

SHELTER WORKING GROUP MEETING MINUTES

18th February 2014, 1530hrs, Islamabad

ACTED, Concern, IOM, Islamic Help, NDMA, UN-HABITAT, UNHCR, USAID/OFDA

Chaired by: Amina Saoudi, IOM

Action Points

1. The Shelter Working Group is established and will take over the activities formerly conducted by the Shelter Cluster. IOM will continue facilitating the coordination platform for shelter/NFIs as sectoral lead agency at the national level. Strong links will be maintained with the Provincial Shelter/NFIs Cluster in KP/FATA, and the situation is to be clarified with NRC regarding the transition in Balochistan.
2. This meeting will be considered the first meeting of the new Shelter Working Group. The draft ToR and coordination structure including provincial and sub-working groups are to be reviewed before the next meeting.
3. Essential activities formerly carried out by the Cluster team will be maintained by IOM in the coming months to enable a smooth transition.
4. Participation in the Working Group remains voluntary. The Working Group will keep a strong technical coordination function through the TWIG. A sub-group will take over the SAG activities and hold an advisory role.
5. The strategic/decision-making role of the Shelter Working Group and sectoral lead is to be clarified.

1. Opening and introductions

2. Cluster deactivation and way forward

- The Shelter/NFIs Cluster in Pakistan was initially reactivated in 2011, and its activities continued throughout 2012 and 2013.
- The Shelter/NFIs Cluster enjoyed a large presence at various levels (national, provincial and in some cases district levels, as in Sindh), and undertook multiple activities involving coordination, information management, technical support and capacity building to strengthen shelter/NFIs responses and preparedness activities in Pakistan.
- In December 2013, the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) decided to deactivate all clusters at national level, and at provincial levels in Sindh and Balochistan. The clusters in KP/FATA remain activated for the complex emergency.
- With more than 60,000 shelters currently being built in areas affected by the 2012 floods, maintaining a coordination platform for shelter agencies is deemed necessary to avoid duplication and highlight residual needs. All sectors will also soon engage in preparedness and contingency planning activities for the 2014 monsoons, which will require involving key stakeholders at the national and sub-national levels.
- It has been agreed by participants that the Shelter/NFIs Cluster would transition into a Shelter/NFIs Working Group (SWG) at the national level, and at subnational levels according to needs.
- IOM remains a sectoral lead for the Shelter/NFIs sector at the national level, and discussions are on-going with NRC regarding Balochistan. Participants highlighted that strong links should be established between the National Shelter Working Group and the Provincial Cluster in KP/FATA led by UNHCR.
- Continued representation or support from NDMA, as co-chair or participating member of the working group, would be important for its legitimacy and effectiveness. It could also be possible for the working group to function in a supporting role for the government, pending further discussions with NDMA.

- NDMA expressed its willingness to participate in the new coordination platform, and other participants highlighted the importance maintaining a strong link with the authorities in all future discussions on shelter activities, policies and preparedness plans.
- Participants were invited to comment on the draft ToR for the Shelter Working Group.
- Members agreed on the necessity of maintaining sub-groups at the national level to address specific issues, taking over from the existing Technical Working Group (TWIG) and Strategic Advisory Group (SAG).
- The TWIG will continue supporting technical coordination and will host discussions on relevant topics, notably DRR and innovation in shelter programming, with stronger links being established with other sectors (e.g. WASH, livelihoods) to discuss lessons learned, preparedness and innovative approaches in humanitarian programming.
- The representation role hold by the SAG and the sector lead would be much more limited under the Shelter Working Group.
- Participants suggested that a sub-working group could be created to replace the SAG and serve as an advisory body for stakeholders engaged in the shelter response, including humanitarian/development agencies, authorities, other sectors and donors. Participants highlighted to need to ensure some level of sectoral representation and convey common messages in interagency platforms, including the HCT.
- Further discussions are required to clarify the extent of the working group's role and responsibilities in relation to supporting pool funds mechanisms such as ERF. The group could still undertake a technical review of proposals, but vetting of proposals might raise challenges in terms of accountability.
- IOM, as sectoral lead, committed to facilitate coordination platforms in the coming months at the national level and in Sindh (provincial and district levels). IOM will maintain some of the key activities carried out under the Shelter Cluster and extend (limited) support to shelter agencies and sub-national working groups/clusters. In addition, information management, technical coordination and capacity building activities will continue. Due to cluster deactivation, resources available for sectoral coordination are much more limited, and the SWG's members are invited to support activities.

