



Global Shelter Cluster
ShelterCluster.org
Coordinating Humanitarian Shelter



SHELTER & SETTLEMENTS

THE FOUNDATION OF HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

Strategy 2018-2022

NARRATIVE



LIST OF ACRONYMS

CCCM	Camp Coordination and Camp Management	ICCG	Inter-Cluster Coordination Group
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund	IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
CLA	Cluster Lead Agency	IM	Information Management
CoPs	Communities of Practice	NFIs	Non-Food Items
CPMT	Cluster Performance Monitoring Tool	NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
GBV	Gender-based Violence	OCHA	UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
GSC	Global Shelter Cluster	PDM	Post-Distribution Monitoring
HCTs	Humanitarian Country Teams	RFP	Regional Focal Point
HLP	Housing, Land and Property	SAG	Strategic Advisory Group
HNO	Humanitarian Needs Overview	UN	United Nations
HRP	Humanitarian Response Plan	UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
HSCT	Humanitarian Shelter Coordination Training	WGs	Working Groups
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee		

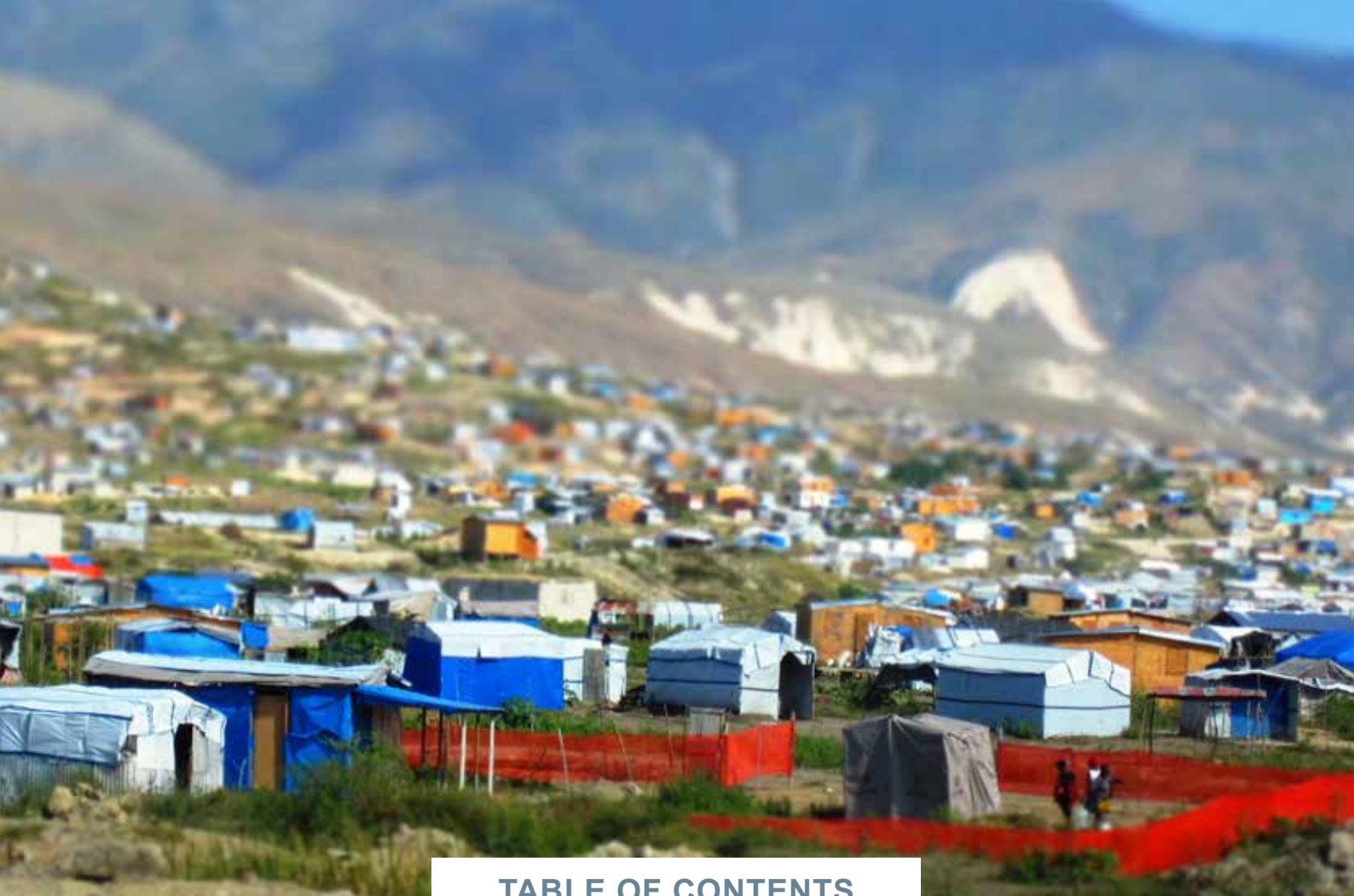


TABLE OF CONTENTS

Commitment to the Future	5
Shelter and Settlements, the Foundation of Humanitarian Response	7
Vision and Mission.....	8
Global Shelter Cluster Partnership	8
Global Shelter Cluster Structure	9
Guiding Principles and Strategic Approaches	10
Scope of the Global Shelter Cluster.....	12
GSC Strategy 2018-2022	15
Strategy Aim	15
Strategic Area 1: COORDINATION	16
Strategic Area 2: ADVOCACY	18
Strategic Area 3: EVIDENCE-BASED RESPONSE	20
Strategic Area 4: CAPACITY	22
Good Shelter Programming.....	24
Implementing the GSC Strategy	26
Overview of the GSC Strategy 2018-2022	28



Commitment to the Future

The Global Shelter Cluster (GSC) is pleased to launch our strategy for 2018-22. This document sets out an inspiring agenda to strengthen global shelter and settlement interventions which remain central to effective humanitarian responses around the world. The strategy describes how we will support partner organisations in meeting the shelter needs of people affected by conflict and natural disaster.

The evolution of the strategy has been a collaborative process that has engaged partners at all levels. Driven by the Strategic Advisory Group (SAG) and the two GSC Lead Agencies, we have reviewed past performance, articulated key priorities and evaluated the current humanitarian landscape and future trends. The strategy defines core GSC priorities while articulating the inherent connectedness with other clusters which will be required to achieve effective shelter and settlements responses.

