

The Role of the Regional Focal Points

The Regional Focal Points act as a pool of experts that support the set-up of country-level Shelter Clusters at the very onset of an emergency and contribute to training, mentoring and distance support to country-level clusters in their region of responsibility.

They provide technical support to on-going clusters and other coordination mechanisms at the regional and country level, helping to enhance shelter coordination and sector-based contingency planning.

They also perform a crucial role in the support to government and shelter actors in selected high-risk countries in order to develop their capacities for disaster preparedness and response. The Regional Focal Points cover four regions:

- Africa
- Middle East and North Africa
- Asia and Pacific
- Americas

In addition, Regional Focal Points work to increase awareness of and participation in shelter clusters in the region of operation, particularly of local NGOs and other national stakeholders.



This initiative of the Global Shelter Cluster is supported by:



Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection



Surge Capacity: Regional Focal Points



Photo: R. Odhiambo/IOM



This mother was able to fix her home in the Philippines with the help of a shelter repair kit. Photo: A. Torralba/IFRC

The Global Shelter Cluster (GSC) is an open platform with around 30 partners participating consistently at the global level. Country level shelter clusters are currently active in 24 countries, with an additional number of countries with active shelter working groups supported by the cluster co-leads.

The GSC started the year 2013 implementing a five-year strategy. The goal of this strategy is to meet more effectively the sheltering needs of population affected by humanitarian crises, by strengthening the shelter response of humanitarian actors through leadership, coordination and accountability in the humanitarian shelter sector.

More information on the Global Shelter Cluster can be found here: www.sheltercluster.org

The Global Shelter Cluster's Management Structure

The **Global Shelter Cluster partners** meet twice a year to review progress against agreed objectives and define the GSC's strategic direction and annual priorities. In order to effectively meet their global

responsibilities, the GSC partners have agreed to organize and coordinate their activities through a management approach that allows participation and at the same time streamlines decision making. The GSC management structure has been informed by the experience of country-level shelter clusters since 2006 and the Transformative Agenda.

This management structure is as follows:

- **Strategic Advisory Group (SAG):** composed of agencies and institutions that are part of the GSC, it is a permanent body that works to advance the Cluster's strategic direction and overall work plan.
- **Global Cluster Lead Agencies:** The GSC is co-chaired by UNHCR and IFRC. The IFRC convenes the Shelter Cluster in natural disaster situations, while UNHCR leads the Shelter Cluster in conflict situations.
- **Working Groups:** task-oriented and time bound structures with clear executable deliverables that are established by the SAG to address particular identified needs.
- **Communities of Practice:** thematic groups of expert individuals that provide technical support to the global or country level clusters.
- **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 its day to day management.

DG ECHO Contribution to the GSC

DG ECHO, as the main donor, together with other Cluster partners, allowed the GSC to set the foundation to operationalize the Strategy 2013-2017 through a project aiming to **Enhance the Coordination of Humanitarian Shelter Response**. The project time frame is **21 months starting on April 1st 2013**. It is implemented by eight cluster partners (ACTED, Australian Red Cross, Habitat for Humanity, IOM, NRC and UN-Habitat, IFRC, and UNHCR) and led by UNHCR. The specific objective of the project is to strengthen the shelter response of humanitarian actors by improving the GSC surge capacity and global preparedness.

Expected outcomes of the project include:

- Global Focal Points as standby/surge capacity
- Regional Focal Points to support preparedness, planning & awareness raising
- Enhanced Assessment, Reporting and Evaluation capacity
- Independent reviews of country level shelter clusters
- Dedicated and improved website

More information can be found here: www.sheltercluster.org/Global/Pages/ECHO.aspx



Internally displaced people in Mali. Photo: H. Caux /UNHCR