



Shelter Cluster Iraq
ShelterCluster.org
Coordinating Humanitarian Shelter

VULNERABILITY CRITERIA FOR SHELTER CLUSTER - 2021

Abstract

This document provides advice to Shelter and NFI Cluster partners on how to prioritise beneficiaries through as systematic assessments ensuring that the needs of the most vulnerable are addressed. The use of the Cash Working Group (CWG) Socio-Economic Vulnerability Assessment Tool (SEVAT) is recommended where situation allows.

INTRODUCTION

Updated Vulnerability criteria of the Shelter and NFI Cluster – 2021

Since 2018, the Shelter Cluster in Iraq has adopted the Socio-Economic Vulnerability Assessment Tool (SEVAT) as the main assessment tool for shelter and NFI interventions for IDPs out of camp and returnees, while it also captures vulnerable host community households.

This assessment and scoring tool was developed by the Cash Working Group (CWG). It is a consumption-based survey which takes into consideration families' behaviours and characteristics, allows for vulnerability classification of the family unit according to the distance from the poverty marker and is aligned with the model used by the Government of Iraq and the World Bank to assess households for MoLSA's cash transfers. In effect, it aims to target interventions at the most vulnerable, using per capita consumption – as a proxy for vulnerability - as an indicator. Using consumption as a proxy also allows us to introduce an identified poverty marker as a cut-off for interventions eligibility (110,000 IQD per person per month¹).

SHELTER/NFI COMPONENT

There are a number of questions in the questionnaire that ask about the shelter type of the family, occupancy/ownership type and basic NFI needs. Combined with the overall vulnerability score of the family, this data can point Shelter Cluster partners to look into additional areas of intervention or just support more accurate targeting of out of camp populations and facilitate more in-depth technical assessment. The Shelter Cluster encourages its partners to use it in their initial assessment of areas of operation. Partners can customize and expand technical assessments, also in the form of Bill of Quantities² in order to determine in details the needs for critical shelter upgrades and their scope, Sealing-Off and NFI Kits.

SEVAT DURING COVID-19

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and related safety measures to curb the spread of the disease, close social interactions shall be kept to minimum. That means, time spent on assessments shall also be weighed against the risk of causing harm to people that are interviewed and the enumerators. For this reason, for instance, the Multi Cluster Needs Assessment usually run in person has been performed mainly through remote modalities (e.g. phone interviews).

Considering that SEVAT is a household-level face-to-face assessment, in light of the risk of spreading COVID-19, sudden camp closures and the increased movement of people in need, CWG recommends that partners have in-built flexibility:

- Assessment can happen, as much as possible, remotely, via phone. Don't risk exposing staff members with direct contacts especially considering that conducting an assessment takes up to 30 minutes.
- Such modality will increase inclusion and exclusion error. That's understandable. In order to mitigate, enhance segregation of duties in your organization between assessment staff, Monitoring & Evaluation and data management.

¹ The vulnerability threshold of the CWG has been increased from 92,000 IQD to 110,000 IQD per capita/per month, due to COVID-19-related increase in vulnerabilities (May 2020)

² A standardized BoQ for shelter interventions is available at <https://www.sheltercluster.org/iraq/documents/standard-boq-minimum-repairs-war-damaged-shelter-v3-enar>

- The CWG Standard Operating Procedures recommend executing a verification questionnaire (done as per normal CWG SOPs via phone) to the 20% of the caseload assessed. Considering increasing such percentage.
- Consider executing home visits verification (the verification questionnaire takes 10 minutes) on a sample in order to refine the inclusion and exclusion rate forecast.

SHELTER/NFI PRIORITIZATION CRITERIA IN 2021

For 2021, the Shelter Cluster still recommends the use of SEVAT to the extent possible. Nonetheless, acknowledging the challenges highlighted above and based on the “Do No Harm” principle related to the risk of further spreading COVID-19, Shelter Cluster partners can prioritize beneficiaries based on the following criteria, coupled with the specific shelter and NFI needs: families living in sub-standard shelters:

Criteria
1. Families in overcrowded settings
2. Large families
3. Female-headed households
4. Families with persons with disabilities
5. Families with persons at greater risk of COVID-19 (older persons, those with chronic, cardiovascular and lung diseases, cancer, etc.)
6. Vulnerable families who cannot return to their property due to secondary occupation
7. Families who cannot afford a rent
8. Families at risk of evictions
9. Marginalized groups ³

Table 1: Criteria for prioritizing beneficiaries

Highly vulnerable people who have prematurely and/or involuntarily left camps due to sudden closures and without a house to return to, will also be prioritized for shelter and NFI assistance at their place of secondary displacement or area of return. The needs of the host community shall also be taken into consideration, not to generate any tension by assisting only a certain group of beneficiaries. When families are in precarious hosting arrangements, in critical shelter and/or in need of NFI, assisting the hosting family is highly recommended so as not mitigate the risk of rejection.

Referral of cases from CWG partners is still very welcome, since beneficiaries would have been already assessed through SEVAT. Synergies in this sense are highly encouraged at area/location level.

CAPACITY BUILDING

As in previous years, the Shelter Cluster with the support of the CWG can provide further guidance to all partners interested in using SEVAT, either through bilateral trainings or Training of Trainers (ToTs).

³ Marginalized groups are those who cannot return to their area of origin and/or to their residential property due to tribal, ethnic, sectarian, political reasons and affiliations; LGBTI persons; victims of GBV: etc. To identify such groups, Shelter Cluster Partners will coordinate with protection, including GBV and HLP, actors in order to implement complementary approaches to identification and selection of beneficiaries