Since the Cluster Approach was rolled out in 2006 the GSC has gone from strength to strength. It has evolved into a robust collective of organisations – each committed to coordinating approaches and resources, sharing best practice and uniting for a common purpose. The GSC has constantly adapted to improve services to support partners to provide shelter and settlements assistance for the most vulnerable families and communities affected by conflict and disaster.

Over this period, the humanitarian context has changed remarkably. Conceptual, programmatic and technological developments have driven change in how we work and helped us gauge our impact. Assisted populations have become the centre of our focus. There is now greater emphasis on accountability to affected populations. Robust monitoring and evaluation tools have been developed in support of evidence-based, inclusive and localised programming with a view to empowering people affected by crises.

The context of our work has also changed given the ever increasing impacts of urbanisation and climate

change. This has resulted in a fundamental shift in our operational reality. With the majority of the global population now living in cities and natural disasters becoming more frequent and severe, we are required to work differently and to constantly innovate to find new solutions. Working in complex urban systems subject to natural disasters and the effects of conflict means that we need to be well-versed in working with issues of chronic vulnerability as much as emergency response. The best development approaches need to be understood and synchronised with humanitarian efforts so as to reduce risk and jointly work toward sustainable systems with area-based and people-centred results. Given the state of global displacement, the need for more effective, timely and efficient shelter and settlements responses is now critical.

The GSC is placed at the centre of coordinating information, knowledge and processes to meet this need. Reflecting this, the GSC has prioritised four main pillars under which activities and processes will be structured:

- **coordination**
- **advocacy**
- **evidence-based response**
- **capacity**

Confronted with limited humanitarian financing, novel approaches are needed in order to:

- **appropriately use cash**
- **provide evidence of need and impact**
- **promote participation and inclusion**
- **promote deep and genuine collaboration with donors, national and local governments, the private sector and civil society – for this is an operational imperative.**

Together, we are committed to further advancing the effectiveness of shelter and settlement work for those in need. We look forward to striving with partners to fulfil this mission and collaborating with all those who share our vision.

Ela Serdaroglu
Global Shelter Cluster Coordinator
IFRC

Brett Moore
Global Shelter Cluster Coordinator
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Shelter and Settlements, the Foundation of Humanitarian Response

Losing one's home, separation from friends, family and community support structures is hugely traumatic. Access to temporary and longer-term shelter and settlements, a place that families and communities can somehow call 'home', can be both life-saving and life-enabling.

Shelter and settlements responses¹ provide:

- i. **a physical dwelling** that protects the health, security, privacy and dignity of families and is designed to bring communities together. They provide protection against threats – including those associated with gender-based violence (GBV), theft, climate and disease.
- ii. **a stable foundation**, a location, an 'address' where other services can be accessed including health, education, nutrition and safe and dignified water and sanitation facilities. Shelter is also a valuable asset that can be the beginning of a bigger investment. It provides a place to re-start livelihoods and economic recovery.

- iii. **a sense of identity**, a place to gather belongings, family and community, a neighbourhood to belong to, a place in which one can consider the past and rebuild a sense of future.

Shelter and settlement support is the foundation of humanitarian response. It is fundamental to rebuilding communities and family life, supporting protection and rebuilding the psychological, social, livelihood and physical components of life – in short, all the components necessary to move from survival to effectively exercising rights in a place where individuals are able to fulfil their potential.

Shelter and settlements responses attempt to ensure that 'no one is left behind'² – that the most vulnerable community members are included and that all interventions contribute to economic, social and psychological recovery.

¹ These interventions include support for shelter, settlement and meeting household needs. Household needs are often met through the distribution of Non-Food Items (NFIs). The strategy uses the term *NFIs* instead of *meeting household needs*.

² The [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) emphasises the importance of reaching the poorest and most vulnerable.

Vision

A World Where Everyone Feels at Home.

Mission

The Global Shelter Cluster collectively supports crisis-affected people to live in safe, dignified and appropriate shelter and settlements.

Global Shelter Cluster Partnership

Co-led by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR), the GSC is a platform of shelter and settlement partners. The GSC and country-level shelter clusters work collectively with national response actors to support people affected by natural disasters and internally-displaced people affected by conflict with timely, effective and predictable shelter and settlement responses. In 2017, the GSC supported over 650 shelter, settlement and non-food item (NFI) partners in 28 country clusters.

The strengthening of the global partnership was an important component of the GSC's 2013-17 strategy. The number and diversity of participating global partners is at its highest since the creation of the Shelter Cluster. So too is the number of collaborative projects.

This important partnership of global actors has had an impact on the quality of collaboration at country level, resulting in many organisations taking on key

shelter and settlement roles in support of the overall response. This illustrates the belief and commitment that working collaboratively supports a more effective response while also providing an efficient use of human, technical and financial resources.

The SAG is the key body to advance the work of the cluster. Agencies represented on the SAG in 2018 drafted this strategy.

- Agence d'Aide a la Cooperation Technique et au Developpement (ACTED)
- Australian Red Cross
- CARE International
- Catholic Relief Services
- Danish Refugee Council
- Habitat for Humanity
- InterAction
- International Organization for Migration (IOM)
- Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)
- Save the Children
- IFRC
- UNHCR



Global Shelter Cluster Structure

Global Shelter Cluster (GSC) Partnership: diverse network of operational, technical and academic organisations, donors and other stakeholders with a shared objective of strengthening humanitarian shelter and settlement response.

Global Cluster Lead Agencies (GCLAs): GSC is co-led by UNHCR and the IFRC. UNHCR leads in conflict situations, while IFRC convenes the Shelter Cluster in natural disaster situations.

Strategic Advisory Group (SAG): permanent body to advance GSC strategic direction and overall workplan; elected by and composed of organisations from the GSC partnership.

Communities of Practice (CoPs): groups of expert individuals providing technical and thematic support to global or country level clusters and developing good practice. A virtual space for information sharing and problem solving.



Global Support Team (GST): dedicated team seconded by cluster partners to provide technical, coordination, IM and other identified support for country clusters through surge, preparedness and capacity building; supports GSC functioning and interaction with other clusters and organisations.

Working Groups (WG): task-oriented, time-bound structures with clear deliverables; established by the SAG to address identified sector gaps.

Donor Consultation Group (DCG): donors supporting humanitarian shelter wishing to contribute to the work of the SAG and advance GSC strategic direction and advocacy efforts.



