



Standard Operating Procedures for In-country Coordination and Communication for Multi-Year Programmes – ECW engagement

Background

Critical to the success of ECW is the extent to which ECW is implemented in the field and results are ensured. This requires clear SOPs for implementing and monitoring ECW financed programmes, and for managing the risks inherent in ECW's ambitious, innovative approach in high-risk environments. Partnership building is critical to ensure results by using a whole government approach, a UN system integrated approach and getting civil society and private sector on board as partners in driving ECW goals.

For the ECW Team, it will be critical to work in an integrated, complementary and well-coordinated manner prior, during and after the mission-engagement in the field.

For the ECW field mission team, the entry point at the field level in the selected countries is proposed to be the RC/HC and her/his offices¹. This will allow ECW to leverage UN field coordination architectures (UNCT, HCT, Education Cluster, LEGs, UNDAF Results/working groups, LACs, the Govt etc.). Firstly, ECW field missions should aim at coordinating with the HCs/RCs and UNCTs to advance the ECW goals. Secondly, ECW staff, in coordination with the UN and partners in the field should identify essential actors and partners to ensure multi partners' synergies in driving forward ECW goals. Linking up with the UNDAF results groups and Humanitarian clusters such as the Education Cluster, the Protection Cluster, Livelihoods, etc. will be of essence as these all may play a critical role in contributing to getting children and youth back to school.

Furthermore, the ECW mission's aim is to leverage resources and partnerships, making sure that partners know how to access ECW funding, as well as understanding what is required from their side. This is instrumental if ECW is to reach 75 million affected children and youth by 2030, and the funding gap of US\$ 8.5 billion is to be bridged.

For the ECW team engaging at field level it will be important to identify how to align ECW goals into the HRPs, UNDAFs and National plans and strategies.

In the interaction with the UNCTs/HCTs/Govt, Sector WGs, and LACs the objective is to explain what ECW is about, how it can be of support in supporting access of children and youth into the education system. In this respect, guidelines, templates and SOPs should be at hand and shared, preferably a **readily available document** should be available so that people understand how to access the resources, and the required engagement from their side.

¹ While the RC is the main and default entry point for ECW communications with the field, it may be decided by the ECW Secretariat Director, that other partners could be, in some instances, the entry points, as it is the case for DFID in the case of Uganda.

Engaging with and relating to the field partners prior, during and after the ECW engagement/mission

1. Engagement Process

The ECW engagement (pre, during and after the field mission) comprises three distinct phases that have been designed to help identify and finance the most appropriate proposal to deliver the objectives of ECW in a given context/country, while mitigating potential risks. Each of these three phases will involve a number of steps and tasks, which are detailed in the SOPs (below), as well as templates and presentations that support ECW and partners in developing the proposal and getting it financed and implemented.

- Once the decision has been taken by the ECW Director/Ex-Com on the country, ECW will facilitate, guide and support the background analysis and statistics of the country context, review the HRP, the UNDAF, the National Development Plans and Strategies to understand how they link to the objectives of ECW and to the development of the country specific proposal (using a participatory approach).
- Key meetings will be organized through the UN RC/HC and her/his office and include relevant government, civil society, donors, UN stakeholders, Education Cluster and local education sector group (where these exist), and private sector.
- On the first visit, the ECW field mission team is expected to be in the country for a period of one working week, starting with a briefing with the RC/HC and a debrief session prior to leaving the country. Within this first week, a larger engagement process with various stakeholders will kick-off. This engagement will seek to support (during the first mission week and then throughout the program design process):
 - Clear understanding from partners of ECW's core functions and strategic priorities
 - Commitment from partners to new ways of working, in line with ECW's mandate (and WHS outcomes) – partnership, joint multi-year plans and programming bridging humanitarian and development, local capacity-strengthening etc.
 - Commitment and buy-in from government and international community to drive forward ECW joint programme, including design, co-financing and implementation
 - Collective assessment of the context - political, conflict, development, humanitarian, education, human rights, gender etc. – and priorities for ECW multi-year programme
 - Collective assessment of capacity on the ground and identification of potential grantees and implementing partners for ECW program, as well as capacity gaps
 - Collective assessment of the major risks and mitigation (using guidance to be developed by Secretariat)
- The ECW field mission will culminate in the identification of the entry points for the proposal, the delineation/formation of a working team (Action Plan), supported by ECW staff and consultants.
- The process of proposal elaboration (for MY) is expected to continue over the next 8 to 12 weeks with the support and guidance of the ECW Team and fielded consultants (that stay behind). Based on expertise and interest, some countries may be well positioned to coordinate and facilitate the development of the proposal. The process should be based on a template provided by ECW, including disbursement options.
- The ECW field support team that stays behind to facilitate the development of the proposal will follow the framework outlined in the ECW SOPs and guidelines, using relevant templates and tools, a consistent methodology with sufficient flexibility to focus the team's engagement in support of the specific demands of each country.
- ECW support is not limited to a one-week mission to kick-off the process (planning and organization). To move the agenda forward subsequent focus will be placed on facilitating the design

