

Response to the Evaluation of the Haiti Earthquake 2010 Meeting Shelter Needs: Issues, Achievements and Constraints

Background

A 7.0 magnitude earthquake struck the Haitian coast on 12 January 2010. The epicentre was located 22 kilometres from the capital Port-au-Prince, and 15 kilometres from the closest towns. The most-affected area was the Ouest province, and the most-affected cities were: Port-au-Prince, Carrefour, Léogâne, and Jacmel.

The Government of Haiti requested international assistance and clusters were activated. The Shelter/NFI Cluster (SC) was initially led by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and on February 3rd it was agreed that IFRC would take the lead of the cluster. IOM continued to provide assistance to cluster partners by managing the non-food items (NFI) pipeline. IFRC sent a Shelter Coordination Team to support the Haitian government in the inter-agency coordination of shelter actors. This team was made up of a national coordination team and a number of hubs including Port-au-Prince, and included as well personnel from the IFRC Secretariat, Red Cross National Societies, and cluster partners. IFRC handed over the coordination of the Shelter/NFI Cluster to UNHABITAT on 10 November 2010.

The Shelter/NFI Cluster helped coordinate the efforts of more than 80 agencies. The emergency shelter distribution effort in Haiti was one of the fastest ever mounted, compared to other big scale disasters (South East Asia tsunami, Pakistan earthquake, etc.)

Evaluation process

IFRC has already commissioned a review of the Haiti Shelter Coordination Team's performance. It now sought to understand the issues which facilitated and which constrained the delivery of shelter by humanitarian agencies in Haiti in 2010.

The evaluation was conducted by a team of 7 people, with international and national experience in the humanitarian field, shelter and evaluation and research. The evaluation will not evaluate the work of individual agencies nor make recommendations for

longer-term or permanent shelter in Haiti. Its outcome will be a report which clearly identifies achievements and constraints in meeting the short and medium-term shelter needs, views of the response by a sample of the affected population that received support, and implications for interim shelter responses in future emergencies.

The evaluation process was managed by a three-person team including a representative from the Americas zone, the Planning and Evaluation department (PED), and the Shelter department.

The purpose of this evaluation was to understand more about the issues that confronted shelter agencies after the emergency phase in Haiti in 2010, those which facilitated and which constrained delivery of shelter by humanitarian agencies. The review aims at identifying achievements and constraints in meeting the short and medium-term shelter needs, views of the response by a sample of the affected population that received support and implications for interim shelter responses in future emergencies, in order to identify key issues to improve upon and to provide information for future responses.

One year after the earthquake, almost a million people continue to live in emergency shelter. This has raised a number of questions:

- Why have shelter agencies been unable to fulfil targets for interim shelter solutions?
- What more could shelter agencies and others have done?
- What more could others, such as governments or others have done?
- Why people are still living beneath plastic sheets?
- Did the shelter sector consider all options for emergency and early recovery shelter?
- How satisfied is the affected community with the shelter response?
- How useful are the solutions provided?
- What on the initial shelter provision went well and what could be improved?
- Does the quality of early recovery shelter provided meet sectorial standards?

Therefore, the evaluation intended to find out what could have gone better, what additional things could have been done, and what constrained and favoured the performance of the shelter cluster actors. There is no intent to evaluate any given agency or project.

The review was completed in October 2011 and this action plan matrix responds to the evaluation report recommendations.

Response and Follow Up

This matrix provides views on the relevance of the recommendations and highlights those key areas for improvement which are considered critical to address. It does not constitute an opinion on the accuracy of facts, observations and views outlined in the report.

This response matrix details each response against each separate and numbered recommendation. For the purpose of the matrix, the key points have been taken from each of the recommendations. This matrix includes the decision whether a recommendation has been accepted, partially accepted or rejected; and the key follow-up action or deliverable including the timeframe and responsible department or unit. It also includes comments providing additional information or clarification regarding a recommendation. Key follow-up actions and deliverables will be incorporated into the work plans of the departments/units responsible for implementation at the global/zonal and country level.

In reading this matrix, it is important to consider the limitations in resources and capacity to implement some of the actions and the challenges at the country level.

The evaluation and this response matrix have been widely shared with Global shelter cluster partners and shelter partners in Haiti (shelter agencies, Government representatives, UN agencies...). It has been done through Haiti E-Shelter/Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) cluster coordination team, led by IOM from September 2011, and funded by ECHO (as for UN Habitat-led coordination period from 10 November 2010 to August 2011).

Both documents have been presented during national cluster meetings, and an opportunity has been given to all for submitting comments for each of the recommendations. Originally, IFRC's Haiti delegation had proposed a meeting to further discuss comments received within the cluster framework, but since limited comments were received, this meeting will now not be held. All comments received have been reflected in the response matrix below.