Guiding Principles

Humanitarian Principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence.

The Principles of Partnership (Equality, Transparency, Responsibility, Results-Oriented Approach, Responsibility and Complementarity) between affected populations, governments and response actors. Embedded within this is accountability to affected populations.

The Centrality of Protection in Humanitarian Action. The GSC aims to ensure that the rights of affected persons and the obligations of duty bearers under international law are understood, respected, protected and fulfilled without discrimination³ throughout the duration of humanitarian response and beyond.

³ [Inter-Agency Standing Committee Policy on Protection in Humanitarian Action, IASC, 2016.](#)

Strategic Approaches

As part of achieving a more predictable, effective and accountable response, the GSC promotes a number of key **Strategic Approaches** in shelter programming:

- **People-centred humanitarian response:** People's capacity and strategies to survive with dignity are integral to the design and approach of humanitarian response. Interventions therefore need to support and complement the efforts of affected populations who are usually the first and main responders.
- **Localisation:** Localising humanitarian response is a process of recognising, respecting and strengthening leadership by local authorities and the capacity of local civil society in humanitarian action to better address the needs of affected populations.
- **Capacity building:** To improve the quality and effectiveness of response, the GSC recognises the need to increase the capacity of responders at country level. It is also important to monitor trends in the overall capacity and flexibility of the sector so as to respond to increasing needs.
- **Preparedness:** Preparedness can save lives, reduce the impact for those affected by crisis and lower the cost of response. Preparedness actions are part of the GSC's commitment to localisation of response leadership.
- **Prioritising the most vulnerable:** We must plan for high-impact interventions that address the reality of vulnerable people's diverse needs and capacities.
- **Quality and scale:** It is vital to ensure assistance is provided to the maximum number of households and individuals in need without compromising the quality of the assistance provided.
- **Mainstreaming cross-cutting issues:** (Or good shelter programming) is required to ensure an effective and accountable response. If the response is not informed by, and able to respond to, the needs of different groups there is a risk of exclusion of those most in need. Equally, responses should take into account their potential impact on the long-term recovery prospects of communities which includes the environments that support them.
- **Recovery coordination:** Whilst there are immediate needs post-emergency, the GSC recognises that recovery starts from the first day. The coordination of recovery is therefore needed immediately post-disaster. Only by working with governments and other development actors is it feasible to bridge the humanitarian-development gap and support a localised approach to recovery coordination.
- **Supporting self-recovery:** It is important to find effective ways to support the majority of households that self-recover. This can be done by improving construction quality, building safer and more resilient homes and settlements and promoting climate and disaster risk-aware communities.
- **Area-based coordination and settlement programming:** People do not perceive their recovery in sectoral terms, but from a holistic perspective. While sectoral technical expertise is an important ingredient in the response, understanding the holistic needs of affected communities requires better sectoral collaboration. Area-based coordination and settlement programming are geographically targeted, participatory, multi-sectoral and applicable throughout all stages of the humanitarian programme cycle.

⁴ The Sphere Project, [Core Standard 1: People-centered humanitarian response](#)

⁵ [Localising the Response, World Humanitarian Summit Putting Policy into Practice Series, OECD, 2017.](#)



Scope of the Global Shelter Cluster

Defining humanitarian shelter and settlement action

MANDATE AND GUIDANCE

The GSC is mandated to strengthen system-wide preparedness and technical capacity to respond to humanitarian emergencies. Specifically this entails:

- providing operational support
- building response capacity
- consolidating and disseminating standards and policy.⁶

The GSC is guided, *inter alia*, by:

- [The Right to Adequate Housing](#) – with specific focus on humanitarian contexts
- the [Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement](#)
- the policy of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), in particular the [IASC Reference Module for Cluster Coordination at the Country Level](#) and the [IASC Policy on Protection in Humanitarian Action](#).

SUPPORT AND ACTIVATION OF CLUSTERS

The GSC supports activated country-level shelter clusters by providing services to improve the predictability, effectiveness and timeliness of humanitarian shelter and settlement responses.

In countries where clusters have not been officially activated⁷ – but in which other sector coordination mechanisms exist – the GSC can provide support

following requests from the in-country lead agency for shelter, settlement or NFIs. In some countries shelter clusters have been merged with other areas – often for practical resourcing reasons – usually Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM). The GSC believes that such merged mechanisms are unlikely to provide the same quality of coordination services.

OBJECTIVES OF SHELTER, SETTLEMENT AND NFI RESPONSES

The primary objective of shelter response is safeguarding the health, security, privacy and dignity of affected populations. Shelter is a physical component of protection. Beyond life-saving objectives, shelter also increases resilience, supports family and community life and facilitates access to livelihoods and markets. Individual shelters alone cannot provide safety or a basis for recovery if they are not considered in the context of settlements. It is important to consider risks that they may bring, from exposure to hazards or conflict, especially without provision of infrastructure and access to livelihoods.

Shelter and settlements interventions contribute to the Sustainable Development Goal 11 – to make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

COMPLEXITY OF SHELTER AND SETTLEMENTS RESPONSE

Supporting individuals, families and communities

⁶ [Guidance Note on Using the Cluster Approach to Strengthen Humanitarian Response, IASC, 2006.](#)

⁷ [And in the absence of any other guidance from the Emergency Relief Coordinator](#)

with their post-crisis sheltering needs is a complex social, cultural, technical, economic, legal and political process. It is closely bound with the climatic, physical and security environment in which it takes place. In urban environments, this complexity can be multiplied. Shelter and settlement interventions are therefore inextricably linked with the needs and responses of other sectors, requiring high levels of inter-sectoral coordination and collaboration, in particular with Protection, CCCM, Water Sanitation Hygiene (WASH) and Early Recovery clusters.

This close collaboration should consider the whole settlement where the response is taking place (settlement programming) or at least part of it (neighbourhood programming), rather than only the specific households being supported. Such holistic programming allows analysis of the specificity of a community to ensure a more integrated response, one which is greater than the sum of its parts. The GSC supports inter-sectoral area-based coordination at the lowest level to facilitate settlement programming and to link with broader sectoral coordination at national or sub-national level.