of the proposal, the implementation modalities etc., thus the ECW team will need to make itself available throughout the following 8-12 weeks to support the partners as necessary.

- It is anticipated that within the 8 -12 weeks the proposal is elaborated, and the technical and qualitative review is conducted by ECW at central/HQ level.
- After approval of the proposal by ECW Secretariat or Ex-Com (as necessary), it is submitted to the ECW Grants Manager for processing, allocation and disbursement of funds.
- The above efforts are critical given increased partners' expectations, including donors as well as ECW's aspirations to deliver on its own objectives with far-reaching impact.

2. Approach

The recommended approach is that prior to ECW field mission it is necessary to work in close collaboration with the RC/HC office to perform a country context/landscape analysis, with a focus on ECW goals related bottlenecks, risks, opportunities, strengths, weaknesses as well as potential partners.

Once in the field, the ECW Team, in close coordination with the RC/HC Office, will meet with the partners, share the ECW information kit, conduct a workshop (as needed) to familiarize partners with ECW objectives and literature, contribute to developing an actionable proposal and ensure timelines are determined collectively.

It is envisaged that the ECW Field Mission team will undertake a 1-week mission and provide subsequent support virtually, with the possibility of placing a dedicated ECW programme expert in the country to support the in-country partners in developing the project proposal.

The exact dates of the mission must be communicated with the RC/HC office, Government and other partners. The ECW Field Mission team will be composed of a lead member and co-lead alongside individuals with strong relevant experience. Some members of the Field Mission team will remain for about one month to coordinate with the national counterparts and through the RC/HC.

The mission and engagement costs are borne by ECW, with the understanding that **costs involved in running meetings or workshops will be borne by the RC/HC and partners** on the ground.

Results from the mission will feed into an action plan, which will be implemented jointly by the local partners.

Final proposals will be provided to the ECW Secretariat at central-NY (Ex-Com, if necessary) for quality control, review and eventual approval. The ECW Secretariat will assess programmes based on a checklist of criteria including: thorough context analysis; demonstration of inclusive partnership; alignment with ECW strategic priorities and core functions; appropriately ambitious indicators on beneficiary education outcomes (ie. not just inputs); robust risk register capturing key risks and mitigation and M&E framework; value for money; and assessment of capacity in the field to implement, along with proposals, as needed, to strengthen this.

After the proposal is approved and funding is disbursed, ECW must ensure that results are achieved and risks are managed through rigorous monitoring and steering of the implementation, including target-based reporting. Once implementation has started, the ECW Country Focal Point (and/or the programme officer assigned to the country) is expected to check in with country partners at least once per month and conduct a country visit at least once a year.

ECW may recruit field monitoring and reporting expertise, in-country, to ensure the monitoring of activities and results carried out by the various partners, which are expected to be reflected in one logical framework to enable ECW to understand if it is achieving its targets in the country.

