to provide immediate search and rescue as well as offering crucial support to those affected. • Cash-for-work initiatives, particularly focused on debris removal, were instrumental in delivering immediate relief to impacted communities. • Additionally, the presence and efforts of security forces to the response efforts was noteworthy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing space and resources was a challenge. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal provisions for debris management could be clearer with a guideline. • There is need for increased awareness of safety measures and practices for debris management.
Information Management & Support System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing a one-door policy and providing regular updates on activities. • UNDP deploying 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There's a risk of information manipulation, possibly due to political influence, and a shortage of human resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information validation needs to be done. • Ethics and morality (awareness) – people wanted compensation for completed damaged houses when their

	dedicated staff and developing well-designed formats for data collection.		houses were partially or damaged very little. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information validation is essential. There is a need for transparent procedures and rigorous monitoring.
Governance Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legal framework and policies are in place. The service delivery did not stop despite the earthquakes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of coordination, including vertical and horizontal – intergovernmental and inter-organization coordination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invest in preparedness. There is scope for more clarity in the role division.
Livelihood/Cash for Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good initiative that provides support to the community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of coordination in cash for work distribution. There is lack of livelihood diversity and opportunities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We do not have relevant resource for other forms of livelihoods, to be more innovative than seed distribution for example.
Disaster Risk Reduction/Preparedness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Having well drafted and clear policies in place. Community based organizations are empowered. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are still challenges in store. Fund mobilization – there is less provision for preparedness as people feel it is not an important area for fund mobilization. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholder and resource mapping/remapping is necessary after a disaster. We respond in nearby places and don't go to remote areas We haven't prepared warehouses and open spaces for stock piling. Resource – though we have resources, we do not utilize it for preparedness as they don't see it as priority

Annex 4

	Early Recovery Cluster Key Themes	Sub themes
1.	Debris Management	Debris clearance/disposal of debris safely
		1.2 Establishment of temporary storage sites
		1.3 Recycling Materials/Reuse of salvage materials for reconstruction
		1.4 Awareness and community sensitization program /locally adopted practices and technologies.
		1.5 Standardize cash for work
		1.6 Local level guidelines
2.	Information Management and System Support	2.1 Need Assessment
		2.2 Communication and coordination
		2.3 Data management and validation
		2.4 Resource allocation - system generation
		2.5 Information flow diagram (of/between different federal, provincial and local government)
		2.6 Dedicated trained resources/capacity building
3.	Governance Support	3.1 Technical Assistance
		3.2 Training
		3.3 Prefab construction/assemble structures
		3.4 System strengthening, link DDR to recovery
		3.5 Digitalization of administration, communication, and legal process/systems
		3.6 Policies and guidelines
4.	Livelihood/Cash for Work	4.1 Long term livelihood
		4.2 Cash for work/National guideline
		4.3 Temporary employment opportunities
		4.4 Debris Clearance
		4.5 Infrastructure repair
		4.6 Environmental rehabilitation
		4.7 Strengthening livelihood by linking market to sustainable and climate sensitive livelihood options
		4.8 Social security
		4.9 Resourcing mapping and regular updating
		4.10 Post-pandemic support
5.	Disaster Risk Reduction/Preparedness	5.1 Strengthening infrastructure
		5.2 Early warning systems
		5.3 Enhancing community resilience,
		5.4 Development planning and policies.
		5.5 Monsoon preparedness and response plan
		5.6 Stock piling
		5.7 Allocation of funds from regular budget
		5.8 Capacity building at local level
		5.9 Psycho-social counselling
		5.10 Cross-cutting issues