RANGE OF SHELTER AND SETTLEMENTS RESPONSES

Shelter and settlements responses need to address the different risks, needs, desires and vulnerabilities – including by age, gender, susceptibility to GBV, diversity and disability – of individuals, families and communities in crises. In order to do this, there is a need to

undertake an analysis of who is at risk (how and why) as well as an assessment of how contextual complexities will impact the different response options.

Responses are defined in collaboration with local governments and other responding actors. The GSC acknowledges the invaluable contributions of national shelter stakeholders and declares its commitment to actively include them within the work of the Shelter Cluster.

Shelter and settlement responses use a variety of methodologies. These include in-kind support of materials (for example, plastic sheeting, timber, nails, bamboo or bricks), products (such as tents or shelter kits), tools, labour assistance, cash, vouchers or market interventions, advocacy and sharing of technical guidance and information. The GSC advocates for responses which combine different methodologies in order to meet the different needs of affected populations. Rarely does one single methodology meet all needs. Adequate shelter cannot be achieved by just providing in-kind goods or cash support. For technical advice and monitoring are essential components of all shelter and settlement responses in order to ensure that minimum living standards are met and no additional risks introduced. The GSC's scope includes all aspects related to achieving the *Right to Adequate Housing* with a humanitarian focus and can range from emergency to longer-term responses. Examples include:

Settlement Support

- Contributing to site and urban planning across a variety of scales.
- Spatial understanding of context and interconnected territory.
- Upgrading of infrastructure.
- Housing, Land and Property (HLP) support.
- Area-based coordination.
- Settlement programming.
- Advocacy.

Shelter Support

- Technical and cross-cutting guidance.
- Strengthening of technical capacity and capacity building.
- Cash and markets-based shelter responses.
- Emergency, temporary and transitional shelter.
- Housing repair, construction and reconstruction.
- Rental support.
- HLP support.
- Advocacy.

Essential Household Items

- Coordinating shelter NFIs.
- Setting standards for shelter materials and shelter-related NFI quality.
- Tracking delivery of assistance and working with partners to fill gaps.
- Ensuring that affected people can access needed NFIs of suitable quality.
- Cash and markets-based shelter responses.
- Technical and cross-cutting guidance including household monitoring.
- Advocacy.





GSC Strategy 2018-2022

By means of the [GSC Strategy 2013-2017 Evaluation Report](#) the GSC has listened to those engaged in field operations, seeking to ensure that the subsequent new strategy maintains and strengthens critical support in key areas for better response and recovery. There is renewed commitment to basing strategy on sound evidence and learning that supports the diverse needs of affected populations.

The four strategic areas of the GSC Strategy are described below. They give an overview of priorities

and actions needed and set out the key cross-cutting issues and operational modalities that support them.

A detailed description of the specific workplan of outputs and activities needed to reach these aims, and indicators to measure progress, has been compiled as an annex to this strategy. To support greater impact and accountability, this workplan is composed of actions that are needed at the global, country and agency levels.

AIM STRENGTHENED SHELTER AND SETTLEMENTS RESPONSES THAT BUILD RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

The strategic aim will be achieved through the combined workstreams of the four strategic areas:



All cross-cutting issues are critical in each of the four strategic areas in order to ensure good shelter programming.



STRATEGIC AREA 1

Coordination

Coordination contributes to a localised, predictable, effective and timely response

1.1 PREDICTABLE, TIMELY, EFFECTIVE Support and services for Shelter Clusters

- **Preparedness, surge, support – coordination, IM, assessment, technical, cash, HLP.** The direct support given to country clusters is highly valued by coordination team members and partners. The GSC Support Team will provide preparedness, rapid surge support and assistance (both remotely and through missions) so as to support the core roles of coordination, information management, assessment and technical support. Responding to field demands, this will be expanded to provide shelter, NFI and cash expertise to promote market-based shelter approaches where appropriate. HLP experts will support effective shelter and housing recovery. There will be capacity development for coordinators in cash responses and HLP. Advisors on specific technical areas of shelter and settlement (such as environment, protection, gender, GBV and inclusion) can be deployed upon request.
- **Coordination capacity building tools.** Cluster coordination training and workshops will continue, focusing on languages where there are the greatest gaps and working towards a more comprehensive approach to building coordination capacity. This will include initiatives such as ‘on the job’ exposure, mentoring or

shadowing opportunities to create a stronger pathway for those trainees who have completed cluster coordination training and field cluster coordination roles. Increased and improved capacity building will continue to develop one shared roster open to all partners. Key country-level tools will be shared through the [Shelter Cluster Coordination Toolkit](#), including guidance around cross-cutting issues. Tools will be promoted through training, briefings and via deployment of coordination teams.

- **Strengthening Information Management (IM).** IM gaps at country level will be analysed and strategies and tools developed to fill them. There will be better use of existing partner rosters to support IM gaps. The GSC website ([sheltercluster.org](#)) will continue to be the key knowledge management hub. It will be progressively strengthened and complemented with other tools to better respond to field needs.

1.2 LOCALISED AND AREA-BASED Strengthening area-based coordination and promoting settlement approaches

- **Localised coordination capacity.** There will be specific emphasis on promoting localised and gender-sensitive coordination capacity. This will entail increasing and supporting national representation and gender balance in coordination teams, as well as increased national actor involvement and leadership. This will include cross-cluster collaboration to simplify coordination demands, monitoring and support of direct funding of local actors. GSC partners have been playing a critical role in providing support to country-level clusters. This support will be further recognised and developed.
- **Sub-national coordination.** Field and partner feedback shows that prioritising sub-national

coordination can have a direct impact on the quality and effectiveness of shelter responses. The GSC will make sub-national coordination a greater priority by organising preparedness workshops, developing pre-disaster agreements on sub-national coordination (at global and country levels), translation, capacity building, online training, the help desk and facilitating access to *Communities of Practice* (CoPs)⁸ for national actors. The GSC will ensure that in each response, sub-national coordination is systematically included at the outset of the coordination set-up. This will be done no matter which agency is nominated to be the country-level Cluster Lead Agency (CLA).