Recommendation 1: Planning must integrate a more realistic timeframe, and establish milestones around these issues. As part of the process to deliver transitional shelter solutions, the rubble clearance should be better addressed head-on by the shelter agencies, whether as part of the shelter or the early recovery cluster, either by integrating it into their own response or by strongly advocating other specialized agencies to address it sooner.

Response	Key follow-up action/deliverable	Timeframe	Responsibility
Accepted	IFRC to communicate this recommendation to Global Shelter Cluster partners.	Global Shelter Cluster(GSC) meeting in November 2011	Global Shelter Cluster Coordinator on behalf of IFRC
	Global Shelter Cluster partners to take the recommendation into consideration for future shelter responses.	For future operations	Global Shelter Cluster partners

Comments:

ECHO Haiti: The recommendation underlines the importance of having ONE strong cluster to coordinate the different aspects of shelter including rubble removal, E and T-shelter, house repair , rental subsidies and not many different clusters that liaise insufficiently with each other.

Recommendation 2: When an operation is as complex as the Haiti earthquake response, and the context is so extraordinarily restricting from the very first day, the humanitarian actors have to think “outside the box” when meeting the many constraints they will surely encounter. Strategies must be able to dodge the constraints as long as it is feasible, by integrating diverse and innovative approaches into the response, taking calculated risks and placing the need for coverage before liability concerns as far as possible.

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Accepted	IFRC communicated this recommendation to Global Shelter Cluster partners.	GSC meeting in November 2011	Global Shelter Cluster Coordinator on behalf of IFRC
	Global Shelter Cluster partners to take the recommendation into consideration for future shelter responses.	For future operations	Global Shelter Cluster partners

Comments:

ECHO Haiti: This is accepted. It was e.g. a huge step to offer rental subsidies as a solution to shelter needs since there was a fear(too big) of the consequences. Calculated risks need to be taken if we want to deliver aid fast and efficiently.

Recommendation 3: The changing context, the new available information, and the lessons learned as the response went along should represent a continual review and update of strategies, plans and goals.

Response	Key follow-up action/deliverable	Timeframe	Responsibility
Accepted	IFRC communicated this recommendation to Global Shelter Cluster partners.	GSC meeting in November 2011	Global Shelter Cluster Coordinator on behalf of IFRC
	Global Shelter Cluster partners to take the recommendation into consideration for future shelter responses.	For future operations	Global Shelter Cluster partners
Comments: ECHO Haiti: Yes, and this needs a strong cluster lead with a vision and flexibility to rapidly adapt to and fight through necessary changes in strategy.			
Recommendation 4: Since every single solution included in the Shelter Response Plan had its own related constraints, diversification of solutions would have been a way to elude bottlenecks.			
Response	Key follow-up action/deliverable	Timeframe	Responsibility
Accepted	IFRC communicated this recommendation to Global Shelter Cluster partners.	GSC meeting in November 2011	Global Shelter Cluster Coordinator on behalf of IFRC
	Global Shelter Cluster partners to take the recommendation into consideration for future shelter responses.	For future operations	Global Shelter Cluster partners
Comments: ECHO Haiti: Finally, a diversification of solutions was adopted by most stakeholders but that could have been done at an earlier stage of the response.			
Recommendation 5: Visibility, know-how or higher outcome control can be factors taken into consideration to engage in some shelter option, but when the needs are as big as in the Haiti earthquake disaster, shelter agencies should base their decisions on the context appraisal and the estimated effectiveness and efficiency of the actions, more than on the donors' alleged preferences or on insufficiently informed senior levels estimations.			
Response	Key follow-up action/deliverable	Timeframe	Responsibility
Accepted	IFRC communicated this recommendation to Global Shelter Cluster partners.	GSC meeting in November 2011	Global Shelter Cluster Coordinator on behalf of IFRC
	Global Shelter Cluster partners to take the recommendation into consideration for future shelter responses.	For future operations	Global Shelter Cluster partners
Comments: ECHO Haiti: Agreed, and this calls for stronger coordination among shelter agencies.			

Recommendation 6: In such a constrained context, with a limited picture of needs and difficult engagement with local population and authorities, it is advisable to put in place demand measuring systems, in order to diversify options and design more tailored-made approaches.

Response	Key follow-up action/deliverable	Timeframe	Responsibility
Accepted	IFRC communicated this recommendation to Global Shelter Cluster partners.	GSC meeting in November 2011	Global Shelter Cluster Coordinator on behalf of IFRC
	Global Shelter Cluster partners to take the recommendation into consideration for future shelter responses.	For future operations	Global Shelter Cluster partners

Comments:
ECHO Haiti: By whom should the system be put in place? The shelter cluster lead?

