Shelter Cluster Working Group on Predictable Resource Mobilisation

# Introduction

The IASC Cluster Approach Evaluation Phase 2[[1]](#footnote-1) highlighted a number of key areas for improvement within the multilateral humanitarian response system. The formulation of the IASC transformative agenda, finalised in 2012, frames this review by identifying the need to improve the leadership, coordination, and accountability of humanitarian interventions. In recognition of these findings, the Global Shelter Cluster has placed special focus on key elements that should enable **predictable coordination, ensure coherent cluster and operational leadership** at various levels, and improve **the accountability and impact of the cluster on affected populations.**

In the annual Global Shelter Cluster meeting in November 2011, structured feedback from the shelter sector’s leading operational agencies, service providers and donors present called for the establishment of a working group to map existing resources and gaps within the cluster and to explore potential funding sources and mechanisms of prefinancing Shelter Cluster teams. Greater predictability in resource mobilisation will improve the coordination among shelter stakeholders and implementation of shelter operations at country level, in both rapid onset emergencies and protracted crises.

The members of this working group have been IFRC, UNHCR, IOM, UN-HABITAT, CARE-UK, IMPACT and ACTED, all of which are agencies that are currently instrumental in resourcing shelter coordination at the field level in both natural disasters and conflict situations. The needs and gaps identified here by this working group are based on the direct feedback received by the participants in the Global Shelter Cluster on the priorities that they identified for improving shelter coordination and response. It is also informed by the different assessments and evaluations carried out[[2]](#footnote-2) and is in line with the IASC transformative agenda which has been approved by the IASC Principals which includes representatives from the benefitting organizations or consortia to which they belong such as ICVA or InterAction.

# The Shelter Cluster

The leadership of the Global Shelter Cluster is provided by two co-lead agencies: IFRC as convenor in natural disasters and UNHCR as lead in conflict situations. IFRC has been the convener of the Global Shelter Cluster for natural disasters since 2006 and has coordinated country level clusters in 22 emergencies, with a primary focus on coordinating the emergency and transitional phase of a response, at the request of government and national partners. UNHCR assumed the lead of the Global Shelter Cluster for conflict in 2005 and since then has coordinated 19 country-level shelter clusters, some of which are protracted emergencies that have lasted for years such as in Somalia, Afghanistan or Sudan. IOM and UN-HABITAT coordinated the shelter cluster for the first time after the 2005 Pakistan earthquake and IOM has since coordinated the cluster, sometimes for multiple emergencies, in 19 countries while UN-HABITAT has since coordinated the clsuter in 7 countries and provides recovery and reconstruction related advice to the cluster.

The Global Shelter Cluster is comprised of 29[[3]](#footnote-3) agencies (including the cluster co-leads). Country level shelter clusters are currently active in 18 countries, with an additional number of countries with active shelter working groups supported by the cluster co-leads. Agency participation in each of these clusters and working groups usually ranges from 4 to 30 agencies. In large emergencies the number of agencies benefiting from Shelter Cluster services can be as high as 600 agencies as in Haiti or 100 in Pakistan.

The Global Shelter Cluster is structured as follows:

* **Strategic Advisory Group (SAG)**: permanent body that works to advance the cluster strategic direction, overall work plan, and advocacy. The SAG is composed of self-selecting agencies and institutions of the Global Shelter Cluster based on agreed criteria, and reports to the Global Shelter Cluster.
* **Working Groups**: task-oriented and temporary structure with clear executable deliverables that are established by the SAG to address particular identified needs.
* **Communities of Practice**: thematic groups of professional/expert individuals that provide technical and surge support to Global or Country-level clusters, develop "good practices", and address critical issues within their areas of expertise. Their work is not time-bound as they typically support core ongoing cluster functions.
* **Support Team**: a team of dedicated personnel seconded by different cluster partners. This team is the support cell or secretariat of the GSC and is responsible for the day to day running of the GSC. It provides technical and surge support to country level shelter clusters and facilitates the work of the SAG, Working Groups, and Communities of Practice of the Global Shelter Cluster. It also provides inputs to inter-agency discussions and inter-cluster coordination at the global level, and contributes to building capacity and enhancing preparedness.