- **Area-based coordination and settlement programming.** Area-based coordination involves undertaking coordination within a defined geographic area whilst taking a holistic, multi-sectoral perspective. An area may include several settlements, each with several neighbourhoods. Area-based coordination mechanisms can provide a useful framework to promote – whenever feasible – joint leadership with sub-national partners and local authorities. This may be through co-chairing area-based coordination mechanisms with counterpart municipal or city level authorities. By working in partnership with municipal authorities responsible for the long-term development of a neighbourhood or municipality, area-based coordination mechanisms bring opportunities to ensure humanitarian response contributes to long-term planning processes. The GSC will advance area-based coordination by engaging other clusters and will develop modalities for area-based coordination in applicable contexts.
- **Performance monitoring.** To strengthen coordination, increase accountability and ensure corrective action and support (where necessary) there will be performance monitoring using agreed tools at country level. As part of this, support to clusters where the in-country CLA is not one of the two global CLAs (UNHCR and IFRC) will be clarified. The GSC bodies (i.e. the Support Team, the SAG, the Working Groups and CoPs) will have greater involvement in assessing and improving the performance of country-level shelter clusters, including through joint country review missions.

1.3 TRANSITION TO RECOVERY

Facilitating transition to recovery coordination, enhancing engagement with governments and development actors

Evaluation of the 2013-2017 strategy drew attention to the need to fill gaps in effective shelter transition and recovery. The GSC commits to playing a pivotal and catalytic role in bringing humanitarian and development actors together to find solutions to support more effective post-crisis shelter transition and recovery.

As part of the overall review of solutions to recovery coordination at country level there will be a review of the process of transition, handover and the exit of cluster coordination. Coordination teams will be supported to identify counterparts for recovery, prepare exit strategies from day one and define triggers for phasing out. Case studies will be developed around transition and recovery coordination to establish best practice and lessons learned.

1.4 INTEGRATED RESPONSE

Effective inter-cluster coordination and joint response planning approaches

Inter-cluster coordination at country level is critical to achieving an effective response in an integrated way to the priority needs of people affected by humanitarian crises. One of the greatest threats to predictable and effective coordination highlighted in the strategy evaluation is the use of (or failure to use) the cluster approach in new emergencies, the increasing disconnect between Humanitarian Country Teams (HCTs) and clusters, exclusion of clusters from decision-making architecture and ineffective inter-cluster coordination.

The Shelter Cluster will work with other clusters, partners and donors to:

- advocate and organise discussion at the IASC Working Group (WG) and Emergency Directors' Group (EDG) levels around the lack of activation of clusters and global CLA responsibilities in such responses.
- review inter-cluster coordination and HRP processes to ensure they both support a more effective response.



⁸ CoPs are voluntary bodies consisting of individuals with expertise and interest in a thematic area related to humanitarian shelter response, shelter practices or shelter coordination



STRATEGIC AREA 2

Advocacy

Increased recognition of shelter and settlement in humanitarian response and recovery

2.1 IMPORTANCE OF SHELTER AND SETTLEMENT **Strengthened understanding of shelter and settlement's critical multi-sector impact**

There has been some progress in advancing recognition of the importance of the shelter sector and its critical life-saving and life-enabling impact on the achievement of the objectives of other sectors. However, the evaluation of the previous strategy has shown the need to consolidate this awareness among key policy and funding decision-makers, both at country and global levels. These must include:

- Humanitarian Coordinators (HCs)
- Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) Secretariat members
- the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)
- Inter-Cluster Coordination Groups
- operational agency representatives
- donors
- national and local stakeholders – including governments, local authorities, partners and communities.

Effective advocacy will focus on highlighting the strong links and significant contribution of quality shelter and settlements programming to achieving

protection, health, livelihoods, water and sanitation outcomes. Additionally, key messaging will highlight the need to strive towards meeting the right to adequate housing.

Information produced under the other components of Strategic Area 2 – as well as critical evidence produced under Strategic Area 3 – will guide the translation of these messages into tailored communication and advocacy briefs at different levels so as to productively engage with these key stakeholders.

2.2 ENGAGEMENT **Increased donor and agency engagement and support for shelter and settlements sector**

- **Donor engagement.** The comprehensive review of funding of shelter at country level will be backed up by a review of donor policies, priorities and funding practices in the shelter sector so as to inform an overall donor engagement strategy. A global Donor Consultation Group was set up in 2016 and during the strategy period will be extended to country level. Tailored advocacy and engagement with specific donors on key shelter policies will also be prioritised to ensure maximum support and influence for the sector. The focus of such advocacy will not only be on increasing the resources available to shelter and settlements programming. It will also emphasise the importance of responses that are more immediately fit-for-purpose according to the nature of the crises. This will require more rapid transition to durable responses in crises that are obviously longer-term.
- **Agency engagement.** In addition to intensified advocacy with donors, efforts will also target key shelter actors. The 2013-17 shelter strategy evaluation identified the need to work more intensively with existing GSC partners,

as well as to engage important operational agencies that are not currently involved. This will be key to scaling up quality responses and advocacy in the sector and encouraging more agencies to become more involved in global level initiatives.

2.3 RESPONSE FUNDING

Critical funding and response gaps are monitored, communicated and supported

Funding of shelter responses at country level is the biggest gap highlighted by country-level shelter clusters. There will be a comprehensive review of shelter response funding at country level. This will follow up initial observations from the evaluation of the previous GSC strategy, as well as reviewing how shelter response is supported at agency level. This will be used to inform the development of a mechanism to more consistently monitor and highlight critical funding response gaps, quality concerns and their impact. With these, country-level shelter clusters and the GSC should be able to more effectively advocate to partners and donors locally and globally.

2.4 INFLUENCING

Engaging others: appropriate urban assistance, cash and markets programming, area-based approaches

- **Delivering appropriate humanitarian shelter and settlement assistance in urban contexts.**

In an increasingly urbanised world, more affected populations will seek shelter in larger towns and cities. The New Urban Agenda (2016), was a commitment to offering the most appropriate humanitarian assistance in urban contexts. Urban crises bring complexities such as:

- increased density, with technically complex physical structures such as high-rise buildings and bridges
- impacts of government regulation, policy and politics
- the ability to occupy space according to tenancy arrangements which could be complicated by multiple owners, renters and hosting
- diversity of social and economic behaviours
- communicating with and assisting highly mobile populations and challenges in identifying the most vulnerable.

The GSC will lead efforts to strengthen and increase the ability of its partners to deliver appropriate shelter and settlement assistance in urban contexts. Cluster partners at global, national and agency level must develop strat-

egies that create synergies with civil society and other interest groups and integrate the long-term visions of local governments and other development networks. Through collaboration and concerted advocacy efforts, GSC strategies will result in increased opportunities for affected populations to access employment, social security and essential services and thus contribute towards creating more cohesive urban societies.