3. Phases

Overall, the Country Level Engagement, i.e. prior, during and after, will follow distinct phases, ranging from the development of an action plan to the elaboration of the ECW country specific project proposal, and the submission of the proposal and its eventual approval.

The plan will serve as an actionable roadmap allowing field partners and ECW to develop the proposal and strategy that will ensure delivery of the ECW intended objectives.

3.1 Phase 1: Prior to the ECW mission (one month timeline)

key deliverable-action to be taken	Responsible party [lead (in red) and supporters]	Timeframe
1. Based on EXCOM decided priority countries list, ECW decides on the country to be targeted (for first response and/or Multi-Year) and gives the greenlight to engage pro-actively with that country and related partners.	ECW Director, Educ. Economist, with support of Country Lead and Co-Lead	Upon approval by Ex-com and ECW Director
2. Contact with the RC/HC in the field.	ECW Director	2 days after Country is approved
3. Determination of mission team composition.	Country Lead and Co-Lead with support by Chief of Staff	
4. Develop (or update) and adapt (to country context) ECW mission presentation (power point), in line with ECW presentation template. <i>N.B. The ECW presentation will consist of a summary description of the overall mission objectives, description of deliverables, ECW goals and indicators, a description of the process of the elaboration of the country proposal and of the steps and processes leading to the approval of the proposal. The presentation will also include timelines, provide an overview of key meetings with national and international partners in the country as well as the expected content of the end of mission action plan that will serve as the guiding tool for ECW and the country partners in elaborating the proposal.</i>	ECW Field mission team, the Country Lead and Co-lead, with support by ECW Communications Officer	Within 5 working days, after decision to support Country, and contact has been made with target country
5. Develop, update and make available the ECW information kit, comprised of the ECW brochure, relevant templates (<i>project proposal template, mission Terms of Reference, ECW goals and indicators, ECW proposal elaboration action plan, guidance on risk management etc.</i>).	ECW Communications team, with support of ECW Field mission team	Within 5 working days, after decision to support Country
6. Produce a one or two pager of the Country context analysis (with important statistics and indicators) to provide the ECW Field Mission Team with essential data of the Country and linkages to ECW objectives. <i>N.B. This information/analysis will be further strengthened by data from the partners in the field. It is anticipated that a high level of interaction is maintained between ECW and relevant partners in the country throughout the process. The role of the ECW is to crystallise and extract team-based knowledge, identify bottlenecks and problems and ensure the in-depth review of the country context.</i>	ECW Economist & M&E, and Reporting Officer, with support of CO lead	2 weeks after decision to support Country has been communicated and contact has been made with target country
7. Coordination on and determination of mission dates, in partnership with the RC-HC and related Office staff as well as definition of the detailed agenda of meetings (based on mission agenda template to be provided), which are expected to be firmed up by the time the team arrives in the field.	Country Lead and co-lead, Field mission Team; with support by Chief of Staff	To be conducted within 2 weeks from decision to support Country - in parallel to other tasks
8. Perform travel, visa and administrative arrangements as well as other operational requirements (hotels etc.).	Management Support Unit, with support by Field Mission Team	Timeframe is provided by Country lead and co-lead

