Key points

- Contact UNHCR's Global Shelter Cluster Section in the Division of Resilience and Solutions (DRS) as soon as there is an indication that cluster activation will be discussed. This permits the section to provide guidance and support effectively.

- UNHCR leads the shelter cluster in conflict-related emergencies. Representatives should consult UNHCR's Global Shelter Cluster Section if they feel their office cannot take the lead, as a decision not to lead the shelter cluster contradicts UNHCR policy and guidance and can have important operational and reputational consequences.

- The appointment of a NGO partner or a government body as co-chair is encouraged by the IASC, where appropriate and possible, but should be made after consulting UNHCR's Global Shelter Cluster Section because the decision has important consequences.

- Coordinating a cluster is a full-time job. It should not be merged with another function. A dedicated full-time Shelter Cluster Coordination Officer and a full time Information Management Officer should be appointed. Other coordination positions (Information Manager, Technical Coordinator, Sub-national Cluster Coordinators) are normally also required.

- UNHCR's Global Shelter Cluster Section can deploy surge capacity for Coordination but also Information Management at short notice to help establish a cluster or support during an emergency situation. It can also provide support and advice from headquarters.

1. Overview

The Global Shelter Cluster was established in 2005 and it is co-led by UNHCR (conflict situations) and IFRC (disaster situations) at the global level. The Shelter Cluster is an inter-agency mechanism that coordinates shelter, settlement, and shelter-related non-food items (NFIs) during a humanitarian response for internal displacement (IDP) situations. When activated at country
level, it is responsible for coordinating the emergency shelter and NFI response with Shelter Cluster partners, other clusters and government authorities to support affected populations (through the provision of plastic sheeting, shelter kits, tents, cash, NFIs or other support) and longer-term needs (through transitional shelter, building or reconstruction of houses, capacity building, and related matters).

The Shelter Cluster promotes the inclusion of disaster risk reduction measures in the design and construction of shelters and settlements. Protection mainstreaming and risk analysis, particularly for housing, land and property (HLP), have important implications for shelter interventions. Close coordination with the Protection Cluster but also other clusters is therefore very important.

2. Relevance for emergency operations

The objective of a Shelter Cluster is to ensure there is a coordinated approach for meeting the shelter needs of affected populations more effectively by strengthening leadership, coordination, and accountability in the humanitarian shelter sector. UNHCR should recommend the activation of shelter clusters when there are shelter needs and the government requires additional capacity for coordination of shelter-related responses. According to the Policy on UNHCR's Engagement in Situations of Internal Displacement, in situations of conflict UNHCR should lead the Shelter Cluster.

The UNHCR Global Shelter Cluster Section should be contacted as soon as there is an indication that the activation of clusters will be discussed.

Please note that the cluster coordination approach is applicable in situations of internal displacement and natural disasters. In refugee situations the IASC does not apply, and the response is coordinated within the framework of the (RCM). In mixed settings, the "Joint UNHCR – OCHA Note on Mixed Situations: Coordination in Practice" (2014) applies.

3. Main guidance

The Shelter Cluster has developed tools and guidance for shelter operations which can be found on the GSC website. The Global Shelter Cluster Coordinator and the GSC support team at HQ stand ready for any advice needed.

Preparedness/ Pre-Crisis

- Understand and familiarize your team with Shelter and settlements issues and the Shelter Cluster and responsibilities of UNHCR as Cluster Lead Agency: The shelter sector is very broad covering household or shelter-related NFIs, emergency shelter, transitional and longer-term shelter, and issues related to settlements, including settlement planning and infrastructure development. UNHCR is the lead for conflict contexts which includes being the first port of call for the activation of the cluster at country-level, and the responsibility to be the “provider of last resort”
熟知您的团队掌握庇护所和庇护所集群：
教育您的团队了解庇护的更大影响和重要意义，以及庇护如何作为实现保护的手段，改善健康和生计的基础。有关有用的建议，请参见UNHCR参与内部流离失所情况的指导手册（公开）或UNHCR（内部）“构建块”，实施规划工具为流离失所者背景。

- 倡导UNHCR的激活和领导，并分析国家背景和不断演变的紧急情况，以及现有的协调机制，以及它们是否能够应对。尽早与捐助者取得联系。捐助者不仅能够提供资金，而且还具有非常有用的经验、见解和杠杆作用，可以为庇护所集群及其合作伙伴提供巨大支持。

- 事先识别庇护所集群合作伙伴，尤其是政府和地方当局 - 开始与所在国家的庇护者合作，包括当地庇护者或其他组织，例如建筑师或工程师协会、地方学术界或研究机构。确定哪些政府机构在国家或可适用的次国家级别中将最好地担任庇护所集群的对应方或共同领导协调机制。

一旦庇护所集群在国家层面的激活：

- 建立集群协调团队：当UNHCR在庇护者集群中采取领导作用时，应指派一位专门的庇护者协调员。信息管理能力应也到位。

- 定义国家庇护所集群ToR：建立一种清晰的ToR，以说明在特定背景下、范围、会员资格和国家结构（包括次国家结构）中集群的作用。当可能时，强力建议与政府机构和非政府组织伙伴共同领导。SAG应不超过大约10名成员。

- 创建战略顾问委员会（SAG）：由协调员主持，SAG应负责制定和调整集群的战略框架、优先事项和工作计划。SAG应代表整体集群合作伙伴，包括不同类型的成员（国际非政府组织、国家非政府组织、联合国）及其代表。SAG不应超过约10名成员。
✓ Outline a shelter strategy: Aim initially for a quickly produced one page document that outlines what the cluster would like to do, why, by who, how and by when. Do not aim for perfection initially but rather create something that gives direction and elaborate details with time. Examples and templates can be found in the GSC Coordination Toolkit.