# Beneficiaries

The ultimate target group and beneficiaries of the Shelter Cluster are the people affected by humanitarian crises, including host communities, whose lives depend on an efficient and effective humanitarian response to their needs.

The direct beneficiaries of the services provided by the Shelter Cluster are its member organisations and other shelter stakeholders at the country and global levels. Participation in the Shelter Cluster at both country and global levels is open to any non-profit organisation working in humanitarian shelter. Beneficiaries are therefore self-selecting and profit from the outputs in different ways.

Additional indirect beneficiaries include:

* Host governments both at the national and local level.
* Other clusters, coordination bodies and interagency initiatives will benefit from the publicly available outputs that are developed by the Cluster.
* National agencies, including RCRC National Societies, who are not routinely part of the shelter cluster but who benefit from the enhanced coordination services.
* Global, regional and national shelter agencies and sector practitioners, including private sector, who are not routinely part of the Shelter Cluster and its preparedness activities but who benefit from the freely available online information, tools and training.
* Academic, professional and technical bodies with whom tools, methodologies, lessons learned and other outputs developed will be shared with or jointly developed.
* Local and international media.
* Refugees involved in UNHCR shelter and settlement projects will benefit because UNHCR will improve the coordination and performance of these interventions using tools, and lessons learned from the Cluster.

# Current Shelter Sector Resources

During 2012 so far, pledges of 247.7 million USD have been made to fund shelter and NFI interventions in emergencies. Of this amount, by October 2012, the shelter sector has received 128.5 million USD in contributions for implementation of shelter and NFI in natural disasters and conflict situations. Among the largest donors are CERF (31.4 million USD), OFDA/USAID (18.7 million USD), Japan (14 million USD), ECHO (13.8 million USD), Norway (11.5 million USD) and private individuals and organisations (8.7 million USD). The largest gap between pledges and actual contributions is due to Common Humanitarian Funds that pledged 25 million for shelter and NFI but only disbursed 2.8 million. Similarily the Emergency Response Fund (OCHA) pledged 4.3 million of which only 400,000 was disbursed.[[4]](#footnote-4)

During the last five years the Shelter Cluster consistently coordinates over 100 million USD per annum[[5]](#footnote-5) worth of shelter interventions and yet receives less than 1% of this amount for the coordination of these services and interventions.

# Core Cluster Services

The key areas to be addressed to ensure **predictable and consistent** **shelter coordination** include:

1. Maintain sufficient shelter **coordination surge capacity** amongst both cluster co-leads and partner agencies for rapid deployment. Predictable, timely and effective shelter cluster coordination at the country level requires the immediate availability of dedicated, trained, and experienced staff to deploy within 72 hours of cluster activation.[[6]](#footnote-6)
2. Provide and maintain common, open-access cluster-related **information management services**, for use by operational personnel at global and field level.
3. Provide the Shelter Cluster with a **predictable and reliable assessment capacity and needs gap analysis** in its responses. This will enable better identification of needs, priorities and strategies, and an overall more effective and efficient shelter-sector response.
4. Provide open-access **online self-learning tools** on shelter coordination and humanitarian shelter response.
5. **Build the capacity** of a wider range of shelter cluster agencies to contribute to shelter cluster coordination at country level, and ensure rostered shelter coordination personnel and key agency personnel responsible for their deployment and support are aware of emerging developments and best practices.
6. Establish **common agreement and standard operating procedures** amongst cluster agencies on the scope of the cluster, minimum requirements for country level cluster leads, defined linkages between country and global level clusters, and the roles and responsibilities of participating cluster agencies.
7. Resource and support country level cluster based **preparedness** and scenario planning.
8. Inform humanitarian shelter sector development through the comparative and systematic **analysis of the impact** of shelter and settlement response interventions and increase accountability.
9. Increase the **participation of operational agencies** within the shelter cluster to actively contribute to the shelter coordination teams at country and global level.

# Shelter Cluster Needs

The following gaps and needs in the provision of cluster services and commitments have been identified for 2013.