3. Set-up of provincial working groups and multi-sectoral platforms

- In Sindh, a provincial working group will continue hosting regular meetings in Sukkur as well as in districts with ongoing shelter projects. Agencies that are active in other sectors working in those areas are welcome to join district meetings and use them as coordination/preparedness platforms.
- In Balochistan, discussions are on-going with the sectoral lead, and one possibility would be to merge the former Shelter Cluster with the Housing Sub-Working Group created under the Community Restoration Working Group
- Strong links would be established between the national working group for shelter and the provincial Shelter/NFIs Cluster in KP/FATA. UNHCR could arrange monthly videoconferencing with the provincial cluster in Peshawar. The sectoral lead might be able to participate to share any advocacy messages or updates, and also to become aware of any challenges that might need to be raised at a national level. Likewise, a representative from the KP cluster could be invited to participate in the national working group meetings in Islamabad.
- To replace the Inter-Cluster Coordination Meetings (ICCMs), a multi-sectoral platform has been established to focus on preparedness and strategic discussions for 2014. Core members will include sectoral lead agencies, though the platform will be more open to NGOs and INGOs. Similar platforms will also be established at provincial level in Lahore, Karachi and Quetta.

4. Planned activities for 2014

- Regular coordination meetings will be convened every month or on request to address specific issues.

- Information management updates, 4Ws and mapping will continue to support coordination among shelter agencies; information will be accessible on new website to be launched shortly. Organizations can request information and guidance documents from the working group support team.
- A new Technical Advisor at the national level will support technical coordination and facilitate meetings of the TWIG. Among other planned activities, the second phase of the Shelter Study will be initiated (TWIG members will be asked to review the ToRs).
- Among preparedness activities for 2014, the SWG team is planning to develop a Relief Sites Assessment methodology; the team will also draft the sectoral preparedness and response plan for both Shelter and CCCM sectors, in close coordination with other sectors, OCHA and the authorities. Capacity building activities at national, provincial and district levels will continue (CCCM and preparedness).
- A study of community coping mechanisms in return areas is also planned to gather lessons learned from previous disaster responses and support preparedness efforts (ACCCRA).

5. Brief updates

- KP/FATA
 - Current visits in Kurram Agency are gauging potential for returns, with goal to start returns in March 2014. A return intentions survey has already been conducted, showing 95-97% of displaced from Kurram keen to return in the next month.
 - Proposal for 37,500 returns to Khyber Agency in April 2014 contingent on willingness to return, to be determined through return intention surveys.
- Balochistan
 - Sub-working group on housing convenes weekly meetings to discuss designs for housing reconstruction in earthquake-affected areas. There are challenges due to a lack of consensus on the design. The SWG suggested to seek agreement on a common strategy and key technical requirements rather than focusing on the design.
 - Government of Balochistan plans to build 30,000 houses in the affected areas. Funds have been released at federal and provincial levels, and the government is currently finalizing a design for a two-room housing unit.
- Concern Rapid Fund
 - 2,000 winterized NFI kits distributed to families in Khyber Agency (completed 25 January 2014).
 - 900 shelters are being built in district Jaffarabad, UC Nasirabad, Balochistan.
 - OFDA just approved Cesvi's project for the construction of 400 shelters in Rajanpur, Punjab.