✓ Establish a regular and predictable dissemination of Information Management Products. The GSC has a toolkit and a companion available to support this. Initially this should include activity planning, 3/4Ws (Who, What, Where, and with Whom), and basic information on population, key indicators and mapping. The onset of an emergency is a critical moment to harmonize systems among partners as this becomes increasingly challenging as the response becomes more established. The Shelter Severity Classification (SSC) System can improve IM activities to support evidence-based decision-making.

Checklist on UNHCR’s roles and accountabilities in countries where UNHCR leads the Shelter Cluster

As Shelter cluster lead agency, the UNHCR Representative as head of the Shelter Cluster lead agency is accountable to the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) and is responsible to:
- Ensure that coordination mechanisms are established and properly supported.
- Serve as first point of call for the Government and the Humanitarian Coordinator.
- Represent at the HCT cluster-specific concerns and challenges that the cluster cannot solve.
- Act as provider of last resort.

The Shelter Cluster Coordinator is responsible and accountable for ensuring that the Shelter Cluster performs the following six core functions:
- To support service delivery by providing a forum in which approaches can be agreed and duplication eliminated.
- To inform the strategic decision-making of the Humanitarian Coordinator and Humanitarian Country Team by coordinating needs assessments, gap analysis, and prioritization.
- To plan and develop strategy (including cluster plans, adherence to standards, funding needs, HPC processes, CERF and Country-Based Pool Fund processes, etc.) and mobilise resources
- To advocate for identified concerns on behalf of affected populations and cluster partners.
- To monitor and report on the cluster strategy and its results and recommend corrective action where necessary.
- To conduct contingency planning, preparedness, and capacity building where needed.
As an Operational Organization and as indicated in the guidance on UNHCR’s Engagement in Situations of Internal Displacement, assuming cluster leadership not only implies readiness to coordinate, but also readiness to be operationally relevant, predictable and accountable.

1. Promoting State responsibility for Shelter and Settlements interventions: Ultimately this suggests that shelter coordination and shelter interventions need to be designed with a handover/exit or transition phase in mind, especially where internal displacement is likely to remain protracted.

2. Upholding and maximizing synergies with refugee protection and right to asylum, predominantly in mixed contexts;

3. Promoting human rights: Particularly Housing Land and Property (HLP) rights should be carefully addressed.

4. Applying a community-based approach responsive to age, gender and diversity (AGD);

5. Responding in partnership: Designing a response that fosters collaboration with other sectors such as WASH, CCCM, and Protection as well as development and peace actors, CBOs and faith groups.

6. Infusing protection principles across clusters in an interagency response;

7. Promoting comprehensive solutions: Shelter interventions are more meaningful when holistic, multi-sectoral interventions at a neighbourhood or settlement level are considered. All shelter interventions should include adequate access to water and sanitation, all settlements should have drainage, health and education facilities, garbage collection and waste disposal facilities. Engagement with the WASH, Health, Education, CCCM, and Protection clusters, but also (local) government authorities will be important to ensure multi-sectoral issues are adequately addressed. It is also essential to include the host community and find ways to ensure that the interventions are designed jointly and will also benefit them. Disaster risk reduction should be considered in every shelter and settlement intervention. Overall, keep in mind these approaches and long-term solutions from the start of a response.

8. Disengaging responsibility: Shelter interventions should be sustainable and as easy to maintain as possible. Local building practices and local materials should be prioritised so that shelters can be maintained and repaired with the existing know-how. Building capacity of the local population and local builders such as masons and carpenters should also be considered.

The Shelter Cluster performance can be measured against the 6 core functions of the Clusters and accountability to affected population. The CCPM Process is a tool provided to country Clusters to carry out a yearly self-assessment. Standard indicators will follow the following headings:

1. Supporting service delivery

2. Informing HC/HCT strategic decision-making

3. Planning and implementing cluster strategies

4. Monitoring and evaluating performance

5. Building national capacity in preparedness and contingency planning
6. Supporting robust advocacy

7. Promoting accountability to affected populations

**Post emergency phase**

UNHCR and IFRC, as Shelter Cluster co-lead agencies at global level, work in close partnership with shelter actors to develop common approaches for shelter responses while developing more specific tools and methodologies for Disasters and Conflict contexts, which might include longer-term considerations. The Shelter Cluster develops an overarching strategy to provide a harmonized, efficient and effective humanitarian shelter response and support resource mobilization efforts.

Given the often long-term impact of shelter interventions, it is essential to ensure that appropriate approaches and technical solutions are defined based on good practices, needs, and capacities. Advocacy with donors and government is a key activity of a Shelter Cluster in order to get funding for cluster partners and support for issues such as land allocation or other HLP issues. The Shelter Cluster Coordinator also plays a crucial role in advancing coordination and cooperation between different sectors’ intervention (e.g. WASH, Protection, Early Recovery (where existing), etc.). Country Shelter Clusters should coordinate and provide inputs to the shelter sector sections of the Humanitarian Programme Cycle (HPC) and its outputs including the Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) and the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP).

**Annexes**

- IASC Reference Module for Cluster Coordination at the Country Level 2015
- Guidance Package for UNHCR's Engagement in Situations of Internal Displacement

**4. Links**

- Global Shelter Cluster Website
- Global Shelter Cluster Coordination Toolkit
- Global Shelter Cluster Information Management Toolkit
- Global Shelter Cluster Performance Monitoring
- Shelter severity classification system
- More than just a Roof: GSC online training on Shelter Building Blocks (access for UNHCR staff only)

**5. Main contacts**

Functional mailbox: Global Shelter Cluster <info@sheltercluster.org>