- **Advocating strategies for effective shelter outcomes in cash and markets based programming.**

Critical to this work will be using evidence from specific research under Strategic Area 3 (Evidence-Based Responses) to communicate impacts from different cash and markets modalities in shelter (particularly multi-purpose cash). This will be done through field communication tools developed to support advocacy for appropriate application of cash and markets programming to key stakeholders – agency, cluster, inter-cluster (OCHA), HCT, HC and donors. Participation and contribution to broader cash coordination, at global and country levels, will be important. This will keep the wider humanitarian community updated on progress in sectoral cash and market-based approaches, inform the GSC and build on learning from other cash responses.

- **Drive and support area-based approaches.**

The GSC is promoting the relevance and importance of area-based approaches - characterised as: geographically targeted, participatory and multi-sectoral (see Strategic Approaches section for more detailed definition). The GSC is responsible for leading the process of defining area-based approaches for the Global Cluster Coordinators Group. The GSC will work with other clusters and partners to align tasks with development and humanitarian actors working to promote a more integrated and localised response. Starting with agreement on definitions and understanding of terminology, the GSC will support piloting at country level, gather evidence, develop guidelines and tools to support advocacy and enhance communications with key stakeholders to promote greater uptake of the approaches.



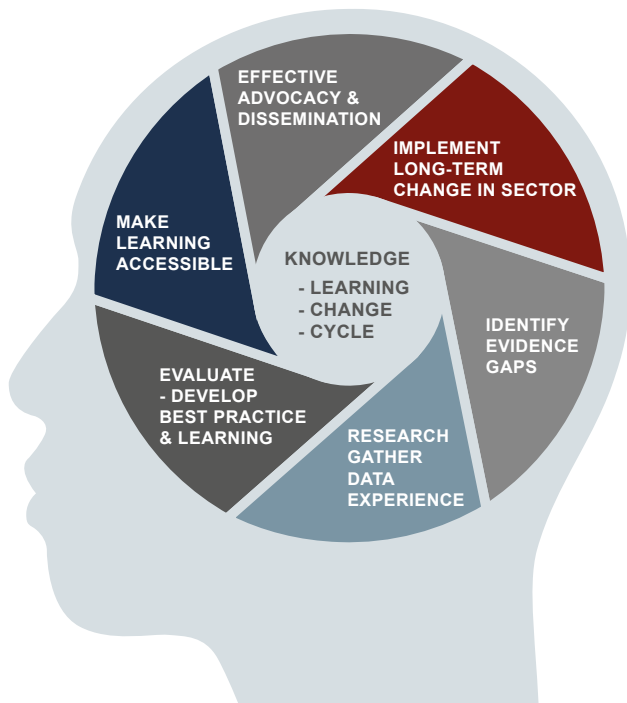


STRATEGIC AREA 3

Evidence-based response

Shelter response informed by evidence, best practice and learning

Completing the knowledge-learning-change cycle is important in making effective decisions and ensuring that humanitarian response is properly informed by evidence, best practice and sustained learning. In recent years the GSC has developed a predictable capacity to support country-level needs assessments. Building on this, the GSC wants to continue strengthening the knowledge-learning-change cycle to ensure that it informs response planning, advocacy and learning at country and global levels.



3.1 AVAILABLE AND USED

Evidence available and used to inform planning, coordination and decision-making

As part of efforts to better inform shelter decision-making and strategy development, the Shelter Cluster has multiplied the number of needs assessments conducted at country level. Building on this, the GSC wants to further strengthen the ability to gather and analyse evidence in support of shelter and settlement response decision-making and planning, in particular by:

- ensuring greater consistency and predictability in needs assessments and analysis
- supporting shelter actors in assessing and analysing various response modalities and promoting cash or markets-based responses when feasible
- piloting and rolling out outcome-level evaluations at country level to help measure the impact of shelter responses against the objectives set out in the cluster strategy
- promoting and supporting inter-sectoral assessments and analysis at crisis and area-specific levels
- reflecting the inclusion of cross-cutting issues across all assessments and evaluations.

To achieve these objectives the GSC will further strengthen the availability of global support, while at the same time empowering country clusters to be more independent in their implementation and analysis capacity by providing high quality and flexible tools.

In parallel, the GSC will develop and implement training and guidance notes, as well as providing technical advice in supporting country clusters, to effectively integrate evidence into their planning and coordination. Such approaches include:

- the Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) and Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) processes
- development of a cluster strategy and its indicators
- the use of assessment findings in the development of indicators for output tracking (Who does What, Where?) – 3W-like.

The GSC will monitor the use of evidence by country clusters in informing their planning.

3.2 EVIDENCE GAPS FILLED Key shelter and settlement evidence gaps filled

Shelter sector advocacy has been limited by a lack of strong evidence to support critical messages and programming approaches which can draw attention to the importance of shelter outcomes and the significant impact they have on so many other life-enabling aspects for people affected by disasters and other emergencies. It is imperative both to build evidence around the critical role shelter plays in health, protection, livelihoods, education and psycho-social support and also to show how environmental issues impact provision of sustainable durable shelter solutions.

Collating evidence on how NFIs and/or multi-purpose cash transfers can help meet shelter outcomes is also currently a high priority for operational staff. Initial work will further analyse existing evidence and gaps and set out a broader operational field

research agenda. This will also look at the partnership potential between academic institutions and operational agencies in order to gather robust credible evidence to inform the critical advocacy work outlined in Strategic Area 2. This will start with a review of the existing evidence-base for shelter.

3.3 CAPITALISATION Knowledge Management systems in place to capitalise on lessons learned as well as best practice in order to bring about change in sector policy and practice

The evaluation of the last GSC strategy highlighted the importance of translating learning into direct policy and practice changes in programme response.

The Shelter Cluster will review good knowledge management practices, look at how existing Shelter Cluster Knowledge Management tools can be better used. These include CoPs, the [website](#), annual Global Cluster coordination learning workshops, as well as endorsing existing (or developing more accessible) tools. These may include Shelter TED Talks, tip sheets and field-oriented notes based on evidence, best practice and learning. Inter-agency reviews of country responses will contribute to annual summaries of lessons, bringing together sector learning from each year informed by national-level learning workshops, as well as more formal sector-wide evaluations.