Recommendation 7: Despite its lack of mandatory powers before the shelter agencies, the SC lead's advocacy role with the shelter agencies should be more intense and aggressive, pressing them strongly and challenging them to commit in the identified needs.

Response	Key follow-up action/deliverable	Timeframe	Responsibility
Partially Accepted	IFRC consulted with Global Shelter Cluster partners on this recommendation, since it would entail a more intense and aggressive advocacy role by GSC partners.	GSC meeting in November 2011	Global Shelter Cluster Coordinator on behalf of IFRC

Comments: IFRC This recommendation may or may not be accepted depending on the result of the consultation with the Global Shelter Cluster partners.
ECHO Haiti: The recommendation is only as good as the shelter cluster is. What if the cluster doesn't have the right vision and presses on shelter agencies to go into a certain direction?

Recommendation 8: Since the timeline to solve constraints may signify relevant delays in the overall implementation, a cost-opportunity analysis must be incorporated to the decision-making process. Thus, an early planning and allocation of budget in a balanced combination of emergency, temporary and permanent solutions, may contribute to assure both efficiency and efficacy. Advocacy through funding assignment pressure and/or funding earmarks should be managed at agencies' senior levels at much as possible, since most donors and developed countries' public opinion nowadays have more educated criteria to understand the flexibility needed in complex disaster contexts.

Response	Key follow-up action/deliverable	Timeframe	Responsibility
Accepted	IFRC communicated this recommendation to Global Shelter Cluster partners.	GSC meeting in November 2011	Global Shelter Cluster Coordinator on behalf of IFRC

	Global Shelter Cluster partners to take the recommendation into consideration for future shelter responses.	For future operations	Global Shelter Cluster partners
Comments: ECHO Haiti: Agreed			
Recommendation 9: Analysis of the response in Haiti shows the need to use a <i>contiguuum</i> approach, distinguishing between emergency phase and emergency approach, initiating not only emergency activities or approaches from the very beginning, and therefore avoiding the delay on actions such as rubble removal which later become absolutely necessary.			
Response	Key follow-up action/deliverable	Timeframe	Responsibility
Accepted	IFRC communicated this recommendation to Global Shelter Cluster partners.	GSC meeting in November 2011	Global Shelter Cluster Coordinator on behalf of IFRC
	Global Shelter Cluster partners to take the recommendation into consideration for future shelter responses.	For future operations	Global Shelter Cluster partners
Comments: ECHO Haiti: None			
Recommendation 10: Shelter Cluster Mandate, Scope and Structure have to adapt to each crisis. Shelter and Housing links (blur line especially in Haiti) must be streamlined with capacities of key stakeholders. Thus, it is necessary to (re) define early recovery approaches to be handled in the emergency centred phase, and vice versa how emergency issues have to be managed in the early recovery-centred phase.			
In this respect, the SC scope should be more clearly stated, and issues such as how rubble removal or settlement-related issues are addressed in shelter cluster performance should be discussed, resulting in the (re) definition of the skills and abilities of shelter actors.			
Response	Key follow-up action/deliverable	Timeframe	Responsibility
Accepted	IFRC communicated this recommendation to Global Shelter Cluster partners.	GSC meeting in November 2011	Global Shelter Cluster Coordinator on behalf of IFRC
	IFRC and Global Shelter Cluster partners to better define the scope of the cluster.	Ongoing	Global Shelter Cluster Coordinator on behalf of IFRC Global Shelter Cluster partners
	Global Shelter Cluster partners to take the recommendation into consideration for future shelter responses.	For future operations	Global Shelter Cluster partners

Comments:
ECHO Haiti: Agreed and action taken though merger of shelter and CCCM cluster.

Recommendation 11: Inter-cluster and humanitarian coordination should ascertain that there are no gaps or overlapping of responsibilities among clusters, and that there is clear leadership for every single aspect of the clusters’ strategies, consequently avoiding that the clusters can decide whether or not to assume critical responsibilities included in their mandates or sectorial approaches, ensuring an integrated performance. In addition, integration of cluster responsibilities until emergency response is achieved may be considered, resulting in a reduced number of clusters.

Response	Key follow-up action/deliverable	Timeframe	Responsibility
Accepted	IFRC to communicate this recommendation to OCHA and relevant IASC bodies	Next meeting with OCHA and IASC.	Global Shelter Cluster Coordinator on behalf of IFRC

Comments:
ECHO Haiti: Agreed and action taken though merger of Shelter and CCCM cluster