**Staffing**

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| **Provide Dedicated Surge Capacity, Coordination and Technical Staff in Support of the Shelter Cluster.** |

To maintain the Support Team of the Global Shelter Cluster. The members of this Support Team are fully dedicated to the support of the cluster in their roles and seconded from different organisations. They ensure techncial and coordination support to the Shelter Cluster and its working groups but also will provide secretariat services to the Strategic Advisory Group (SAG), the main decision making body of the cluster.The structure of the Support Team is the following:

* Two **Deputy Global Shelter Cluster Coordinators** linking the team to the cluster lead agencies.
* Four **Global Focal Points** as standby/surge capacity and support for global cluster preparedness and response coordination.
* Four **Regional Focal Points** hosted by cluster partner agencies as standby/surge capacity and support for country level cluster based preparedness planning.

**Funding**

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| **Establish revolving funds to ensure immediate and consistent shelter cluster team deployments throughout the emergency and early recovery phases of an emergency.** |

To establish a **Global Shelter Coordination Fund** to enable the rapid and predictable deployment of trained shelter coordination personnel from lead and partner agencies. The average calendar year balance of the GSCF needs to be maintained at a minimum of 250,000 Euros.

Resourcing predictable and rapidly deployable coordination capacity to hand over coordination services from the emergency phase to the early recovery phase in an emergency.

**Services**

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| **Provide Information Management Services at Global and Country Level** |

The facilitation of the exchange of information and analytical products between cluster members, other clusters, and other humanitarian partners is an essential function of the cluster coordination teams. Managing this process requires dedicated capacity to perform it as well as a systematic and well-supported practice. Country level clusters will be expected to produce maps, tables, and other information products relevant to complement the required strategic decision making required by both the SAG and the operational agencies. This process is backed up at the global level to ensure coherence with other country level IM activities and that a ‘good practice’ is adhered to and improved.

Core to the IM function is the maintenance and promotion of a dedicated **Shelter Cluster website** ([www.sheltercluster.org](http://www.sheltercluster.org/)) for use by global and country level clusters for specific emergencies. The website is the virtual embodiment of the principles and values that the cluster approach represents: inclusiveness of all stakeholders, transparency, and collaboration in the effort to better coordinate between agencies and improve responses. It supports communications and dissemination of information among cluster stakeholders, provides updated contact details, a toolkit with formats and key documents for every activated shelter cluster both in natural disasters and conflicts. A dedicated country cluster web page is established within 24 hours of cluster activation. The website serves as the cluster "memory" and knowledge management system for past responses.

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| **Provide Assessment Capacity and Needs and Gaps Analysis in a Response** |

Maintain dedicated and predictable deployable **needs assessment** **and gap analysis** capacity that meets the specific needs of the Shelter Cluster while informing the broader response. Through its REACH multi-agency initiative, IMPACT has supported the Global Shelter Cluster (a) by developing a global Assessment tool that is linked with existing Information Management tools of the cluster, (b) by providing the cluster at global and country level with technical and human resources to strengthen its data processes and systems, including atabase and mapping capacity, (c) by providing leadership and capacity to the cluster to facilitate and carry out shelter specific interagency assessments and (d) supporting the cluster’s impact evaluation capacity by defining indicators that enable an ongoing evaluation of the programmatic impact of action conducted by shelter cluster members (e) contributing to inter-cluster assessment and data analysis initiatives. Thanks to this capacity, the cluster is able to target aid and propose solutions which are more effective and efficient.

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| **Implement the Strategy and priorities of the Global Shelter Cluster** |

To implement the Strategy defined by the Global Shelter Cluster for the next 5 years and in particular the priorities identified for the next year. These priorities are defined by the SAG based on the feedback received during the Global Shelter Cluster meeting.

In 2012 these priorities included improving cluster coherence, determining the scope of the cluster**,** advancing solutions to overcome barriers in shelter and housing provision and assessing the impact of humanitarian shelter and settlement interventions. Systems and approaches for evaluating performance and impact, and enhancing accountability have been developed by the cluster in 2012. The cluster must increase its efforts to demonstrate impact and to systematically and regularly capture evidence on what works, what does not, and why, to improve its performance. This involves the consistent use of jointly agreed upon indicators for shelter assessments which were developed, strategy development, monitoring, and impact evaluations, complemented by the use of the cluster Performance Management System.