STRATEGIC AREA 4

Capacity

Shelter sector capacity to address ongoing and emerging challenges

4.1 SKILLS

Increased and localised shelter response capacity

In order to complement coordination capacity development (Strategic Area 1), there is a large gap identified in supporting shelter capacity, particularly at country level.

- **Understanding country level shelter capacity and filling gaps.** Capacity assessment frameworks will be developed and implemented nationally. These should be able to identify how best to support the development of national and local capacity. Outreach will be made to institutions and universities in key regions and countries with the goal of working together to find local and more sustainable options for capacity development. Preparedness workshops carried out as part of Strategic Area 1 – and in cash and shelter work at country level – will also assist in identifying national capacity gaps in shelter responses.
- **Existing policy and practice.** A review of existing policies and practices of operational agencies will examine how national capacity building is currently approached by shelter partners as they work to identify good practices and inform country-level capacity building approaches on an inter-agency and individual agency level. The GSC will then support country clusters

to carry out capacity assessments to develop strategies on these two levels, working, where appropriate, with other sectors.

- **Capacity development and access to training.** Capacity building strategies will be developed at global and country cluster levels, incorporating material made available by individual agencies. Existing guidance and training materials will be reviewed for technical quality and inclusive approaches to shelter and settlement response. They will then be translated to make them more accessible at national level.
- **Sufficient technical capacity.** The evaluation has demonstrated that not only has national capacity been limited but also – and in contrast to sectors also requiring specialised technical skills such as WASH – the ratio of technical coordination positions was much lower. The importance of such roles is not necessarily recognised at a country level. As a result, donors may not receive compelling justification in support of funding requests. Access to increased technical capacity at a cluster level will be reviewed, utilising immediately existing accessible rosters of technical shelter staff.
- **HLP capacity.** As they are cornerstones of access to adequate housing, security of tenure and wider HLP considerations are critical areas for engagement. The GSC will support capacity building through the newly established post of GSC Roving Shelter-HLP Advisor. There will be increased engagement with the [HLP Area of Responsibility of the Protection Cluster](#) and advocacy for shelter and settlement issues. At the country level, Shelter Coordination teams will engage key stakeholders, particularly government and protection colleagues, to support localised responses that strengthen security of tenure for affected populations. Country level shelter

strategies will promote the inclusion of tenure security as a vulnerability criteria and systematically use security of tenure to plan and monitor the response, including advocacy activities.

- **Developing quality partnerships and supporting direct funding to national partners.** Partnership with national/local organisations often takes the form of grant disbursements, while providing little or no institutional investment. Such grant support is often limited to direct implementation activities with little support for building capacity in such areas as management, finance, administration and logistics. Country clusters and agencies will be asked to assess partnerships and encouraged to make greater institutional investments. Linkages will be made with other clusters and OCHA at country level to support better understanding of the humanitarian system and access to funding for national and local actors. It is critical to gather evidence and improve understanding of the reasons behind capacity limitations of national and local shelter partners. This is needed if donors (including common humanitarian funds) and shelter partners at global and country levels are to support funding access and redesign funding frameworks so as to facilitate more comprehensive and direct funding to local actors.

4.2 PREPAREDNESS Country workshops and HLP

- **Preparedness workshops.** The GSC will support preparedness workshops at country level to develop localised response planning as well as working with sub-national government and other structures to promote the rapid activation of sub-national coordination and response structures.
- **HLP preparedness.** The GSC will undertake preparedness activities, including the development of HLP country profiles to inform country-level strategies and discussions – mapping out critical security of tenure aspects before, or at the onset of, a crisis so as to ensure conflict-sensitive programming.

4.3 UTILISING CASH AND MARKETS Shelter responders apply cash and markets modalities appropriately

Guidance, tools, monitoring, best practice, coordination, communications and advocacy. Different aspects of cash and markets-based shelter programming are represented within each of the four strategic areas. The focus of capacity enhancement activities will be the development of guidance, tools and training materials as well as filtering of existing knowledge particularly useful to shelter. This will include:

- market analyses
- cash and shelter preparedness
- refining approaches to support effective monitoring of different modalities of cash and markets responses in meeting shelter outcomes
- developing more effective messaging around the associated potential impacts of responses on protection, the environment and technical/safety aspects of shelter.

Drawing out and disseminating best practice on cash and markets-based approaches applicable and useful to the sector will be a key priority in order to build upon complementary extensive work done by other sectors.

4.4 FUTURE OF SHELTER AND SETTLEMENT Analysis of sector future response needs and capacity

To ensure the shelter sector is fit-for-purpose in the years to come it is important to take stock, review trends and critically examine the sector's ability to respond to the changing humanitarian landscape and plan for the future. This exercise will inform both individual agencies and overall sector policy and practice in national and international human resource investment, material response capacity and strategies to strengthen the localisation of shelter response.

The work will be initially informed and guided by the *State of Humanitarian Shelter and Settlement report*. This straddles the two strategies and will guide the next five-ten years of shelter sector capacity building.





Good Shelter Programming

Cross-cutting issues for effective shelter, settlements and NFIs response

PROTECTION MAINSTREAMING AND PROTECTION INTEGRATION

Good shelter and settlement programming looks beyond the provision of assistance and explores its impacts. It takes all kinds of risks into consideration and contributes to achieving protection outcomes such as the reduction of GBV or promotion of peaceful coexistence.

The GSC will support country-level shelter clusters to work with the Protection Cluster to promote shelter and settlement interventions that contribute to achieving protection outcomes and that take protection risks and potential violations into consideration. Shelter actors will be encouraged to promote meaningful access, safety and dignity in humanitarian aid by:

- avoiding exposing people to further harm
- ensuring people's access to impartial assistance
- protecting people from physical and psychological harm as a result of violence
- assisting them to claim their rights, access available solutions and recover from abuse.

The GSC will encourage actors to work toward dissemination of, and capacity building around the recently revised [GPC Protection Mainstreaming](#)

[Toolkit](#) to promote the mitigation of protection risks across the programme cycle in shelter and settlement programming.

The GSC will further support universal adherence to the UN Secretary-General's [Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse: A New Approach](#).

Prevention, mitigation and safe response to gender-based violence in shelter and settlements programming. The GSC recognises that shelter and settlement programming poses great opportunities to prevent, mitigate and safely respond to GBV. Specific outputs for the sector to prevent violence and increase safety within shelter and settlement programming will include adherence to the IASC [Guidelines for Integrating Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action](#) across all shelter operations and global forums, and participation of GSC actors in the dissemination and uptake of the [Guidelines for the Distribution of Shelter/NFI Kits](#) and [Site Planning Guidance to reduce the Risk of Gender-Based Violence](#).