3.2 Phase 2: During the ECW mission

Key deliverable-action to be taken	Responsible party (lead and supporters)	Timeframe
1. Arrival and checking into the security approved hotel.	ECW Field Mission Lead, with support by all other mission members and Management Support Unit	Day 1, upon arrival
2. Security briefing.	ECW Field Mission Lead, with support by UNDSS Security Advisor, all other mission members and Office of RC-HC	Day 1, upon arrival
3. Enter briefing with the RC-HC and relevant RC-HC Office staff. <i>N.B. During this meeting the ECW Country mission focal point will ensure that the RC-HC and relevant office staff are briefed on ECW, reminded of the content of the shared mission TORs, with a special focus on deliverables, process and key meetings. It is also expected that the mission will already have a mission agenda comprised of the meetings scheduled and firmed up, ref. to meeting with the UNCT, meetings with government, civil society, private sector, international community counterparts, coordinating education groups, field visits, etc. In addition, the RC-HC should also be requested to provide, prior to the end of the mission, the list of focal point persons that will be part of the core ECW proposal drafting team.</i>	ECW Field Mission Lead and Co-lead with support by all other mission members and Office of RC-HC	Day 1, upon arrival or on first working day, if mission arrival in the country falls during holidays or weekend.
4. Conduct meetings with all relevant partners, as per the firmed-up agenda. <i>These meetings will be essential for communicating ECW's strategic priorities and core functions and for setting the agenda for the follow-on work, as set out above under "Engagement Process". An initial analysis of context, information and data collection is essential, as well as a survey and review of partners' capacities.</i>	ECW Field Mission Lead and Co-lead, other team members and Office of RC-HC	Days 2 to 6.
5. Debriefing with the RC-HC followed by a debriefing with the Govt and relevant agencies and partners, as may be agreed with the RC-HC. <i>N.B. The debriefing sessions are intended to firm up commitment towards the elaboration of the ECW proposal, review the composition of members of the core proposal elaboration team, and define and agree on the post mission action plan content, defining timelines, responsibilities and expectations. Template of the action plan to be provided to the RC-HC.</i>	ECW Field Mission Lead, with support by all other mission members and Office of RC-HC	Day 7
6. Departure. <i>(Programme Officers may remain to facilitate the proposal development process)</i>	ECW Field Mission Lead, and co-lead.	Day 7 or 8
7. Back to Office; mission report finalized and sent to the Director of the ECW Secretariat.	ECW Field Mission Lead and co-lead, with support by all other mission members	Day 3 after returning from the mission
8. Programme team members remain in the country for up to 8 weeks to facilitate the development and finalization of the MY proposal.	ECW Field Mission Team	Up to 8 weeks in total in the field

3.3 Phase 3: After the ECW mission

Key deliverable-action to be taken	Responsible party (lead and supporters)	Timeframe
Ensure technical support, remote assistance and backstopping to the country level project proposal elaboration team.	ECW Field Mission Team, CO Lead, with support by all other ECW units	Within 1-2 month after end of 1 st field mission
Official submission of the project proposal by the CO.	RC-HC or relevant counterpart lead in-country	Preferably 2 months (8 weeks) from the end of the 1 st field mission
Lead the technical revision and quality assurance and control process leading to the for finalisation of the project proposal.	Field Mission Lead and Co-lead, ECW Field team, Education Economist with support by all other ECW units	2 weeks from receiving project proposal draft from RC-HC office
Review and Approve ECW reviewed the project proposal. If proposal is for more than US\$ 3 million ² , submit to the EX-Com for its review and eventual decision and approval.	ECW Director	Within 2 weeks of official receipt from RC-HH or relevant counterpart lead
After Director/Ex-com approval, officially inform the RC-HC and national counterparts of the approval of the project proposal.	ECW Director	One day after receipt of official approval of proposal
Further advance the operational, administrative and programmatic process leading to the signature of financing agreements and implementation of the proposal, in the form of a finalized and signed project document and financing agreement.	ECW Country Lead, Grants Management, with support by all other ECW units, the RC-HC and others, as relevant	Within 1 month from moment the RC-HC is informed of approval of the project proposal
Once implementation of the project starts, ensure monitoring by ECW, independently of the monitoring implemented by implementing partners ³ .	ECW recruited Monitoring Officer in the Field, Country lead, Co-lead, Programme Officer with support by all other ECW units	Quarterly
Continuous liaising with Field partners and implementing partners to ensure steering of results.	ECW Country lead, Co-lead, Programme Office, recruited in-country capacity or outsourced capacity, with support by all other ECW units	Once a month

² If proposal is up-to US\$ 3 million, the Director can approve the proposal.

³ Note that for MY programmes, ECW may opt to recruited M&E and Reporting capacity in the field to monitor progress, partners combined achievements and elaborate consolidated reports.