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| **Support Preparedness and Contingency Planning for Shelter and Settlement Issues** |

Ensuring support, technical guidance and resources for country level cluster-based **preparedness**, scenario planning and awareness-raising.It is evident that coherence in leadership is enabled by enhanced preparedness through timely and consistent cluster-based contingency planning at country level. With some notable exceptions, typically where humanitarian agencies have a substantial presence in a given country, in many countries interagency preparedness planning is ad hoc or inconsistent, with agencies reporting the lack of a common methodology and clarity on expectations and roles and responsibilities. Where clusters are in place, the expectations on the clusters themselves, both the lead and participating agencies, also varies considerably. The shelter cluster will ensure that the shelter contingency plans of high risk countries are developed and updated and available at sheltercluster.org.

**Capacity Building**

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| **Create a common professional basis among Shelter Cluster Team members and ensure consistency in methodologies and practices implemented in emergency response situations**. |

To carry out global and regional **coordination workshops** involving coordination personnel from lead and partner agencies to review and revise coordination methodologies, tools and strategies. Predictable coordination at field level requires consistent delivery of high-quality coordination services regardless of the individual knowledge and expertise of staff and agencies participating in any given SCT deployment. The continuous gathering and dissemination of best practice and improvement of existing methodologies, tools and strategies through regular reflection among practitioners constitutes a key factor in ensuring consistency in coordination products and services by shelter cluster agencies. Two global and three regional workshops will be held annually with a minimum of 15 participants each to contribute to enhanced country level cluster coordination.

To carry out **online and** **residential training for coordination and technical issues**, including mentoring and exposure. Timely, consistent, predictable and effective shelter cluster coordination at the country level requires rapid availability of skilled personnel to provide coordination and technical services for shelter response. The existing Shelter Cluster surge capacity roster provides a pool of trained experts available for SCT deployments. A total of nine standardized global level trainings are provided. The training comprises a tutored, online course of an hour a day over five weeks, followed by a one week residential course. These trainings provide a bench-mark for performance as well as a screening mechanism to select adequately skilled candidates for the shelter coordination surge capacity roster. Offering standardized trainings to enhance shelter coordination surge capacities allows for the creation of a common professional basis among SCT members, equipping them with a common language and practical tools, and therefore contributing to enhanced coordination, increased accountability and improved understanding when coordinating the shelter response. The courses on shelter operations and shelter coordination are part of recognised, accredited academic institutions. Participation in these trainings is open to cluster partner agencies, resulting in consistent and coherent approaches to and understanding of coordination issues across the sector. Participation in these trainings is complemented by mentored deployments for trained personnel as part of country level coordination teams.

To develop **self learning online training tools** in shelter operations and cluster coordination/humanitarian reform, for use by field personnel and decision-makers at country, regional and HQ level – cluster agencies, government and donor representatives.

1. Group URD and GPPi, Cluster Approach Evaluation 2, April 2010 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Cluster and shelter evaluations can be found on www.sheltercluster.org [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Current cluster members are ACTED, Archi-Urgent, Article 25, Care UK, CHF, CRS, Danish Refugee Council, DFID, Habitat for Humanity, IFRC, IMPACT, IOM, Medair, NRC, OFDA, Oxfam GB, ProAct, ProVention, RedR, Relief International, RICS, Save The Children UK, Shelter Centre, SKAT, UN-HABITAT, UNHCR, UNOCHA, UNRWA and  World Vision. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Financial Tracking System, UNOCHA [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. 2011 Shelter and NFI received 199.5 million USD, in 2010 542.5 million USD, in 2009 381 million USD and in 2008 179 million USD. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. The Shelter Cluster has contributed a defined methodology for enabling rapidly deployed, dedicated interagency shelter coordination teams (see “The shelter coordination team (SCT)”, available for download from [https://www.sheltercluster.org/Global/Pages/default.aspx](https://www.sheltercluster.org/Global/Pages/default1.aspx)) with dedicated support at the global level and regular reviews and “refresher” trainings and workshops for coordination personnel. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)