The GSC will further support the integration of 'do no harm' principles into its guidance. It will disseminate and contextualise its recently launched GBV Constant Companion in Level 3 humanitarian responses to ensure safe response to the needs of GBV survivors. The GSC is committed to supporting coordinators and GSC partners at global, regional and national levels to access key tools, guidance and technical support to prevent, mitigate and safely respond to GBV within shelter and settlement programming. The GSC help desk will be available to further support shelter actors to advance protection outcomes within their programming.

INCLUSION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Crises place persons with disabilities in a heightened and disproportionate state of vulnerability. Disabilities can create additional barriers to accessing humanitarian assistance. The GSC recognises the need to include persons with disabilities in preparedness, response and recovery activities and to avoid marginalisation or exclusion. The GSC will work on the consolidation and dissemination of existing knowledge (notably the *Guidelines for Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action*) along with sharing of best practice to guide activities and programming. Capacity development of coordinators and GSC partners will continue to be supported and improved through training, advocacy and monitoring.

GENDER AND DIVERSITY SENSITIVE SHELTER AND SETTLEMENT PROGRAMMING

Conflicts and natural disasters affect women, girls, men and boys in different ways. Their varying needs are further compounded by a wide range of social and cultural factors (such as status, religion and ethnicity), producing specific and diverse needs.

The GSC believes that better shelter outcomes are achieved by effectively integrating gender issues into future shelter and settlements programmes

and by acknowledging and promoting programming for specific and diverse needs. This will be achieved through consultation and gender-and-diversity aware analysis, design and implementation as well as mainstreaming a gender and diversity perspective into all shelter and settlement programming. Specific outputs for the sector will include applying the recently revised *IASC Gender with Age Marker* in country-level responses and emergency funding mechanisms and dissemination and capacity building around good shelter programming which includes a gender perspective. The GSC aims to support the capacity of coordinators and GSC partners to comply with gender and diversity initiatives to achieve equal and minimum standards of care for everybody.

ENVIRONMENT SENSITIVE SHELTER AND SETTLEMENTS PROGRAMMING

It is important to recognise that humanitarian operations can have a dire environmental impact. The GSC seeks to increase understanding of environmental issues facing operational teams and to minimise the impact of response activities. The GSC will do this through maintaining the GSC Helpdesk, supporting field coordinators, collecting evidence, delivering training and supporting the deployment of technical environmental field advisors as required. The GSC will continue to support and disseminate the standards on environmental sustainability through the Environment CoP.





Implementing the GSC Strategy

A detailed plan of the specific activities and outputs to achieve the strategic aims, indicators to measure its success and indicative budgets have been developed as an annex to this strategy.

The GSC will regularly update workplans and budgets to support prioritisation and fundraising.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Key components of the strategy will be implemented by the co-leads and other partner organisations, the multi-partner GSC *Support Team*, including the Global Focal Points. They will provide support in coordination, information management, technical aspects of shelter, cash and market-based responses, HLP, and assessment. The Support Team also includes agencies serving as 'champions' to provide specific support and guidance on cash and market-based responses and HLP.

An important collaborative implementation strategy has been the wide range of GSC *Working Groups*, formed to implement specific parts of the strategy. WGs are time-bound, linked to the achievement of specific activities and outputs, after which they are dissolved.

The CoPs are bodies bringing together organisations and individuals with expertise in specific areas

of shelter and settlement. They provide a forum to access knowledge from a global talent pool on specific areas for both field and global partners.

The CoPs will be strengthened and supported during this strategy period.

As part of developing workplans other mechanisms through which the strategy can be effectively and efficiently implemented will be reviewed and proposed.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The GSC Strategy 2018-2022 has been developed with a series of outcome indicators that will be reported on a regular, with updates provided through annual Achievement Reports. More detailed workplans of specific areas of the strategy will be developed. They will have their own reporting mechanisms to the SAG and the GSC as a whole.

A rapid, mid-point review will take place to examine the implementation of the strategy. This should provide real-time pointers and guidance on how to improve the next implementation cycle.



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Global Shelter Cluster Strategy 2018 - 2022

AIM

STRENGTHENED SHELTER AND SETTLEMENTS RESPONSES THAT BUILD RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

1



COORDINATION

Coordination contributes to a localised, predictable, effective and timely response

1.1 PREDICTABLE, TIMELY, EFFECTIVE

Support and services for Shelter Clusters

1.2 LOCALISED AND AREA-BASED

Strengthening area-based coordination and promoting settlement approaches

1.3 TRANSITION TO RECOVERY

Facilitating transition to recovery coordination, enhancing engagement with governments and development actors

1.4 INTEGRATED RESPONSE

Effective inter-cluster coordination and joint response planning approaches

2



ADVOCACY

Increased recognition of shelter and settlement in humanitarian response and recovery

2.1 IMPORTANCE OF SHELTER AND SETTLEMENT

Strengthened understanding of shelter and settlement's critical multi-sector impact

2.2 ENGAGEMENT

Increased donor and agency engagement and support for shelter and settlements sector

2.3 RESPONSE FUNDING

Critical funding and response gaps are monitored, communicated and supported

2.4 INFLUENCING

Engaging others: appropriate urban assistance, cash and markets-based programming, area-based approaches

3



EVIDENCE-BASED RESPONSE

Shelter response informed by evidence, best practice and learning

3.1 AVAILABLE AND USED

Evidence available and used to inform planning, coordination and decision-making

3.2 EVIDENCE GAPS FILLED

Key shelter and settlement evidence gaps filled

3.3 CAPITALISATION

Knowledge management systems in place to capitalise on lessons learned as well as best practice in order to bring about change in sector policy and practice

4



CAPACITY

Shelter sector capacity to address ongoing and emerging challenges

4.1 SKILLS

Increased and localised shelter response capacity

4.2 PREPAREDNESS

Country workshops and HLP

4.3 UTILISING CASH AND MARKETS

Shelter responders apply cash and markets modalities appropriately

4.4 FUTURE OF SHELTER AND SETTLEMENT

Analysis of sector future response needs and capacity

MAINSTREAMED PROTECTION, GENDER, DISABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT



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